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CHAPTER 4: 1-44

The Gospel of
Luke

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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.

Luke's gospel is a compilation of various interviews with eye-witnesses and close followers of Jesus (Luke 1:1-4). The author, Luke, probably did not become a Christian until several years after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He is first mentioned (implicitly) in Acts 16:10 (Acts is another book of the New Testament which Luke wrote). He did not, therefore, meet Jesus in the flesh and he himself was not an eye-witness.

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.

Luke 4: 1-44

Douay Rheims Version

*Christ's fasting and temptation. He is persecuted in Nazareth.
His miracles in Capharnaum.*

1. And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from the Jordan and was led the by the spirit into the desert,
2. For the space of forty days, and was tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing in those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry.
3. And the devil said to him: If thou be the Son of God, say to this stone that it be made bread.
4. And Jesus answered him: is written that Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word of God.

5. And the devil led him into a high mountain and shewed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.
6. And he said to him: To thee will I give all this power and the glory of them. For to me they are delivered: and to whom I will, I give them.
7. If thou therefore wilt adore before me, all shall be thine.
8. And Jesus answering said to him. It is written: Thou shalt adore the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.
9. And he brought him to Jerusalem and set him on a pinnacle of the temple and said to him: If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself from hence.
10. For it is written that He hath given his angels charge over thee that they keep thee.
11. And that in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest perhaps thou dash thy foot against a stone.
12. And Jesus answering, said to him: It is said: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.
13. And all the temptation being ended, the devil departed from him for a time.
14. And Jesus returned in the power of the spirit, into Galilee: and the fame of him went out through the whole country.
15. And he taught in their synagogues and was magnified by all.
16. And he came to Nazareth, where he was brought up: and he went into the synagogue, according to his custom, on the sabbath day: and he rose up to read.
17. And the book of Isaias the prophet was delivered unto him. And as he unfolded the book, he found the place where it was written:
18. The spirit of the Lord is upon me. Wherefore he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the contrite of heart,
19. To preach deliverance to the captives and sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of reward.
20. And when he had folded the book, he restored it to the minister and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.
21. And he began to say to them: This day is fulfilled this scripture in your ears.
22. And all gave testimony to him. And they wondered at the words of grace that proceeded from his mouth. And they said: Is not this the son of Joseph?
23. And he said to them: Doubtless you will say to me this similitude: Physician, heal thyself. As great things as we have heard done in Capharnaum, do also here in thy own country.
24. And he said: Amen I say to you that no prophet is accepted in his own country.
25. In truth I say to You, there were many widows in the days of Elias in Israel, when heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there was a great famine throughout all the earth.

26. And to none of them was Elias sent, but to Sarepta of Sidon, to a widow woman.

27. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet: and none of them was cleansed but Naaman the Syrian.

28. And all they in the synagogue, hearing these things, were filled with anger.

29. And they rose up and thrust him out of the city: and they brought him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

30. But he passing through the midst of them, went his way.

31. And he went down into Capharnaum, a city of Galilee: and there he taught them on the sabbath days.

32. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his speech was with power.

33. And in the synagogue there was a man who had an unclean devil: and he cried out with a loud voice,

34. Saying: Let us alone. What have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the holy one of God.

35. And Jesus rebuked him, saying: Hold thy peace and go out of him. And when the devil had thrown him into the midst, he went out of him and hurt him not at all.

36. And there came fear upon all; and they talked among themselves, saying: What word is this, for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they go out?

37. And the fame of him was published into every place of the country.

38. And Jesus rising up out of the synagogue, went into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever: and they besought him for her.

39. And standing over her, he commanded the fever: and it left her. And immediately rising, she ministered to them.

40. And when the sun was down, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them to him. But he, laying his hands on every one of them, healed them.

41. And devils went out from many, crying out and saying: Thou art the son of God. And rebuking them he suffered them not to speak; for they knew that he was Christ.

42. And when it was day, going out he went into a desert place: and the multitudes sought him, and came unto him. And they stayed him that should not depart from them.

43. To whom he said: To other cities also I must preach the kingdom of God: for therefore am I sent.

44. And he was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

Ver. 1.—*And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan*, having been there baptized by John a little time before, and having *visibly* received the Holy Spirit, whose fulness He had already obtained *invisibly* in the first instant of His conception.

Ver. 2.—*Tempted of the devil*. In the Greek *πειζαζόμενος*, suffering or sustaining temptation by the devil. See Commentary on Matt. iv. 5.

Ver. 5.—*In a moment of time*. S. Ambrose says, “It is not so much the quickness of the view which is indicated, as the fleeting frailty of power which is expressed. For in a moment they all pass away. And often the honour of the world is gone ere it is come. For what can be lasting in the world when the worlds themselves are not lasting.”

Holy Land,” on the word “the Leap of the Lord:” “The tradition is that Christ fled to a high mountain, which is called from that circumstance ‘the Leap of the Lord,’ and that, at the touch of His garment, the rock flowed, and being melted and loosened like wax, made a kind of hollow for the Lord’s body to be received in and protected, a hollow of a capacity equal to the quantity of the Lord’s body. And in this, even at the present day, the lineaments and folds of the garment on the Lord’s back, and the marks of His feet are preserved, marked out as though by the hand of a sculptor.” This, however, lacks confirmation.

On verse 32 see what I have said on Matthew xiii. 5, viii. 14; on verse 33 see Mark i. 23.

That they might cast him down headlong—from the top of the hill to the bottom, and so kill Him, as one who had defamed his own native place, and inflicted injury and insult upon it; and therefore they brought Him forth outside of the city, as being unworthy of it, that they might cast Him from the top of the mountain, dash Him down upon the rocks, and break His whole body to pieces. This was a grievous piece of violence on the part of the Nazarenes against Christ, their fellow-citizen, and thus, as Euthymius observes, they confirmed in act, what He had spoken in words, namely, that a prophet is not held in honour in his own country, but dishonoured, nay, slain; and that therefore the Nazarenes were unworthy of the preaching and miracles of Christ.

S. Bonaventure, Toletus, and others add, that they took Christ out of the city to the top of the hill that they might slay Him as a blasphemer, because He had made Himself the Messiah. For though, by the law, the blasphemer was to be stoned, still they wished to cast Christ headlong upon the rocks and stones, because this is the same as if they had stoned Him. Whether the stones are cast at the man, or the man hurled headlong upon the stones, is all one; indeed, the latter is more cruel and terrible. So it was that they cast S. Stephen out of Jerusalem as a blasphemer, and stoned him; and S. James, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, was hurled down from a pinnacle of the Temple as a blasphemer, because He taught that Christ was the Messiah.

S. Ambrose points out that these men were worse than the devil, who did but set Christ upon a pinnacle of the Temple, and say to Him, “Cast thyself down,” while these did their best to hurl Him down by force. “The heritage of the disciples,” he says, “is worse than that of the master - he tempts the Lord by word, they attempt His life by their act—he says, ‘Cast thyself down,’ they do Him violence in order to cast Him down.”

Ver. 30.—*But He passing through the midst of them went His way.* Maldonatus thinks that Christ here made Himself invisible, S. Ambrose and Bede that He changed their wills, so that they consented to let Him go. Others hold the better opinion that Christ turned away their imagination or their eyes, or suspended their consciousness and held their hands and feet, so that, like men bereft of their senses, though they saw Him they could not or dared not lay hold of Him. Wherefore Christ here manifested His Godhead. S. Ambrose says, “Behold! the minds of these furious men, being suddenly changed, or stupefied, He goes down through the midst of them.” And he adds the reason, “For when He wills He is taken; when He wills He slips away; when He wills He is slain; because His hour had not yet come,” John vii. 30. For as yet he must preach, and at last be crucified at Jerusalem by the Father’s decree, but not cast down headlong in Nazareth. So Bede, S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and others. Brocardus, in his “Description of the Holy Land,” gives the tradition that Christ glided away from out of the hands of the Jews, and suddenly appeared on the opposite side of the mountain, and that therefore the place is called “the Leap of the Lord.” N. de Lyra adds that the rock on which Christ stood yielded, and received like wax the impress of His feet, just as, when ascending into heaven from Mount Olivet, He left the marks of His feet there. This is what Adrichomius says, in his “Description of the

Ver. 14.—*And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee.* In the Greek *ἐν δυνάμει*, in the power, strength, or force of the Spirit. Under a strong impulse of the Spirit, Jesus returned to Galilee. For the Holy Ghost was moving Him, and powerfully impelling Him to put forth at this time that spiritual power which He had received from the beginning of His conception, but which He had hitherto shut up and hidden within Himself, and to begin in Galilee with immense ardour and zeal, His ministry of preaching, and, confirm it by His admirable holiness of life and His stupendous miracles. Hence Theophylact renders it *ἐνθουσιῶν*, driven and urged on by the enthusiasm and Divine afflatus of the Holy Ghost.

Ver. 16.—*And He came to Nazareth.* Note here that while Christ is said, in v. 14, to have gone into Galilee, He is not said to have entered Nazareth which is situated there, as S. Matthew (ch. iv. 13) has it, but Capernaum, and there to have done the things which S. Matthew relates in chaps. iv. to xiii., all of which S. Luke passes over here, and then He is said to have come to Nazareth. S. Luke wished at the very outset to state the reason why Christ would not teach in Nazareth, namely, that He was despised by His fellow-townsmen as being the son of a carpenter. And though this only happened subsequently, yet Christ foresaw that it would be the case, and therefore turned aside from Nazareth and went to Capernaum, which He made the seat of His ministry, as S. Matthew relates in iv. 13.

And stood up for to read. It was (and still is) the custom among the Jews that each one should read the Hebrew books of Holy Scripture in the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, both that he might learn the law of God from it, and also that he might be stirred up to the worship, love, and service of God. Moreover, it was the part of the Rabbin and the teachers, such as Jesus was, to read the Holy Scripture publicly, to interpret it, to preach, and to teach.

Ver. 17.—*And there was delivered unto Him (by the attendant) the book of the prophet Esaias.* This was done by the counsel and direction of God, that Jesus might show from Isaiah that He was the-Messiah described by that prophet.

And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written (Isa. lxi. i). Christ seems so to have opened the book that, without looking for it, He lighted upon this passage of Isaiah by the will and guidance of God. The Vulgate, “as He unrolled the book,” is better; and Vatablus, “when He had unfolded;” others, “when He had spread out,” for this is the meaning of the Greek *ἀναπτύξαζ*. For the books of the Hebrews were not divided into leaves, but consisted of one long piece of parchment which was rolled round a cylinder from beginning to end, as maps are nowadays. In order to read this parchment it was therefore necessary to unroll it, and spread it out.

Ver. 18.—*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me: because He hath anointed me.* The Holy Spirit, who was in Me from the beginning, descending upon Me here in the baptism which I have now received from John the Baptist, descending visibly in the form of a dove, while the voice of God the Father spoke forth in thunder, “This is My beloved Son; hear ye Him,” has by this sign, as by a visible anointing, publicly declared, authorised, and, as it were, consecrated Me as the Teacher, Prophet, Saviour, and Lawgiver of the world, and especially of the Jews to whom I was promised, and therefore—

He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor, for the rich Scribes and Pharisees despise My lowliness and My poverty. Observe the words “hath anointed me;” for in Hebrew “Messiah,” and in Greek *Χριστός*, mean “anointed.” This anointing of Christ was accomplished *secretly* in the Incarnation—

(1.) By the grace of the hypostatic union, which made Him in the highest degree holy and divine—nay, made Him God.

(2.) By the plenitude of graces which flowed from this union. For other saints are said to be anointed with the grace and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, but Christ was anointed with the Holy Ghost Himself, as though with the very fountain and plenitude of all graces, that the Man Christ might become a superabundant fountain pouring forth its grace into all the apostles, martyrs, virgins, and confessors, so says Basil (*de Spiritu Sancto*, ch. xxvi.). Christ was, as I have said, *publicly* anointed in His baptism, *to heal them that are brokenhearted*—heal and console those who, by reason of their sins, and the burden of the law of Moses, as well as their ignorance of the things of God, are afflicted in spirit, and pant for the knowledge of God, His pardon, His grace, and His salvation, and who, therefore, look for the Messiah. Hence Symmachus and Theodotus render it; so S. Jerome tells us in his Commentary on Isa. lxi., “to bind up the wounds of sinners.”

To preach deliverance to the captives—that I may preach, announce, and bring freedom, through penance and My grace, to those who are held captive by sin and the devil.

And recovering of sight to the blind. The Hebrew and Chaldee versions of Isaiah give “*open to those bound*,” *i.e.*, as Symmachus has it, “*loosening of those bound*.” But the Septuagint, and S. Luke following them, render it in the Greek *ἀνάβλεψιν*, “*looking again*,” that they may see again. For the Hebrews call those that are blind *bound*, or *shut*, like the Latin idiom, “Moses seized in their eyes,” and consequently they call the illumination by which the eyes of the blind are opened “*opening*.” The meaning, therefore, is, Christ shall both restore sight to those who are physically, and illumine those who are spiritually, blind, and are ignorant of God and of the way of salvation. He shall teach them the knowledge of God and the way to save their souls. This was what Isaiah (xlii. 7) clearly foretold that the Messiah should do: “I will give Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind.” And hence it is plain that Isaiah in ch. xlii., is not speaking literally of the deliverance from the Babylonian captivity wrought by Cyrus, as Toletus would have it, but of the deliverance from the captivity of sin and of the devil wrought by Christ; for Cyrus

respect, but the latter despise Him as a carpenter, and their own fellow-townsmen; and so He imparts to the former the spiritual bread of heavenly doctrine and miracles, but leaves the latter in their spiritual want. For Elias was the type and precursor of Christ, and the widow of Sarepta the type and first-fruits of the Gentiles whom Christ preferred before the Jews, His fellow-countrymen. Bede says that “Sidon” in Hebrew signifies “useless hunting;” “Sarepta,” “conflagration” or “neediness”—namely, of bread; that is, the Gentile world given up to the pursuit of worldly things, and suffering from the conflagration of their carnal passions and the want of spiritual bread. Elias is the prophetic word, which, being received, feeds the hearts of them that believe.

Ver. 27.—*And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian,* a foreigner and a Gentile. As Elisha, following his master Elias, did not prophecy to the Jews, his own people, but to foreigners, and did not therefore heal the lepers that were in Judæa, but Naaman the Gentile, by reason of his faith and their incredulity; so I preach and work miracles among these Capernaite strangers, on account of their faith, reverence, and good-will towards Me, but I leave you Nazarenes alone for your infidelity, your irreverence, and your contempt of Me. For Elisha, like Elias, was a type and forerunner of Christ; and Naaman the Gentile, a type of the Gentiles to whom Christ, leaving the Jews, would, by the apostles, transfer His faith, His church, and His grace. So Bede, Titus, Theophylact, Euthymius, Jansenius, Toletus, and others.

Ver. 28.—*And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath*—because they knew that they were touched by these two examples of the widow and Naaman, as being incredulous, and that a slur was cast upon them as being unworthy of the miracles of Jesus; and again because they were indignant that Jesus, their fellow-townsmen and equal, should compare Himself with, and place Himself before, Elias and Elisha, nay, make Himself out the Messiah, from the prophecy of Isaiah; and, lastly, because Christ hinted that He would transfer His gifts from the Jews to the Gentiles. So S. Thomas, Toletus, Francis Lucas, and others.

Ver. 29.—*And rose up and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill, whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong*—“*led him*”—dragged Him, as it seemed to them, by violence, but, in reality, Christ of His own accord allowed Himself to be led and dragged.

brought from the East to the West, where birds of this kind are not common, wondered that he was held in greater esteem and honour than he had been accustomed to in his own country. He occupied an ivory cage plaited with silver wire, and fed on the daintiest viands, such as did not fall to the share of the others, which were only western birds, but inferior to himself neither in beauty nor in the power of imitating the human voice. Then says a turtle-dove, shut up in the same cage with him, "There is nothing wonderful in this, for no one receives in his own country the honour which is his due."

Tropologically, Christ here teaches the faithful, particularly men devoted to the Apostolic calling, that they ought to curb or to divert themselves of all excessive affection for their own country and kinsfolk, that they may be useful to all men—

"The fishes' native country is the boundless sea;
Let the wide earth the brave man's country be."

S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat.* xviii.) says very well, "For great and noble men there is one country—that Jerusalem which is perceived by the mind, not those countries which we see here, now inhabited by one race of men, now by another." And again (*Orat.* xxv.) "These earthly fatherlands, these differences of race, are the scenes, the illusions, of this our short fleeting life. For whatsoever country each one has previously got possession of, whether by injustice or by misfortune, that is called his country, while we are all alike strangers and sojourners, however much we may play upon the meaning of words." Such was S. Basil, of whom S. Gregory of Nyssa, in his life, writes, "Basil the Great was free from the fear of exile, because he held that the only fatherland of men was Paradise, and regarded all the earth as nature's common place of exile."

Vers. 25 and 26.—*But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. Three years and six months*—This does not appear in the Old Testament, but Jesus, as God, knew it, and revealed it to S. James, Ep. v. x7, for as to what is said in 1 Kings xviii. 1, "The word of the Lord came to Elias, in the third year, saying, Go and show thyself to Ahab that I may give rain upon the face of the earth." This third year is not to be taken from the beginning of the drought, but as from the sojourn of Elias in Sarepta.

In all the land—Israel and the neighbouring region, such as Sidon, and Sarepta, where this widow was. The sense is that, as Elias, in the time of the famine, procured food for no Israelite, but only for the widow of Sarepta, a Sidonian, a Gentile, and a foreigner, because, valuing the prophet very highly, and believing him that God would provide for her hunger according to his word, she gave him the little oil and meal which she had, postponing her own and her children's wants to his; so Christ, in like manner, puts the Capernaïtes before the Nazarenes, His own fellow-citizens, because the former hear Him as a Teacher sent from Heaven, honour Him and pay Him

restored sight to no one, but Christ to many. I confess, however, that there is an allusion to Cyrus, he being a type of Christ. To the Hebrews in Babylon who were "bound" he gave "opening and loosening," as the Hebrew version has it, when he freed them from captivity and sent them back into Judæa.

To set at liberty them that are bruised—into liberty and health. The Arabic has "to send thee bound into remission." Pagninus, "that I may send forth the broken by remission." So also Vatablus. These words are not in Isaiah lxi 1. in the Hebrew; they have been added paraphrastically by S. Luke or his interpreter, and seem to form another explanation of "to heal them that are brokenhearted." So Forerius on Isaiah lxi., and Francis Lucas on this passage. Origen omits "to heal them that are brokenhearted," and reads instead, "to send forth the broken into liberty;" and he adds, "What was so broken or shattered as the man who, when sent away by Jesus, was healed?"

For "broken" the Greek has *τετρασμένους*, which Vatablus and others translate "broken."

Ver. 19.—*To preach the acceptable year of the Lord*—the pleasing year—in Hebrew, *מִנְתַּן מְרִצֵּן* *scenat raston*; in the Septuagint *ἐνιαυτὸν εὐδοκίας*, that is, as S. Jerome renders it, "the placable year," or, as others with propriety, "the year of the good pleasure," of divine benevolence and liberality, such as was the year of the jubilee to which he here alludes. For the year of the jubilee was the type and figure of this evangelical year which Christ brought. So the whole time of the preaching of Christ, and thenceforward all the time of Christianity, is a year of jubilee to those who obey Christ and accept His liberty—a year of grace, mercy, peace, remission, liberality, and salvation, in which, after God's long anger against us, we are restored to His grace, His favour, His heirship, His glory, and all the former blessings which we had in Paradise in the state of innocence. This is what S. Paul says in 2 Cor. vi. 2, "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

The Vulgate adds, *and the day of retribution*, of vengeance. The year of the jubilee, that is, the time of Christianity, shall be to the enemies of Christ a time of vengeance, when God shall avenge the human race on its enemies and oppressors, the demons that oppress it; for Christ shall deliver men from the devils, and shall cast them down, according to Isaiah xxxv. 4, "Say unto the timid, Be comforted, and fear not; behold, your God shall bring the vengeance of retribution. God Himself shall come and shall save you." Vulgate. And Christ says, in John xii. 31, "Now is the judgment of the world, now shall the prince of this world be cast forth."

Ver. 20.—*And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him*. "That they might hear," says Euthymius, "how He

interpreted what He had read.” For already the fame of what He had said and done at Capernaum had been noised abroad everywhere, so that many held Him to be the Messiah; and they especially desired to hear this from Christ. For they knew that the passage of Isaiah read by Him was a prophecy of the Messiah, and so they listened with eagerness to Him while He explained it.

Ver. 21.—*And He began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture* (“which has sounded,” says Euthymius, and the Syriac version), *fulfilled in your ears*. This day is fulfilled in your hearing this prophecy of Isaiah, while you hear me preaching to you and to the rest of the poor of Galilee the year of full remission, and I am prepared to do, nay, I have already done in Capernaum, all that Isaiah has here foretold. I am the Messiah of whom Isaiah there prophesies, whom you, in accordance with the predictions of Jacob and Daniel, are already eagerly expecting every moment. For, though Jesus does not clearly say that He is the Messiah, yet He tacitly implies it.

Ver. 22.—*And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph’s son?* “Words of grace,” he calls them (1) gracious, beautiful, suave, and pleasant; (2) full of grace and the Holy Spirit; (3) efficacious to move and persuade; (4) full of wisdom and eloquence, so as to convince those that heard them. For Christ spoke with a tongue that was more than human. “He was teaching them as one having power, and not as the Scribes,” Matt. vii. 29.

Bore Him testimony—that He spoke well, not that He was the Messiah. Hence they call Him “the son of Joseph;” and, a little after, when they were rebuked by Him, they despised Him and wished to cast Him down headlong. So, nowadays, many people praise a preacher so long as he says to them what is pleasing and elegant, but when he attacks their vices they abuse and persecute him. Such is the way of the fickle multitude, who love themselves and their own desires. However, Bede takes this as meaning that they bore witness that He was the Messiah of whom Isaiah had prophesied these things; and he adds:—“How great their blindness, when, only on account of their knowledge of His origin, and because they had seen Him nourished, and that He had developed, through the stages of life among themselves, they set Him at nought whom, by his words and works, they knew to be Christ.”

Ver. 23.—*And He said unto them. ye will surely say unto Me this proverb* (in the Greek *παζαβολήν*—parable, proverb, or adage, in common use), *Physician, heal thyself*—that is, cure Thine own people and Thine own country, which should be as dear to Thee as Thyself; cure Thy fellow Nazarenes as Thou hast cured or art said to have cured the Capernautes. Thus it was that Christ presently explains it, He, by His Divine Spirit, seeing the hidden thoughts of the Nazarenes, and that they were wishing in their hearts for that which He now said. Anticipating their secret thought, He meets and answers it. “It was common among the Jews,” says Titus, “to taunt physicians who had caught any disease with this impudent and ironical saying, Physician, heal thyself.” For the common sense of mankind holds, and reason favours the opinion, that he who cannot cure himself, or neglects to do so, cannot cure others or should not attempt it. In point of fact, however, experience not seldom

shows that the physician who cures others is unable to effect his own cure, but hands himself over to other physicians to be treated, because appetite often blinds the reason, and diseases obscure one’s scientific knowledge. Hence we judge better and more safely about the diseases of others than about our own. Self-love often perverts our judgment, so that Solomon warns us with the words, “Lean not unto thine own understanding,” Prov. iii. 5.

Tropologically, S. Anthony thus expounded the saying “Physician, heal thyself;” He that will cure the faults of others let him first cure his own. For they that will help others before they cure themselves shall relapse into their own faults. Indeed experience teaches us that they who remedy any fault in themselves easily cure it in others.

Whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Thy country. Hence it is, plain that these events took place in Nazareth after Jesus had preached and worked many miracles in the city of Capernaum, as has been said at v. 16, and S. Augustine (*De Consensu*, bk. ii. cap. 42) observes. The Gloss interprets, “We do not believe what a vague rumour has published, seeing that among us, on whom favours of the kind would have been more fittingly conferred, Thou hast done no such work.” Here in Nazareth, Thy fatherland which conceived Thee, nourished Thee, and brought Thee unto manhood, Thou hast brethren, sisters, kinsfolk, and neighbours, some rich, others poor, some sick, others suffering in other respects. Why then dost Thou not miraculously succour these Thine own people, to whom Thou art bound by blood, by love of home, and by natural affection?

Ver. 24.—*And He said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country*. Ye, O Nazarenes, despise Me as your fellow-townsmen, and the son of a carpenter; wherefore you are unworthy that I should confer benefits upon you., Therefore (says the Interlinear), I work not among you, not because I hate my own country, but because you are incredulous. S. Cyril adds that a citizen, being always near to his fellow-citizens, is deprived of the reverence which is his due at the hands of those who know him.

Thirdly, S. Chrysostom says, “Christ had abstained from miracles among the Nazarenes that He might not provoke them to envy.” For, as S. Ambrose says, God is a despiser of the envious; and the Gloss remarks that it is almost natural for fellow-citizens to envy one another; nor do they take account of merit, but call to mind a man’s frail childhood.

Chrysologus (Serm. 48, at the end,) remarks, “To be powerful is, among one’s own people, a biting and a burning; to be eminent among one’s fellow-citizens and neighbours burns up one’s neighbours’ glory; and if neighbours owe honour to a neighbour they count it slavery.” There is an amusing apologue of a parrot, which touches this subject. A parrot,