

Martyrs' Voices

Translated by Brother Anthony

One of the characteristic features of Charles Dallet's *Histoire* is his frequent *verbatim* reproducing of letters. Most of the letters are those written by French missionaries, but he also includes translations into French of a few letters and other texts written by Koreans, almost always martyrs faced with imminent execution. In this way Dallet gives a voice to the first Korean Catholics in a unique way. While the French text of Dallet is freely available online, it might be good to enable those voices to be heard in English as well.

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Blessed Yun Ji-chung 윤지충 尹持忠 Paul (1759-1791)

Dallet Volume 1. Book 1 Chapter IV. 1791

Paul Yun Ji-chung, also called Wooyong, descended from a noble family from the island of Haenam. His ancestors had often occupied distinguished places, and several of them had made a name for themselves in letters. His father, after having devoted himself successfully to the study of medicine, had come to settle in the village of Jangu-dong, district of Jinsan, province of Jeolla. This is where Paul Yun was born in the year gi-myo (1759). From childhood, he stood out by his intelligence and good conduct. He quickly acquired a reputation for science, which grew even more, when in the year kye-myo (1783), at the age of twenty-five, he obtained in public examinations the grade called jinsa (graduate). During the winter of the following year, having made a journey to the capital, he found at the home of Thomas Kim Beom-woo, two books of religion which he took away and took copies of: but he was not yet practicing. It was only about three years later that, instructed by his first cousin Jeong Yak-jeon, on the whole of the Christian religion, he embraced it definitively and began with fervor to fulfill its duties. When the persecution of Christians began, he burned some of his books out of fear, but nevertheless continued to practice the religion in secret. We do not see that he had much public relationship with the Christians, nor that he worked for the conversion of the infidels. The letter from the Bishop of Peking forbidding sacrifices and other superstitions in honor of deceased parents did not shake his courage. He immediately obeyed, and burned the tablets, which, according to the custom of the country, were kept in his family home. In the meantime, in the summer of the year sin-hae (1791), his mother, named Gwon 權, died.

The position was tricky. The news of this death would attract Paul's relatives and friends to pay him their compliments of condolence and to witness the sacrifices. He had to violate his faith and deny his God at least outwardly, or else be ready to face reproaches, insults and curses. His noble and upright soul did not waver on which side to take. He put on the robe of mourning, wept sincerely for his mother, and did all that enlightened and well-meaning filial piety might suggest in such circumstances. Nothing was lacking in what a son's love for his mother and outward proprieties require, only there were no sacrifices. Immediately the murmurs broke out. Nothing was said of anything but this hitherto unheard-of attack, especially on the part of a noble child. The news of it spread far and wide, and soon, pointed out as impious by all that he held most dear, pointed out by his neighbors as a man who had denied all the feelings of nature, reviled, threatened with being handed over as a rebel against his King, Paul found himself almost ostracized from society.

The mandarin of Jinsan therefore went to Paul's house. A visit to the home of a noble is, in Korea, a very delicate and often dangerous expedition, but the mandarin was too well informed to have anything to fear. He was, however, somewhat taken aback when he found in Paul's house the box used in the country to enclose the tablets. The box was opened, and found to be empty. Sa-won immediately gave the order to arrest Paul Yun Ji-chong and his cousin James Gwon Sang-yeon, one the son, the other a nephew of the deceased. As they had retired, one to Gwangju and the other to Han-sou, probably according to some secret notice of the mandarin's arrival, the latter took Paul's uncle as surety.

As soon as they learned of the warrant for their arrest, and the arrest of Paul's uncle, they set out together, to deliver themselves into the hands of the Mandarin Sin Sa-won, and by traveling night and day, arrived at the prefecture of Jinsan on the evening of the twenty-sixth day of the eleventh lunar month of the year sin-hae (1791). The interrogations began immediately. Here they are, as told to us by Paul himself, in notes which he wrote in Chinese, and which were later translated into Korean. We reproduce these documents in their entirety because they are the first of their kind which have been preserved for us, and because they will make clear, better than any explanation, the ideas of the Korean people on the worship of ancestors, and their terrible prejudices against the Christian religion.

"Towards the evening of the twenty-sixth day of the tenth lunar month (1791), I arrived at the prefecture of Jinsan, and immediately after supper I was summoned before the Mandarin. "How do I see you," he cried, "and how have you come to this?" "I don't quite understand what you are asking me," I replied. "I say that very serious rumors are circulating against you. Could they be founded? Is it true that you are lost in superstitions?" "I am by no means lost in superstitions; only, it is true that I profess the religion of the Master of Heaven." "And isn't that a superstition?" "No, that's the real way." "If that is so, then everything that has been practiced from Fuxi to the great men of the Song dynasty is all a lie?" — "In our religion, among the commandments, is the one that forbids us to judge and condemn others. As for me, I content myself with following the religion of the Master of Heaven, without thinking of criticizing anyone or making comparisons." "You refuse to offer sacrifices to the ancestors; but does not the animal Sirang itself show gratitude towards the authors of its days! Some birds also know how to make sacrifices; with all the more reason man must act thus. Have you not read the passage from the books of Confucius where it is said: He who, during the life of his parents, served them according to all the rules, who, after their death, made their funerals according to all the rules, finally offered the sacrifices according to the prescribed rites, only he can say that he has filial piety." "All this," I replied, "is not written in the Christian religion." — Then the Mandarin, citing other passages from the sacred books of Confucius, urged me to change my conduct, and said to me with a sigh: — "What a pity! For so many generations the fame of your family has been growing up to

you; here it is completely ruined. You yourself had the reputation of a scholar full of talent; but your mind lacking in maturity and reflection, you have come to the point of abandoning the worship of your fathers. If I had known earlier that you were acting like this, I would have gone immediately to urge you, to make you open your eyes, and I would have prevented you from coming to this end. However, all is not lost. There have been, in the past, great men who have returned, after having been led astray for a long time by the doctrines of Fo and Lao-tse. If therefore, right now, you are thinking of changing, you can still walk in their glorious footsteps.” “If there was still a possibility for me to change, I would have done so first, and I would not have come here.” “So there’s nothing left to try to bring you to better feelings? As for me, I neither want to decide your fate, nor to question you minutely. once before the criminal court, you will have to account for all your conduct. This body that you received from your parents, do you want to madly make it suffer torture and death? Moreover, you are the cause of your uncle being imprisoned in his old age; is this fulfilling the duty of filial piety?” — “To acquire virtue in spite of torture and death, is that to lack filial piety? As soon as I learned of my uncle’s incarceration, without even stopping at night, I ran to deliver myself into your hands; is this not fulfilling the duties of piety?”

“The Mandarin then ordered me to be treated according to the law, and immediately they put a heavy cangue around my neck, then he said to me with a sigh: — “In what a get-up you are! To die under cangue and in irons is to die a criminal.” He had me taken to prison; but the room which was intended for me being in ruins, and not having yet been able to be restored, I was deposited in another room. Thus ended the day.

“The 27th passed without any remarkable incident. On the 28th, at lunchtime, I saw my cousin James Gwon enter the prison. He had just undergone his interrogation. He had been asked the same questions, and he had answered them the same way as me. At noon the Mandarin sent for my uncle; and, after having addressed him long condolences: “Couldn’t you then,” he said to him, “do like such and such, whom you know, and prevent these young people from giving themselves up to evil practices?” — My uncle did not answer a single word, left the tribunal; and was, I believe, immediately released. Towards the end of the day, we were summoned again, my cousin and I; the big cangue was taken from us and was replaced by the little one: “You are going,” said the Mandarin, “to leave for Jeonju, residence of Jeong Min-si, governor of the province. But how do you behave? not to follow, with the doctrine of the scholars, a way of pleasures, and to bring oneself misfortunes, what does that mean?” — Then, looking at my cousin Gwon, he said to him: — “You who lived among all your relatives, did you spread these superstitions among them?” — We both kept silence, and the Mandarin, receiving no response, sent us away. We were accompanied by the praetorian in charge of criminal cases, a satellite and a jailer. They had received the order to make us leave on time, but it was already dark when we left the tribunal, it was impossible to set off, and we slept with the correspondent of the canton .

“On the 29th, at the first cockcrow, we were on our way. We made a first stop at the Singeoreon inn for lunch, and later a second, at Gaepawoo , to feed the horses. At nightfall, after passing by the dignitaries’ travel hostel at Andeok, and crossing a small mound, we met the satellites of the criminal court coming to fetch us. Numerous valets were on their feet and advanced, uttering loud cries, and making such a din that our capture resembled that of notorious thieves. We were taken to the prefecture, outside the southern gate, and, as the darkness was already complete, and the night advanced, torches were lit on our right and on our left, and we were placed near the tiered seats of the court. The criminal judge asks us: what are your first and last names? - We decline them. “Do you know the crime of which you are accused?” “I don’t know what this is about. Our governor having sent us to the judge, we came on his order, and against all expectation, we were, on the way, seized like thieves.” “What are your usual occupations?” “I devote myself to study.” — “What studies?” “To the

study of religion?” “Where did you each retire separately?” “I have been at Gwangju,” I replied; “and I at Hansu,” said my cousin James Gwon. “Having learned, each on our own, your order, we returned immediately, without even stopping for the night, to deliver ourselves into your hands.” — We answered thus frankly. Shortly afterwards, a large cangue weighing eighteen pounds was passed round each of our necks; they also attached an iron chain to our necks, and with a wooden hook they fixed our right hand against the edge of the cangue.

“The judge having given the order to take us to the prison. we were taken there. There we sat down on the floor outside the door. Then, when everyone had retired, we were taken to the room where the thieves were, and we were obliged to take our place among them. Fortunately, the jailer came soon after to bring us into the guards’ room. This apartment had the inconvenience of being not far from the thieves’ prison, but on the other hand it was high and the floor a little heated. It was like an ordinary room. We spent the night there, sometimes lying on the ground and dozing, sometimes sitting. On the 30th, at daybreak, we were again told to change our dwellings, and when day was quite up, we were taken to the prison of the governor, who summoned us to his bar after noon, and made us undergo the following questioning: “Which one of you is called Yun? and who is the one called Gwon?” — Each of us answered by declaring his name. “What is your usual occupation?” — “In my youth,” I answered him, “I applied myself to literature in order to pass the examinations. For some time I have devoted myself to studies which regulate the heart and conduct of man.” “Have you studied the classic scholarly books?” “I have studied them.” “If you want to regulate your heart and your conduct, aren’t our sacred books enough, and why go and lose yourself in superstitions?” “I’m in no way lost in superstition?” “And the so-called religion of the Master of Heaven, isn’t that a superstition?” — “God is the supreme Father, creator of heaven, earth, angels, men and all creatures; can his service be called superstition?” “Give me a simple summary of this doctrine.” — “The place where we are is suitable for examining criminal cases and not for developing a doctrine. What we practice boils down to the Ten Commandments and the Seven Capital Virtues.” “Where did you get your books from?” “I could well point it out, but when they lent me these books, the King’s prohibition did not exist, and therefore the one who lent them was not guilty. Today that there is rigorous prohibition, so if I designated him, he would be exposed, without any guilt on his part, to violent tortures; how could I solve it? it would be breaking the precept which forbids us to harm our neighbor, so I cannot denounce him.” — “It is not so; even if you declare it, this man who lent you these books before prohibition, will certainly not become guilty of it. So do not be held back by this vain fear. The King having ordered to make exact information, if you do not declare anything, how can I make a report? This would be in violation of the King’s order, which, without a doubt, is not permitted. So declare it and do not wait for torture to do so.”

“I remained for a long time in complete silence, and, as my cousin James urged me to answer, I said first: “It is something that dates back a long time and it is difficult for me to remember it well.” Then I added: “In the winter of 1784, I went by chance to Kim Beom-woo, of the middle class, and finding these books there, I borrowed them, copied them, and returned them at once to their owner. When then I learned of the King’s prohibition, I burned what was on Chinese paper and washed what was on Korean paper. It has been several years since the two treatises on the Ten Commandments and the Seven Capital Virtues are no longer with me.” “The king’s order is that if there are books, they must be burned. If therefore you have any other, it is right to deliver it at once.” “The mandarin of my district has visited all my house, and has not found a single page there.” “You are guilty of a sin that heaven and earth could not contain, and the King’s order to examine things thoroughly, these are questions you must answer frankly, item by item.” Then the governor laid before us a list of questions, the contents of which are roughly as follows. “You who do not follow the true

way and foolishly believe deceitful words, you infatuate the world, and debauch the people, you destroy and distort the natural relations of man. So declare which books you study, and who you do it with. Despite a severe prohibition, you dare to indulge in a great license of ideas, and you join practice to theory even more madly. It is a great impiety. But this fault would be relatively slight. It says in the King's dispatch that you no longer make the sacrifices. That's not all: you burn the tablets and prevent visitors who come to pay their duties to the deceased from entering your home. Finally, you do not even pay your parents the honors of burial, and that without blushing and without wishing to return to better sentiments. This conduct is worthy of a brute. Deliver your books immediately, and declare all your co-religionists. Moreover, it is said that there are among you bishops who direct you in secret, and spread this religion; you cannot not know them, so declare everything, without disguising anything."

"After having read this indictment to the end, I replied: — "I have, it is true, omitted the sacrifices, I have also destroyed the tablets, but I received the visitors who came to offer their condolences, and did not prevent them from entering. I also paid my father and my mother all the honors of burial. For the books, I have just explained what concerns them; I have none to deliver. I also have no companions to declare. As for the bishops, this very name does not exist here. In Europe, this dignity exists, and they are said to deal with the affairs of religion. If you want to ask about them, it is in Europe that you have to do it. Finally, in religion, there is no master or disciple, in the sense that we attach to it here." — The Governor then turning James Gwon: — "And you," he said to him, "what books have you studied?" — "I have studied the book of the true notion of God, and that of the seven cardinal virtues." "Where did you get them from?" — "I read them with my cousin Yun Ji-chong who had borrowed them." "Did you copy them too?" — "I did not." "Did you also omit the sacrifices?" — "I omitted them." "And burned the tablets?" — "I still have at home the boxes that the mandarin noted during his visit." — The governor then questioned him about his relationship with various personages, and continued: — "One of your relatives in the capital has spread the rumor that you burned the tablets, what are we to believe?" "Since I omitted the sacrifices, my relatives regard me as an enemy, and reprimand me saying, 'That being there will surely come to burn the tablets.' Their words of blame, as they spread, made a noise, and it was thus that it was doubtless concluded that I had destroyed them." — The governor addressing me again said: — "Do you know Hong Nak-an?" "I know him by name, but I've never seen him." "Hong Nak-an and his friends reported to the minister against you, and he sent me orders. This is the cause of this whole affair. But the rumor that goes around that you didn't bury your parents must have some basis; how could one say such words in the air?" "I really don't know what's causing these noises. At the time of the burial, the plague was in my house, my relatives and friends did not come, and not being able to have relations with outsiders, I made all the funeral ceremony with the men of the village only. Is that where the noise came from? I really don't know the cause." — "Among you, there are certainly masters with whom you discuss and whom you question, who are they? — "In religion, as I have already said, there is neither master nor disciple, as we understand it here; with all the more reason in this kingdom, where no one has been able to do anything but read a few books, who would dare to boast of having best studied the doctrine and would like to call himself a master?" "What an amazing being you are, to know without having learned?" "As I know a few characters, it is enough for me to have opened a book and read it." "Are you a licensed jinsa?" — "I am." "What year did you become one?" — "In the spring of the year 1783." — Then, after having questioned me about my relationship with various persons; he said to me: — "It is said that in your religion, you rejoice in sufferings and tortures, and you like to die under the sword; is it believable?" — "To desire to live, and to fear death, is a sentiment common to all; how could we be as you say?"

“We were sent back, and when we arrived at the prison, it was already dark.

“On the 1st of the eleventh lunar month, at daybreak, our own mandarin called us, made us sit in a kind of vestibule, and commanded a praetorian to make us recite the Ten Commandments and the Seven Capital Virtues. We recited them; he took our words in writing and sent them to the governor. Shortly after, this mandarin called us back and, after some exhortations, he told us; “What you said yesterday is not the truth and is not enough to pass judgement. And then, this religion, in spite of its Ten Commandments, does not contain the relationship between king and subject. This is called a doctrine without a king, or which ignores the king.” “It is not so,” I replied, “the King is the father of the whole kingdom, and the mandarin, the father of his district; we must therefore render to them the duties of piety; now all this is included in the fourth commandment.” — “If so, you must put notes to this effect in the fourth commandment, and present it annotated. The religion of Europeans is in our eyes only a superstition. But, you others, if you follow it because you believe it to be true, and because you know that it is not similar to that of Fo who ignores the parents and the king, what reason have you not to erect the tablets, and not to make the sacrifices to the parents? Even if you don’t offer food, you probably have some other way to show your filial piety. If all this exists among you, it must be indicated in detail. Moreover, yesterday you said that the desire for life, and the fear of death, are sentiments common to all; it is therefore right to reflect and, in making your declarations, to put forward the principles of fidelity to the King and filial piety, in order to find by this means the means of preserving your life.”

“The mandarin of Impi , charged with examining the affair, also came near me, and spoke to me in a calm tone, and by way of advice. I replied: - “Everything you tell me is in line with my wishes, only I cannot explain everything clearly in person. If you will give me a praetorian and some brushes, I will have everything written down in detail.” So he took me to another apartment, with orders to write a defense and present it. I sat down, and dictated the following.

“For the cause of the accused Yun. Early in the morning, I gave myself up to work to prepare myself for the examinations, with the thought of fulfilling public offices. My humble desires were limited to trying to satisfy the duties of devotion to the King, of piety towards my parents, and of friendship towards my brothers. In the spring of the year gye-myō (1783), I obtained the diploma of licentiate jinsa. The following year, having traveled to the capital during the winter, I happened to go to the middle-class Kim Beom-woo in the Myeong-ne bang-gol district. There were in this house two books entitled, one: True principles on the Master of Heaven, and the other: The Seven Capital Virtues. Going through them, I saw that the Master of Heaven is our common father, creator of heaven, earth, angels, men and all things. It is the one that Chinese books call Siang-tiei. Between heaven and earth man was born, and although he receives flesh and blood from his parents, in fact it is God who gives them to him. A soul is united to his body, but the one who united them is still God. The basis of devotion to the King is the order of God, the basis of piety towards parents is also the order of God. Comparing the whole thing with the rule given in the sacred books of China, to serve the Sang-di wholeheartedly and with the greatest care, I thought I saw a great deal of conformity there. The practice is contained in the Ten Commandments, and the Seven Capital Virtues. The ten commandments are: 1o Worship one God above all things. 2o Do not take the name of God in vain to make false oaths. 3o Observe feast days. 4o Honor father and mother. (The gloss says that the king being the father of the whole kingdom, and the mandarins, fathers of the peoples of their district, they must also be honored.) 5o Not to commit homicide. 6o Not to commit impurity. 7o Do not steal. 8o Do not bear false witness. 9o Do not desire your neighbor’s wife. 10o Do not unjustly desire the goods of others. These ten commandments relate in short to two points which are: to love God above all things, and to love all men as oneself. The seven capital virtues are: 1o Humility, to combat pride. 2o

Charity, to combat jealousy. 3o Patience, to fight anger. 4o Generosity in alms, to combat avarice. 5o Temperance, to combat gluttony. 6o The repression of concupiscence, to combat lust. 7o The assiduity to good, to fight laziness. All this being clear, precise and easy to help in the practice of virtue, I borrowed these two books, I put them in my sleeve and, when I returned home, in the provinces, I copied them.

“In the spring of the year eul-sa (1785), I sent them back to their owner. It was only three years later that, having studied and meditated on these books, I began to practice them seriously. Two years later, I learned that this doctrine was strictly prohibited, I burned or washed these volumes and did not keep them at home. I have therefore learned the Christian doctrine from no one, just as I have communicated it to no one. But, having once recognized God for my father, I could not avoid following his orders. However, the tablets in use among the nobles, being prohibited by the religion of the Master of Heaven, since I am of this religion I could not do otherwise than to conform to what it prescribes. The fourth commandment commanding us to honor our father and mother, if in fact our parents were really in these tablets, every man who professes religion should honor them. But these tablets are made of wood. They have no flesh, blood, or life relationship with me. They had no part in the labors of my birth and education. The soul of my father or my grandfather once out of this world, can no longer remain attached to these material objects. Now, the denomination of father and mother being something so great and so venerable, how could I dare to take an object made and arranged by a workman, make it my father and my mother, and really call it so? It is not based on right reason, so my conscience could not submit to it; and even if I should, by that, according to you, derogate from my nobility, I do not want to make myself guilty towards God. So I buried my tablets under the floor of my house. The rumor spread that I had burned them, but religion not giving us a formal precept on this subject, I do not know which lips formulated the accusation, and which ears heard it.

“As for the offering of wine and food to the dead or their tablets, it is also a thing forbidden by the religion of the Lord of Heaven, and those who follow it must conform to its laws. Indeed, when the Creator arranged the different species of creatures, he wanted material creatures to use material things, and immaterial creatures to use immaterial things. This is why virtue is the nourishment of the soul, as material nourishment is that of the body. Were one to have excellent wine and delicious dishes, one could not nourish the soul with them, for the reason that an immaterial being cannot be nourished with material things. The ancients said, “The dead are to be served as when they were alive,” and you agree that this is a basic maxim in the books of this country. Now, since during life their soul could never nourish itself with wine and other food, with all the more reason it cannot after death. However pious a man may be to his parents, he does not offer them food while they sleep, because sleep is not a time for eating. So much the more, when they are asleep in the long sleep of death, to offer them food would be a vain thing and a false practice. Now, how could a child bring himself to honor his deceased parents by vain and false practices? Thus, putting aside the use of foods which have no real flavor for the parents, one should apply oneself with all one’s strength to the practice of virtue in order to bring its effects to them, and at the same time, nourish our soul, that is the true way, the right doctrine. And, I repeat, even if, in professing it, I derogate from my nobility, I do not want to render myself guilty towards God. Moreover, consider that the common people who do not erect the tablets, are not therefore in opposition to the government, that the nobles who, because of their poverty, do not make all the sacrifices according to the rules, are not treated in a harsh manner. It therefore seems to me, in my humble thought, that not to erect tablets and not to offer sacrifices to the dead, while practicing in my house the faithful observance of the religion of the Master of Heaven, is in no way a violation of the laws of our kingdom.

“I am also accused of prohibiting condolences after the death of parents. To make and receive visits of condolence in such cases is a duty of humanity. How could a well-born child resist it? If you don’t believe me, there are people who have come to pay me visits of this kind, you only have to order an information, and you will recognize the truth of what I say.

“It is added that I did not bury my parents. My mother died this year in the fifth lunar month, and I performed the burial ceremonies on the last day of the eighth lunar month. As for what concerns the burial, the coffin, the tears, the mourning clothes, etc., the Christian religion recommends us to do everything with the greatest care. I did these ceremonies and chose a suitable place, as all others do. The plague being then in my house, I was not able, it is true, to contact outsiders, and my relatives and friends were not all able to attend the funeral, but all the people of the village, big and small, came and took part in it. Here again you only have to take information to see that the widespread rumors are false and slanderous. This word: Christian religion, is an instrument which people use to raise all blame. One speaks of it to another, this one to a third; one lie spreads to another, and so little by little it has come to be said that I refuse to receive the usual condolences, that I don’t even bury my parents. The accusation of having burned my tablets is also made in the air and without proof; they use it to charge me and accuse me again. They claim, moreover, that I am a bishop of the Christians. In all the kingdoms of Europe there is, it is true, the dignity of bishop, but it is not given to children or novices, even less would it be given to me who lived in a secluded place, in the depths of a province, who have neither seen nor heard anything, who alone, by means of two or three volumes, have worked for my personal sanctification, who have received no lessons from anyone, and have had no share in propagating this doctrine. To say that I am a bishop is too ridiculous, and I have no answer. Born of noble parents, having at last more or less discovered the origin of heaven and of man, and the commandments of devotion to the King and of filial piety, my feeble desires were limited to cultivating virtue, and to trying to serve God properly. Beyond that, I have nothing more to expose.

“As for the accused Gwon. Being first cousin of Yun Ji-chong by his mother, and residing in the neighborhood, I saw at his house, and I borrowed from him the books entitled: True principles on God and Treaty of the seven capital virtues. That was many years ago. This was before Ji-chong had burned or washed these books, I did not copy them and only read them. I have, it is true, ceased to offer the sacrifices, but I have neither burned nor destroyed the tablets, the boxes are still with me, and the Mandarin of Jinsan having noted everything in the inventory that he made, there is no need for me to say more about it. From the moment I started to practice religion, all my relatives looked upon me with displeasure, and poured out all kinds of blame on me. Then, seeing that I no longer made the sacrifices, they all said with one voice: ‘Since he no longer makes the sacrifices, the tablets have become useless, and he will certainly end up burning them.’ To this word thrown into the air, each one added again and spread it everywhere, and that is why I am a prisoner today. Moreover, having lost my father and my mother at an early age, I have not had the opportunity, since I practiced religion, to perform the burial ceremonies for my parents. Apart from that, all I could say is no different from what Tsi-tsiung-i said, and I have nothing more to expound.

“By means of the praetorian, I had these two defenses presented to the Mandarin of Lim-p’i. He read them carefully, put them into his sleeve, and went to the governor’s criminal court, giving orders that we should be kept waiting at the door. It was around noon, and we sat down to wait. A long time later we were called, and the governor said first to James Gwon: “Have you really kept the tablets? Just now you said you had them, and yet the mandarin of Jinsan, in his report, said that he only saw four empty boxes and no tablets; what

is that about?" James replied: "When I came from Jinsan, to the governor, I was told that everything had to be declared, as was stated in the mandarin's report. Fearing therefore, if I said too much, that the mandarin would be wronged on this occasion, I simply told the governor that the boxes of the tablets were still at my house; but, in fact, my tablets are no longer there, I buried them." "Where did you bury them?" asked the governor. James indicated the place, but added that a landslide having taken place since, we could probably not find the place. "You didn't bury them alone, I imagine; there was a man who dug the earth, he must serve as a witness." "As, in this affair, I feared to be seen by any one, I called no one, and buried them with my own hands." The governor, addressing me, said: "And you, how did you act?" "I have declared everything in my written defence, please don't question me any more." "Did you bury the tablets whole, or only after burning them? Depending on whether you burned them or not, your guilt will be more or less serious. In any case, it will take me a few days to find out what is going on, what advantage will you have?" "I burned them, then buried them." "If you honored them like your parents, you might go ahead and bury them, but to burn them! Can this ever be done?" "If I had thought they were my parents, how could I have brought myself to burn them? But knowing very clearly that in these tablets there is nothing of my parents, I burned them. Besides, whether they are buried or burned, they always return to dust; there is therefore nothing that makes one of these acts more serious than the other."

"The governor, after ordering us to come up and sit on the torture board, made us sign our judgment and said to me: — "Do you acknowledge that you have been condemned justly for having burned the tablets of the dead?" "If I had burned some tablet, thinking that the parents are locked up there, the tortures would be just; but as I have done so, knowing very clearly that there is nothing of my parents there, what fault can I have committed?" "If you were in Europe, your words might be right, but being in our kingdom, you must be punished according to the law." "In our country, after five generations, everyone, even the nobles, buries the tablets, do you punish them severely for this?" — "According to the decision of the saints, it is after five generations that the duties of kinship end for man." At these words, the governor having ordered me to be beaten, I received ten blows. The governor then said: "You who are noble, are you not suffering in this torture?" — "How could I not suffer, since I am of flesh like you?" "Have you no regrets?" "As the Christian religion does not specifically order the burning of a tablet, I might, if need be, regret having done so lightly; apart from that, I have nothing that I can regret." The governor orders another valet to beat me, and they give me another ten blows. Then the governor said to me: — "Where you to die under the blows, you must abandon this religion? "If I were to deny my supreme Father, alive or dead, where could I ever go?" "If your parents or the King pressed you, would you not yield to their voice?" To this question I made no answer. "As for you, you know neither parents nor king." "I know both parents and king very well."

Blessed Yi Sun-i 이순이 李順伊 Lutgarda (1782-1802)

Dallet Volume 1. Book 3, Chapter 3

Augustine Yu, on dying as a martyr, left behind his very old mother, his wife and six children. The eldest, John Yu Jeong-cheol, had married Lutgarda Yi. Lutgarda Yi was born in the capital, of one of the most illustrious families in the country. Her father was called Yi Yun and her mother Gwon; she herself also received the name of Yu-hui. She was younger sister of Charles Yi, martyred that same year sin-yu, in the twelfth lunar month, and elder sister of Paul Yi, whom we shall see, in the persecution of 1827, following in the glorious footsteps of her brother and sister. She was about fourteen when she had the opportunity to meet Father Zhou, who had just entered Korea. The Christians of those days were generally so little instructed in the dogmas of the faith that Lutgarda at first seemed too young to be admitted to the sacraments, but already she understood the value of these heavenly gifts. She shut herself up alone in a room for four days, solely occupied in preparing herself there, and the priest having judged her capable of receiving them, she was at the height of her wishes. Her only concern from then on was to preserve well the fruit of the Holy Eucharist, her only desire to adorn her soul with all the virtues, and soon afterwards, eager to attract the good graces of her divine Spouse without sharing, she resolved to consecrate her virginity to him. But great difficulties stood in the way.

In Korea, as we have already remarked, it is, in all classes of society, an unheard of thing for a young girl not to marry; but in families of a distinguished rank, it is almost an outrage, and it would be dangerous to defy public opinion on this point. The Savior himself came to the aid of his beloved servant, and prepared for her a husband according to his own heart. Father Zhou who had, after careful consideration, approved Lutgarda's project, knew a young man who also wanted to remain celibate in order to give himself entirely to God. It was John Yu, eldest son of Augustine. John's family, although noble and very wealthy, was nevertheless of a condition much inferior to that of Lutgarda, and moreover, John lived at Cho-nami, near Jeonju, province of Jeolla, that is to say at a considerable distance from the capital, in a region where large families hardly ever settled. However, Father Zhou managed to arrange things to unite these two hearts under the veil of marriage, and allow them to live as brother and sister, according to their mutual desires.

The widow, mother of Lutgarda, willingly gave her consent, and the marriage was concluded. In the spring of 1801, John was arrested with his father Augustine and a few other members of the family. One can imagine what a terrible blow this was to Lutgarda's heart. She soon learned that her husband had remained a prisoner in the town of Jeonju, although the others had been transferred to the capital. Throughout the summer, John's younger brother, also named John, continually went to town to bring provisions to his brother, but he could not succeed in getting him clothes. The confessor therefore had, in the midst of the great heat, to keep wearing the heavy winter clothes which he was wearing at the time of his arrest, and soon their dirtiness, the odor which emanated from them and the vermin which spawned there, became a real torture for a man brought up in luxury and delicacy. We do not know what tortures he had to endure. We only know that during the whole time of his stay in prison, he was day and night loaded with the cangue, and that it was not taken from him until the moment of execution. Moreover, John did not allow himself to be shaken and knew how to keep his faith intact until the end.

Around the 15th of the ninth lunar month, probably a day or two before the execution of Augustine Yu and his companions. Lutgarda was arrested in turn, along with the rest of the family. Shortly after, three of the women were released, viz.: Augustine's mother,

whom her great age no doubt spared; her newly married daughter, who was no longer supposed to be part of the family, and one of her two sisters-in-law, possibly the widowed mother of Mathew Yu. But the house of Augustine being confiscated, they had to leave it and were deposited all three, without any resources, in a wretched cabin, nearby.

Hardly arrived in the prison, Lutgarda thought of consoling her mother, that the news of her arrest had just plunged into pain. She wrote to her, and succeeded in having a letter delivered of which here is the translation as literal as possible.

“To my mother.

“In the midst of the emotions caused by the events that have happened to me, I think of you, my mother, and I want to let you know my feelings since our separation four years ago. It is impossible for me to report everything. I am only addressing you a few lines. Although I find myself on the point of death, do not distress yourself too much, and, without resisting the merciful order of God, please submit yourself in peace and calm to his designs. If I obtain the favor of not being rejected by him, thank him for this favor. If I remained in this world, I would never be anything more than an inconstant girl, a useless child; but if, by a signal grace, the day to bear fruit appeared, on the one hand my mother could say that she had really borne a daughter in her womb, and on the other, all regret would be superfluous.

“On the eve of leaving you forever, and no longer having the opportunity to fulfill the duties of filial piety towards you, how could I repress all natural feeling? But I tell myself that time, which passes like a spark from a pebble, is not of long duration; I say to myself that I, your child, am going to open to my mother the door of Heaven and eternal happiness, and give in advance for her the price of eternal joys; and this thought of approaching death, although naturally bitter and difficult to bear, is immediately converted into sweetness and becomes a very sweet pleasure. You are not unaware of all this, it is true, but by remembering the words of your daughter at death’s door, you will love yourself in order to preserve yourself, and you will truly practice virtue. Apart from this ardent wish to see the souls of all my relatives eternally enjoying the sight of our common Father, what other desire could I experience now?... You, my sisters, how are you? Many words of affection would serve no purpose; I address only two words to you: Have a fervent love, nothing touches the heart of God so much; the fulfillment of all desires is, moreover, something that does not depend on us, but on him. — Let the slaves do their duty, and thereby they will become members of the family; from the small and useless children that they were, they will become real and precious children, I dare to hope a thousand times.

“Do not distress yourself too much, my mother, and suppress all your worries. See this world as a dream, and, recognizing eternity for your country, be always on your guard. Then when, after having followed God’s order in everything, you come out of this world, I, vile and weak child, my head girded with the crown of endless happiness, my heart flooded with all celestial joys, I will take you by the hand and introduce you to the eternal homeland.

“I hear that my brother Charles, detained in the capital, courageously confessed his faith. Truly what grace! what protection! How can we thank God enough for this? My mother, I praise your happiness. Separated from you for four years, I have suffered greatly from no longer being able to communicate to you all the feelings of my heart; but that itself is an order from God. He gave us to you, he takes us away, all that is regulated by his Providence, and to be too moved by it would be for Christians a weakness worthy of mockery. In eternity we will bind the mother-daughter relationship together and make it entirely perfect; I dare ten thousand times to hope so.

“My sister-in-law, don’t be too sad. Were my brother to die, we can say that you have truly met a husband. I congratulate you in advance for being the wife of a martyr. In this world united by the ties of blood or marriage, in eternity placed in the same rank, mother,

son, brother, sisters, husband, if we manage to enjoy eternal joy, will it not be very beautiful? After my death, please do not sever relations with my husband's family, but do as when I was there.

“When I arrived at my husband's house, I easily obtained what was the object of all my anxieties, and the concern of all my days. I found myself with him at the ninth hour; at the tenth, we both swore to keep our virginity, and for four years we lived as brother and sister. In this interval, having had a few temptations, a dozen times, all was nearly lost; but, by the merits of the Precious Blood, which we invoked together, we avoided the pitfalls of the demon. I tell you this lest you worry about me.

“Please receive this scrap of paper with joy, as if you were receiving my person. — Before I have done anything yet, it is very light of me to send you my thoughts and my writing in this way, but I wish to dissipate my mother's anxieties, please find some consolation in it. — While Father James Zhou existed, he recommended that I note in detail the persecutions suffered by the whole family; that is why, when I arrived here, I sent some papers through John; what happened to them? I tell you again, repress every kind of sorrow and trouble, think that this world is vain and deceitful. I would have a thousand things to add, but I cannot write everything, I will stop here. Sin-iou year, the 27th of the ninth lunar month (November 3, 1801).

“Your daughter, Yu-hui.”

Let Lutgarda relate these various events to us herself, in a long letter, written from her prison to her two sisters, that is to say to her own sister and her sister-in-law, wife of Charles Yi, who was then in prison, in the capital. This letter is rather, properly speaking, a diary of her emotions, her thoughts, her fears, her memories, her hopes; is it a series of fragments written stealthily, despite the jealous surveillance of the jailers? Here it is in its entirety, according to the copies carefully preserved in various Christian families.

“To my two sisters.

“I take up the pen and see nothing to say. Is my poor brother dead or alive? I had heard from him indirectly, in the first days of the ninth lunar month, but since then, having been taken myself, I have sat locked up without any news being able to reach me. The thought of my brother oppresses me and makes my heart ache. If he has signed his sentence, everything must be over now, but before his death he cannot come into possession of happiness. And yet, what a position for the whole family! How will my mother and my sister-in-law be able to resist it? It seems to me that they should not have a single heartbeat left. When I think of this, it is only worries and anxieties, and what words could convey what I feel! How will you have endured all the upset of his death? and then, if the denouement has not yet taken place, how will Charles be able to hold out in this cold prison? Whether he's dead or alive, my mother's entrails can only be parched by it!

“For me, my sins are so heavy, the horizon that surrounds me is so dark that I don't know how to put everything in writing, and find nothing to say. I have arrived on the grounds of death, and I do not know what terms to use, and yet I want to say a few words to you about what happened, and to bid you farewell from this world as I set off for eternity. This year, when my entrails were already torn as a result of so many irremediable calamities, I still had to see myself separated from what remained of my family. From then on no desire to live remained in my heart, and I only thought of laying down my life for God while the occasion was good. I took this resolution in myself, and, meditating on this great affair, I tried to prepare myself well for it.

“Suddenly, when we least thought of it, many satellites came in and I was taken; it was while I was worrying about the lack of opportunity, that everything happened according to my wishes; thanks be to God for this blessing! I was happy and joyful, but at the same time worried and troubled. The satellites urged me, cries of pain to shake heaven and earth were heard around me; I must leave forever my mother, my mother-in-law, my brothers and sisters, my friends, my neighbors, my country; and nature not being entirely extinguished in me, I make this farewell in the midst of trouble, and my eyes bathed in tears; then, turning around, only one desire remains to me, that of a good death.

“I was first shut up in the place called Sugeupcheong ; then, less than an hour later, transferred to another prison, where I met my mother-in-law, my aunt and two of my brothers-in-law. On both sides we looked at each other, there were tears and not a word, little by little the night was falling. It was the 15th of the ninth lunar month, under a clear and serene autumn sky. The moon was full and bright, and its light reflected against the window; you could see what each of us was thinking and feeling. Sometimes lying down, sometimes sitting, what we ask in silence, what we desire, is the grace of martyrdom. Soon our hearts are overflowing, everyone speaks up, and all five of us, as one voice, promise each other to be martyrs for God, we form a resolution as solid as iron and stone. This mutual confidence having shown that our desires are the same, our affection becomes more whole, our intimacy more complete, and naturally all regret and all idea of affliction are forgotten. The more one advances, the more the blessings and graces of God accumulate; spiritual joy increases in our souls, we become heedless in all matters, no concern seems to remain.

“And yet, my thoughts and affections were constantly directed to John, my husband, locked up in another prison in the same city. How could I have forgotten him for a moment? When I was still at home, I had written to him: “What happiness if we could die together and on the same day!” but the occasion not being sure, I delayed a little in sending him this paper, and I had not yet been able to send it to him, when relations were strictly forbidden, and all means of communication cut off. Nevertheless the object of my secret prayers, my desire, my hope was always that we could die together, the same day, martyrs for God. Who could have guessed the adorable designs of the sovereign Master? On the 9th of the tenth lunar month, my brother-in-law, called John, was taken away from us, I did not know for what purpose. “So where is he going? I asked. “It is the Mandarin’s order,” replied the jailer; “we are going to take him to the big prison, and lock him up with his brother.” I was as if cut in two, as if pierced by a thousand swords. They took him away. “God’s will be done,” I said to him, “go and be with him; let’s not forget ourselves. Then I advised him earnestly: “Tell John that it is my wish to die with him, the same day.” Two and three times I repeated this recommendation; then, letting go of our hands, I turned away.

“There were four of us left, bewildered, and having no support except in the protection of the Lord. A quarter of an hour had not elapsed when the news of their death reached us. The blow dealt to the feelings of nature had only the second rank with me; John’s happiness filled me with joy. However, I felt some anxiety in the depths of my soul. “Oh my God, what happened to him?” I said to myself; Was he well prepared for such a sudden death? Ten thousand swords seemed to tear my heart, and I didn’t know where to turn my thoughts. About an hour passed like this, and I felt a little calm return. “Wouldn’t that kind of death even be a favor from God?” After all, he did have some merits; could it be that God, so good, so merciful, had rejected him? My heart was less agitated, but my thoughts kept turning to him. I questioned one of our relatives who said to me: “Don’t worry, he had made up his mind beforehand.” At last a letter arrived from home; it said: “We found in John’s clothes a note addressed to his sister (that’s how he always called me); this note was thus conceived: ‘I encourage you, exhort you and console you; let’s meet again in the kingdom of heaven.’ Only then were all my worries dispelled. In fact, when I think of all his conduct, there is nothing to

regret; he had stripped away the spirit of the world, and one could call him a true Christian. His assiduity, his fervor, his righteousness, had won him general esteem.

“When we realized together what I had wanted for many years, he revealed to me the bottom of his heart, and told me that he too had had this same desire before our marriage. Our union was therefore a special grace from God that approved the realization of our projects, and that is why both of us wanted to recognize this great benefit, giving our lives for the faith of Jesus Christ. We had mutually promised each other that when the day came when the administration of the house and the goods would be handed over to us, we would divide it into three or four parts, one for the poor, another very large one for the younger brothers, so that they could take good care of our parents, and if the days became happier, we had to separate and, with the rest, live each of us apart. Finally, we made a commitment never to violate this agreement.

“Last year, it was the twelfth lunar month, a most violent temptation made itself felt; my heart trembled, like someone walking on ice about to break, or on the edge of an abyss. I asked earnestly, eyes raised to heaven, the grace of victory, and, by the help of God, with great difficulty, with great difficulty we triumphed, and we kept ourselves as children. Our mutual trust has become as solid as iron and stone, our love and loyalty unshakable as a mountain.

“Since this promise to live as brother and sister, four years had passed, when, this year, he was taken in the spring. During the four seasons, he could not once change his clothes. Imprisoned for eight months, he was not released from his cangue until he was dying. “Will he not come to renounce God?” I thought day and night with concern; and I hoped to go and join him to encourage him and die with him. Who could have thought? who could have known that he would take the lead? This is an even greater blessing from God. Down here, whichever way I turn, I see nothing that can henceforth captivate my affections and preoccupy me. If a thought arises in my mind, it is towards God; that a sigh rises in my heart, it is towards Heaven.

“On the 13th day of the tenth lunar month, I was by sentence of the tribunal placed in the rank of slaves of the prefecture, and condemned to a distant exile in the city of Byeokdong. I presented myself before the mandarin and made a thousand complaints to him: “All of us who honor the God of heaven, according to the law of the kingdom, we must die; I too want to die for God, like the other people in my house.” He dismisses me immediately and orders me out. I approach closer, I sit down in front of him and say to him: “You who receive a payment from the governor, how do you not follow the orders of the King?” and a thousand other things, but he doesn’t even pretend to hear me and has me thrown out by his satellites. Having no more resources, I set out; along the way I redoubled my earnest prayers to God, and we had hardly made a hundred li when I was called back and arrested again. This is a signal favor, a grace above all graces. How could I ever be grateful enough? Even after my death, please still thank God for this benefit .

“We had passed through four villages, I thought of the four neighborhoods that Jesus passed through to go to Calvary, and I said to myself: “Could it be a small resemblance that God wants to give me with this divine Savior?” I saw the satellites again with indescribable joy, and as if I had met my own parents.

“At the first interrogation that followed, I declared that I wanted to die honoring God; they immediately hurried to the King, and when the answer arrived, I was again brought before the criminal judge; my sentence was passed, I signed it. The judge had me bastinadoed on my legs, the cangue was passed to me, and I was put back in prison. My flesh was scratched, the blood flowed; Scarcely had a meal passed than I was no longer in pain; they are graces upon graces, all unexpected; four or five days later, everything was cured: who could have thought?

“Since this ordeal, about twenty days have passed, and I no longer feel the slightest pain. The others say that I am in pain; the expression is not only inaccurate, but directly contrary to the truth; I say that I am in peace and well-being. What man could be, in his own house, as quiet and as happy as I am here! When I think about it, I am even disturbed and in awe; is it that God does not want me? couldn't I bear violent tortures? I tremble and am filled with confusion. Since they sent to the king, more than twenty days have passed and no news; moreover, certain rumors report that there would be a chance of life; I have no hope except in the help of the Lord, who I am sure will not want to reject me entirely. Let the answer come very quickly, very quickly; I only hope for death. In the meantime, seated and without occupations to distract me, I can barely deceive the eye of the guards, and stealthily seize a few moments to bid you farewell for eternity, on a sheet of paper that you will receive, as it were, the representation of my own face, and which, I hope, will bring you some consolation. But there are so many things to say, and having to do it hastily, I speak indiscriminately, and without follow-up. If you follow me in thought, read these lines as if you saw me present and before your eyes.

“When we left, we agreed to meet the following year, and that is four whole years ago. Who would have ever thought of it, even in a dream? But can we ever say anything in advance about the things of this world? A separation of four years seemed difficult to us, what will a separation be like without return here below? and how much will you not have the heart afflicted, because of a good-for-nothing little sister? However, my eldest sister, having a heart as big as the sea, and being wise and prudent, will she not be able to bear everything well? Yes, you will be able to do it calmly, and I lay down all my concerns. Despite this, when I think of you, dear sister, I cannot help worrying about useless thoughts. The love of loved ones is such a natural thing that you can only get rid of it with life. “Yet,” I say to myself, “if I had a little fervor, would I tire of useless worries?” and I blame myself for all these thoughts. Your heart will suffer much over me, no doubt; but in the end, if I have the happiness of being a martyr, is there cause for sadness? So do not grieve, but congratulate yourselves.

“As I think of the pain and affliction that will overwhelm you, my mother and my sisters, I send you these last wishes as my testament. Please do not reject them. When you hear the news of my death, I dare to hope ten thousand times, don't be too sorry. I, vile and miserable girl, I, stupid sister and without any good feelings, if I can become the child of the great God, take part in the happiness of the just, become the friend of all the saints in heaven, enjoy a perfect bliss and partake of the sacred banquet, what glory will it not be? If we wanted to obtain it from ourselves, it would be impossible. That a daughter or a sister only becomes the object of the good graces of the prince, we are rightly congratulated; but if a child becomes the object of the love of the great King of heaven and earth, in what terms should we not congratulate ourselves? They argue to obtain the favor of the king; to receive it without having sought it, is that not an even greater benefit?

“In all the universe, I am the greatest sinner. Vis-à-vis the world, I no longer have the means of ever erasing the shameful title of slave of the prefecture of Pyeokdong: vis-à-vis God, I have a hundred times by my sins denied this divine Master and his benefits; however, if, ending well, I should become a martyr, in an instant all my sins will be erased, and I will enter the bosom of ten thousand happinesses; is there anything to grieve about? Between the title of sister of a prefectural slave and that of sister of a martyr, which smiles on you the most? And you, my mother, if you are called mother of a martyr, what will you think of this title? If I manage to be a martyr, will it not be an incomparable prodigy? For the other saints, it is becoming and well deserved; but that such a high honor should be given to a wretched creature such as myself, is there anything more capable of confounding?

“Look at my death as real life, and my life as real death. Don’t grieve for my loss, but grieve for the loss of God in the past, and fear losing him again. Save any kind of regret to mourn the past, and strive to erase it and redeem it. Leaning on the Blessed Mother and putting your hearts at peace, strive to become the throne of the Lord. If you peacefully submit to this command of God, you will thereby follow his intention which is to purify you through pain, and he himself will cherish and console you. You have there a beautiful opportunity to obtain his most precious graces and to acquire merits. If, on the contrary, afflicting yourselves needlessly, you came to offend this same God, would there be anything more deplorable?

“In all things therefore, submit yourselves to his providence, and with a calm heart take advantage of your affliction to fully satisfy his justice. Give yourself up to the practice of good and the acquisition of merits; however slight a fault, avoid it as a great sin, and regret it likewise; for the practice of good, on the contrary, however small it may seem, do not neglect the opportunity to do it. Lean entirely on the help of God, often ask for the grace of a good death; strive always to produce acts of fervent love. Should you have no love, no contrition, strive to bring them to birth; when they are asked for insistently, God gives them. If you have relaxed for a few moments, wake up immediately; and if you seek God earnestly, little by little you will come closer to him. If God, fulfilling my desires, makes me enjoy his presence, and if brothers and sisters, mother and daughters, we all meet with him, will it not be very beautiful? Each must, indulgent towards the others, examine herself severely, and always strive for harmony; thereby my mother will become, in her old age, entirely united to the divine will, and my sisters will become loving and submissive daughters.

“My sister-in-law, if my brother is put to death, do not grieve too much, without any profit; but, with a calm heart, thank God for this benefit. He will support you from above and help you in the midst of difficulties. Apply yourself to contrition, make every effort, and employ all the faculties of your soul to follow in the footsteps of my brother.

“Here, my aunt is with her son, the only child she had. They want to give their life for God with us, they have suffered the same tortures and are also detained, they are perfectly resigned and calm. Model yourselves on them, and, imitating our good mother the Virgin Mary and all the saints, do not set your affections on useless things. My sister-in-law and my brother-in-law are also in a very difficult position to bear, but, to advance in virtue and acquire merits, such occasions are excellent; and so far they have shown admirable patience. But if it is good to begin well, it is even better to finish well; therefore always be on your guard, do not lose past merits. If you have extreme pains, accept them wholeheartedly; think of the order of God, and have faith in future retribution. If you reject all the too quick movements of nature, even painful things will lose what is painful about them. It seems to me that it would be very advantageous to keep our hearts always in this disposition. All virtues are good to ask for, but faith, hope and charity are the main ones; if they are really in the soul, the other virtues follow quite naturally.

“How is my brother-in-law now? When I think of my sister’s position, it pains my soul. Although you may not be in perfect harmony, try to follow his desires gently for all that is not sinful, and at least not to lose good harmony. John and I, married for five years and having lived four years together, we have not had a single moment of disagreement; with all the people in the house I never had any dissatisfaction.

“I would still have a thousand things to say, but outside there is a dreadful noise and I can only write with great difficulty, so I will not do it separately to my mother. I would like to write to you at least the ten thousandth part of what has happened in the past four years, but every time someone shouts to bring someone from the prisoners, it always seems to me that it is me who they call, and I stop writing; then, starting again, I stop again. My sentences are without sequence and perhaps incomprehensible, but thinking of making you happy by a

few lines of my hand, I try to seize the moments and say a few words. By the infinite goodness of God, if, not rejecting me entirely, he grants me the grace of martyrdom, and my brother also obtains it, you will have two children who will precede you; could it be that we are not leading you to your destination? Although I die, could I forget my mother and my sisters? If I obtain the object of my desires, one day I will see you again; but having no merit, one must not speak too loudly before having had a good death.

“My sister-in-law, if my brother should die, please don’t just listen to nature and grieve too much. The spouses no longer forming a single being, let one of the parties ascend to heaven, he will easily lead the other there; therefore do not be a coward for the good, do not sadden your heart unnecessarily to cause pain to God and to my brother. Tong-oan-i being the only offspring of my brother’s blood, he is more precious than any other; take good care of his body and his soul, and when he grows up, marry him and try to make him and his wife a holy couple.

“As for me, during twenty years of life, having passed no day without weakness, and having never again fulfilled my duties as a daughter, here I am on the point of leaving without leaving any trace of filial piety; my sister, take care of my mother all the more, and still do in my place what I should have done. Godliness to the body is good, but godliness to the heart is even better. Having lived, too, near my father-in-law and my mother-in-law, I have seen that what satisfies them more is to enter into all their views and feelings. If, being poor, you cannot treat my mother entirely according to your wishes, at least enter into all her intentions and console her well; often wake up her darkened intelligence, and if by chance she was in some small wrong, don’t content yourself with addressing a few good words to her, do it again with a cheerful and serene air. If she is in sadness, disguise yours well, even play the child with her, and, by some agreeable or pleasant word, force her to recover. After the death of my eldest brother, my younger brothers have no support except in you; combine the office of brother and eldest sister, raise them in virtue, try to establish them, preserving the family and making them fervent Christians.

“If my brother is martyred, and I too, by the grace of God, die a good death, I dare to hope to find you in the next life. Above all, help my mother to spend the rest of her years well and to obtain the grace of a good death, so that mother and children, brothers and sisters, husband and wife, we can meet in joy; I recommend it to you a thousand times. I know you will not act recklessly, but thinking about my recommendations, you will do it twice as well. He who has his parents must not indulge in sadness and will indulge his own affliction, think about it. I say this not out of distrust of your goodwill, but because I know that you are too prone to give in to grief.

“As for John, people call him my husband and I call him my faithful friend: if he could reach the kingdom of heaven, I think he will not forget me. Here below, he had so much regard and kindness for me; living in the abode of happiness, my cries, in the midst of fears and pain, cannot escape his ear, and he will not forget our promises; no, our friendship cannot be broken. Oh! When then, leaving this prison, can I meet our great King and common Father, the Queen of Heaven, my beloved parents and my faithful friend John, to enjoy joy with them! But being nothing but sin and having no merit, I dare to hope, it is true; but can my desires be fulfilled anytime soon?

“Here, there are many people immersed in affliction, how to express everything? My sister-in-law, brought up in abundance and opulence, after having lost her parents, her brothers and all her possessions, was again obliged to leave the big house; she retired to a ruined cabin with one of her aunts and her grandmother, overwhelmed with old age. Recently married, she had not yet been taken to her husband’s house, and it is said that her father-in-law no longer wishes to receive her, because of the misfortunes of her family. What a deplorable position! what terms could describe it! My brothers-in-law, aged nine, six, and

three, are all three separately exiled to Heuksan-do, Sinji-do, and Geoje-do Islands; how can I endure such a terrible spectacle? My mother-in-law, my aunt and Mathew, my husband's first cousin, have only one heart and one thought with me. They too were questioned and had to undergo cruel torture. They are imprisoned here; I hope they all end well.

“My eldest sister, among the five brothers and sisters that we are, cherishes me above all with a very special affection, for the reason perhaps, she says, that she carried and raised me in her arms. Certainly it is the same on my part, and I dedicated her a very lively affection, but all the more reason for you not to grieve for my death. If, by the grace of God, I have the happiness to reach the kingdom of heaven, when, after having assiduously acquired merits, you will have a good death, I myself want to draw you there and lead you by the hand. Having taken up my pen to bid you eternal farewells, I would like to omit nothing of what I have to say, and yet, not being able to write everything I think, I am obliged to abbreviate. I sincerely hope that you will practice good and collect merits; keep your body healthy and your soul pure, so that you can ascend to heaven, so that we may enjoy eternal joys together. After my death, I will ask for it urgently and without ceasing. But if by chance my wishes were not fulfilled, if I were condemned to live, ah! that would be a terrible thing! But no; I trust in my sweet savior Jesus Christ.

“After my arrest, fearing that my trial would be over immediately, I wrote a few lines to my mother; read them, and after having read this letter also, please send it to the other members of the family, so that in reading them they will imagine seeing me once more. This is a very long letter and many words. Having no virtue myself, I had the audacity to exhort others; really, am I not like those wooden figures standing by the side of the road, who teach the way, without ever taking a single step themselves? However, as it is said that the words of a dying man are upright, perhaps mine will not be too faulty; read them with indulgence.

“Yu-hui. »

We do not find the date of this letter, but, according to the facts mentioned therein, it must have been written in the eleventh lunar month of this year sin-yu.

Blessed Yi Gyeong-do 이경도 李景陶 Charles (1780-1802)

Dallet Volume 1. Book 3, Chapter 5.

Two executions took place in quick succession, in the capital; one on the 26th day of the twelfth lunar month (January 29, 1802); the other two days later. The latter is that of Luthgarda Yi, her sisters-in-law and her cousin Mathew. We have told it above. Let us now say a few words about the first in which, according to the testimony of eyewitnesses, eight Christians obtained the palm of martyrdom.

The leader of this glorious troop was Charles Yi Gyeong-do, elder brother of Luthgarda. Born in the capital in the year 1780, he was, in the twelfth or fifteenth generation, the main descendant of a natural son of King Tae-jo, founder of the now reigning dynasty. His family, ennobled under the name of Gyeong-ryeong-gun, had not counted among the princes for several generations; it had nevertheless retained a very distinguished rank in the kingdom, and was at the head of the Nam-in party. Of a gentle, generous and serious character, Charles, from childhood, had no light conversations. He early stood out for his unusual natural talents, and for his progress in letters. At the age of seventeen he was married according to his condition, and three months later, his father having died, he found himself, as the eldest, at the head of a rich and numerous family. Arrested in 1801, he seems to have had a few moments of weakness at first, but soon his faith regained the upper hand, his resolution became firm and did not waver until the day of execution. We do not know the details of his trial. He was accused neither of conspiracy nor of revolt, but condemned purely and simply as a Christian. Here is the letter he wrote to his mother the day before he died.

“I, your son, am writing to you today for the last time. Although I am the greatest of sinners, the Lord, by an extraordinary blessing, deigns to call me to himself in a very special way. I should be filled with contrition and love, I should try, by my death, to repay this favor somewhat; but the mass of the sins of all my life, reaching up to heaven, my heart, like wood and stone, does not yet let tears flow for this signal grace. When I consider the infinite goodness of God, how could I not be ashamed, and not fear his terrible punishments? However, when I reflect, I say to myself: My sins, it is true, are without limit, but the mercy of God is also without limit. If with his merciful hand he wants to take me to himself, should I die ten thousand times, what do I have to regret and what can my worries be about?

“Weak as I am, unable to make a courageous determination, I have often said to myself: If by a special grace of God death became inevitable for me, what happiness it would be for me! And behold, today God is serving me according to my desires; isn't that the greatest benefit? As long as I have been in this world, I fear that I have not been able to fulfill my duties as a son and have not shown you all the submission that I owed; this is the subject of my sorrow and my regrets. Do not separate from each other, and I hope to see you soon again forever, in heaven. I will not forget my son Gwi-pil; dear child, be very obedient, stay with all the others without ever moving away from them, and when the time is right, come and find me. I would have many things to say, but I cannot say them at length. Above all, don't be too sad, and after keeping body and soul here below in good condition, let's meet again forever.

“Sin-yu year, the 25th day of the twelfth lunar month,

“Charles Yi.”

Blessed Kim Jong-han 김종한 金宗漢 Andrew ?-1816

Dallet Volume 1. Book 4, Chapter 2.

We quote here some of these letters which deserve to be preserved. They are one more proof of the marvelous action of the Holy Spirit on the souls of neophytes; for it is impossible to explain otherwise than by the efficacy of divine grace, how pagan men yesterday, having received no sacrament but baptism, living in the midst of idolaters, without priest, without sacrifice, almost without religious instruction, were thus able to speak the supernatural language of Christian resignation and divine love.

Andrew's first letter is addressed to his older brother.

"I start, putting aside all the usual formulas. When I least expected it, I was stopped by satellites from Andong. In the first interrogation, the criminal judge of this city wanted, at all costs, to make me apostatize, but, God helping, I held firm until the end, and I was put in prison. After ten days of detention, he gave me a volley of blows on the legs, and took me in all haste to the criminal prison of Daegu. There, the mandarin tried by a thousand tempting means to obtain my submission, but having been unable to do so, he had me administered a new beating on my legs, and hurried to the governor to warn it of the state of things. The answer was that I should be forced to apostatize, and I received another beating.

"In this province, more than a hundred people, men, women and children, had been arrested. Of this number, some died of hunger, either in the prison of their own town, or along the roads on their way to the chief town of the province; the others were weak enough to submit, and today there are only thirteen of us left. All this is an order of Providence and a benefit for which we must thank her; but the body being so weak, it is difficult to bear everything with a happy heart; every moment is sadder than I can express. As for me, a poor sinner, having nothing that can make me deserve the favor of martyrdom, I rely solely on the help of all Christians; pray and ask without ceasing, and I trust that my desires can be fulfilled."

In a second letter, Andrew said to his brother:

"Without further preamble, I am writing you two words in haste. For a long time, because of the distance, all communication with you was interrupted; I had heard from you only indirectly, and during this year of famine my anxieties grew more serious day by day. Against all hope, I finally receive your handwriting; I seem to be with you alone, is it a dream? is it a reality? Feelings of joy and sadness crowd together in my heart; my chest is oppressed; tears are flowing from my eyes. When I lost my father, I could not assist him in his last moments; I retained a deep regret and I said to myself: could I at least attend the anniversary of his death! This desire cannot now be realized, I am all the more distressed. On the other hand, I am happy to hear that during this dreadful year, you are doing as usual, and that the whole family is at peace. The news of my sister-in-law's death at the beginning of spring is very unfortunate, it is true; but no one can avoid dying. The main point, the only important one, is to make a good death; for, in this world, why was man born? His great business is to serve God, save his soul, and obtain the kingdom of heaven. If one does not fulfill these great duties and wastes time uselessly, what good is life?

"After coming into the world without thinking about it, if a man returns in the same way, it would be better for him not to have been born, and he finds himself in a worse

condition than that of the brute himself; for when the animal dies, it returns to nothingness. For man it is not so, if he does not save his soul, it falls into eternal death. Death! this word is frightening! but if the body, which must necessarily die, is frightened of death, how much more must the soul, which is made to live forever, dread it? If once you enter Hell, you can never get out of it; one lives there without truly living, one dies there without being able to die; had we spent thousands of years there, it is still like the beginning. Alas! alas! never to be able to catch a glimpse of the clarity of the sky and the day! always be plunged into a dark abyss! when you think about it it makes you shudder. But also when we think of the sufferings of Hell, the sorrows and sufferings of this world are only a shadow. The illnesses and misfortunes here below are no longer regarded as painful. Moreover, if one knows how to take advantage of them, they serve salvation. The body finds enough to preserve life, how could the soul not do it too? The things of this world are in themselves neither good nor bad; do we use them well? they are good; are we using them wrongly? they are bad. They are like a ladder that also serves to go up and down, and each can help us avoid sin and gain merit. In everything act with joy and for Jesus, and you are a chosen one. But since everything depends on good or bad will, even if you have enormous difficulties, bear them with patience for Jesus, and they work the salvation of the soul and obtain the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, as you go through this world of pain and tribulation, seek only the glory of God. Tear down the mountains of pride, lust and anger; walk flying to eternal happiness.

“As for me, having been in this place of suffering for a year already, and by a very special blessing, having preserved my health, I thank God for this favor. I am on the road to martyrdom, I almost dare to hope for this last benefit, but I am too unworthy to receive it. Things drag on, and no decision comes; I’m terrified of it. The body is more at ease, but the soul becomes all the more sick, and in this living body the soul is as if dead. If I cannot obtain this signal favor, how henceforth can I resist the three terrible enemies? When the body is weak, the soul becomes stronger; and if the soul is weak, the body takes over. Time does not return twice; if I lose the present opportunity, I will never be able to find it again; and the more I think about the state of things, the more I fear I will miss the right moment. To hope without foundation would be folly; so, above all, I hope in a completely free grace from God, secondly, I count on the prayers of all Christians. Pray therefore and pray with all your heart and with all your strength; pray every day, so that I bear fruit, and not become like the trees of the forests.

“I had a first time received some objects, but without any letter, and I did not know by whom it was sent; this time reading your post, I understood everything. What happened to me on this second occasion will be very useful to me in the extreme cold. A thousand and a thousand thanks. In the midst of the general embarrassment, I thus find myself a burden to many people. God grant that I arrive at the goal that my sighs so ardently call for!”

Finally Andrew Kim wrote to the Christians Yi and Yu, recommending his wife to them.

“Time flies, it’s been more than a year since we met, and on both sides our pain is probably equal. Occasionally I learned of your news; God be blessed that in this terrible winter you were able to survive so much hardship. For me, I now have to endure imprisonment for the faith. It is, it is true, a beautiful position, but unfortunately I still only have the beautiful name of martyr, and because of my sins, everything has remained at a simple beginning; the outcome does not come, and things drag on. I am like the trees of the forest that bear no fruit; if everything remains there, of what use will it be to me? Time is a treasure; if you lose it once, it can never be found again. If I don’t make my efforts right now, how long will I wait to make them? Even in the affairs of the world, if the favorable

opportunity is missed, it is difficult to regain it; a fortiori, in the matter of the salvation of the soul.

“For me, in embracing religion, I had no other goal than the service of God and the salvation of my soul; the position in which I find myself today is therefore nothing but natural, and my heart is not too discouraged by it. But on learning of the sad situation of my wife, I am saddened and sorry. It is said that during the rigors of winter she has no place to retire to, and although in the village where she is, all are our relatives or acquaintances, because of my present condition, no one wants rescue her. Everyone uses fear of compromising himself as a pretext, and she is reduced to seeking refuge elsewhere. How can harshness and insensitivity be brought to this point? We Christians, as soon as we embrace religion, we leave our country to serve God and save our souls, and we retire far away to places where we know no one. We make all the sacrifices for our salvation; we regard everything, adversity or prosperity, as the order of God; but if all the pains that come to us from men are an order from God, whether joy or pain, everything becomes a means of salvation when we use it well, is it not a better work still to relieve those who are alone and without support?

“So take care of my wife, who has no place to shelter. If you receive her into your house, if you regard her as a relative and try to preserve her body and her soul, you will thereby work for your own salvation; so I recommend her with confidence. I do it all the more freely because your own daughter is a prisoner with us, and, although I do not know how many years we must share the same sufferings, as long as I live I will not cease supporting her with all my might; in this way, there will be compensation. With charity, what shall we not do? God himself wanted to found this world on charity; if mutual love disappeared from it, how would the world be preserved? The Church is one body, heaven and earth are one whole, the world itself is one whole. What is not based on union and love? In a body there are many members, which is the member that we do not like, which is the one that we would like to reject? We only live by the help we give each other; the body must help the soul, and the soul the body; there is no other way to preserve life. Although each man is a separate being, the head of the church is God, the neck is the Blessed Virgin Mary, the members are all of us; even if we do not hurt the head directly, to hurt the limbs is to hurt the head, and likewise, to love the limbs is to love the head. According to this, if we love God, we will love men, and if we love men, we will love God too...”

Blessed Shin Tae-bo 신태보 申太甫 Peter (1769?-1839)

Dallet Volume 1. Book 4, Chapter 1

The fate of those who had been exiled by the courts, or who had voluntarily emigrated to the wilder parts of the remote provinces, was still sadder. We cannot explain it better than by giving the account left us of his ordeals by Peter Sin Tae-bo , this courageous Christian who made so many futile efforts to approach Father Zhou and receive the sacraments , and who later obtained, as we shall see, the crown of martyrdom. You will find there, feature by feature, the picture of the sufferings of thousands of other Christians, at the same time, and in the same circumstances.

“The persecution was finally appeased, it is true, but we were isolated and we had lost the prayer books. How to practice? I learn by chance that the survivors of some families of martyrs live in the district of Yongin, I do my best to find them, and finally I meet them. There were only women already advanced in years, and a few young men barely out of childhood; in all, three houses linked by kinship. They were without support and without resources, hardly daring to open their mouths with strangers, and no longer breathing for fear when people began to talk about religion. They did have a few volumes of prayers and the explanation of the Gospels, but the whole thing was hidden with the greatest care. When I asked to see them, I was cut off, they waved their hands in sign of silence; I didn’t want to insist. However, these poor women were overjoyed when they learned from their children of the presence of a Christian, and since propriety did not allow them to see me, they wanted at the very least to converse with me . I told them a little of the latest events, of the state of religion, and of our common position, in which we could neither serve God nor save our souls. They were deeply touched; some even shed tears, and testified the desire that we would communicate to each other frequently, to support one another.

“I lived forty li (four leagues) from there, and since that time, every eight or ten days, we made reciprocal visits. Soon our mutual affection was as lively and as sincere as if we had been members of the same family. We began to resume reading our books, and doing the exercises for Sundays and holidays. These people had received the sacraments from the priest, and when I heard details of him and his exhortations, I seemed to see him himself. Joy and happiness spread in my soul; it was as if I had found a treasure. I loved all these Christians as angels, but on both sides we dwelt among the pagans, and on all sides their eyes were always upon us. I had to do the forty li at night and in secret, to avoid them. Shortly after the neighboring pagans wanted to know my name, then the place where I lived, and with whom I was related. All this displeased us, and we conceived the plan to emigrate all together, and go somewhere to form a small separate village. For me, I had only my son and my daughter; but our five families together made a number of more than forty people, and each one having only debts for their fortune, the sale of the houses would not, the debts once paid, so much as provide only the viaticum necessary for the journey, because the place I had in view was in the depths of the mountains of the province of Gangwon, where there were hardly any traces of men. Nevertheless, whether the thing would succeed or not, emigration was decided upon.

“Two families had their houses completely empty, not knowing in the morning what they would eat in the evening. The other three sold their houses with the furniture, and got barely a hundred nyangs (about two hundred francs), out of which they had to pay a lot of debts. When we wanted to set the day of departure, each in the five families claimed to leave

first, and had only one thought: to get out of this hell to go find a paradise. We argued to the point of coming to words of misunderstanding and discord. Good Lord! what trouble I had to make them listen to reason! As for me, I entrusted my son and my daughter to the care of my nephew, and it was decided that the departure of one of the families would be postponed for some time. But without speaking of the children, there were five women who absolutely could not be delayed, and who, either because of their age or because they had never been used to walking, could not go on foot. So I bought with great difficulty two horses, then a third, which exhausted our small funds, and having no more resources, I went to find two rich friends of the village, who were good enough to have five litters prepared, and lend me two horses. We left in this. The horses were good, and the grooms did their job well; and yet the first day passed with difficulty. Our appearance was very suspicious. It was not a procession of nobles, nor of commoners; but especially the horses were attired in a bizarre manner. From the second day it was necessary to change the system. We left the five litters, and the women, wearing skirts over their heads as cloaks, had to go on horseback. The appearance of our caravan had become more or less that of the ordinary people of the province, or rather of the mountain dwellers, and yet passers-by and innkeepers always said that we were from the capital. Some even repeated with a malicious smile: "Those are certainly families of Christians." We feared at every moment that we would be recognized and arrested.

"After eight days of very difficult walking, we finally arrived at the desired goal. New embarrassment! No home, and no knowledge. We managed to borrow a hovel to lodge everyone, and, five horses becoming embarrassing, I immediately sold mine to procure provisions, and to buy a hut where my legs could scarcely stretch out. We had to send back the two borrowed horses; but, for lack of money, we had to keep them for a month, and their food consumed almost the price of a horse. However, we managed to send them back, and on the way back, we brought the family left behind. Without our knowing it, the time for cultivation was passing, and winter having come, the snow piled up and made all the roads disappear. In the surroundings, no knowledge; impossible even to communicate with our neighbors, and more than forty of us were exposed to starvation. The horse we had left had gnawed and almost devoured his enormous wooden trough; the children cried incessantly, asking for food; grown-ups themselves were worried and impatient.

We were almost out of provisions; the future looked darker every day, and we succumbed to the temptation to murmur, to hate our faith which was the cause of these terrible sufferings, to curse ourselves for having believed in God.

"Finally, by a miracle of divine mercy, we survived, without being able to say how. Winter passed, and the snows once melted, it became possible to circulate and cross the mountain. Learning that a rich bachelor named Choi lived about seventy li from us, I went to his house, stayed there two days, and having given him a picture of the horrible misery in which our families found themselves, I could, through him, obtain about twenty hectoliters of unhulled rice. To reduce the price of transport, I went to ask the inhabitants of the country, who lent themselves to it with great complaisance, to hull the rice for me; then I sold part of it and had the rest transported in two or three days. All this grain was payable at a fixed time. Having thus ended this affair, I tried again to console all our people, and only then was I listened to; joy and fraternal charity reappeared. Our various loans already amounted to more than a hundred nyangs, but I had not the courage to mention them; for when I spoke of being on our guard and sparing provisions, all faces looked gloomy and desolate."

Peter Sin Tae-bo, already well known to our readers, after having taken great pains for the collections relating to the trip to Peking, no longer interfered in the affairs of Christianity, and lived in retirement, solely occupied with the salvation of his soul. His name, however, was well known, and the great number of books he had transcribed must

naturally compromise him more than any other in time of persecution. After having lived successively in various provinces, he had finally established himself at Jatgol, in the district of Sangju, province of Gyeongsang, where he lived apart, having very few relations with outside Christians. Nevertheless, when he learned of the progress of the persecution of 1827, he understood that he could not fail to be denounced, and made his preparations to bring his family and himself to safety. On the 22nd day of the fourth month, everything was ready, and they were to leave before daybreak, when that very night, at cockcrow, the satellites of Jeonju burst into the village, surrounded the house of Peter Sin, and declared him a prisoner.

he inquired about the state of things, and learned that among the books denounced, many were written in his own hand. It therefore became useless for him to try to hide the fact any longer. The next day they separated, and soon after, arriving in the city, Peter was taken to the criminal judge.

It is he himself who informs us of all these details, in the memoirs which he wrote later in his prison, at the request of a missionary, M. Chastan. Let him now tell of his trial.

“The judge first asked me: “Are you a noble?” — I replied: “Once here, the difference between noble and commoner is of little use.” “It is said that in three provinces you are spreading a perverse doctrine, and the people are infatuated with it: is this true?” — “I am not of perverse doctrine, but only the religion of the Master of Heaven.” “He does not mean a perverse doctrine! He says the religion of the Master of Heaven! Well! by following the perverse doctrine of the Master of Heaven, did you know that it is strictly prohibited?” “How could I not know that? What I did, I did knowingly.” “Having knowingly contravened the King’s orders, are you not worthy of death?” “I knew very well that I would be killed.” “Now that the King orders you all to be put to death, won’t you change your mind?” “He who, after having served his King in prosperity, would disobey him in adversity, would be a coward; he who professes the truth only when everything smiles on him, and who abandons it in difficult days is more cowardly still. Let the mandarin act according to the law, I will act according to my convictions.” “That rascal speaks badly,” resumed the judge. “He is undoubtedly one of the leaders of the sect. Well, since you want to be treated according to the law, you will be satisfied.” Then he ordered me to be put to the most severe question. I was therefore tied with my arms crossed behind my back, then a stick was passed between them and my back, which a valet was to operate. Moreover, with a horsehair cord, they tied my two legs together at the knees and above the ankles, and they inserted between the legs two large sticks on each of which a man was to weigh on each side. So when, drawing on one hand the stick fixed against my back, on the other they pressed hard on those crossed between the legs, it seemed to me that my body was suspended in the air, that my chest was going to burst and all my bones be broken. I lost consciousness, and the Mandarin, seeing that I could not answer the questions addressed to me, ordered the straps to be loosened a little. Little by little I regained the use of my senses; the rays of the sun seemed to me like burning torches, my arms and my legs seemed to no longer exist, my body was all on fire.

“Two servants pierced my sides with sharp sticks to make me talk. With great difficulty I could answer that I had been instructed by an old Christian who had been martyred a long time before, and that I had no disciples. “You villainous deceiver,” cried the judge, “are you waiting for new tortures to declare the truth?” “If it is yes, I say yes; if no, I say no. I’m already half dead, and if you go on for a bit more, I’m going to die completely. When dying, how could I deceive?” “No, no, you will not die of it, but you will have much more to suffer; only see a little. So they lifted my legs, and pressed hard on the two sticks. My body had no more life, all saliva was exhausted, the tongue was sticking out of the mouth, my eyes were bulging out of their sockets and sweat covered my whole body.

“Declare everything,” the satellites were screaming. But I did not answer; I prayed to God to grant me death quickly. It was the last day of the fourth lunar month. Night having come, the judge said: “It is getting late. As it’s the first day, you only had a sample, tomorrow you will have real torments to bear. So try to reflect tonight, and take care to preserve your life.” They untied me, and two valets, passing a stick between my legs, carried me off to the prison, where soon I was served supper. But I could neither sit down nor use my arms: moreover, the smell of rice made me nauseous, and as I could not take anything, a bowl of cloudy wine was brought to my lips and I drank in small sips; only then did sanity seem to come back to me.

“It was already late in the night when the head of the satellites who had brought me to Jeonju came to tell me; “You are worthy of pity. The mandarin is convinced that Yi Yeojin is at your home, or else, if he is no longer there, that you know where he is. Tomorrow you will have for this affair terrible tortures to endure. It would be better, it seems to me, to admit it frankly and save your life.” I replied, “I do not know who this man is. If I saw him, I could perhaps tell whether he is known to me or not; he is neither my father nor my brother, what reason have I to hide him at the cost of my life? But you who have seen my house, you know what it is like. Was he hidden there? And besides, how could I know where he fled to now? It seems to me that in this matter everything depends on your words.” He replied, “Because of this Ni, the Mandarin and the Praetorians accuse me of incapacity, for not having arrested him yet. I have nothing more to say: but you certainly know something about him. Act accordingly. I am also reproached for not having seized any book from you. I said that after having examined everything, you had none. You will also be questioned about it: answer straight away that you had none.” After which he hung up the cangue with which I was loaded, so that it would cause me less pain. He called the guard and ordered him to give me the cleaning services that my position demanded, adding that he would take it into account, then finally made me take some wine. This behavior greatly consoled me, and I was deeply touched by these marks of compassion.

“Soon the door of the prefecture opened and servants arrived to transport me there. The judge said in a loud voice: “Think about what I told you yesterday and frankly make the confession requested.” “Yesterday,” I replied, “I lost consciousness. I don’t remember your orders. As for making a confession, if I had one to make, I wouldn’t have waited until now.” “Ni Ie-tsin-i was certainly at your house, and you know his business; if you don’t admit it, woe to you!” “I don’t know who this Ni is, but even supposing I hid him then, how could I know where he is now? I can’t tell you anything about it. He is neither my father nor my brother; would it be fair for me to be killed for him? If you want to put me to death, let it be for my own faults.” “It seems that you found yesterday’s torture light, and you want to taste more violent ones. Very well! so be it! At the same time he excited the executioners by saying: “This culprit, although old, is the most obstinate of all. Don’t spare him.” And he made them inflict the spreading of the leg bones again. They tightened the straps and I was already almost fainting, when by dint of pressing, a stick broke. At the noise, I thought my leg was broken and I looked at it, terrified. I heard words and could not answer. Wine was brought to me and put to my lips; but I couldn’t swallow it. After a few moments of rest, it was presented to me again and, little by little, I was able to drink the potion. The judge said in a moderate voice: “You absolutely want to die for the business of others. I don’t understand the principles.” Then he had his escort prepared, mounted his horse, and went to the superior mandarin.

“As he had not untied me, I remained seated and exposed to the heat of the sun. However, I did not feel the heat, the air seemed cold to me. After quite a long time, the judge came back and said to me in an irritated tone: “Since you don’t want to confess, you must die or I will lose my place. There is no middle ground. So start the tortures again.” They obey; the sufferings were neither more nor less severe; only they varied the torments, but for me it

was all one. When evening came, I was untied and taken to prison. I could not eat the rice: they gave me a cup of wine, and the night passed like that. In the morning, I heard again the cries for the opening of the doors of the prefecture. These cries hurt me, and I thought I was hearing the call of the accused. In fact, the valets were not long in coming to fetch me. They uttered insulting cries and, without any precaution or consideration, put me astride a stick, carried me away and laid me down opposite the judge, who said to me: "You can see that here there are many books written by you. You are said to be the head of three provinces, and to have supplied a number of books to other Christians. Admit everything frankly, and do not persist in dying in torture." "I did not have the strength to speak. They made me drink a little wine, and with great difficulty I could articulate a few words. During this interrogation, according to what the Christians I had met on the way had told me, I confessed to having copied a few volumes for them, adding that at home there were none, as the satellites that had searched my house could certify. "When I copied these books," I added, "it was in these Christians' homes and from old copies they had. "You are not telling the truth, and you are not telling everything; we will see the end." "Soon afterwards I was carried away, without having had to undergo any other torture.

"That night I was deposited with the praetorians. They gathered in large numbers around me and said to me: "You claim to be noble and yet you do not speak frankly in front of the mandarin. Since Yi Ye-jin has not been caught, this affair cannot end. It is certain that he was in your village, and if he left, it was you who directed his escape. To say that you do not know him and also to deceive about the books is to expose yourself to still more cruel tortures. How will you hold out? Tomorrow we have to start the question again. Tell us everything here, and we'll let the judge know." I answered: "To desire life and to fear death is a sentiment common to all; and who, then, would gladly bring upon himself suffering? But you, you proceed only by torture, without paying attention to the bottom of things. Is this justice?" "Why do you want to take our words in bad part? we only act to save you suffering. Just denounce this Ni, and we won't talk about anything else. We'll take care of him. Why are you so stubborn?" "I have said all I have to say, and have nothing more to confess. If I die, it will all end there. If I am left alive, it is an order from God; but I have little desire to live. Take me back to where I was. All this had been suggested by the Mandarin himself."

"I was taken back to the prefecture when the doors were already opening, and I was soon brought before the judge who said loudly and angrily: "I would like to finish this case, but you are making such confused statements that I can't see things clearly." Then, in a few words, he concludes that I was charged with having written all these books. What remedy could I bring to this? That was not all. Many images and religious objects, many of which came from foreign countries, had also been taken from Christians, who, to get out of trouble, had blamed me. The judge said: "You have no more means of justifying yourself. Explain where these images and other objects come from." "I have declared the truth about the books. For the rest, please question those to whom these objects belong." "They all blame you." Not knowing what course to take, I remained silent. The judge again asked the Christian prisoners if all these objects came from me, and they answered in the affirmative. I then said: "I was told in the past that after the year sin-yu (1801) someone having bought the house of a person executed at that time, found, while demolishing it, some of these objects in the walls. They must have been shared and spread this way and that. That's probably where they came from." The angry judge exclaimed, "By going this far, we won't get anywhere. First you have to torture these Christians."

"They began to saw their limbs with cords, and then everyone blamed me, more insistently than ever. As I was preparing to speak, the judge subjected me to the same torture, shouting: "Squeeze, squeeze, we must get it over with." The executioners thus excited were careful not to spare me, and yet, by a particular grace of God, I suffered less than before.

“Won’t you finally make a full confession?” shouted the judge. — “I have said everything.” — “Who first received these different objects, and through whose hands did they then pass?” — “The people who lived in 1801 are almost all dead, and if there are a few left, they are not Christians now.” “Who got them first? Who did he give them to?” — “I do not know. These objects, like all the others, will have changed masters either by death, or by donation or purchase. Who could ever know through whose hands they all passed?” “Say what you know.” I then indicated four or five names among the Christians already dead, and I added: “As for the rest, it is impossible for me to know anything.” “Among so many, you only know four or five; it is a mockery.” They tightened my bonds again, so tight that I thought I was going to die. The judge gave a list of names to a praetorian, and I was ordered, as he pronounced them, to declare whether or not I knew the individuals named. Not being able to speak any longer, I answered with a nod, and I made a negative answer for everyone, known or unknown. The judge added, “Don’t you know Ia-So either?” I gave the same negative sign again. Evening had come, they untied me, but the cords being buried in the flesh, they could not be removed, and I lost consciousness during the operation. They took me back to prison, and, as I could eat nothing, they put me to bed, my head resting on my cangue.

“The dreadful cries of the court still lingered in my ears, pain prevented me from sleeping, and when I came back to myself, I happened to think of these words from the judge: “Don’t you know Ia-So either? Only then did I reflect that the Chinese characters of the holy name of Jesus were pronounced Ia-So in Korean. I began to tremble, to grieve, to lament what had happened. My heart ached and could barely breathe. They came again to urge me to take some food, but dejected, despairing at the thought that my thoughtlessness henceforth rendered death fruitless for me, I violently pushed back those who offered me the rice, and decided only, on repeated solicitations, to swallow a few sips of wine. Then I tried to console myself. I said to myself: “Although the judge wanted to designate Jesus, I only heard Ia-So. Will God forgive me?” And I resolved to retract myself clearly the next day; but having been brought from then on before the civil mandarin, I could not make this retraction, and regret remains imbued in me to the marrow of my bones.

“The next day, the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, I was brought before the civil mandarin. At the sitting were the mandarins of Muju, Gosan, and Iksan. The latter, accompanied by a praetorian, came and stood near the balustrade and said to me: “If you only want to regulate your conduct according to the principles of sound morality, the books of Confucius, Mencius and the other saints are quite sufficient. Now, against the orders of the King, you follow a foreign doctrine, and you have been seized; is this not a crime worthy of death?” I immediately saw that I was no longer in the criminal court. The mandarin from my district looked irritated, but everyone else looked affable. They looked at me with compassion, and seemed to regret the terrible tortures to which I had been subjected. Their valets themselves did not utter vociferations, and spoke in moderate tones. It no longer seemed like a court, but a private house. I answered with all the more respect: “Our religion is forbidden for the sole reason that it comes from another kingdom. But everywhere I see in your houses objects from foreign countries: books, clothing, furniture, etc.” — “These are objects that are used in all countries, so there is no reason to prohibit them. But, in terms of doctrine, are not Confucius and Meng-tse sufficient?” — “For diseases of the body, when with the medicines of our country we do not obtain an effect, we have recourse to the medicines of China, which often effect the cure. Every man has the seven vices which are so many diseases of the soul. However, without our religion, we cannot cure them. It’s not that I don’t know the doctrine of Confucius and Meng-tse, but, you know it as I do, in the temples of these sages or others like them, people fight for a bowl of rice or a piece of meat, even uttering coarse insults; not only do they worry very little about the doctrine and actions of these sages, but they are often insulted, and their temples, instead of being schools of virtue,

become schools of disorder. There are only a few people who know how to contain themselves, at least on the outside, and keep the proprieties a little, and even they, in the bottom of their hearts, they are none the less bad. Our doctrine, on the contrary, first regulates the interior, rectifies the seven passions, directs by means of the Decalogue the exterior as well as the interior. It is, in fact, the perfection of the doctrines of Confucius and others.” “If you are telling the truth, it would not be perverse, but since the King forbids it, will you say that the King is wrong?” “As there is only one sun in the sky, you want there to be only one doctrine in the kingdom; it’s good. Now that alongside the doctrine of the scholars is that of the Master of Heaven, the King is perhaps not wrong to temporarily prohibit it until a distinction has been made between the true and the false; but, on the other hand, he who follows our religion, which in fact is the only true one, cannot be wrong either.” “What are you saying there? A false thing is false, a true thing is true. Now, according to your words, the true and the false would meet at the same time for the same object.” — In everything, reason is the great master. However, when through reason we begin to want to distinguish between the true and the false, there is a moment when nothing has yet been decided. In discussions, some discover the true reason before others, and in matters of doctrine, a subject may well perceive the truth before the government has succeeded in knowing it. This is precisely what is taking place today in this kingdom.” “According to this, all of you who were executed according to the law, were they right?” — “The doctrine being true, they were right; if it was wrong, they would have been wrong.”

“The district mandarin then rose up in a rage, saying, “Such words are useless;” and he had the book of civil acts brought to him. After which he uttered a few words about the sentence which I did not hear. The mandarin of Muju read it, and said in surprise: “Would you then decide on execution?” “Yes,” he replied. “But,” resumed the other with a distressed air, “in this affair, there is no reason always to come to capital execution.” After which the mandarin of Iksan spoke to me: “Repeat everything you said before the criminal judge, and also explain in detail what you had started to say about the seven passions. I therefore repeated what I had said in the criminal tribunal, and I developed how each of the seven passions is cured by one of the seven opposite virtues. A praetorian took note of everything. “To see the tortures you have endured,” said the mandarin to me then, “to see the state in which you are reduced, I really believe that you have been made to suffer too much. It would be difficult for you now to read the summary of your case yourself, a praetorian will read it to you. Then he gave the paper to the praetorian who read it. That was pretty much the gist of it, but without any details. Their expressions had been softened, and they seemed inclined to let me live. I said: “It seems that you are moved with compassion, your judgment will be a triumph over the law itself.” The district mandarin then exclaimed in a tone of anger: “We would have done well to condemn him to death. They’re all that stubborn.” “From his words you would not be wrong,” said the mandarin of Ik-san; then, turning to me: “You have violated the King’s prohibitions, and I am delegated to judge you. Perhaps you would be excused elsewhere, but other countries, other laws; here in Korea, for your fault there is no remedy.” Then a watchman was called to hand me over to him, and I was taken to a private house. After a few days, I was able to get up, but I was unable to walk. My stomach refused all food, and I only took a little wine,

“A few days later, I was brought before the governor. All the Christian prisoners were gathered. I was waiting outside the door, seated and leaning on my cangue. The valets and the praetorians laughed at me; some struck the cangue with their feet; the most wicked climbed on it to make it weigh more; all had only insults for me. I appeared first. The governor said to me: “Are you noble?” I replied: “What does it matter! what is the difference here between noble and commoner?” “If you Christians want to follow this religion, why do you only do it in secret?” Then he ordered me to declare by name the owner of each book,

image and other religious object. “During the interrogation,” I resumed, “all the prisoners having blamed me, I was pressed to confess, and if I said I did not know, the torture was redoubled, absolutely demanding that I take responsibility of all. Unable to bear it any longer, I accepted this responsibility. Now you want me to say who owns each object. How could I know?” “Do you have any tablets?” – “I do not have any.” “And why don’t you have any?” “Left alone from a ruined family, homeless and always wandering this way and that, not even having somewhere to place them, I have none.” “Don’t you make sacrifices to the ancestors?” — “On birthdays, I only prepare food according to my means, and I share it with the neighbors,” — “Do you eat then without even genuflecting?” “I don’t genuflect.” Then, without further questions, I was handed over to the jailer.

“The next day I was brought before the district mandarin; all the Christian prisoners were there. We appeared five by five, and we were beaten on our legs. But though one struck vigorously, it was nothing compared to the torture of the curvature of the bones. Then the accused were untied, the cangue was passed to them, and the irons were put on their feet and hands. My feet alone were not put in irons, because they were too swollen. When we were taken back to the prison, the mandarin, seeing my condition, told the praetorian to have my large cangue removed and replaced by a lighter one, and for the first time it was taken from me. My legs were so torn that you could see the bones, and I couldn’t sit down or eat rice. Every day I only had two or three bowls of wine. Gangrene had set in in my wounds, and an unbearable odor exhaled from them. Also, the room was full of worms and vermin, so no one dared approach me. Fortunately, a few healthy Christians supported me so that I could move around a bit, and were willing to clean my dungeon from time to time. How can we thank them enough for this act of charity?”

Blessed Paul Yi Gyeong-eon 이경언 李景彦 aka 종회 or 경병 (1792-1827)

Dallet Volume 1. Book 4, Chapter 4/

Paul Yi Jong-hui, legally called Gyeong-byeong, was the last of the brothers of Charles Yi and Lutgarda Yi, martyred in 1801. Like them, he received from childhood a truly Christian education. With a frail constitution and delicate, of a character at once gentle and firm, he shone with the finest qualities of heart and mind. His family, descended from the founding king of the current dynasty, had occupied, until the persecution, the highest dignities of the kingdom. But his brother and his sister having been beheaded in 1801, on account of religion, all his family were proscribed, and his house entirely ruined. Paul was only nine or ten years old then. Left with his widowed mother and his widowed sister-in-law, he lived in the capital in great poverty. When he was of age he was married off to a person of the middle class, and by God's leave his wife was found to be of an intractable character, so that he had with her throughout the course of his life, pains without number, which he bore with exemplary patience. In 1815, his mother and his sister-in-law retired to the provinces with his elder brother, at Ien-p'ong; and Paul remained alone in the capital with his wife. Although he suffered greatly from an internal illness, the attacks of which were frequent and painful, he let no complaints escape, always kept a cheerful and affable countenance, and continually applied himself to reading religious books.

When persecution arose in the province of Jeolla in 1827, he was denounced in an interrogation to the court of Jeonju, for the books and images which he had distributed everywhere. The satellites of this city were therefore sent to the capital to seize his person. Before the judges, Paul faithfully followed in the glorious footsteps of his brother and his sister; like them, he courageously confessed his faith, and left to the Christians of Korea, and of the whole world, examples worthy of all our admiration. Here is how he himself recounts the adventures of his trial, in a letter written from his prison, and the accuracy of which is guaranteed by all the eyewitnesses still alive.

“Often I had said to myself: “By martyrdom at least, can I really hope to satisfy for all my sins? When I was not expecting it, on the 21st of the fourth lunar month, at the beginning of the night, Kim Seng-jip and a dozen satellites, both from the province and from the capital, presented themselves to me, seized me and dropped me off at one of the police headquarters. They asked me if it was true that I had drawn religious pictures; at this question, I understood that everything was discovered. “That's true,” I told them. The next day, the chief criminal judge called me and said, “Is it true that you follow the religion of the Master of Heaven?” – “Yes.” “Who did you learn it from?” — “My eldest brother having died for this religion, from childhood I had heard a little about it; but, subsequently, I associated with Jo siouk, killed, he also, for the same doctrine; I practiced it for several years with him and filled my heart with it.” – “Even now if you want to desist, I will save your life.” “I cannot. “Is what you said yesterday true?” — “Yes, that is true.” And he had me taken back to prison. Three days later, the chief judge, after taking advice from the prime minister, handed me over to the satellites, and at nightfall we crossed the river. Since my arrest, bothered as I was by a thousand worries, I hadn't been able to eat anything and I was exhausted. The night passed not far from there, and the next day, early in the morning, I left accompanied by Saeng-jip and six satellites.

“Nature not being entirely dead in me, tears flowed from my eyes, when I saw this road that I was beginning. Then I thought to myself: “Jesus Christ has deigned to travel laden with his cross, so why should I refuse to make this journey? No, I want to follow Jesus step

by step.” This thought gave me strength. We made a journey of 100 li (ten leagues) each day, and on the evening of the 28th I entered the police headquarters of Jeonju, where, after a few moments’ rest, I was brought before the judge. He was surrounded by about twenty servants, whose torches shed a bright light. This scene reminded me of Our Lord Jesus when he was taken from the Garden of Olives. They asked me only my names, first name, and those of some of my ancestors, and I was taken back immediately. The rice was served to me quite properly in a warm apartment, but after taking three or four spoonfuls of it, I could not continue. I stretched out on the ground to sleep, they inserted my feet and my hands between two iron bars, and put a large cangue around my neck, then locked me up. The night passed without sleep; my confused ideas could stop at nothing.

“The next day, when day broke, I was summoned to court and the judge said to me: ‘How many paintings have you drawn? How many books do you have and who are your accomplices?’ I answered bluntly. ‘I declared a few paintings delivered formerly to Tsio-siouk-i, and two given to Saeng-jip who denounced me. As for accomplices,’ I added, ‘I have none. Left alone from a ruined family, my parents and friends have all abandoned me. Even the commoners despise me and spit in my face. So I have no more friends, how could I have what you call accomplices? Finally, as for the books: I was instructed entirely by word of mouth, and my books are only engraved in my heart. I don’t have any others.’ – ‘You’re deceiving me. Among you the ignorant commoners each have themselves thirty or forty volumes, and you, you don’t have any? Beat him hard.’ ‘Should I die under the blows, I have neither accomplices nor books.’ Having then brought a quantity of pictures, glasses, paintings, Agnus Dei, and medals, he said to me: ‘Are these paintings yours?’ I answered in the affirmative and they put me back in prison. The judge immediately went to the governor, and after some time I was shown into a room adjoining the tribunal. While I waited, the thought of my sister, judged and martyred in 1801 in this same city of Jeonju, came back to me. Yes, I said to myself, I will follow her. And really is it not she who attracts me to follow her? At the same time a joy mingled with sadness arose in my heart.

“I was soon brought before the governor who, accompanied by the judge, asked me a few questions which I answered as the day before. But the whole apparatus was ten times more terrible than before the criminal judge. ‘Are you really determined to remain a Christian?’ asked the governor. – ‘I am.’ ‘What is God?’ ‘He is the supreme king and father of the whole universe. He alone created the sky, the earth, the spirits, men and all that exists.’ – ‘How do you know?’ — ‘On the one hand, examining our body, and on the other, considering all creatures, can we say that there is not a creator of these things?’ – ‘Have you seen him?’ ‘Can one believe only after having seen? Has the mandarin seen the workman who built this tribunal? What we call the five senses only enable us to perceive sounds, colors, smells, tastes and the like; but for principles, reason, and all immaterial things, it is the mind that makes them distinguishable.’ After a few moments, he added: ‘Tell me everything you have learned.’ ‘I know the ten commandments that must be followed, the seven sins that must be avoided, and the prayers that we address to God in the morning and in the evening.’ ‘I have already heard about that, but in the end will you not retract?’ ‘I cannot. A child who does not serve his father, a subject who does not serve his king, are impious and rebellious. How could I, being a man, not serve God?’ ‘Aren’t you afraid of death?’ ‘Why shouldn’t I be afraid of it?’ ‘If that’s the case, why don’t you give up this religion?’ ‘The reason why I cannot give it up I gave you just now: please don’t ask me again. I will be glad to die.’ I was taken back to prison.

“The next day, the mandarin of Jeonju as well as those of Gosan, Gokseong, Dongbok, and Jeongeup having sat down, and having dismissed all their followers, made me approach quite close to the bar, and the mandarin of Jeonju said to me in a very moderate voice: ‘You, child of a nobleman, you are not like these ignorant people. Besides, you are a

handsome man, so how can you persist in following this bad religion?" — "When it comes to principles, there is no superior or inferior, noble or commoner, more or less advantageous countenance: it is only the soul that can and must make the distinction." — "In this religion of the Master of Heaven, what principle can there be?" After which, the Mandarin of Tongpak engaging me to say what were the dogmas of Christianity, I reported in abridgement what is expounded at length in the three parts of one of our books, namely: the knowledge of the true God, knowledge of human nature, and rewards and punishments. Then, as I was developing the Decalogue, the Mandarin of Tsien-tsien said: "It is all nonsense, there is no soul; there is neither heaven nor hell; there is not even a God. And then you do not offer sacrifices to the ancestors. Among you goods and women are in common. Can there be a more distorted and ungodly doctrine?" "That we offer no sacrifices, it is true; but that among us goods and women are in common, that is not so. Sacrifices to the ancestors are a vain thing, which a right doctrine rightly prohibits. At the time of death, the soul of the good goes to heaven and the soul of the wicked goes to hell. After entering it they can never come out. Moreover, the soul being immaterial, how could it eat material things? and the tablets being simply the work of an artisan, is it not an insult to want to honor them like his parents? All this is based on reason and I firmly believe it. As for the goods that are said to be in common among us, if there were not in the world some communication of wealth, how would the poor live? Finally, as far as women are concerned, what is imputed to us is formally prohibited in the commandments, and is repugnant to all the feelings of nature. We are forbidden even to desire our neighbor's wife. How could we have the principles that you attribute to us? And not being animals, how could we do that? It is an atrocious calumny and ten thousand times deplorable." One of the mandarins resumed: "They say you still have your mother, and your wife and children as well; even now speak only one word, and leaving here you will find your mother, your wife and your children. Won't that be good?" "To go find my mother, you want me to apostatize? But God being the great king and the father of all men, my mother herself having been created by him, how could I deny the Creator for one of his creatures?" After having thus conversed for half a day, I was taken back to the prison.

"Three days later I was summoned before the criminal judge who, surrounded by a terrible apparatus, said to me: "Denounce your accomplices, give your books and deny the God of Heaven." Then he had me placed on the torture board, bound and beaten cruelly. My strength was exhausted, and although I had great difficulty in speaking, I still repeated: "I have neither books nor accomplices, and I cannot deny my God." I was taken back to prison. The next day, same scene and same tortures during which I fainted. Several valets carried me to the top of the room and gently rubbed my whole body. When I came to, it was night. Two days later I was carried on someone's back to the mandarin of the district. To see all the arrangements, I thought my last moment had arrived. The report to the governor and the address to the king were read to me, and the mandarin added: "You see, everyone is trying to save your life. The other Christians have all submitted to the King, why would you alone act stubbornly? Just say a word." "I can't." After countless attempts, having nothing more to try, he made me sign my condemnation. It has been three days since this happened, and they say the criminal judge is to question me again. What will it be? During all these trials, although I relied only on God and his holy Mother, I had violent temptations, seeing myself between life and death. Day and night I was singularly tormented. Since yesterday, my heart is calmer. How great is this grace? How to thank God for it? How to answer it? I can only do so by my death.

"On the 6th day of the fifth lunar month, after having been taken to the criminal court, I was brought back to the mandarin of the district. He and several other mandarins brought together made me appear three times before them, and used a thousand tender and subtle words to save my life. In the end, as I did not surrender: "To speak to him further is

useless,” they said, and they sent me back to the prison, where, moreover, I was treated well enough. On the 13th, after more than fifty Christians had been subjected to interrogation, I was, around four o’clock in the evening, summoned myself and the judge said to me: “Finally, will you not come to repentance?” I answered in the negative, and, without further questioning, I was placed on the torture board. Alas! I have no fervor and am of weak constitution, but by a very special grace, while I was on this board, I thought only of the scourging and the crucifixion of the Saviour. At each blow, I invoked Jesus and Mary. After about twenty blows, feeling that I was losing consciousness, I said: “My God receive my soul into your hands.” When the required number was finished, they dragged me from the plank, put a cangue about twenty pounds around my neck, and dragged me to the door. The consciousness returning to me a little, I tried to walk, supported by two people, without being able to do so. A young man, one of the spectators, with a complacent air, loaded me on his back, and the chief of the prison supporting the top of my cangue, I was thus carried into a room of the prison.

“While this young man supported me lying in his arms, the head of the prison, some Christian prisoners and other people began to gently press all my limbs, and bandage my wounds. I opened my eyes, and I saw my legs in shreds and the blood running from all sides or curdling on the wounds. Alas! Jesus, whose body could not have been stronger than mine, spilled a sweat of blood in the Garden of Olives. He suffered the scourging, and carrying his cross, he walked more than a thousand steps to the top of a high mountain. No one looked on him with pity, and there was not a Christian to come to his aid. And I, a great sinner as I am, they bring me compassion and help in this way, they strive to bring me back to knowledge. What thanksgiving wouldn’t it be right to give? And yet, in my weakness I do not even know how to thank. Angels and saints of paradise, and all of you my friends, please give thanks to God, in my place, for this blessing! The more I advance, the more divine graces and favors increase. By the time a mealtime had passed, my pains had disappeared. Three days have passed since, and my wounds do not cause me too much pain. I cannot, it is true, make use of my legs, and the heavy cangue crushes me, but I take a little food, and my heart is very calm. If it were not for the help of God and Mary, how could it be so by my strength alone? I couldn’t even stand the bite of an insect! Really, I don’t understand it. On the 15th they sent a despatch to the King; the answer will come, it is said, around the 20th; what will it be? I await it anxiously. I put all my hope in God alone; but I am without merits and all covered with sins, so what will be his order on me? The closer the end, the more I fear death and the more I tremble at being rejected.

“On the 16th, when I woke up, my legs felt lighter and the pain had greatly diminished. I receive benefit upon benefit, how can I thank the Lord? A young Christian is near me, does all my errands and serves me tirelessly; isn’t that still a grace? Other Christians that I had never seen, that I had never heard of, come to me from time to time. Some give me some money, others console me. This is too much. It seems that all the favors have gathered on me alone. Should my whole body turn into lips, how can I sing the praises of God enough? All of you Christians, please, in my place, thank and thank the Lord again. I would still have a thousand things to say, but time is short; we will meet again in eternity.

“P.S. — On the 19th, I was brought back before the criminal judge, I signed my condemnation again, and after having had the cangue and irons put on my feet, I was sent back to prison, and again a message was sent to the King. I was certainly happy in the bottom of my soul, but my physical and moral forces were exhausted, I had difficulty in calming my frightened heart. Returning to the prison, I conversed with some Christians, we comforted each other, and since that time, supported at first by the grace of God and the help of Mary, then helped by my companions in captivity, I pass the days without any new concern. I still

don't know what the outcome will be. Could it be that God was rejecting me? I beg him earnestly, will he deign to listen to me? I can only hope, and I hope, yes I hope."

From the prison where he was deposited while awaiting the final answer of the King, Paul wrote several other letters, which the Christians have piously preserved. They deserve to figure in this story with those of his sister Luthgarta. We find there the same accents of lively faith, of firm hope, of heroic humility, of loving resignation to the will of God. The first is addressed to his mother, and collectively to all the members of his family.

"My mother, my sister, my brother, my sister-in-law, my wife: In the thirteen years since I left my father's house, until the day of my arrest, I was only able to go and greet you twice. This is, on my part, a great lack of piety. For thirty-six years, not a day has passed for me without some more or less serious fault, I have only failed in the duties of filial piety, and today against all odds, by a very special grace, God calls to the bliss of eternal life this being full of sins and wickedness. I am ashamed and I tremble, but could I not submit to his holy will?

"The opportunity is too good to pass up. I am determined to lay down my life for God. But what frightens me is that I have uselessly lost more than thirty years for my salvation. Everything else makes little impression on me. Even on this day, I have neither fervor, nor contrition, nor perfect charity; but my only hope being in the boundless mercy of God and Mary, could they abandon me? Thank God for all his blessings.

"My sister, how are you? In a brother such as I am, you could not really encounter any mark of brotherhood! Behold now that I leave you forever I must never see you again in this world. Ensure therefore, by the practice of virtue, and the acquisition of many merits, that we may rejoice together eternally before God. As for me, I will no longer be able to fulfill my duties as a son towards my mother, any more than those of a brother towards you; at least by the union of our hearts, our prayers and our efforts, let us meet in the joys of eternity.

"Dear brother, what shall I say to you? Good and virtuous as you are, how grieved your heart will be on the occasion of a useless brother! I urge you to think above all about the salvation of your soul. Do not consider as long this time which passes as quickly as the spark leaps from the flint. Take the greatest possible care of my mother during her last years; and if the whole family, mother, brothers and sisters can, reunited in eternity, sing the benefits of our common Father, what glory will it not be? Since God deigns to grant such great favor to a sinner and a wicked person like me, you, my brother, naturally good and upright, if you make the effort, you will not be rejected. Work diligently, then, and strive to merit the grace of a good death. Really I am ashamed, I have never been anything but a cause for concern for you. After my death, my wife and two children no longer have any support, and to whom can I recommend them, if not to you? Having already so many burdens, how can you manage? What misery! my heart aches.

"My older sister-in-law, how are you? You who raised me, and so often carried me in your arms, who until now were always so worried about me, and so touched by my position, when you hear this news, how can your heart not be broken? However, thank God for his blessings. In his boundless goodness, he is willing to grant your wretched brother the grace to follow Jesus from afar on the way to the cross. My martyred brother and sister obtained for me the happiness of following in their footsteps; I repeat to you, give thanks to God. I have a favor to ask of you, please don't reject my last words. My son doesn't seem like a child you can't do anything about. Please embrace him fully, establish him and make him truly a man. All my life is for me a source of regrets; too often I misunderstood your feelings, little listened to your words, and so many other things that I cannot repeat; please forgive me for everything. Of five children that we were, now three are martyrs; before God

what greater glory could one desire? For the other saints, for my brother and my sister, the thing is not astonishing; but for a being like me, what extraordinary grace!

“And you, my wife, now forgive, forgive me. There is no husband so bad as I have been, and all that I have to reproach myself about you could not be written. During the thirteen years of our union, I never entered into your feelings and only caused you afflictions; suddenly I find myself face to face with death. What should I tell you? We will no longer be able to live together in this world; there is therefore no remedy for the past, and regret alone remains with me. Although I have so poorly fulfilled my duties as a spouse, if I obtain to ascend to the Kingdom of Heaven, I will intercede to obtain for you a good life and a good death, and, myself, messenger of the happiness which is yours. destined by our heavenly Father, I will come to meet you, and lead you by the hand to bring you into possession of eternal joys.

“I earnestly recommend to you, be subject in all things to the will of God, regret all things of the past, regard this world as a dream, and consider eternity as your true homeland. Ah! how could I make so much of such a futile world? In a few days, everything will be over for me. Only now do I understand that everything, even the smallest things, depends on the will of God, and the projects of men are nothing but vanity; but even regret comes to nothing.

“Mother, you are still alive, but for how many days? Be happy to see the children you have brought into the world follow, one after another, the path of martyrdom, stir up yourself to true contrition, and make sure to obtain the grace of a good death. The words of my brother and my sister, in their last hour, were full of devotion and filial piety; whatever mine are, please think about them. I won’t forget you either, my older sister-in-law, no, I won’t forget you. Which of my brothers and sisters can I be indifferent to? However, the pains and care you have taken for me are second only to those taken by my mother herself; and it was also in you, after my mother, that I trusted and leaned more. When I went to Ien-p’ong a few years ago, I returned without having been able to see you; I regret it ten thousand times, but what to do now? May our rendezvous be in eternity!

“My son and my daughter, by a blessing from the Lord I have become your father, but the gravity of my sins has prevented me from fulfilling my duties properly, and even before you have clear intelligence, the thread of my days is cut off. Having neither virtues nor wealth to leave you as an inheritance, I leave you only two words in my will. Take care to faithfully follow the will of God, and to exercise towards your mother all the duties of filial piety. Towards all other people, be gracious and full of charity, and if in this world you follow the right path, you will certainly ascend to the kingdom of heaven. I hardly have the right to speak thus, poor sinner that I am, but I am a father, and it is my duty to excite my children to good. I still recommend you to engrave in your hearts this wise proverb of the ancients: Never allow yourself to do evil, however slight it seems; always strive to do good, however great it may seem. I would have many things to say to many other people, but not only do I lack the paper and the brushes, but I have just undergone a violent torture which has deprived me of the use of the lower part of my body. I am loaded with a cangue weighing more than twenty pounds, and my reason is quite disturbed and my arm trembles. So I cannot say more. Above all, above all, try to have a good life and a holy death. I hope a thousand times, ten thousand times.

“Jeong-hae year, the 14th of the fifth lunar month.”

“Paul Yi, sinner.”

The next day, Paul wrote a private letter to his wife, this letter is superscripted: To the mother of Jeong-ae, because the politeness of this country demands that women be

designated by their title as mother of such and such of their children. Jeong-ae was the name of Paul's young son.

“Since our marriage, for thirteen years, neither of us has been able to spend a single quiet day, and we have had all kinds of miseries. Suddenly separated, we must never see each other again in this world; God's will be done! Considering the actions of my whole life, and my many sins, I especially regret all that I have to reproach myself for towards you; forgive me. Though I die, could I forget you? For support here, you are left with Tieng-ei and his sister; raise them well, instruct them and have them follow in my footsteps. For you, if you are submitted in all things to the will of God, if you become a friend of the Lord, will this not be true happiness? Since our separation, how many difficulties you must have encountered! When this thought occurs to me, I am overwhelmed by it; but immediately thinking of God and Mary, I calm my worries. Above all, try to end your life well. Have you heard from Ien-p'ong? Alas! alas! when my mother learns of my condition, what will become of her? If I also come to be a martyr, what glory for her, it is true, but how will nature be able to contain itself? Now I must leave you completely, I have no more paper, and still under the eyes of the jailers, I am obliged to seize on the sly a few moments to address these two words to you; please pass them around the family. And my older brother how is he? And my older sister-in-law, whom I will never be able to see again? My hope is that we will meet and rejoice together in the kingdom of heaven.

“I don't know if I will die here or in the capital; if I die here, I will obtain the palm in the same place where my sister picked it; what a boon! Angels and Saints of Paradise, Christians from all parts of the earth, deign to give thanks to God for me. Every circumstance reminds me of the memory of the letters of this dear sister martyr, and the only thing that afflicts me is the regret of not having loved God as much as she did during my life. Now I would like to start loving him, but it's too late and what can I do? My heart is oppressed by it, but if on the one hand my sins are without number, the mercy of God is also without limits, that is my only hope. By my own strength, I could not have held firm even for a moment. No, now more than ever, I recognize that in all things our forces are for nothing, and that the protection of God is everything.

“When the violence of the persecution has calmed down a bit, come and get my things and give them to my son. Do not forget to have my two children rebaptized; surely they were not. I have some debts and orders which I have not been able to fulfill. No word can express what I feel; I only hope that God will forgive me; make every effort to pay for it all.

“I cannot write separately to my mother, copy this letter and send it to her. The years you have left will not be long and eternal happiness is approaching; do not be too sad and let us meet forever near the Lord. The order to summon me is heard; I therefore end here.

“The 15th day of the fifth lunar month.

“Your husband,
“Paul Yi.”

Finally, a few days before his death, Paul wrote a last letter to the associates of the Myeongdo brotherhood, or brotherhood of Christian instruction, of which he was one of the principal members, perhaps even one of the directors. This pious association, first established in China, had been transported to Korea, as we have seen, by Father Zhou, with the object of

preparing and encouraging the confreres for the instruction of Christians and pagans. Here is that letter:

“I, a very great sinner, who for thirty-six years spent my time in vain, and am without any merit, I well deserved to be abandoned by God and the Virgin Mary. Today I am called, by a special and extraordinary favor. It is, I have no doubt, a blessing from Mary conceived without sin, our great patroness who, after having incorporated me into the brotherhood, made this first-rate grace flow to me. How great are the fervor and the meritorious works of all the confreres! For me, ashamed of myself and my unworthiness, reflecting on the magnitude of my sins which heaven and earth cannot contain, I did not believe I could take part in it. “How,” I said to myself, “could I mingle well with this society?” Having been, against all odds, imprisoned for the law, I believe that Mary’s intention is thereby clearly revealed to me. For the other confreres, who are so rich in merit and in virtues, she may well, without putting them through prison, bring them to term; but for a sinner like me, the good Mother saw that there was no other way. O all of you, thank her for me.

“As I was seized quite unexpectedly, you will all have been amazed and in great anxiety. For my part, I cannot express all the feelings by which I am constantly with each of you. I know that you act with great zeal. Let me, however, say a word to you. You know the history of the true religion of Our Lord Jesus Christ in our country. After efforts continued for many years, they had succeeded, by a special disposition of Providence, in building a very small house, and in bringing together a few inhabitants. Then, the weather not being favourable, a strong wind and rain almost knocked it down; when I think of it, my breath stops, and yet I hope that, by the protection of the good Mother, this house will be able to be preserved; Yes I hope; pray, pray earnestly.

“You will find in my house details of everything I have been able to do during the past month. But when, this month, someone arrives from our days of reunion, my pain redoubles, because now I find myself separated from you forever. Besides, if I survived, I wouldn’t be much use for the brotherhood. Nevertheless, I know well that when you have your meetings, you will feel some sadness and some regret, because of my absence. Instead, unite your hearts and your forces to thank God for such a great blessing. I am thinking of each of you in particular. I even seem to see you. Please, all of you, make your efforts to preserve the small house of which I have just spoken to you, and to arrive without fail at the great House of God, where we will all rejoice together.

“Are the two superiors in good health? Are the superiors of each place equally healthy? I cannot set aside my concern because of the interest I have in you. What trouble you are willing to give yourself! If all is quiet in the capital, please see to the preservation of the little house and its few inhabitants. Work for religion to flourish. I have seen more than two hundred Christians here; few have stood firm, almost all have fallen! By the grace of God, some are thinking of resuming the life, and I say to myself: is this still not the effect of the intercession of my confreres?

“Charles, my friend, how is your mother? Certainly our mutual affection was far from being an ordinary friendship. Without you, no one would ever have told me about my faults. Now that I think about it, you really were a treasure to me. Dear friend, listen favorably to my prayer, please take care of my wife and my children. There are many others in whom I could trust, and who would not deceive my trust, but among all of them, you my friend, understand all my thoughts, and you will not forget the word of a dying man. Time flies, already more than a month has passed since my arrest. As for the sufferings, I myself am not capable of supporting them, the body that is too weak cannot overcome them, and if it were not for the grace of God and the help of Mary, how could I hold out even for a moment?

I am tormented by the thought of not having been able to pay the debts contracted towards the Christians of the capital and the province, and of not having been able to recognize the benefits that I have received. It only remains for me to invoke God, hoping that he will forgive me.

“I tell you all again, and I dare to hope ten thousand times that you will listen to me: this time is really only a moment, make your efforts, exhaust all means to obtain a good death. The mass of my sins rises to heaven, but since God has showered me with blessings so far, he certainly does not want to abandon me. If I am the first to reach heaven, whoever you are, when you come to our great abode, I will meet you with musical instruments, and we will ascend together before our common Father to praise him and rejoice together. I would still have a thousand things to tell you, but I cannot tell them on paper. Take care to keep body and soul in good condition in this passing world, and in eternity we shall fully discover the sentiments of our hearts.

“Jeong-hae year, the 25th of the fifth lunar month.

“Paul Yi.”

It does not appear that Paul had any other interrogations to undergo after those he himself told us about. In prison, he continued to edify everyone by his patience, his fervor and his submission to the will of God. But his body, naturally weak, had been so broken that he could not survive. Exhausted by his wounds, our brave martyr languished for a few more days, and on the 4th of the fifth intercalary lunar month, his beautiful soul flew up to heaven to receive there the prize of his invincible constancy. He was then thirty-six years old.

Saint John Yi Mun-woo 이문우 李文祐 aka 경천 Gyeong-cheon (1810-1840)

Dallet Volume 2. Book 2, Chapter 3

John Yi Gyeong-cheon was of a Christian and noble family of Dongsan-mit, in the district of Icheon, and had sucked with the milk the faith of his parents. Orphaned at the age of five, he was taken to the capital and adopted by a Christian woman. From an early age, his obedience and filial piety towards his benefactress made him noticed by all. He wished to remain celibate, but out of humble deference to the wishes of his adoptive mother, he consented to marry, and fulfilled in an exemplary manner all the duties of a Christian husband, during the few years that his wife lived. God having called her to himself, as well as the two little children he had had by her, no authority could persuade him to remarry, and he henceforth lived alone. Fully devoted to good works and eager to render service to Christians, he accompanied M. Maubant for more than a year on his rounds for the administration of the sacraments. When the persecution of 1839 broke out, he devoted himself to going everywhere to collect alms, which he passed on to the prisoners. Several times also he went to find the bishop or the priests in their various hiding places, to keep them informed of events; and although his name was well known, although the danger became daily more pressing, he could never make up his mind to remain inactive. He had just taken the resolution, with several other Christians, to collect all the bodies of the martyrs whom they had not yet been able to bury, and, this work completed, to take refuge in the provinces, when, on the 6th of the tenth lunar month, the satellites suddenly entered the house where he was sleeping. Awakened by them with a start, he was taken aback for a moment, but soon: "God is calling me," he said to himself. "God calls me by a special blessing. How could I not respond to his voice?"

A few days before dying, on the 22nd of the twelfth lunar month, John wrote a long letter to his parents, the greater part of which we will quote here. Better than any explanation, better than any narrative, this letter, as well as those of the other martyrs that have been read in various pages of this history, will bring to light the prodigious effect of divine grace in the hearts of poor Korean neophytes. After giving details of his arrest, his first interrogations and his stay in the prison, which we have already reproduced, the confessor continues thus:

"I was transferred to the criminal court prison. I met there about ten Christians, men and women, all my close friends, detained there to receive their death sentence. What joy, what happiness to find ourselves together as brothers and sisters, and how can we thank God enough for such a blessing! Two or three months passed without the judge holding any session, I was sad and worried. The sins of a whole lifetime, during which I so often offended God out of pure wickedness, forming by their number like a heap of mountains, presented themselves to my mind, and I said to myself: What will be the outcome of all this? However, I did not lose hope. On the 10th of the twelfth month, I was summoned before the judge who had me undergo an extraordinary beating. By my own strength how could I have endured it? But supported by the strength of God, through the intercession of Mary, the angels, the saints and all our martyrs, I almost thought I was not suffering. I will never be able to repay such a grace, and the offering of my life is quite just. However, my conduct being so little regulated and my strength so lacking, I was in confusion and fear.

"But why worry before God who knows everything? In his infinite goodness, he deigned to send his Son for us into this world; this divine Son made man, for thirty-three years, endured a thousand sufferings, he shed the very last drop of his blood to give life to all

peoples in all centuries. And me, unhappy, in all my life, I have never known how to praise or thank him; I did not have the courage to do for him an act of virtue as big as the end of a hair. What am I saying? not a day has passed that I have not offended and betrayed him according to my whims; I was just wasting my time. How could I have been so stupid and so ungrateful?

“This life is only a moment, and the body is a very vain thing. When the soul is separated from it, after about ten days, look at this corpse; what a wretched thing worthy of pity! The sense of smell cannot bear this rot; the eyes, ears, nose and mouth are no longer distinguishable; the whole body is in dissolution, and hardly anything remains but the bones. This sight cuts the breath, and the intelligence is completely troubled. Alas! alas! Yet here is the body that we want, at all costs, to nourish well and dress delicately! During life one flatters one’s passions and unregulated inclinations, one follows all one’s desires for grandeur, wealth, ease and pleasures. For it, we gladly make ourselves the slave of the demon, we forget the eternal happiness of the true fatherland; we put all our heart, all our strength into pampering this food of worms, and the thought that the immortal soul is going to fall into Hell to burn there eternally does not cause us to tremble! To live like this is surely to assimilate ourselves to animals? What am I saying? animals have no soul to save, but for a man who has a soul, to lead the life of animals in this way, what horror!

“How can anyone be so foolish as not to think of the terrible judgment that will follow? Time is wasted on useless things, and after this life there are only terrible regrets. With a heart full of rage, we must say farewell to Paradise, and when, all inundated with bitterness, we descend into Hell, what means of escape? From whom to ask life now? Slave to horrible demons, and constantly in the midst of devouring fires, what a frightful situation! This eternal punishment had long been due to me because of my sins. But since God has preserved my life so far, I want to make sure that I hate them in order to obtain forgiveness.

“This year’s persecution is the fiercest there has been in this country; the number of those who, by their death, have confessed God and raised the glory of the Church, is so great, that religion will no doubt be able to preserve itself well, but how languishing is the faith of the Christians who remain! Their forces are consumed and as if broken, they tremble, they apostatize, they allow themselves to be beaten down. No remedy now, they say, and, driven by lukewarmness and weakness, they seem on the verge of becoming pagans again. Why then did they call themselves Christians? In what hope, then, in the midst of a country such as this, did they embrace the Gospel?

“Please therefore, make your efforts and employ all possible means so as not to be surprised by the deceptive snares of the three enemies: the world, the flesh and the devil; but the most dangerous of all is the flesh. Be diligent in reading and praying; know how to seize the propitious moment to indulge in meditation, and do not discontinue it; take a liking to the Way of the Cross, and if at each station you reflect with fervor, you will find there an immense spiritual profit. It is very difficult to come to know all one’s passions, disordered affections, vices and habits, without the exercise of meditation and prayer. However, if one does not know them, one cannot avoid the eternal pains of Hell. There are thoughts which cloud the mind’s eye, and at the same time bind and fatigue the soul’s forces. We say to ourselves, for example: for the moment, I have too much business; for the moment, there are difficulties between me and the neighbor; there are still other pretexts which lead away from the reception of the sacraments. By thus postponing day by day, how many have already fallen into the abyss! Please be on your guard and think it through.

“Above all, do not forget to invoke the Blessed Virgin, whose limitless virtues cannot be exalted by all our words. Mary ever virgin, you are the mother of the Son of God! Combining all happiness and all virtues, she shines with incomparable brilliance; Queen of heaven and earth, she knows in detail all our needs, and in her benevolence she neglects

nothing that touches us. She is all holy and all beautiful! From time immemorial, how many men and women saints have not obtained the kingdom of heaven by honoring her! Pray therefore to her earnestly, and you are sure to be heard; out of ten thousand, not even one can be refused.

“I have told you too many things already, but this is my last hour. My heart is impatient and my body is all agitated, I cannot say all I would like and what I say is pointless and very incorrect. In the end, how many Christians will you be left with? So take care to be always attentive, come together to pray with all your heart, and if you can obtain from the Holy Spirit the fire of charity, there will be no more difficulties for you. Fear neither danger nor death; do not make useless the desire that Jesus has to save all men, and by his help you will be able to cross happily the stormy sea of this life, and bring your boat to the shores of Heaven, where we will enjoy eternal joys together for ages unending.

“I will not be able to write in particular to Theresa and Agatha. They have already broken with the world, but that is not the most difficult part. Agatha, forced to live with the pagans, will have many difficulties to overcome; she will have to correct her difficult character Imprint deeply on your hearts the five wounds of Jesus Christ. Render unto God love for love, life for life, and even then can you hope to have fully discharged your duty? For Our Lord suffered a thousand pains and a thousand bitternesses of his own free will, for our sins; how are we ever to pay for such a blessing?

“I have a thousand things to communicate to you. But I cannot say everything. These lines are the last that my hand will be able to trace in this world, I hope you will read them and enjoy them. — Gi-hae year, the 22nd day of the twelfth lunar month”.

Six days later, the brave soldier of Jesus Christ sealed this letter with his blood.