

CHAPTER III

What Happened with Most Holy Mary Regarding the Death and Chastisement of Herod; St. John Preaches in Ephesus, Working Many Miracles; Lucifer Rises Up to Make War on the Queen of Heaven.

413. In the rational creature love produces on the heart effects similar to those of the force of gravity on the stone. The stone tends to move wherever its own weight draws it, that is to its center of attraction; love is the weight of the heart, drawing it to its center, namely to that which it loves. If at any time the heart is diverted by necessity or inadvertence, love will immediately make it recoil like a liberated spring returning again to its normal position. This weight or sway of love seems in a manner to take away the liberty of the heart insofar as it becomes subject and subservient to what it loves; it prevents the will from commanding any other course of action than that sought and ordered by the urgency of this love. The happiness or unhappiness of mortals arises from the good or evil use it makes of love, for what man loves he makes his master.* If this master is evil and vile so also shall the man be tyrannized and degraded; if good, then he shall be ennobled and made happy, and the more noble and excellent is the good he loves the more happy he shall be. By these principles I hope to be able to explain in part what has been made known to me concerning the exalted state in which most holy Mary lived, never having dropped from it but rising higher and higher from the first instant of her Conception without interruption or relaxation until She entered the state of a comprehensor in the beatific vision.

414. If all the love of the holy angels and of men could be united in one person, it would be less than that of Mary most holy; yet if we could unite the love of all the other creatures into one whole, it is certain that such a conflagration of love would result that without being infinite it would seem so to us because it would surpass all our comprehension. Thus if the charity of our great Queen exceeded all this, only the infinite Wisdom could weigh the love of this creature and the intensity with which She possessed and inclined toward the Divinity; however, we can at least understand in this most chaste, pure and inflamed Heart there could be no other mastery or sway, no other movement or liberty, except that of loving supremely the highest Good, and this in such an exalted degree that with our limited capacity we can much sooner believe it than understand it, confess it than penetrate it. This charity which possessed the Heart of most pure Mary filled Her at the same time with the most ardent desires of seeing the face of the highest Good who was absent, and assisting the holy Church which was present to Her. Thus She was consumed by two opposite tendencies; yet She governed them with such wisdom that there arose from them no conflict within Her, nor did She give Herself up to the one to the neglect of the other, but attended completely to both to the admiration of all the saints and the fullest satisfaction of the Saint of Saints.

415. In this habitation of such exalted sanctity and eminent perfection most holy Mary often conferred within Herself regarding the condition of the primitive Church left in her charge and how She could exert Herself for its peace and progress. The liberation of St. Peter, so as head of the Church he could attend to the government of the faithful, and the casting forth of Lucifer and his demons from Jerusalem, which for a time freed the faithful from their tyranny, gave Her some relief and consolation in these cares and longings due to the brief break and moderation of

* cf. Mt. 6:21; Gospel for Ash Wednesday [Ed.]

the persecution directed against the followers of Christ. The divine Wisdom, which dispenses labors and consolations with weight and measure (Wis. 11:21), ordained that the most prudent Mother at that time have a very intimate knowledge of the evil disposition of Herod. She perceived the abominable ugliness of that most unhappy soul brought on by his dire and boundless vices and repeated sins which inflamed the indignation of the just and almighty Judge. She also knew that by the evil seed sown by the demons in the hearts of Herod and the Jews they were entirely enraged against Jesus our Redeemer and his disciples after the escape of St. Peter, how the iniquitous king and ruler had the intention of annihilating all the faithful within the confines of Judea and Galilee, and that he would employ in this work all his forces and power. Although most holy Mary knew this determination of Herod, the end which awaited him was not manifested to Her at that time; yet knowing he was powerful and his soul so depraved, he caused Her both great horror at his evil state and profound sorrow at his wrath against the followers of the faith.

416. Between these cares and her confidence in the divine favor our Queen labored incessantly, imploring the Lord with tears, holy exercises, and clamors, as I have said on other occasions. Governing Herself by her most exalted prudence, She spoke to one of the highest Angels of her guard, saying: "Minister of the Most High and creature of his hands, solicitude for the holy Church urges me with great force to obtain its welfare and progress. I pray and beseech thee to ascend to the royal throne of the Most High and in his presence represent to Him my affliction, and on my behalf ask Him to grant that I be permitted to suffer for his Apostles and faithful servants, and that Herod not be allowed to carry out what he has determined against them for the destruction of the Church." Immediately the Angel went to the Lord with this message while the Queen of heaven, like another Esther, remained in prayer for the liberty and salvation of her people and of Herself (Esther 4:16). While She thus prayed the heavenly ambassador returned, dispatched by the most blessed Trinity, and in his name answered Her and said: "Princess of the heavens, the Lord of hosts says Thou art the Mother, the Lady, and the Governess of the Church, and by his power Thou takest his place while Thou art upon earth; He desires Thee as the Queen and Mistress of heaven and earth to pronounce sentence against Herod."

417. In her humility most holy Mary was somewhat disturbed by this answer, and by the force of her charity replied to the Angel: "Am I then to pronounce sentence against the creature and image of my Lord? Ever since I received being from his hand I have known many reprobates among men, and I have never called for vengeance against them, but as far as I was concerned I have always desired their remedy, if possible, and have never hastened their punishment. Return, O Angel, to the Lord and say to Him that my tribunal and power is inferior to and dependent upon his, and hence I cannot sentence anyone to death without consulting anew my Superior; and if it is possible to convert Herod to the way of eternal salvation, I am willing to suffer all the labors of the world according to the disposition of his divine Providence so this soul may not be lost." The Angel returned with this second message of his Queen, and having presented it before the throne of the most blessed Trinity was sent back to Her with the following answer: "Our Lady and Queen, the Most High says Herod is of the number of the foreknown, since he is so obstinate in his wickedness he will accept no warning, reprimand or instruction; he will not cooperate with the helps given to him, nor will he avail himself of the fruits of the Redemption, nor of the intercession of the saints, nor of thy own labors for him, my Queen and Lady."

418. For the third time most holy Mary dispatched the holy prince to the throne of the Most High with another message, saying: "If it is proper that Herod die in order to stop him from persecuting the Church, do thou, my Angel, tell the Almighty that the condescension of his

infinite charity granted me, while His Majesty lived in mortal flesh, to be the Mother and Refuge of the children of Adam, the Advocate and Intercessor for sinners; that my tribunal is one of kindness and clemency to receive and help those who come to it beseeching my intercession; and if they avail themselves of it, I would offer them pardon of their sins in the name of my most holy Son. Hence if I am to have the heartfelt love of a Mother for men, who are the works of his hands and the price of his life and blood, shall I now be a severe judge against one of them? Never has justice been referred to me, but always mercy, to which my heart is entirely inclined; and now it is troubled between pitying love and obedience to rigorous justice. Present anew, O Angel, this concern to the Lord, and find out whether it is his pleasure that Herod die without my condemning him.”

419. The holy emissary ascended to heaven with this third message, and the most blessed Trinity listened to it with the plenitude of pleasure and satisfaction at the pitying charity of his Spouse. Yet the holy Angel returned and informed the most kind Lady with this response: “Our Queen, Mother of our Creator and my Lady, His omnipotent Majesty says thy mercy is for the mortals who desire to avail themselves of thy powerful intercession and not for those who despise and abhor it like Herod will; that Thou art the Lady of the Church, invested with the plenitude of divine power, and thus it is incumbent upon Thee to make use of it when appropriate; that Herod must die, but it must be by thy sentence and order.”* Most holy Mary answered: “The Lord is just and righteous are his judgments (Ps. 118:137). Many times would I suffer death to rescue the soul of Herod if he himself did not by his own free will make himself unworthy of mercy and reprobate. He is a work of the hands of the Most High (Job. 10:8), formed according to his image and likeness (Gen. 1:27); he was redeemed by the blood of the Lamb (Apoc. 1:5), which washes away the sins of the world. Nevertheless, because he has made himself a pertinacious enemy of God, unworthy of his eternal friendship, by the most righteous justice of God I condemn him to the death he has merited[†] so he will not incur greater torments in hell by executing the evil deeds he intends.”

420. This wonder the Lord wrought for the glory of his most blessed Mother and in testimony of his having constituted Her as the Mistress of all creatures with supreme power to act as their Sovereign like her divine Son. I cannot explain this mystery better than in the words of the Lord in chapter V of St. John’s Gospel (v. 19ff.), where He says of Himself: The Son cannot do anything that the Father does not do, but He does the same, because the Father loves Him; and if the Father raises the dead, the Son also raises whom He will; and the Father has given all judgment to the Son, that just as all honor the Father, they may also honor the Son; for no one can honor the Father without honoring the Son. And immediately He adds the Father has given Him the power of judging because He is the Son of man, which He is through his most holy Mother. By knowing the likeness of the heavenly Mother to her Son (of which I have often spoken), the proportionate correspondence of the Mother with the Son, similar to that of the Son with the Father, will be understood regarding this power of judgment. And though most holy Mary is the Mother of mercy and clemency to all the children of Adam who invoke Her, yet together with this the Most High desires it to be understood She possesses plenary power of judging all men; hence, just as they honor her Son and true God they should proportionately

* cf. Mt. 19:28; If this power of judging was given by Christ to his Apostles, how much more to their Queen, his most holy Mother?

[†] cf. Mt. 19:28; I Cor. 6:2; Wis. 3:8; *Introit*, Vigil of All Saints (Oct. 31) [Ed.]

honor Her. As his true Mother He gave Her the same power He has, in the degree and proportion which belongs to Her as Mother, though a mere creature.

421. By this power the great Lady sent the Angel to Caesarea, where Herod then was, to take away his life as the minister of divine justice. The Angel promptly executed the sentence, and as the evangelist St. Luke says (Acts 12:23) the *Angel of the Lord struck him, and being eaten up by worms* the unhappy Herod died the temporal and eternal death.* The wound of this stroke was interior, and from it sprang the corruption and worms which so miserably finished him. From the same text it states that after having beheaded St. James, and after St. Peter had escaped, Herod went down from Jerusalem to Caesarea in order to settle some differences which had arisen between him and the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon (Ib. 19-20). Within a few days, vested in the royal purple and seated upon a throne, he gave the people an oration with great eloquence of words. The vain and flattering people cheered him and acclaimed him as a god (Ib. 22), and the senseless and insane Herod accepted that adulation of the people. Because he had not given the honor to God, but rather usurped to himself divine honor in vain pride as St. Luke says (Ib. 23), the Angel of the Lord struck him. Although this was the last sin which filled the measure of his iniquity, he merited this chastisement not only for this but for so many other sins committed by him in persecuting the Apostles, mocking the Lord our Savior (Luke 23:11), beheading the Baptist (Mk. 6:27), committing adultery with his sister-in-law Herodias (Ib. 17), and for many other abominations.

422. Immediately the Angel returned to Ephesus and gave an account of the execution of the sentence against Herod. The merciful Mother wept over the loss of this soul, but praised the judgments of the Lord and rendered Him gratitude for the benefit which the Church would derive from his chastisement, for as St. Luke says (Acts 12:24) the Church grew and increased by the word of God. This was true not only in Galilee and Judea, where the persecutor Herod was removed, but through St. John and the help of the Blessed Mother the Church was taking root in Ephesus. The science of the sacred Evangelist was as replete as that of a Cherubim, and his dovelike heart was inflamed like a supreme Seraphim, and he had with him as his Mother and Teacher the very Authoress of wisdom[†] and grace.^Δ Because of these precious advantages the Evangelist could undertake great and wonderful works for the foundation of the law of grace not only in Ephesus but in all the neighboring regions of Asia and the borderlands of Europe.

423. Arriving at Ephesus the Evangelist began to preach in the city, baptizing those whom he converted to the faith of Christ our Savior and confirming the faith by great miracles and prodigies such as had never been witnessed by those gentiles. Since the Greek schools in those countries turned out many philosophers and men learned in human sciences, though full of errors, the sacred Apostle convincingly taught them the true science, making use not only of miracles and signs but of argumentation for the credibility of the Christian faith. All his catechumens he immediately sent to most holy Mary, and She instructed many. Since She knew the interior inclinations of all, She spoke to the heart of each one and filled it with the influences of the divine light. She wrought many and prodigious miracles and benefits, curing the possessed and all those who were sick, succoring the poor and the needy, and by the labor of her own hands gave assistance to the sick in the infirmaries, attending upon them in person. In her house the most kind Queen had a supply of clothes for the most poor and forsaken of her fellowmen. She

* cf. Apoc. 21:8 [Ed.]

† cf. Ecclus. 24:40 [Ed.]

Δ cf. Ecclus. 24:25 [Ed.]

helped many in the hour of death, and in that most dangerous moment gained many souls, bringing them to their Creator and withdrawing them from the tyranny of the demon. So many souls did She draw to the path of truth and eternal life, and so numerous were the wonders She wrought for this end, that they could not be recorded in many books, for no day passed in which She did not increase the possessions of the Lord by the copious and abundant fruit of souls.

424. Due to the growth of the primitive Church through the holiness, solicitude and labors of the Queen of heaven the demons were filled with confusion and furious disappointment. Although they rejoice in the condemnation of all souls they carry to their eternal darkness because it swells the numbers of the damned in hell, nevertheless they experienced great torment with the death of Herod, for due to his obstinacy they had expected from him no amendment of his vile and abominable life, and hence had considered him a powerful instrument* for the persecution of the followers of Christ our Good. Divine Providence gave permission to Lucifer and those infernal dragons to emerge from the depths of hell where they had been cast forth from Jerusalem by most holy Mary, as I related in the preceding chapter (406). After having spent this time in hell arbitrating and preparing temptations for their conflict with the invincible Queen of the Angels, Lucifer resolved to make complaint against Her to the Lord himself as he had done against holy Job (Job 1:9), though with greater wrath against Mary most holy. Coming forth from the abyss with this thought in mind he spoke to his ministers and told them:

425. "If we do not vanquish this Woman, our Enemy, I fear without a doubt She will destroy my empire, since we all find in Her a power more than human which annihilates and oppresses us whenever and however She desires to use it, and until now no way has been found to overthrow or resist it. This is what makes Her intolerable to me, for if God himself, who is offended by my high aspirations and opposition, and who has infinite power to annihilate us, conquers me, it does not cause me such confusion as when this Woman vanquishes me, who though She is the Mother of the incarnate Word is not God, but a mere creature of a nature inferior to ours. I will not suffer any more to be treated by Her in such an imperious manner and be ruined by Her at her whim. Let us all go forth to destroy Her, and let us make our complaint to the Omnipotent as we have planned." The dragon executed his resolve and claimed his alleged right before the Lord, saying he was an angel of such superior nature, yet She who was but earth and dust was raised by the grace and gifts of God and not left in her natural condition so in it alone She could be persecuted and tempted by the demons. Yet I give notice that these enemies do not present themselves before the Lord by a vision they have of his divinity, which they cannot attain, but because they have knowledge of the being of God and belief in the supernatural mysteries, though curtailed and unavoidable, by means of this knowledge they are permitted to speak to God when it is said they are in his presence and make complaint against Him or converse with Him.

426. The Omnipotent gave Lucifer permission to go forth in battle and make war against most holy Mary; however, the conditions he asked were unjust and therefore many of them were denied. The divine Wisdom furnished to each of them the weapons which were appropriate, so the victory of his Mother would be glorious and crush the head of this ancient and venomous serpent (Gen 3:15). This battle and her triumph were mysterious, as we shall see in the following chapters, and is contained in chapter XII of the Apocalypse, along with other mysteries of which I spoke in the first Part of this History dilating upon that chapter (*Con.* 94ff.). I only note here that the Providence of the Most High ordained all this not only for the greater glory of his most

* cf. *Transfixion* 367 [Ed.]

holy Mother and the exaltation of the divine power and wisdom, but also in order to give a just motive for relieving the Church from the persecutions which the demons concocted against it, and to oblige his infinite goodness to shower with equity upon the Church itself the benefits and favors gained for it by these victories of most holy Mary, for She alone and no other soul could gain them.* The Lord always works in this manner in his Church, preparing and arming some chosen souls against which, as members and parts of his holy Church, the dragon can exert his wrath. If they overcome him divine grace these victories redound to the benefit of the whole Mystical Body of the faithful, and the enemy loses some of the rights and powers he has against them.

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

427. My daughter, when in the course of this History I so often call thy attention to the lamentable state of the world and of the holy Church in which thou livest, and when I so often express my maternal solicitude for thee to imitate me, remember, my dearest, I have great reasons for obliging thee to lament with me and for desiring thee to weep over that which I bewailed in my mortal life, and which would afflict me in my present state if in it I was capable of sorrow. I assure thee, soul, thou hast reached times in which thou ought to shed tears of blood due to the calamities coming over the children of Adam. Since thou cannot at one and the same time attain a full knowledge of them all, I remind thee what from my place in heaven I see going on in the whole world and among those who profess the holy faith. Turn then thine eyes upon all and behold the greater part of the children of Adam in the darkness and errors of unbelief in which they hasten toward eternal damnation. Behold also the children of the faith and of the Church, how they live careless and forgetful of this damage, without any who mourn over it; for while despising their own salvation they do not attend to the salvation of others, and since in them faith is dead and divine love absent they do not sorrow for the loss of souls created by God and redeemed by the blood of the incarnate Word.

428. All are the children of the eternal Father who is in heaven (Mt. 23:9), and all are obliged to have care of their brethren according to the condition of each one.† This obligation rests more especially upon the children of the Church, who can live up to it by their prayers and supplications. But this duty is greater in the powerful and those who by means of the same Christian faith are nourished and are more benefited by the generous hand of the Lord. Those who through the law of Christ enjoy so many temporal comforts, and appropriate all of them to the service and delights of the flesh, are they who as the powerful are to be more powerfully tormented (Wis. 6:7). If the pastors and superiors of the house of the Lord care only to live in regalement, without having to engage in true labor, they shall be accountable for the ruin of the flock of Christ and the damage wrought by the infernal wolves. O my daughter, into what a lamentable state has the Christian people been cast by the powerful, the pastors, and the wicked ministers whom God has given them in his secret judgments! O what confusion and chastisements await them! At the tribunal of the just Judge they shall have no excuse, since the Catholic truth which they profess undeceives them and their conscience reprehends them, yet they remain deaf to all warnings.

* cf. *Transfixion* 514 [Ed.]

† cf. Gal. 6:2 [Ed.]

429. The cause of God and of his honor sit solitary* and without a master; his property, which are the souls, without true nourishment;† nearly all look to their own interest and preservation, each one with his own diabolical cunning and motives according to his status. Truth is obscured and oppressed, flattery exalted, avarice rampant, the blood of Christ trodden under foot, the fruit of the Redemption despised. No one desires to risk his comfort or interest in order that souls, who cost the Lord his Passion and life, would not be lost. Even the friends of God have their defects regarding the salvation of others, since they do not make use of their charity and holy liberty with zeal as they ought, and most of them allow themselves to be overcome by their cowardice, or content themselves with working only for themselves, abandoning the common cause of the souls of others. By this, my daughter, thou shalt understand that although my most holy Son has planted the evangelical Church by his hands and fertilized it by his own blood, nevertheless upon Her have come those unhappy times of which the Lord himself complains through his Prophets, saying (Joel 1:4): *That which the palmerworm hath left, the locust hath eaten; and that which the locust hath left, the bruchus hath eaten; and that which the bruchus hath left, the mildew hath destroyed;* and in order to gather the fruit of his vineyard the Lord goes about like one after the vintage (Is. 24:13), who seeks some remaining cluster or olive which the demon has not shaken down or carried away.

430. Now tell me, my daughter, how is it possible for thee, if thou still hast a true love for my divine Son and for me, to find consolation or rest in thy heart at the sight of the loss of souls whom He redeemed by his blood, and whom I have sought to gain by my tears, which many times were tears of blood? Even today if I could shed them I would begin to do so with new weeping and compassion; but since it is not now possible for me to weep over the dangers threatening the Church, I desire thee to do it, and to spurn consolation in an age so calamitous and worthy of lamentation. Weep bitterly then, and do not lose the reward of this sorrow; and let it be so enlivened thou findest no relief except in affliction for the sake of the Lord whom thou lovest. Take notice of what I did in order to prevent the damnation of Herod and of those who desire to make themselves worthy of my intercession; and in the beatific vision my continual pleadings are for the salvation of my devotees. Be not dismayed by the labors and tribulations sent to thee by my divine Son so thou mayest help thy brethren and acquire them for the house of the Lord. Amid the injuries done to Him by the children of Adam do thou labor to recompense the Lord for them in some measure by the purity of thy soul, which I desire to be rather that of an angel than of an earthborn woman. Fight the battles of the Lord against his enemies, and in his name and mine crush their head, reign over their pride, and cast them into hell. Do thou also counsel the ministers of Christ with whom thou dost converse to use their power in doing the same, to defend the souls in lively faith, and in them the honor and glory of the Lord, for thus shall they repress and vanquish them with divine power.

* cf. Lam. 1:1 [Ed.]

† cf. Lam. 4:4 [Ed.]