

PART III

Of the Divine History and Life of the Queen of Heaven, Mary Most Holy; Contains the Events from the Coming of the Holy Ghost until the Assumption into Heaven and Coronation of the Virgin Mother of God.

BOOK SEVEN

FIRST OF PART III

How the Divine Right Hand Favored the Queen of Heaven with Most Exalted Gifts so She Could Labor in the Holy Church; the Coming of the Holy Ghost; the Copious Fruit of the Redemption, and of the Preaching of the Apostles; the First Persecution of the Church; the Conversion of St. Paul, and the arrival of St. James in Spain; the Appearance of the Mother of God in Saragossa, and the Foundation of Our Lady of the Pillar.

CHAPTER I

Our Savior Jesus Remains Seated at the Right Hand of the Eternal Father, while Most Holy Mary Descends from Heaven to Earth so She Could Plant the New Church by Her Assistance and Teaching.

1. In finishing the second Part of this History I showed how our great Queen and Lady, most holy Mary, was privileged by God to be miraculously present in body in two places, in the Cenacle as well as in the empyrean heaven (*Tran.* 801), where She was seated at the right hand of her Son and eternal God (Ps. 44:10); how in order to make his glorious Ascension more wonderful the Son of God and of Mary took Her with Him in order to give Her possession of the ineffable rewards She had until then merited, and to assign Her the place which for these merits, and for the rest which She was going to merit, He had prepared for Her from all eternity. I also said the three Persons of the most blessed Trinity left it to the free choice of the heavenly Mother either to return to the world for the consolation of the first children of the Church and for its foundation, or permanently to establish Herself even then in that most blessed state and remain in the possession of the glory They had conferred upon Her (*Tran.* 811); for consequent upon her choice and in pursuance of the great love They had for this peerless creature, the will of the divine Persons inclined toward retaining Her in the abyss of their glory and not to restore Her to the banished children of Adam upon earth. In a certain sense justice seemed to demand this, since the world was already redeemed by the Passion and Death of her Son, toward which She had cooperated in all plenitude and perfection. Death had in Her no further claims, not only because She had suffered its pains in the death of Christ our Savior, as explained by me in its place (*Tran.* 553, 630, 670), but also because the great Lady never was tributary to death, nor the demon, nor to sin, and therefore was not subject to the common law of the children of Adam (Heb. 9:27).^{*} According to our mode of thinking the Lord desired Her, without dying like the others, to pass by another kind of transition from the state of pilgrimage to that of comprehension, from mortality to immortality, and not suffer death upon the earth, She who while remaining upon it had committed no fault to merit death, for the Most High could have passed Her from one state into the other in another way.

2. On the other hand, the only reason for parting this blessed state was the charity and humility of this admirable and sweetest Mother, for her love urged Her to come to the assistance of her

^{*} cf. also Esther 15:13 [Ed.]

children and seek the manifestation and exaltation of the name of the Most High in the new evangelical Church. She desired also to gather into the faith many faithful followers by her solicitation and intercession, and to imitate her children and brethren by dying upon the earth, though by reason of her sinlessness She owed no such tribute (Rom. 6:23). In her vast wisdom and admirable prudence She knew how much more precious it is to merit a reward and crown than to possess them gratuitously in advance, even if they happen to be those of eternal glory. Her wisdom and humility were not without their present reward, for the eternal Father made known to all the courtiers of heaven at the same time both his own desires and the choice of most holy Mary for the good of the Church Militant and for the help of the faithful. All the inhabitants of heaven then began to know what is but just that we should know also on earth: That just as the eternal Father (as St. John says) so loved the world as to give his onlybegotten Son for its Redemption (Jn. 3:16), so also He gave his Daughter, most holy Mary, sending Her from her glory to build up the Church which Christ its Artificer had established; and in like manner and for the same purpose the Son delivered up his most loving and beloved Mother, and the Holy Ghost his sweetest Spouse. To this must be added another circumstance enhancing this blessing, namely that it followed closely upon the injuries which Christ our Redeemer received in his Passion and outrageous Death, making the world altogether unworthy of this favor. O infinite love! O immense charity! How evident it is that the multitudinous waters of our sins cannot extinguish thee (Cant. 8:7)!

3. After most holy Mary had remained in heaven for three entire days and had enjoyed in body and soul the glory of the right hand of her Son and true God, She departed with the benediction of the blessed Trinity from the supreme empyrean heaven and returned according to her desire to this nether world of the earth. God ordered an innumerable multitude of Angels, selected from all the choirs and from the highest Seraphim nearest to his throne, to accompany their Queen. She was enveloped in a cloud or globe of the most resplendent light, which served Her as a couch or reliquary and in which She was borne downward by the Seraphim. The beauty and exterior splendors in which this divine Queen came to the earth can never be compassed by the human mind in mortal life, and it is certain no living creature could have looked upon Her with merely natural powers without losing its life; because of this it was necessary for the Most High to hide her refulgence from those who saw Her until the splendors of her beauty had moderated. St. John the Evangelist alone was privileged to see the Queen in the full refulgence of the divine glory which She had enjoyed. The immense beauty of this magnificent Queen and Lady of the heavens as She descended from the throne of the most blessed Trinity can easily be understood when we consider how the face of Moses, after having spoken with the Lord and received the law on mount Sinai, shone with such light that the Israelites could not bear it or look upon his face (Ex. 34:29). We are not informed whether the Prophet saw the Divinity face to face, and if he did his vision of God certainly did not approach in the least to that enjoyed by the Mother of God.

4. The great Lady arrived at the Cenacle as a substitute of her divine Son in the new evangelical Church. In the gifts of grace which She had received for this ministry She showed such a plenitude and abundance that She excited the wonder of the angels and the astonishment of the saints, for She was a living image of Christ our Redeemer and Master. Beneath the cloud of light in which She arrived unseen in the Cenacle She was restored to her natural existence, being then present only in that place. Immediately the Mistress of holy humility prostrated Herself upon the ground, and abasing Herself to the dust She said: "Most high God and my Lord, behold this vile worm of the earth, acknowledging itself formed from it (Gen. 2:7), and coming from nothingness to this existence which I hold through thy most liberal clemency. I

acknowledge also, O highest Father, that thy ineffable condescension, without any merits of mine, has raised me from the dust to the dignity of being the Mother of thy Onlybegotten. From my whole heart I praise and exalt thy immense goodness in so favoring me. In gratitude for such great blessings I offer myself to live and labor anew in this mortal life according to all the decrees of thy divine will. I consecrate myself as thy faithful servant and as the servant of the children of the Church. All of them I present before thy immense charity and implore Thee from my inmost heart to look upon them as their most kind God and Father; for them I offer up the sacrifice of being deprived of thy glory and peace, and of having chosen of my own free will suffering rather than joy, denying myself the vision of Thee in order to perform that which is so much to thy pleasure.”

5. The holy Angels who had come with the Queen took leave of Her to return to heaven, congratulating the earth for again possessing as its inhabitant their great Queen and Lady. I wish to mention that while I wrote of this the holy princes asked me why I did not more frequently call most holy Mary the Queen and Lady of the Angels, and they told me not to neglect the use of that title in the remainder of this History since they derived such great delight therefrom. In order to obey and please them I shall use it many times from now on. But returning to our History, we must take notice that the heavenly Mother during the first three days after her descent from heaven remained much withdrawn from earthly things, still lingering in the overflow of the joy and admirable influences of her triduum of glory in heaven. Of all mortals the Evangelist St. John alone had knowledge of this mystery, for in a vision he had seen the great Queen of heaven ascend with her divine Son, and had also seen Her descend in her glory and graces for the enrichment of the Church. St. John was for two days as it were suspended and beside himself with admiration* at this new mystery. Knowing his most holy Mother had descended from on high he desired to speak to Her, but he dared not presume.

6. Battling between the urgency of his love and the restraint of his humility, the beloved Apostle hesitated nearly a whole day. Conquered by his filial love he at last resolved to seek the presence of his heavenly Mother in the Cenacle, and on his way there he stopped to argue with himself: “How can I presume to do what I desire before knowing the will of the Most High and of my Lady? Yet my Redeemer and Master has given Her to me as a Mother, and favored and bound me to Her as a son; hence it is my duty to serve and assist Her. She is not ignorant of my desire, and shall not despise it; She is kind and sweet, and shall pardon me. I desire to prostrate myself at her feet.” With this St. John determined upon his resolve and went to the place where the Queen was in prayer with the rest of the faithful. At the instant in which he raised his eyes to look upon Her he fell down prostrate, just as he and the other two Apostles had fallen upon seeing the transfigured Lord on mount Tabor (Mt. 17:2), for the splendors which he now saw in the countenance of most holy Mary were very similar to those seen in our Savior Jesus at that time. Since the impression caused by the vision of her descent from heaven was also still enduring, his human weakness was so much the more completely overwhelmed and he fell to the earth without power of again rising to his feet for the space of an hour, and during this time he revered profoundly the Mother of the Creator himself. Nor were the Apostles and disciples who were present in the Cenacle necessarily astonished at this fall, because in imitation of their divine Master, and moved by the example and instructions of Mary most holy, they were during the time they were expecting the Holy Ghost frequently lying prostrate in the form of a cross, praying for the coming of the Paraclete.

* cf. Mt. 17:4 [Ed.]

7. The most kind Mother then approached the humble and blessed Apostle and raised him from his prostrate position, and assuming a more natural appearance She herself fell upon her knees and said to him: “My master and son, thou already knowest I am to be governed in all my actions by obedience to thee, for thou takest the place of my divine Son and Master in order to command me in all I am to do. I now ask thee anew to be solicitous in commanding me because of the consolation I derive from obeying in all things.” Hearing these words St. John felt great confusion and perplexity due to what he had seen and experienced concerning Her, and he once more prostrated himself before Her, offering himself as her slave and begging Her to command and govern him entirely. In this urgent request St. John persevered for some time until, overcome by the humility of our Queen, he subjected himself to her will and was persuaded to yield to Her, agreeing to command Her as She desired, since this was for the greatest profit for his own advancement and for us a unique and efficacious example, reminding us of our pride and teaching us to crush it. If we acknowledge ourselves devout children of this heavenly Mother and Teacher of humility, we are justly obliged to imitate and follow Her. The vision of the great Queen of the Angels in her state of glory was so deeply impressed upon the understanding and the interior faculties of the Evangelist that the image of it remained within him during the rest of his life. At the moment when he saw Her descend from heaven he cried out in great wonder; the intelligence he then received concerning Her he afterwards manifested in the Apocalypse, and especially in chapter XXI as I shall explain in the next chapter.

INSTRUCTION WHICH THE GREAT QUEEN AND LADY OF THE ANGELS GAVE ME.

8. My daughter, although I have until now so many times urged thee to detach thyself from all visible and earthly things, and to die to thyself and to all that savors of a child of Adam, and though I have fully exhorted and instructed thee in the first and second Parts of my Life already written, yet I now call upon thee anew with the affection of a kind and loving Mother, and I invite thee in the name of my divine Son, in my own name, and in that of the angels, who also love thee so much, that forgetting all else thou raise thyself to another life, more exalted and heavenly, approaching that of eternal happiness. I desire thee to leave entirely the ancient Babylon, thy enemies, and all their false and harassing vanities, and approach the holy and celestial Jerusalem and live in its porches, where thou art to occupy thyself in the true and perfect imitation of my life, and thus arrive by divine grace at the intimate union with my Lord and thy most faithful Spouse. Hear then, my dearest, my voice with cheerful devotion and promptness of soul. Follow me fervently, renewing thy life using as a model what thou writest of mine, and studying the works I performed after I came back from the right hand of my divine Son to this world. Meditate upon and penetrate into all my doings so thou mayest, according to the graces thou dost receive, continually imitate what thou dost understand and write. The divine favor shall not fail thee, for the Most High shall not deny it to those who on their part exert themselves according to their power, and He shall not refuse thee his assistance to attain what is pleasing and acceptable to Him if thou do not by thy negligence make thyself unworthy. Prepare and expand thy heart, inflame thy will, purify thy understanding, and cast out from thy faculties every image and impression of visible creatures so none of them embarrass thee or compel thee to commit even a slight fault or imperfection. The Most High shall deposit in thee his hidden wisdom, and thus thou shalt be prepared and anxious to execute all that is most pleasing in our eyes and enjoined upon thee by us.

9. From now on thy life is to be like that of one newly called from the grave. Just as such a one is apt to turn to a new life, as if estranged and foreign to all he loved in his former life, changed in all his desires, reformed and alienated from all his former inclinations, likewise I desire thee, my daughter, to be renewed; for thou must live as if thou shalt participate anew in the gifts of the soul in the manner possible to thee by the divine power which shall work in thee. But for these divine operations it is necessary for thee to use thy own efforts and prepare thy whole heart so thou mayest be entirely free and become as it were a blank tablet whereon the Lord with his own finger may write and stamp as on soft and yielding wax the seal of my virtues. * His Majesty desires thee to be an instrument in his hands with which to operate his own holy and perfect will; and thou knowest that an instrument does not offer resistance to the artisan, and if it possesses free will it uses it only in order to permit itself to be freely moved. Now then, my dearest, come, come whither I call thee, and remember that if it is natural to the highest Good to bestow favors and communicate Himself to creatures at all times, yet in the present age this Lord and Father of mercies seeks to manifest more abundantly his liberal kindness toward mortals; for the times have advanced toward their end, and there are few who are willing to dispose themselves for the reception of his divine gifts. Do thou not lose such a favorable occasion. Follow me and tread in my footsteps, and since I invite thee to such happiness in motherly love, and by such high and perfect doctrine, do not grieve the Holy Ghost by thy tardiness.

* cf. Cant. 8:6 [Ed.]