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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.

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.

Matthew Chapter 4: 1-6

Douay Rheims Version

*Christ's fast of forty days: He is tempted. He begins to preach,
o call disciples to him, and to work miracles.*

1. Then Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil.
2. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry.
3. And the tempter coming said to him: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.
4. Who answered and said: It is written, Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.
5. Then the devil took him up into the holy city, and set him upon the pinnacle of the temple,

Dare not to do in his presence that which thou wouldst not dare to do if I saw thee." "As often as any very fierce temptation is seen to oppress thee, or vehement tribulation to threaten thee, invoke thy Guardian in those due times of trouble. Call upon him and say, 'Lord, save us, we perish.' He neither slumbereth nor sleepeth."

In their hands shall they bear thee. So of S. Benedict it was said by S. Bernard, that at a certain time, when he appeared to have his eyes intently fixed upon a refulgent light, he saw the soul of S. Germanus, Bishop of Capua, borne by the angels in a globe of fire into heaven.

they would bear him up, if he were cast down from on high. Wherefore he threw himself down headlong into a well, and there miserably perished.

Moraliter. The devil, who fell down from heaven into Tartarus, strives to cast or drag others down with him. Wherefore when he persuades any one to sin, he causes him to cast himself down. As Christ saith to the perverse Jews, "You are from beneath, I am from above." (S. John viii. 23 .) Again, Christ, studiously concealing from the devil that He was the Son of God, eluded all his arts and devices, and kept him in doubt and suspense, so that he should not know in what way he might tempt Him.

Wherefore learn not to make known to every one the secrets of thy soul, lest thou be hindered of the devil. In battles, the crown of victory is his who can conceal his own plans, and discover those of the enemy. A Christian learns by frequent experience that heroic acts of virtue are easily accomplished, if the determination of them be kept secret in the mind, and they are suddenly brought out into the sphere of action, before the demon has been able to get scent of them and oppose them. This is the art of deluding the demon.

Verse 6- *For it is written*, &c. A citation of Ps. xci. 2. The angels in this place mean properly men's guardian angels, though any other messengers whom God sends in various ways to help and save men may be understood. Whence SS. Chrysostom, Jerome, Hilary on this passage, Origen (*Hom. 24 in Luc.*), Nazianzen (*Orat. in S. Baptisma.*), think that the devil here wrongly cites Holy Scripture; that the Psalmist in the passage in question speaks of mere men, not of Christ, who was the God-man. For He had not, like other men, a guardian angel; the Divinity Itself was the Guardian of His Humanity.

On the contrary, S. Ambrose (*in cap. 4 Luc.*), and Remigius (on Ps. xci.), think that the devil did not wrest this passage of the Psalms, but applied it rightly to Christ; for although He had not any stated guardian angel, He had all the angels at His call, all deputed to minister unto Him. The devil did, however, wrest the text so far as this, that he used it for an evil purpose, namely, to make Christ cast Himself down. For God hath promised this guardianship of the angels to the righteous who act prudently and piously, not rashly and presumptuously, after the manner of those who tempt God. Hear S. Bernard, on Psalm *Qui habitat*, Ser. 14. "What has he commanded? Surely what follows in the Psalm, 'That they may keep thee in all thy ways.' Does he say in precipices, in such a way as casting thyself headlong from the pinnacle of the Temple? That is not a way but a destruction, a downfall. Or if it be a way, it is thine own, not God's."

Moraliter, the same S. Bernard (on Ps. xci. *Serm.* 12): "He has commanded His angels concerning thee. Wonderful condescension! And, indeed, great affection of His love! For to whom, concerning whom, and what hath He commanded?" After some other remarks, "How great reverence ought these words to instil into you! What devotion! What trust! reverence for their presence, devotion for their kindness, confidence for their protection. Walk then warily, as one to whom the angels are nigh

Whithersoever thou mayest go apart, in every corner have thine angel in reverence.

6. And said to him: If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written: That he hath given his angels charge over thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest perhaps thou dash thy foot against a stone.
7. Jesus said to him: It is written again: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.
8. Again the devil took him up into a very high mountain, and shewed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them,
9. And said to him: All these will I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me.
10. Then Jesus saith to him: Begone, Satan: for it is written: The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shalt thou serve.
11. Then the devil left him; and behold angels came and ministered to him.
12. And when Jesus had heard that John was delivered up, he retired into Galilee:
13. And leaving the city Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capharnaum on the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and of Nephthalim;
14. That it might be fulfilled which was said by Isaias the prophet:
15. Land of Zabulon and land of Nephthalim, the way of the sea beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles:
16. The people that sat in darkness, hath seen great light: and to them that sat in the region of the shadow of death, light is sprung up.
17. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say: Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
18. And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea (for they were fishers).
19. And he saith to them: Come ye after me, and I will make you to be fishers of men.
20. And they immediately leaving their nets, followed him.
21. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets: and he called them.
22. And they forthwith left their nets and father, and followed him.
23. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom: and healing all manner of sickness and every infirmity, among the people.
24. And his fame went throughout all Syria, and they presented to him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and such as were possessed by devils, and lunatics, and those that had the palsy, and he cured them:
25. And much people followed him from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

Verse 1- By the devil. Syriac, *by the accuser*, Gr. *διάβολος*, *accuser, calumniator*. For Satan is he who accuses men before God perpetually, that he may gain them for himself and Gehenna.

Then, that is, immediately after His Baptism. Hence S. Mark says, “Straightway the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.” Whence it would appear that Christ on the same 6th day of January on which he was baptized was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness. And at the close of the same day He commenced His forty days’ fast, which He would finish on the 15th of February. Thus speedy in every good work are both Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Was led, Gr. *ἀνήχθη*, *i.e.* was withdrawn, and taken away out of the midst of the multitude of the people with whom He had hitherto dwelt, that He might have time for prayer and fasting. Mark has, *the Spirit driveth him*, where the word *drive* denotes the power, efficacy and alacrity of the Spirit which was in Christ, and which was to be in the Apostles and all other Christians, and which was to drive or impel them to heroic acts of virtue, according to the words (Rom. viii. 14) “For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Vulg.) Christ then was led by the Spirit, not rapt through the air, but through the impulse of the Spirit, going with the utmost alacrity upon His feet, to the scene of His contest with the devil.

The desert was Christ’s wrestling ground of prayer and fasting and an angelic life, where He entered upon His duel with Lucifer and vanquished him.

The wilderness. This desert is called Quarantana. Adrichomius, in his description of the Holy Land, gives the following account of it out of Brocardus and others:— “The desert of Quarantana, between Jerusalem and Jericho, begins near Anathoth, and extends above Gilgal as far as the desert of Tekoa and Engaddi, by the Dead Sea. Here dwelt John the Baptist. In the same wilderness is a mountain called also Quarantana. It is near the Jordan, lofty and difficult of access. Here the Lord was first tempted of Satan. There is upon the top a ruined chapel, held in veneration on account of Christ’s fast and prayer.”

Tropologically, listen to S. Ambrose, lib. 3 *de Virgin.*: “Let us, too, follow Christ, far from luxury, far from lasciviousness, living as it were in the arid soil of His life of fasting. Not in the marketplace, not in the broad streets is Christ found. So let us not seek for Christ where He cannot be found. Christ is not in the courts of law, for Christ is peace; in the courts are lawsuits, Christ is justice; in the forum is iniquity, Christ is charity; in the forum is detraction, Christ is fidelity; in the forum is fraud and perfidy,” &c.

Of the Spirit. Not the devil, but the Holy Ghost. This is clear from the sixteenth verse of the third chapter. This Spirit of God, therefore, was the possessor and charioteer of Christ, driving Him into the desert. Whence the Syriac has, *of the Spirit of holiness, i.e.*, the Holy Ghost, the fountain of all holiness. This is clear, too, from the presence of the Greek article, *τοῦ Πνεύματος*. And *The Spirit* is here put in opposition to the devil, who follows as the adversary of Christ and the Holy Ghost, that Christ’s Own

commerce with Satan and be thought a magician, Christ so wrought unseen that He should be beheld of none, though the devil knew it not.

So Christ made the devil suffer an illusion, who had intended to play falsely with Him. For the demon thought that if Christ were the Son of God, He would not allow Himself to be taken up and carried through the air, and by this would know whether He were the Son of God or not; but Christ, by suffering this, frustrated the demon’s plan, and left him still in doubt. Whence S. Chrysostom was of opinion that the devil supposed that he carried Christ through the air to the pinnacle of the Temple against His will, and because He was not able to resist him.

Upon The pinnacle. It is probable that this pinnacle was the ridge or extreme point of the roof of the porch of that part of the Temple which was called the Sanctuary, or the Holy of Holies, for this part of the Temple alone had a roof (the Court of Israel was open to the sky), and like a tower overtopped the whole edifice. It was 120 cubits high. If Christ had fallen down from thence, He would have fallen into the court of the priests, between the porch just spoken of and the altar of burnt offering. The devil therefore suggested to Christ that He should cast Himself down from this pinnacle into the court of the priests, using some such arguments as these: “Cast thyself down, and show thyself to the priests and the other worshippers of God, and to all the people (for they, from the Court of Israel, were able to behold the sacrifices which were offered in the court of the priests), show thyself, I say, by miraculously gliding down unhurt, to be the Son of the True God, of Him whom in this court all are worshipping, and to whom they are offering sacrifices.” For by this temptation Satan wished Christ to make a vain show of Himself and His glory. So Franc. Lucas, Toletus, and others.

Jansen and Maldonatus understand the passage in another way. They observe that the houses and the Temple of the Jews did not have steep roofs, but flat like a table, so that men could walk, dine, and even sleep upon them, as is plain from Josh. ii. 6; Matt. x. 27, &c. They add that this flat roof was surrounded on every side by a low wall, or parapet, to prevent persons from falling down, according to the command of God, Deut. xxii. 8. And it is probable that in this parapet there were some parts higher than the rest, as for instance at the corners, just as we see in quadrilateral buildings at the present day. And they think that Satan placed Christ upon one of these angular turrets, which are called in Gr. *περύγια*, in Heb. *כנפים*, *kenaphim, i.e.* “wings,” because they towered aloft, and were like expanded wings floating in the air. So Angelomus, Eucherius, Lyra, &c.

By a similar temptation, as Cassian relates, *Collat.* 2, cap. 4, the devil overthrew Hero. For when he had lived upon bread and water only, he persuaded him that he was so holy, and so dear to God and the angels, that

illuminating and inflaming the mind. 3. He feeds us by prayers and holy inspiration.

Tropologically, S. Gregory (*Hom. 16 in Evang.*) here admires the meekness of Christ. “Consider how great is the patience of God, and how great our impatience. If we be injured, or provoked by any wrong, we are moved with wrath, and either revenge ourselves as far as we can, or threaten when we are not able. Behold, the Lord endured the onset of the devil, and answered him nothing save words of meekness. He endures him whom He might have punished.”

Verse 5- *Then the devil took him up into the holy city, i.e. Jerusalem.* The word, then, signifies that the devil, having been conquered by Christ in the first temptation to gluttony, immediately subjected Him to a second, vain glory. You may inquire why S. Luke places this temptation third instead of second. The reason is that S. Luke in this place, as in many others, disregards the chronological order of the temptations, which Matthew accurately observes. Whence the latter says in the eighth verse, *Again the devil took him.* And this is a natural and congruous sequence of temptation, to pass from gluttony to vain glory. So SS. Chrysostom, Jerome, Hilary, and others. For when the devil sees any one despise the pleasures and allurements of the flesh, he raises up against him the spiritual temptation of vanity and presumption.

Taketh him. The first opinion we will here notice is that of S. Cyprian (*Sermon on the Fast and Temptation of Christ*). He thinks that the devil’s taking Christ up was not real but only imaginary, like the visions seen by Ezekiel, and such as are the translations of sorcerers, who seem to themselves to be transported by the devil to a feast—a grand assembly, when in reality they are not transported, but the devil is playing tricks with their imagination, somewhat like the illusions of dreams. But we cannot suppose that the devil thus played false with the imagination of Christ, especially since the devil had no power over Christ’s inner man. The whole of this temptation was effected by means of an external voice, not through interior suggestion, as I have already said from S. Gregory.

2. Euthymius and Maldonatus think that Christ was led by the devil upon His feet up to the pinnacle of the Temple; and that Satan did this, lest by carrying Him through the air he should betray himself. So likewise Anselm and Origen, *Hom. 31 in S. Luc.* But from the desert of Quarantana to Jerusalem is a long journey, greater than could well have been accomplished in a day.

3. And most probably, Christ was taken up—*i.e.*, was carried through the air to the pinnacle of the Temple. So SS. Jerome, Gregory, Author *Imperfecti*, the *Gloss*, S. Thomas. Nor is it wonderful, says S. Gregory, that Christ should suffer the devil to deal with Him in this manner, since He suffered Himself to be crucified by the devil’s members—the wicked Jews. Nor did the demon betray himself by this, because he might have transported Christ in the guise of an angel of light. Or, indeed, he cared little now about betraying who he was, since he already suspected and feared that he was thoroughly known. Whence in the third temptation he boldly threw off all disguise of an angel of light, and unveiled his Satanic arrogance.

The Author *Imperfecti*, and from him S. Thomas, here observe that although the devil thus took up Christ so that Christ might be seen of all, and be supposed to have

Spirit might lead Him where the evil spirit might find Him to tempt Him, says S. Gregory.

That he might be tempted by the devil. The word *that* does not signify that the Holy Ghost directly intended that the devil’s temptation should assail Christ, for that were an evil thing: but only that the temptation should be permitted for the sake of Christ’s profit and victory, which He surely foresaw, and so opposed Christ, as it were an athlete, to the devil.

1. In the first place, the Holy Spirit intended by this temptation to afford to Christians, baptized and converted to God, an ideal of religious life, whereby they should know they must fortify themselves against the temptations which are sure to attack them. So SS. Chrysostom and Hilary. Whence Tertullian (*de Baptism.*, last chapter) teaches, that it is here signified, that no one without temptation shall attain the Kingdom of God.
2. The Holy Ghost would show that there is no temptation which may not be overcome by grace, by prayer and fasting, by repeating the words of Scripture, the precepts and promises of God.
3. Christ, who was often tempted by Satan, thus showed Himself to be like unto all other men, His brethren, as the Apostle teaches, Heb. iv. 15.
4. That He might show that those who are about to become doctors, preachers, prelates, apostles, must needs be first proved by temptations, and be strengthened by prayer and meditation in solitary retreats, and there drink in a large supply of the Spirit, which they may afterwards pour forth upon others. They who be wise, first go apart with Christ into the wilderness of prayer and meditation.
5. That challenging Lucifer to battle, He might vanquish him, and his whole army of demons with him. This duel between Christ and the devil is as when the sun struggles with the surrounding clouds, with this motto, “Splendour is from me.” “For the sun,” as S. Ambrose says, “is the eye of the world, the pleasantness of day, the beauty of the heaven, the measure of seasons, the strength and vigour of all the stars. As the sun dissipates the clouds, so does Christ all the temptations of the devil.” And again, “As the sun makes brilliant the darkest clouds, so does Christ, by the splendour of His grace, convert desolation into consolation, temptations into victories, war into triumph.”
6. That by His temptation as an example, He might overcome our temptations, and might teach us to fight with and overcome the same antagonist. For although the faithful, conscious of their own infirmity, ought to avoid temptations as far as they can, according to the words of Christ, “Lead us not into temptation,” yet when temptations do come, they must, relying upon Christ, valiantly resist them, remembering His words; “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” Whence S. Augustine on Psalm xci. says, “Therefore was Christ tempted, that the Christian might not be overcome by the tempter.” For as S. Ambrose says, “When thou art tempted, recognize that a crown is being prepared for thee. Take away the contests of the martyrs, you take away their crowns. Take away their

torments, you take away their beatitudes. Is not the temptation of Joseph the celebration of his virtue? Is not the wrong of his prison the crown of his chastity?"

S. Luke (iv. 1) says, *being tempted by the devil forty days*. From this some think that besides the three temptations mentioned by the Evangelist, Christ suffered many other temptations during these forty days. They also think that verse 14 points in the same direction, *And all the temptation being ended*. Thus Euthymius, Jansen and Cajetan, Origen (*Hom. 29 in Luc.*), Bede (lib. 1 *in Marc.*), Augustine (lib. 2 *de Consens. Evang. c. 4*).

S. Luke, by using the present participle GG, which the Vulgate renders by the imperfect, *was being tempted*, seems to refer principally to the three celebrated temptations of Christ as the summing up as it were and the chief of them all. As Suarez rightly points out.

Of the devil, namely Lucifer, the prince of all the demons. And it was just that Christ should now contend with him, as He had afore contended with him in heaven, when He cast Satan ambitiously seeking the hypostatic union, and envious that He was about to become man, down to Tartarus, as some suppose. Lucifer therefore, at this time, came forth from hell, and taking the form of a man—of a holy man, says Carthusianus—tempted Christ, (1) that he might make trial whether He were God's own Son in very deed, and (2) that he might entice Him to sin. As therefore Lucifer, through Eve, tempted Adam, and overcame him, so he tempted Christ, and was overcome by Him. We are here taught that when the devil foresees any one will be an illustrious doctor of the Church, he is accustomed to assail him with various temptations, that he may cast him down, and destroy the harvest of souls which he sees he may reap, that he may choke the fruit in the seed, as now he strove to strangle all Christians in Christ their Parent.

Verse 2- *And when he had fasted* Christ, after the example of Moses and Elias, fasted forty whole days and nights, without taking any food or drink whatever. He fasted, not by natural but by supernatural strength; and not by strength received from without, as Moses and Elias, but by His own proper and intrinsic, that is to say, divine strength, as the Fathers teach, *passim*.

You ask for what reasons Christ fasted? I answer,

1. That by prayer and fasting He might prepare Himself for His work of preaching, and teach us to do the same.
2. Objectively, that by the hunger consequent upon His fasting, He might afford the devil an opportunity of tempting Him; and by the same fasting might arm Himself, and teach us to arm ourselves against temptations. So S. Basil (*Hom. 1 on Tempt.*).
3. That by macerating His flesh, He might make satisfaction for Adam's eating the forbidden fruit, and for all the gluttony of his posterity.
4. That He might dispose Himself for holy contemplation, and show that fasting is as wings, whereby the soul is carried upward to celestial things. (S. Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 in Gen.*)

persuasions, and work a miracle. For this were directly contrary to religion, which forbids all commerce with Satan. Indirectly, it were contrary to temperance. Calvin, therefore, is wrong in denying that Christ was tempted to gluttony. Hear S. Gregory (*Hom. 16 in Evang.*), where He teaches that Christ was assailed by a threefold temptation—viz., gluttony, vain glory, and avarice—because Adam had been attacked and vanquished by the same temptations: "He tempted him to gluttony when he showed him the fruit of the forbidden tree, and persuaded him to eat. He tempted him to vain glory when he said, 'Ye shall be as gods.' He tempted him to covetousness when he added, 'knowing good and evil.' For avarice is not only of money, but also of greatness. For that is rightly called avarice where loftiness above measure is ambitiously desired. Christ was assailed by the same temptations, but overcame them: by gluttony, when the devil said, 'Turn these stones into bread;' by vain glory, 'If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down;' by covetousness of magnificence, when he showed Him all the kingdoms of the world."

Verse 4- *But he answered, &c.* The Greek and the Vulgate have, *in every word*. This is by enallage of the preposition, *in* every, for *from* every, as the Vulgate translates in Deut. viii. 3, the passage which Christ here quotes. The Hebrew is, "*upon every thing which goeth forth from the mouth of the Lord shall man live*"—that is to say, on whatsoever thing the Lord shall command, or order for the sustentation of life, man shall live and be nourished, as He fed the Jews for forty years without bread, with manna from heaven (the discourse in Deut. viii. 3 is upon this manna), and fed Moses, Elias, and Christ for forty days by His word, and by His power, preserving nature. Thus, too, God nourished the Abbot John for three years with the Eucharist alone, which he was accustomed to receive every Lord's day, when an angel said to him, "Christ is thy true food." Palladius (*in Lausiaca, c. 61*) attests this. So, too, God nourished S. Mary of Egypt, for nearly forty-seven years, in the desert, without earthly food, feeding her with tears and heavenly joys. So He fed the Magdalen with nothing save angelic music, seven times a day repeated.

Of this Petrarch sings—"As pass the weary hours away, Seven times is sung the angels' lay, Seven times in each revolving day."

So the great S. Sabas, says the author of his life, kept abstinence through all times of fasting, tasting no food whatever, save that on Saturdays and Sundays he received the holy sacrament.

Mystically, every faithful Christian lives by every word of God:—1. By receiving Christ, who is God's Eternal Word, and who, being made man, nourishes us by His doctrine, His grace, and His example. And we, by receiving Himself, by receiving His Flesh, receive His Godhead in the Eucharist. 2. God gives the words of sacred Scripture, which feed by

respects like a poor, weak, ordinary mortal, and being for that reason in doubt whether He were the very Son of God by nature, the **WORD** itself of the Father, or only a very eminent Son of God by adoption, he tempts Christ, and asks Him to turn stones into bread, that by His performance of the miracle, or inability to perform it, he might determine what kind of Son of God he was. For as by the Word of God all things had been created in the beginning, so by the same Word might stones be suddenly and instantly converted into bread. If therefore Christ had done this, the devil would have believed that He was the **WORD** of God.

Angels indeed are able to turn stones into bread, but not suddenly and directly, but by degrees and indirectly, by applying active energies to passive objects, with many previous actions, alterations, and conversions; but if Christ could not have done what He was asked, and had said that He could not, and that this was a Divine work, and peculiar to God, the devil would have urged, "Then thou art not the WORD of God, nor His Son by nature." It is a probable opinion of many theologians that the sin and pride of Lucifer in heaven were, that when God revealed to him that the Son of God would assume man's nature, and bade him submit himself to Christ as man, he became envious of Christ, that a man forsooth should be preferred to himself, who was the most glorious angel, and that a man should be taken up into hypostatic union with the WORD. Of this honour he was himself ambitious, and so rebelled against Christ and God. When therefore he saw this man called the Son of God by John the Baptist and the Father, he wished to find out if He were really God's Son, that he might pour out upon Him his pristine envy, fury, and indignation. So Suarez. This was Satan's cross, gnawing and tormenting his proud mind. But he conceals all this, veils it beneath the cloak of charity, that he wished to succour Christ in His hunger. Wherefore it is probable that the devil did not abruptly and without preface say to Christ, *If thou be*, &c., but first saluted Him kindly, and insinuated himself by some such bland words as these, "What, my lord, are you doing here alone? I saw you baptized of late in Jordan: I heard a voice come down to you from heaven, *This is my Son*. I should be glad to know whether you are truly the Son of God by nature, or only His adopted Son by grace. I observe also that you are utterly spent with hunger after your fast of forty days. If then you are the Son of God, relieve your hunger, convert these stones into loaves of bread. This for you were most easy."

Wherefore what S. Chrysostom says in this place is not so probable—that the devil endeavoured to tempt Christ to unbelief. Somewhat as though he had said thus:—"It is true you heard a voice at your baptism, *This is my Son*, but do not imagine yourself to be the Son of God, or, if you are, turn these stones into bread." For it would have been folly to try to persuade Christ to believe that He was not the Son of God, if He was indeed His Son, and knew that He was.

The devil wished also, by this temptation, to entice Christ to make a vain boast of his power, and to distrust the aid of God His Father. "Your Father has for forty days been unmindful of you; He has not given you food. Now then, take care of yourself."

There was also a temptation to gluttony. For the temptation to gluttony, in this case, would have been, on account of hunger to yield to the devil, to acquiesce in his

5. That He might teach us to despise corporal for the sake of spiritual delights; and that by the contemplation of divine things, and the joy which arises from that contemplation, the longing for carnal pleasures is quenched, and the thought of food and drink taken away. Whence the Abbot John, as Cassian testifies (*Collat.* 19. 4) was so fed with the pleasures of contemplation, that he could not remember whether he had eaten the day before or not.

6. And chiefly, that He might inaugurate the Lenten Fast, observed by Christians according to Apostolic tradition; that He might sanction, and, as it were, consecrate this fast by His example. So S. Ignatius (*Epist.* 7), and other Fathers, *passim*. The reason was, first, that we might give a tithe of all the days of the year to God. So S. Gregory (*Hom.* 16. *in Evang.*) "From this day until the gladness of Easter are six weeks, or forty-two days, from which, as six Sundays not to be given to fasting must be deducted, there remain only thirty-six days. Thus do we deny ourselves for six-and-thirty days, as giving the tenth of the 365 days of the year to God, that we, who have lived by the gift which we have received for ourselves, might, for the sake of our Maker, mortify ourselves by fasting in His own tithe of time. Whence, brethren most beloved, as ye are bidden by the law to offer the tithe of your substance, so also offer to God the tithe of your days." S. Ambrose gives another reason, that as the Israelites passed by forty-two stations through the desert to the Promised Land, so we too arrive by forty days of fasting at the longed-for feast and joy of Easter. Whence Tertullian, Cyprian, S. Ambrose (*Epist.* 25), and others call a fast *a station*. See in Peter Bongus much more concerning the mysteries contained in the number forty. See also S. Jerome (*ad Præsid.*) on the Paschal Candle.

We may add that the Lenten Fast is appointed for the spring, not only for the sanctity of the soul, but for the sanity of the body, as D. Viringas, Professor of Medicine at Louvain, in his book called *Fasting, the Physician of the Church*, says. In spring the blood breaks out in various humours, which produce fevers and various disorders, unless they are kept under by fasting and fish.

Mystically, S. Augustine, on Ps. cx. *sub init.*, teaches us that the number forty, in connection with fasting, signifies the whole period of this present life, assigned by God to repentance and expiation of sins, by which we arrive at the Easter of a joyful resurrection, and at Pentecost, or the fiftieth day of eternal reward and glory.

Moreover, some of the ancient Christians, imitating the example of Christ, were very rigid in the observance of this fast, as Baronius shows (A.C. 57, c. 153). Whence Lucian (*in Philopatros*) testifies that the early Christians were so accustomed to fasting that they would spend ten whole days without food. More fully writes S. Gregory Nazianzen: (*ad Hellen.*), concerning the monks who live in the deserts of Pontus, that there were many of them who abstained from food twenty whole days, and as many nights, imitating

Christ in one half of His fast. And S. Augustine writes (*Epist. 86 ad Casulanum*), that there were some in his time who kept a whole week's fast, and that he himself was acquainted with them. He adds, "It has been solemnly affirmed to us by brethren worthy of credit, that one kept a fast of forty whole days."

Afterwards he hungered. The most probable meaning is that Christ felt some sensation of hunger during the forty days, though not such hunger as He did when they were finished, and which incited Him to seek for food.

With Christ equally as with Moses and Elias, prayer and converse with God were the nourishment both of soul and body throughout the forty days; for they who wholly give themselves up to those things are so fed with their sweetness that they do not experience the pangs of hunger.

You will ask whether Christ by natural strength could live for forty days without food and drink? I reply—

1. Both experience and physicians teach that such a thing is impossible to the power of nature. There is the *à priori* reason against it, that when aliment is withdrawn the vital heat languishes and dies, as the fire of a lamp is extinguished when oil fails. You may say that Pliny (lib. 7, c. 2) tells us that the Indians at the sources of the Ganges live merely by inhaling the smell of fruits and flowers. Rondelivius also (lib. I *de Piscibus*, c. 13) relates that a certain person lived for forty years upon air alone. Robert Bacon relates that an English girl lived for twenty years in a similar manner. Simon Portius also says that a girl of Spire, about A.D. 1540, lived four years without food. A French priest lived for two years without food at Rome, in the time of Nicholas V. As to what Pliny says, it is fabulous. Odour refreshes the brain, but does not fill the stomach. The other instances were brought about either by divine power or by the devil's art, a wonderful example of which last, B. Prosper relates of an Indian girl. The young woman of Spire laboured under a disease of slow, viscous, and chilous phlegm, and so was kept alive. In a somewhat parallel manner Indians, by chewing the herb coca, and Scythians, by the herb hippice, can sustain hunger and thirst for twelve days. see Delrio (lib. 2, *disquis. Magic. quæst.* 21); and Coimb. (lib. I *de Generat.*, c. 5, q. 7, art. 1 & 2).

2. Vehement and protracted attention of the mind to other things, such as mathematical, philosophical, or theological speculations, is able to keep a man without food for some time, but not for forty days. And so, contemplation alone would not have enabled Christ to live without food for forty days.

3. The fasts of Christ, Moses, Elias, Simeon Stylites, and such as they fasting for forty days, was supernatural, arising from a singular providence of God. God in their case suspended for forty days the action of natural heat, and sustained and nourished them internally, so that they lived and flourished during the time, just as even at this present time Enoch and Elias are living well and strong without food for so many thousands of years in the terrestrial Paradise, where they feed only upon the spiritual delights of prayer and contemplation.

Hungered. God, who had for forty days stayed this hunger by His intervention, afterwards withdrew that intervention, and gave up the body of Christ to the suffering of hunger—1. That He might declare Christ to be true man. As S. Chrysologus says: "To feel and to conquer hunger is a work of human labour, not to hunger at all is the result of Divine power." (*Serm.* II.) Secondly, as S. Ambrose says, "That the Lord's hunger might be a pious fraud upon the devil," that the devil being allured by the appearance of hunger, might tempt Christ as if He were a man, knowing not that He was God. *In c. 4 S. Luc.*: "The lowly God-man hungered, that the lofty Man-God might not be made known to the enemy," says a certain holy person.

Verse 3- *And when the tempter came—came, i.e.,* in human form, and with an audible voice. For this temptation of Christ, like that of Adam and Eve, in their state of innocence, was effected by the external suggestion of the voice, not by internal cogitations and movements of the fancy, rising up against reason and the Spirit. For in Adam, and much more in Christ, was original righteousness, which kept in subjection to the reason all motions of the soul and imagination, so that in Him was no unlawful thought, no motion of concupiscence that could be stirred up by the devil, such as is stirred up in us since Adam's sin. For by it we have lost original righteousness, and are vexed by concupiscence. So Damasc. (lib. 3, *de Fide*, c. 20), and from him theologians, *passim*. Whence S. Gregory (*Hom.* 16): "By suggestion Christ could be tempted; but His mind the delectation of sin wounded not, and therefore all that temptation of the devil was without, not within."

The tempter. Not because he is the only tempter, but because he is the first and chief among tempters. For they mistake who say that all temptation comes from Satan. Some temptations arise out of our own carnal will and frailness, and some from the world, *i.e.,* from worldly and carnal men. So S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 54 *in Acta*), "Many sin without the devil. He does not do everything: many things even come of our slothfulness alone." The devil, however, often rouses concupiscence in us by representing to the imagination things to be lusted after, and thus inflaming the sensual appetite. In the same way he stirs up the world, *i.e.,* worldly and carnal men, to tempt us by persecuting us, or by enticing us to their follies. So he is called the tempter, *κατ' ἐξοχήν*. Note here the craft of the devil, how he tempts every one by that to which he has a propensity, or in which he is weak. As fowlers and hunters lay in snares for wild birds and beasts various sorts of food such as each prefer, so also the devil offers the pleasures of the table to such as are prone to gluttony, to those who are full he offers ease and sloth, to the proud he offers honours, to the contentious lawsuits and strifes, to the avaricious usury, fraud, iniquitous bargains, and so on. (S. Gregory, lib. 14, *Moral.* c. 7.)

If thou be, &c. The devil had heard the Father's Voice at the Baptism of Christ—*Thou art my beloved Son*; yet forasmuch as he saw Him in some