

CHAPTER XIX

Christ our Lord Prepares for His Public Preaching by Giving Certain Notice of the Coming of the Messiah, Assisted by His Most Holy Mother; Lucifer begins to be Disturbed by These Events.

209. The fire of divine charity which burned in the bosom of our Redeemer and Master was as it were violently enclosed until the destined and opportune time in which He was to manifest it, breaking the jar and vase of his most sacred humanity* and laying bare his bosom by means of his preaching and manifest miracles for men. Although it is true, as Solomon says, that fire cannot be concealed in the bosom without burning the vestments (Prov. 6:27), and though the Lord always manifested his love, sending forth from Him its sparks and flames in all his doings since the moment of his Incarnation, yet in comparison to what He was to accomplish in his chosen time, and in comparison to the conflagration of his interior love, we may say the flames of his love had until then remained covered and enclosed. His Majesty had now reached the age of perfect adolescence, attaining his twenty-seventh year, and according to our way of understanding it already seemed He could neither resist nor restrain the impetus of his love and desire to press onward in obedience to his eternal Father in the sanctification of men. He was filled with sorrowing love, prayed and fasted much, and began to mingle with the people and communicate with mortals. Many times He passed the nights in prayer in the mountains, and began to absent Himself two or three days from the house and from his most holy Mother.

210. The most prudent Lady, who already in these journeys and absences of her Son began to feel his labors and sorrows approaching, was pierced in heart and soul by the sword foreseen by her pious and devout affection, and was entirely consumed in most tender acts of love for her Beloved. During these absences of her Son her heavenly courtiers and vassals, the holy Angels, attended upon Her in visible forms, and the great Lady spoke to them of her sorrows and sent them as messengers to her Son and Lord so they could bring Her news of his occupations and exercises. The holy Angels obeyed their Queen, and by their frequent messages She was enabled in her retirement to follow Christ, the highest King, in all his prayers, supplications and exercises. Whenever the Lord returned She received Him prostrate upon the ground, adoring Him and thanking Him for the blessings which He had gained for sinners. She served Him, and as a loving Mother sought to procure for Him alleviation and the food, poor though it was, which She knew He needed as a true man subject to suffering, for often it happened that He had passed two or three days without rest, food or sleep. The most blessed Mother knew the cares of the Savior in the manner already described (200, 203-4), and the Lord always informed Her of them and of his new undertakings and the hidden blessings communicated to many souls by new light concerning the Divinity and the Redemption.

211. Full of this knowledge the great Queen was accustomed to say to her most holy Son: "My Lord, the true and highest Good of souls, I see, Light of my eyes, that thy most ardent love which Thou hast for men will not rest or be appeased until it has secured their eternal salvation. This is the proper occupation of thy charity, and the work entrusted to Thee by thy eternal Father. Thy words and works of inestimable value are powerful to draw to Thee many hearts; yet, O my sweetest Love, I desire all mortals to be drawn to Thee and correspond to thy solicitude and the

* cf. Mk. 14:3 [Ed.]

kindness of thy charity. Lord, here is thy slave with a heart prepared to employ all my faculties for thy greater pleasure and offer my life, if necessary, so all creatures submit themselves to the desires of thy most ardent love, which so completely devotes itself to drawing them to thy grace and friendship." This offering the Mother of Mercy made to her most holy Son, moved by the force of her inflamed charity which obliged Her to desire and procure the fruit of the works and doctrine of our Repairer and Master; and since the most prudent Lady worthily weighed them and knew their value, She desired none of them to be wasted for souls, nor proper gratitude for them to be lacking in men. By this ineffable charity She desired to assist the Lord, or rather to assist those who were to hear his words and witness his works to correspond to this benefit and not lose the occasion of their remedy. She also desired, as She truly did in fact, to render worthy gratitude to the Lord and praise for the wonderful works He would accomplish for souls, so all these mercies would be acknowledged and gratitude given for them, not only for those mercies which were efficacious but also those withheld due to the guilt of men. In this type of thanksgiving the merits attained by our great Lady were as hidden as they were admirable, because in all the works of Christ our Lord She participated in a most exalted degree, not only regarding the cause, her most holy Son with whom She concurred, cooperating with his charity, but also regarding the effects. She labored for each soul as if She herself was the one to be benefited. Of this I shall say more in the third Part (*Cor.* 111, 160-8).

212. To this offering of the most loving Mother her most holy Son answered: "My Mother and Friend, already the time has arrived in which it is suitable for Me, conformable to the will of my eternal Father, to begin to prepare some hearts so they receive the light of my doctrine, and give them notice that the chosen and opportune time of human salvation has arrived. In this work I desire Thee to accompany and follow Me. Do Thou beseech my Father to guide by his light the hearts of mortals and awaken their souls so with an upright intention they receive the knowledge which shall now be given them of the coming of their Repairer and Master into the world."^{*} By this exhortation of Christ our Lord the Blessed Mother was made ready to accompany and follow Him in his journeys as She desired. From that day on the divine Master was accompanied by his Mother on nearly all his excursions from the town of Nazareth.

213. The Lord began to make these journeys more frequently in the three years preceding his public preaching and Baptism. In the company of our great Queen He made many journeys in the neighborhood of Nazareth and to the province of Nephtali (according to the prophecy of Isaias [Is. 9:1]), and to other places. In his conversation with men He began to announce to them the coming of the Messiah, assuring them He was already in the world and in the territory of Israel. He told them of it without intimating that He himself was the one they thus expected, for the first testimony that He was the Son of the eternal Father was given publicly by the Father himself when He said at the Jordan: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased* (Mt. 3:17). Yet without manifesting in particular his dignity as the Onlybegotten made man, He began to give notice of it in general terms as one who knows with certainty. Without working public miracles, nor by other demonstrations of his divine power, He secretly accompanied his teachings and testimonies with interior inspirations and helps which He conferred on the hearts of those with whom He conversed and treated. Thus disposing their souls by faith, He prepared them to receive Him afterwards more easily as their Messiah.

214. He made acquaintance with those who by his divine wisdom He knew to be suitable and capable, or less incapable, of accepting the seed of truth. To the more ignorant He spoke of the

* cf. Jn. 6:44 [Ed.]

signs of the coming of the Redeemer known to all, such as the coming of the three Kings, the slaughter of the Innocents, and similar events. With the more enlightened He adduced the testimonies of the Prophets already fulfilled, and He explained to them these truths with the power and force of a divine Teacher. He proved to them the Messiah had already come to Israel, and He pointed out to them the kingdom of God and the way to attain it. Since He exhibited in his outward appearance so much beauty, grace, peace, sweetness, and gentleness of manner and speech, and since all his discourse, though veiled, was nevertheless so vivid and strong, and since He added thereto also his interior help of grace, the fruit of this wonderful mode of teaching was very great. Many souls came out of sin, others improved their life, and these and others were made capable of and catechized in great mysteries, and especially that the Messiah for whom they hoped was already in his reign.

215. To these works of mercy the divine Teacher added many others, for He consoled the sorrowful, relieved the oppressed, visited the sick and grieving, encouraged the disheartened, gave salutary counsel to the ignorant, assisted those in the agony of death, secretly gave health of body to many, helped those in great distress, and at the same time led them on to the path of life and true peace. All those who trustfully came to Him, or heard Him with a devout and upright mind, were filled with light and gifts of the powerful right hand of his divinity. It is not possible to enumerate or estimate the admirable works of the Redeemer during these three years before his Baptism and public preaching. All was done in a mysterious manner, so without manifesting Himself as the Author of salvation He communicated it to a vast number of souls. In nearly all these wonderful operations our great Lady was present as a witness and most faithful Coadjutrix of the Master of life. Since all of them were manifest to Her, She assisted and gave thanks for them in the name of these beneficiaries of divine mercy. She composed hymns of praise to the Almighty, prayed for souls as one knowing all their interior necessities, and by her prayers gained for them new blessings and favors. She herself also undertook to exhort and counsel them, drawing them to the sweet teachings of her Son and giving them intimation of the coming of the Messiah; however, She practiced these works of mercy more among women, imitating among them the works of mercy which her most holy Son performed for men.

216. Few people accompanied and followed the Savior and his most holy Mother in those first years, for it was not yet time to call them to the close following of his doctrine, and hence they remained in their homes, informed by the divine light and improving their lives by it. The ordinary companions of the heavenly Teachers were the holy Angels, who served them as most faithful vassals and servants, and although Jesus and Mary often returned from these journeys to their home in Nazareth, yet during them they stood more in need of the ministry of these courtiers of heaven. Some of the nights they passed in prayer without any other shelter than the sky, and on these occasions the Angels protected them and sheltered them from the inclemency of the weather, and sometimes they brought food. At other times the Lord and his Mother begged for food, refusing to accept any money or other gifts not necessary for their present nourishment. When at times they separated, the Lord visiting the sick in hospitals and the Queen other sick persons, innumerable Angels accompanied Her in visible forms. Through their mediation She performed some of her works of charity and was kept informed of the doings of her most holy Son. I shall not tarry in explaining in particular the wonders performed by them during this time, nor upon the labors and inconveniences suffered on the roads, inns, and from the obstacles which the common enemy placed in their way; it is enough to know the Teacher of life and his most holy Mother were looked upon as poor pilgrims, and preferred the way of suffering without refusing any labor for our salvation.

217. In this hidden manner the divine Master and his Mother spread the knowledge of his coming to all sorts of persons, yet the poor were more especially the objects of his blessed solicitude (Lk. 7:22); they are ordinarily better disposed, with fewer sins and greater light, and minds uncluttered and free from anxieties, and thus more readily receive and admit his doctrine. They are likewise more humble and diligent in subjecting their will and understanding, and in applying themselves to an upright and virtuous life; and since during these three years Christ our Lord had not yet begun his public teaching and doctrine, nor with manifest authority confirmed by miracles, He addressed Himself rather to the humble and poor, who are led to the truth with less show of authority. Nevertheless, the attention of the ancient serpent was much aroused by many of the doings of Jesus and Mary most holy, for not all of his miracles remained concealed, though the power by which they were done was hidden. Lucifer saw that through his words and exhortations many sinners were brought to penance, amended their life, and escaped his tyranny, while others advanced in virtue, and in all who listened to the Teacher of life the common enemy noticed a great and unheard-of change.

218. What enraged him most was he could not succeed in his attempts with those who were in the throes of death. Though he multiplied his cunning and malice in these last hours of souls in this life, it often happened that this bloodthirsty dragon, having approached the sick in order to exert his malice, was interrupted by the entrance of Christ our Lord or his most holy Mother and felt a powerful force which hurled him and his demons to the deepest caverns of hell. If the Sovereigns of heaven, Jesus and Mary, had previously come to the sickroom, the demons could not enter and could exert no influence upon the sick person who thus died in the powerful protection of the Lord. Since this dragon felt the divine power and was ignorant of its cause he developed a furious agitation and rage, and sought a remedy for the damage he felt. Then happened what I shall relate in the following chapter, in order not to enlarge this present one.

TEACHING OF THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN, MARY MOST HOLY.

219. My daughter, by the knowledge I give thee of the mysterious works of my most holy Son, and mine in union with Him, I see thee astonished; for being so powerful to transform the hearts of mortals, yet many of them have been hidden until now. Thy wonder should not be that men are unaware of these mysteries, but that having known so many mysteries of the life and works of my Lord and thine they have so forgotten and despised them. If their hearts were not so weighed down, and if they would pay attention with affection to the divine truths, they would find in the life of my Son and in my own, with what they know of it, powerful motives to be grateful. By the Articles of the holy Catholic faith, and by so many divine truths proposed and taught by the holy Church, many worlds could be converted; for by them is known that the Onlybegotten of the eternal Father vested Himself in the form of a servant in mortal flesh (Philip. 2:7) in order to redeem us by the ignominious death of the cross, acquiring eternal life by giving his temporal life, and recalling sinners from the death of hell. If this benefit would be taken at its true value, and mortals were not so ungrateful to their God and Repairer, and so cruel to themselves, none would lose the occasion of their remedy, or deliver themselves over to eternal condemnation. Thus be amazed, my dearest, and mourn with irreparable weeping over the dreadful perdition of so many fools, ungrateful and forgetful of God, and what they owe Him and themselves.

220. Other times (172) I have told thee that the number of these unhappy foreknown as reprobate is so great, and of those who save themselves is so small, that it is not expedient to

declare it more in particular; for if thou understood this, and art a true daughter of the Church and spouse of Christ, my Son and Lord, thou wouldest die of sorrow at such calamity. What thou canst know is, that all this perdition and the damages suffered by the Christian people in government, and in other things which afflict them, in the leaders as well as the subjects of this mystical body of the clergy, as well as among the laity: All originate and result from the forgetfulness and contempt of the life of Christ and the works of human Redemption. If in this situation some means were undertaken to awaken their remembrance and gratitude, and if they would act as faithful and recognized children of their Creator and Repairer, and of me, who am their intercessor, the indignation of the just Judge would be appeased, and there would be some relief of the general ruin and the scourging of Catholics; the eternal Father, who justly doles out retribution for the honor of his Son, and chastises with greater rigor the servants who know the will of their Lord and do not fulfill it, would be appeased.

221. The faithful in the holy Church make much of the sin of the incredulous Jews in taking away the life of their God and Master; this was indeed a very grave crime, and merited the punishments decreed against that people. Yet Catholics do not notice that their own sins have other characteristics which exceed those committed by the Jews, for though their ignorance was culpable, in the end they held it as truth; and at that time the Lord willfully delivered Himself up to them, permitting them to work darkness and its power (Lk. 22:53), in which the Jews were oppressed by their sins. Today Catholics do not have this ignorance, but rather are in the midst of the light by which they know and grasp the importance of the divine mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption; and the holy Church has been founded, enlarged, made illustrious by miracles, by Saints, by the Scriptures, and by the knowledge and confession of truths which others do not attain. Despite all this accumulation of favors, benefits, knowledge and light, many live like infidels, or as if they did not have before their eyes so many motives to awaken and oblige them, nor so many chastisements to fill them with fear. How then can they, under these conditions, imagine that the sins of others have been greater and more grievous than their own? How can they not fear that their chastisement shall not be more lamentable? O my daughter, ponder well this doctrine, and tremble with holy fear.* Humble thyself to the dust, and acknowledge thyself as the least of all creatures before the Most High. Look upon the works of thy Redeemer and Master; be guided by them and apply them for thy justification with sorrow and penance for thy sins. Imitate me and follow my ways as thou knowest by the divine light. I desire thee to labor not only for thyself alone, but also for the salvation of thy brethren;[†] this must be by praying and suffering for them, charitably admonishing those thou canst, supplying by it what they have not obliged thee to do. Seek to demonstrate thy charity more in soliciting good for those who have offended thee, suffering all, and humbling thyself even to the least creatures; and toward the needy in the hour of death, as thou art ordered to do (173-4), be solicitous to help them with fervent charity and firm confidence.

* cf. Philip. 2:12 [Ed.]

† cf. Eccl. 24:47 [Ed.]