

CHAPTER VIII

The Demons Meet in Hell to Confer Regarding the Triumph of Christ our Savior in Jerusalem; the Results of This Meeting; and the Measures Resolved Upon by the Priests and Pharisees of Jerusalem.

417. All the mysteries connected with the triumph of our Savior were great and admirable, as I have said; but not the least wonderful among these was the hidden secret of the oppression felt in hell by the divine power when the demons were cast into it at the entrance of His Majesty into Jerusalem. Two entire days, from Sunday until Tuesday of that week, the demons lay shattered by the right hand of the Almighty, filled with painful and confused fury, by horrible howls manifesting it to all the damned, and that entire turbulent gathering received new fright and torment beyond the ordinary. The prince of that darkness, Lucifer, more confounded than all the rest, gathered in his presence as many demons as were then in hell, and taking a most eminent place as their chief spoke to them and said:

418. "It cannot be otherwise than this Man who thus persecutes us and destroys our influence, and who thus crushes my power, is more than a Prophet. For Moses, Elias, Eliseus, and others of our enemies among the ancients never vanquished us so completely, though they performed miracles, nor did they ever succeed in hiding from me so many of their doings as this one, for especially of his interior works I can obtain little information. How can a mere man perform such works and manifest such supreme power over all creation as are publicly ascribed to Him? Without any change or inflation of mind He received the praise and glorification for these works from the mouths of men. In celebrating this triumphal entry into Jerusalem He has shown new power over us and over all the world, for even now I find vanishing away my strength for visiting destruction upon Him and blotting out his Name from the land of the living (Jer. 11:19). In his present triumph not only his own friends have extolled Him and proclaimed Him as blessed, but even many of those who were subject to me have done the same and have called Him the Messiah promised in their law. He has drawn them all to venerate and adore Him. This certainly seems to exceed mere human power, and if He is no more than man there never was one who partook of the divine power in such a degree, and He is doing and will do us great damage. Since the time when we were cast out from heaven we have never experienced such ruinous defeat, nor have I ever encountered such overwhelming power before this Man came into the world. If He is the incarnate Word (as we suspect) there is need for thorough deliberation, for if we permit Him to live He will by his example and teaching draw after Him all mankind. In my hatred I have several times sought to bring about his death but without success. In his own country when I instigated his countrymen to cast Him off a cliff, He by his power made his way through those who were to execute it (Lk. 4:30); on another occasion He simply made Himself invisible to the Pharisees, whom I had incited to stone Him (Jn. 8:59).

419. "But now, with the help of his disciple and our friend Judas, matters seem to promise better success. I have so wrought upon the mind of Judas that he is willing to sell and betray his Master to the Pharisees, whom I have likewise incited to furious envy. They are anxious to inflict upon Him a most cruel death, and will no doubt do so. They are waiting only for an occasion, which I will try my utmost to procure for them, for Judas and the priests and Pharisees are ready to do anything I suggest. Nevertheless I see in this a great danger which demands our closest attention, for if this Man is the Messiah expected by his people He will offer his death and all his sufferings for the Redemption of men and thereby satisfy for their misdeeds and gain infinite

merits for all of them. He will open the heavens and pave the way for mortals to enjoy those rewards of which God has deprived us, and this would be a new and severe torment if we do not take precautions to prevent it. Moreover this Man will leave to the world a new example of patience in suffering and show its merit to all the rest of mankind, for He is most meek and humble of heart, and was never seen impatient or excited. These same virtues He will teach all men, which even to think of is an abomination to me since these are the virtues most offensive to me and to all those who follow my guidance and sentiments. Hence it is necessary to unite on a course of action regarding the persecution of this new Man, Christ, and that you let me know what is your understanding of this matter.”

420. Over this proposal of Lucifer those princes of darkness held long conferences, lashing themselves to incredible fury against our Redeemer and lamenting the error they judged they had already made in plotting his death with so much astuteness and malice. They concluded henceforth to make use of redoubled astuteness and cunning to repair the damage done and hinder his death, for they were by this time confirmed in their suspicion that He was the Messiah, although they did not reach altogether definite conclusions in this matter. This suspicion was for Lucifer the cause of so much anxiety and torment that he approved of the new determination to hinder the death of the Savior, and he closed the meeting by saying: “Believe me, friends, if this Man is at the same time true God He will by his Passion and Death save all men, our dominion will be overthrown, and mortals will be raised to new happiness and dominion against us. We were greatly mistaken in seeking his death; let us immediately proceed to repair the damage we have wrought.”

421. With this intention Lucifer and all his ministers went to the city and neighborhood of Jerusalem and there, as is related in the Gospels, they exerted their influence with Pilate and his wife to prevent the death of the Lord (Mt. 27:19), and place other hindrances which certainly arose but are not recorded in the Gospels. Before all others they beset Judas with new suggestions, dissuading him from his intended treachery toward his divine Master. When by their suggestions they failed to change his mind or make him desist from his purpose, Lucifer appeared to him in visible and corporeal form and reasoned with him not to procure the death of Christ through the help of the Pharisees. Being aware of the unbounded avarice of the disciple, the demon offered him great riches if he would not deliver Him over to his enemies. Lucifer now tried much more earnestly to deter Judas than formerly to persuade him to sell his divine and most meek Master.

422. But, O sorrow of human misery, that Judas, having surrendered himself to the demon to obey him in evil, would not obey him in retracting it! The enemy could not call to aid the force of divine grace, and vain are all other motives and influences to prevent man from falling into sin and help him follow his true good. It was not impossible for God to convert the heart of this perfidious disciple, but the persuasion of the demon, who had torn him from grace, was of no avail for this purpose. However, the Lord was justified in not supplying Judas with further help, since he had cast himself into his exceedingly great obstinacy while in the very school of his divine Master, continuing to resist his teaching, inspirations, and vast favors, disregarding in dreadful presumption the counsels of the Lord and those of his most holy Mother, and despising the living example of their lives and the interaction with them and with all the Apostles. Against all these influences for good the impious disciple had hardened himself with pertinacity greater than a demon and beyond all the malice of a man free to follow the good. Having run such a course of evil he arrived at a state in which his hatred of Christ and his Mother made him incapable of seeking any of their mercy, unworthy of any light to recognize it, and blind to all

reason and natural law which would have made him hesitate to injure the Innocent from whose hands he had received such generous blessings. This is indeed an astounding example and dreadful warning for the foolish weakness and malice of men, all of whom if they have no fear may be drawn into similar dangers and destruction, and bring upon themselves a similar unhappy and lamentable ruin.

423. The demons, in despair of ever being able to influence Judas, went to the Pharisees. By many suggestions and arguments they sought to dissuade them from persecuting Christ, our Lord and Savior. But the same happened with them as with Judas, and for the same reasons; they could not be diverted from their purpose, nor from the wicked deed which they had planned. Although some of the scribes, from motives of human prudence, were led to reconsider whether what they had resolved was advisable, yet since they were not assisted by divine grace they were soon again overcome by their hatred and envy of the Savior. Hence resulted the further efforts of Lucifer with the wife of Pilate and with Pilate himself. The former, as is recorded in the Gospels, they incited to womanly pity so she might urge Pilate to beware of condemning *that just man* (Mt. 27:19). By these suggestions and by others which they themselves made to Pilate they induced him to resort to so many different schemes in order to evade passing the sentence of death upon the innocent Savior; of these I shall speak in their proper place (597, 611, 635, 638). Since Lucifer and his satellites were entirely frustrated in their efforts they again changed their purpose, and in their fury now resolved to induce the Pharisees, executioners, and their helpers to heap the most atrocious cruelties upon the Lord, and by the excess of torment to overcome the invincible patience of the Redeemer. All these machinations of the devil the Lord permitted so the high ends of the Redemption would be attained; however, He did not allow the executioners to execute on the sacred Person of the Savior some of the more indecent atrocities to which they were incited by the demons (579).

424. On the Wednesday following his triumphal entry into Jerusalem Christ our Lord remained in Bethany without going to Jerusalem, and on this day the Pharisees and scribes met at the house of Caiphas in order to plan the death of the Savior of the world (Mk. 14:1). The welcome which the Redeemer had met with among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and which had followed so shortly upon the resurrection of Lazarus and the many other miracles of those days, had excited their envy to the highest pitch; besides, they had already resolved to take away his life under the false pretext of the public good, as Caiphas had prophesied so contrary to his intention (Jn. 11:49). The demon, who saw them thus determined, suggested to some of them not to execute their design on the feast of the Pasch lest the people who venerated Christ as the Messiah or a great prophet cause a disturbance. Lucifer sought by this delay an opportunity to hinder the death of the Lord altogether. Yet since Judas was now entirely in the clutches of his avarice and hatred, and altogether deprived of any saving grace, he came to the meeting of the priests in great disturbance and terror of mind, and began to negotiate with them concerning the betrayal of his Master. He closed the deal by accepting thirty pieces of silver, contenting himself with such a price for Him who contained within Himself all the treasures of heaven. In order not to lose their opportunity the priests put up with the inconvenience of its being so near the Pasch. All this was so disposed by divine Providence directing these events.

425. At the same time happened what our Savior is recorded as saying in St. Matthew (26:2): *You know that after two days shall be the Pasch, and the Son of man shall be delivered up to be crucified.* Judas was not present when these words were uttered by Christ, but in the fury of his treason he returned to the Apostles and perfidiously began to inquire of his companions, and even of the Lord and his Blessed Mother, where they intended to go from Bethany and what the

Master was to do on the following few days. All this was merely a treacherous preparation of the perfidious disciple for the betrayal of his Master to the chief Pharisees. By these pretenses and concealments Judas, as a hypocrite, sought to palliate his premeditated treachery. But both the Savior and his most blessed Mother well understood the purpose of his feverish activity, for the holy Angels immediately reported to them his shameful contract to which he had bound himself for thirty pieces of silver. On that very day, when the traitor approached the great Lady to ask Her where the Lord proposed to partake of the Pasch, She answered him with ineffable meekness: "Who can penetrate, O Judas, the secret judgments of the Most High?" With that She ceased to warn him against committing the sin, but both She and the Lord tolerated his presence until he himself despaired of his remedy and eternal salvation. But this meekest Dove, now certain of the irreparable ruin of Judas and the delivery of her most holy Son into the hands of his enemies, broke out in most tender lamentations in the presence of the Angels, for they were the only ones with whom She could confer about her heartrending sorrow. In their presence She permitted the sea of her sorrow to overflow, and She gave expression of words of greatest wisdom and affection. She excited the wonder of these holy Angels, who saw such an exalted and new perfection practiced by a mere creature in the midst of most bitter sorrows and tribulations.

INSTRUCTION GIVEN ME BY THE GREAT QUEEN OF HEAVEN, MARY MOST HOLY.

426. My daughter, all thou hast understood and written in this chapter contains great and instructive mysteries for mortals who shall meditate upon it. First, thou must ponder with discretion how my most holy Son came to undo the works of the demon (I Jn. 3:8) and vanquish him so he would not have such powers against men, and for this intention leaving him in the condition of his nature of an angel and the habitual knowledge corresponding to it, nevertheless concealed many things from him (as thou hast already recorded in other places [*Inc.* 501, 648; *Tran.* 356, 413]), so by not attaining such knowledge the Most High could restrain the malice of this dragon in the manner most appropriate for the sweet and strong providence of the Most High (Wis. 8:1). Thus the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures was concealed from him, and he drifted into such hallucination regarding this mystery that he confused himself, and was involved in varying discourses and fictitious determinations until in due time my most holy Son made him understand it, and that his divinized soul had been glorious from the instant of his conception. Likewise He permitted the demon to witness some of the miracles of his most holy life, yet concealed from him many others. And the same happens now with some souls, for my most holy Son does not permit the enemy to know all their works, though naturally he could know them; His Majesty hides them in order to attain his high ends for the benefit of souls. Afterwards He allows him to find them out for the greater confusion of the demon, as happened regarding the works of the Redemption, when for his torment and greater oppression the Lord permitted him to become aware of them. For this reason the infernal dragon, the serpent, is continually prowling around souls in order to search into their works, not only the interior ones but also the exterior ones.

427. Such is the love my most holy Son has for souls after He was born and died for them. This benefit would be more general and continuous with many if they did not make themselves unworthy by delivering themselves over to the enemy, listening to his false suggestions and counsels full of malice and error. As the just and chosen ones in sanctity become instruments in the hand of the Lord, who governs and controls them Himself and does not allow another to

move them because they submit entirely to his divine disposition, so on the contrary many of the reprobate and those who are forgetful of their Creator and Redeemer, and who deliver themselves into the hands of the demon by repeated sins, are moved and drawn into all kinds of wickedness and are mere tools of his depraved malice. An example of this we have in the perfidious disciple and in the murderous Pharisees persecuting their Redeemer. No mortal has an excuse if they suffer this damage, for just as Judas and the priests by the use of their own free will refused to follow the good advice of the demon and desist from persecuting Christ our Savior, so they could much more easily have refused to join him in persecuting Christ when they were first tempted, for then they were assisted by grace if only they wished to use it, while afterwards they were assisted only by their own free choice and led by their bad habits. That they were in the second instance deprived of the grace and assistance of the Holy Ghost was only just, because they had given themselves up and subjected themselves to the demon in order to obey him in all malice and allow themselves to be governed only by his perverse will, without consideration of the goodness and power of their Creator.

428. Hence shalt thou understand that this infernal serpent can have no power to lead anyone toward the good, but very much toward leading those souls into sin who are neglectful in issuing from their evil state. Truly I say to thee, my daughter, that if mortals would thoroughly understand this danger they would be struck with great terror, for there is no created power which can prevent a soul who has once yielded to sin from casting himself from abyss to abyss. Since the sin of Adam the weight of human nature, burdened with the concupiscible and irascible passions, is drawn toward sin as the stone toward its center. Joined to this tendency are the bad habits and customs, the power of the demon over those who have sinned, and his unceasing tyranny. Who is there who is so much an enemy of his own welfare as to despise these dangers? The Almighty alone can free him, and to his right hand is reserved the remedy. In spite of all this mortals live as secure and forgetful of their ruin as if each one had it in his own power to prevent and repair it at his pleasure. Though many know and openly confess they cannot rise from their own ruin without the help of God, yet they allow this consciousness to become a mere habit and a vague sentiment, and instead of lovingly seeking his aid they offend and irritate God, expecting Him to wait upon them with his grace until they are tired of sinning or are unable to continue their abominable wickedness and ingratitude.

429. Do thou fear, my dearest, this formidable danger, and guard thyself against the first sin, for after the first sin thou shalt be less able to resist the second, and thy enemy acquires strength against thee. Remember thy treasure is most valuable, and the vase in which thou dost carry it most fragile; by one fall thou canst lose it all (II Cor. 4:7). Great is the cunning and sagacity which the serpent uses against thee, and thy insight is but small. Therefore thou must collect thy senses and close them to all outward things; thou must withdraw thy interior within the wall of protection and refuge raised for thee by the Almighty, from whence thou canst repel all the inhuman assaults of thy enemies. To excite this fear in thee it shall be sufficient to consider the punishment of Judas, which has been made clear to thy understanding. In regard to thy imitation of my behavior in other matters, how thou must act toward those who hate and persecute thee, love them and bear with them in charity and patience, and pray for them to the Lord with true zeal for their salvation as I did for the traitor Judas, in all this I have previously often exhorted thee. I desire thee to excel and distinguish thyself therein, and to instruct thy religious, and all those with whom thou hast communication, in this manner of acting, because in view of the patience and meekness of my most holy Son and my own example, the wicked and all mortals shall be covered with unutterable confusion because they have not pardoned each other with

fraternal charity. The sins of hatred and vengeance shall be punished with greater severity than other sins on Judgment Day, and in this life these vices shall most quickly drive away the infinite mercy of God and cause eternal punishment of men unless they amend in sorrow. Those who are kind and sweet toward their enemies and persecutors, and who forget injuries, resemble on that account more particularly the incarnate Word, for Christ always went about seeking to pardon and load with blessings those who were in sin. By imitating the charity and meekness of the Lamb the soul disposes itself to receive and maintain that noble spirit of charity and love of God and neighbor which makes it fit for all the influences of divine grace and benevolence.