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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.

Continuation of Matthew 21: 10-27

Verse 10 - *And when He was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? Who with so great honour, applause, congratulation, as it were the King of Israel, enters into Jerusalem, whilst the Scribes and Pharisees are looking on—yea, the Roman soldiers of Tiberius Caesar, who would not suffer another than Cæsar to be called King of Judæa ? Wherefore Christ, now bearing Himself as a king, would have come into peril of death, had not He, by the power of His Divinity, struck not only all the Jews but the Romans with amazement, and rendered them as it were thunder-struck, so that no one should dare to lay hands upon Him, nay, or even think of such a thing. So Abulensis and others.*

But the people said, This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, of Galilee.

Greek, *ὁ προφήτης*, i.e., *that prophet, par excellence*, who far surpasses and transcends all the prophets in preaching, sanctity, power, and miracles. Therefore He

not; but afterwards he repented and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto Him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.”

Verses 25-27— There is no commentary on these verses.

is Messias, the King of Israel. *Of Nazareth*: for although Jesus was born at Bethlehem, yet He was brought up at Nazareth. Christ by this glory of His gave occasion to His death; for the Scribes, being stirred up by it to envy and hatred of Him, after four days crucified Him. In truth, God—foreknowing all things—ordered all these things, in part positively, in part permissively, that from them He might elicit greater good, namely, the redemption of the world, to be accomplished by the death of Christ. The malice, therefore, of the Scribes fulfilled the counsel and decree of God concerning the death of Christ and the redemption of the world, as S. Peter teaches (Acts ii.)

And Jesus entered into the Temple of God, and cast out all that sold.

Jesus, entering into Jerusalem, did not come to the citadel of Sion as a second David, but to the Temple, that He might show that He was the Son of God the Father, Who was worshipped in the Temple; that He might refer to Him the honour here ascribed by the people to Himself, for He had accepted it for no other end than that He might lead men to God.

Wherefore it is not doubtful that Christ gave thanks in the Temple to God the Father, because He had manifested Him to the whole city as Messiah, yea, had glorified Him by the applause of all the people. Again, the first care of Jesus, as Pontiff and Messiah, was of the Temple. Whence, entering into the city, He came to that the first, that He might teach us to do the same. For this reason He set out His journey through Bethany (where He raised Lazarus) and Bethphage, which were over against the Temple, that through them He might proceed straightway to the Temple. For as I have said (verse 1), Christ—passing over the Mount of Olives from Bethany—proceeded directly from thence, through the Valley of Jehosaphat, to the golden gate, which pertained both to the Temple and to the city, near to which was the golden eagle set up by Herod. Wherefore through this gate there was immediate access to the Temple. See Adrichomius, in his account of Jerusalem, where he graphically describes this journey of Christ, and adds that it was said by some that this golden gate was wont to be shut, but that at the coming of Christ it was opened as by a miracle.

Note, that by the Temple here is understood not the Holy Place, nor the Holy of Holies (for into the latter it was lawful only for the high priest, into the former only for the priests, to enter), but the court of the Temple; for into this the laity were accustomed to enter in order to pray and behold the sacrifices, which were offered in the court of the Priests, before the Holy Place. For this court was, as it were, the people’s Temple. For Christ was not a Levitical priest, forasmuch as He was not sprung from Levi and Aaron. Wherefore He could not enter the Holy Place, nor the court of the Priests, but only the court of the people. Wherefore what Faustus the Manichee invented concerning the genealogy of Christ—as though He were sprung from the tribe of Levi—and His Levitical priesthood (*apud S.*

Augustinum, lib. 23, contra eundem Faustum); also what Theodosius, a prince of the Jews in the time of the Emperor Justinian, said (which Suidas recites under the words, *Jesus Christus*) too rashly believed by Suidas and others; all learned men laugh at as dreams and most fabulous errors. Verily Vilalpando (*tom. 2, lib3, cap. 9*) thinks that this court was the court of the Gentiles. For who can believe that these merchants penetrated the inner courts when they could conveniently sell their goods in the outer courts? Especially because Christ in the same day and place had to do with Gentiles, as is plain from John xii. 20. But the Gentiles were not able to enter the court of the Jews, but that of the Gentiles, which was before the court of the Jews. This court then was Solomon's porch—probably the eastern part of Solomon's porch, in the court of the Gentiles—in which were sold doves, sheep, and lambs for sacrificing in the Temple, whom Christ drove out of it. For the court of the Gentiles was, as it were, the temple of the Gentiles, in which, therefore, it was not seemly to buy and sell.

And He cast out all that sold and bought in the Temple. Not on Palm Sunday itself, but on the next day; for Mark (xi. 11), who exactly and precisely relates these actions of Christ, performed each day from Palm Sunday until the Friday on which He suffered and was crucified, says, *on the day following* the Palm Sunday on which this solemn entry of Christ into the city took place—that is, on the Monday—were these things done by Christ in the Temple. Christ, therefore, on Palm Sunday entered into the city and the Temple in solemn pomp, and prayed in it, and gave thanks to God; afterwards, about eventide He went out of the city to Bethany, with the twelve Apostles; and on the next day (Monday) He returned to the city and Temple, and drove out of it the sellers and buyers, as Mark relates (xi. 11, 12, 15). Wherefore there is here in Matthew a hyperbaton, or inverted historical order. For He wished to join with Christ's entrance into the Temple His ejection of the buyers from the Temple, for the sake of brevity, lest he should be compelled to relate over again the entrance of Christ into the Temple on the following day. Moreover, Christ drove them from the Temple (that is, from the court of the Temple) for two reasons. The first is, because it was not seemly that those things should be sold in the Temple, but in the market-place; for the Temple is the house of prayer, not of merchandise, as Christ says. The second was the avarice and usury of the priests. For they were wont—by their own people, or servants, or factors—to sell at a dear rate sheep, kids, doves, to those who wished to offer them in the Temple; especially to those who came from a distance, and poor people, from whom (on account of delay in payment) they extorted gain by usury. Whence they are called robbers by Christ. Thus S. Chrysostom and others. Lastly, Christ twice cast out buyers from the Temple; the first time, at the beginning of His preaching (John ii. 14), the second, towards the end of it, four days before His death, as is plain from this place. So S. Chrysostom, Augustine, Euthymius, Theophylact, Jansen, Maldonatus, Toletus, and others.

And overthrew the tables of the money-changers (Syriac, bankers), and the seats of them that sold doves. Money-changers—Greek, *κολλη βιστων*: for *collyba*, as S. Jerome says, means what we call sweet-meats, or cheap little presents—for example, of parched peas, grapes, raisins, and apples of various kinds. Therefore, because the

But they thought within themselves, saying:

Greek, *διελογίζοντο*, i.e., they thought and conferred among themselves, deliberating what to answer Christ, being anxious and perplexed.

If we shall say, From Heaven; He will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

Verse 24- *But if we shall say, of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. Wherefore did ye not believe him,* declaring Me to be Messiah, and persuading you to prepare by repentance for My grace and salvation? *We fear the multitude*, understand, *lest they should stone us*, as Luke adds (xx. 5). *As a prophet*: The word, *as*, is the mark of truth, not of likeness. It means, all held John for a true and a great prophet, and therefore sent by God. For a prophet is the ambassador, seer, and interpreter of God. Thus it is said of Christ (John 1.), "We saw His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father," where *as* denotes reality, not similitude. Meaning, "We saw the glory of Him, as verify the Only Begotten Son of God, or, of Him who was the true and Only Begotten of God."

And they answered Jesus and said, We know not. They lie; for they had seen the life of John, as well as his most holy and divine preaching, sealed by his death and martyrdom for the sake of chastity. But dishonesty would rather lie than be convicted of falsehood and convinced of dishonesty.

And He said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. It means, "Ye are not willing to answer My question, wherefore neither will I answer yours, because the solution of yours depends upon Mine. But ye say that ye do not know it, and ye lie. I say that I know, but am unwilling to say; and I speak the truth, that I may confound and put down your insolence." For by this answer Christ stopped the mouth of the Scribes, so that they were as silent as mice, nor did they dare again to open their lips. Whence S. Jerome says: "He showed that they knew, but would not answer, and that He knew, and did not answer, because they kept back what they knew."

How seemeth it to you? Christ, by the following parable, convicted the Scribes and Pharisees—who said that they knew not whether the baptism of John were from heaven or of men—of the utmost dishonesty and obstinacy; because, although they wished to be accounted sons of God, yet refused to receive John who was sent by God, and would not believe His preaching, nor do penance. Moreover, Christ in this place, says S. Chrysostom, brings in guilty the judges themselves, with a great confidence in justice, where the cause is entrusted to the adversary. But He employs a parable, that they may not perceive how they are pronouncing sentence against themselves: "A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will

whole of his preaching concerning Him. There is a *synecdoche*. This is Christ's argument, bearing upon the Scribes with irresistible force. Thus, "Ye ask, from whence I have power—from God or from men? I, in reply, ask you, from whom had John power to preach and baptize—from God or from men? If he had that authority from God, as all allow, then have I the same authority from God. For this was the witness which John gave of Me, teaching that he was the servant, but I the Messiah, the Son of God. And this he did when ye sent messengers to him expressly about this very thing, to ask him if he were the Messiah." (John i. 20, 26, 27.)

From Heaven, come from God. Where observe: The Hebrews by *metonymy*, by which that which holds is put for what is held, call God שמים *Scamaim*, i.e., *Heaven*. The Greek poets, following this usage, called the father of Saturnούρανον, and the Latins, *cælum*. Thus Caninius (*de nomin. Hebræis*, c. 2). Hence the Jews worshipped Heaven and the stars as God. Hence Christians who apostatized from Christianity to Judaism were formerly called *cælicolæ*, against whom there are extant rescripts of the emperors Theodosius and Honorius (*lib. 18, de Judæis et cælicolis*). See Baronius, A.D. 408. Hence also the poet sings of the Jews— "They adore shining clouds and the divinity of Heaven."

For the Heaven by its immensity, beauty, motion, adornment, and influx, carries every one away with admiration of it. "Whence Heaven" (*cælum*), says Sipontius, "is so called because it is, as it were, sculptured with stars and constellations." But Varro (*lib. 4, de linguâ Latinâ*) derives it from κούλος, i.e., *hollow*, because it embraces all created things in its cavity. Hence God is, as it were, the Atlas of Heaven and earth, of whom Virgil says (*lib. 6, Æn.*)—

"Where Heaven-bearing Atlas turns round the Heaven,
Furnished with burning stars upon his shoulders."

Wherefore many nations have worshipped Heaven as a god. As Cicero (*lib. 2, de Divinat.*) says, "I have always said, and I will say, that the race of the gods belongs to Heaven." The same (*in Somnio Scipionis*) says, "And I give thanks to thee, O highest sun, and to you the rest of the heavenly ones." And Pliny (*lib. 7, cap. 33*) says, "Divinity and a certain most noble association of women from Heaven was in the Sibyl." Hear also S. Augustine (*lib. x. de Civit. cap. 1*), "And they call the gods themselves *cælicolæ*, for no other reason than that they inhabit (*colant*) Heaven, not, indeed, worshipping, but inhabiting—as it were, colonists (*coloni*) of Heaven." Lastly, Heaven is the throne of God, and the seat of His majesty and glory, as well as of the holy angels and beatified men.

Learn from hence to be ambitious of Heaven, to sigh after Heaven, to despise the earth and earthly things, and to say with our S. Ignatius, "How mean to me is the earth when I look at Heaven." For he who seeks Heaven, seeks paradise, happiness, a blessed eternity—he desires the God of Heaven. "O Israel, how great is the house of God, and vast the place of His possession!" (Baruch iii. 24. See the passage.)

colly-bistæ who lent money might not receive usury, they took for interest various sorts of things that they exacted by means of these things, which are bought for money, what it was not lawful to take in money; as if Ezekiel had not spoken of this very thing, saying, "Ye shall not take usury or increase." (Ezekiel xxii.)

With more probability Jansen and others are of opinion from Hesychius and Pollux that these collybistæ did not lend money but only exchanged it, so that for gold they gave silver, less for greater, for foreign money, domestic, and that with interest and profit; the collybistæ therefore were the money-brokers, so called from κόλλυβος, i.e., *small change*, which people gave for handling money.

Tropologically, money changers are simoniacal persons, indeed all sinners who profane their soul, which is the temple of God, by lusts and sins, according to the words, Know ye not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost (1Cor. vi. 19), and, "if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy" (1 Cor. iii. 17). So S. Jerome, Origen and *Auctor Imperfecti*.

And the seats in which the men and women who sold doves were wont to sit. For doves were often sold by women, who being weak, and unable to stand long, procure seats for themselves, according to the saying of Martial, "she sits in the women's seats all day long." It is wonderful that no one withstood one poor man, as Christ was, overturning all the gains of the priests in the temple. Whence S. Jerome thinks that this was Christ's greatest Miracle, that He alone could "by the stripes of one scourge cast out so great a multitude, and overturn the tables, and break the seats, and do other things which a vast army could not have done. For something fiery and starlike shot from his eyes, and the majesty of the Godhead shone in His face." Thus far S. Jerome. Christ therefore here showed a great zeal for religion and the temple, and fulfilled the words of the Psalm (lxxix. 9). "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me," as John says (ii. 17).

Mystically. They sell doves who sell the grace of the Holy Ghost, as orders, priesthood, and benefices. For a dove is the symbol of the Holy Ghost. Thus Origen: "And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves. (Isaiah lvi. 7.) Arab. *a cave for robbers*. "For a robber," says S. Jerome, "and he who converts the temple into the appearance of a robber's den is he who makes gain out of religion; and his worship is not so much the worship of God as an occasion of business," because forsooth, such priests, wholly bent on lucre, lurking in a place of honest appearance, the temple, as in a den, by selling at a dear rate, by usury and by other fraudulent arts and methods were wont to despoil foreigners and poor people, yea plunder them, as robbers do. "For a robber," says S. Isidore (*lib. x. etymol. litera L.*), "is an infester of the ways," in Latin *latro* from *latendo*. But *latro* is better derived as if from

latero, he who lies in wait at the side of the way." And Varro (*lib. 6 de lingua Latina*) says, "*latrones* (robbers) are so called from *latere*, because they have a sword at their side." And Sextus Pompeius (*de Verb. signif. litera L.*) says, "the ancients called *latrones* those who fought for hire, ἀπὸ τῆς λατρείας, i.e., hire, but now highwaymen are called *latrones* because they make their attack à *latere*, or because they lurk in secret (*latenter*)."

There is an allusion to Jeremiah vii. 11, where God says, "Is this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord." For these Semi-atheists thought that they hid themselves and their wickedness so that they should not be seen by God, as robbers hide themselves and lurk in caves.

Observe: the Temple is called the House of God, not as though God corporeally dwelt in it as in a house (for this S. Paul denies, Acts xvii. 24), but because the temple is the place appointed for worshipping and praying to God; in which God hears the supplications of those who pray. But the Temple of Christians is called especially the House of God because Christ the Lord corporeally dwells in it in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, says S. Thomas.

Tropologically: the Temple is a house not for talk, nor speculation, nor drinking, nor revelling, but for prayer. Let therefore those who profane it by gossiping, by gaping about them, by acting lasciviously, by drinking, see how they will be scourged by Christ. For as Bede says (*in cap. 2, Joannis*), "Those things might seem to be lawfully sold in the Temple which were bought with the intention of offering them in the same Temple to the Lord; but the Lord Himself being unwilling that any earthly business, not even that which was considered honest, should be transacted in His house, drove away the unjust traffickers, and cast them all out together with the things which they sold. What then, my brethren, what do we think the Lord would do if He found people quarrelling, or listening to fables, or giving way to laughter, or entangled in any other wickedness, when He saw those who were buying in His Temple victims which were to be offered to Himself, and made haste to cast them out?" Especially when these buyers and sellers did not lodge in the Temple itself, strictly speaking, but only in a court of the Temple, indeed in a court common to all nations; and yet they were cast out by Christ from thence: what then will He do to Christians who perpetrate these and worse indignities in His Temple before the Holy Sacrament?

Learn from hence how great reverence is due to the Temple, such indeed as is due to God's House, for Christ calls it *My house*. Wherefore as a master inquires into and punishes an injury done to his house, as though it were done to himself, so also does Christ look upon an indignity done to His Temple as done to Himself, and as such punishes and avenges it. Wherefore appositely does S. Augustine give the monition in his rule, "Let no one do anything in the Oratory, except that for which it was made, from whence also it hath its name." See what has been said on Isaiah lvi. 7, and Levit. ix. at the end of the chapter.

So on account of the infidelity of the Turks who are masters of the Holy Land, the Angels, A.D. 1291, transferred from Galilee and Nazareth the house of the Blessed Virgin (in which she, the angel announcing it, conceived the Son of God), to Dalmatia, and subsequently, A.D. 1294, to Italy (Lauretum), where is the seat and the head of the faith and the faithful; and therefore on account of that faith it works in the same place innumerable miracles, which our Horace Turselli relates in his History of Loretto.

Verse 22- *And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Believing*, i.e., if ye shall believe and be confident that ye shall obtain those things from God, according to James i. 6. "Let him ask in faith, nothing doubting." See what is there said.

Well speaks S. Bernard (Serm. 15 in Psal. *Qui habitat*), expounding *tropologically* the words of God to Joshua, chap. i. "Whatsoever place your foot shall tread upon shall be yours." "Your foot," he says "is your faith, and let it go as far as it will, it shall obtain, if so be that it be fixed wholly upon God, that it be firm, and stumble not." The reason *à priori* is the liberality and munificence of God, which does not suffer itself to be surpassed by our hope, but far surpasses and transcends it.

Verse 23- *And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto Him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority? By what power (Vulg.), Greek, ἐξουσία, i.e., authority; meaning, Who gave Thee right and authority to teach in the temple? to cast out of it the buyers and sellers? and to call the people together to acclaim thee by Hosanna as the Teacher and the Messiah?*

Verse 24- *And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. It is commonly said, He does not put an end to a suit who resolves a suit by a suit. For thus dishonest lawyers, when they have no faith in their cause, get up another cause and lawsuit, so that they may quibble and escape condemnation. So also when the heretics cannot reply to the arguments of Catholics, they bring forward other arguments, so as to find a way of escape from their heresy and ignorance. But Christ does not here act so, but he proposes another question, on the solution of which depended the answer to the question proposed by the Scribes. Thus—"Ye do not believe Me when I say that I have received power from God, believe then John the Baptist who bare witness to Me, that I have been sent by God to do these things."*

The baptism of John, whence was it, from Heaven or of men?

By the baptism of John, Christ means his testimony, doctrine, and the

grow no more; and so it straightway happened that the tree obeyed the saint, in order to teach men the evil of disobedience. So Wadding (*in Annal. Minorum*, A.D. 1222, num. 11).

Verse 20- *And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!* The Vulg. omits *fig tree*, which is found in the Greek and Syriac. This took place on the following day, for Christ on the Monday returning from Bethany to Jerusalem cursed the fig tree: after that He cast out the buyers from the Temple, and taught there: in the evening He returned from the city to Bethany: on the Tuesday morning, as the disciples were returning with Him from Bethany to Jerusalem, they saw the fig tree dried up, and then they cried in wonder, *How immediately is it dried up!* That this is the order in which the events happened is plain from Mark xi. 19, 20.

Symbolically: Christ cursed the fig tree, because a fig was the tree which God forbade, of which Adam ate, and ruined himself and his posterity, as the learned men whom I have cited (Gen. ii. 9) think with probability.

Allegorically: the withered fig tree denotes the Jews, who when Christ came, being unbelieving, lost the sap of faith and grace, and so bring forth no fruits of good works. Thus Origen.

Tropologically: the fig tree, full of leaves but without figs, denotes believers who have the leaves of a profession of the faith but lack the solid fruit of virtues, and so will be cursed by Christ. Thus Origen.

Verse 21- *Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith* (that excellent and efficacious faith, like a grain of mustard seed, of which, chap. xvii. 19) *and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree* (that which ye see has been done by Me, as is plain from the Greek), *but also ye shall say to this mountain, Lift up* (viz. thyself, as follows, in the Greek ἀρῶντι, i.e., as the Syriac, *be lifted up*, be rooted up out of the earth) *and be thou cast* (Gr. βλήθητι, Syr. fall) *into the sea, it shall be done. And shall not hesitate*, Gr. μὴ διακριθῆτε, i.e., *shall not dispute*, as doubting and hesitating; *shall not distinguish whether what ye ask be easy, or hard to be done.* For many, because they think what they ask arduous and difficult, are in doubt whether they shall obtain it from God, and so do not obtain it. But they do not distinguish between easy and difficult, thinking that what is difficult to them is easy to God, and who therefore rely on the Divine Omnipotence, goodness and promise, by which He has promised that we shall obtain from Him all things which we ask of Him with certain faith and confidence; wherefore, I say, they lift up their minds and hopes above their infirmity, and set them upon God, certainly expecting from Him the end and fruit of their prayer; such, I say obtain whatsoever and how much so ever they ask of Him. *This mountain*, Olivet, for Jesus, proceeding by it to Jerusalem, there spake these things. So Abulensis (*quæst.* 134), Franc. Lucas and others. Other things which pertain to this subject I have spoken of, chapter xvii. 19.

Verse 14- *And the blind and the lame came to Him, and He healed them*, that by these miracles He might show Himself to be Messiah, yea God; and so that He had been rightly honoured by the acclamations of the people and the pomp. For Isaiah had foretold (xxxv. 5) that Messiah would work such miracles. And they were worthy both of Christ and the Temple, and Christ substituted them for the covetous traffic in cattle.

Verse 15- *And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the Temple, and saying Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased.* Both because they were envious of this glory of Christ, as because they were displeased at their gains and marketings being cast out of the Temple.

Verse 16- *And said unto Him, hearest Thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?* (Psalm viii. 3.) The Hebrew is מִדַּבְּרֵי טַיִּיִּסְאָדָא oz, i.e., *hast founded strength.* Aquila, *hast laid foundations, power;* Sixtine edition, *Thou hast constituted strength;* Tertulian (*Lib. de anima, cap. 19*), *Thou hast furnished praise;* Syriac, *Thou hast directed praise;* Arabic, *Thou hast prepared praise.* This is, Thou hast proved, confirmed, made Thy power perfectly laudable, when out of the mouth of infants, not having the use of their tongues, and not yet able to give utterance, or to speak, Thou dost express Thy praise and glory. For thou hast caused that on Palm Sunday infants with the people should cry out to Christ, *Hosanna to the Son of David.* S. Hilary, and Auctor Imperfecti, understand by *infants* boys already able to speak and give utterance. With more truth S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact think that these were really infants unable to speak, as it is here expressly said. Whence the Syriac translates, *Out of the mouth of little boys and infants Thou hast directed praise;* and therefore Luke adds (xix. 40) that Christ said, *If these should be silent the stones will cry out.* By this was signified that the infants equally with the boys being moved and acted upon by a Divine instinct and miracle, cried *Hosanna* to Christ, though they did not understand the word, yea although the infants naturally were not yet able to speak it. The reason was that which the Psalmist subjoins (Psalm viii.), “That Thou mayest destroy the enemy and the avenger,” that in truth, through the mouths of infants Thou mayest confound the Scribes and Pharisees, the enemies of Christ, and mayest teach that they are senseless, and more foolish than infants, for these acknowledge, praise, and glorify Jesus as Christ. But those latter words of the psalm Christ did not cite, intentionally, lest He should too greatly exasperate the Scribes. At the same time, Christ here intimates that infants should be early taught, as soon as they begin to speak, to utter pious words—that their first words should be *Hosanna, Jesus, Mary, &c.* Thus S. Jerome writes to Blæsilla, that she should teach her little daughter Paula, the grandchild of her grandmother, S. Paula, as soon as she began to speak, to utter and pronounce *Alleluia.* So our S. Francis Borgia was taught when an infant to utter as his first words, *Jesus, Maria*, as Ribadaneira

testifies in his life. Thus the Trisagion, for example, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, was revealed to a boy caught up into the air at the time of an earthquake at Constantinople, which ceased as soon as the people, instructed by the boy, cried the Trisagion, A.D. 446, in the time of the Emperor Theodosius, as Damascene testifies (*Trad de Trisagis*). For God delights in the praises of boys, for boys (*pueri*) are so called from purity (*puritate*), says Varro, because they are not yet come to years of puberty, and are pure like terrestrial angels.

Arias Montanus (*in Psalm* ii.) observes, that infants in all nations utter the word ,יהיה, which is the Name of God, and an abbreviation of *Jehovah*; and thus God claims for Himself the commencement and foundations of His wonderful Name, firmly uttered by the very mouth of infants. In like manner, Arnobius asserts that there is no man whatsoever who has not entered upon the first day of his life with the idea of God; and that the brutes, the trees, and the stones would cry out, if they were able to speak, that God is the Lord of all things. So Plato (*lib. 10, de Republ.*) and Cicero (*lib. 1, de Natura Deorum*) teach that we share in the knowledge and praise of God with our mother's milk. Lyra distinguishes a threefold order of children praising God. The first are those who praise God by their deaths, not with their mouths; such as the Innocents who were slain by Herod for Christ's sake. The second, such as praise with their mouths rather than by their deaths, like those who sang *Hosanna* to Christ. The third, those who both by their mouths and their deaths praised God. Such were S. Agnes, thirteen years of age; S. Pancras, twelve; SS. Vitus, Celsus, and others. See our Philip Barlaymont (*in Paradiso puerorum, cap. 13 and 14*), where he recounts the praises and oracles of God uttered by the mouths of infants.

Observe: the eighth Psalm seems to be spoken literally of God's magnificence which He shows in the creation of the universe in which He made man the lord of all things. Yet more appropriately and profoundly, according to the letter, it speaks of the magnificence of God which He manifests in the re-creation and redemption of the world, in which He has made Christ the conqueror of death and sin, and the Redeemer of the world, and the Lord of all things; who therefore is the First Man, and the most noble of all men. This is plain—1. Because Christ here so expounds it, as S. Paul does (Heb. ii. 7). 2. Because such great magnificence as the Psalmist there celebrates does not apply so well to the misery of man—who, after his fall into sin, lost his dominion over the brutes—as it does to Christ. 3. Because this passage, "Out of the mouths of infants and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise," applies much more clearly and truly to Christ than to any others. A like passage is Deuteronomy xviii. 18, as I have there said. For as to Maldonatus explaining it of David calling himself (in respect of Goliath, whose head he cut off) an infant, it is certain that he was not literally an infant at that time, but a spirited and warlike youth. Whence Nicephorus (*on Psalm* 8) says: "The Incarnation of the WORD is the magnificence of God."

Verse 17- *And He left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and He lodged there.* Syriac and Arabic, *He passed the night at Bethany.* See here the ingratitude and fickleness of the people: for those who that very morning had cried to Christ *Hosanna*, on the evening of the same day forsake Christ for fear of the Scribes, so

that no one was found to invite Him to hospitality. Therefore Christ was forced to go out of the city to Martha and Magdalene, his hostesses at Bethany.

Verse 18- *Now in the morning as He returned into the city, he hungered.* This, therefore, took place on the day after Palm Sunday, on Monday, the eleventh day of Nisan, the first month; which is, according to our reckoning, the twenty-first of March. For three days afterwards (namely, on Friday in the Paschal season, which fell that year on the twenty-fifth day of March) Christ was crucified and offered up.

He hungered. Not with natural hunger, but with hunger voluntarily excited, say S. Chrysostom and Abulensis (*quæst.* 103). For it was morning, and Christ had supped with Martha the evening previous; so that He would not so soon again be hungry. He stirred up, therefore, this hunger in Himself, that by it He might have occasion to curse the unfruitful fig tree. Wherefore, also, He sought figs upon it, although He knew that the time of figs was not yet, as Mark has (xi. 13). For this was the twenty-first of March, as I have said, at which time there are no figs.

Observe: this hunger of Christ and the withering of the fig tree were before He cast out of the Temple the buyers and sellers. For He did this on this same Monday, but after the withering of the fig tree, as appears from Mark xi. 14, &c., where he assigns the actions of Christ to the several days on which they were done.

Verse 19- *And when He saw a fig tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.* Christ cursed the fig tree, and dried it up, that He might manifest His power, by which He was able in like manner to destroy and wither up the Scribes and the Jews, His enemies, if He wished; and to show that He would shortly suffer the Cross and death at their hands, not against His will, but voluntarily. Note that this curse of Christ was not done *proprie*, but by *catachresis, abusive*. For this malediction only signifies that Christ prayed for evil—*i.e.*, withering for the fig tree—which it is lawful, especially to Christ, for a sufficient reason to pray for, for inanimate things; for to Him belong all the trees and farms of all men. See what has been said (Jeremiah xx. 14, and Job iii. 1). In like manner, S. Francis cursed a juniper tree planted by blessed Juniper, one of his first companions, in punishment of his disobedience. From thenceforward, this tree did not grow a nail's breadth after the day in which it was planted in the ground. This tree is still visited at Carinula, or Calenum, a town of Campania Felix, near Mondragonium, in a monastery of the Friars Minor. For blessed Juniper was busy planting this tree, and being called by S. Francis, he delayed obeying the call until he had finished his work. S. Francis cursed the tree because it had been an occasion and object of disobedience, and bade it