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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 8: 1-19

Douay Rheims Version

Christ cleanses the leper, heals the centurion's servant, Peter's mother-in-law, and many others: he stills the storm at sea, drives the devils out of two men possessed, and suffers them to go into the swine.

1. And when he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him:
2. And behold a leper came and adored him, saying: Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.
3. And Jesus stretching forth his hand, touched him, saying: I will, be thou made clean. And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed.

woman's hand had received death. He held her hand, that what the hand of presumptuous Eve had lost, the hand of her Maker might restore.

Verse 16- *When even was come . . . he healed many that were sick.* S. Luke says (iv. 40), *by imposition of hands.* For Christ did not disdain, with His most pure and Divine hands, to touch those who had ulcers, running sores, and leprosies, that He might show the power and virtue of His Divine touch, and heal them all.

Verse 17- *That it might be fulfilled, &c.* These words of Isaiah have a two-fold meaning. The first is concerning diseases of the soul, *i.e.*, sins and their penalty, which Christ took upon Himself, and abolished upon the cross. This was Isaiah's chief meaning, as appears from what follows, and from the words, *He carried.* The second meaning concerns diseases of the body, which are at once the types and result of diseases of the soul. These too, Matthew here says, *Christ bore:* not by actually becoming diseased Himself, but by compassion, and by wholly healing those who were diseased. Hence the Syriac translates, *He shall sustain our sickness.* Christ bore so many torments, and even the death of the cross, that He might do away with all infirmities, and death itself, either in this life or at the resurrection—in other words, that He might take away sin with all its consequences and penalties. Thus therefore Christ carried our sins, thus also our diseases and punishments. And thus Christ had the power of healing diseases in that He Himself took them upon Himself, by atoning for and expiating them upon the cross.

Verse 19- *And a certain scribe came to him, &c.* This doctor of the Law seeing Jesus preparing to depart, and cross over the lake, and being moved by His preaching and miracles, and the concourse of applauding people, desired to be associated with Him as a disciple with a master.

incessantly implored by those who are thus fevered in soul.

Whosoever then thou art who labourest under the fever of concupiscence, I do not say that thou shouldst embrace a monastic life, or that thou shouldst macerate thy body by hair shirts or the scourge, or drink nothing but water. I make an easy suggestion; frequently receive Holy Communion, and by so doing receive Christ into the house of thy soul. He is a virgin, and the son of a virgin, and by His own virgin flesh He will extinguish this fire. This assuredly is the most powerful medicine against lust, as Holy Scripture teaches, and the holy Fathers testify, and daily experience confirms. For this is “the wheat of the elect, and the wine that maketh virgins.” (Zech. ix. 17, where see my commentary.)

There are nine correspondences between fever of the body and fever of the soul.

1. There is fever when noxious moisture and abnormal heat, opposed to the natural heat, affect the heart. Thus too there is fever in the soul when man’s will is steeped in the love of concupiscence, which is contrary to the love of God.
2. As fever takes away the healthy disposition of the secretions of the body, so does the fever of the soul put an end to the due regulation of its passions and affections.
3. As fever is known by a violent pulse, so may the soul’s fever be discerned by excessive cares and anxieties, as it were pulsating in the mind.
4. Fever excites thirst, which those who are in a fever do not quench by drinking, but rather augment, so does the soul’s fever excite a thirst for riches, honours, and pleasures which is not extinguished by the possession of them, but increased.
5. Fever arises from cold, and ends in burning heat. So does the soul’s fever often arise from negligence, ease, and torpor. Hence is the cupidity of luxury and pride kindled and inflamed.
6. Fever vitiates the taste, making sweet things and honey itself appear bitter; so the soul’s fever makes divine things—such as spiritual reading—appear insipid.
7. Fever makes a sound, flourishing, and beautiful body appear weak, pallid, ugly; so too does the soul’s fever make the soul weak, unnerved, deformed.
8. Fever agitates a man, will not suffer him to rest; so does the soul’s fever make a man unquiet, so that he cannot fix his mind, but, ever unstable, he falls into lust after lust.
9. As one fever is apt to produce another, so does one vice beget another and yet another. In short, the heretic labours under a pestilential fever; the slothful man under a hectic and slow fever; the glutton under a daily, and the inconstant man under a tertian fever.

Verse 15- *And he touched her hand, &c.* S. Luke adds, *He commanded the fever.* Gr. τῷ πυρετῷ, i.e., *He rebuked the fever.* As Euthymius says, with powerful authority He commanded, and as it were, threatened the fever. Well says B. Peter Chrysologus (*Serm.* 18), “Ye see how the fever let go its hold of her whom Christ held. There stood not infirmity where the Author of salvation was present. There could be no approach of death there where the Lifegiver had entered. *He took her by the hand*, it is said. What need could there be for touching her, when He had the power to command? Christ took hold of this woman’s hand, for life, because Adam from a

4. And Jesus saith to him: See thou tell no man: but go, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.
5. And when he had entered into Capharnaum, there came to him a centurion, beseeching him,
6. And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented.
7. And Jesus saith to him: I will come and heal him.
8. And the centurion, making answer, said: Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.
9. For I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers; and I say to this, Go, and he goeth, and to another Come, and he cometh, and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.
10. And Jesus hearing this, marvelled; and said to them that followed him. Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel.
11. And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven:
12. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
13. And Jesus said to the centurion: Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee. And the servant was healed at the same hour.
14. And when Jesus was come into Peter’s house, he saw his wife’s mother lying, and sick of a fever;
15. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she arose and ministered to them.
16. And when evening was come, they brought to him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word: and all that were sick he healed:
17. That it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet Isaias, saying: He took our infirmities, and bore our diseases.
18. And Jesus seeing great multitudes about him, gave orders to pass over the water.
19. And a certain scribe came and said to him: Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou shalt go.
20. And Jesus saith to him: The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.
21. And another of his disciples said to him: Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.
22. But Jesus said to him: Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead.
23. And when he entered into the boat, his disciples followed him:
24. And behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves, but he was asleep.
25. And they came to him, and awaked him, saying: Lord, save us, we perish.

26. And Jesus saith to them: Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith? Then rising up, he commanded the winds, and the sea, and there came a great calm.
27. But the men wondered, saying: What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey him?
28. And when he was come on the other side of the water, into the country of the Gerasens, there met him two that were possessed with devils, coming out of the sepulchres, exceeding fierce, so that none could pass by that way.
29. And behold they cried out, saying: What have we to do with thee, Jesus Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?
30. And there was, not far from them, a herd of many swine feeding.
31. And the devils besought him, saying: If thou cast us out hence, send us into the herd of swine.
32. And he said to them: Go. But they going out went into the swine, and behold the whole herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea: and they perished in the waters.
33. And they that kept them fled: and coming into the city, told every thing, and concerning them that had been possessed by the devils.
34. And behold the whole city went out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart from their coast.

Ver. 2.—*And, behold, a leper, &c.* This same miracle is related by S. Mark (i. 40), and by Luke (v. 12). From a comparison of these it would seem to follow that the miracle was not performed immediately upon our Lord's descent, at the very foot of the mountain, for Luke says that *it came to pass in one of the cities*. And both Mark and Luke speak of other miracles as previously performed. But S. Matthew's narrative appears to be the most chronological, according to which it may be said that this miracle was the first which Christ wrought after His descent. So S. Jerome, Jansen, and others. As to what S. Luke says, that, *it took place in one of the cities*, we must understand, *near the city*. For by the law lepers were ordered to be kept entirely apart, and were forbidden to enter towns and camps, lest the inhabitants should catch the disease. Some think that the Levitical law only forbade lepers living in towns, but not their passing through them, so that this leper might have been cleansed by Christ as he was passing through this city. This city, as may be gathered from the fifth verse, was Capernaum.

How great, how incurable and contagious, a disease was leprosy is plain from hence, that lepers, both by the ancient law and the usage of all nations, were debarred from consorting with their fellow men. For in lepers there is a contagion which spreads by contact with the whole, whom they are able to infect by the stench of their ulcers and their fetid breath. With them, by the contagion and the infection of the disease, the face is disfigured, the hair falls off, the nostrils are enlarged, the bones are eaten away, and the tongue swells, in short, every kind of disease, and all their symptoms, are found as the accompaniment of leprosy. Physicians teach that it may be considered an elephantine disease, and incurable. How, says Avicenna, can leprosy be cured, since it is an universal cancer, when even a single cancer is beyond the power of medicine? Moreover, hot and stony and salt regions, and such as are exposed to excessive vicissitudes of cold and heat, are peculiarly liable to this disease. Such

in order His miracles, both those which He wrought before His sermon, and those which He wrought afterwards, in confirmation of His doctrine. The true order of the narrative is, then, as follows, as may be learnt by comparing Mark and Luke. After Christ had called Peter and Andrew from their fishing to follow Him, as Matthew relates (iv. 18), He entered into Capernaum. There He preached in the synagogue, and healed the demoniac. From thence He proceeded to Peter's house, and healed his mother-in-law. This miracle, therefore, and the others which follow to the end of chap. ix ought, according to chronological sequence, to be inserted in chap. iv., immediately after ver. 22.

Verse 14 (Continued)- *Into Peter's house*, which belonged to Peter and Andrew, as we find in S. Mark i. 29. This house, was at Bethsaida, the native place of Peter. (See John i. 44.) Bethsaida was close to Capernaum, about half-an-hour's journey. Or it may be that this was Peter's wife's mother's house, and that she lived in Capernaum itself, and that Peter was wont to call in there. For Mark and Luke seem to intimate that this miracle was wrought in Capernaum. The mention of this mother-in-law shows that Peter was called in marriage by Christ, and that he left his wife and a daughter, who in time to come, from her father, Peter, was called Petronilla. None of the Apostles, except Peter, are spoken of in the Gospels as having a wife. Peter's wife was called Perpetua, says Molanus, although others called her Concordia, and others again, Mary. In after time, when she had been converted to Christ, and was being led to martyrdom for her faith in Him, she was strengthened by S. Peter, who said, "O spouse, remember the Lord." This is related by Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* lib. 2). Petronilla, on account of her great beauty, was sought in marriage by a nobleman named Flaccus. She asked for three days to deliberate. The term being expired, she received Holy Communion from the priest Nicomede, after which she gave up her soul to God, and is reckoned among the Virgin Saints. Her name occurs in the Calendar on the last day of May, and her relics are still preserved at Rome, in the Basilica of S. Peter.

Sick of a fever; a great fever, says S. Luke. *Tropologically*, the fever of the soul is the fire of concupiscence, the burning heat of lust, of gluttony, of pride, of envy, &c. Listen to S. Ambrose (lib. 4 in *Luc.* c. 4, ver. 38). "Under the type of Simon's wife's mother, our flesh languishes under the fevers of various spiritual sicknesses, and is tempest-tossed by the varied enticements of immoderate desires. The fever of love, I may say, is no less than of heat. The one inflames the mind, the other the body. Our avarice is a fever, our lust is a fever. Hence the Apostle says 'If they cannot contain let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn.'" He subjoins the example of Theotimus, who, being told by his physicians that if he married he would lose his sight, exclaimed, "Farewell, dear light."

Christ comes as the heavenly physician to quench the heat of this fever of concupiscence within us by the dew of His grace, that grace which must be

With the guests, then, and in the supper-hall, was light, but without was darkness, which is here called the outer darkness—that is, outside the banquet.

The meaning of the passage is: the children of the kingdom, the Jews, destined, for the sake of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to the kingdom of heaven, on account of their unbelief, in refusing to believe in Christ, shall be excluded from the royal and heavenly feast, and shall be driven into the outer darkness of hell.

Verse 13- *Jesus saith unto the centurion, &c.* From this it would appear that Christ had not gone into the centurion's house, nor touched his servant; but in the very place where the centurion met Him, there He healed the sick man, that He might confirm his master in the faith that He was the Messiah—yea, that He might show Himself to be God; for great faith gains great rewards, great confidence gains great things. As much as thou expectest from God, so much shalt thou obtain. Whence S. Bernard (on Ps. *Qui habitat, Serm.* 15), explaining tropologically God's words to Joshua—“Whatsoever place the soles of your feet shall tread upon shall be yours”—says, “Hope in the Lord, all ye congregation of the people; all that your feet tread upon shall be yours; for your foot is your hope.”

Let masters learn from this narrative what great care they ought to bestow upon their servants, and how dear they ought to be to them. So dear was this servant to the centurion, that he employed the aid of the elders and his friends to call Christ to heal him. So too, in turn, ought servants to obey their masters with the greatest zeal, love, and reverence. Wisely saith Seneca, although he was a heathen (*Epist.* 47), “Are they servants? Still they are men. Are they servants? Still they belong to thy family. Are they servants? Yet they are thy fellow-servants, if thou considerest how both are in the power of fortune.” And then he gives examples of servants who had been well treated by their masters, who were prepared to lay down their lives for them, if by so doing they could avert danger from them. Wherefore that common saying is false, “As many servants, so many enemies.” “For,” saith he, “we do not have them as enemies, but we make them enemies, by treating them unkindly.” Wherefore let all masters and superiors act towards their dependents as this centurion acted towards his servant, especially by bringing them to Christ, to be healed of the diseases of their souls, if not of their bodies.

Mystically, the centurion is every one who rules over his members, senses, and faculties, so that they, as it were soldiers, may fight for and serve God.

Verse 14- *And when he was come into Peter's house, &c.* We have here an inverted order of the narrative, for this miracle, and the other works of Christ which Matthew proceeds to relate, as far as the end of chap. ix. took place before the healing of the leper and the centurion's servant, before, indeed, the Sermon on the Mount, as may be gathered from Mark 1. 23 and 29, Luke iv. 32 and 38, and, indeed, from S. Matthew himself. For the Sermon on the Mount was delivered in the hearing of the Twelve Apostles, and therefore of S. Matthew himself. Yet he relates his vocation subsequently to this, in ix. 9. The reason is, that Matthew wished to give, at the commencement of Christ's preaching, a summary of His doctrine, and then to relate

regions were Palestine and a part of Egypt. Wherefore Galen says, “In Alexandria many labour under elephantia (leprosy) as well on account of their way of living as of the heat.”

Worshipped, i.e., falling down upon his knees and face, for S. Mark *γονυπετῶν*, i.e., falling at his knees. The leper did this not with the design of rendering Him civil honour, but that he might give to Christ the highest worship of religion, as is plain from his so humble and believing petition. For he did not request Christ to ask God, as Moses did, but *If Thou art willing, Thou art able to make me clean*. As though he had said, I know that Thou hast the power of God, and therefore dominion over diseases, so that Thou canst control leprosy by the right of a master, and canst, by Thy command alone, drive it from me. I ask Thee, therefore, that thou wouldst deign to do this. For if Thou wilt, the thing is done, and I am healed. So S. Chrysostom says, “To the spiritual physician, he offers spiritual hire—viz., believing prayer, than which nothing of more worth can be offered to God.” Also the *Interlinear Gloss* says, “To will He adds the attribute of power, for as great as His will so great is the power of God. For whatsoever He wills, that He is forthwith able to perform. According to the words of the Psalmist, ‘Whatsoever the Lord willed, that did he in heaven and earth.’” (Ps. cxxxv. 6, Vulg.) This leper therefore had faith in the Divinity of Christ, partly from His inward illumination and inspiration, partly from His miracles, several of which Christ had already performed in this first year of His preaching. For this leper was healed in the second year, as I have said in the *Chronotaxis*, nu. 22. Again, the words, *if Thou wilt*, denote the desire of being healed, mingled with resignation. For he resigns himself to the will of Christ, that if He wishes it, he may be cured; if He be unwilling, he may remain unhealed.

Verse 3- *And Jesus put forth his hand, &c. Touched him*, that He might show that He was above the law, which forbade contact with the leper.

The law forbade this touching of a leper from fear of contagion. But there was no danger of such contagion in Christ's case, but rather the certainty of healing the leper. When, therefore, Christ touched the leper, He did not do so as against the law, but rather as fulfilling the spirit of the law.

2. He touched him out of kindness, that He might show His love for the leper.

3. He touched him, says S. Cyril, that the saving efficacy of the Flesh of Christ might be made manifest. Whence Victor of Antioch, on S. Mark (chap. i.), says, “The Word, willing to show forth Its indivisible union with the Flesh, wrought many miracles and signs through the ministry of the body.” And Bede says, “God stretched forth His hand, and touched human nature by His Incarnation, and brought back to the Temple those who were cast out of the camp of the people of God (the lepers), that they might

offer their bodies a living sacrifice to Himself, to whom it is said, 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.'"

I will, be thou clean. From these words the Fathers prove the Divinity of Christ and His omnipotence. Maldonatus cites them at length. Thus S. Ambrose: "He saith, 'I will,' because of Photinus, He commands on account of Arius, He touches on account of Manichæus." For Photinus taught that Christ was a mere man, and not God, whose attribute is an almighty will, by which, he says, "I will, be thou clean." Arius taught that Christ was inferior to the Father, and, therefore, did not Himself command, but received the Father's commandments. Manichæus taught that Christ had not real flesh, but only in appearance, such as could not in reality either touch or be touched.

And immediately, &c. There was no interval between Christ's command and its fulfillment. He spoke and all things were made, because His will was omnipotent. (Genesis i.) The Arabic translates, *the man was cleansed from his leprosy*: for the words, *the leprosy was cleansed*, are a figure of speech. By this miracle Christ shows that He came into the world as a physician that He might heal all diseases and purge away all filthiness.

Verse 4- *And Jesus saith unto him.* (S. Mark, *threatened*, i.e., commanded him with a severe and stern countenance.) He did this to avoid ostentation, and to teach us not to boast of our virtues and gifts, but rather conceal them.

But go, show thyself to the priest; Mark has to the high priest. "He sends him to the priests," says S. Jerome, "on account of humility, that He may appear to show deference to them, so that they henceforth might either believe and be saved, or else be held without excuse; and, lastly, that He might not be accounted to violate the law.

The gift which was to be offered to the priest by lepers who were cleansed was a lamb, or, if the leper were poor, two turtle doves, or two young pigeons. (Lev. xiv. 13, &c.)

For a testimony unto them, sc. the priests. By the word *Testimony*, some understand the law, as though He had said, "Offer the gift enjoined, that thou mayest fulfill the law which Moses commanded." For in the 119th Psalm the law is often called by the name of *testimony*. That is to say, it is the Divine will, which God testifies that He would have done by us. There is, however, no reason *why testimony* should not be taken in its ordinary acceptation.

This then was the testimony which the leper gave to the priests that he was cleansed from his leprosy, namely, an ocular inspection of his body and his limbs, which was made by them, And if they saw that he was healed, they accepted his gift as a thank-offering to God; but if he were not healed they refused it.

Tropologically, leprosy signifies mortal sin, especially that which is contagious, such as

satisfied" (Vulg.); and Ps. xxxvi. 8, "They shall be inebriated with the richness of thine house, and thou shalt give them to drink from the torrent of thy pleasure" (Vulg.)

Verse 12- *But the children of the kingdom, &c.*, i.e., destined and called to the kingdom as being Israelites, as being the progeny of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to whose seed God had promised both the earthly kingdom of Judah, and the spiritual kingdom of eternal glory in heaven. By a similar Hebrew idiom, they are called children of death, of hell, of the resurrection, to whom death or hell is threatened, or to whom the resurrection has been promised.

Into the outer darkness, of hell. Christ still keeps up the metaphor of a feast in the kingdom of heaven, a feast therefore in which was abundance of light. Observe that most of the ancients did not dine, or at least put very sparingly, after the manner of a lunch, but made supper their chief meal, at which they fed heartily, and were hilarious. And this was the time when they made their feasts, because then they had ease and leisure. For they did this, as Horace says, not to break into the day.

Hence the *triclinia*, where feasts were made, were called supper-rooms. It is plain that this was the custom among the Hebrews from the constant mention in Holy Scripture of *supper* and, *supper chambers*, but rarely of dinner. Examples are the supper of Darius (3 Esdr. iii. 1), of Holofernes (Judith xii. 5), of Herod (Mark vi. 21), &c. In the Old Testament there is no mention of dinner except in Tobit ii. 1, Daniel xiii. 13, and Esther, when the Jews had been carried away to Assyria and Babylon, where they followed the customs of the Gentiles, and ate as those nations did. I except Jeroboam I., king of Israel, who invited the prophet who restored his hand home to dine with him. (1 Kings xiii. 7.) But this king was an idolater, the maker of the golden calves which the Israelites worshipped. So that it is not at all strange that he should affect gluttonous feasts.

Moreover, the first Christians were wont to fast until eventide, as Tertullian shows (lib. 1 *de Jejun.* c. 10). Indeed, as late as the time of S. Thomas Aquinas, who flourished A.D. 1270, it was customary to fast until three o'clock in the afternoon, when Christ expired upon the cross. And he who took food before that hour was considered not to have fasted, according to a decree of the Council of Cabillon. (See D. Thomas 2. 2. *quæst.*, 147, *art.* 7, where, however, Chalcedon has crept in instead of Cabillon.)

Since, then, they did not dine at midday, but supped at night, there was abundance of light at the ancient feasts, as Virgil says:—

"From golden roofs the lamps depend,
And darkness from the guests defend."

appearances sent into His soul by God, at the very moment of His conception, He knew all things. 3. *Experimental*, by which those things which He understood by infused knowledge, He daily saw, heard, and understood experimentally.

I answer therefore, that in Christ wonder did not exist properly and absolutely, as something which flows from the depths of the heart. For wonder arises in us when we see or hear something new. But Christ, by means of infused knowledge, knew all things before they were done. Since therefore He was omniscient, nothing was to Him new, unknown, unexpected, or wonderful. Christ, however, stirred up in Himself, as it were, by experimental knowledge, when He met with anything new or wonderful, a certain, as it were, interior act of wonder, and the outward expression of that wonder, that so He might teach others to marvel at the same. Thus S. Augustine (lib. 1. *de Gen. contra Manichæos*): “Who indeed, save Himself, had wrought in the man that very faith at which He marvelled? But even if another had wrought it, why should He marvel who had foreknowledge? That the Lord wondered signifies that we must wonder, for whom it is needful as yet that we should thus be moved. But all such movements in Christ are signs, not of a perturbed mind, but of one teaching authoritatively.” So also S. Thomas. Very well saith S. Cyprian (*Tract. de Spectaculis*), “Never will he wonder at human works who has known himself to be a child of God. He has been cast down from the height of his nobility, who is able to admire anything after God.”

And he said to them which followed, &c. When Christ says *I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel*, you must understand Him to speak of the ordinary run of people at the time of His preaching, for there was without doubt greater faith in the Blessed Virgin, in Abraham and Moses, and John the Baptist, and others. Or as S. Chrysostom, *I have not found so great faith*, that is, in proportion, for this centurion was a Gentile; those were believing Israelites. The same S. Chrysostom prefers the faith of the centurion to the faith of the Apostles at their first vocation. Hear S. Chrysostom: “Andrew believed, but it was when John said, Behold the Lamb of God. Peter believed, but it was when Andrew had told him the glad tidings of the Gospel. Philip believed, but by reading the Scriptures. And Nathanael first received a sign of Christ’s Divinity, and then offered the profession of his faith.” Hear likewise Origen: “Jairus, a prince of Israel, asking in behalf of his daughter, said not, *Say in a word*, but *Come quickly*. Nicodemus, when he heard of the Sacrament of faith, answered, How can these things be? Martha and Mary said, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died, as though doubting that the power of God is everywhere present.”

Verse 11- *But I say unto you, &c.* Christ here predicts the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews. He alludes to Isaiah xliii. 5, &c., where is predicted the calling of the Gentiles from the four quarters of the earth, their grace and glory. *Shall sit down i.e., shall rest*, says S. Hilary. But the Greek is *ἀνακλιθήσονται*, i.e., shall lie down as on a *triclinium*, or couch. They shall feast as guests at a magnificent entertainment. For to this the kingdom of heaven, and the felicity of Christ and His saints, is often compared, because of their perfect joy, security, and satisfaction. There is an allusion to Ps. xvii. 15, “When thy glory shall appear, I shall be

heresy is in an especial manner, because of its extreme foulness and infectious nature. So S. Augustine (lib. 2, *Quæst. Evan., quæst.* 40); Theodoret, Radulphus, and others, on Levit. xiv. Hence the cleansing of leprosy is the symbol of the sacrament of penance, and of sacramental confession, whereby sins are forgiven. From this type, S. Jerome on the sixteenth chapter of S. Matthew proves the power and efficacy of this sacrament against the heretics, showing how the priests must be cognisant of the various kinds and varieties of sins. S. Chrysostom (lib. 3, *de Sacerdotio*) does the same, teaching that the office of a Christian priest is far more powerful and excellent than was that of a priest of the order of Aaron, because to these latter it was not granted to heal leprosy, but only to declare that it was healed, whilst to the former it is given not merely to declare that sins are forgiven, but really to cleanse and absolve them. And this was the reason why, when Christ came down from the mount, where He had taught the Evangelical Law, He willed that His first miracle should be the cleansing of the leper, chiefly because the various stages of leprosy best represent the foulness and plague of sin, and the cleansing of leprosy the forgiveness of sins. And so Christ in His Passion assumed the appearance of a leper, that He might take upon Himself and heal the leprosy of our souls. Wherefore Isaiah says (liiii. 4), “Surely He Himself hath borne our sicknesses, and carried our griefs; and we esteemed Him as though He were a leper, stricken of God, and humiliated. But He was wounded for our iniquities; He was bruised for our wickednesses.” (Vulg.) See what I have said on leprosy on Lev. xiii. and xiv. This was why Christ appeared to the monk Martyrius in the form of a leper, and suffered Himself to be carried on his shoulders to the gates of his monastery, where He disappeared. Yet did not Martyrius feel His weight, because Christ bore him who carried Him, as S. Gregory says (*Hom. 30 in Evang.*). Christ appeared in the same form of a leper to S. Louis, Bishop of Toulouse, who was a grandson of S. Louis, King of France, as is related in his Life.

Verse 5- *And when he was come into Capernaum, &c.* This was the second miracle by which Christ confirmed His teaching upon the mount, as S. Jerome says. This is the passage from which we gather that the city near to which the leper was healed was Capernaum, as I have already said. Moreover, the leper was a Jew, and the centurion was a Gentile—probably a Roman, a captain of 100 men or more. L. Dexter, in his Chronicle, lately published, says that this centurion was Caius Cornelius, a Spanish centurion, the father of Caius Oppias, also a centurion, who stood beside Christ on the cross, and beheld the signs which were done in heaven, and the sun, and the earth, and the rocks, and was converted to Christ. Both father and son afterwards preached the Gospel in Judæa and Spain.

Came to him. There is an antilogy here; for Luke (vii. 1) relates the same miracle differently. He does not say that the centurion himself came to Christ but sent to Him, first Jews, then his friends, to ask the favour of Him that He would heal His servant. Wherefore in S. Luke we must supply from

S. Matthew, that after his friends, the centurion himself, last of all, came to Christ, either for the sake of doing Him honour, or because of the urgency of the disease, and the imminent peril of death. This is the opinion of S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 26), Theophylact, and Euthymius. Or you may suppose that the centurion is here said to have come to Christ, and besought and answered Him, not personally, but by his friends. This is the opinion of S. Augustine and Bede.

Verse 6- *Heal my servant.* Greek, *boy*: for servants were under subjection, and were bound to render obedience and reverence, like sons. Moreover, this servant was dear and precious to the centurion, as Luke says.

Lieth at home sick of the palsy. That was, says S. Hilary, “like a corpse in a bed, with all his limbs useless—unable to stand, or do anything.” Paralysis, says Celsus, is an unstringing of the nerves. It is a disease in which half the body is dead, without the power of motion or feeling. And so Galen says (*Comment.* lib. 4). It is called *hemiplexia*, i.e., semi-apoplexy, because it affects half the body; for when the whole body is similarly affected, it is called *apoplexy*.

Grievously tormented, and so at the point of death, as S. Luke says. For this was sudden and acute paralysis. There are other slow forms of paralysis, which are without this excessive torture and immediate danger. The torment here spoken of seems to have been convulsion and drawing up of the nerves, which have their origin in the brain. For when they are unnaturally twisted and stretched, they cause intense anguish, as William Ader shows, from Galen (*lib. de Ægrotis et Morbis a Christo sanatis*, c. 2), in which work Ader shows that those sick persons were despaired of, and incurable by natural means, and were therefore reserved by God, for Christ, as the Arch-physician. Such an one was this paralytic. S. Ambrose says the same thing (*Epist.* 75), “The Lord Jesus saved those whom no one else was able to cure.”

There is, in the account of this miracle, a second antilogy. S. Luke says, *When he heard of Jesus he sent unto him the elders of the Jews*, &c. Luke says, *he asked him to come*; whilst Matthew, and indeed Luke himself, relate what seems a contradiction of this in his saying, *Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, but speak the word only*. The explanation is, that the words *asked* and *sent*, so far as they relate to the word *come*, apply to the Jewish ambassadors of -the centurion. They had less faith and humility than the centurion, who only asked through them that Christ would heal his servant; but the Jews added of themselves the request that He would come and heal him by touching him. And so, by means of the elders, he asked Jesus to *come*. For what the ambassador saith, that he who sent the ambassador is reckoned to say. Luke, therefore, after his manner, for the sake of brevity, rolls together what was done and said by the Jews and the centurion, without distinguishing or separating one from the other.

Others give a different explanation, namely, that when the centurion sent the Jews, he sent them to ask Christ to come and heal his servant; but after they had gone, being illuminated by God, and his faith and humility having increased, he repented of what he had done, and desired and asked that Christ, without being present, would

heal, him. But this would be inconsistent with what is said in Luke vii. 7, where the centurion, through the Jews, is reported to have said at the first, *Wherefore also, I thought not myself worthy to come unto thee*. For if he had thought himself worthy that Christ should come unto him, much more would he have thought himself worthy to come unto Christ.

Ver. 8.—*Say in a word only.* Meaning, There is no need that Thou shouldst be present to touch my servant; but though Thou art absent, give the command, and my servant will be immediately healed. The centurion therefore believed that Christ was God who is everywhere present, and commandeth and worketh whatsoever He will, or at least, that Christ was an extraordinary prophet, and most dear to God—in other words, the Messiah promised to the Jews, who, in God’s name in Judæa, ordered all things according to His own will.

Verse 9- *For I also am a man under authority*, &c. If I have authority over a few soldiers, so that they obey my behests, how much more, O Christ, who hast power over all things, canst Thou make diseases obey Thee? Or, if I, who am placed under the authority of my tribune and of Cæsar, can yet give my orders to the soldiers under me, how much more canst Thou, O Christ, who art under the power of none, but art God omnipotent and Lord of all, do whatsoever Thou wilt? so that even if absent Thou shouldst say to the disease, I mean my servant’s palsy, *Go away*, immediately it will depart: if Thou shouldst say, *Come*, straightway it would come. For diseases are, as it were, Thy ministers and satellites, whom Thou at a nod sendest upon the guilty, and whom, when sinners repent and are suppliant, Thou recallest. S. Jerome commends the *faith* of the centurion, who, though he was a Gentile, believed that one who was paralytic could be healed by the Saviour; his humility, in that he deemed himself unworthy that He should come under his roof; his prudence, because he beheld the Divinity lying hid beneath Its corporeal veil, for he knew that not that which was seen, even by unbelievers, could help him, but that which was within, which was unseen.

Verse 10- *When Jesus heard, he marvelled.* Whence Origen says, “Consider how great a thing, and what sort of thing, that was which the Only-Begotten God marvels at. Gold, riches, kingdoms, principalities in His sight are as shadows, or as fading flowers. None of these things therefore in His sight are wonderful, as though they were great or precious. Faith alone is such: this He honours and admires: this He counts acceptable to Himself.”

You will ask, could wonder really exist in Christ? I would lay down that in Christ, according to the common opinion of theologians, besides that Divine knowledge which He had as God, there was a threefold knowledge, as He was man. 1. *Beatific*, by which He beheld the essence of God, and in the enjoyment of which He was blessed. 2. *Infused*, by which, through the