



CHAPTER 17: 1-37

The Gospel of Luke

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For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

Luke's gospel is a compilation of various interviews with eye-witnesses and close followers of Jesus (Luke 1:1-4). The author, Luke, probably did not become a Christian until several years after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He is first mentioned (implicitly) in Acts 16:10 (Acts is another book of the New Testament which Luke wrote). He did not, therefore, meet Jesus in the flesh and he himself was not an eye-witness.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Luke 17: 1-37

Douay Rheims Version

Lessons of avoiding scandal and of the efficacy of faith.

The ten lepers. The manner of the coming of Christ.

1. And he said to his disciples: It is impossible that scandals should not come. But woe to him through whom they come!
2. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he cast into the sea, than that he should scandalize one of these little ones.
3. Take heed to yourselves. If thy brother sin against thee, reprove him: and if he do penance, forgive him.
4. And if he sin against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day be converted unto thee, saying: I repent: forgive him.
5. And the apostles said to the Lord: Increase our faith.

the command of the angel, and was changed into a pillar of salt, so you also, against these commandments of mine, may return to the life of the world, and perish with that which is perishing and burning.” S. Augustine (*Lib ii. Quæst. Evang. quæst. 43*): “What is the meaning of Lot’s wife? She represents those who look back in tribulation and separate themselves from the hope of the Divine Promise, and who are therefore changed into a pillar of salt, that by admonishing men not to do the same, they may, as it were, season their hearts, and not become fools.”

Ver. 34.—*In that night there shall be two men in one bed.* By the word night it may be thought that the universal judgment of Christ will take place at night, for the greater terror of men. But I reply, That which in verse 31 is called day, is here called night. First, Because the day of judgment will be to very many, and certainly to all who have fallen away, fatal and most calamitous. For night and darkness are symbols of calamity. Secondly, As night closes the day and the time of labour, so will that day also close the time of labouring and meriting, according to the words, “The night cometh when no man can work.” John ix. 4. Rightly then is the day of judgment called night.

6. And the Lord said: If you had faith like to a grain of mustard seed, you might say to this mulberry tree: Be thou rooted up and be thou transplanted into the sea. And it would obey you.
7. But which of you, having a servant ploughing or feeding cattle, will say to him, when he is come from the field: Immediately go. Sit down to meat.
8. And will not rather say to him: Make ready my supper and gird thyself and serve me, whilst I eat and drink; and afterwards thou shalt eat and drink?
9. Doth he thank that servant for doing the things which he commanded him?
10. I think not. So you also, when you shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which we ought to do.
11. And it came to pass, as he was going to Jerusalem, he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.
12. And as he entered into a certain town, there met him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off.
13. And lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.
14. Whom when he saw, he said: Go, shew yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass, as they went, they were made clean.
15. And one of them, when he saw that he was made clean, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God.
16. And he fell on his face before his feet, giving thanks. And this was a Samaritan.
17. And Jesus answering, said: Were not ten made clean? And where are the nine?
18. There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger.
19. And he said to him: Arise, go thy way; for thy faith hath made thee whole.
20. And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he answering them and said: The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.
21. Neither shall they say: Behold here, or behold there. For lo, the kingdom of God is within you.
22. And he said to his disciples: The days will come when you shall desire to see one day of the Son of man. And you shall not see it.
23. And they will say to you: See here, and see there. Go ye not after, nor follow them.
24. For as the lightning that lighteneth from under heaven shineth unto the parts that are under heaven, so shall the Son of man be in his day.
25. But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.
26. And as it came to pass in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.
27. They did eat and drink, they married wives and were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all.

28. Likewise as it came to pass in the days of Lot. They did eat and drink, they bought and sold, they planted and built.

29. And in the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

30. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man shall be revealed.

31. In that hour, he that shall be on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not go down to take them away: and he that shall be in the field, in like manner, let him not return back.

32. Remember Lot's wife.

33. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose it shall preserve it.

34. I say to you: In that night there shall be two men in one bed. The one shall be taken and the other shall be left.

35. Two women shall be grinding together. The one shall be taken and the other shall be left. Two men shall be in the field. The one shall be taken and the other shall be left.

36. They answering, say to him: Where, Lord?

37. Who said to them: Wheresoever the body shall be, thither will the eagles also be gathered together.

Ver. 5.—*And the Apostles said to the Lord, Increase our faith.* The Apostles said this, when, from their little faith, they had been unable to cast out the devil from the lunatic. They then asked for greater faith, as appears from the above words compared with those of S. Matt. xvii. 19, &c., for Christ made the same reply in each place, “If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed you would move mountains.”

Ver. 6.—*If ye had faith.* “This indeed,” says S. Chrysostom, “is small in quantity but great in power. He means that the least portion of faith can do great things.” And Bede, “Perfect faith is a grain of mustard seed: in appearance it is small, in the heart it is fervent.”

You would say unto this sycamine tree (a mulberry tree (moro) close at hand, to which Christ pointed). *Be thou rooted up and be thou east into the sea, and it would have obeyed you.*—For mulberry tree, Matt. xvii. 20 has mountain. Christ therefore said both. It is called the mulberry tree allegorically, as if *μῶζος* (foolish); that is by antithesis, because it is the wisest of trees; not putting forth its leaves till the frost is over, lest they should be cut off. The mulberry signifies the gospel of the cross of Christ, which to the Gentiles appears foolishness, but to the faithful is “the power of God and the wisdom of God,” 1. Cor. i. 24. Hence S. Augustine (*Lib. II, Quæst. Evan.: quæst. 39*): “Let those servants speak through the grain of mustard seed, to this mulberry tree; that is, to the gospel of the cross of Christ through the blood-coloured apples hanging like wounds on that tree which is to give food to the nations. Let them say that it is rooted up by the unbelief of the Jews, and transferred to the sea of the Gentiles and planted there, for by this home service they will minister to the hungering and thirsting Lord.” So too Bede. “The mulberry tree,” he says, “by the blood colour of the fruit and shoots, is the gospel of the cross of Christ,

Ver. 22.—*And He said unto His disciples, The days will come.* That is, the time will come and is now at hand, when for My faith and the preaching of the gospel you will suffer many adversities, persecutions, and distresses; the errors and heresies, moreover, of the innovators; and be oppressed by straits of body and mind, and know not what consolation or counsel to take. Hence you shall seek to see Me, and to consult Me, if only once, but in vain: for after I shall have ascended into heaven, I shall no more appear on earth. Thus the things you now hear from Me you ought to teach, and to console, and to direct, until, at my second coming to judgment, I return to you, that is, to your successors. Thus He spoke to warn them that they could only come to the kingdom of glory through tribulations, that they might neither fail in heart nor fall from the faith. So Theophylact, Euthymius, Titus, Bede, and others.

Ver. 23.—*And they shall say to you.* False prophets shall come feigning themselves to be Christ or sent from Christ. Go not out, neither follow those deceivers or their rumours. The Arabic has, “See them not, nor hasten to them.”

Ver. 24.—*For as the lightning.* The Syriac has, “As the lightning shines from heaven and lightens all things under heaven.” As the lightning most suddenly, swiftly, and openly descends from heaven and shines out, so shall I suddenly and unexpectedly return to judgment. There will be no need of watching for Me, or sign, or mark, for I shall appear conspicuous and glorious to all in the whole earth. This and the following we have read in Matt xxiv. 27 and following, where I have explained it.

Ver. 25.—*But first must He suffer many things.* The Arabic has, “Before this He shall endure much suffering, and be rejected by this generation.”—“That is,” says Euthymius, “by this nation of a few Jews. He said this firstly, lest the Apostles, seeing Him suffering and being put to death on the cross, should be offended, and doubt whether He were the Christ.” Secondly, as Bede says, “that when they saw Him dying, who, they thought should be glorified, the pain of His sufferings might be lightened to them by the hope of the promised glory.” Thirdly, that He might arm them against future sufferings by this prophecy. “As if He had said,” says Theophylact, “Wonder not if troubles come upon you, so great as to make you wish for the days when I was with you. For even I myself, who will come as the lightning, must first suffer many things, and be rejected, and so come into that glory. Let this be your example, for to you also shall come glory from perils.”

Ver. 30.—*Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.* “Well does Christ say,” says Bede, “that He shall be revealed as one who, not being seen, sees all things, and then appearing, shall judge all things.”

Ver. 32.—*Remember Lot's wife.* She perished because she looked back. “Lest,” says S. Ambrose, “as she looked back on the burning Sodom, against

that Christ said, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." This Pharisee, therefore, either from a desire of knowledge, or to mock Jesus, said, "Thou Jesus preachest Thy kingdom in heaven, but when will it come? When shall we see Thee reigning in it? When shall we see Israel, who is now subjugated by the Romans, breathe again through Thy means and recover her liberty and live happily under Thee as her kin?" "They asked Him when He would reign," says Euthymius, "as to deride Him, who appeared as one of low estate." But Christ answered mildly and briefly at first as in this verse, but afterwards at more length (verse 22 to the end of the chapter). He spoke of the glory of His kingdom in the heavens, to which that of grace should first be subordinated on earth, for we proceed to glory through grace. He said therefore,

The kingdom of God. The kingdom of God and the Messiah cometh not with previous preparation, nor with the outward pomp of soldiers, horses, and chariots, as you can see, from itself. You know a king to be at hand when you see his attendants preceding him. With such as these you thought that the kingdom of the Messiah would come, and you look for it as now nigh at hand.

Ver. 21.—*Neither shall they say.* They shall not say, In Jerusalem is the royal throne of Christ, He reigns there in magnificence like another Solomon; because Christ does not reign on a bodily throne, but in a spiritual soul, which by His grace He rules and directs into all good, and so guides it to the kingdom of heaven. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17. I would understand all these sayings of the same thing: that is, of the first Advent of Christ in which He reigns in the souls of the faithful as a king through His grace; for thus do His sayings, as a whole, best agree together and cohere. Some, however, understand the kingdom of glory, because He will adorn even the bodies of the just with His own brightness, and other gifts, as all may see.

Secondly, This kingdom of God is within us: that is, it is in our own power if we embrace the faith and grace of Christ, and work with Him, for, as Titus says, "It is of our own will and power to receive the kingdom of God."

Thirdly, The kingdom of God is within us, because Christ, as our God and king, lives among us preaching and endowing this kingdom. Thus speaks Theophylact:

"The kingdom of God on the whole is to live after the manner of the angels, when nothing of this world occupies our souls. We need no long time and no distant journey, for faith is near us, and after faith the divine life." The same also said the Apostle, "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith," Rom. x. 8. For to believe, and to walk worthily of our belief and of our calling, is within us. The Pharisees therefore derided the Lord, but He turned them into ridicule, showing that they were ignorant of that which was within them and which is very easy to any one who wishes for it. "For now when I am in the midst of you, you are able to possess the kingdom of God if you believe in Me and will live according to My commandments."

which, through the faith of the Apostles, when it was held as it were in the stem of its kind, was rooted up from the Jews, and planted in the sea of the Gentiles." The Gloss adds, "The leaves of the mulberry, offered to the serpent, bring death upon him, as the word of the cross destroys all hurtful and venomous things of the soul." On the other hand, SS. Ambrose and Chrysostom and the Gloss understand by the mulberry tree, the devil, whom the faith of Christ casts out and sends into hell. "The fruit of the mulberry, tree," says S. Ambrose, "is firstly white, when in flower, when fully blown red, and when ripe it becomes black. The devil also, from the white flower of his angelic nature and power, when cast out by his reddening wickedness, grew horrible from the foul odour of sin. Behold Christ saying to the mulberry tree, 'Be thou rooted up and cast into the sea;' when He cast the Legion out of the man, He permitted them to enter into the swine which, being driven by the spirit of the devils, cast themselves into the sea."

Hear also S. Chrysostom in the *Catena*: "As the mulberry feeds worms (silkworms) which spin silk from its leaves, so does the devil, from thoughts springing from those leaves, nourish in us an undying worm; but faith has power to root this tree out of our souls, and to plunge it into hell."

Lastly, the Arabic for the mulberry has "sycamine," or "sycamore," of which, chap. xix. 4. Christ, moreover, exalts the power of faith, that He might implant in the Apostles an additional desire of increasing its keenness, and of praying for its gift to them; for He who gave to men the mind and desire of praying, wished also to increase the faith of those who prayed. Hence He subsequently increased their faith, especially when He sent the Holy Spirit upon them at Pentecost. Hence too, by the strength of their excelling faith, they wrought so great wonders and miracles, converting the whole world; and, lest they should grow proud of such deeds, and become vainglorious, Christ, by the following Parable, teaches them to be humble-minded, and to say, "we are unprofitable servants."

Ver. 7.—*But who is there of you, having a servant ploughing or keeping sheep.* Christ represses the vainglory of the Apostles, lest, when by their exalted faith they had performed wonderful and stupendous acts, they might glory in them and not ascribe to God, whose it is, the honour. "He," says Euthymius, "who attains the result, plucks up the effect of boasting. The servant was not a slave as the heretics say, but one who was hired, and who, in addition to the service agreed upon or ordered by his master, might perform another for him to which he was not bound." Here observe that the heretics abuse this passage to the opposing of good works, but wrongly. For this servant, as clearly appears, truly deserved the daily payment due to him by agreement, but did not deserve that his master should render him thanks; for masters are not accustomed to bestow thanks upon those whom they pay for their labour. Thanks are only given to assistance rendered gratuitously and without payment. We who are the

servants of God, through the works ordered by Him, if we offer them, merit eternal life, as the hired servant who has laboured throughout the day deserves his daily payment. Mark ix. 41; Matt. x. 41; Apoc. xi. 18. For although our works, as far as they are ours, are of little or no value, yet so far as they flow from the grace of Christ, and are therefore the works of Christ, our head, they are of great worth and desert, and do merit, as such, eternal glory; for grace is the seed of glory; especially as God, of His immeasurable goodness, has been pleased to promise to them, as done by the grace of Christ, eternal glory.

Vers. 8, 9.—*And will not rather say unto him.* That is, I suppose, because he does not owe thanks to his servants. “For it is incumbent upon such an one to do his master’s will,” says Theophylact. “So there is laid upon us,” as Bede says, “the necessity of doing all things that God has commanded, and by fresh diligence, of always increasing our former services.” The meaning is, as S. Ambrose says, “As we not only do not say to our servant, Take thy repose (recumbe), but require of him a further service, and give him no thanks, so neither does the Lord permit in us one only work, for all while living ought to work always. Acknowledge we ourselves therefore to be servants, lending very many acts of obedience on interest. Nor should we exalt ourselves, because we are called the sons of God. Grace is to be acknowledged, but nature is not to be passed over (ignoranda), nor should we boast ourselves, if we have served well in that which we ought to do. The sun obeys, the moon submits, the angels serve.”

Ver. 10.—*Even so ye also.* “Woe unto us if we do it not,” says S. Bernard in his fourth sermon on Psalm xv. So the Apostle, 1 Cor. ix. 16, “Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel,” because God has commanded me to do so.

The heretics object, “Christ here calls His faithful, useless servants, therefore by their merits they deserve nothing, nay, they do nothing good, because they contribute nothing useful.” I answer, Their first premiss is false, for Christ does not call His own servants unprofitable, nay, in Matt. xxv. 23, He says, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” &c. But He warns each one of the faithful to call himself unprofitable, to the avoidance of vainglory, and to the greater increase of humility and equally so of their merit, as say SS. Ambrose, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Bede, and others, *passim*; and that, in a sense not false and pretended but true and sincere. Because the faithful servant, in merely fulfilling the precepts of God, does nothing peculiar or remarkable, but only that which by the law of God he ought to do, and to which he was bound under the penalty of sin. He therefore both is, and is called, unprofitable, because he has fulfilled the commandments alone, but has omitted the counsels and works of supererogation, as Christ Himself explains: “All things that are commanded,” and “what we ought to do we have done.” He therefore gains only the ordinary reward of such observance of His commands; but to that exceptional glory, and crown, and aureole of the observance of the Evangelical counsels he does not attain; as says S. Paul, whose words I will shortly cite. Again, says S. Chrysostom, “When we say, with humility, we are unprofitable servants,” Christ says, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

return and acknowledge their cure, and give Me thanks? In truth the nine were rejoiced at their cure, and went to the priests, that they might be declared to be clean, and restored to the society of men, thinking wholly of themselves, and caring very little for the glory of Jesus.

Ver. 18.—*There are not found that returned.* By confessing and declaring themselves cured by God through Christ of their leprosy, which was a great glory to God.

Save this stranger. That is, except this Samaritan, who was a stranger to the nation and religion of the Jews. For the Samaritans were Babylonians, Assyrians and Medians, and were transferred by Shalmanezar to Samaria. 2 Kings xvii. 24. The Syriac says, “Why were they separated, so that none gave glory to God except this one?” He represents the Gentiles, who were to believe in Christ, and give Him thanks, when the unbelieving Jews would hold Him in contempt. We thus see that strangers are often more grateful than natives, because strangers wonder at strange benefactors more, and pay them greater respect than natives, who, as familiar with their benefactors, think that benefits are their due from the right of country. Moreover, they were ashamed to humble themselves before their own countrymen, and to acknowledge the misery from which they had been delivered. Rightly therefore does Christ blame them; and He might with justice have deprived them of the benefit of the cure, and allowed them to fall back again into their leprosy. But He would not do this, because His mercy was so great that it extended even to the ungrateful. S. Bernard sharply rebukes the Wickedness of ingratitude, Sermon. li. on Canticles. He says, “It is the enemy of our souls, the inanition of our merits, the dispenser of our virtues, the ruin of our benefactions. Ingratitude is a burning wind, drying up the Fountain of Holiness, the dew of mercy, the streams of grace.”

Ver. 19.—*And He said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith.* Faith, by which you have believed that I am able to save you, nay that I will do so, if you obey Me, and go to the priests. For this faith has worked with your healing, even though I be the primary author. Hence very likely the prompting of God elicited from this leper some act of contrition by which he was justified; and that he then left the schism of the Samaritans, and joined the true religion of the Jews. In the end he became a disciple of Jesus, and received His baptism, and became a Christian and preached the power and miracle of Christ and converted many to Him.

Ver. 20.—*And when He was demanded of the Pharisees.* The Kingdom of Israel, which had now indeed fallen, but which was to be raised up again by the Messiah.

The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. “Cometh,” that is, will come. It is a Hebraism, in which the present is put for the future. Observe

Ver. 14.—*He said unto them, Go and shew yourselves unto the priests.* That is, if you go to them and obey Me, you shall assuredly be healed of your leprosy by My power and providence.

And it came to pass, as they went. Christ commanded them to go to the priests, not that they might be healed by them, for this was impossible, but firstly, for the honour and deference due to the priest-hood; secondly, because the law commanded lepers, if they were healed, to show themselves to the priests, that by their means they might be brought back to the city and temple, and to the society of men. The priests, moreover, had their own signs by which they might know whether a man were a leper or not, as I have shown before. Thirdly, to prove the faith and obedience of the lepers, for they knew themselves to be lepers, and that they could not be healed by the priests, but only that their leprosy could be declared. Yet they went to them at the command of Christ, believing that they would thus be healed by Him before they came to the priests. For if they had not so believed they would assuredly not have gone to them. Fourthly, that Christ might make the priests witnesses of the miraculous healing done by Him, and that from this they might know that He was the Christ.

Allegorically. Christ wished to signify that mystical lepers, that is sinners in the New Law, ought to come to the priests that they may be healed by penance, and absolved from the leprosy of sin. “It is not,” says S. Chrysostom, “the duty of the priest, under the New Law, to prove the leprosy, as it was under the Old, but to cleanse and expiate it when proved.” *Lib. iii. de Sacerdotio.*

And as they went, they were cleansed. “In certain faith and blind obedience, not judging of the command,” says Euthymius. It is probable that immediately on their going they were healed, that they might know it to have been done by Jesus. Hence the Samaritan, perceiving what had happened, and that he was cured, returned to Jesus and gave thanks. Thus is God wont to reward prompt faith and obedience.

They were cleansed. From their leprosy, which among the Jews was the greatest of uncleannesses, both natural and legal; especially because it was contagious, and made those who came near, leprous and unclean.

Ver. 15.—*And one of them, when he saw that he was healed.* He left the road and went back to Jesus, the Author of his healing, magnifying God with a loud voice, who, through Jesus, had healed him.

Ver. 16.—*And fell down on his face at His feet.* That by profound humiliation he might show his great reverence to Him, as in the Greek and Syriac. *And he was a Samaritan:* a Samaritan, and therefore an alien from and abhorrent to the Jews, a schismatic moreover, so that it was wonderful that he alone gave thanks so earnestly to Jesus, who was a Jew, when the other lepers, who were Jews by nation and religion, passed Him by and gave no thanks for so great a benefit.

Ver. 17.—*And Jesus answering said,* Why do not the nine, equally with this Samaritan,

S. Bernard again, in his treatise *de Præcept et Dispens.*, thus explains the matter, “We are unprofitable servants, we have done what we ought;” *i.e.* If you are content with the mere precept and traditions of the law, and do not give yourselves up to the counsels and persuasions of perfection, you are free indeed from debt, but you are not praiseworthy for merit; you have escaped punishment, you have not gained the crown.

It is this which S. Paul, when preaching the Gospel freely, and when he might have required food from the faithful, 1 Cor. ix. 15, calls his glory.

Secondly, Even S. Paul himself, the other Apostles, and the Religious, in observing not only the precepts but also the counsels of Christ, can truly say, “We are unprofitable servants: we have done what we ought to do.” Firstly, because we owe to God our souls, our bodies, our lives, and all that we have, which, whatever good we do, we can never pay back. This debt is infinite and manifold, but it is especially fourfold. First, there is the debt of creation, for as we were created out of nothing by God, the whole that we are we owe to God our Creator. Thus Plato in his *Phædo*, “Man is one of the possessions of God.” “Behold,” says S. Bernard on “Our Fourfold Debt,” “He is at the door who made the heavens and the earth. He is thy Creator and thou art His creature: thou art the end of His work.” The second is the debt of emption and redemption, for Christ redeemed us from death and hell at the price of His own blood. We are therefore slaves of purchase, nay, “the purchased servants of Christ,” 1 Cor. vi. 20. S. Bernard, in the sermon already cited: “Firstly, we owe all our lives to Christ Jesus, for He laid down His life for us, and endured bitter torments, that we might not have to undergo eternal ones.” He sums up thus: “When I give to Him all that I am, all that I can do, is not this as a star to the sun, a drop to the river, a stone to the mountain, a grain to the heap?” So in his tract, *De Deo dilig.*: “If I owe my whole self for my first creation, what shall I add for my second, and that brought about as it was? For a second creation is not effected as easily as a first. He who made me once and only by a word, in creating me a second time spoke many words and did wonderful things and endured hard things, and not only hard but even undeserved things. In the first creation He gave me to myself, in the second He gave Himself to me, and when He gave Himself to me He restored me to myself. Given, then, and restored, I owe myself for myself, and I have a double debt. What reward shall I give to God for Himself, for if I were to weigh myself a thousand times, what am I to God?”

The third debt is, that renouncing Satan in our baptism we have given ourselves wholly over to the obedience of Christ; He in regenerating us in Himself has made us new men, and divine, who are the Temple of God and of the Holy Ghost.

The fourth is that He is our beginning and final end, and He to whom we ought to direct all our actions. For He has promised us the happiness of

heaven, and everlasting glory, which is nothing else than the vision and fruition of God. See Jerome (*Platus*, Book I., On the Grace or a Religious State, chapters iii. iv.), where he recounts seven titles of our service, on account of which we are not of our own right, but are God's and Christ's.

To these add that we are unprofitable servants in respect of God; for, to God who is immense, most rich, and most blessed, we can add no good thing. Hence S. Augustine on Psalm xxxix. "He possesses thee that thou mayest possess Him. Thou wilt be His land, Thou wilt be His house. He possesses thee, He is possessed by thee, that He may profit thee. Canst thou profit Him in any way? For I said to the Lord, 'Thou art my God, therefore shall I want no good thing.'"

Again, we are unprofitable, because we sin in many things, and many of our words are infected by negligence or vainglory or some other fault. In addition to this, our actions, if looked upon with strictness, as they proceed from men, are without value to the meriting of the grace and glory of God: according to the Apostle, Rom. viii. 18. So S. Augustine, whose words I will shortly produce. Lastly, all our actions derive the dignity of worth and merit from the grace and promise of God, and are useful to ourselves, not to Him. Hence the Arabic reads, "We are indeed useless servants, for we have done that which was our interest to do." So Euthymius, S. Cyril in the *Catena*, and others.

And thus did those monks of the Alps to whom S. Bernard wrote his 152d Epistle; "You account yourselves unprofitable, and you have been found to be humble. To act rightly, and yet to think themselves without value, is found in few, and therefore many admire it. This I say, this assuredly makes you, from illustrious, even more illustrious; from holy, more holy; and wherever this report is published it fills all things with the odour of sweetness;" for, as the same author says in his 42d Sermon on Canticles, "Humility, like the ointment of spikenard, scatters its sweet scent, growing warm in love, flourishing in devotion, smelling pleasantly to the senses of others."

S. Augustine indeed, for useless servants (*inutiles*) reads *super-vacui*, men at leisure, who after their labour look for repose; that eternal reward and glory which far surpass and exceed all their toil. "Nothing remains for us to do: we have finished our trial, there awaits us a crown of righteousness. We may say all things of that ineffable perfuition, and the more all things can be said the less can anything be said worthily; for it is the light of the illuminator, the repose of the toiler, the country of the returned wanderer, the food of the needy, the crown of the conqueror, whatever the temporal goods of unbelievers the holiness of the sons of God will find others more true, and such as will remain in the Creator to all eternity." Hence the conclusion of Theophylact, "If when we have done all things, we ought not even then to have any lofty thoughts; how deeply do we sin when we do not perform the greatest part of the commandments of God, and yet are praised not the less."

Ver. 11.—*And it came to pass as He was going up to Jerusalem* from the borders of Cæsarea Philippi or Paneas, as is clear from S. Matt. xvii. 22, to Jerusalem; to the feast

of tabernacles, as appears from S. John vii. 2. He went through the midst of Samaria and Galilee; for this was the direct road for one journeying from Cæsarea to Jerusalem. Mention is made of Samaria to suggest a reason why, among the ten lepers that were healed by Christ, one was a Samaritan; namely, that as Christ was going through Samaria, although He had been inhospitably received by the Samaritans, nay, shut out from one of their towns, ix. 53, He yet wished to do good to a Samaritan, that He might return kindness for ill-treatment. See the chronological order of events which I have prefixed to this commentary.

Ver. 12.—*And as He entered into a certain village.* Lepers, as being unclean, were not able to enter cities, towns and villages, lest they should communicate their leprosy to the inhabitants, as well as their legal defilement, which under the old law was communicated by contact with a leprous and unclean person; as in Numb. v. 2. Hence they met Christ before the village.

There were ten lepers, says Euthymius, whom their disease had united together; for otherwise the Jews hold no communication with the Samaritans, John iv. 9. These ten leper's seem to have agreed, as soon as they met Jesus, to demand to be healed with one voice. They made an attack upon the clemency of Jesus.

They stood afar off, as being unclean and out of communion with the clean, being banished lest they should affect them by their breath. In figure leprosy is concupiscence, heresy, and every kind of sin, as is shown in Levit. xiii. xiv. and Matt. viii. 2.

Ver. 13.—*And they lifted up their voices.* They cried out aloud, because they stood afar off. The voice was one and proceeded from all, "Jesus, Master," have mercy on us, and free us from this heavy and incurable disease. Master here does not so much mean teacher as Lord, one who directs his servants and tells them his wishes. The Greek is *ἐπίστατα*, that is *Præfect*—*Præses*; one whose right it is to rule and command: for they do not ask Christ to teach them, and give them precepts of virtue, but to command the leprosy and cause it to depart from them. So the Hebrew, *Rabbi*, means not only master but also Lord, and *Mighty*, and *One of the first rank*. Moreover, S. Luke everywhere calls Christ *ἐπίστατα*, as is seen v. 5, viii. 24, 45, ix. 33, 49; S. Matt. also, viii. 25, xvii. 4, and elsewhere, has *κύριε*, that is *Lord*. So the Gauls, Germans, and Belgians call their masters *Lords*, *Domini*, *mon maistre*, *mein meister*.

And when He saw them He said unto them. Theophylact says, "They stood afar off indeed in position, but they were near in speech, for 'The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon Him,'" Ps. cxlv. 18.