Chapter 18

The apostle catechises the king and instructs him in the matters of our holy faith

No heathen, whether savage or Moor, is harder to convert than the one, who when confronted, lacks the weapons of rationality.[a] Hence, in matters of faith and the Christian religion, one must believe that he who possesses these weapons is always better placed to attain to the hope of advancing to the heights of Goodness and Grace.[b] From lack of these weapons it comes about that the Moor and the Turk resist with the sword the light of the Gospel and keep to the dark doctrines of their barbarous sect; that the heretics, with their pride and fleshly licence, extend so widely the abominable vice; and lastly, that the Jews, who in ancient times did not believe unless they had miracles, in order to justify their refusal to believe at the present time can only shelter behind the unbelief and blindness of their fathers and their ancestors. To this last group of unbelievers I compare the idolatry of Ethiopia and its peoples. In everything they follow the example of their forefathers, so that, just as all of them are one in the flesh and in understanding, equally so they consider themselves obliged to conform to the same pattern and to copy each other in their beliefs. Although miracles have considerable weight with them as arguments for Divine Power, example always prevails. Everything they have in abundance, except the curiosity to learn about heavenly things. Let us supply them with the necessary instruction which, as it is about the principles of our holy faith, can be a great consolation to all of them, and for some of them a remedy against the importunities of the enemy, who, as Prince of Darkness, attempts without scruple to lead them astray in everything. Proceeding thus and sustained by the divine favour, we gradually disperse the darkness of understanding of this people, by correcting their nonsensical beliefs about the other life. Now let us speak about the Author of Life.

The rest of this chapter, and all of chapters 19 and 20, represents a general exposition of Christian doctrines, lacking any specific references to Guinea and is therefore not translated. The translation resumes at f. 103.

(a) Teaching of Father Lucena of the Society. Dispositio (? testament) of Father Manuel Álvares of the Society, 1612.

(b) Chapters 18 - 20.