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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 Lapse'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. Lapse'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 12: 32-50

Verse 32- *Shall not be forgiven:* Arab. *Shall not be relaxed*, i.e., shall with difficulty, and seldom be forgiven. For this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is most horrible, inexcusable, and altogether unworthy of pardon, and, considered simply in itself, takes away and excludes all medicine, and means of obtaining forgiveness. For such a blasphemer places himself in diametrical opposition to the Holy Ghost, and drives Him from him, yea blasphemes Him: the Holy Ghost, I say, by whom alone he could be absolved, healed, and sanctified. Similarly, we call an incurable disease one which does not admit of medicine, and rejects every kind of food. Nevertheless a blasphemer does not shut up the hand of God, so that God cannot have mercy upon him, although unworthy; and convert him, as He converted S. Paul, who confesses that he had been a blasphemer against God (1 Tim. i. 13).

And whosoever shall speak a word, &c. Christ declares the same truth in still clearer words. *A word*, anything injurious, reviling, blasphemous, *it shall be forgiven him*, it is

every tie, as though they were father, sister, and brother. For this is what Matthew adds concerning Christ, *And stretching forth His hand, &c.* The Arab. trans., *He pointed with His hand towards His disciples.*

Verse 49- *For whosoever shall do, &c.* Spiritually, as I have already said, not carnally. He speaks of *brother and sister*, because of either sex. The faithful soul is also the mother of Christ, because by teaching, exhorting, and counselling, she brings forth Christ in herself and others. Hear S. Gregory (*Hom. 8 in Evang.*), "We must know that he who is the brother and sister of Christ through believing, is made his mother by preaching. For he, as it were, brings forth the Lord, whom he infuses into the heart of his hearer." He subjoins the example of S. Felicitas, who by the spirit bore to God the seven sons, to whom she had given birth in the flesh, because she strengthened them in persecution, and animated them for martyrdom. These words of Christ were also exemplified in S. Victoria, a virgin martyr under Diocetian. She said to the pro-consol, who asked her, "Wilt thou go with Fortunatianus, thy brother?" who was a heathen; "No, for I am a Christian; and those are my brethren, who keep the commandments of God." Wherefore she was shut up in prison, and perishing by hunger, obtained the martyr's crown.

Verse 50- No commentary on this verse.

marriage. But Joseph never had any other wife except the Blessed Virgin Mary. Peter Damian (*Epist. 11, c. iv. ad Nicol. Rom. Pont.*) says that this is the faith of the Church.

3. Hugh of S. Victor thinks they were descendants of S. Ann, the mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and that S. Ann, besides Joakim the father of the Virgin, had two other husbands, of whom, those who are called the Lord's brethren, were begotten. But S. Hippolytus (*Ap. Niceph. 2, 3*) teaches that S. Ann had only one husband, Joakim. I say, therefore, that these persons were not properly the brethren of Christ, nor the offspring of the Blessed Virgin Mary, nor Joseph, nor S. Ann, but are called brethren, *i.e.*, cousins or relations of Christ, by a mode of expression common in Hebrew. In sooth, they were cousins, or really brothers of S. Joakim, or S. Ann, or rather brother's children, or sister's children of SS. Joakim and Ann, probably children of Cleophas, who was a brother of Joseph, the husband of the blessed Virgin Mary, according to the testimony of Hegeppus (*Eus. H.E. iii. 11*). For Joseph and Cleophas were sons of Jacob, the brother of S. Ann. Hear S. Jerome on the passage, "We, as it is in the book which we have written against Helvidius, say, that the Lord's brethren were not children of Joseph, but cousins of the Saviour, and children of Mary, the maternal aunt of the Lord, who is called the mother of James and Joseph and Jude."

Verse 47- *Stood without.* They sent a messenger into the house, to Christ, to call Him out.

Seeking to speak with Him. Not out of ambition and pride, that they might appear to be relations of so great a Teacher and Prophet, as S. Chrysostom and Theophylact think; but that they might take Him with them, and bring Him to Nazareth. For they said that He was beside Himself (*Mark iii. 21*). "For neither did His brethren believe in Him" (*John vii. 5*). Whether they said this because they really thought He was mad; or feignedly, in order that they might deliver Him out of the hands of the Pharisees. That for some such cause the Blessed Virgin called Christ forth, no pious person would doubt. But if they wished to take Him as a madman, they must have concealed their opinion from the Blessed Virgin Mary, and taken her with them that they might the more easily draw Christ away. For it is certain she knew perfectly that Christ was of sound mind. Wherefore she accompanied these brethren or relations of Christ from the desire of beholding Him.

Verse 48- *But one said to Him, Behold Thy mother, &c.* This person was the messenger whom the brethren of Christ sent to call Him out.

But he said: Who is My mother, &c. Observe, Christ speaks thus, not as denying that He really had a mother, as if Christ were not a true man, but a phantasm born of a phantasm, as Marcion and the Manichees taught; nor yet as though He were ashamed of His mother and poor brethren, but either because this messenger was interrupting Him with too great boldness and importunity, by calling Him away from the preaching which He had begun; or rather, as S. Ambrose says, that He might show that He must be more intent upon the ministry given Him by His Father, than upon His affection for His mother; and that He must prefer spiritual to carnal relationships, where there is neither sex nor rank, but all are most nearly related to Christ, and by

remissible, and is readily forgiven to the penitent. From hence, it is plain against the Novatians, that all persons who have lapsed into heinous sins, should be admitted to penance.

But whosoever shall speak against the Holy Ghost, &c. Syriac, whosoever shall revile the Holy Ghost.

Here, first, Origen is condemned, who extended repentance, pardon, and salvation, to all sinners, after this life. For he said, after the great year of Plato, all things would be restored afresh, and that Judas would be saved; and Lucifer, together with the devils and the damned, would be brought back to heaven.

2. S. Aug. (*21 Civit. 24*), S. Greg. (*4 dialog. 39*), Isidore, Bede, S. Bern., and others, quoted by Bellarmine (*Lib. 2. de Purgat. sec. 4*), prove from this passage, that there is a Purgatory after this life. For it would be unmeaning to say, *shall not be forgiven nor in the world to come*, if there were no remission of sins in the world to come. Thus a person would speak vainly who said, I will never marry a wife, neither in this world, nor in the world to come, since no wife can be married in the world to come. Mark adds, and gives greater force to the saying: *but shall be guilty of eternal damnation*. Moreover mortal sins are expiated in Purgatory, so far only as pertains to their punishment, but venial sins as regards both fault and punishment.

Verse 33- *Either make the tree good, &c.* This is Christ's fifth argument, and as S. Jerome says, forms a dilemma, from which it is impossible to escape.

1. And plainly, this tree is Christ. *Make, i.e., appoint, assert.* Either approve and praise Me, together with My works, which seem to you to be laudable; or condemn Me, with My works as a bad tree. He means, you, O ye Pharisees, praise My works, and yet condemn Me the author of them. But if ye praise the works, ye ought likewise to praise their author. Or if ye condemn the author, ye ought also to condemn the works. Otherwise ye flatly contradict your own selves. 2. S. Jerome by *tree* understands the *devil*, to whom the Scribes attributed the works and miracles of Christ. As thus, "If ye praise My works, then ye ought also to praise the devil to whom ye ascribe them; which is most absurd." 3. S. Aug. (*Serm. 12. de Verb. Dom.*), by *tree* understands the *Pharisees* themselves. If ye wish to be, and to be accounted good, do good works, namely, praise good men and good things. For if ye do evil, as in truth ye do, when ye condemn Me and My Divine works, ye must needs confess yourselves to be bad and wicked calumniators, for a calumniator is known by his calumnies, as a tree is known by its fruit. From hence S. Aug. gathers the moral argument. "First," he says, "a man must be changed, that his works may be changed. For if a man remained in that which is bad, he cannot have good works: if he remain in that which is good, he cannot have bad works."

Verse 34- *O generation of vipers, &c.* Christ here calls the Pharisees *vipers*,

for this special reason, that they, like vipers, uttered viperous words and calumnies, by which they endeavoured to defame Christ and cut Him off. For they had a viper's heart, that is a heart full of the poison of envy, pride, hatred and malice against Christ, from which they belched forth those viperous and deadly calumnies.

Out of the abundance of the heart, &c., i.e., from that which abounds in the heart, which the heart often thinks about and loves, that, the mouth speaketh. If the heart, *i.e.*, the mind and the will, abound in goodness and charity, a man speaks good and loving things; if in the gall of malice and envy, he speaks words of gall and envy and bitterness; as ye do against Me, O ye Pharisees. Whence S. Chrysostom says, "if the words spoken by them are so evil, how great malice, think ye, do they have in their hearts, where God is the only witness? Wherefore, when thou hearest a man speaking evil, much greater may you consider is the wickedness which his words demonstrate. For what is spoken outwardly is but the super-effluence of that which is within, with which he has vehemently attacked you. For if what is spoken by them is so evil, how great is the root of thought which imagines the words? Do you wish then to know what any one has in his heart, consider what he says; what he has most frequently on his lips, for in that his heart abounds."

Verse 35- *A good man, &c.* He explains the abundance of the heart by a *treasure*, that is, a heap and accumulation. A good man, therefore, from the good heap of good thoughts and affections which he accumulates in his mind, brings forth good words and works. But an evil man, from the evil treasure and heap of evil affections, brings forth evil words and works. Hear S. Chrysostom, "He shows, either that the Jews themselves, blaspheming God, make manifest from what treasure house they draw their blasphemy; or else, the sentence is connected with what went before, that as a good man cannot bring forth evil things, nor an evil man good things; so neither can Christ do bad works, nor the devil good works."

Verse 36- *But I say unto you, for every idle word . . . give an account* (Arab. *an answer*). *Give an account, i.e.*, to Christ the judge. Christ shall require of them an account of idle words; and if they are not able to render it, He will punish them. There is here a catachresis, as appears from the following verse. So SS. Hilary, Chrysostom, Jerome, and others. It is a Hebrew construction. For the Hebrews put the relative, with its antecedent, in the nominative case. The meaning then is, as S. Jerome says, "If he who speaks an idle word, which by no means edifies the hearers, is not without peril to him who speaks it, and if in the day of judgment every one shall give an account of his words; how much more shall ye, who blaspheme the works of the Holy Ghost, and say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub, give an account of your calumny? Again, like idle words, so too every idle thought, wish, and action, is at least a venial sin."

You will ask, what is meant by *an idle word*? The Gr. is *ἄργον*, as if *ἄεργον*, that is *inert, without art and work, lacking fruit and utility*. First, Theophylact and Euthymius translate *idle, calumnious*. With them S. Chrysostom agrees, who says, "It is an idle word because it is false." He adds, "Some say, because it is vain, such as gives rise to inordinate laughter: or shameful or immodest."

Again, the devils are driven by God and His Saints into desert places, that they may not injure men. Thus Raphael bound Asmodeus in the deserts of Upper Egypt. (*Tobit* 8.) So also Isaiah says, (Isaiah xiii. and xxxiv.) that Babylon should be wasted and rendered a desert; and that *hairy creatures, Satyrs and Onocentauri, i.e.* demons in the shape of goats and monsters should dwell there. But the devil does not find rest in such places, for, as Abul. says, "The devil cannot rest, because he shall be tormented eternally, but he seeks the rest of his own evil will: for he is envious, and loves to injure men: and when he is able to injure them he rests after a fashion." He acts thus, partly from envy, because he grudges man the happiness of heaven, from which he himself has fallen; partly from hatred of God: and because he cannot injure God himself, he would injure man who is God's creature and image, that he may thus, as far as he can, do an injury to God.

Mystically, dry places are the souls of the Gentiles, in which, by the grace of Christ, the moisture of concupiscence is dried up. Hear S. Jerome, "The unclean spirit went forth from the Jews, when they received the law, and being driven from them, walked in the wilderness of the Gentiles. But when the Gentiles had believed in the Lord-finding no place among them, the devil said, I will go back to the Jews."

Verse 45- *And the last state of that man, &c.* This is the end and scope of the parable. Christ shows that relapsing into sin is worse than falling into it at first; even as a relapse into a disease of the body is worse than the original disease. S. Augustine says (*Epist.* 137), "I confess un-feignedly, before the Lord our God, who is the witness of my soul, from the time when I began to serve God, that I have not found any who have made greater progress in religion than those in monasteries. So too, in like manner, I have never found worse men than those who have fallen, being monks. And this is why I believe it has been written in the Apocalypse (*ch.* xxii.) 'He that is just, let him become more just; and he that is filthy, let him become more filthy.'" Thus Lucifer, who was the most fair of all the angels, became the worst of the devils. So too Judas, from an Apostle, became an Apostate, and the betrayer of Christ. So also Nestorius, Eutyches, Pelagius, Arius, and in our time Luther, Calvin, and the rest, their companions, from monks and priests, became apostates and heresiarchs. As it is commonly said, "the best wine makes the sourest vinegar."

Verse 46- *While He was yet speaking to the multitude, behold His mother, &c.* You will ask, who were those who, in the Gospels, are called the brethren of Christ? The impure heresiarch, Helvidius, answered that they were children of the blessed Virgin who were born after Christ. For he denied Her perpetual virginity. But S. Jerome sharply and learnedly refutes him, in the work which he wrote against him.

2. The Greeks generally, with Euseb. (*H.E.* ii. 1), and of the Latins, SS. Hilary and Ambrose, think that they were children of Joseph, by a former

wisdom, and undertook a most difficult journey from the remotest parts of the earth to Jerusalem, that she might make trial of his wisdom. This wisdom she wondered at above measure, and received Solomon's counsel, although he only discoursed concerning earthly things. But the Jews, the scholars of the Divine Law, would not receive Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the only teacher of the mysteries of eternal salvation, which had been hid from ages and generations, when He offered Himself to them, and asked and invited them to come to Him. Yea, they altogether rejected Him, although He gave them the most wonderful sign of the Resurrection. How much, therefore, did the Queen of Sheba excel the Jews! and with what justice and with what power, will she, in the Day of Judgment, rebuke them to their face for their obstinate ingratitude, unbelief, and disobedience to Christ!" The same reasoning will apply to the Ninevites. Therefore let priests, religious and others, who are abundantly supplied with God's grace, take heed that they use it rightly and diligently; for otherwise, the more they have received, the more severely will they be punished. Yea, in the Day of Judgment, laymen will triumph over them, even as Heathens and Turks will upbraid bad Christians, because if they had had their graces, they would have lived far more holily and religiously.

Verse 43- *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, &c.* Observe, Christ still continues to treat of the subject of demoniacal possession: for the possessed, whom He healed, were corporeally possessed by a demon, but the Scribes and the Jews, who reviled Christ's miracles, were spiritually possessed. Christ here speaks parabolically, after the manner of the Syrians. The meaning is: As a man who is an exile wanders through arid and desert places, so the devil when driven by the law of God from man, that is to say, from you, O ye Jews, who were the people of God, amongst whom God dwelt, and manifested Himself by prophecies and miracles, wanders through desert places, and seeks rest. But when he cannot find it save in man, and when he sees that ye despise God's grace, which I offer you, then he eagerly returns to you as to a house that is empty and swept, as to a place prepared and adorned for him. Then he takes seven, *i.e.*, many other companions, more wicked than himself, and they joyfully inhabit that house, *i.e.*, your souls; and that they may not be again expelled, and that they may make you more wicked, with that object in view they cause you to blaspheme Me, My doctrine, and My miracles, and to say that I cast out devils by Beelzebub, and that ye may at length crucify Me, which is of all wickedness the chief and the greatest. Wherefore God will punish you with utter destruction by Titus, and will cause you to be without God, without Messiah, without law, or temple, or sacrifice, and without faith—yea, that ye shall think your own perfidy and blindness to be the true faith and the true light.

Moreover, *the house*, that is the soul, is empty, because it is without God, and devoid of His grace. It is *swept with besoms* (*Vulg.*) because all virtue, piety and goodness have been driven out of it, and the poison of impurity has been scattered in it, and the tapestry of pride hung about it. For such adornment as this is the adornment of uncleanness, and is pleasing to the devil who delights in nothing but what is impure and filthy.

2. And genuinely, an *idle word* is one that is vain, frivolous, ludicrous, which brings good neither to the speaker, nor to the hearer, even though it be injurious to no one, nor, in itself, reprehensible. Thus S. Jerome, "an idle word is what is spoken without profit either to the speaker, or the hearer, if omitting to speak of serious things we speak of what are frivolous and old wives' fables. But a man who utters what is scurrilous, or anything immodest, will be accounted guilty, not of idle, but of wicked words." S. Greg. (*Hom. 6. in Evang. sub finem*), says: "An *idle word* is one which is devoid of right usefulness, or the reason of just necessity. Turn ye therefore your idle words into endeavours after edification. Consider how swiftly the time of this life passes away; how swiftly the strict judge shall come." S. Bern. says, in his sermon of the threefold keeping of the hand, the tongue and the heart: "An *idle word* is one of which we can give no reasonable account, one which is without reason. Let none of us, brethren, think lightly of the time we spend in idle words. For now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. The word flies, and cannot be recalled. Time flies, and cannot be recovered; nor does foolish man consider what he loses. Let us chat, they say, to pass away the time. O meanwhile the hour, the time is passing away, which the mercy of thy Maker is giving thee to repent, to obtain pardon, to acquire grace, to gain eternal glory; the time is passing, in which you ought to propitiate the Divine mercy, to hasten to the society of the angels, to sigh for thy lost inheritance, to breathe after the promised felicity, to stir up thy weak will, to weep for the sins thou hast committed." An *idle word* then, according to S. Bern., is one spoken without reasonable cause. Such therefore is not one which is spoken pleasantly, to console the afflicted, or to exhilarate those who are sick and sad. Neither is it one which teaches human wisdom, as when the words and deeds of others are related, with this end, that, from them, we may learn to act and speak prudently. S. Basil goes further, and says that for a word not to be idle, a pious intention is required. But he is speaking to Religious, whose profession calls them to deal with and speak of holy things. He says: "An *idle word* is one which is not for edification in the Lord; for such grieves the Holy Ghost." For like as it is the part of a human being to act and speak according to the rule of right reason, and of a Christian according to the law of Christ, so it is the part of a Religious to speak according to the dictates of religion and piety. Whence S. Bern. says: "Thou hast consecrated thy mouth to the Gospel; it is no longer lawful for thee to open it for jests."

3. Then a pious intention is not required absolutely, that a word should not be idle. It is sufficient that it should, in some manner, be conducive to use, and human prudence. For thus the sailor speaks of the winds, the ploughman tells of oxen. Were it otherwise, nearly every word of artificers, of merchants, and men of the world would be idle.

4. Gabriel Vasquez (1. 2. *disp.* 52. *in fine.*) teaches that an *idle word* is not one uttered with this end only in view, that a man should give counsel with

respect to any infirmity or want of nature: As for example, if one should say, when he is cold, I am frozen; I desire the fire, that I may drive away the cold.

This idleness of thoughts, words, and works is, as it were, a wastefulness of time and human actions, which, other things being equal, is worse than waste of riches and fortune. For a small portion of time has been given us by God, in which to provide for a blessed eternity: and every moment of it we may, by thinking, speaking, and acting well, be acquiring for ourselves the greatest degrees and treasures of glory and blessedness, all which treasures are wasted by this idleness of words and works, as S. Bern. has rightly remarked. Everyone is bound to do and say all things in such manner as that they may be fitly referred to God, that is to say, that they should be adapted to please and obey Him, according to those words of the Apostle, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. x. 31.) Otherwise they are idle, *i.e.*, useless for the final end of man. But for this it is required that they should be directed by right reason, and should be honest. For everything that is honest, and nothing but what is honest is pleasing to God.

God has given us a mouth, that we should pray to Him and praise Him; and that we should speak what is useful and salutary to ourselves, or to our neighbours. But he who speaks what is idle and unprofitable, abuses his mouth, contrary to the mind and appointment of God. "For neither," as S. Ambrose says (in Ps. cxix. Serm. 22) "is it of small peril to speak of worldly and idle things, when we have such wonderful works of God to speak about. Let the righteous man be resolved to say with holy David, My tongue shall speak of Thy word, for all Thy commandments are equity (Vulg.); and thus let him shut out all idle words."

From what has been said, it is plain that many idle things are done and said by most men, of which they will have to render an account to God. Wherefore, that they may provide a remedy against this evil, let them accustom themselves to do and say nothing without premeditation. In the second place, let them learn to speak sparingly, and only about good and useful things. 3. Let them for some days collect their mind and thoughts, and consider seriously the actions, reasons, objects, and intentions of their life; that if they be depraved or idle, they may correct them, and aim at some definite end for their whole life and all their actions, that in all they may seek God's glory and their own salvation and perfection. Moreover, let them each morning daily conceive this intention, and offer it to God, and frequently renew it through the day; that thus they may gain a habit of referring all their words and actions to this end. By this means they will at length always have this end (virtually) in sight, even though they may not actually think about it. For a good intention changes our words and actions, so that from being indifferent or idle they become honest, holy, and are rewarded with heavenly glory. Cassian tells of the Abbot Machetes, who, when idle things were being related, fell asleep; but, when spiritual things were spoken of, was always wakeful. He used to say that the devil was the author of idle words, and that he had found it out by the following proof: When he was discoursing about spiritual things, almost every one fell asleep; by-and-bye if he related some idle tale, he saw them all wake up. This caused him to groan, saying, Who is the author of

forty years and Jerusalem shall be destroyed by Titus." Euseb. of Emessa (*Hom. 2. de Pasch.*), and S. Aug. (*Epist. 49. 6*), have collected further analogies between Jonah and Christ.

Verse 42- *The Queen of the South shall rise, &c. Aegypt. The Southern Queen.* Persian, *Queen of Thema* (Theman with the Hebrews and Orientals signifies the south). Ethiopic, *Queen Aseb*. The name, therefore, of this queen appears to have been *Aseb*, and to have been taken from the name of her kingdom, *Saba, Sabæa*. This is the opinion of some. But I maintain that *Aseb* is Ethiopic for the south, as Ethiopians at Rome have assured me. This is the Queen of Sheba, which is south of Judea (1 *Kin. x.*). Sheba, or Saba, is a country, and has two meanings. One Sheba was in the neighboring Arabia; the other in remote Ethiopia, the capital of which was afterwards called by Cambyses Meroë, after the name of his sister. This queen is thought by many to have come from the Ethiopian, rather than the Arabian Sheba: because the Ethiopian Sheba was furthest off, and because Josephus calls her Queen of Ethiopia and Egypt. Wherefore afterwards the knowledge of scripture, and of the true God of the Hebrews, remained among the Ethiopians. From among them there came to Jerusalem, to worship God, a eunuch of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians. (*Acts viii.*) Pliny (*Lib. 6, c. 29*) says, that queens reigned over the Ethiopians, and bore the general name of Candace. Indeed, the Emperor of the Ethiopians, or Abyssinians calls himself *the Son of Solomon*. For the Ethiopian tradition is that their queen was married to Solomon, by whom she had a son, from whom the Abyssinian kings, who are now called *Prete-Tannes*, are descended. Pineda, however, refutes this tradition. The Abyssinians add that this queen Aseb reigned in Tigris, which is the largest province of Abyssinia, and that her son was called *Menile, or like*, because he was very like his father Solomon. Thus Euthymius, Jansen, Maldonatus, Toletus, Barrad, and others, think this queen came from Ethiopia; but others, with more probability think she came from Saba, which is in Arabia Felix, where are the *Homeritæ*, in whose country spices and gold as well as camels are abundant. Again, she is said *to have come from the uttermost parts of the earth*; for Arabia Sabæa is distant from Jerusalem 606 leagues. It is, moreover, the furthest land in the direction of the *Mare Indicum*, or Arabian Gulf, for there the land ends, and the sea begins. Hence it is often called in scripture, a land very far off, as Jer. vi. Isaiah xliii. and elsewhere. Whence Nicephorus (*l. 8, c. 35*) says, Arabia Felix is Sabæa, and its boundaries extend to the ocean. Thus SS. Jerome, Cyril, Theodorus, Salmeron and others, whom Pineda quotes and follows.

To hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold a greater than Solomon is here. Christ speaks of Himself in the third person out of modesty. This comparison between the Jews and the Queen of Sheba has much emphasis, which is well brought out by Franc. Lucas. "The woman," he says, "was a Gentile, not brought up in God's discipline, but immersed in the business of a great empire; yet she was attracted by the fame of Solomon's

yet *three nights* are expressly mentioned. Others therefore answer more fully and plainly; that these three days and nights are reckoned according to the Roman computation. For the Romans were at that time, masters of Judea, and had introduced their own methods of computing time in civil affairs. The Romans reckoned from midnight to midnight, as Christians do in their fasts and festivals. (See *Macrob. L. 1. Saturni c. Gell. L. 3. c. 2. Pliny. L. 2. c. 77. and others*). According to this reckoning it is clear Christ remained in the tomb during a part of three days and three nights. He was buried on Friday before sunset; and was in the tomb until the midnight of that day. After that He was in the tomb during the entire day and night of the Sabbath; and from the midnight of Sunday for about six hours until that dawning of the Lord's Day on which He arose. For the Passover was at that time about the equinox, when the days and nights are equal, each being about twelve hours long. But the Soul of Christ, immediately when He expired upon the Cross at the ninth hour, *i.e.*, at three o'clock in the afternoon, descended into Limbus, and there remained with the Fathers until the dawn of Easter Day. Now that the Jews made use of the Roman method of computing time may be learnt as well from other things, as because they borrowed the four watches of the night from the practice in use among the Roman armies. (See *Matt. xiv. 25 and elsewhere.*) Different nations had different methods of reckoning the beginning of the day. The Persians and Babylonians reckoned from sunrise to sunrise. The Athenians and Italians, from sunset to sunset. Astronomers from midday to midday. But the Egyptians and Roman priests reckoned from midnight to midnight: and this method has continued in the Roman Church. The Hebrews then in the time of Christ followed the method of the Romans, to whom they were subject. Franc. Lucas teaches that the Jews did not compute their Festivals from midnight as Christians do. The explanation given above is that of S. Anselm, *in Loco*. Isidore of Pelusium (*L. 1. Epist 114 and 212*), D. Thom., (*3. p. q. 46. art. 9*), Suarez (*3. p. q. 53. disp. 46. sect. 3. in fine.*), and Baronius. (*A. C. 34.*)

Verse 41- *The men of Nineveh shall rise up*, &c. That is to say the Ninevites, who, with their king Sardanapalus, had thrown themselves into wickedness, and given themselves up entirely to the lusts of the flesh, when they heard Jonah thundering against them, and threatening them with destruction, believed him, and did penance. They therefore, in the day of judgment, shall accuse and condemn the Scribes and the Jews who would not believe Christ, their God and Lord, working so many miracles. They shall condemn them, I say, not so much in word as by their deeds, namely, by the example of their faith and repentance. It does not follow from hence that the Ninevites were saved; for shortly afterwards they returned to their sins like a dog to his vomit. (See what I have said in the Prefaces to Jonah and Nahum.)

And behold a greater than Jonah is here. For Jonah was a prophet and a servant: Christ is Messiah and the Lord. Jonah, remaining alive in the fish, alive came forth: Christ rose again from death and the grave, and restored to life, came forth. Jonah preached unwillingly. Christ of His own accord. Jonah was a foreigner among the Ninevites: Christ was of the same race as the Jews. Jonah threatened the destruction of Nineveh. Christ promised the kingdom of Heaven. Jonah did no miracle: Christ did very many. All the prophets prophesied of Christ: none of Jonah. Jonah cried aloud, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Christ cried by His Apostles, "Yet

this, unless it be he to whom idle things are pleasing, spiritual things displeasing—that is, the devil?

Verse 37- *For by thy words*, &c. Not only of works, but also of words, must we have a great care, since of both account must be given to God. They are both the fruit of the same tree—that is, of the will—whether it be good or bad. Wherefore thy words, no less than thy works, shall justify thee, if they be righteous and holy; or shall condemn thee, if they be depraved and perverse. They shall justify, I say—that is, shall not only declare thee just, but shall also make thee just, or more just, if they proceed from the love of God and true repentance. But they shall condemn, and render thee liable to punishment if they be idle, wanton, quarrelsome, and so on. For those who are condemned by Christ in the Day of Judgment shall be punished, not only on account of mortal, but also of venial sins; yet, according to the gravity and desert of each, more or less severely.

Verse 38- *Then certain of the Scribes—a sign*, &c. S. Luke (xi. 16) adds, *from Heaven*. These were some of those men who brought the false accusation against Christ, that He cast out devils by the help of Beelzebub. This is plain from S. Luke xi. 16. When they had been refuted by Christ, because they did not wish to seem overcome and convicted of falsehood, they pressed Him to confirm what He said by a sign, that is, by some celestial miracle. As thus: Thou sayest that Thou workest miracles by the help of God; if it be so, cause that God may attest that this is true by some sign from Heaven, by which He may signify that Thou art sent by Him, and dost cast out devils by His power. But the many diseases which were healed, the many dead who were raised up by Christ, with this object—that He might show them that He was the Messiah, sent by God the Father—ought to have been sufficient for them. But for the unbelieving and false accusers nothing is sufficient; and if one thing be granted, they ask, as a subterfuge, another and another. The meaning is this: Thy miracles, O Christ, are in the earth and of the earth, but we wish to see celestial miracles in Heaven. For God, Whom Thou assertest to be the Author of these miracles, dwells in Heaven. Cause, therefore, that fire may come down from Heaven, as Elias did; or that the sky may flash with new and marvellous thunders and lightnings, as Samuel did (1 Sam. vii. 10); or that the sun should stand still, as Joshua did. Thus S. Jerome: Tacitly, therefore, they scoff at Christ's miracles done on earth, as though they were tokens of Satanic influence; and they tempt Christ, that they may falsely accuse Him. But although He had shown such a sign in Heaven, they would immediately have sought a subterfuge, and would have required some other sign. For this is the disposition of all curious and cavilling persons, especially infidels and heretics.

Verse 39- *He answered and said—an evil generation—and*, that is, *but*, &c. *generation* (Gr. *γενεά*, *i.e.*, *nation, race*) *adulterous*, *i.e.*, *faithless* and *unbelieving*, because leaving God their husband to whom they had been betrothed by circumcision, they clave to the devil. Hence infidelity

and idolatry are often called *adultery* by Ezekiel (cap. 16) and others. So Theoph. says, "He calls them an adulterous generation, because they forsook God, and clave to the devil." 2 *Adulterous, i.e.*, degenerate from the faith and character of Abraham, Isaac and the rest of the Patriarchs. For they believed in Messiah, but these would not acknowledge Him when He was present, and proving Himself by so many miracles to be Messiah. For Messiah was the husband of the synagogue of the Jews, and is now the Spouse of the Christian Church, as is plain from Eph. v. 32. For thus the Hebrews called spurious, *i.e.*, degenerate children, *bene nechar, i.e., strange children*, or rather, children of a strange, that is to say, an adulterous father.

But no sign, &c. This perverse nation of the Jews asks of me a sign from Heaven, but I will not give it a sign, except a sign from the earth, that is, from the deep. I will not grant to the Jews any other sign than what I formerly promised, when I said, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up;" but He spake of the temple of His body (S. John ii. 19, 21). (He meant the sign of the Resurrection, which is the sign of the prophet Jonah, because it was prefigured by Jonah.) For this Jonah clearly showed, who I am, why I died, why I am crucified, in respect of which they are offended; in truth that I am Messiah, the Tamer of Death and Sin, the Saviour of the World, and the Lord of Heaven and Earth. For the keepers of the sepulchre told the Jews that Christ was risen from the tomb; the Jews themselves saw the empty sepulchre, and the Apostles proved Christ's resurrection by many miracles. Wherefore many Jews at the time, and afterwards all nations, believed in Christ raised from death. For the Jews did not expect a humble and poor Messiah, but one who was rich and glorious. Such they beheld Christ in His Resurrection, Ascension, and Mission of the Holy Ghost. Whence they at that time acknowledged Him, and accepted Him as Messiah, according to what He said in John viii. 28. *When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, on the Cross, then ye shall know that I am He:* for I shall rise gloriously from the cross and death.

But the unbelieving Jews were likewise compelled to acknowledge that Christ was Messiah, for after His Resurrection He sent Titus and Vespasian, who destroyed Jerusalem and Judea, because of His unjust death at the hands of the Jews. Thus S. Chrysostom, for at that time there was a complete destruction of the nation, although it still endures, and shall endure until the end of the world. A righteous and avenging God brought this upon them on account of their crowning wickedness in killing Christ. This destruction is the most evident token that the Jesus whom the Jews put to death was the Messiah. Wherefore Christ brings forward this sign of Jonah, as it were a sign of the condemnation of the Jews by the Ninevites, for the Ninevites believed Jonah and repented, but the Jews would not believe Christ, and were therefore cut off. Maldonatus thinks that Christ gave the Jews who sought a sign from Heaven, a sign from earth, that they might be condemned; for it behooved that they who sought a sign deceitfully should be confounded.

Verse 40- *For as Jonah was, &c., in the heart, i.e., in the lowest part of the earth, within the earth, as the heart is within the human body. When Christ died upon the cross, as His body was placed in the tomb, so did His soul descend into the Limbus Patrum, which is near the centre of the earth.*

You will ask, how Christ was three days and nights in the sepulchre and Limbus: for He was there only on Friday and Saturday nights, and rose at day-break on Sunday? 1. Alcuin (*L. de Divinis Off. sec. de Cæna. Dom.*) gathers from this place that Christ lay in the tomb three whole days and nights, or 72 hours, and consequently rose again at the end of Easter Monday. But this is certainly a mistake. The constant tradition of the church is that Christ rose on the Lord's day.

2. Greg. Nyssen (*Orat. 1 & 2 de Resurrec.*) computes these three days to begin on Thursday. He is of opinion, that when on the evening of that day Christ instituted the Eucharist, He offered Himself to God under the species of bread and wine by means of the unbloody sacrifice. The soul of Christ was separated from the body, but that this was done in a secret and invisible manner, and that then the soul of Christ went down to Hades, and that thus He pre-accomplished His death, which the Jews were visibly to bring about on the following day upon the cross. But this, too, is an error. For there is really in the Eucharist the soul of the Living Christ, that is to say, in His body and blood contained under the species of bread and wine. It is there, I say, not indeed by virtue of the words of consecration, but by natural concomitance. For in the Eucharist there is Living Christ, with His Soul, even as He is outside the Eucharist. Thus the Council of Trent defines (*Sess. 13, sec. 2*). It would have been otherwise if any of the Apostles had consecrated the Eucharist during the *triduum* of the Passion. For then the Body and Blood of Christ would have been in it separated from His Soul, for in this manner they were in Christ Himself now buried. For Christ was then dead, not alive.

I say then, that the expression *three days and three nights* is here only a periphrasis and description of a natural day. The two integral parts of such a day are day and night, or light and darkness. Christ makes use of this periphrasis because Jonah, His antetype, did the same. (Jonah i. 17.) We must not understand that these days are three artificial days as opposed to nights, as if during three days, in which the sun is above the horizon, Christ lay in the tomb; for this was not the case. You must consider these three natural days to be not whole days but parts of days, namely, the latter part of Friday; when Christ being taken down from the Cross, was laid in the sepulchre, the whole of Saturday, and part of the Lord's day. For although the Hebrews reckoned their civil days from one sun-rise to another, like the Chaldeans and the Persians (*Beda de ration. temp.*), yet they computed their sacred days, such as the Passover, from evening to evening. Thus S. Jerome, Theophyl., Euthym., and S. Aug. and commentators, *passim*, explain the meaning of these three days. Hence Christ is constantly spoken of as rising on the third day, or after three days, without any mention of nights.

But in this place, according to this computation, there were but two nights in which Christ lay in the tomb, viz. Friday and Saturday nights, and