

## CHAPTER XVII

*Continuing the Mystery of the Immaculate Conception of Most Holy Mary by the Understanding Given to Me Regarding Chapter XXI of the Apocalypse.*

243. The Immaculate Conception of most holy Mary contains such great and such hidden sacraments that in order to make me more capable of understanding this admirable mystery His Majesty opened up to me many of the hidden meanings of chapter XXI of the Apocalypse of St. John and referred me to it for my guidance. In recording some of the things which were manifested to me I will divide this explanation into three parts, thus avoiding some inconvenience which could be caused if all was together in such a long chapter. And first I will give the very words of that chapter which begins in the following manner (Apoc. 21:1-8):

244. *1. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth was gone, and the sea is now no more.*

*2. And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

*3. And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and He will dwell with them. And they shall be his people; and God himself with them shall be their God.*

*4. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away.*

*5. And He that sat on the throne, said: Behold, I make all things new. And He said to me: Write, for these words are most faithful and true.*

*6. And He said to me: It is done. I am Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the end. To him that thirsteth, I will give of the fountain of the water of life, freely.*

*7. He that shall overcome shall possess these things, and I will be his God; and he shall be my son.*

*8. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, they shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*

245. This is the first of the three parts of the literal rendering of this chapter, and I shall begin to explain it verse for verse. *I saw*, says the Evangelist, *a new heaven and a new earth*. He speaks of the issuing forth of most holy Mary from the hands of the omnipotent God, and the placing in the world the immediate material from which was formed the most holy humanity of the Word, who was to die for men; all this was described by the Evangelist as seeing a *new heaven and a new earth*. Not without great propriety could that human nature, and the virginal womb where and from which it was formed, be called a *new heaven*, for in that heaven God began to dwell in a new way (Jer. 31:22), different from that in which He had dwelt before in the ancient heaven and in all his creatures. But also the heaven of the saints could be called new after the mystery of the Incarnation, since by it originated the novelty that mortal men could dwell therein; moreover, heaven was renovated by the glory of the humanity of Christ, and also of his most pure Mother, which was such that (in addition to its essential glory) heaven was given new beauty and splendor. Although the good angels already dwelt there, this was something as of old; hence it was something very new that the Onlybegotten of the Father would by his death restore to men the glory lost through sin, and merit for them admittance into heaven from whence they had been expelled, it being impossible to acquire by themselves. And because all this renewal of heaven

had its beginning in most holy Mary, the Evangelist in speaking of Mary conceived without sin said he saw a new heaven.

246. He saw also a *new earth*, for the old earth was stained and laden with the guilt of sin and eternal condemnation. But the holy and blessed earth of most holy Mary was a new earth without the fault or the malediction of Adam, and it was so new that since the creation of the first earth no other new earth was seen or known in the world until most holy Mary. It was so new and free from the malediction of the old earth that in this blessed earth was renewed all the rest of the children of Adam, for due to the blessed earth of Mary, and through it, and in it, the earthly material of Adam was beginning to be blessed, renewed and vivified, having until then remained cursed and grown old in its malediction. But all was renewed in most holy Mary and her innocence, and therefore the Evangelist, seeing that in Her this renovation of the human and earthly nature took its rise, says that in Mary conceived without sin he saw a new heaven and a new earth. He continues:

247. *For the first heaven and the first earth was gone.* It naturally followed that as soon as the new heaven and new earth of most holy Mary and her Son, true God and true man, appeared in the world, the ancient heaven and earth of the human and earthly nature, grown old with sin, would disappear. There was now a new heaven for the Divinity in the human nature, for preserved and free from sin most holy Mary could furnish a new habitation for God himself through the hypostatic union in the Person of the incarnate Word. Already the first heaven ceased to exist, that one which God had created in Adam and which had become sullied and unfit for the indwelling of God; this disappeared, and for it was substituted the other heaven in the coming of Mary. Then also arose the new heaven of glory for the human nature; not that the empyrean heaven was removed, but insofar as from now on there would not be lacking the presence of men therein, who had been excluded for so many ages. In this respect it ceased to be the old heaven, and it became a new one through the merits of Christ, now beginning to shine forth in the aurora of grace, most holy Mary his Mother. Thus vanished the first heaven and the first earth, which until then was without hope of remedy. *And the sea is now no more*, for the sea of abominations and sin which had flooded the world and destroyed the earth of our being ceased to exist with the coming of most holy Mary and of Christ, since the sea of his blood superabounded, overwhelming the sea of sin\* in such an abundance that no amount of guilt could prevail against it. If mortals would only approach this infinite sea of the divine mercy and merits of Jesus Christ our Lord, all the sins of the world would cease to exist, since the Lamb of God came to undo them and take them away.

248. *And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* Since all these mysteries had their beginning in most holy Mary and were founded in Her, the Evangelist says he saw the holy city Jerusalem, for under this figure he speaks of Her. To him was given to see Her so he could value so much the more highly and watch with appropriate solicitude over the Treasure who was confided to his care at the foot of the Cross (Jn. 19:27). And though nothing could ever fill up the void caused by the absence of her Son, yet it was proper for St. John to be enlightened regarding the dignity of the office which he was to assume, namely that of a substitute for her natural Son.

249. Due to the wonderful works which God had accomplished in the city of Jerusalem it was a most excellent symbol of She who was his Mother, the center and focus of all the wonders of the Almighty. For a similar reason it is also a figure of the works of the Church Militant and

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\* cf. Rom. 5:20 [Ed.]

Triumphant, for both were revealed to the eagle vision of St. John, and he was shown the correspondence and similarity which those two mystical Jerusalems presented. But in a special manner he viewed as from a watchtower the exalted Jerusalem of most holy Mary, in whom are displayed and reproduced all the graces, wonders, gifts and excellences of the Church Militant and Triumphant. Whatever was transacted in Jerusalem, the city of Palestine, and all that it signified, together with its inhabitants, is reproduced in most pure Mary, the holy City of God, and with a greater and more marvelous excellence than in all the rest of heaven and earth and their inhabitants. Hence She is called the new Jerusalem because all her gifts, greatness and virtues are new and are the cause of new wonder to the saints; new also, because She came after all the ancient Fathers, Patriarchs and Prophets, and in Her were renewed and accomplished all their clamors, prophecies and promises; new, because She came without the contagion of guilt and under a new dispensation far from the law of sin; new, because She entered into the world triumphant over sin, the devil, and the first deceit, thus being the greatest new event since the beginning of the world.

250. Since all this was now on the earth and could not have proceeded from earthly causes, She is said to *come down from heaven*. Although She was derived from Adam according to the ordinary course of nature, She did not tread the well-worn paths of sin in her coming, as had been done by all the preceding children of that first delinquent. For that Lady alone there was a special decree of divine predestination,\* and a new path was opened by which She would descend into this world with her divine Son, neither being Herself the companion of any other mortal, nor any of them being found worthy of treading the same path with Christ our Lord. Thus She descended from the heaven of the mind and determination of God. And whereas the rest of the children of Adam descended to the world earthly and stained by it, this Queen of all creation comes from heaven as a descendent of God alone by innocence and grace, for ordinarily we say that someone is descended from this or that house or family since he descends therefrom as from a source of his being. Now the natural substance of Mary which She derived from Adam scarcely comes into consideration when we take into account her dignity as Mother of God and all that it imports as bringing Her so near to the eternal Father by grace and participation of the Divinity. This dignity causes her natural being to appear as merely accessory and of minor importance. Hence the Evangelist directed his gaze upon that which was in Her most exalted and heavenly, and not upon the insignificant part of her being which came from the earth.

251. He continues by saying She came *prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*. For the day of the espousal it is customary among mortals to procure the most precious adornments and presents obtainable for adorning the terrestrial bride, and the most precious jewels will even be borrowed so nothing may be lacking to the array befitting her state and condition. Therefore if we admit, as we are indeed forced to admit, that most pure Mary was the Spouse of the blessed Trinity and Mother of the second Person, and that She was adorned and prepared for these dignities by the omnipotent God, who is infinite and rich without measure or limit, what adornments, what preparation, what jewels must be those with which He embellished Her so She could be his worthy Spouse and worthy Mother? Would He reserve any jewel from his treasures? Would He deny Her any grace of his powerful arm which could enrich and adorn Her? Would He leave Her ugly, distorted, or blemished in any way or for any instant? Would He be meager or miserly with his Mother and Spouse when He so prodigiously lavishes the treasures of the Divinity upon other souls, who in comparison with Her are less than servants and slaves of his

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\* cf. Esther 15:13 [Ed.]

house? Let all confess with the Lord himself that She alone is the chosen One (Cant. 6:8) and the perfect One, whom the rest must recognize, proclaim and magnify as the Immaculate and most happy among women, of whom wondering with joyful praise they ask (Ib. 9): *Who is She that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array?* This is most holy Mary, the only Spouse and Mother of the Almighty, who descends to the world adorned and prepared as the Bride of the blessed Trinity for her Spouse and her Son. This coming and entrance was made memorable by such great gifts of the Divinity that the splendor of them made Her more agreeable than the sunrise, more beautiful than the moon, more elect and singular than the sun,\* and without peer among things created. She came more valiant and powerful than the heavenly hosts of saints and angels. She descended adorned and prepared by God, who gave Her all that He desired, and who desired to give Her all that He could, and who could give all that is not the essential Being of God, namely all that is most proximate to the Divinity and farthest removed from any blemish of a creature. Entire and perfect was this adornment, and it would not have been so if it was faulty, and if at any point She was without innocence and grace; and neither would it have been enough to make Her so beautiful if the adornment and jewels of grace had been showered upon a distorted countenance, a nature spotted by sin, or a soiled and revolting vestiture. Forever there would have been a blemish, and not even great diligence on her part could ever remove the shadow and mark of this stain. All this was unbecoming for Mary, the Mother and Spouse of God; and if it was such for Her, it was also such for Himself. The Lord would not have adorned and prepared Her with the love of a Spouse or the solicitude of a Son if, while possessing the most rich and precious fabric, He would have chosen a soiled and worn-out vestment for his Mother and Spouse, and for Himself.

252. It is now time for human understanding to expand and extend itself regarding the honor due to our great Queen, and for those misled by opposite opinions to hesitate and cease to belittle and deny Her the adornment of her immaculate purity at the instant of her heavenly Conception. By the force of the truth and the light in which I see these ineffable mysteries, I confess once and many times over that all the privileges, graces, prerogatives, favors and gifts of most holy Mary, including that of being the Mother of God (according to how it has been given me to understand), depend upon and have their origin in her being immaculate and full of grace in her most pure Conception, so that without this benefit all of them would appear unformed and defective, like a sumptuous edifice without a solid and proportionate foundation. All are seen with a certain order and linked to the immaculacy and innocence of her Conception; for this reason it is imperative to touch upon this mystery so often in the discourse of this History, beginning with the divine decrees regarding the formation of Mary and of her most holy Son insofar as He is man. I will not now enlarge upon this; yet I give notice to all that the Queen of heaven has such esteem for the adornment and beauty given to Her by her Son and Spouse in her Immaculate Conception that her indignation shall be proportionate against those who with obstinacy and persistence intend to despoil Her of it and disfigure Her, while her most holy Son has deigned to manifest Her to the world so adorned and beautified for his glory and for the hope of mortals. The Evangelist proceeds:

253. *And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and He will dwell with them. And they shall be his people; and God himself with them shall be their God.* The voice of the Most High is great and strong, sweet and efficacious to move and

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\* cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Vespers of Aug. 15, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, *Antiphon at the Magnificat* [Ed.]

draw toward Him all creation. Such was the voice which St. John heard proceeding from the throne of the most blessed Trinity, and which caused him to pay perfect attention in order to understand thoroughly the mystery which was then shown to him. He was privileged to see the dwelling of God among men, that He lived among them, and that He was their God and they his people. All this was contained in the mysterious figure of most holy Mary descending from heaven in the form I have described. Since this divine tabernacle of God had now come to the earth, it followed that God also dwelt among men, for He lived and remained in this tabernacle. It is as if the Evangelist had said: The King has his home and his court in the world, and it is clear He shall go to dwell in it, and in such a way that from this tabernacle He shall assume the human form in which He shall be a dweller among men. In it He shall be their God and they his people, as the inheritance of his Father and also of his Mother. We were the inheritance of the Father to his Son not only because in Him were all things created (Jn. 1:3), and because all was given to Him through the eternal generation, but also because He redeemed us as man clothed in our human nature (Titus 2:14), purchasing us as his people\* and as the inheritance of the Father, and making us his brethren. For the same reason, namely because of his human nature, we are the legitimate inheritance of Mary most holy, since She gave Him the form of human flesh by which He purchased us for Himself. As the Daughter of the Father, the Mother of the Son, and the Spouse of the Holy Ghost, She was also the Mistress of all creation, all of which her Onlybegotten possessed as his inheritance; for that which is granted by human laws established in accordance with natural reason need not be invalid in the divine order.

254. This voice proceeded from the royal throne through an Angel, who with a sort of holy envy seemed to me to say to the Evangelist: Behold and see the tabernacle of God among men, and He shall live with them and they shall be his people. He shall be their Brother and shall assume human form in this tabernacle of Mary, whom thou dost see descending from heaven by her Conception and formation. But we can answer with equal joy to these heavenly courtiers: Indeed the tabernacle of God is with us, for it is our tabernacle, and in it God becomes our own. He will receive from it life and blood, which He offers in purchase for us in order to make us his people. He shall live in us as in his dwelling and habitation, since receiving Him in the Blessed Sacrament we are made his tabernacle (Jn. 6:57). Let those heavenly spirits be content to be our elder brothers, less in need than we. We are the little and infirm ones, who need the gift and favors of our Father and Brother. Let Him come to the tabernacle of his Mother and our tabernacle; let Him take the form of human flesh in her virginal womb; let the Divinity be encompassed† and live with us and in us. Let us hold Him so near that He shall be our God and we his people and his dwelling. Let the angelic spirits break forth in admiration and suspense at such wondrous blessings, and let us mortals enjoy Him, joining them in the same praise, admiration and love. The text continues:

255. *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away.* In consequence of the Redemption, of which the Conception of most holy Mary has assured us, the tears which sin has caused to flow from the eyes of mortals shall be dried. For those who avail themselves of the mercy of the Most High, of the blood and merits of his Son, of his mysteries and Sacraments, of the treasures of his holy Church, and who obtain the intercession of his most holy Mother, there is no more death, nor sorrow, nor tears, since the death of sin and all that

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\* cf. I Peter 2:9 [Ed.]

† cf. Jer. 31:22 [Ed.]

resulted from sin is abolished and has ceased. The true mourning is now left to the sons of perdition who dwell in the abyss from whence there is no deliverance. The sorrows of labors are not a mourning, nor a true sorrow, but only an apparent one, entirely compatible with the true and highest kind of joy (Rom. 5:3), for when accepted with submission they are of inestimable value, and the Son of God chose them as a loving pledge for Himself, his Mother, and his brethren.

256. Nor will there be heard any clamor, nor the voice of quarrel, for the just and the wise, following the example of their Master and of his most humble Mother, must learn to bear themselves with silence, like the simple lamb when it is carried to be a victim and sacrifice (Is. 53:7). The friends of God must renounce the right of weak nature to seek some alleviation by cries and complaints, seeing that His Majesty, who is their Head and Model, humbled Himself unto the frightful death of the cross (Philip. 2:8) in order to repair the damages wrought by our impatience and lack of hope. Why should our human nature be permitted to complain of labors and trouble in view of such an example? Or how can hateful distinction and uncharitable sentiments be allowed among men when Christ has come to establish the law of fraternal love? The Evangelist repeats *and sorrow shall be no more*, for if any sorrows remained among men they are those of a bad conscience; and for a remedy of this sickness there is the so sweet medicine of the Incarnation of the Word in the womb of most holy Mary, so now this sorrow is changed to gladness and the cause of rejoicing, no longer meriting the name of sorrow but containing within itself the highest and truest joy. With its introduction the first things have passed away, namely the ineffectual rigors and sorrows of the ancient law, which are now moderated and ended by the abundance of the evangelical law which gives grace. Therefore he adds: *Behold, I make all things new*. This voice proceeded from the One who is seated on the throne, because He declares Himself the Artificer of all the mysteries of the new law of the Gospel. And commencing this novelty so rare and never thought of by creatures, that of the Incarnation of the Onlybegotten of the Father, who gave Him to the most pure Virgin Mother, it was necessary that if all things were to be new then there must not be in his most holy Mother anything old and ancient; but clearly original sin is almost as old as nature, and if the Mother of the incarnate Word had been infected with it He would not have made all things new.

257. *And He said to me: Write, for these words are most faithful and true. And He said to me: It is done. I am Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the end.* According to our way of speaking God was deeply grieved because the great works of love performed for us in the Incarnation and Redemption would be so much forgotten, and as a remembrance of these great benefits and as a satisfaction for our ingratitude He commands them to be written. Therefore men should write them in their hearts and begin to dread the offense which they commit against God by their gross and execrable forgetfulness. Although it is true that the Catholics have faith and believe in these mysteries, yet by the contempt which they show in their lack of gratitude for them and forgetfulness of them they seem tacitly to repudiate them, living as if they did not believe them. In order to charge them with their most foul ingratitude the Lord says *for these words are most faithful and true*. Being thus what they are, let mortals see their rudeness and deafness in not yielding their understanding to such truths, since they are so faithful and efficacious in moving the human heart and conquering its rebelliousness, if as *most faithful and true* these truths are fixed in the memory and revolved and pondered in it as certain and infallible, and which God has worked for each one of us.

258. Yet since *the gifts of God are without repentance* (Rom. 11:29) because He does not retract the good which He confers, although men disoblige Him He says *it is done*. This is as if

He said to us that although by our ingratitude we have provoked Him, He does not desire to turn back from his course of love; for having sent into the world most holy Mary free from original sin, all that pertains to the mystery of the Incarnation is inevitable. Since most pure Mary was now on earth it does not seem possible that the eternal Word would remain in heaven without descending to assume human flesh in her womb. And He assured us again saying *I am Alpha and Omega*, the first and the last letter, *the beginning and the end*, including the perfection of all things, for if I give them a beginning it is for the purpose of raising them to the perfection of their ultimate end. This I shall do by means of this work of Christ and Mary, commencing and finishing through them all the works of grace. In man I shall raise and draw all creatures to Myself as to their last end and center where they shall repose.

259. *To him that thirsteth, I will give of the fountain of the water of life, freely. He that shall overcome shall possess these things.* Who among creatures shall presume to give counsel to God, or who shall give so much to Him as to oblige Him to make a return (Rom. 11:34-35)? So says the Apostle, wanting to make it understood that all God does or has done for men is of his free grace, and not through obligation toward anyone. The source of a fountain owes nothing of its current to him who comes and drinks from it; freely and gratuitously it flows for all who approach, and that all do not partake of its blessings is not the fault of the fountain but of those who do not approach, for it invites all to partake of its joyful abundance. And if they do not seek it, it issues itself to seek such as will partake, flowing on without ceasing so freely and without reward it can offer itself to all (Jn. 7:37). O most reprehensible dullness of mortals! O most abominable ingratitude! If in truth the Lord owes us nothing, and all He has given and does give us is by his free grace, and among all his graces and benefits the greatest was to become man and die for us, because by this benefit He gave us Himself entirely, letting loose the impetuous stream of the Divinity (Ps. 45:5) until it met our human nature, uniting Himself with it and with us: How is it possible that we, being so desirous of honor, glory and delight, do not hasten to drink entirely from this fountain offered to us for free (Is. 55:1)? But now I see the cause: We have no thirst for the true glory, honor and happiness, but crave only the apparent and deceitful ones, neglecting the fountains of grace which Jesus Christ our Good has opened for us by his merits and death (Is. 12:3). Yet to those who have thirsted after the Divinity and his graces the Lord promises He will give freely of the fountain of life (Jer. 2:13). O what a great sorrow and pity it is that having discovered the fountain of life so few are thirsting for it, and so many run after the waters of death! Those who conquer the demon, the world, and their own flesh within themselves will certainly possess these things. And it says He *will give* them, for having given the waters of grace it might be feared whether at some time they might be denied or revoked; thus in order to assure us it says they are given into our possession without limit or restriction.

260. Beyond this the Lord reinforces his promises by another new and greater assurance, saying: *I will be his God; and he shall be my son.* And if He is to us a God, and we are to Him as sons, it is clear that we are made to be sons of God, and being sons also heirs of all his goods (Rom. 8:17), and being heirs (though all the inheritance is that of grace) we are made secure of our inheritance, just as children are secure in the inheritance of the possessions of their father. As He is Father and God at the same time, infinite in his attributes and perfections, who can estimate the goods which He offers to us in making us sons? Therein is included the paternal love, our preservation, our vocation, our enlivenment and justification, all the means thereto, and finally our glorification and the state of happiness which *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man* (I Cor. 2:9). All this is destined for those who conquer and have shown themselves true and courageous children.

261. *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, they shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.* On this formidable roster innumerable sons of perdition have written their names with their own hand, because *the number of fools is infinite* (Eccles. 1:15) who blindly have chosen death, blocking up for themselves the path of life, since this path is not hidden to those who use their eyes, but only to those who willfully close their eyes and who have allowed and are allowing themselves to be fascinated and deceived by the lies of Satan. According to the different inclinations and tastes of men he proffers them the poisonous cup of vice after which they seek. *The fearful* are those who continually hesitate, and thus fail to taste of the manna of virtue and never enter the path of eternal life, to whom virtue appears dull and dreadful, though the yoke of the Lord is sweet and his burden is light (Mt. 11:30); deceived by this fear they are overcome by their cowardice rather than by the difficulties. Those other ones, *the unbelievers*, neither admit that truths are revealed, nor give belief to them, like the heretics, pagans and infidels; or if they do believe them, like the Catholics, it seems as if they heard them from afar and only through the faith of others, not giving full assent to the evident truth contained therein. Thus they hold but a lifeless belief (James 2:26), and they live like unbelievers.

262. *The abominable* are those who follow vice without distinction, without repentance or limit, and rather boast of their wickedness and contempt, making themselves hateful to God and drawing down his wrath and curse. Thus they arrive at a state of rebellion and become incapable of good works. They draw away from the path of eternal life as if they were not created for it; they separate and become estranged from God and his benefits and blessings, and become objects of disgust to God and his saints. Likewise are mentioned *the murderers*, who without fear or reverence for the divine justice usurp from God the right of the supreme Lord to govern the universe and chastise and avenge injuries. These deserve to be treated and judged according to the same measure which they use in treating and judging others (Luke 6:38). *The fornicators* are excluded from that kingdom, since for a short and impure pleasure which is abhorred as soon as it is attained, and yet in its disorder is never satiated, they despise the friendship of God and the eternal joys, which on being tasted are the more sought and are an unfailing fountain of undiminished delight. *The sorcerers*, who believe and testify to the false promises of the dragon hidden under the cloak of friendship, are deceived themselves and so perverted that they deceive and pervert others. *The idolaters* cannot enter heaven, for they seek after and feel the presence of the Divinity and do not find it, though He is in all our surroundings (Acts 17:27). They ascribe divinity to the works of their own hands, which are only inanimate shadows of the truth and empty cisterns (Jer. 2:13), totally incapable of suggesting an idea of the grandeur of the true God. *The liars*, who standing in opposition to the highest truth, which is God, are also deprived of his rectitude and virtue, occupying the opposite extreme, confiding more in fraudulent deceits than in the Author of truth and of all good.

263. Of all these the Evangelist says he heard the sentence: *They shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.* Nobody can complain of divine justice and equity, since He has justified his cause by the greatness of his benefits and numberless mercies. He descended from heaven to live and die among men and rescue them by his own life and blood. He opened up so many fountains of grace which have been given to us freely in his holy Church, and in addition to all this He gave us the Mother of grace itself and the fountain of the life of most holy Mary, by whose intercession we can attain this grace. Thus mortals cannot excuse themselves if in spite of all these gifts they have not made use of his grace



and have abandoned the inheritance of eternal life in the pursuit of the momentary delights of their mortal life. It is no surprise they reap what they have sown, and have their portion and inheritance in the terrible abyss of burning sulfur from whence there is neither redemption nor hope of life when once the second death of punishment has overtaken them. Although this second death is infinite in its duration, yet more wicked and abominable was the first death of their sin into which they voluntarily precipitated themselves; for the death of grace caused by sin is opposed to the infinite sanctity and goodness of God, offending Him who is to be revered and adored, whereas the death of infernal pains is the just punishment of these reprobate souls, and the equitable retribution of his most unerring justice. Thereby this justice is exalted and proclaimed in the same measure in which it was outraged and despised by sin; let it through all the ages be feared and adored. Amen.