

CHAPTER XXIII

The Triumph of Christ our Savior on the Cross over the Demon; His Death and the Prophecy of Habacuc; and the Council which the Demons Held in Hell.

701. The hidden and venerable mysteries of this chapter correspond to many others scattered throughout the whole extent of this History. One of them is that Lucifer and his demons in the course of the life and miracles of our Savior could never fully ascertain whether His Majesty was true God and Redeemer of the world, and consequently what the dignity of most holy Mary was. This was so disposed by divine Providence so all the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption of the human race would be more fittingly accomplished. Lucifer, although knowing God was to assume human flesh, nevertheless knew nothing of the manner and the circumstances of the Incarnation. Since he was permitted to form an opinion of this mystery in accordance with his pride, for this reason he was so hallucinatory, sometimes affirming Christ to be God because of his miracles,* and on other occasions denying such an opinion due to seeing Him poor, humiliated, afflicted and fatigued. The dragon, blinded by this variety of lights, persisted in his doubt and continued his probing or inquisition until the determined hour of the Cross, at which time by the knowledge of the mysteries of Christ he was both undeceived and vanquished in virtue of the Passion and Death suffered by the most holy humanity of the Lord and which Lucifer himself had brought about.

702. This triumph of Christ our Savior was accomplished in such an exalted and miraculous manner that I feel the sluggishness and insufficiency of my powers to describe it. It took place in a manner too spiritual and too far removed from the perception of the senses according to which I must describe its process. In order to manifest it I would wish we were able to speak and understand one another by means of the simple communication and vision peculiar to the angels, for such would be necessary in order to describe and understand correctly this great miracle of the omnipotence of God. I shall say what I can and leave the understanding of it more to the enlightenment of faith than to the signification of my words.

703. In a preceding chapter (653) I said Lucifer and his demons, as soon as they saw the Lord taking the Cross upon his sacred shoulders, wished to flee and cast themselves into hell, for at that moment they felt against them the divine power which with greater force began to oppress them. By this new torment they recognized (it thus being permitted by the Lord) that they were threatened with great ruin by the death of this innocent Man, who could not be a mere man, which they themselves had plotted. They therefore desired to withdraw, and they ceased to incite the Jews and the executioners as they had previously done. But the imperial command of most holy Mary, enforced by the divine power, detained them, and enchained like fiercest dragons they were compelled to accompany Christ to Calvary. The end of this chain was given to the great Queen so by the virtues of her most holy Son She could subject and shackle them. Although they many times sought to break away, frantically tearing themselves, they could not overcome the power of the heavenly Lady. She forced them to come to Calvary and surround the Cross, where She immobilized them and commanded them to remain and witness the end of the great mysteries there enacted, the remedy for men and ruin for the demons.

* cf. Lk. 4:41 [Ed.]

704. Lucifer and his infernal hosts were so overwhelmed with pains and torments by the presence of Christ our Lord and his most holy Mother, and with the fear of their impending ruin, that they would have felt greatly relieved to be allowed to cast themselves into the darkness of hell. Since this was not permitted them, they fell upon one another and furiously fought with each other like hornets disturbed in their nest, or like a brood of vermin confusedly seeking some dark shelter. But their rabid fury was not that of animals but of demons more cruel than dragons. Then the haughty pride of Lucifer saw itself entirely vanquished, and all his proud thoughts of setting his throne above the stars of heaven and drinking dry the waters of the Jordan put to shame (Is. 14:13; Job 40:18). How weak and annihilated was he now, he who so often had presumed to overturn the whole world! How downcast and confounded, he who had deceived so many souls by false promises and vain threats! How dismayed this unhappy one at the sight of the gibbet where he had sought to place Mardochai (Esther 7:9)! What ignominy was his to see the true Esther, most holy Mary, asking for the rescue of her people (Ib. 3ff.), and for the traitor to be cast down from his ancient height and chastised by the punishment of his supreme pride! There our invincible Judith beheaded him (Judith 13:10); there She trod upon his haughty neck. From now on (O Lucifer) I shall know thy arrogance and pride is much greater than thy strength (Is. 16:6). Instead of splendors thou art now vested with worms (Is. 14:11) which envelop and consume thy cadaver! Thou who hast afflicted the nations art now more wounded, bound and oppressed than all the world. Henceforth I shall not fear thy counterfeit threats, and I will no longer listen to thy wiles, for I see thee subdued, debilitated, and without any power.

705. The time had now come for this ancient dragon to be vanquished by the Master of life. Since this was to be the hour of his disillusionment, and as this venomous asp was not to escape it by stopping his ears to the voice of the enchanter (Ps. 57:5), the Lord began to speak the seven words from his Cross, permitting Lucifer and his demons to hear them and understand the mysteries enclosed therein, for it was by this disclosure that the Lord desired to triumph over the demons, over sin, and over death, and despoil them of their tyrannical power over the human race. The Savior then pronounced the first word: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do* (Lk. 23:34). By these words the princes of darkness came to the full conviction that Christ our Lord was speaking to the eternal Father, and that He was his natural Son and divine, the true God with Him and the Holy Ghost; that in his most holy humanity, as a perfect man united to the Divinity, He had permitted death by his own will in order to redeem the entire human race; and that now He offered his infinitely precious merits for the pardon of the sins of all those children of Adam who would avail themselves thereof for their rescue, not excepting even the wretches who crucified Him. At this discovery Lucifer and his demons were thrown into such fury and despair that they instantly wished to hurl themselves impetuously into the depths of hell, and strained all their powers to accomplish it in spite of the powerful Queen.

706. In the second word spoken by the Lord to the fortunate thief, *Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise* (Ib. 43), the demons understood that the fruits of the Redemption in the justification of sinners ended in the glorification of the just. They were made aware that from this hour the merits of Christ would begin to act with a new force and strength, that through them would be opened the gates of paradise which had been closed by the first sin, and that from now on men would enter upon eternal happiness and occupy their destined heavenly seats which until now had been impossible for them. They perceived the power of Christ to call sinners, justify and glorify them, and they felt the triumphs gained over themselves by his exalted virtues, the humility, patience, meekness, and all the virtues of his life. The confusion and torment of Lucifer at seeing this cannot be explained by human tongue, but it was

so great that he humiliated himself so far as to beg our Queen, most holy Mary, to permit them to descend into hell and be cast out from her presence; but the great Queen would not consent, since the time had not yet arrived.

707. At the third word spoken by the Lord to his Mother, *Woman, behold thy son* (Jn. 19:26), the demons discovered that this heavenly Lady was the true Mother of the Godman, the same Woman whose likeness and prophetic sign had been shown to them in the heavens at their creation, and who was to crush their head as announced by the Lord in the terrestrial paradise (Gen. 3:15). They were informed of the dignity and excellence of this great Lady over all creatures, and of her power which they were even now experiencing. Since they had from the beginning of the world and from the creation of the first woman used all their astuteness to find out who this great Woman announced in the heavens could be, and since they now discovered Her in Mary, whom they had until now overlooked, these dragons were seized with inexpressible fury; their having been thus mistaken crushed their arrogance beyond all their other torments, and in their fury they raged against their own selves like bloodthirsty lions, while their helpless wrath against the heavenly Lady was increased a thousandfold. In addition they now knew St. John was appointed by Christ our Lord as the angelic guardian of his Mother, endowed with the powers of the priesthood. This they understood to be in the nature of a threat against their own wrath, which was also well known to St. John. Lucifer saw not only the power of the Evangelist, but that given to all priests in virtue of their participation in the dignity and power of our Redeemer, and that the rest of the just, even though not priests, were placed under the special protection of the Lord and made powerful against hell. All this paralyzed the strength of Lucifer and his demons.

708. The fourth word of Christ was addressed to the eternal Father (Mt. 27:46): *My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* The evil spirits discovered in these words the charity of God toward men was boundless and everlasting; that in order to satisfy it He had mysteriously suspended the influence of the Divinity over his most sacred humanity so by the supreme rigor of the Passion the Redemption would be most copious; that He was aware and lovingly complained that not all men would be saved; and how ready He was to suffer more if such would be ordained by the eternal Father. The good fortune of man in being so beloved by God increased the envy of Lucifer and his demons, and they foresaw the divine omnipotence executing this immense love without limitation. This knowledge crushed the haughty malice of the enemies, and they were made well aware of their own weakness and helplessness in opposing this love if men themselves would not choose to neglect its influence.

709. The fifth word of Christ, *I thirst* (Jn. 19:28), confirmed the triumph of Christ over the demon and his henchmen. They were filled with wrath and fury because the Lord clearly let them see their total overthrow. By these words they understood Him to say to them: If what I suffer for men and my love for them seem great to you, be assured my love for them is still unsatiated and continues to long for their eternal salvation, and the mighty waters of torments and sufferings have not extinguished it (Cant. 8:7). Much more would I suffer for them if it were necessary in order to deliver them from your tyranny and make them powerful and strong against your malice and pride.

710. In the sixth word of the Lord, *consummatum est* (Jn. 19:30), Lucifer and his demons were informed that the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption was now accomplished and entirely perfected according to the decree of divine Wisdom. They were made to feel that Christ our Redeemer had obediently fulfilled the will of the eternal Father; that He had accomplished all the promises and prophecies made to the world by the ancient Fathers; that the humility and

obedience of our Redeemer had compensated for their pride and the disobedience they had shown in heaven in not desiring to subject themselves and acknowledge Him as their Superior in human flesh; and that they were now through the wisdom of God justly humbled and vanquished by the very Lord whom they had despised. The great dignity and the infinite merits of Christ demanded that in this very hour He exercise his office and power of Judge over angels and men such as had been conceded to Him by the eternal Father (Jn. 5:22); hence He now applied this power by hurling this sentence at Lucifer and all his followers, namely that being condemned to eternal fire they instantly depart into the deepest dungeons of hell. This very sentence was included in the pronouncing of the seventh word: *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit* (Lk. 23:46). The powerful Queen and Mother of Jesus concurred with the will of her most holy Son and also commanded Lucifer and his allies to depart into the infernal depths. In virtue of these decrees of the supreme King and Queen, the evil spirits were routed from Calvary and precipitated to the deepest hell more violently and suddenly than a flash of light through the riven clouds.

711. Christ our Savior, as the triumphant Conqueror, having vanquished the great enemy, now yielded up his spirit to the Father and permitted death to approach by inclining his head (Jn. 19:30). By this permission He also vanquished death, which was with the demons equally deceived in Him, for death could not attack men, nor had any jurisdiction over them, except through the first sin of which it was a punishment. Because of this the Apostle says the weapon or *the sting of death is sin* (I Cor. 15:55-6), which opens up the wounds by which death enters into the world of humanity; yet since our Savior paid the debt of sin which He could not commit, therefore when death took away his life without the shadow of justice it lost the power which it had over the other sons of Adam (Rom. 5:12), such that from then on neither death nor the demon could hurt them as before if men would avail themselves of the victory of Christ and not return to subject themselves to the demon of their own free will. If our first father Adam had not sinned, and we ourselves in him, we would not suffer the punishment of death, but merely pass over to the happiness of the eternal fatherland. But sin has made us subject to death and slaves of the devil (I Jn. 3:8), who seeks our death in order to use it to deprive us of our passage to eternal life, and first of the grace, blessings, and friendship of God; thus we remain in the slavery of sin and the devil, subjects of his tyrannous and iniquitous rule. All these works of the demon were dissolved by Christ our Savior, for in dying without sin and satisfying for our own sins He merited that our death would be a death of the body only, and not of the soul; that it would have power to take away our temporal life, but not our eternal; the natural life, but not the spiritual; and that it would henceforth be merely the portal to eternal happiness if we ourselves do not renounce that blessing. Thus the Lord satisfied for the chastisements due to the first sin, at the same time furnishing us a means of offering a compensation in our own name by accepting our natural and bodily death for the love of God. Christ absorbed death (I Cor. 15:51) and offered his own as a bait for deceiving death. By his death He put an end to its power, overcame it, and was the death of death itself (Osee 13:14).*

712. In this triumph the Savior fulfilled the prophecy of Habacuc contained in his canticle and prayer (Hab. 3:2-5),† from which I shall select some passages necessary for my purpose. The Prophet was informed of this mystery and the power of Christ over death and the devil. With holy fear he beseeched the Lord to *bring to life his work*, namely man, and prophesied that *He*

* cf. also Tenebrae for Holy Saturday, 1st Antiphon at Lauds: *O mors, ero mors tua* [Ed.]

† cf. also Good Friday, 1st Tract [Ed.]

shall make it known; that when He shall be the most angry, He shall remember his mercy; that the glory of this miracle would fill the heavens, and his praise would fill the earth; that his brightness shall be as the light; that horns are in his hands, which are the arms of the Cross, and there is his strength hid; that death shall go before his face captive and vanquished; that the devil shall go forth before his feet and measure the earth. All this was executed to the letter, for Lucifer departed having his head crushed by the feet of Christ and his most holy Mother,* who on Calvary despoiled and trod upon him by their sufferings and power. Since he was forced to cast himself to the lowest hell, which is in the middle of the earth and farthest removed from its surface, he is said to measure the earth. The rest of the canticle pertains to the triumph of Christ our Lord in the succeeding ages of the Church, but that need not be repeated here; however, what is just for all men to understand is that Lucifer and his demons, by the death of Christ our Savior, were bound, weakened, and debilitated in their power of tempting rational creatures unless their sins and their own free will again unbind them and encourage them in their pride to return for the destruction of the world. All this will be better understood from the proceedings of the infernal council held in hell, and from what I shall say further in the course of this History.

*THE COUNCIL HELD BY LUCIFER WITH
HIS DEMONS IN HELL AFTER THE
DEATH OF CHRIST OUR LORD.*

713. The rout of Lucifer with his demons from mount Calvary to the abyss of hell was more violent and disastrous than their first expulsion from heaven. Though as holy Job says (Job 10:21), that place is a land of darkness, covered with the shades of death, full of gloomy disorder, misery, torments and confusion, yet on this occasion the chaos and disorder was increased a thousandfold because the damned were made to feel new horror and additional punishments at the sudden meeting of the ferocious demons in their rabid fury. It is certain the demons do not have the power of assigning the damned to a place of greater or lesser torment, for all their torments are decreed by divine justice according to the guilt of each of the condemned; yet in addition to this essential punishment the just Judge allows them to suffer other accidental punishments from time to time on certain occasions, for their sins have left in the world roots and much damage to others who because of them are condemned, and the new effects still arising from former sins cause such accidental punishments in the damned. Thus the demons devised new torments for Judas for having sold and brought about the death of Christ. They then also understood that this place of dreadful punishments where they had placed him (of which I spoke above [538]) was destined for the chastisement of those who would damn themselves having faith without works,† and for those who would intentionally despise both the worship of God obligated by the virtue of faith and the fruit of human Redemption. Against these the demons execute a more furious wrath, similar to the one they have conceived against Jesus and Mary.

714. As soon as Lucifer was permitted to proceed in these matters and arise from the consternation in which he remained for some time, he set about proposing to his fellow demons new plans of his pride. For this purpose he called them all together, and placing himself in an elevated position he spoke to them: “To you, who have for so many ages followed and still

* cf. Gen. 3:15 [Ed.]

† cf. James 2:14-26 [Ed.]

follow my just faction in vengeance of my grievances, is known the injury which I have now sustained at the hands of this new Man and God, and how for thirty-three years He has led me about deceived, hiding from me his divinity and concealing the operations of his soul, and how He has now triumphed over us by the very death which we brought upon Him. Before He assumed flesh I hated Him and refused to acknowledge Him as being more worthy than I to be adored by the rest of creation. Although because of this resistance I was cast out from heaven with you and was degraded to this abominable condition so unworthy of my greatness and former beauty, I am even more tormented to see myself thus vanquished and oppressed by this Man and by his Mother. From the day on which the first man was created I have tirelessly sought to find them and destroy them; or if I would not be able to destroy them, I at least wished to bring destruction upon all his creatures and induce them not to acknowledge Him as their God, nor any of them ever draw any benefit from his works. This has been my intention and to this all my solicitude and efforts were directed, but in vain, since He has overcome me by his humility and poverty, crushed me by his patience, and at last has despoiled me of the sovereignty of the world by his Passion and outrageous death. This causes me such an excruciating pain that even if I succeeded in hurling Him from the right hand of his Father where He sits triumphant, and if I would draw all the redeemed souls down into this hell, my wrath would not be satiated or my fury placated.

715. "Is it possible for human nature, so inferior to my own, to be exalted above all creatures! That it is so loved and favored as to be united to the Creator in the Person of the eternal Word! That before executing this work He made war on me, and afterwards cast me down in such confusion! From the beginning I have held this humanity as my greatest enemy; it has always filled me with intolerable abhorrence. O men, so favored and gifted by your God whom I abhor, and so ardently loved by Him! How shall I hinder your good fortune? How shall I bring upon you my unhappiness, since I cannot destroy the existence you have received? What shall we now begin, O my vassals? How shall we restore our reign? How shall we recover our power over men? How shall we overcome them? For if men from now on will not be most senseless and ungrateful, if they are not worse disposed than we ourselves toward this Godman who has redeemed them with so much love, it is clear that all of them will eagerly follow Him; none will take notice of our deceits; they will abhor the honors which we insidiously offer them, and will love contempt; they will seek the mortification of the flesh and will discover the danger of carnal pleasure and ease; they will despise riches and treasures, and love the poverty so much honored by their Master; and all that we can offer to their appetites they will abhor in imitation of their true Redeemer. Thus will our reign be destroyed, since no one will be added to our number in this place of confusion and torments; all will reach the happiness which we have lost, all will humiliate themselves to the dust and suffer with patience, and my wrath and haughtiness will avail me nothing.

716. "Oh unhappy me, what torment does my own error cause me! When I tempted Him in the desert (Mt. 4:1) the only result was to give Him a chance to leave the example of this victory which by imitating men can overcome me so much the more easily. My persecutions only brought out more clearly his doctrine of humility and patience. In persuading Judas to betray Him, and the Jews to subject Him to the deadly torture of the Cross, I merely hastened my ruin and the remedy of men, while the doctrine I sought to blot out was only the more firmly implanted. How could one who is God humiliate Himself to such an extent? How could He bear so much from men who are evil? How could I myself have been led to assist so much in making this salvation so copious and wonderful? O how divine is the power of this Man who so torments

and weakens me! And how can this Woman, his Mother and my Enemy, be so mighty and invincible in her opposition to me? New is such power in a mere creature, and no doubt She derived it from the divine Word whom She clothed in human flesh. Through this Woman the Almighty has ceaselessly waged war against me, though I have hated Her in my pride from the moment I recognized Her in her sign or image.* But if my proud indignation is not to be assuaged I benefit nothing by my perpetual war against this Redeemer, against his Mother, and against men. Now then, you demons who follow me, now is the time to give way to our wrath against God. Join with me all of you to confer by what means we must proceed, for I desire in this your opinions.”

717. Some of the principal demons gave their answers to this dreadful proposal, encouraging Lucifer by suggesting diverse schemes for hindering the fruit of the Redemption among men. They all agreed it was not possible to injure the Person of Christ, to diminish the immense value of his merits, to destroy the efficacy of the Sacraments, or to falsify or abolish the doctrine which Christ had preached; yet they resolved, in accordance with the new causes, means, and favors established by God for the remedy of men, to now seek new ways of hindering and preventing the work of God by so much the greater deceits and temptations. In reference to these plans some of the astute and malicious demons said: “It is true that men now have at their disposal a new and very powerful doctrine and law, new and efficacious Sacraments, a new Model and Instructor of virtues, and a powerful Intercessor and Advocate in this Woman; yet the inclinations and passions of their flesh and nature remain just the same, and the delectable and sensible things have not changed. By these means, adding new astuteness, let us undo as far as in us lies the effects of what this Godman has wrought for men. Let us wage powerful warfare by drawing their attention with suggestions and exciting their passions so they with great impetus will follow them without attending to anything else; and in their human condition, being so fearful and engrossed in their desired object, they cannot attend to the contrary.”

718. Acting upon this counsel they redistributed the spheres of work among themselves so each squadron of demons could with a specialized astuteness tempt men to different vices. They resolved to continue to propagate idolatry in the world so men might not come to the knowledge of the true God and the Redemption. Wherever idolatry would fail, they concluded to establish sects and heresies for which they would select the most perverse and depraved of the human race as leaders and teachers of error. Then and there were concocted among these malignant spirits the sect of Mohammed, the heresies of Arius, of Pelagius, of Nestorius, and whatever other heresies have been introduced into the world from the first ages of the Church until now, together with those which they have in readiness but which it is neither necessary nor proper to mention here. Lucifer showed himself content with these infernal counsels since they oppose divine truth and destroy the foundation of human salvation, which is divine faith. He lavished flattering praise and high offices upon those demons who showed themselves willing and who undertook to find the impious originators of these errors.

719. Some of the demons charged themselves with perverting the inclinations of children at their conception and birth, and others to induce parents to be negligent in the education and instruction of their children either through an inordinate love or aversion, and to cause a hatred of parents among the children. Some offered to create hatred between husbands and wives, to place them in the way of adultery, or to think little of the fidelity promised to their conjugal partners. All agreed to sow among men the seeds of discord, hatred and vengeance, proud and

* cf. *Conception* 90ff. [Ed.]

sensual thoughts, the desire of riches or honors, and by suggesting sophistical reasons against all the virtues Christ has taught. Above all they intended to weaken the remembrance of his Passion and Death, of the means of salvation, and of the eternal pains of hell. By these means the demons hoped to burden all the powers and the faculties of men with solicitude for earthly affairs and sensual pleasures, leaving them little time for spiritual thoughts and their own salvation.

720. Lucifer heard these different suggestions of the demons, and answering them he said: "I am much beholden to you for your opinions; I approve of them and adopt them all. It will be easy to put them into practice with those who do not profess the law given by this Redeemer to men, though with those who accept and embrace these laws it will be a difficult enterprise. But against this law and against those who follow it I intend to direct all my wrath and fury, and I will most bitterly persecute those who hear the doctrine of this Redeemer and become his disciples; against these must our most relentless battle be waged to the end of the world. In this new Church I must strive to sow my cockle (Mt. 13:25), namely the ambitions, avarice, sensuality, and mortal hatreds, with all the other vices of which I am the head; for if once these sins multiply and increase among the faithful, they will by their concomitant malice and ingratitude irritate God and justly deprive men of the helps of grace left to them by the merits of the Redeemer. And if by their sins they thus despoil themselves of these means of salvation we will have assured victory over them. We must also exert ourselves to weaken piety and all that is spiritual and divine so they do not realize the power of the Sacraments and receive them in mortal sin, or at least without fervor and devotion, for since these Sacraments are spiritual it is necessary to receive them with a well-disposed will in order to reap their fruits. If they despise the medicine they will languish in their sickness and have less resistance to our temptations; they will not see through our deceits, they will forget the benefits available to them, and they will neither esteem the memory of their own Redeemer nor the intercession of his Mother. Thus will their foul ingratitude make them unworthy of grace and so irritate their God and Savior as to deprive them of his helps. In all this I wish for all of you to assist me strenuously, losing neither time nor occasion for executing my commands."

721. It is not possible to rehearse all the schemes of this dragon and his allies concocted at that time against the holy Church and her children so these waters of the Jordan might be swallowed up in his throat (Job 40:18). It is enough to state that they spent in this conference nearly an entire year after the death of Christ to consider the state of the world up to that time and its new state after the crucifixion of Christ our Good and our Teacher, and after His Majesty had manifested the truth of his faith by such enlightening miracles, blessings, and examples of holy men. And if all this has not been enough to convert mortals to the way of salvation, it can be clearly understood how much Lucifer has been able to sway them, and that his wrath is so great that we are able to say with St. John (Apoc. 12:12): *Woe to the earth, because Satan is come down unto you full of wrath and fury!* But alas!, that truths so infallible as these, and so important so we may know our danger and shun it with all our strength, are in our days blotted out from the minds of mortals to the irreparable danger of the whole world! Our enemy is astute, cruel and watchful, but we are sleepy, lukewarm and careless! What wonder is it that Lucifer has entrenched himself so firmly in the world when so many listen to him and accept and follow his deceits, and so few resist him because they forget the eternal death which he with furious indignation and malice seeks to load upon them? I beseech those who read this not to forget this dreadful danger. If souls are not convinced of this danger through the evil condition of the world, and through the evils each one experiences himself, let them at least learn of this danger by the vast and powerful remedies and helps which the Savior thought it necessary to leave behind in

his Church, for He would not have provided such antidotes if our sickness and danger of eternal death were not so great and formidable.

INSTRUCTION WHICH THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN GAVE ME.

722. My daughter, by divine enlightenment thou hast received great understanding of the glorious triumph of my Son and Lord on the Cross over the demons and the oppression by which they were left defeated and vanquished. But thou must remember thou art yet ignorant of much more than what thou knowest concerning these ineffable mysteries, for in mortal flesh the creature cannot comprehend them in their reality, and divine Providence reserves the full understanding of them as a reward of the saints in heaven and for the beatific vision in which these mysteries will be comprehended clearly. This insight will also be given to the reprobate, to each one according to his degree, for their confusion and punishment at the end of their career. But what thou hast learned will suffice to apprise thee of the dangers of this mortal life and enliven thy hope of overcoming thy enemies. I desire also to warn thee of the new and special wrath which the dragon has conceived against thee for what thou hast written in this chapter. He has ceaselessly pursued thee with his wrath and has sought to hinder thee from writing my Life, as thou hast experienced continually in this work. But now his haughty pride is incensed against thee especially because thou hast revealed his humiliation and crushing ruin at the death of my most holy Son, the condition in which it left him, and the secret counsels for revenging himself upon the children of Adam, and especially the members of the holy Church. All this has excited and disturbed him anew, seeing these secrets shall be revealed to those yet ignorant of them. Thou shalt feel this indignation in the difficulties he shall stir up against thee by various temptations and persecutions, which thou hast already begun to recognize, experiencing the malice and cruelty of this enemy; and I warn thee to be wary of this.

723. Thou art astonished, and justly so, to know on the one hand the power of the merits of my Son, of his Redemption, and the ruin and debilitation they have caused in the demons, and on the other hand to see them so powerful, lording over the world with tremendous temerity. Although the light given to thee in writing this History is equal to this astonishment, I desire to add still another point of information so thou mayest guard thyself so much the more carefully against enemies so full of malice. It is certain that when Lucifer and his demons came to know the sacrament of the Incarnation and Redemption, that my most holy Son had been born so poor, humble and despised, and knowing his life, miracles, and mysterious Passion and Death, and all the rest He accomplished in the world to draw men to Him, they were debilitated and without strength in tempting the faithful in the same way as the rest of men and as they ceaselessly desire to do. In the primitive Church this terror of the demons and the fear they had of the baptized and followers of Christ our Lord continued for many years, for in them the divine power shone forth brightly by means of their imitation of Christ and fervor by which they professed their holy faith, followed the doctrine of the Gospel, and exercised the virtues by heroic and most fervent acts of love, humility, patience, and contempt of the vanities and obvious deceits of the world. Many shed their blood and gave their life for Christ our Lord, and performed excellent and admirable works for the glory of his Name. This invincible fortitude resulted from their living at a time so near to the Passion and Death of their Redeemer, having more present to them the prodigious example of his magnificent patience and humility, but also because they were less tempted by the demons, who could not so soon rise from the crushing ruin inflicted upon them by the triumph of the divine Crucified.

724. This living image and imitation of Christ, which the demons recognized in those first children of the Church, they feared in such a way that they dared not approach them and fled from their presence, as happened with the Apostles and the other just who rejoiced in the doctrine of my divine Son. In their most perfect works were offered up to the Almighty the first fruits of grace and of the Redemption. And the same would happen from now on (as is seen and experienced in the perfect and the saints) if all Catholics would accept grace, work with it, not permit it to go to waste, and follow the Way of the Cross, since Lucifer fears it as thou hast written. But then as time passed the charity, fervor and devotion in many of the faithful began to grow cold, and they forgot the benefit of the Redemption; they yielded to carnal inclinations and desires, they loved vanity and avarice, and permitted themselves to be captivated and deceived by the false fantasies of Lucifer by which the glory of the Lord has been obscured, and have surrendered themselves to their mortal enemies. By this foul ingratitude has the world been brought to its present most unhappy state, and the demons have risen up in pride against God, presuming to possess themselves of all the children of Adam by the forgetfulness and carelessness of Catholics. They carry their audacity so far as to intend the destruction of the whole Church, perverting so many who disclaim it, and inducing those who are in it to think little of it, or fail to take advantage of the price of the blood and death of their Redeemer. The greatest calamity is that many Catholics have not come to realize this damage, nor care about the remedy, although they can presume the times have arrived which were threatened by my most holy Son when He spoke to the women of Jerusalem, namely those in which the barren should be happy, and many would call upon the mountains and hills to cover and fall upon them (Lk. 23:29-30) in order not to see such horrible sins cutting down the sons of perdition like dried trees without fruit and without any virtue.* In this evil time dost thou live, O my daughter; and in order for thee to not be included in the perdition of so many souls do thou weep over it in bitterness of heart, and never forget the mysteries of the Incarnation, Passion and Death of my most holy Son, for I desire thee to render gratitude for them for many who despise them. I assure thee the mere memory and contemplation of these mysteries are of great terror for hell, torment and drive away the demons, and they flee and withdraw from those who remember with gratitude the life and mysteries of my most holy Son.

* cf. Mk. 11:12-14, 20-21 [Ed.]