

CHAPTER XI

How in the Creation of All Things the Lord had Present to His Mind Christ our Lord and His Most Holy Mother, and how He Chose and Favored His People Prefiguring these Mysteries.

133. In chapter VIII of the Proverbs Wisdom says of Himself that in the creation of all things He was present with the Almighty forming all things (Prov. 8:30). And I said above (54) this Wisdom is the incarnate Word, who with his most holy Mother was present in spirit when God resolved upon the creation of the whole world, for in that instant the Son was not only coexistent in divine essence with the Father and the Holy Ghost, but also the humanity which He was to take occupied the first place among all creatures foreseen and designed in the divine mind of the Father. Conjointly with Him was also foreseen as present the human nature of his most holy Mother, who was to conceive Him in her most pure womb. In these two persons were foreseen all his works, so because of them (speaking in a human way) He overlooked all that could offend Him in the conduct of the men and angels who were to fall, for the conduct of the latter was an inducement rather to desist from the creation of the human race and of the things which were for their service.

134. The Most High looked upon his onlybegotten Son made man and upon his most holy Mother as models which He had formed by the grandeur of his wisdom and power so they could serve as the originals according to which He was to copy the whole human race. Thus by assimilating it to these two images of his divinity all the rest of men could issue forth by means of these models made in the likeness of God. He created also the necessary material beings required for human life, but with such wisdom that some of them also serve as symbols to represent in a certain way these two beings which He primarily intended, and to which all others were to be subservient, namely Christ and Mary most holy. For this reason He made the luminaries of heaven, the sun and the moon (Gen. 1:16), so thus in dividing the day and the night they would symbolize Christ, the Sun of justice, and his most holy Mother, who is beautiful as the moon (Cant. 6:9), for these two divide the day of grace and the night of sin. The sun illumines the moon, and both, together with the stars of the firmament, illumine all other creatures within the confines of the universe.

135. He created the rest of the beings and added to them greater perfection, seeing they were to serve Christ and most holy Mary, and through them the rest of men, for whom before they issued from their nothingness He set a most delightful table, abundant, secure, and more memorable than that of Assuerus (Esther 1:3), because He was to create man for his delight and draw him to the enjoyment of his knowledge and love. Like a most courteous and bounteous Lord He did not desire the invited guests to wait, but rather both the creation and the invitation to the banquet of his knowledge and love to be one and the same act. Man was not to lose any time in that which concerned him so much, namely to know and praise his almighty Maker.

136. On the sixth day He formed and created Adam as it were of the age of thirty-three years (Gen. 1:27). This was the age in which Christ was to suffer death, and Adam in regard to his body was so like unto Christ that scarcely any difference existed; also according to the soul Adam was similar to Christ. From Adam God formed Eve so similar to the Virgin that she was a copy of Her in features and person. God looked upon these two portraits of the originals with the highest pleasure and benevolence, and because of the originals He heaped many blessings upon them, as if He wanted to entertain Himself with them and their descendants until the time would arrive for forming Christ and Mary.

137. But the happy state in which God had created the two first parents of the human race lasted only a very short while. The envy of the serpent was immediately aroused against them, for Lucifer was impatiently awaiting their creation, and no sooner were they created than his hatred became active against them. However, he was not permitted to witness the formation of Adam and Eve as he had witnessed the creation of all other things, for the Lord did not choose to manifest to him the creation of the man, nor the formation of Eve from a rib. All these things were concealed from him for a space of time until both of them were joined. But when the demon saw the admirable composition of the human nature, perfect beyond that of any other creature, and the beauty of the souls and also of the bodies of Adam and Eve, and recognized the paternal love with which the Lord regarded them, and how He made them the owners and lords of all creation, and gave them hope of eternal life, the wrath of the dragon was lashed to fury, and no tongue can describe the rage with which that beast was filled, nor how great was his envy and his desire to take the life of these two beings. Like an enraged lion he certainly would have done so if he had not known that a superior force would prevent him. Nevertheless he studied and plotted out some means which would suffice to deprive them of the grace of the Most High and make them the enemies of God.

138. Here Lucifer deceived himself, for the Lord had from the beginning mysteriously manifested to him that the Word was to assume human nature in the womb of most holy Mary, but not how and when; and thus He had also concealed the creation of Adam and the formation of Eve so Lucifer would from the beginning labor under his ignorance concerning the mystery and the time of the Incarnation. As his wrath and his watchfulness against Christ and Mary had been so signally anticipated, he suspected that Adam had come forth from Eve, and that She was the Mother and Adam the incarnate Word. His suspicions grew when he felt the divine power which prevented him from harming the life of these creatures. On the other hand he soon became aware of the precepts of God, for these did not remain concealed from him since he heard their conversation in regard to them. Being freed more and more from his doubt as he listened to the words of the first parents and sized up their natural gifts, he began to follow them like a roaring lion (I Peter 5:8), seeking an entrance through those inclinations which he found in each of them; nevertheless, until he was undeceived in the course of the Redemption he continued to hesitate between his wrath against Christ and Mary and the dread of being overcome by them. Most of all he dreaded the confusion of being conquered by the Queen of heaven, who was to be a mere creature and not God.

139. Taking courage therefore in the precept which was given to Adam and Eve, and having prepared the snare, Lucifer entered with all his energy upon the work of entrapping them and of opposing and hindering the execution of the divine will. He first approached the woman and not the man, because he knew her to be by nature more frail and weak, and because in tempting her he would be more certain that it was not Christ whom he was encountering; moreover, he had the highest indignation against her ever since he had seen the sign in heaven and heard the threat which God had made against him through that Woman. All this drew and carried him first toward Eve rather than Adam. Before he manifested himself to her he aroused in her many powerful and disordered thoughts or imaginations in order to approach her in a state of excitement and preoccupation; yet since I have written about this elsewhere I will not enlarge here upon the violence and inhumanity with which he tempted her. It is enough for my purpose to mention what Scripture says, that he took the form of a serpent (Gen. 3:1), and thus speaking

to Eve drew her into a conversation which she should not have permitted. Listening to him and answering him, she began to believe him;* then she violated the command of God; and in the end she persuaded her husband that he should likewise break the command, causing damage to them and to all other mortals, and losing for them and us the happy state in which the Most High had placed them.

140. When Lucifer saw the two fallen and their interior beauty, grace, and original justice changed into the ugliness of sin, incredible was the elation and triumph which he demonstrated to his demons. But he soon fell from his proud boasting when he saw, contrary to his expectations, how kindly the merciful love of God dealt with the delinquents, and how He offered them a chance of doing penance by giving them hope of pardon and return of grace; moreover, he saw how they were disposing themselves toward this forgiveness by sorrow and contrition, and how the beauty of grace was restored to them. When the demons perceived the effect of contrition all hell was again in confusion. His lamentation grew greater seeing the sentence which God pronounced against the guilty ones, in which he himself was implicated. More especially and above all was he tormented by the repetition of that threat: The Woman shall crush thy head (Gen. 3:15), which he had already heard in heaven.

141. The offspring of Eve multiplied after the fall, and so arose the division and multiplication of the good and the bad, the elect and the reprobate, the ones following Christ our Redeemer and Master and the others following Satan. The elect cling to their Leader by faith, humility, charity, patience, and all the virtues, and in order to obtain victory they are assisted, helped and beautified by the divine grace and gifts which the Redeemer and Lord of all merited for them. But the reprobate, without receiving any such benefits from their false leader, or earning any other reward than the eternal pain and confusion of hell, follow him in pride, presumption, ambition, impurities and wickedness, being led into these disorders by the father of lies and the originator of sin.

142. Notwithstanding all this the Most High in his ineffable kindness gave our first parents his benediction so the human race would grow and multiply. His most exalted providence permitted Eve to bring forth in the unjust Cain a type of the evil fruits of sin, and in the innocent Abel, both in figure and in imitation, the type of Christ our Lord (Gen. 4:3ff.); hence in the first just man the law and doctrine of Christ began to exert its effects. All the rest of the just were to follow it, suffering for justice' sake, hated and persecuted by the sinners, the reprobate, and by their own brothers (Mt. 10:21-22). Accordingly patience, humility and meekness began to appear in Abel, and envy and all wickedness in Cain, for his own perdition and for the benefit of the just. The wicked triumph and the good suffer, exhibiting the spectacle which the world in its progress shows to this day in the composition of the two cities, namely the Jerusalem of the just and the Babylon of the reprobate, each with its own leader and head.

143. The Most High also desired the first Adam to be the type of the second in the manner of his creation, for just as before the creation of the first man He created and ordered for him the republic of all the beings of which he was to be the lord and head, so likewise before the appearance of his Onlybegotten He allowed many ages to pass so in the multiplied numbers of the human race his Son would find prepared for Himself a people of which He was to be the Head, the Teacher, and the King. He was not to be even for a moment without a people and without followers. Such is the wonderful harmony and order in which the divine wisdom disposed all things, making that later in execution which was first in intention.

* cf. *Incarnation* 355 [Ed.]

144. So the Word could descend from the bosom of the Father and clothe Himself in our mortality, as the world progressed in its course God selected and prepared a chosen and most noble people, the most admirable than any either before or after.* Within it He also constituted a most illustrious and holy race from which He was to descend according to the flesh. I will not linger in detailing the genealogy of Christ our Lord, for the account of the holy Evangelists has made that unnecessary (Mt. 1:1-16; Lk. 3:23-38). I will only say, in praise of the Most High, that He has shown to me many times the incomparable love which He bore toward his people, the favors shown to them, and the sacraments and mysteries which He entrusted to them, as was afterwards made manifest through his holy Church; for at no time has He slept or slumbered who has constituted Himself the watcher of Israel (Ps. 120:4).

145. He made most holy Prophets and Patriarchs, who in figures and prophecies announced to us from far off that which we now have in possession. He desires us to venerate them, knowing how they esteemed the law of grace and how earnestly they yearned and prayed for it. To this people God manifested his immutable being by many revelations, and they again transmitted these revelations to us by the Scriptures, containing immense mysteries which we grasp and learn to know by faith; however, all of them are brought to perfection and are made certain by the incarnate Word, who transmitted to us the secure rule of faith and the nourishment of the Holy Scriptures in his Church. Although the Prophets and the just ones of that people were not so favored as to see Christ in his body, they nevertheless experienced the liberality of the Lord, who manifested Himself to them by prophecies and who moved their hearts to pray for his coming and for the Redemption of the whole human race. The consonance and harmony of all these prophecies, mysteries and aspirations of the ancient Fathers were a sweet music to the Most High which resounded in the secret recesses of the Divinity, and which regaled Him and shortened the time (to speak in a human manner) until He would descend to converse with men.†

146. In order not to be detained too much in that which the Lord has revealed to me regarding this, and in order to arrive at the preparations which the Lord made for sending to the world the incarnate Word and his most holy Mother, I will rehearse these mysteries succinctly according to the order given in the Holy Scriptures. Genesis contains that which concerns the beginning and the creation of the world for the human race; the division of the lands and peoples; the chastisement and the restoration; the confusion of tongues, and the origin of the chosen race, brought low in Egypt; and many other great sacraments revealed by God to Moses so we may be led to know his love and justice towards men from the beginning, drawing them to his knowledge and service and foreshadowing that which He had resolved to do in the future.

147. The book of Exodus contains what happened in Egypt with the chosen people; the plagues and punishments which God sent in order to rescue them; their departure and march through the sea; the written law given with such great preparations and wonders; and many other great sacraments which the Lord provided for his people, afflicting sometimes their enemies and other times themselves, chastising their enemies as a severe Judge and correcting the chosen people as a most loving Father, teaching them to know the benefit of labors. He worked great wonders with the staff of Moses, which prefigured the cross upon which the incarnate Word was to be sacrificed as the Lamb, a remedy for some and ruin for others (Lk. 2:34), like the waves of the

* Most Rev. Samaniego in note XX of Part I of his Spanish edition explains that Ven. Mary is here speaking of the children of Israel as superior to all other *temporal* peoples, whereas Christians are a *spiritual* people and hence superior in this regard. [Ed.]

† cf. Baruch 3:38 [Ed.]

Red Sea which shielded the chosen people and annihilated the Egyptians. By all these mysteries He advanced his chosen people, interweaving their lives with joys and weeping, with labors and comforts, and with infinite wisdom and providence He symbolized in them the Life and Death of Christ our Lord.

148. In Leviticus He describes and ordains many sacrifices and ceremonies of the law for placating the Divinity, for they were to point out the Lamb who was to be immolated for all men; and they pointed out also ourselves, immolated to His Majesty by the true execution of these figurative sacrifices. It also describes the vestments of Aaron, the high priest and type of Christ, though Christ was not to be of that inferior order but of the order of Melchisedech (Ps. 109:4).

149. The book of Numbers describes the wanderings of the Israelites in the desert, prefiguring what was to happen with the holy Church, with the Onlybegotten as man, with his most holy Mother, and also with the rest of the just, who in different aspects were prefigured in the column of fire, the manna, and the rock giving forth water. It contains also other great mysteries which are included in the events there recorded, and likewise the mysteries pertaining to numbers, in all of which deep secrets are hidden.

150. Deuteronomy is like a second law, a repetition of the first, but given in a different way and prefiguring more closely the law of the Gospels; for since the Incarnation of the Son was to be deferred, according to the hidden judgments of God and the propriety known to his wisdom, He renewed and rearranged these laws so they would be more like to those which He was to establish through his onlybegotten Son.

151. Jesus Nave or Josue conducts the people of God into the promised land. He divides the Jordan to allow the passage of the multitudes and achieves great things, typifying plainly the Redeemer as well in name as in deed. His history represents the destruction of the kingdoms which the demon possessed, and the separation and division of the good and bad which will happen in the last day.

152. After Josue, when the people had already come into the possession of the promised and desired land, which primarily and appropriately signifies the Church acquired by Jesus Christ through the price of his blood, comes the book of the Judges ordained by God for the government of his people, especially during the wars which because of their sins and idolatries were waged against them by the Philistines and other neighboring enemies. From these God freed and delivered them whenever they returned to Him by penance and amendment of life. In it are also related the deeds of Deborah while judging the people and liberating them from great oppression, and also those of Jahel, who helped them to victory, mighty and courageous women both. All these deeds of history prefigure and illustrate what was to happen in the Church.

153. After the generation of the Judges came the Kings for whom the Israelites petitioned in their desire of imitating the government of the surrounding nations. These books contain great mysteries concerning the coming of the Messiah. Heli the priest and Saul the king prefigure in their death the reprobation of the old law. Sadoc and David typify the new reign and priesthood of Christ, and also the Church with the small number which were to belong to it in comparison to the rest of men in the world. The other kings of Israel and Juda and their captivities presignify other great mysteries of the holy Church.

154. During the aforesaid times lived the most patient Job, whose words are so mysterious that there is not one without its profound sacramental meaning concerning the life of Christ our Lord, the resurrection of the dead, the Last Judgment in the same flesh in which each one lives, and concerning the violence and astuteness of the demons and their warfare against men. Above all has God placed him as an example of patience for us mortals, for in him we all may learn how

we are to bear our adversities, especially as we have before our eyes the death of Christ, whereas this saint saw Him only at such a distance and yet imitated Him so closely.

155. In the writings of the many and great Prophets whom God sent in the time of the kings to provide for special necessities, not one of the great mysteries and sacraments pertaining to the coming of the Messiah and his law remained undeclared or unrevealed. The same thing, although more at a distance, God accomplished in the ancient Fathers and Patriarchs. In all this He multiplied the likenesses and as it were the patterns of the incarnate Word, and prearranged and prepared for Him a people and the law which He was to teach.

156. In the three great patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob He deposited great and precious pledges, calling Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He desired to honor Himself in this name at the same time that He honored them, manifesting his dignity and his excellent virtues and sacraments, and confiding them to their care so they could furnish so honorable a name to God. The patriarch Abraham, in order to prefigure vividly that which the eternal Father was to do with his Onlybegotten, was tempted and tried by the command to sacrifice his only son Isaac (Gen. 22:1). But when this obedient father was about to complete the sacrifice, the same Lord who had given the command impeded its execution, for such a heroic sacrifice was to be reserved to the eternal Father, who alone was to sacrifice in reality his Onlybegotten. Only in a symbolic manner can Abraham be said to have done the same, for thus it will appear that the zeal of divine love is strong as death (Cant. 8:6). However, it was not appropriate for such an expressive figure to remain altogether unaccomplished, and therefore the sacrifice of Abraham was fulfilled by the killing of a ram, being likewise a figure of the Lamb who was to pay for the sins of the world (Jn. 1:29).

157. To Jacob was shown that mysterious ladder, full of sacraments and hidden import (Gen. 28:12), principally to represent the incarnate Word as the way and the means of ascending to the Father and of his descending to us. On it also ascend and descend the angels who illumine and guide us, bearing us up in their hands so we might not stumble over the rocks of the errors, heresies and vices with which the path of mortal life is strewn (Ps. 90:12). In the midst of them we pass securely up this stairs in the faith and hope of his holy Church, which is the house of the Lord and the only portal of heaven and sanctity.

158. To Moses, in order to constitute Himself the God of Pharaoh and leader of his people, He showed the mystical bush which burned without being consumed (Ex. 3:2), and which foreshadowed the Divinity covered with our humanity, leaving the Divinity intact by the humanity and the humanity unconsumed by the Divinity. At the same time it also signified the perpetual virginity of the Mother of the incarnate Word, not only of her body but of her soul, such that although She was a daughter of Adam and came vested in the sin-tainted nature derived from Adam, She nevertheless was without stain or offense.

159. He raised also for Himself David according to his own heart (I Kg. 13:14), who worthily sang the mercies of the Most High (Ps. 88:2), comprehending in his Psalms all the sacraments and mysteries not only of the law of grace, but of the written and natural laws (Ps. 118 and 18). The testimonies, judgments and works of the Lord which were pronounced by his lips David also treasured up in his heart, meditating on them day and night. In pardoning his enemies he was an express image and figure of God forgiving us. Thus all his promises concerning the coming of the Redeemer were made more certain to the world.

160. Solomon, the king of peace, and by this a figure of the true King of kings, showed his great wisdom in manifesting by diverse kinds of writings the mysteries and sacraments of Christ, especially in the metaphor of the Canticles, wherein is enclosed the mysteries of the incarnate

Word, of his most holy Mother, and of the Church and the faithful. He taught also right behavior in different ways, opening up a fountain of truth and life-giving knowledge for many other writers.

161. But who can worthily magnify the benefits He provided for his people in the praiseworthy host of holy Prophets? Through them the Lord has spread the light of prophecy, lighting up as from afar the holy Church, and commencing in advance to shed the rays of the Sun of justice and of the efficacious law of grace. The two great Prophets, Isaias and Jeremias, were chosen to preach to us, in a sweet and exalted manner, the mysteries of the Incarnation of the Word, his birth, life and death. Isaias promised us *a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel* (Is. 7:14); that *a Child is born to us, and a Son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder* (Is. 9:6). All the rest of the life of Christ he proclaims with such clearness that his prophecies are like a Gospel. Jeremias announces the unheard-of wonder that God will cause a woman to bear in her womb a man, who is at the same time to be God and perfect man, who alone can be Christ (Jer. 31:22). He announced his coming, his passion, ignominies and death (Lam. 3). Wonder and suspense fill me in the consideration of these Prophets. Isaias asks the Lord to send the Lamb, who is to rule the world, from the rock of the desert to the mountain of the daughter of Sion (Is. 16:1); for this Lamb, the incarnate Word, calls the heavens a desert, where as God He dwelt without the society of men. Isaias calls Him a rock due to the stability of his throne and the unaltered rest of eternity which He enjoys. The mountain from which He is asked to come is, in the mystical sense, the holy Church, and first of all most holy Mary, the Daughter of the vision of peace, which is Sion. The Prophet interposes Her as the Mediatrix to induce the eternal Father to send the Lamb, his Onlybegotten, for in all the rest of the human race there was nothing to influence Him so much as to have such a Mother, who was to clothe this Lamb with the fleece* of the most holy humanity. All this is contained in that most sweet prayer and prophecy of Isaias.

162. Ezekiel also saw this Virgin Mother in the figure and likeness of the closed gate (Ez. 44:2) which was open only for the God of Israel, and through which no other man could enter. Habacuc contemplates Christ our Lord on the cross, and in most profound words prophesies the mysteries of the Redemption and the wonderful effects of the Passion and Death of our Redeemer (Hab. 3). Joel describes the land of the twelve tribes, prefiguring the twelve Apostles, who were to be the heads of all the sons of the Church. He also announces the descent of the Holy Ghost upon his servants and handmaids (Joel 2:28), foretelling the time of the coming and the life of Christ. And all the other Prophets announced in part the same thing, for God desired all his great works to be announced, prophesied and prefigured far in advance, and so completely that they would testify the love and care which He had for men and with which He enriched his Church. He desired also to reprehend us and convict us of our lukewarmness, since these ancient Fathers and Prophets, seeing only the shadows and figures, were inflamed with divine love and broke forth in canticles of praise and exaltation of the Lord, whereas we, who enjoy the truth and the bright day of grace, remain buried in forgetfulness of such great benefits, and forsaking the light continue to seek the darkness.

* cf. Ps. 71:6 [Ed.]