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MATTHEW 4: 7-25

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.

Matthew writes his gospel account to give us the view of Jesus as the King. He records Jesus' authority in calling the disciples: "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19), and he also records more than any of the others about Jesus' teaching concerning God's kingdom and heavenly rule.

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.

Continuation of Matthew 4: 7-25

Verse 7- *Jesus said to him: It is written again, &c.* For he tempts God who asks for a miracle without necessity, such as this would have been, for Christ might have descended from the pinnacle by means of the stairs.

In necessity, however, say for the sake of avoiding a worse destruction, it would be lawful to cast oneself from a precipice if no other way of escape appeared. Thus many holy virgins, that they might escape from the hands of sinners who sought to defile them, have cast themselves headlong into rivers, preferring to die as martyrs rather than be violated as virgins. For greater is the wreck of virginity than of life. For as the honour of the one is greater than that of the other, so also is the disgrace. This is what S. Pelagia, a virgin of Antioch, fifteen years of age, did, together with her mother and sisters. "Who," as S. Ambrose says (lib. 2, *de Virgin.*), "when the persecutors were following hard, and a river torrent shut them off from flight, but shut them up for the crown, cried out, 'What are we afraid of? Behold the water!

And healed them. From none of these did Christ require faith, says S. Chrysostom, for He had not yet manifested His power; and those who came from far had as yet but small faith in Him. But afterwards He required faith on the part of the sick, as will appear in the sequel. “Clouds of miracles,” says S. Chrysostom, “does S. Matthew pass over in few words, a few of which he afterwards relates more at length.”

Mystically, lunatics are mutable and inconstant persons, who at one time serve God and religion, at another the devil and their lusts, according to the words in Eccles. xxvii. 12—“A holy man continueth in wisdom as the sun, but a fool is changed as the moon.”

Verse 25- Followed him. Hear S. Bernard (*Serm. I de omnibus Sanc.*): “From the cities and villages the people followed the preaching of the Lord. He saved their souls; He healed their bodies. They clave to Him, being delighted both by the sight of Him and by His words. His voice was sweet, His face was comely, as it is written, ‘Thou art fairer than the children of men; full of grace are thy lips.’ Such is He whom we follow, to whom we adhere—who is altogether desirable, upon whom not the people only, but the holy angels themselves desire to look.”

Decapolis—i.e., the region of ten cities—from *δέκα ten*, and *πόλις a city*. The names of these ten cities, according to Burchard, were Tiberias, Saphet, Asor, Kedesh, Cæsarea Philippi, Capharnaum, Jotapata (which Josephus defended against the Romans), Bethsaida, Corozaim, and Beth-shan, or Scythopolis.

Beyond the Jordan—i.e., in respect of Galilee, which was on this side Jordan. These regions were Gilead, Trachonitis, Abilene, Seir, Cœlosyria, and Batanæa, the ancient Bashan, formerly the dominions of King Og.

What doth hinder us to be baptized? Let the water receive us, the water which makes virgins, which opens heaven, covers hell, hides death, creates martyrs.’ When they had repeated these words, they join their hands, as though they were leading a dance, and advanced into the middle of the stream. You might have seen the pious mother twining their hands together. ‘These victims, O Christ,’ she said, ‘I immolate to Thee, presidents of virginity, leaders of chastity, comrades of Thy Passion.’”

Moraliter. Learn here that the devil in the same way that he tempted Christ to cast Himself headlong, tempts Christians by raising the fancy, the blood, black bile, so that they may have sad, horrible, sanguinary, despairing, blasphemous thoughts, such as had never come into their minds before. Let them comfort themselves by the example of Christ, how God permitted His temptation for His greater virtue and merit. The advice which Scipio Nasica gave the Romans not to destroy Carthage when it was conquered, lest the Roman youth should become enervated by ease, for that Carthage, raising war, would be a perpetual spur to their courage, you might apply to the struggle which the saints endure through frequent temptations. Thus S. Paul, though almost an angel upon earth, said, “Lest the abundance of the revelations should puff me up there was given me a thorn in the flesh—the messenger of Satan to buffet me.” The remedy is constancy of mind, fortitude, and firm confidence in God, by which you will manfully overcome temptations of every sort, however dreadful and abominable they may be. Yea, you will despise them, and proceed with a great heart in the course of virtue in which you have entered.

The devil formerly came to S. Anthony complaining that all men spake ill of him. “And very properly,” said the saint, “for it is your own fault, since you vex and distress all men.” The demon answered, “I do nothing; I have no power against him who is unwilling. Men vex themselves and one another. It is their own consent to my suggestions which makes them the authors of evil.” He who consents not to the devil when he tempts him, but resists him, overcomes him, and triumphs over him.

Verse 8- Again the devil, &c. In descriptions of the Holy Land, this mountain is said to be near the desert of Quarantana. “The devil’s mountain is distant two miles from Quarantana. It is to the south of Bethel and Hai. Up it Christ was led by Satan, when he showed Him all the kingdoms of the world.” So Adrichomius.

You will ask, in what way did the devil show to Christ all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and that “in a moment,” as S. Luke adds? Observe, God alone is able to do this absolutely; for, in the first place, God is able so to strengthen the power of sight in men that they are able to see any object, however remote, and that even through rocks and walls, so that they see things as they are in themselves, without visible appearance. In this manner He strengthens the mind of the blessed with the light of

glory, so that it beholds God's essence without any appearance. So S. Anselm saw with his bodily eyes things which were done on the other side of a wall, as his "Life" records. In a similar manner God is able to make us here in Rome see with our bodily eyes things done in the bedchamber of the King of China. 2nd. God is able to multiply visible appearances in such wise that they are dispersed through places dark and dense, and even far distant and remote. 3. He is able, not only to draw forth the appearance from an object, but to prolong it to any place whatever. Thus, God showed the whole of the promised land to Moses from Mount Abarim; thus, He set the whole world before the eyes of S. Benedict in a round globe, as S. Gregory relates (lib. 2 *Dial.*, c. 35). The devil can do none of these things.

How, then, did he present all kingdoms before the eyes of Christ?

1. Origen understands kingdoms mystically, as the reign of the devil, in which he rules in some men by anger, in others by pride, in others by gluttony, and so on. Listen to Origen: "The devil showed Him innumerable multitudes of men whom he held in his dominion, and said unto Him, 'I know that Thou art come to fight against me, and take my subjects from under my sway. I ask You not to contend with me. You need not trouble Yourself to fight. One thing only do I ask, that Thou shouldst fall down and worship me, and then receive all my empire.'" But this is mystical, not literal.
2. Some think that the devil flew with Christ through all the kingdoms of the world, and in this manner showed them to Him; but the language used will not admit of this interpretation. It was from their position on the mountain that Satan showed Christ the kingdoms.
3. S. Cyprian (*Tract. de Tentat. Christi*) is of opinion that they were not shown to the senses, but to the imagination. But I have already shown (on verse 3) that this whole series of temptations was external, not internal, and that the devil had no power over the imagination of Christ.
4. Others suppose that the demon, by means of many mirrors reflecting from one to the other, gathered together the appearances of all the kingdoms of the world, and presented them to the eyes of Christ by art similar to that, by which Socrates is said to have seen a dragon in a far distant mountain devouring men, which no one else was able to see. Similarly we now behold very distant objects by means of a nautical telescope. But to have done this, the demon must have filled the whole atmosphere with mirrors, and even then they would not have sufficed for seeing all things.
5. And with more probability, Euthymius and others, with S. Thomas (3 *p.*, *q.* 41, *art.* 4) say that the devil took Christ up on a lofty mountain, that he might show Him, at least in a confused way, the situation of each kingdom, as by saying thus: "There in that direction is Asia; there is Europe, here is Syria, there is Italy"—and all this in a moment, as Luke says, that is, in an extremely brief space of time. And because from this mountain the devil showed Christ not only all kingdoms, but the glory of them, we may add with Theophilus, Jansen, and others, that the demon, like a painter, represented in a compendious manner pictures of all kingdoms in the air by varied refractions of the rays of the sun, as is done in the case of the rainbow, and so, as it were, painted them as to cause whatsoever was glorious and splendid in all lands to be set before the eyes of Christ. Thus did the same demon make dense the air and so work upon it, that he pictured many spectres of lions, wild beasts, serpents, and

it to pass the time, and to divert their minds from the affliction which they were enduring at the loss of their Master.

Wisely does S. Bernard say to those who fear to follow God's call to high and arduous things, "Why dost thou fear? Why dost thou hesitate? The Angel of great counsel calls thee. No one is wiser than He is; no one is stronger; no one is more faithful."

Tropologically, the scholiast on S. Jerome says, "Let us leave the spiders' nets which are the vanities of the world in which we are held.

Verse 21- *And going on from thence, &c. James*, in Hebrew *Jacob*, a *supplanter*; for he supplanted the world, and all worldly things, that he might follow Christ.

Zebedee, *i.e.*, *liberal, munificent*. For though he was an old man he willingly gave to Christ his two sons, who were the staff of his old age. זבדזבד *zabad*, means *to give, to bestow*.

John, the grace of God, for Christ poured His grace upon John more abundantly than upon the rest of the Apostles. "By this apostolic chariot of four horses we are carried to heaven; on these four corner-stones the Church was first built."

Ver. 22.—*They straightway, &c.* Observe Luke (v. 11) rolls the vocation of these four Apostles into one; but S. Matthew relates the particulars of the calling: 1, of Andrew and Peter; 2, of James and John. The historical sequence is as follows—Christ having been carried in Peter's boat, and having landed on the shore, then called Peter and Andrew. Going on a little further, he saw James and John mending the nets which had been broken by the miraculous draught of fishes; then He called these two, saying, "Follow me." They, being moved by the miracle, and the example of their partners, straightway left their father and all things, and followed Christ. So S. Augustine (*de Consens. Evan.* lib. 2, c. 17).

Verse 23- *And Jesus went about, &c.* Sickness—Greek, νόσος,—an habitual, organic, or incurable disease, says Euthymius. *Disease*—Greek, μαλακίον—*i.e.*, *languor, infinity, failure of strength*.

And his fame. Greek, ἀκοή—*i.e.*,

rumour, report. Torments (Gr. βασάνοις). This word means, properly, examination under torture, when an accused person was tormented on the *little horse*, to make him confess his crime and accomplices. Lunatics are sick persons, who suffer from the changes of the moon, either by sickness, or delirium, or madness, especially epilepsy. Tho. Valesius (*Sac. Philos.* c. 71) denies that the moon has any such effect.

Simon, this is from the Hebrew *שמעון*, “hearing,” “obeying.” See what I have said on Gen. xxix. 33.

Andrew is a Greek name, which the Jews after the time of Alexander the Great took from the Greeks, together with such names as Jason, Lysimachus, Menelaus. (See 1 Mac. iv, &c.) Andrew means strong, brave. And such indeed S. Andrew was upon his cross.

Casting a net. We must supply from S. Luke, chap. v., that Christ went up into Peter’s ship, and taught the multitudes from thence, that after that He bade Peter cast a net into the sea, which immediately caught a vast number of fishes, so that the net brake, that by this miracle Peter was converted, together with Andrew, James, and John, that then Christ said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,” as S. Matthew here records.

Verse 19- Fishers of men. For Christians are like fishes swimming in the waters of baptism. “There are merchandise and nets and ropes: Death the reward, virtue the prow, the keel is health above; Faith the ropes, true godliness the mast, The sail is hope, the oars are grace, the captain is true love.”

This is the ship of Christ’s Church in which we sail to heaven. I have noticed nineteen analogies between fishes and men, upon Habakkuk i. 14, which if you please you may consult.

Hence Christ is called by the early Christians ΙΧΘΥΣ, a Fish, because its initial letters make this acrostic, *Ιησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σῶτηρ*, or Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Saviour; on which there is extant a verse of the Erythræan Sibyl in S. Augustine (*Civ. Dei*, 18. 23.) See Tertullian (*de Bapt.*), and Prosper (*part. prædict.* 2. 39).

S. Luke says, “From henceforth thou shalt catch men,” Gr. *ζωγρῶν*, *i.e.* take them alive, catch them for life. S. Ambrose translates, “make them live.” As though Christ had said, “Fishermen take fishes for death, that they may kill them, but thou, O Peter, shalt catch men unto life, that they may begin a new life, and live unto God in holiness.”

Well does S. Augustine say (*Tract, 7 in Joan.*), Christ, wishing to break the nets of the proud, sought not the fisherman by means of the orator, but from the fisherman he gained the emperor. Great is Cyprian the orator, but first was Peter the fisherman. In this was fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah (xvi. 16), “Behold, I will send many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish you.”

Verse 20- Leaving their nets. Under the term *nets* understand also ships, houses, occupation, servants, parents, relations, and all other things whatsoever, according to that saying of S. Peter to Christ, “Lo! we have left all things and followed thee.” When then we read that after Christ’s death the Apostles went a-fishing (John xxi. 3), we do not understand that they again betook themselves to their old vocation, but only did

monsters, and brought them before the eyes of S. Anthony that he might terrify him, as S. Athanasius asserts in his Life of S. Anthony. If the demon is able to picture such things to the fancy, why not in the air? Various colours are depicted in the rainbow. In the time of the Maccabees, squadrons of soldiers were seen fighting in the air, with other portents.

Verse 9- And said to him, &c. You ask, how did the devil dare to make such an impious proposal to Christ? I answer that he is so ambitious that even from the beginning he wished to be God, and envied Christ, as man, the Divinity which He had by means of the Hypostatic Union. Ambition, therefore, and envy blinded him so that he treated Christ as his rival. 2. Because when he saw Christ once and again declining to work a miracle, he made himself more and more certain that He was not the Son of God. 3. Because from Luke iv. 6 we learn that the devil added, “For to me they are delivered, and to whom I will I give them,” from whence it is plain that he pretended to be the Son of God and God, and consequently an object of worship, as S. Hilary says. The devil then, from Christ’s patiently suffering Himself to be transported from the pinnacle of the temple to the mountain, and growing bold by Christ’s modest silence, suspected that He was not the Son of God, but a mere man; and so he here demands the Divine honours which he had formerly coveted in heaven—that they should be rendered to him by Christ as well as by all other men. For this ambition of being a god is, as it were, innate in him, and blinds him, says the *Gloss*. And therefore he introduced idols, that by them he might be worshipped. Satan, moreover, by this solicitation of worship, wished to make still further trial whether or not Christ were the Son of God.

In the two previous temptations he made trial directly whether Christ were the Son of God, but in this third temptation his direct object was to tempt to avarice, ambition, and idolatry, and indirectly to find out if He were the Son of God.

Observe the arrogance of the devil. He does not care for any mere adoration, but such only as is accompanied by falling down and prostration. Hear what S. Irenæus says upon this expression, *fall down*. “The devil himself confesses that to worship him and do his will is to fall from the glory of God.” He therefore sells us vain honours at the price of our own destruction. Irenæus adds, “Not even these things which he has promised will he give to him who has fallen.”

S. Luke adds that the devil gave a reason why he made this offer to Christ, but in so doing he told a double falsehood. He said “All these things have been delivered unto me,” *i.e.*, by God, but he withholds mention of the Divine Name, both because it is hateful to him and because he himself wished to be accounted and worshipped as God. And God has not given into his power the kingdoms of the world. “For the earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof.” Secondly, because it is false that the devil gives them

to whom he will. He did not intend to give the kingdoms of the world to Christ, neither would he have given them, even though Christ had worshipped him. The devil therefore here betrays himself, as Toletus observes, because this his promise was false, arrogant, and deceitful. We have seen why it was false. It was deceitful because he exchanges the present for the future. "I will give," he says, but he would have the adoration now. By a similar fraud the devil endeavours to persuade men to give their youth and time present to pleasures and himself, but to give the future and old age to repentance and God: though old age is uncertain, and ill adapted for penance, as S. Gregory warns us.

Lastly, observe how Christ, by His examples and answers, teaches us that the first temptation of the flesh and hunger is to be overcome by hoping in God and His providence; the second, of pride and presumption, is to be vanquished by the fear of God; the third, to avarice and ambition, must be driven away by greatness of soul and contempt of the world. B. Peter Damian suggests three efficacious incentives to bring this to pass. "The conqueror of the demons is made the companion of angels; the exile of the world is the heir of Paradise; the denier of himself is the follower of Christ."

Verse 10- *Then Jesus saith to him: Begone, Satan.* The Syriac adds, *behind me.* Jesus spake thus in righteous anger and indignation; and so the devil, despairing of victory, fled away in confusion. Whence let Christians learn bravely to repel the suggestions of the devil and to rebuke him, and he will flee from them.

It is written, &c. For thou shalt worship, the Hebrew has תִּירָא *tira*, "thou shalt fear." For the Hebrews by the word '*fear*' signify reverence, adoration, the whole worship of God. As Statius says, "Fear first made gods to be in the world." The word *only* is not in the Hebrew, but it is understood in the pronoun *Him*. *Thou shalt worship*, I say, *Him* alone, *Him*, thy Creator. Thou shalt serve Him with *latría*. For the Greek is λατρεύσεις; since *latría* is rendered to God alone, *dulia* to the saints, according to S. Augustine (*de Civ. Dei*, lib. 10, c. 1), to the Blessed Virgin *hyperdulia*.

Moraliter. Christ here teaches us the answer we should give to the devil when he tempts us to avarice or any other sin. All temptation tends to this, that we should prefer the creature to the Creator, and make it, as it were, our idol, and worship it. Thus, the idol which the devil sets before the covetous man is Plutus, mammon, riches, kingdoms; the idol of the proud man is honour, ambition; of the glutton, his belly; of the wanton, Venus. With Christ we must answer Satan, "I worship God, not Plutus or Venus." For as S. Cyprian says (*Tract. de Spect.*), "He casts himself down from the vantage ground of his nobility who is able to admire anything in comparison with God." For what is the whole world, what are all its kingdoms—all creatures—compared with God, but as a point compared with the universe? What is all time in respect of eternity, but as a moment? What are all pleasures, honours, riches, compared with the riches and honours of eternity, but vanities and shadows, yea, but dust and ashes? Despise them, therefore, for God's sake, and cleave close to Him; and then, last, overcome all temptation. As the Psalmist says, "It is good for me to hold me fast by God." And again, "My soul is firmly stayed upon God." As S. Cyprian

whole Psalter twenty times, accompanied by constant flagellation, for one Psalter so said is equal to five years of penance.

Thus Henry II., King of England, because he had given occasion for the murder of S. Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury, came as a penitent, with bare feet, to the tomb of S. Thomas, and prostrate on the earth, confessed his sin with tears at the feet of the bishops, and, baring his shoulders, received from them five flagellations, and from each of the monks, who were eighty in number, he received three strokes of the rod. This was about A.D. 1170. What does our delicateness say to this? What has become of the ancient penance?

Let us hear what S. Jerome says of S. Paula in her epitaph. "She did not sleep upon a bed, but upon sackcloth spread upon the bare ground, if, indeed, that could be called sleep which was interrupted by almost continual prayers, day and night, fulfilling the words of the Psalm, "Every night wash I my bed, and water my couch with my tears." You might have thought she was possessed of a fountain of tears; so did she weep over her trifling faults, that you might have imagined her guilty of the most dreadful crimes. Often did we admonish her to have mercy upon her eyes, and preserve them for the reading of the Gospel. But she said, "It is meet that this face should be defiled, which so often, against the command of God, has been adorned with cosmetics and vermilion. It is meet that this body should be afflicted which indulged in so many luxuries. A long laughter shall be recompensed with constant weeping. Soft kerchiefs and precious silks shall give place to rough sackcloth. I who pleased my husband and the world now desire to please Christ." See the same Epistle (30), graphically describing the rare penance of Fabiola.

Verse 18- *And Jesus walking by the sea, &c.* It is not the first vocation of Peter and Andrew which is here recorded. This is related by S. John (i. 36), among the events of the first year of Christ's ministry. The second vocation of Peter and Andrew was after the Baptist's imprisonment, when they surrendered themselves at Christ's call to become His disciples; when they constantly cleave to Him, and never return to their former occupations. This second calling of these Apostles is related both by Matthew and Luke; by the former, compendiously; whilst S. Luke, after his wont, narrates the particulars of the history more at length. So S. Chrysostom.

Walking, not by chance, not merely for recreation, but that He might call to Him Peter and Andrew, James and John. Let Christians, especially priests and religious, strive to imitate Christ, and do nothing aimlessly, but seek fruit in all things.

By the sea of Galilee. Capharnaum, where Christ had chosen a house for receiving His disciples was near this lake.

Verse 17- *From that time Jesus began, &c.* This was the sum and the scope of the preaching of Christ, to invite men to repentance, to change their course of action, and lead them to a holy life. For this is true wisdom, this our end, our goal, our good, our happiness. Truly says the *Gloss*, “To the Gospel pertains the promise of blessedness, the remission of sins, adoption, resurrection, the heavenly inheritance, the society of angels. By the Gospel, kings are made and a kingdom given, not earthly and transitory, but heavenly and eternal.”

Wherefore Babylas, the play-actor, who had two concubines, hearing these words of the Gospel read, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*, being touched by the finger of God, learned wisdom, and shut himself up in a cell, to do penance for the rest of his life. He left his riches to his concubines, but they too, pricked with compunction by his example, also shut themselves up in cells, and did continual penance. (See John Moschus, *Spiritual Meadow*, c. 32.) Verily the word of the Gospel is quick and powerful. (Heb. iv. 12.)

Appositely did Christ preach repentance in Galilee because Galilee is the same as transmigration, say S. Gregory and others, from the root גלגלה *galah*, “he migrated.” For in Galilee Christ taught men in mind, and affection, and love, to migrate from earth to heaven. Wherefore also He chose for apostles none but Galilæans, *i.e.*, migrators, men who were but pilgrims upon earth and citizens of heaven.

This transmigration is accomplished by penitence. How strict, and of how long duration, was the penance upon bread and water in former times! This appears from the Roman Pœnitential, and from the Penitential Canons of SS. Basil, Gregory Nyssen, and Bede, of Rabanus Maurus, and Burchardus, which are still extant. In Spain, the sick and those about to die did penance, clothed in the monastic habit, and received the tonsure, by which they made profession of a monastic life; and if they afterwards recovered they were bound not to return to the world, but to pass the rest of their life in a monastery. This appears from the Twelfth Council of Toledo, cap. 2. Wamba, king of Spain, a great example to posterity, did this about A.D. 674. (See Mariana, and Baronius, tom. 8, A. D. 680, *in fine*.) For this reason the Pontifical Penitentiaries at Rome carry a rod in their hands, because they are apostolic judges in the tribunal of conscience. For a straight rod is borne before a judge as an emblem of the rectitude of justice, according to that which is said of Christ, Ps. xlv. 7, “The sceptre of thy kingdom is the sceptre of uprightness.” (Vulg.); because also in grave and public offences, especially those to which excommunication was annexed, the Penitentiaries, reciting the Psalm *Miserere*, used to beat the guilty person with a rod; and thus they gave absolution, as is appointed even now in the ancient ritual of the Church, sanctioned by the canons, in solemn absolution from excommunication. Thus S. Anno, Archbishop of Cologne, sharply whipped the emperor Henry II. as a penance, A.D. 1056, as can be seen in his life in Surius. And the use of this discipline, as it is commonly called, by rods, inflicted, either by the penitent himself, or by the Penitentiary, was very common in the time of blessed Peter Damian, who flourished A.D. 1040, as is plain from many of his Epistles, also from the life of S. Dominic Loricatus, where he says that a hundred years’ penance is performed by reciting the

(*de Orat. Domin.*) says, “Since of God are all things, to him who hath God nothing will be wanting, if he be not wanting to God.”

In like manner, if the devil threaten you with the fear of infamy, poverty, disease, death, join thyself to God, worship Him with constant hope and prayer. S. Cyprian (*in Exhort. Martyr.*) shows that some fell away from martyrdom because they had respect to the fierceness of the torments, not to the strength and help of God, and that those stand fast and conquer who turn away their minds from the torments and fix them upon God, and say, “I can do all things through Him who strengtheneth me.” God is greater than the torments. So S. Agnes, fixing all her hopes and love upon Christ, vanquished all the torments of the tyrant. For God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the strong, and He wills to show to the whole world His strength in our weakness. For God *cannot* forsake those who hope in Him, call upon Him, and worship Him.

Wherefore, S. Cyprian (*Tract. de Mortal.*) says, “Adversity does not withdraw us from the power of faith, but confirms us.” Of this S. Anthony had experience, who, on the testimony of S. Athanasius, was wont to say that “the best remedy for overcoming all the temptations of the devil is spiritual joy and the love of Christ, from one sign of whose cross he flies away vanquished.”

Verse 11- *Then the devil, &c.* Rightly Anon. (*in Catenâ*) says, “The end of contests is found when the adversary yields to his victor of his own will, or is vanquished by a threefold fall according to the rules of pugilism.” For he who has thrice overcome his antagonist is plainly his superior.

Then the angels approached Christ in His human form which He had assumed, and congratulated him, and brought Him food, and rendered Him other offices of their service, as their Creator and their Lord.

Learn from hence that he who bravely conquers the devil is rewarded by the ministry, the strengthening, and the consolation of the angels. For the conqueror of Satan becomes, as it were, one of the angels.

Origen (*Hom. 31 in Luc.*) and Abulensis are of opinion that when the devil tempts a person to some particular sin, and has been by him thoroughly vanquished, he does not tempt him any more in the same way. Salmeron, the Jesuit, thinks the same. But it is more probable that the devil having been once thoroughly vanquished either by Christ or Christians, only departs from them for a season, as S. Luke says, and returns whenever another occasion offers to try them by a similar, or even by the same temptation. For so S. Anthony was often tempted in the same way; and S. Paul was frequently, and of long continuance, tempted by the same thorn in the flesh.

Let us hear S. Ambrose (*lib. 4. in c. 4 Luc., ver. 13*): “Rightly are these three temptations of Christ shown to be the fountains of all sins. Nor would Scripture have said that all the temptation was ended, unless there were in these three the material of all offences, the seeds of which must be avoided in their origin. The end of temptations is the end of desires, because the causes of temptations are the causes of desires. The causes of desires are the pleasing of the flesh, the show of glory, the greed of power.” And after a little, “You see, then, that the devil is not persevering in his zeal; that he is accustomed to yield to true courage. And though he does not leave off to envy, he ceases to attack, because he has often fled away when triumphed over.” After much more, S. Ambrose thus concludes: “Therefore, He who wishes to give a crown suggests temptations. Whenever thou art tempted, know that a crown is being prepared.”

Ver. 12.—*When Jesus had heard, &c.* Matthew, Mark, and Luke all omit the embassy of the Jews to John the Baptist, asking him if he were the Messiah. To this first year of Christ’s ministry pertain also the turning water into wine, the driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and the discourse with Nicodemus. These all took place before the imprisonment of the Baptist, and are related only by S. John. For before his imprisonment Christ had committed to John the work of preaching, but now He took that office upon Himself. Moreover, when Christ heard of John’s imprisonment, He departed out of Judæa into Galilee, because He fled from Herod, that he might not imprison Him as he had done John. In Galilee, therefore, he began solemnly to preach, that He might fulfil Isaiah’s prophecy, of which more presently.

You may say—Herod reigned in Galilee, not in Judæa. Why then did Christ, to avoid Herod, flee into Galilee? I reply, because John, preaching in Judæa, near Jericho, and gathering together the multitudes, was accused to Herod, probably by the Scribes and Pharisees. For they had been sharply rebuked by John, and called “a brood of vipers.” In their anger they suggested to Herod, who they knew was hostile to John, that he should apprehend him, lest he should make a tumult, and incite the people to rebellion. Josephus (*Ant., lib. 18, c. 7*), says that Herod slew John through fear of a rising of the people who flocked to John. The same Scribes and Pharisees were, it is probable, hostile to Christ, who had been pointed out by John, and who was wont, equally with John, freely and publicly to rebuke their vices. And although John had baptized in Judæa, he had perhaps passed into the neighbouring Peræa, which was subject to Herod. When Christ therefore heard of John’s apprehension, He fled from Judæa into Galilee, lest He should be delivered by the same Scribes and Pharisees, with the connivance of the Roman governor, to Herod. But Jesus was not afraid of Herod himself, because He had not offended him personally, as John had, by reproving his adultery. This Herod Antipas was the son of Herod of Ascalon, the murderer of the innocents.

This was the second departure of Christ from Judæa into Galilee. The first is related in John i. 43, and is the same which is referred to by S. Mark (i. 14), S. Luke (iv. 14), and S. John (iv. 3, 43.)

Ver. 13.—*And leaving his own city, &c. Leaving i.e.,* passing it by. Jesus did not wish to enter Nazareth, although it was His own city, to begin His preaching there. S. John gives the reason (iv. 44), “A prophet hath no honour in his own country.” Therefore He went to Capharnaum, and set up there His Chair of preaching.

Observe, there were two Galilees, one, Lower Galilee in the tribes of Issachar and Zabulon, in which was Nazareth: and Upper Galilee in the tribes of Aser and Nephtali, in which was Capharnaum, and which was called *Galilee of the Gentiles*, because it bordered upon Phoenicia, and was largely peopled by Gentiles. A considerable portion of it was given by Solomon to Hiram, king of Tyre. (See I Kings ix. 11.)

Capharnaum, which is by the sea. Because it was near the Jordan, where it flows into the Sea of Galilee. From its situation it became a most celebrated emporium for merchandise, and the metropolis of Galilee. In wealth, luxury, and beauty it far surpassed all the other cities of Galilee, and thence derived its name. For Capharnaum is as though *כפרנחמים caphar naim, i.e.,* “the field of pleasantness or delight,” as S. Jerome says on Hebrew names. In this city then, Christ began to preach the kingdom of God, and to rebuke the luxury and vices of its citizens, and to call them away from earthly goods, from wealth and pride, to the heavenly riches. This He did both by His preaching and His miracles. It was here that He healed the paralytic man, who was let down through the roof upon a bed. In Capharnaum He restored to sight two blind men, and healed the dumb man who was possessed of a devil. Here, whilst walking in the street, He cured the palsied servant of the centurion. Here He healed the woman with an issue of blood, who touched the fringe of His garment. Here He raised from death Jairus’ daughter.

But when its inhabitants, swelling with pride and luxury, gave no heed either to His words or His miracles, and would not be moved to repentance, at last He pronounced upon them the sentence, “And thou, Capharnaum,” &c., chap. xi. 23.

Verse 14- *That it might be fulfilled, &c.* There is an apposition here. 1. There is the land of Zabulon and Naphtali, which is by the way of the sea. 2. There is the country across the Jordan. And the whole district was called Galilee of the Gentiles. This land, I say, was illuminated by Christ making known the light of the Gospel to them that dwelt therein. The word *Gentiles* here denotes that Christ was about to transfer the Kingdom of God from the Jews, because of their unbelief, to the Gentiles. So S. Chrysostom.

Verse 16- *The people that sat in darkness, &c.* I have expounded this prophecy at length in Isaiah ix. 1: which see.