

## CHAPTER VII

*Most Holy Mary Concludes the Battles with the Demons, Gloriously Triumphant over Them as Described by St. John in Chapter XII of the Apocalypse.*

505. In order to understand better the mysteries to be described in this chapter it is necessary to presuppose what I have written in chapters VIII, IX and X of Part I, Book One,\* where I explained chapter XII of the Apocalypse insofar as it was given me to understand at that time. Not only there but during the whole course of this divine History (*Inc.* 327, 363) I have referred to the present chapters of this third Part for a description of the battles which most holy Mary had with Lucifer and his demons, the triumphs She gained, and the state in which She was left by the Almighty after these battles for the rest of her earthly life. Of all these sacred mysteries the evangelist St. John took notice, and he wrote of them in his Apocalypse (as I have stated at other times [11]), particularly in chapters XII and XXI, and I must repeat the explanations of these chapters in this History, this being unavoidable for two reasons.

506. First, the secrets contained in them are so exalted and magnificent they can never be adequately explained or manifested, especially since the Evangelist, considering it as the sacrament of the King and Queen, has enveloped them in such enigmatic and metaphorical language as can be interpreted only through divine revelation when and how it shall be the divine will, as the Evangelist was commanded to do by most holy Mary. The second reason has to do with the cause of the rebellion and pride of Lucifer, for though raised against the will and orders of the most high and omnipotent God, yet the primary matter over which he fell into this rebellion was Christ our Lord and his most holy Mother, to whose superiority and excellence the apostate and rebel angels did not wish to subject themselves;† moreover, the first rebellion and war waged with St. Michael in heaven was in protest against their authority, but at that time they could not war with the incarnate Word and with his Virgin Mother in person, but only against the mysterious sign or representation of that mysterious Woman which they saw placed in the heavens as a prophetic symbol of all the mysteries of the Incarnation to be enacted in her womb. When the time came for the execution of these admirable sacraments and for the Incarnation of the Word in the virginal womb of Mary, it was appropriate for the demons to renew this battle with Christ and Mary in their persons so they themselves could personally triumph over the demons, since the Lord himself had threatened them in heaven as well as afterwards in the earthly paradise that He would place enmities between the Woman and the serpent, and between the seed of the Woman and the seed of the serpent, in order for Her to crush his head (*Gen.* 3:15).

507. All of this was fulfilled to the letter in Christ and Mary, for St. Paul says of our great High Priest and Savior that He was tempted in all things like we ourselves and for our example, but without sin (*Heb.* 4:15), and the same can be said of most holy Mary. Lucifer had permission to tempt them after his fall from heaven, as I have said in chapter X of the first Part (*Con.* 127). And because this battle with Mary most holy corresponded to the first one which occurred in heaven, and was for the demons the execution of the threat they then made against the sign which represented Her, it was described and enveloped in the same enigmatic words. Having

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\* cf. *Conception* 94ff. [Ed.]

† cf. *Conception* 87-89 [Ed.]

given sufficient explanation regarding the first battle I must now speak of what happened in the second. Although Lucifer and his demons had already been punished in their first rebellion by the eternal loss of the beatific vision and hurled into hell, they were now punished anew in this second battle by additional accidental torments corresponding to their desires and attempts to persecute and tempt most holy Mary. The reason for this is the natural faculties of a creature draw satisfaction and contentment from their attainment of what they strive after, and this in proportion to the vehemence with which they have striven; and on the contrary, they receive pain and sorrow with discontent when they fail or when the opposite happens of what they had expected and for which they had hoped. Now the demons since their fall had desired nothing more vehemently than to see Her fall from grace who was to be the medium of grace for the children of Adam; hence it was an inconceivable torment for the infernal dragons to find themselves vanquished, subdued, and deprived of all hope in the confidence and desires with which they had conspired for so many ages.

508. But for the heavenly Mother, for the same and many other reasons, this triumph in seeing the ancient serpent shattered was a singular joy; moreover, for the conclusion of this battle, and for the state which She was then to enjoy during the rest of her life, her divine Son held in readiness so many and such great blessings as exceed all human and angelic capacity. In order to say something concerning what I have been made to understand, the reader must remember that due to our limited powers and capacity we are constrained to use for the most exalted mysteries the same terms and words we use for the more ordinary ones; yet in what I am to speak of now there is infinite latitude and extent of mystery within which the Almighty can raise the creature from one state which seems to us the highest to one much more exalted, and from this again to a higher and more excellent state. Being confirmed in her very nature in graces, gifts and favors, and after reaching (as She really did) all that is not the essence of God, most holy Mary encloses such an immense breadth of excellence that by Herself She constitutes a new hierarchy, greater and more exalted than all the rest of angelic and human creatures.

509. Thus taking notice of all of this, I shall proceed to relate according to my ability what happened to Lucifer until being ultimately vanquished by most holy Mary and by her Son our Savior. The dragon and his demons were not yet entirely subdued by the triumphs related in the last chapter, when they were hurled down from the upper air into the abyss by the great Lady, nor by the curses they attempted via the women of Jerusalem, even though these curses all vanished without effect. But fearing in his malice that he had little time left for his temptations and persecutions, the enemy in his implacable malice wished to make up for the shortness of time by an increase of fury and temerity. Hence he sought out other men who having been specially instructed by him in magic and witchcraft were still greater sorcerers. To these Lucifer gave special and minute directions how to take away the life of Her whom they held as their enemy. In this way those ministers of evil attempted this many times by diverse manners of spells of great cruelty and efficaciousness. But none of them could in any way harm either the life or health of the Blessed Mother because the effects of sin exerted no influence over Her since She was sinless, and moreover for other reasons was exempt and superior to all natural causes. The dragon upon seeing this, and having his intentions frustrated in that which he had so tirelessly schemed, chastised with impious cruelty those sorcerers who deserved it, this being permitted by the Lord and merited by them for their temerity, and so they would know what kind of master they served.

510. Full of this new fury Lucifer convened all the princes of darkness and reminded them of the many reasons they had since their fall from heaven for straining all their forces and their

whole malice in order to cast down this Woman, their Enemy, since they now clearly recognized in Her the one shown to them at that time. They all agreed with him and resolved to unite and assault Her alone, presuming on some occasion or another they would find Her less prepared and bereft of her defense. Most holy Mary being alone in her oratory they at once seized this opportunity, and depopulating hell for this enterprise they advanced upon Her in united multitudes. This battle was the greatest ever fought by a mere creature from the first one in the empyrean heaven to the end of the world, and it was very much like that first one. In order to estimate the fury of Lucifer and his demons in coming to where most holy Mary then was, one must consider their torments in perceiving the divine power emanating from Her, as well as their remembrance of how often they had been oppressed and vanquished by Her. Yet their wrath and envy conquered even these torments and drove them in spite of their pains to throw themselves as it were upon the bristling pikes and swords to avenge themselves upon the heavenly Lady, for not to make such an attempt was a greater torment than any other.

511. The first assault of the demons was directed principally upon the exterior senses of the Blessed Mother, consisting in terrific howlings and confused clamors. Arraying their hosts in the air, they produced a type of din and trembling so dreadful as if they would destroy the mechanism of the whole world. To make all this appear more real they assumed diverse visible shapes, some of horrid and different kinds of demons and others of angels of light, and between the ones and the others they pretended to engage in a darksome and formidable fight or battle without it being possible to know the cause, and neither could anything be heard except the confused and most terrible din. This temptation was meant to cause terror or disturbance in the Queen; and truly it would have caused very great terror to any other human being, even to a saint, if left in the common order of grace, and no one could have endured this without losing his life, for this barrage lasted for twelve whole hours.

512. But our great Queen and Lady remained immovable and serene, as tranquil as if She heard or saw nothing of all this; She was not disturbed or altered in any way, showing no change in her countenance or traces of sorrow during this entire infernal uproar. Then the demons proceeded to other temptations directed against the internal faculties of the invincible Mother, pouring out their diabolical malice more than I can describe, for that entire demonic multitude exhausted the full measure of their hellish astuteness in concocting their false revelations, lights and suggestions, their promises and threats in attempting to infect each of her virtues by temptations to the contrary vice. I will not stop to enumerate in particular these temptations since it is neither necessary nor appropriate; but our Queen and Lady vanquished them so gloriously that in all the temptations to vice She performed acts of the contrary virtue as heroic as can be imagined, knowing how to perform them with all the exertion and vigor of grace, virtues and gifts She possessed in her current state of sanctity.

513. She prayed on that occasion for all souls tempted and afflicted by the demon, since She was now experiencing the force of his malice and the necessity of divine assistance to overcome it. The Lord granted Her the power of extending her protection to all those who are tempted and who invoke her intercession. The demons persevered in this battle until no kind of malice was left unattempted against the Purest of creatures. Then She on her part cried out for justice so God would arise and judge his cause (as David says [Ps. 73:22]), and so his enemies would be dispersed and those who abhorred his presence be put to flight (Ps. 67:2). To fulfill his judgment the incarnate Word descended from heaven to her place of seclusion in the Cenacle, appearing to his Virgin Mother as her most sweet and loving Son, and to the enemies as the severe Judge on the throne of his supreme majesty. He was accompanied by innumerable Angels, the ancient

Saints, Adam and Eve with many patriarchs and prophets, and Sts. Joachim and Anne; all of these presented and manifested themselves to most holy Mary in her oratory.

514. Prostrating Herself as usual in deepest veneration and worship, the great Lady adored her Son and true God. The demons did not see the Lord, though they were made aware of his royal presence and tried to flee from their imminent punishment. But the divine power detained them, fettering them in the manner in which their spiritual nature permitted, and the ends of their fetters or chains the Lord placed into the hands of his most holy Mother.

515. Then a voice issued from the throne saying: "Today shall come upon thee the wrath of the Omnipotent, and a Woman descended from Adam and Eve shall crush thy head (Gen. 3:15) and execute the ancient sentence fulminated against thee on high and afterwards in the earthly paradise; because being disobedient and arrogant thou hast despised the humanity of the Word with which She clothed Him in her virginal womb." Immediately most holy Mary was raised from the earth by the hands of six Seraphim nearest to the throne of God, and enveloped in a refulgent cloud She was placed on the throne of her divine Son at his side.\* From his own essence and Divinity issued an ineffable and supereminent splendor which enveloped and surrounded Her like the globe of the sun. Beneath her feet appeared also the moon, indicating She was to subject to Herself all that was inferior, earthly and variable, symbolized by the concavity of the moon. Over her head was placed a diadem or crown of twelve stars (Apoc. 12:1) as an emblem of the divine perfections communicated to Her to the fullest extent possible in a mere creature. She was also shown as pregnant (Ib. 2), not only of the concept of God in her mind but also of the corresponding love. She gave forth voices as of the sorrows of the birth of what She had conceived so all creatures who were capable might participate in it, yet they resisted, though She desired it with tears and groans.

516. This sign, in all the grandeur in which it had been conceived in the divine mind, was shown in that heavenly region to Lucifer, who was present as the great red dragon with seven heads crowned with seven diadems and ten horns (Ib. 3), manifesting in this horrendous figure he was the author of all the seven capital sins, that he desired to crown them in the world with his invented heresies, that for this reason they were reduced to seven diadems, and armed by his astuteness and strength as with ten horns he had sought to overthrow the divine law contained in the Ten Commandments. In like manner he had encircled with his tail and drawn to hell with him a third part of the stars of heaven (Ib. 4), not only in seducing the myriads of angels who followed him in disobedience, but also in casting from the heaven of the Church many of the believers who seemed to have risen above the stars either in dignity or sanctity.

517. In such a fearful and horrid shape stood Lucifer, and with him, in many other and various shapes, all of them abominable, stood his fellow demons arranged in battle array around Mary most holy, who was about to bring forth in spiritual birth the perpetual existence and enrichment of the holy Church. And the dragon, in furious envy that this Woman was so powerful in establishing and spreading this Church, and that She would by her merits, example and intercession enrich it with so many graces and raise so many myriads of men to their predestined eternal happiness, stood in readiness to devour if possible what She was to bring forth and destroy this new Church. In spite of the envy of the dragon She brought forth a man-child, who was to govern all the nations with a strong rod of iron (Ib. 5). This man-child was the most righteous and strong spirit of the Church, which in the righteousness of Christ our God holds sway over all the nations in justice; and likewise it signified all of the apostolic men who in the

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\* cf. Mt. 20:23 [Ed.]

same righteous spirit are to judge with the iron rod of divine justice (Mt. 19:28). All this is what most holy Mary brought forth, not only because She gave birth to Christ, but also because through her merits and diligence She brought forth the Church in holiness and rectitude, nourished it during the time She lived in it, and even now and forever preserves it in the manly spirit in which it was born, maintaining the uprightness of Catholic truth against which the gates of hell shall not prevail (Mt. 16:18).

518. St. John says this man-child was then taken up to the throne of God, and the Woman fled to her destined place in the desert in order to be nourished there one thousand two hundred sixty days (Apoc. 12:5-6). This signifies that all the legitimate offspring of this sovereign Mother, not only those who are the fruit of the general spirit of holiness in the Church, but also the particular souls whom She engendered and engenders as her proper spiritual children, shall arrive at the throne where her natural Offspring is, who is Christ, in whom and for whom She engenders and raises her children. But the solitude to which most holy Mary was raised after this battle was a most exalted state and full of mysteries, of which I shall say something presently. It is called a solitude because She alone of all creatures was in that state, and no one else could ever reach or attain it. In it She was without the company of creatures, and moreover She was left alone by the dragon, who more than anyone else was ignorant of this mystery and could not any more tempt or persecute Her in person. There the Lord nourished Her one thousand two hundred sixty days, which was the time She lived in this state before passing to another.

519. All this was darkly known and intimated to Lucifer and his demons before this heavenly Woman and living sign was hidden away from their sight. The knowledge of her destiny took away the confidence which for more than five thousand years had inspired the dragon with the hope of being able to vanquish Her, She who was the Mother of the incarnate Word. Hence the despair and torment of Lucifer and his demons can to a certain extent be imagined, especially since they now saw themselves overcome and held bound by the very Woman whom they had with such insane fury sought to cast down from grace and deprive of the merits and fruits of the Church. Struggling to escape, the dragon said: "O Woman, give me leave to hurl myself into hell, for I cannot bear thy presence, nor will I ever venture to come before Thee as long as Thou livest upon this world. Thou hast conquered, O Woman, Thou hast conquered, and I acknowledge thy power in Him who has made Thee his Mother. Omnipotent God, chastise us Thyself, since we cannot resist Thee, but do not send thy punishments through a Woman of a nature so inferior to ours. Her charity consumes us, her humility crushes us, and She is in all things a living manifestation of thy mercy for men, and this torments us above many punishments. Come, ye demons, assist me! But what is all our power against this Woman, since all our forces are insufficient to allow us to flee from Her while She does not desire to cast us from her intolerable presence? O foolish children of Adam, why do you follow me, forsaking life for the sake of death, truth for falsehood? What absurdity and insanity is yours (so in despair I must confess), since you have in your midst and belonging to your own nature the incarnate Word and this Woman? Greater is your ingratitude than mine! This Woman forces me to confess the truths which I abhor with all my heart. Cursed be my resolve to persecute this Daughter of Adam, who so torments and crushes me."

520. While the dragon thus gave vent to his despair the prince of the heavenly hosts St. Michael appeared in order to defend the cause of most holy Mary and of the incarnate Word, and by the arms of the understanding he began another battle with the dragon and his followers (Apoc. 12:7). St. Michael and his Angels hurled at them the convincing arguments of old, reproaching them with their pride and disobedience in heaven and their temerity in persecuting

and tempting the incarnate Word and his Mother, contending with those in whom they had no part or right whatsoever since they could accuse them of no sin, injustice or imperfection. St. Michael justified the works of divine justice, declaring them most righteous and unblamable chastisements for the disobedience and apostasy of Lucifer and his demons. Anew St. Michael and the holy Angels anathematized them and confirmed the sentence of their damnation, confessing the Almighty as holy and just in all his works. The dragon and his followers likewise tried to defend their rebellion and the audacity of their pride, but all their reasonings were false, vain, and full of diabolical presumption and error.

521. A silence ensued in the altercation, and the Lord of hosts spoke to Mary most holy, saying: “My Mother and my Beloved, chosen among creatures by my eternal wisdom for my habitation and holy temple, Thou hast given Me human form and restored the human race; Thou hast followed Me, imitated Me, and merited the graces and gifts communicated to Thee above all my creatures, and Thou hast never permitted them to be unprofitable in Thee. Be Thou the worthy object of my infinite love and the protection of my Church, its Queen, Lady and Governess. Thou dost possess my commission and power, and as the almighty God I have entrusted it to thy most faithful will; by this power do Thou command the infernal dragon that as long as Thou shalt live in the Church he shall not sow the seed of error and heresy which he holds in readiness.

Strike his hardened neck,\* cut off and crush his head (Gen. 3:15), for during the days of thy life I desire the Church to derive this advantage from thy presence.”

522. Most holy Mary executed this command of the Lord, and by her authority as Queen and Lady commanded the infernal dragons to be silent and not to pour out among the faithful the false sects which they held in readiness, and while She lived upon earth none of them must dare to deceive any of the mortals by their heretical tenets and doctrines. And thus it happened, for though the wrath of the serpent, in vengeance upon the great Queen, had intended to pour out this poison on the Church, the Lord for the sake of his love of the heavenly Mother hindered it during her lifetime. After her glorious Transition permission was given to the demon to spread his heresies because the sins of men subjected them to the just judgments of the Lord.

523. Then as St. John says (Apoc. 12:9) *that great dragon, that old serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, was cast forth with his angels and banished from the presence of the Queen. Their chains were lengthened and they fell upon the earth, where they were permitted to remain. At this point a voice was heard, which was that of the Archangel St. Michael in the Cenacle, saying (Ib. 10-12): Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; because the accuser of our brethren is cast forth, who accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of the testimony, and they loved not their lives unto death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you that dwell therein. Woe to the earth, and to the sea, because the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time!* By these words the Angel proclaimed that in virtue of the victories and triumphs of Mary most holy, united to those of her Son and Savior, the reign of God, which is his Church, and the effects of the Redemption of man were assured to the just. All this he called the salvation, strength and power of Christ. And since without doubt if the Blessed Mother had not overcome the infernal dragon this impious and powerful enemy would have hindered the effects of the Redemption, therefore that voice of the Angel resounded victoriously at the conclusion of the battle and at his casting forth to the earth and the sea. He

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\* Judith 13:10, 24 [Ed.]

congratulated the Saints because now the head and the accusations of the demon, by which he slandered men, were crushed; and the Angel calls them brethren because of their kinship via the soul, and by grace and glory.

524. The calumnies by which the devil persecuted and accused mortals were the illusions and deceits by which he tried to pervert the beginnings of the evangelical Church, and his appeals to the justice of God, alleging men through their ingratitude and wickedness, and by having taken away the life of Christ the Savior, did not merit Redemption or mercy, but deserved to be punished by leaving them to their own sinfulness and to the darkness of eternal damnation. But Mary most holy pleaded against all this as the most sweet and merciful Mother, meriting for us faith and its propagation, and the abundance of mercies and gifts which have been granted to us in virtue of the death of her Son, all of which were demerited by the sins of those who crucified Him and the others who would not receive Him. St. Michael with sorrowful compassion warned the inhabitants of the earth to be prepared against this serpent which now descended to them in such great wrath, for without a doubt this dragon knows he has little time for executing his wrath since he has learned of the mysteries of the Redemption, the power of most holy Mary, and the abundance of grace and wonderful favors in the primitive Church. From all these facts he entered into suspicion that the end of the world was at hand, or that all men would follow Christ our Lord and avail themselves of the intercession of his Mother to gain eternal life. But what sorrow, that men themselves have been more insane, foolish and ungrateful than even the demon himself dared to think!

525. In further explanation of these mysteries the Evangelist states when the dragon saw himself cast upon the earth he attempted to persecute the mysterious Woman who had brought forth the man-child. But to Her were given two wings as of a great eagle so She could fly into the solitude or desert *where She was nourished for a time and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent* (Apoc. 12:13-14). And for this reason the same *serpent cast out of his mouth after the Woman water as it were a river, that he might cause Her to be carried away by the river* if possible (Ib. 15). By these words he further declares the wrath of Lucifer against God and his Mother, and against the Church; for as far as this dragon is concerned his envy always burns, his pride is always lifted up, and his malice always active in order to tempt anew this Queen as long as he has power and permission. But they were taken from him in regard to the Queen, and hence it is said two wings were given Her to fly into the desert, where She is nourished during the stated times. These mysterious wings were the power or divine virtue given by God to most holy Mary in order to fly and ascend to the vision of the Divinity, and to descend to the Church to distribute the treasures of grace to men, as we shall describe in the next chapter (535).

526. From that time on the serpent had no more power to tempt the Blessed Mother in person, and thus it is said her solitude or desert is removed from the sight of the demon. The time and times, and half a time, are three years and a half, which contain the one thousand two hundred sixty days, less a few days, as mentioned before. In this state, and in others yet to be declared (601), most holy Mary spent the rest of her mortal life. But since the dragon was forced to give up tempting Her he shot forth the river of his venomous malice after this heavenly Woman (Apoc. 12:15), for after her victory he sought astutely to tempt the faithful and persecute them through the aid of the Jews and gentiles, and especially after her glorious Transition into heaven did he loosen the flood of his heresies and false sects locked up within himself. The threats which he uttered after her victory referred to the war he intended to wage against men in order to avenge himself upon Her, for being now unable to vent his rage upon the person of the Queen he resolved to continue it against those whom the Lady loved so much.

527. Hence St. John says the dragon proceeded to make war upon the others who are of her generation and seed, who observe the law of God and have the testimony of Christ (Ib. 17). And the dragon stood upon the sands of the sea (Ib. 18), namely he relied upon the countless infidels, idolaters, Jews and pagans, through whom he has made and does make war upon the holy Church, besides secretly waging the war of temptation against the faithful. But the solid and firm set earth, which is the immutability of the Church and the imperishable Catholic truth, helps the mysterious Woman (Ib. 16), because the Church opens her mouth, swallowing and absorbing the flood poured out against Her by the serpent. And so it happens, since the holy Church, which is the organ and mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost, has condemned, refuted and confounded all the errors and false sects and doctrines by the words and teaching coming forth from this mouthpiece through the divine Scriptures, the Councils, decisions, doctors, teachers, and preachers of the Gospel.

528. All these mysteries and many others the Evangelist intimates and describes under the image of this battle and triumph of most holy Mary. In order to end the conflict, though Lucifer was already cast from heaven and given over, fettered in chains, into the hands of the victorious Queen, the great Lady perceived it to be the will of the Lord her divine Son that She hurl him and his hosts into the infernal caverns. Fortified and strengthened by God, She released them and commanded them immediately to depart into hell. As soon as She pronounced the word all the demons fell into the most distant caverns of hell, where they remained for some time giving forth terrible and despairing howls. Then the holy Angels sang new hymns to the incarnate Word because of his victories and those of his invincible Mother. The first parents, Adam and Eve, gave thanks to God because He chose this their Daughter for his Mother and thus repaired the ruin they had caused to their posterity; the Patriarchs, because their great expectations and prophecies were so happily and gloriously fulfilled; St. Joachim, St. Anne, and St. Joseph, with still greater jubilation, glorified the Almighty for their Daughter and Spouse; and all of them together sang the glory and praise of the Most High, so holy and admirable in his counsels. Most holy Mary prostrated Herself before the royal throne and adored the incarnate Word, offering Herself anew to labor for the Church and asking his blessing, which She received with admirable effects. She asked also her parents and her Spouse for their blessing, recommending the holy Church and all the faithful to their prayers. With this the whole celestial gathering took their leave and returned to heaven.

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

529. My daughter, with the rebellion of Lucifer and his demons in heaven have begun the battles between the kingdom of light and that of darkness, between Jerusalem and Babylon, and these battles will not cease until the end of the world. The Captain and Head of the children of light is the incarnate Word, as the Author of sanctity and grace; and Lucifer, as the author of sin and perdition, has constituted himself as the leader of the children of darkness. Each one of these leaders defends his followers and seeks to increase his reign and the number of his adherents. Christ seeks to draw men to Himself by the truths of his divine faith, the favors and gifts of his grace, the holiness of his virtues, his consolations in labors, and by the certain hope of his promised happiness, commanding his Angels to accompany, console and defend them (Ps. 90:11) until they are able to bring them to heaven. Lucifer on the other hand gains his followers by lies, deceits and treachery, by the allurements of ignominious and abominable vices, by darkness and confusion; he treats them in this life like a tyrant, afflicting them relentlessly and



depriving them of all consolation, while in the next life he holds in readiness for them eternal and horrible torments which he himself and through his demons shall inflict upon them with inhuman cruelty as long as God is God.

530. But what sorrow!, my daughter, that in spite of this truth, so infallible and so well known to mortals, and in spite of the infinite difference of the recompense, how few are the soldiers who follow Christ as their legitimate Lord, as their King, their Chief, and their model, and how numerous are those who band with Lucifer, who gives them neither existence nor life, who gives them no nourishment nor any return, who deserves nothing nor in any way obliges them, as was and is the case with the Author of life and grace, my divine Son. So great is the ingratitude of men, so foolish their infidelity, so unhappy their blindness. Merely because God has given men freedom of will either to follow their Master or not, to show themselves grateful or not, they side with Lucifer and serve him freely, and permit him to enter the house of God and his temple so he may tyrannically confuse and profane it, drawing after him the greater part of the world to his eternal torments.

531. This conflict will last to the end, because the Prince of eternity, due to his infinite goodness, shall not cease to defend the souls He created and redeemed by his blood. But He does not battle the dragon by Himself alone, nor only by his Angels; for it redounds to his greater glory and the exaltation of his holy Name if He overcomes the enemies and confounds their pride through human beings, in whom they seek to avenge themselves upon the Lord. Being a mere creature I was, next to my Son the true God, the Leader and Sovereign in these battles. Although through his Passion and Death He vanquished the demons, who had become very haughty by the dominion of sin inaugurated among men by Adam, yet after He, and I in his name, had triumphed over the enemies, and through our victories established the Church in such high perfection and holiness, the Church would have persevered and Lucifer would have remained crushed, as I said before (*Inc.* 370; *Tran.* 723-4), if the ingratitude and forgetfulness of men had not impelled him anew toward the perdition and ruin of the whole globe.

532. Nevertheless my divine Son did not forsake the Church, which He had acquired by his blood (Acts 20:28), nor have I, as its Mother and Protectress, forsaken it; and we continue to look within it for some souls to defend the glory and honor of God and fight the battles against hell for the confusion and crushing of the demons. Hence I desire thee to dispose thyself by divine grace for this battle, and not to wonder at the strength of the demon nor be downcast at thy misery and poverty. Thou knowest the wrath of Lucifer against me was greater than against any of the creatures, and greater than against all of them together, yet by the power of the Lord I vanquished him gloriously, and by the same power thou canst resist him in thy smaller temptations. Although thou mayest be weak and lacking in what is required, I desire thee to understand my divine Son acts now as a king who is short of subjects and soldiers, and will admit anyone who wishes to serve in his army. Encourage thyself then to conquer the demon in present matters, for then the Lord will afterwards arm thee for greater battles. I tell thee the Church would not be entangled in its present difficulties if a number of souls belonging to it had taken it upon themselves to defend the cause and honor of God; but the Church stands very much alone and forsaken by the children whom it nourished at its own bosom.\*

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