

CHAPTER IX

Continued Explanation of Chapter XII of the Apocalypse.

106. *And there was a great battle in heaven; Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels* (Apoc. 12:7). When the Lord had manifested these things to the good and to the wicked angels, the holy prince Michael and his companions with the divine permission gave battle to the dragon and his followers. It was a wonderful battle, for it was fought with the understanding and the will. St. Michael, burning with zeal for the honor of God and armed with divine power and with his own humility, resisted the arrogant pride of the dragon, saying: “Worthy is the Most High of honor, praise and reverence, and of being loved, feared and obeyed by all creation. He is mighty to work whatever his will desires. He that is increate and without dependence on any other being cannot seek anything that is not most just. To us He gave grace such as we have, creating us and forming us out of nothing. He can create other beings, as many and in whatever manner He pleases. It is reasonable that we, submissive and prostrate in his presence, adore his majesty and kingly grandeur. Come then, ye Angels, follow me; let us adore Him and extol his admirable and secret judgments, his most perfect and holy works. God is most exalted and superior to all creation, and He would not be the Most High if we could attain or comprehend his great works. He is infinite in wisdom and goodness, rich in his treasures and benefits. As Lord of all and needing none, He can distribute them to whomsoever serves him more, and He cannot err in his election. He can love and give to whom He loves, and He can love whomever He desires; He can raise up, create and enrich according to his good pleasure. In all things He will be wise, holy and powerful. Let us adore Him by acts of gratitude for the most wonderful work of the Incarnation upon which He has determined, and for his favors to his people and for their restoration if they fall. And regarding this expected One* of two natures, divine and human: Let us adore Him, reverence Him, and receive Him as our Head; let us confess He is worthy of all glory, praise and magnificence, and as the Author of grace and of glory let us give Him power and divinity.”

107. With such arms St. Michael and his angels gave battle, fighting as it were with the powerful rays of truth against the dragon and his followers, who fought with blasphemies. But at the sight of the holy Prince, not being able to resist, Lucifer was torn with interior rage and sought to flee from his torments; however, it was the will of God that he not only be punished but conquered so by his fall he would know the truth and power of God. Nevertheless he blasphemed and cried out: “Unjust is God in raising the human nature above the angelic. I am the most exalted and beautiful angel, and the triumph is due to me. I shall place my throne above the stars, and shall be like unto the Most High (Is. 14:13-14). I shall subject myself to no one of an inferior nature, nor consent that anyone take precedence before me or be greater than I.” In the same way spoke the apostate followers of Lucifer. But St. Michael answered: “Who is there who could be equal and compare with the Lord who dwells in the heavens? Be silent, enemy, in thy terrible blasphemies; and since iniquity has taken possession of thee, depart from our midst, O wretch, and begone with thy blind ignorance and wickedness into the dark night and chaos of the infernal pains. But let us, O spirits of the Lord, honor and reverence this happy Woman who is to give human flesh to the eternal Word, and let us recognize Her as our Queen and Lady.”

* cf. Gen. 49:10; *O Antiphon* for Dec. 23 [Ed.]

108. The great sign of the Woman served the good angels as a shield and arms of battle against the evil ones, for at the sight of it all their power of reasoning weakened and was brought to confusion and silence, since they could not endure the mysteries and sacraments contained in this sign. And just as by divine power this mysterious sign appeared, so also now the other figure or sign of the dragon appeared, so thus transformed he could be ignominiously hurled from heaven amid the fright and terror of his followers and the astonishment of the holy angels. All this was the effect of this new manifestation of the justice and power of God.

109. It is difficult to describe in words what passed in that memorable battle, since there is such a wide difference between our conceptions, founded on material objects, and those which would be appropriate to the nature and operations of such great spirits as these angels. But the wicked ones *prevailed not* (Apoc. 12:8), for injustice, lies, ignorance and malice could not prevail against equity, truth, light and goodness, nor could these virtues be overcome by those vices. Therefore it is also said *neither was their place found any more in heaven*. Through the sins which these disgraced angels had committed they made themselves unworthy of the eternal vision and company of the Lord. Their memory was blotted out from his mind, where they had been written by the excellences and graces of the nature given to them; and having lost the right to the places which had been reserved for them if they had obeyed, this right passed over to mankind, and to them they were dedicated, while the very vestiges of the apostate angels were blotted out and were no more found in heaven. O miserable wickedness and never to be described unhappiness, which drew after itself such a horrible and dreadful chastisement! The Evangelist adds:

110. *And that great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, who seduceth the whole world; and he was cast unto the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him* (Ib. 9). The holy prince Michael hurled from heaven Lucifer, now converted into a dragon, with those invincible words: "Who is like unto God?" So effective was this battle cry that it sufficed to precipitate that proud giant and all of his hosts to the earth and cast him in dreadful ignominy to the center of the earth. From that time he began to be called dragon, serpent, devil and Satan, imposed upon him by the holy Archangel in that battle as a testimony of his iniquity and malice. Deprived of the happiness and honor of which he had become unworthy, he was despoiled also of his names and honorable titles, acquiring in their stead such as designated his ignominy. The wicked plans which he proposed and enjoined upon his confederates, namely that they should deceive and pervert all those who would live in the world, manifest sufficiently his wickedness. Hence he who intended to scourge the nations was consigned to the hellish regions, as Isaias says in chapter XIV (v. 12-15), to the profound abyss, and his carcass was delivered to the moth and the worm of his own bad conscience (Ib. 11). Thus was fulfilled in Lucifer all that the Prophet says in that place.

111. When the heavens had been rid of the wicked angels, and the curtain of the Divinity unveiled to the good and the obedient; when the good had triumphed and entered their glory, and at the same time the rebels had been chastised, then happened what the Evangelist further says: *And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying: Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; because the accuser of our brethren is cast forth, who accused them before our God day and night* (Apoc. 12:10). This voice which the Evangelist heard was that of the Person of the Word, and all the holy angels heard and listened to it. Its echoes reverberated through the infernal regions and filled with trembling and fear the demons; however, they did not understand its mystery in full, but only as much of it as the Most High chose to manifest to them for their greater affliction and punishment. It was the voice of the

Son, who in the name of the humanity which He was to assume was asking the eternal Father that the salvation, power and kingdom of His Majesty and the power of Christ be realized, since the accuser of the brethren of the same Christ our Lord, who are men, had already been cast out. It was like a petition before the throne of the most holy Trinity that the salvation, power, and the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption be confirmed and executed against the envy and fury which Lucifer had conceived when he was cast down from heaven irate against the human nature, which the Word was to assume. Full of love and compassion the Word calls men his brethren. Lucifer is said to *accuse them day and night*, because both during the day in which he still enjoyed divine grace in the presence of the eternal Father and of the holy Trinity he belittled us in his pride, and much more in the night of his own darkness and of our fall he pursues us unceasingly with slander and persecution as long as this world will endure. He called virtue, power and reign the works and mysteries of the Incarnation and death of Christ due to all He worked by them, and because they manifested his great virtue and power against Lucifer.

112. This was the first time in which the Word in the name of his humanity interceded for men before the throne of the Divinity, and in which, according to our mode of conceiving such things, the eternal Father conferred with the other Persons of the blessed Trinity in regard to this petition, manifesting in part to the holy angels the decree of the divine consistory regarding these sacraments, saying to them: “Lucifer has raised the banners of pride and sin, and with all iniquity and fury will persecute the human race, and with cunning he will pervert many, and by the blindness of sins and vices in diverse ways they shall prevaricate ignorant of their danger; yet lying pride and all sin and vice are infinitely distant from our nature and will. We shall therefore raise up the triumph of virtue and sanctity, and for this purpose the second Person shall assume passible human nature, and shall accredit and teach humility, obedience, and all the virtues, and prepare salvation for mortals.* Being true God He shall humble Himself and make Himself the least of men;† He shall be the Just Man, the Model and Master of all sanctity, and shall die for the salvation of his brethren. Virtue alone shall be accepted in our tribunal, and shall always triumph over vices. We shall raise up the humble and humiliate the proud;‡ We shall make labors and sufferings glorious in our good pleasure. We resolve to help the afflicted and those who are suffering (Mt. 11:28); our friends shall be corrected by afflictions, and by this means advance in our grace and friendship, and according to their capabilities work out their salvation by practicing virtue. Blessed shall be those who weep (Mt. 5:3ff.), and happy shall be the poor and those who suffer for justice’ sake and for Christ their Head. The little ones shall be extolled and the meek of heart magnified. The peaceful shall be loved as our sons. Most dear shall those be to us who forgive and suffer injuries and love their enemies; We shall assign to them copious fruits of the blessings of our grace and rewards of immortal glory in heaven. Our Onlybegotten shall put into practice these decrees, and those who follow Him shall be our chosen ones, regaled, refreshed and rewarded by Us; their good works shall be engendered in our mind as the first cause of all virtue. We give permission to the wicked to oppress the good, thus helping them to gain their crown, while meriting punishment for themselves. Let there be scandals (Mt. 18:7) for the common good; unhappy shall they be who cause them, and blessed they who shall suffer them. The pompous and the proud shall afflict and curse the humble; the great and the powerful shall oppress the lowly and abject ones, who will give blessings instead of curses (I Cor. 4:12-

* cf. Lk. 2:30-31 [Ed.]

† cf. Ps. 21:7 [Ed.]

‡ cf. Lk. 18:14 [Ed.]

13). While they are pilgrims they shall be rejected by men, but afterwards they shall be ranked with the angelic spirits our sons, and shall enjoy the seats and rewards which the unhappy and unfortunate have lost. The obstinate and the proud shall be condemned to eternal death, where they shall recognize their perverse proceedings and obstinacy.

113. "So all may have a true model, and superabundant grace if they desire to avail themselves of it, our Son shall descend capable of suffering and as a Repairer, and He shall redeem men (whom Lucifer defrauded of their happy state), and shall raise them up through his infinite merits. Let salvation be accomplished in our will and determination since there is a Redeemer and Master who shall merit for them and teach them, who shall be born and live poor, and shall die despised, condemned by men to a most ignominious and outrageous death; who shall be judged a sinner and a criminal, and yet shall satisfy our justice for the offense of sin. Due to his foreseen merits We shall show mercy and kindness. All shall understand that the humble, the peaceful, and those who practice virtue, who suffer and yet forgive, follow our Christ and shall be our son. No one shall be capable of entering by his own free will into our kingdom unless he denies himself, and taking up his cross follows his Head and Master.* This shall be our kingdom, composed of the perfect who have legitimately labored and fought,† persevering to the end (Mt. 10:22). These shall have part in the power of our Christ, now prepared and determined upon, for the accuser of his brethren has been cast down, and the triumph of Christ is secured (Apoc. 17:14), who shall wash and purify them with his blood, that to Him be exaltation and glory; hence only He shall be worthy to open the book of the law of grace (Ib. 5:9). He shall be the way, the light, the truth, and the life (Jn. 14:6), through whom men shall come to Me. He alone shall open the gates of heaven. He shall be the Mediator (I Tim. 2:5) and the Advocate of mortals (I Jn. 2:1); in Him they shall have a Father, a Brother, and a Protector, since they have a persecutor and accuser. And the angels, who as our true sons have worked their salvation by practicing virtue, and have defended the reign of my Christ, shall likewise be honored and crowned through all the eternities of eternities in our presence."

114. This voice (which contains the mysteries hidden since the constitution of the world [Mt. 13:35] and manifested by the doctrine and the life of Jesus Christ) issued forth from the throne and imported more than I can explain. Through it were assigned the commissions which the holy angels were to fulfill. St. Michael and St. Gabriel were appointed ambassadors of the incarnate Word and of Mary his most holy Mother; they were to be ministers for all the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption. With these two Princes many other Angels were assigned to the same service as I shall explain afterward (201-206). Other Angels the Almighty appointed as companions and guardians of souls, to teach them and inspire them with the virtues and sanctity opposed to the vices into which Lucifer had proposed to seduce mankind. They were to guard and defend souls and bear them up in their hands (Ps. 90:12) so the just might not injure their feet against the stones, which are the snares and traps laid by their enemies.

115. Other things were decreed at this occasion or time, concerning which the Evangelist says was put into effect the power, salvation, virtue and reign of Christ. But among the mysterious works at this time was especially the designation and enumeration of the predestined in the secret tablets of the divine mind through the foreseen merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. O mystery and inexplicable secret which then occurred in the bosom of God!‡ O happy destiny for the chosen

* cf. Mk. 8:34 [Ed.]

† cf. II Tim. 2:5 [Ed.]

‡ cf. Rom. 11:33 [Ed.]

ones! What a moment of such weight! What a sacrament so worthy of the divine omnipotence! What a triumph of the power of Christ! O infinitely happy destiny for the members who were designated and united to such a Head! O great Church! O mighty people and holy congregation of such a Leader and Master! In the consideration of such an exalted sacrament the judgment of creatures is entirely overwhelmed, my understanding is suspended, and my tongue becomes mute.

116. In the consistory of the three divine Persons the mysterious book spoken of in the Apocalypse was given and as it were delivered to the Onlybegotten of the Father; at that time it was written, closed, and sealed with the seven seals of which the Evangelist speaks (Apoc. 5:1-7). When He was made human flesh He opened it, solving in their order the seals by enacting the mysteries of his Birth, Life and Death, unto the consummation of all things. That which the book contained were all the decrees of the holy Trinity after the fall of the angels, namely all that belongs to the Incarnation of the Word, the law of grace, the ten Commandments, the seven Sacraments, all the articles of faith and what is contained in them, and the constitution of the whole Church Militant. To the Word as having assumed human nature, and as the High Priest and holy Pontiff (Heb. 6:20), was given the power to communicate the necessary faculties and gifts to the Apostles and the other priests and ministers of the Church.

117. This was the mysterious beginning of the law of the Gospel. Upon that throne and in that most secret consistory it was established and written in the divine mind that those who would observe that law shall be written in the book of life.* Here was the beginning of that law, and of the eternal Father are the successors or vicars, the Pontiffs and Prelates.† From His Highness the meek, the poor in spirit, the humble, and all the just have their beginning. This is their most noble origin, and on that account it is true to say that he who obeys the superior obeys God (Lk. 10:16), and he who despises them despises God. All this was decreed and conceived in the divine mind, and to Christ was given the power to open in its proper time this book of decrees which until then was to be closed and sealed. In the meanwhile the Most High gave his testament, namely the testimonies of his divine words in the natural law and in the written law, accompanying them with wonderful works and manifesting a part of his secrets through the Patriarchs and Prophets.

118. Through these testimonies and through the blood of the Lamb it is said: *They (the just) overcame him* (Apoc. 12:11); for though the blood of Christ was entirely sufficient and superabundant to enable all the faithful to overcome their accuser the dragon, and though the testimonies and teachings of the Prophets are of great power and help for eternal salvation, yet the just attain the fruit of the Passion and Redemption by cooperating of their own free will with these divine helps, conquering their own selves and the demons, and making use of grace. They not only succeed in fulfilling the ordinary commandments and counsels of God, but they go to the extent of sacrificing their lives for the Lord in testimony of Him (Ib. 6:9) and in the hope of the crown and triumph promised by Christ, as the martyrs have done in testimony of the faith and in defending his honor.

119. Because of all these mysteries the sacred text adds: *Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you that dwell therein* (Ib. 12:12). Rejoice, because thou art to be the dwelling place of the just, and of the Just among the just, Jesus Christ, and of his most holy Mother. Rejoice, O heavens, because of all the material and inanimate creatures none obtained a better lot, for thou art to be

* cf. Eccclus. 24:32; Apoc. 20:12 [Ed.]

† cf. Eph. 3:15 [Ed.]

the house of God, who shall endure through the eternal ages, and thou art to receive as thy Queen the most pure and most holy creature who ever emanated from the power of the Most High. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and all ye ministering angels who dwell therein, and ye just, who shall be the companions of this Son of the eternal Father and of his Mother, and parts of that Mystical Body, whose Head is Christ himself. Rejoice, ye holy angels, because ministering to them and serving them by thy defense and custody thou shalt increase the rewards of thy accidental joy. Let St. Michael, the Prince of the celestial militia, singularly rejoice, because he defended in battle the glory of the Most High and his adorable mysteries, and because he is to be the minister of the Incarnation of the Word and the singular witness of all its effects to the end. Let all his allies and all the defenders of Jesus Christ and his Mother rejoice, since during their ministry they do not lose the joys of essential glory already their own. Because of such divine sacraments let the heavens rejoice!