

CHAPTER IX

Most Holy Mary Recognizes Lucifer Rising Up to Persecute the Church; what She Did against This Enemy, Helping and Defending the Faithful.

135. In the highest degree of grace and sanctity possible in a mere creature, the great Lady of the world saw with the eyes of divine knowledge the little flock of the Church increasing day by day. As a most vigilant Mother and Shepherdess, from the high mountain on which She was placed by the right hand of her omnipotent Son, She watched* with deepest insight lest any assault or attack from the ravenous wolves of hell threaten the little sheep of her fold, for She well knew their hatred against the newborn children of the Gospel. The watchfulness of the Mother of Light† served as a wall of defense to that holy family which the most pious Queen had accepted as her own and looked upon as the portion and inheritance of her most holy Son, selected from the rest of men and chosen by the Most High. For some days the little ship of the Church proceeded prosperously onward, governed by the heavenly Mistress by the counsels She gave, the doctrine She taught, the warnings She administered, as well as the prayers and petitions She incessantly offered without losing any occasion or moment in attending to all that was necessary for this vigilance and for the consolation of the Apostles and the other faithful.

136. A few days after the coming of the Holy Ghost, while at her prayers, She said to the Lord: “My Son, the true God of love, I know, my Lord, that the little flock of thy holy Church, of which Thou hast made me the Mother and Defender, is of no less value than the infinite price of thy blood and life by which Thou hast redeemed it from the power of darkness (Col. 1:13); thus it is reasonable that I offer Thee my life and all that I am for the preservation and increase of what thy holy will holds in such estimation. Therefore let me die, my God, if it is necessary for the exaltation of thy Name and the spread of thy glory throughout the world. Receive, my Son, the sacrifice of my lips and my will which I offer in union with thy own merits. Look kindly upon thy faithful and receive those who hope solely in Thee and deliver themselves to thy holy faith. Govern thy vicar Peter so he may govern with certainty the sheep Thou hast entrusted to him. Watch over all the Apostles, thy ministers and my masters, preventing them all with the blessings of thy sweetness (Ps. 20:4), so we all may execute thy perfect and holy will.”

137. The Most High responded to the petition of our Queen and said to Her: “My Spouse and Friend, chosen among creatures for the plenitude of my pleasure, I am attentive to thy desires and petitions. Yet Thou knowest my Church must follow my footsteps and doctrine, imitating Me on the way of suffering and of my Cross, which my Apostles, disciples, and all of my intimate friends and followers must embrace, for such they cannot be without this condition of labor and suffering (Mt. 10:38). It is also necessary for the ship of my Church to bear the ballast of persecutions by which it shall sail securely through the prosperity of the world and its dangers. Such is demanded by my most high providence in regard to the faithful and predestined. Attend, therefore, and behold the manner in which this is to be brought about.”

138. Immediately the great Queen in a vision saw Lucifer and a great multitude of demons rising out of the depths of the infernal caverns where they had been oppressed since the time they had been vanquished and hurled from mount Calvary, as I have described above (*Tran.* 710). She

* cf. Mk. 13:37 [Ed.]

† cf. Jn. 8:12 [Ed.]

saw that dragon with seven heads coming up as it were from the depths of the sea, followed by the rest. Although they came forth very much weakened, in the manner of convalescents unable after a long and grievous sickness to drag themselves along, yet despite all this in pride and rage he was lashed to implacable indignation and arrogance, which on this occasion he recognized as greater than his strength, as Isaias said (Is. 16:6); for on the one hand he manifested the crushing defeat which had been caused in him by the victory of our Savior and the triumph He attained on the Cross, and on the other hand he unleashed a volcano of wrath and fury which flamed from his bosom against the holy Church and her children. Having come upon the earth he roamed all over it and reconnoitered; then he hastened to Jerusalem in order to strain all his rabid fury in persecuting the sheep of Christ. He began to spy from afar, gradually approaching and encircling that fold, which was so humble and yet so formidable to his arrogant malice.

139. The dragon saw what a multitude had subjected themselves to the faith and how many were hourly receiving holy Baptism; how the Apostles continued to preach and perform such great miracles for the good of souls; how the new converts renounced and abhorred riches; and how the holy Church was founded with all the principles of invincible sanctity. At such astonishing changes the wrath of the demon increased and his concentrated malice and wrath vented itself in fearful howls. Lashing himself into fury because he was so powerless against God, and thirsting to drink up the pure waters of the Jordan (Job 40:18), he sought to approach nearer to the congregation of the faithful, but in this he could not succeed because they were all united in perfect charity. This virtue, together with faith, hope and humility, was like an impregnable castle against the dragon and his ministers of malice. He roamed about in the vicinity to find some little sheep that might have carelessly strayed from the fold of Christ in order to attack and devour it. He schemed and plotted in many ways to attract someone who would give him an opportunity of entering the fortress of virtue by which all were protected, but everywhere he found his entrance forestalled and prevented by the vigilance of the Apostles and the power of grace, and especially by the protection of most holy Mary.

140. But when the great Mother saw Lucifer and such an army of demons, and the malicious wrath with which they rose against the evangelical Church, her merciful Heart was wounded by a dart of compassion and sorrow as one who knew on the one hand the weakness and ignorance of men, and on the other the malicious cunning and fury of the ancient serpent. In order to restrain and bridle his pride, most holy Mary turned upon him and said (Ps. 112:5): "*Who is like unto God, who dwelleth on high?* O foolish and haughty enemy of the Omnipotent! The same One who vanquished thee from the Cross and crushed thy arrogance, redeeming the human race from thy cruel tyranny, commands thee now; his power annihilates thee and his wisdom confounds thee and casts thee into the abyss. I do this in his name to make thee unable to hinder the exaltation and glory due to Him from all men as their God and Redeemer." Then the merciful Mother continued her petitions, saying to the Lord: "Most high God and my Father, if the omnipotence of thy arm does not halt and crush the fury which I see in the infernal dragon and in his demons, without doubt he shall lay waste to the entire earth and destroy its inhabitants. Be Thou a God of mercy and clemency to thy creatures. Do not permit, O Lord, this venomous serpent to pour out its poison upon the souls redeemed and washed in the blood of the Lamb (Apoc. 7:14), thy Son and true God. Is it possible that souls themselves would deliver themselves over to such a bloodthirsty beast and mortal enemy? How shall my heart find rest if I see in such lamentable unhappiness any of the souls who have touched the fruit of thy blood? O that the wrath of this dragon be turned upon me alone and thy redeemed be placed in safety! Eternal

Lord, I shall fight thy battles against thy enemies. Clothe me with thy strength in order to humiliate them and crush their haughty pride.”

141. In virtue of this prayer and the resistance of the powerful Queen, Lucifer was struck with great fear, and for the time being he dared not approach any of the congregation of the faithful. Yet his fury was not therefore allayed, but he plotted to enlist the scribes and Pharisees, and all of the Jews, whom he perceived still clinging to their obstinate perfidy. He went to them and by many suggestions filled them with envy and hatred against the Apostles and the faithful of the Church, and hence through the unbelievers he roused the persecution which he could not begin himself. He instilled into their imagination how the preaching of the Apostles and disciples would result in the same damage, or even greater, as the preaching of their Master Jesus of Nazareth, whose Name they desired to introduce and praise among all they saw; how they themselves had crucified Him as a malefactor; how his glory would redound to their great dishonor; how having so many disciples who worked such miracles among the people all would be drawn toward Him; how the teachers and the learned in the law would be despised and lose their accustomed profits, since the new believers would donate all their goods to the new teachers; and how inevitably this damage would very soon overtake the teachers of the law due to the great multitudes following the Apostles.

142. These malicious suggestions appealed very strongly to the avarice and ambition of the Jews, and therefore they accepted them readily as sane and very conformable to their own desires. Hence arose the many meetings and cabals of the Pharisees, Sadducees, magistrates and priests against the Apostles as mentioned by St. Luke in the Acts. The first one occurred when St. Peter and St. John in the gate of the temple gave health to one who was a paralytic from birth (Acts 3:6), who was then forty years old and known throughout Jerusalem. Since this miracle was so evident and remarkable the inhabitants gathered in great multitudes, all astonished and excited beyond control (Ib. 11). St. Peter preached a great sermon to them, proving they could not be saved except by the name of Jesus, in virtue of which he and St. John had cured this paralytic of forty years standing (Ib. 12ff.). In reference to this event the priests held a meeting in which they called the two Apostles to account (Acts 4:5). But since the miracle was so widely known and the people glorified God in it, the iniquitous judges were too confused to attempt to punish the Apostles, although they commanded them not to preach or teach in the name of Jesus of Nazareth for the future (Ib. 18). But St. Peter with invincible courage told them they could not obey this command because God commanded them otherwise, and it was not right to obey men in opposition to God (Acts 4:19). With this warning they were dismissed, and the two Apostles immediately went to give an account to the most holy Queen, though She by a special vision had been informed of it all. Then they engaged in most exalted prayer in which the Holy Ghost again came upon all of them with visible signs.

143. A few days afterwards happened the miraculous chastisement of Ananias and Saphira who, tempted by their avarice, tried to deceive St. Peter (Acts 5:1ff.). They lied to the Apostle in bringing to him a portion of the price of an inheritance they had sold while hiding the other part. Shortly before Barnabas, also called Joseph, a Levite and a native of Cyprus, had likewise sold his inheritance and brought all the proceeds to the Apostles (Ib. 4:37). In order to impress upon all that each one must act with the same integrity Ananias and Saphira were punished, falling dead at the feet of St. Peter one after the other. Through this formidable wonder all in Jerusalem were struck with fear and the Apostles preached with greater freedom. But the magistrates and Sadducees were roused to anger and had them seized and cast into the public prison (Ib. 5:18). There they remained but a short time because the Queen liberated them, as I shall soon relate.

144. I do not desire to pass over in silence the mystery connected with the fall of Ananias and his wife Saphira. When the great Mistress of heaven and earth perceived Lucifer and his demons were inciting the priests and magistrates against the preaching of the Apostles, and through these suggestions they brought to trial St. Peter and St. John after the miracle of the paralytic and commanded them not to preach in the name of Jesus, this loving Mother feared lest the conversion of other souls would be prevented; therefore, as her divine Son had enjoined upon Her, and with greater courage than Judith, She took up their cause as her own and addressed that cruel tyrant: "Enemy of the Most High, how dare you rise up against his creatures, when in virtue of the Passion and Death of my Son and true God you have been vanquished, oppressed, and stripped of your tyrannical empire? What can you do, O venomous basilisk,* chained and imprisoned in infernal punishments for all eternity by the Most High? Do you not realize you are subjected to his infinite power and cannot resist his invincible will? Therefore He commands you, and I in his name and power command you immediately to descend with your hordes to the abyss from which you have risen to persecute the children of the Church."

145. The infernal dragon could not resist the command of the powerful Queen, for her divine Son, for the greater terror of the demons, permitted them all to see Him sacramentally present in the bosom of the invincible Mother as on the throne of his omnipotence and majesty. This happened also on other occasions whenever most holy Mary put Lucifer to confusion, as I shall relate farther on (490). This time he hurled himself into the abysses with all who had accompanied him, and they fell ruined and subjugated by the divine strength of that singular Woman. For some time the demons remained in the abyss, terrified and giving forth frightful howls, infuriated with themselves for their wretched state in which they could not annihilate themselves, and because they despaired of conquering the powerful Queen and all those whom She would receive under her protection. With this furious spite Lucifer spoke to his demons, and conferring with them said: "In what a wretched state do I see myself! Tell me, what can I do against this my Enemy, who thus torments me and casts me down? She alone fights a greater war against me than all the rest of creatures combined. Should I then give up persecuting Her so She will not completely destroy me? I have always come forth from battles with Her vanquished, while She remains victorious. I must recognize She is constantly diminishing my powers, and little by little She will finish annihilating them so I will be able to do nothing against the followers of her Son. Yet how can I suffer such unjust oppression? Where is my exalted power? Must I subject myself to a Woman of a condition and nature so inferior and vile in comparison with mine? Yet I dare not battle with Her now. Let us seek to overthrow some of her children who follow her teaching; this shall relieve my confusion and satisfy me for now."

146. The Lord gave permission to the dragon and his hordes to return and tempt the faithful for their probation. But on becoming acquainted with the state of their souls, and the great virtues with which they were adorned, they found no approach open, nor any of the faithful who would listen to their insane deceits and illusions. Yet recognizing the character and inclination of each one, through which (woe to us) they always carry on their brutal warfare, the demons found Ananias and Saphira were attached to money and had always sought after it with a certain amount of avarice. Of this weakness they availed themselves for their attack, and they suggested to their imagination the expediency of reserving a part of the price of an inheritance which they had sold in order to give its proceeds to the Apostles in grateful acknowledgment of the faith and Baptism received at their hands. They permitted themselves to be entrapped by this low deceit

* cf. Ps. 90:13; *Tract*, 1st Sunday of Lent [Ed.]

because it was in accordance with their base inclinations, attempting to deceive St. Peter. The holy Apostle knew of the sin of these two through a revelation, and he chastised them by permitting them to suddenly fall dead at his feet, first Ananias and afterwards Saphira, who without knowing what had happened to her husband came after a little while, and lying as her husband had she also expired in the presence of the Apostles.

147. From Lucifer's initial attempt Our Queen took notice of what he was plotting and how Ananias and Saphira were listening to his damaging suggestions, and full of compassion and sorrow the merciful Mother prostrated Herself in the divine presence and clamored from the depths of her soul: "Alas, my Son and Lord, how this bloodthirsty dragon preys upon these simple sheep of thy flock! How, my God, shall my heart suffer to see the contagion of avarice and deceit in souls who have cost Thee thy life and blood? If this most cruel enemy stealthily prowls among them, the damage will spread by the example of sin and the weakness of men, and one after another will fall into sin. My Good, in the pain caused by this I shall lose my life, knowing how sin weighs in thy justice, and more so the sins of thy children rather than strangers. Remedy then, my Beloved, this damage which Thou hast made known to me." The Lord answered Her: "My Mother and chosen One, let not thy Heart, in which I live, be afflicted, for I shall draw much good from this evil for my Church, which for this end my providence has permitted it. By the chastisement meted out for these sins a warning shall be left for the other faithful so they may fear this example in the Church, and in the future guard themselves against the deception and covetousness of money; for the threat of the same chastisement, or my indignation, impends over all who shall commit the same sin, since my justice is always unwavering against all those rebellious to my will as my holy law teaches."

148. With this answer of the Lord most holy Mary consoled Herself, though She continued to pity those two ensnared ones, Ananias and Saphira, because of the divine vengeance about to fall upon them in chastisement. In the meanwhile She offered up most exalted prayers for the rest of the faithful so they might not fall into the snares of the demon, and She again turned upon him and struck him with fear and cast him out so he would not irritate the Jews against the Apostles. In virtue of this force by which She detained the demons the first children of the Church enjoyed much peace and tranquility. That happiness under the protection of the great Queen and Lady would have continued always if men had not despised it, delivering themselves up to the same and worse deceits than Ananias and Saphira. O that the faithful would fear this example and imitate that of the Apostles! When the Apostles were taken prisoners as related above they called upon the divine mercy and the protection of their heavenly Queen and Mother, and when She by divine enlightenment became aware of their condition She prostrated Herself in the form of a cross before the throne of God and prayed for them as follows:

149. "My supreme Lord, Creator of the universe, from my whole heart I subject myself to thy divine will and acknowledge, my God, how proper it is for thine infinite wisdom to dispose and ordain that the disciples follow their Master, which Thou art, the true light and guide of thy chosen ones. This I confess, my Son, because Thou didst come into the world in the form and habit of humility in order to give it credit and destroy pride, and to teach the Way of the Cross by patience in labors and the dishonors of men. I know also thy Apostles and disciples must follow this doctrine and establish it in thy Church. Yet if it is possible, Good of my soul, for them at present to retain life and liberty in order to found thy holy Church, preach thy sovereign Name to the whole world, and convert it to the true faith, I beseech Thee, my Lord, to give me permission to favor thy vicar Peter, my son John thy beloved, and all those who by the cunning of Lucifer are in prison. Let not that enemy glory in having now triumphed over thy servants, nor let him

raise his head against the other children of the Church. Crush his pride, my Lord, and let him be confounded in thy presence.”

150. To this petition the Most High responded: “My Spouse, let what thou desirest be done, for this is also my will. Send thy Angels to destroy the works of Lucifer, for my strength is with thee.” With this approval the Queen of the Angels immediately dispatched one of her Guardian Angels, who was of a superior hierarchy, to the prison of the Apostles in order to free them from their fetters and remove them from their prison. This was the Angel of whom St. Luke speaks in chapter V of the Acts of the Apostles (v. 19), freeing the Apostles from their prison at night as most holy Mary had commanded, though the Evangelist makes no mention of the secret connected with this miracle. But the Angel was seen by the Apostles, appearing to them full of light and glory and telling them he was sent by his Queen to liberate them from prison. He commanded them to preach, as they also did. Besides this Angel She also sent others to the magistrates and priests in order to drive away from them Lucifer and his demons, who were irritating and inciting them against the Apostles. They were to inspire them instead with holy thoughts and instill into them the fear of injuring these men or hindering their preaching. The heavenly spirits obeyed, and they fulfilled their mission so well that from it resulted the warning given to the consistory by the venerable doctor of the law named Gamaliel, as recorded by St. Luke (Acts 5:34-39). For when the other judges were thrown into confusion by the news that the Apostles whom they had cast into prison were now free and preaching in the temple, without knowing through whom and how they had been freed, Gamaliel counseled the priests not to trouble these men but to let them continue their preaching, since if this was the work of God they could not hinder it, and if it was not it would soon dissipate, as had recently happened to two false prophets who in Jerusalem and Palestine had invented new sects; one was called Theodas and the other Judas of Galilee, and both had perished with all of their followers.

151. This counsel of Gamaliel was inspired by the holy Angels of our great Queen, and through their influence the judges acted upon it, though their own reputation and worldly interest induced them to forbid the Apostles to preach any more in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. The Apostles having gone forth to preach by the order of the Angel who had liberated them, the judges once again brought the Apostles before their tribunal, yet they dismissed them with some punishment. The Apostles immediately reported all their undertakings and experiences to most holy Mary as to their Mother and Teacher, and the most prudent Queen received them with maternal affection and joy in seeing them so constant in suffering and so zealous for the welfare of souls. “Now, my masters,” She said, “thou dost appear to me true imitators and disciples of thy Master, since for his Name thou dost suffer affronts and reproaches, and with a joyful heart help Him to carry the cross. In doing so thou art his worthy ministers and cooperators in reaping the fruit of his blood in men, for whose salvation it was shed. May his powerful right hand bless thee and communicate to thee his divine virtue.” She said this to them on her knees and kissing their hands, and then She served them as described above (92).

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

152. My daughter, in what thou hast understood and written in this chapter thou dost possess many and important admonitions for thy salvation and for the salvation of the faithful in the Church. First of all thou must meditate upon the solicitude and watchfulness with which I sought the eternal salvation of all the faithful without overlooking the least of their necessities and

dangers. I taught them the truth, prayed incessantly, encouraged them in their labors, urged the Lord to assist them, and above all I defended them from the demons and their cunning and furious wrath. All these blessings I now procure for the faithful from heaven, and if not all experience them it is not because I do not solicit them but because there are very few of the faithful who call upon me with all their heart and who dispose themselves to merit and attain the fruit of my maternal love. I would defend them all from the dragon if all would invoke me and fear such pernicious deceits by which they are ensnared and entrapped for their eternal damnation. So all may wake up to this frightful danger I now give them this new reminder. I assure thee, my daughter, all those who damn themselves after the death of my Son, and in spite of the benefits and favors procured by my intercession, shall suffer greater torments in hell than those who were lost before his coming and before I was in the world; hence those who from now on understand these mysteries and despise them to their loss shall be subject to new and greater punishments.

153. They must also remember in what estimation they must hold their souls, since I did and am doing so much every day for them after they have been redeemed by the Passion and Death of my divine Son. This forgetfulness among men is very reprehensible and deserves tremendous chastisement. How is it rational, or of right judgment, that for a momentary pleasure of the senses, which at most must end with life and at other times lasts for a very short time, a man who has the faith labors so much? And for his soul, which is eternal, he gives no more attention or appreciation, and so completely forgets it, as if it will end and be annihilated with the visible things? They do not consider that when all comes to an end the soul begins to suffer or enjoy the eternal and everlasting things. Since thou knowest this truth and the perversity of mortals thou shalt not be astonished at the power of the dragon in our days, for where there is continual combat he who comes out victorious will gain the strength which the vanquished loses. This is especially true of the cruel and incessant conflict with the demons, where souls shall gain in strength by victory and the demons shall be weakened as happened when my Son conquered them and I afterwards. But when this serpent finds himself victorious over men, then he shall raise his proud head and recover from his weakness in gaining new strength and greater dominion as he now possesses in the world, for the lovers of his vanity have subjected themselves and are following him under his banner and false fantasies. In the midst of this ruin hell has opened its maw,* and the more it is glutted the more insatiable becomes its hunger, seeking to bury in its infernal caverns all the rest of mankind.

154. Fear, O my beloved, fear this danger, since thou dost recognize it, and live in continual watchfulness in order not to open the gate of thy heart to the wiles of this most cruel beast. Thou hast a warning in Ananias and Saphira, for when the demon became aware of their inclination toward money and their avarice he assaulted them through that portal and entered into their souls. I do not desire thee to strive after anything pertaining to this mortal life, but rather so suppress and extinguish within thyself all the passions and inclinations of weak nature that not even the evil spirits with all their watchfulness shall find in thee any disorderly movement of pride, covetousness, vanity, anger, or any other passion. This is the science of the saints without which no one can live securely in mortal flesh; by ignoring it innumerable souls perish. Do thou learn it diligently and teach it to thy religious so each one may be a vigilant sentinel over her own self. With this science they shall live in true peace and charity without deception; each one, and all of them together, united in the peaceful tranquility of the divine Spirit and adorned by the

* cf. Is. 5:14 [Ed.]

exercise of all virtues shall be an impregnable fortress for their enemies. Remind thyself and thy religious of the chastisement of Ananias and Saphira, and exhort them to be very solicitous in the observance of their rules and constitutions, for thus shall they merit my protection and special assistance.