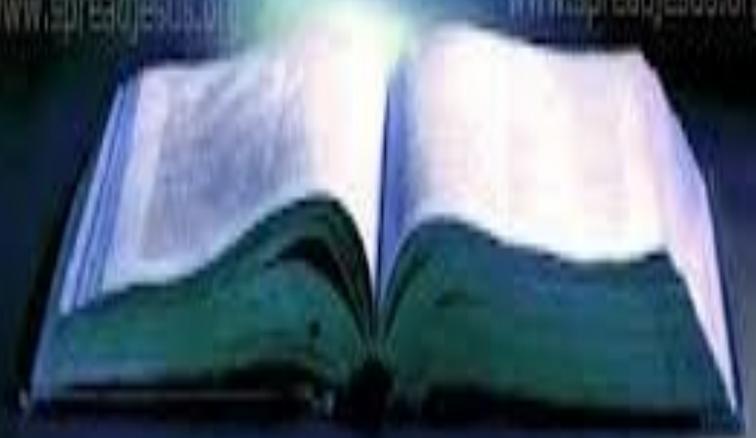


CHAPTER 13: 1-35

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 13: 1-35

Douay Rheims Version

The necessity of penance. The barren fig tree. The cure of the infirm woman. The journey to Jerusalem.

1. And there were present, at that very time, some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.
2. And he answering, said to them: Think you that these Galileans were sinners above all the men of Galilee, because they suffered such things?
3. No, I say to you: but unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish.
4. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower fell in Siloe and slew them: think you that they also were debtors above all the men that dwelt in Jerusalem?
5. No, I say to you: but except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.
6. He spoke also this parable: A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard: and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.

In like manner at Rome, in various places, and especially at the Ursus Pileatus, where is now the Church of S. Bibiana, a great number of Christians were slain by the unbelieving Emperors: so that the place obtained the vulgar name of "The Shambles of the Martyrs." Thus it might then have been said with truth, "It is not possible that a Pope should be killed out of Rome, for almost all the Popes, from S. Peter to Silvester, for 300 years, were put to death by the Emperors at Rome for the faith of Christ."

constant in fearing neither Herod nor the Pharisees, and in His determination to preach, against their will, for a short time still, to the day appointed by the Father. The meaning is: "To-day and to-morrow, and the third day following I must walk in the towns and villages, and preach, and on that third day following, that is soon after, be perfected by death on the cross, as I have already said. I now add that on the third day I shall do the same, for although I shall be perfected on this day, yet on this day also I must walk. All the time of my life, even to my death, I must walk in this country, and preach, and work cures, and cast out devils, because I have consecrated my whole life to holy actions, and my death to generous suffering; for I have offered myself to God as a holocaust." In Hebrew "to walk" is taken for "to work;" S. John viii. 12., xii. 35; PS. i. 1, and elsewhere. The Syriac has, "I must walk today and tomorrow, and on the third day I shall make my journey," *i.e.* I shall set out to Jerusalem to my death, and thence to Heaven from which I came.

Morally, the faithful, and especially the apostolic man, may learn to labour strenuously in the Lord's vineyard even to death and martyrdom, like SS. Peter, Paul, Chrysostom, Athanasius and others. So our own Father Canisius, though worn out by many and great labours, yet ceased not from them until his seventy-seventh year, when he was released at once from them and from his life.

These were his words. "To the soldiers of Christ," their term of service (*stipendia*) is not finished till the end of their lives. When they have ended then they begin: death alone gives them their discharge. There is one abode for those who have merited it, heaven. So our own Sacchinus in Bk. iii. of his life: "Let us labour therefore even to death, that after death we may rest for ever in a blessed felicity; for earth is the course (stadium) of a little labour, heaven is the seat of eternal repose."

For it cannot be that a prophet should perish out of Jerusalem. In the Greek οὐκ ἐνδέχεται; that is, it is not fitting, it does not happen. "It cannot be done" is read by the Syriac. It is a hyperbole. It means, "Such is the wickedness and barbarity of Jerusalem, that it seems proper to her that the prophets should be killed by herself, nay, she will not suffer this to be done by any other, but takes it amiss if it be. I do not fear Herod therefore, whom you cast up to Me, because I shall not be put to death by him now in Galilee, but some months hence in Jerusalem, the murderess of the prophets, where, not by Herod, but by yourselves, O Pharisees, I shall be crucified and slain." "For they were accustomed," says S. Theophylact, "to pour out the blood of the servants, even as they poured out that of the Lord Himself." So Titus, Jansenius, Maldonatus, and F. Lucas. The last named says: "It cannot be that a prophet should be slain outside Jerusalem, he must be slain within it; not because none were slain outside, for Jezebel slew many in Samaria, 1. Kings xviii. 13, xix. 10, but as it was most usual for their slaughter to take place within the walls. For the kings had their abode there, and the rulers, the nobles, the scribes, the wise men, and the Pharisees, holy in their own eyes, who, like the people, would not endure the rebukes and admonitions of the prophets; so that the city was changed from the house of God, into the slaughter-house of the prophets, and professed to be, as it were, their place of torture. We read, 2 Kings xxi. 16, "Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another."

7. And he said to the dresser of the vineyard: Behold, for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and I find none. Cut it down therefore. Why cumbereth it the ground?
8. But he answering, said to him: Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it and dung it.
9. And if happily it bear fruit: but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.
10. And he was teaching in their synagogue on their sabbath.
11. And behold there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years. And she was bowed together: neither could she look upwards at all.
12. Whom when Jesus saw, he called her unto him and said to her: Woman, thou art delivered from thy infirmity.
13. And he laid his hands upon her: and immediately she was made straight and glorified God.
14. And the ruler of the synagogue being angry that Jesus had healed on the sabbath answering, said to the multitude: Six days there are wherein you ought to work. In them therefore come and be healed: and not on the sabbath day.
15. And the Lord answering him, said: Ye hypocrites, doth not every one of you, on the sabbath day, loose his ox or his ass from the manger and lead them to water?
16. And ought not this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?
17. And when he said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the things that were gloriously done by him.
18. He said therefore: To what is the kingdom of God like, and whereunto shall I resemble it?
19. It is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and cast into his garden: and it grew and became a great tree, and the birds of the air lodged in the branches thereof.
20. And again he said: Whereunto shall I esteem the kingdom of God to be like?
21. It is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.
22. And he went through the cities and towns teaching and making his journey to Jerusalem.
23. And a certain man said to him: Lord, are they few that are saved? But he said to them:
24. Strive to enter by the narrow gate: for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter and shall not be able.
25. But when the master of the house shall be gone in and shall shut the door, you shall begin to stand without; and knock at the door, saying: Lord, open to us. And he answering, shall say to you: I know you not, whence you are.
26. Then you shall begin to say: We have eaten and drunk in thy presence: and thou hast taught in our streets.

27. And he shall say to you: I know you not, whence you are. Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

28. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; when you shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God: and you yourselves thrust out.

29. And there shall come from the east and the west and the north and the south: and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

30. And behold, they are last that shall be first: and they are first that shall be last.

31. The same day, there came some of the Pharisees, saying to him: Depart, and get thee hence, for Herod hath a mind to kill thee.

32. And he said to them: Go and tell that fox: Behold, I cast out devils and do cures, to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am consummated.

33. Nevertheless, I must walk to-day and to-morrow and the day following, because it cannot be that a prophet perish, out of Jerusalem.

34. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets; and stonest them that are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered thy children as the bird doth her brood under her wings, and thou wouldest not?

35. Behold your house shall be left to you desolate. And I say to you that you shall not see me till the time come when you shall say: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Ver. 1.—*Whose blood Pilate mingled.* That is, whom while they were sacrificing in Mount Gerizim in Samaria, Pilate slew. He slew them that their blood might be mingled with the blood of their victims. Josephus relates the whole at length (*Antiq.*, book xviii. chap. 7), as also does Hegesippus on the destruction of Jerusalem. Josephus says, “A certain impostor incited the people to assemble on Mount Gerizim, a mountain which they held very sacred, by the promise of shewing them certain vessels which Moses had deposited there and he had dug up. They credulously took arms and occupied the village Tirathaba, awaiting the arrival of others that they might ascend the mountain in force. But Pilate seized it before them, and held it with cavalry and foot soldiers. These attacked the Samaritans in the village, killing some and putting the rest to flight. He also took many prisoners, the chief and most powerful of whom he put to death.”

It may be said, “Josephus asserts them to have been Samaritans; how then does Christ call them Galileans?” The answer is, “They were called Samaritans from their country and nation, but Galileans from their sect and heresy.” So says Baronius. To explain the matter, observe that Judas of Galilee, as St. Luke says, Acts v. 37, was the author of the sect of Galileans who rebelled against Cæsar, saying that it was not lawful for the Jews, who were a faithful people, and worshipped the true God, to be subject to Caesar, a Gentile, and an idolater, and to give him tribute; for they ought to acknowledge and obey no other lord but God. So S. Cyril in the *Catena*, Theophylact, Euthymius, and Titus. Hence Pilate sent a force and destroyed them. This sect arose about the time of Christ. Hence Christ and the Apostles, being Galileans by nation, were accused of the same, and they therefore carefully taught in opposition that tribute ought to be given to kings and to Cæsar, even if Gentiles. Francis Lucas thinks

fox,’ but ‘this fox.’” In fact, to show that the Pharisees resembled foxes by their pretended fraud, He carefully used a middle term, and, as S. Theophylact says, “with intention,” for by saying “fox” in the singular He, made them think that He meant Herod, but by the addition of the demonstrative pronoun “this,” He signified that they themselves were the crafty ones.

Thus Emmanuel Sà: “The word ‘that’ may apply either to Herod or to him who invented the falsehood that Herod wished to kill Christ; and who must have been one of the Pharisees, the enemies of Christ. The meaning then is, You Pharisees, like crafty and deceitful foxes, would fill Me with the fear of Herod, that I may no longer preach among you; but I forewarn you that I fear neither you nor Herod, nor will I, for any reason, cease to preach; for I am sure that my Father will not suffer Me to be taken and put to death before the day appointed by Him shall have arrived.”

Behold, I cast out devils—I proceed to perform my work against the will not only of Herod but of you—to-day and to-morrow, that is, for some time yet, and the third day, that is, in a short time, when I shall have finished my ministry and preaching, I shall be perfected, i.e. “I shall receive my consummation in a glorious death on the cross, undergone by me willingly and courageously for the salvation of men,” as the Apostle says, Hebrews xi.

Observe the Hebraism by which an indefinite time is put for a definite, as in Hosea vi. 2. So S. Cyril and Theophylact. Euthymius says, “To-day; and therefore to-morrow; that is, for some time yet, though a short one, that is about three months,” for Christ appears to have said this a little before the Feast of Dedication, which is kept upon the 25th of the month Casleu, which answers to part of our November and December, and He was crucified in the following March.

Christ therefore boldly said this to the Pharisees to show, 1. That He feared not death but sought it. 2. To show His Divine Power, by which He would live among men, and teach them, even against their will, as long as the Father and Himself pleased and determined. 3. To increase the vexation of the perverse Pharisees, for they already wished for His destruction.

Christ also calls His death “a consummation,” because in it and by it He consummated the whole œconomy of His Incarnation, and the whole work of the mission on which He was sent by the Father, that is, the expiation of all sins, the redemption of the human race, the salvation of the elect; as in Hebrews x. 14.

Ver. 33.—*Nevertheless I must walk.* “Must,” says S. Bonaventure, “not from compulsion but from Divine decree.” So S. Cyril, and Titus. Christ repeats this (which He had said in the preceding verse) to show that He was

wicked lives. The faithful alone are saved, and not all of these. But whether the greater number of them are saved or lost is the question. Some think that the greater number are saved, through the holy sacraments (which very many of them only receive at the end of their lives). Others think that most are lost because they live in a state of mortal sin. The rule of S. Augustine is that as men have lived, so they die. Of these opinions I have shown which is the true one, on S. James ii. 13, on the words "Mercy rejoiceth against judgment." The judgment of S. Chrysostom, Homily xl. to the Antiochenes, who numbered 100,000 or more, is formidable. "In our city," he says, "among so many thousands, scarcely can 100 be found who will be saved, for in the youngers is great wickedness, and in the elders deadness." And S. Augustine (Bk. iv. ch. 53, against Dresconius) compares the Church to a threshing-floor, on which there is much more chaff than grain, *i.e.* more reprobate than elect.

Ver 31.—*The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying, Herod will kill Thee*, as he slew John Thy forerunner. Christ seems not to have preached in Galilee at this time, as He had previously left it (Matt. xix.), but in Peræa in Judæa, for Herod ruled over Peræa as well as Galilee. So thinks F. Lucas. Maldonatus and others, however, suppose that these things were done in Galilee, that S. Luke may now insert by recapitulation what had been done there previously, as we find in ver. 24 and chap. ix. 51.

Moreover the Pharisees, by this falsehood, pretended that Herod was hostile to Christ; that they might banish Him from among them, or at least that they might test His freedom and conscience and depress Him by implanting in his mind the fear of Herod, and might thus drive Him out of their country. "Lest," says Euthymius, "by His presence and miracles He might gain fame and attract a multitude." And perhaps, when going from Peræa to Judæa, He might fall into the hands of the chief Priests, whom they knew to be contriving His death, as is plain from S. John vii. 20. 25. Herod, indeed, was not opposed to Christ, for he desired to see Him and His miracles, as in chap. ix. 9; nay, he would not condemn Christ when Christ was sent to him by Pilate, but sent Him back to Pilate clad in a white (alba, Vulg., *λάμπρος*, Greek) robe, as if He were worthy of ridicule and not death, chap. xxiii. So Jansenius, Maldonatus, F. Lucas and others.

Ver.32.—*And He said to them*. Christ answered the Pharisees freely and loftily when they brought up the fear of Herod. He said that He feared neither Herod, nor the Pharisees, nor the rulers, but He would continue to preach, though against the will of them all, until the day appointed by the Father for His death. He called Herod "a fox," because he was cunning, crafty, (versipellis) and false, for he killed John the Baptist by fraud and falsehood. Such are heretics the type of whom was Herod, for they seek to kill those who believe, in Christ.

But Christ here rather addresses the Pharisees, and calls them all foxes because they would have instilled a false fear of Herod into His mind, that in flying from Judæa He might be taken by the rulers and put to death. Titus says that "He appears, as some think, to direct the whole force of His words against Herod alone, but He turns them against the wickedness of the Pharisees rather than Herod, for He did not say 'that

that these Galileans were slain by Pilate in Jerusalem, when they were sacrificing in the Temple, because Pilate was Procurator of Judæa and not of Samaria. But Josephus plainly says that they were killed in Mount Gerizim, which is in Samaria. The Samaritans, moreover, were a schism from the Jews, and would not go into the Temple at Jerusalem, but built another in their own power on mount Gerizim, as we find from S. John iv. 20. Pilate therefore attacked these Samaritans as rebels, and put them to death in Samaria, as open enemies to Cæsar. When the slaughter of the Samaritans was frequently repeated, there were different opinions on the subject, many affirming that they were wicked men and hated by God; their sacrifices not only being rejected but also mixed with their blood. They related this to Christ and asked His opinion of the matter, but, Christ made a wise use of this occasion, and drew from it an argument to rouse them to repentance, lest a similar vengeance should fall upon them. The preacher should follow this example, and when public slaughter, pest, famine, or wars befall, exhort his people to repentance, that they may escape such inflictions and, with them, the torments of Gehenna.

Ver. 2.—*And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye, &c.* They did suppose this, but wrongly, for God often corrects those who sin less heavily, to make them an example and a terror to others, and so incite them to penitence. So Bede, Titus, and others.

Ver. 3.—*I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* "Likewise"—that is, by a similar death, none excepted, says Maldonatus; and so Wisdom vi 8: "He hath made the small and great, and careth for all alike. For He cares for all without exception, though for some more and for others less." Secondly, and more simply, You shall equally perish, though by another kind of death, by an eternal instead of a temporal one, or even by a temporal. Thirdly, and properly, Jansenius says, "By a similar death; the destruction and vengeance of God." For the Jews were besieged by Titus at the time of the Passover, when they were sacrificing; and, when the city was taken, many were slain in the temple, where they were sacrificing, and accustomed to sacrifice. So Euthymius, S. Thomas, Hugo, N. de Lyra, S. Cyril in the *Catena*.

Observe that Christ here teaches us, in like calamities, to give our minds to the thought of our sins, and to repentance, that we fall not into the like punishments of God.

Symbolically, Bede says that Pilate means, the mouth of the hammerer, (os malleatoris) that is, the Devil, who is always ready to destroy. "Blood"—that is, sin and concupiscence. The sacrifices are good actions which the Devil, either for the delight of the flesh, or from the ambition of human praise, or some other evil motive, pollutes.

Ver. 4.—*Or of those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell.* There

was a fountain, or rather pool, near Jerusalem of which Isaiah speaks, “This people refuses the waters of Siloah that go softly,” viii. 6. Near this fountain was a tower also called Siloë, from it, which in the time of Christ fell down, either from the force of the wind, or from lightning, or an earthquake, or some other like cause, and destroyed eighteen persons who were either in it, or standing near. This, if we only regard secondary causes, may have happened by chance; but if we consider the one primary one, that is, God, it was done by His appointed Providence, who determines to punish some and to terrify others. For with God nothing is fortuitous, but everything is certainly foreseen and prepared, that nothing in His Kingdom should, as Boethius says, be ascribed to chance or temerity. God, then, orders these events for the chastisement and correction of man, that others, seeing their neighbours killed by the fall of a tower or some other sudden accident, may fear lest something similar happen to themselves, and so may repent and reconcile themselves to God, lest they be overwhelmed by His judgments and condemned to Gehenna. This is what God said by the prophet Amos, “Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?” iii. 6; and by Isaiah, “I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil” xlv. 7. The poets and philosophers saw the same through a shade:

<p>—O qui res hominumque Deumque, Æternis regis imperiis, et fulmine terres.</p>	<p>“O Thou who dost the affairs Of men and gods, by laws eternal rule, And by thy lightning fierce dost terrify.”</p>
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And Plutarch (*In Moral.*), “As if a blind man should fall against a person, and call that person blind for not avoiding him, so we make Fortune blind, whereas we stumble against her from our own want of sight. For this very ‘Fortuna fortunans,’ which is, in truth, no other than God Himself, and the Providence of God is most keen of sight, and has many more eyes than Argus.”

Symbolically. “The tower,” says Bede, “is Christ, Siloë, that is, He who is sent by the Father into the world, and who crushes to powder all the wicked upon whom He falls, through the sentence of His condemnation.”

Think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? “Sinners” — the Arabic has culpabiles; the Chaldaic, chare bim, i.e. debtors (for a debtor owes his soul, that is 10,000 talents, S. Matt. xviii. 24, to God). Christ shows clearly that these eighteen who were killed by the fall of the tower of Siloam, were sinners, though not, perhaps, the worst and greatest that were in Jerusalem.

Ver. 5.—*I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* “This shows,” says S. Chrysostom, “that these eighteen were appointed as an example and terror to the others; though each was punished for his own sins. This was made wholesome matter for others, that the fool might be made wiser by the event. For God does not punish all here, but He leaves a time for repentance. Again, he does not leave all for a future punishment, lest many should deny His Providence.”

Verses 6, 7.—*He spake also this parable.* “Cumbereth”—the Greek is *κατάγγει*, that is,

for the Sabbath and its violation, but because of Christ, because He obtained glory.” I have treated the subject at length, *Ecclus.* i. 37, on the words *ne fueris*, and ii. 14, *Væ duplici*.

This daughter of Abraham. The argument of Christ is most applicable and forcible, showing that the healing was not a servile act, but one liberal and divine, and therefore, not only not unworthy, but rather most worthy, of the Sabbath—for the Sabbath, nay, even God Himself, the author of it, was wonderfully sanctified and made glorious, as S. Irenæus shows when he says that, “Christ, in healing the sick on the Sabbath day, acted not contrarily but according to the law.” Christ then compares, opposes, and prefers the bond and release of the woman to the bond and release of the ox and ass.

Again, every word contains a pregnant antithesis. In the first Christ compares, and prefers the woman, as a daughter of Abraham, to the ox or ass. 2. He compares and prefers the spiritual bond and deliverance of the woman to those of the ox and ass. 3. The woman had suffered this bondage for eighteen years. The ox had borne its tether, and therefore its thirst, only an hour or two. 4. The setting of the ox free was a long and troublesome work, but the healing of the woman was the act of a moment, in which the obligation of the Sabbath could in no way be violated. 5. By this release the woman was restored to perfect health and sanctity, but the ox only drank a little draught of water. Lastly, He convicts the ruler and the Pharisees of inhumanity, because, in the words of Bede, “he postponed the healing of a human being to care of cattle.”

The glorious things that were done by Him.

The Syraic—In all the miracles which were done by His hand.

Ver. 18.—*Then said He.* The word “then” is illative, as is shown by what precedes and follows. Christ saw that He had silenced His enemies, the Pharisees, by His wisdom, and that the people rejoiced and praised both Himself and His word. When He saw them thus rightly disposed, He proposed to them the parable of the kingdom of heaven; for He saw that the way was now prepared for proclaiming this, and for His preaching—that He might incite all to attempt its attainment, and therefore to receive His evangelical doctrine and life. I have explained the parable on S. Matt. xiii. 31.

Ver. 23.—*Then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved?* Christ answered in the affirmative that few should be saved, as S. Luke signifies and S. Matt. plainly states, vii. 14. Isaiah speaks to the same effect, x. 22; xxiv. 13. Understand “few” by a comparison of all the inhabitants of the whole world; or of the faithful with the unbelieving, for all the latter are condemned for their unbelief, and equally many of the faithful for their

Ver. 12.—*And when Jesus saw her* (the Arabic has “Jesus looked upon her;” with the eyes, that is, of both body and mind; with the eyes of grace, pity, and mercy), *He called her to Him, and said to her, Woman, thou art loosed, &c.* “Loosed,” that is, thou shalt be dismissed; thou art healed; healed by Me, through the laying on of My hands, as followed. For Christ seems to have done two things at the same time: to have laid His hands upon her, and so healed her, and to have said, Thou art loosed. He said, “Thou art loosed,” and not “I loose thee,” to sharpen the woman’s faith. For Christ often ascribes healing and salvation to His touch, to show the virtue of His word and contact, for in the same moment in which He touched this woman, He healed her. “There was a divine virtue,” says S. Cyril in the *Catena*, “in the flesh of Christ, by which in an instant He worked great and wonderful miracles. As when He said ‘This is My Body,’ He transmuted the bread into His Body, as He transubstantiates it daily in the Mass. For, to have said, This is My body, is to have made it so; as in the words, ‘He spake and it was done.’” Hence, Titus, “By a word, assuredly most divine, and by a most perfect heavenly power, He removed the infirmity of this woman.” Lastly, the words “Thou art loosed,” that is, thou art freed, shows that the woman had been bound by Satan, constrained, kept down, as by a chain, so that her head appeared fixed to her knees and thighs. This bond Christ loosed, and thus made her erect. For Christ came to destroy the works of the devil.

Ver. 13.—*And He laid His hands on her.* The hands signify the power of Christ, His authority, rule over diseases and devils; and equally His loving-kindness and beneficence, by which He conferred the benefit of healing upon the woman, through the beneficence of His touch.

Ver. 14.—*And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation.* With indignation, because he envied Jesus the glory of a miracle by which He had shown Himself, before the whole synagogue and people, to be greater than the ruler. This man made religion and zeal for the observation of the Sabbath the cloak of his feeling. He is therefore called a hypocrite by Christ. So S. Cyril in the *Catena*, “When the ruler of this ungrateful synagogue saw the woman made suddenly erect by a mere touch, and celebrating the great acts of God, he sullied his zeal for the glory of the Lord with envy, and censured the miracle as if he would show himself solicitous for the Sabbath.” Observe the word “ungrateful.” He ought to have been grateful to Christ and to have given Him thanks for having honoured himself and the synagogue, and distinguished it by this miracle. But envy had so blinded him, that he thought the glory of Christ his own dishonour and disgrace, for he was unable to perform such and so great acts, himself. So Saul ought to have given thanks to David for slaying Goliath, the dread of himself and of all Israel. But envy made him so perverse that he thought the glory of David his own ignominy, imagining that David was preferred to himself, and that he himself, though the king, was placed below him. This is the living image of envy—the mask of religion—veiled and cloaked.

Ver. 15.—*The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite.* Hypocrites who feign sanctity abroad, when within they are full of envy and malice. S. Chrysostom in the *Catena*: “Christ rightly called him a hypocrite, because he had the face of one who observed the law carefully, but the mind of cunning and envy. He was not disturbed

loads with a useless burthen, nay, renders the ground barren and fruitless, as well by its shade as by its roots, which keep the earth’s moisture from the other trees. The Syriac says, “keeps it idle;” for ἀζυγον, is idle, inert, devoid of strength.

In the letter the fig-tree represents the synagogue of the Jews, which God planted through Moses; to which Christ came by the Incarnation, to cultivate it by His preaching. Christ, therefore, is the keeper of the vine, that is, of the synagogue, to whom God said, “Cut it down, for now for three years in which Thou hast preached to it, I have looked for the fruit of faith and good works, and I find none, from the unbelief, perverseness, and malice of the Jews.” Christ intercedes for it, that the Father would allow Him to tend it by His preaching for one year more, or, at least, for half an one; and then, if it gave no fruit, it might be cut down. So it came to pass: for the Jews, in the fourth year of Christ’s preaching, at the Passover, adding sin to sin, and becoming more and more perverse, crucified Him; so that, a few years after, Titus was sent by God as His avenger, and took Jerusalem, and destroyed all Judæa. What remains are additions belonging to the finish of the parable, which it is unnecessary to apply to what is signified by it.

S. Ambrose observes, that the fig-tree is an apt symbol of the Synagogue: first, because it was a tree with abundance of leaves, but which disappointed its owner in his hope of fruit. Secondly, while the doctors of the Synagogue were fruitless of good works and boasted only of words like redundant leaves, the vain shadow of the law flourished exuberantly, but the false hope of the expected produce deceived the prayers of the people.

Tropologically. The fig is any individual person, especially a believer; the gardener is Christ, the Apostles, and the like; the Lord is God the Father, or the Holy Trinity. Our own Salmeron (tom. vii., tract 21), gives various reasons and analogies, why the faithful are compared to a fig. 1. The fig produces sweet fruit, which seems to be purses of honey and sugar, and the righteous produce the like. 2. As the fig tree increases little in height but is always short, so the righteous cast themselves down, and humble themselves. 3. The fig, instead of blossoms, gives fruit, and that twice; namely, the early ripe in the summer, and in the autumn the later—for the fig bears twice a year, as the righteous is ever plentifully bringing forth the fruit of good works. 4. As the fig makes a shade with its ample leaves, so the righteous defends and protects others by his charity. 5. The fig is never grafted, into another tree, because of its exceeding sweetness, which cannot leave it. So the righteous rests in no man, but in God alone and his own conscience. 6. The, fig tree, if stripped of its bark, gives no fruit, but withers away; and .the righteous, unless protected by the bark of honest conversation, modesty, and outward decency, will bring no fruit with his neighbours. 7. The fig has medical properties, and heals diseases, as Isaiah healed Hezekiah by means of a fig (Isa. xxxviii. 21). Pliny also says that the

fig alone, of trees, has medical virtues. So the righteous, because he is perfect and mature in virtue, ministers to the infirmities of others, by teaching, advising, and living holily. He adds that lopping and pruning it remedies its too great luxuriousness; as the righteous by circumcising and cutting off the desire of honour above, and the appetites of the senses below, by meditations on death and burial, is rendered fruitful in virtue and good works, and converts many of his neighbours to God.

Behold these three years I come seeking fruit. This alludes to the nature of the fig tree, which sometimes gives fruit in its third year. If not then, it commonly does not give it at all.

Symbolically, these three years, according to Euthymius, signify the three policies or political status of the Jews, under the judges, Kings, and the High Priests, namely the Maccabees. St. Ambrose says “He came to Abraham, He came to Moses, He came to Mary; that is, He came in circumcision, He came in the Law, He came in the body. We acknowledge His Advent from His benefits to us. In the first, Purification; in the second, Sanctification; in the third, justification—Circumcision purified, the Law sanctified, Grace justified—one in all, and all in one; no one can be cleansed but one who fears God: no one deserves to receive the Law but one who is purified from sin: no one comes to Grace but he who knows the Law.” So also St. Cyril: “God sought the nature of the human race before the Law, under the Law, and under Grace by waiting, admonishing, visiting; but some are not corrected by the natural law, nor taught by precept, nor converted by miracle.”

Tropologically, these three years, says Theophylact, are the three ages of man—childhood; full manhood; and old age. For every one ought at all times to bring forth the fruits of virtue to God, as is fitting and proportionate to every age. God, who would have no age of man idle, requires these of every one.

And He, namely, the dresser of the Vine, Christ and the Apostles, *answering said unto him*. Christ and the Apostles, says the Interlineator, knowing that some of the Jews could be saved, pray God to delay the avenging of the Lord’s cross, that is, the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.

And if it bear fruit. Understand, “It shall be well, it shall be safe, and it shall be saved.” It is an aposiopesis. The Arabic adds, “For it has brought forth fruit.” The Synagogue formerly gave fruit under Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and others.

And if not, then after that thou shall cut it down. As God cut down the Jews by the Romans.

Mystically, S. Augustine (*De Verb. Dom.*) says: “He who intercedes is all holy; who, within the Church, prays for those who are without.” To dig about the conscience is to teach humility and patience, and to engraft on the mind the consideration of heaven and heavenly things, lest, as S. Ambrose says, the heap overwhelm the root of earthly wisdom and of earthly desires and hide it from view.

And dung it. This is, as S. Ambrose says, the feeling of humility, and S. Augustine (*De Verb. Dom.*): “Dung is filth, but it causes fruitfulness. The filth of the vine-dresser is the grief of the sinner.” And S. Gregory, “Dung is the sins of the flesh, from which the mind is roused to good works.”

Ver. 10.—*And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.* The Sabbath was a festival on which the Jews came to the synagogue to hear the Law and its interpretation, as Christians on the Lord’s day come together to hear mass and the sermon. Christ chose this time and place for the following miracle, that it might be public, and that He might confute and instruct the Pharisees, when speaking against it on account of the Sabbath.

Ver. 11.—*And behold there was a woman.* “The spirit of infirmity, that is, an infirmity sent by the evil one,” says de Lyra. Euthymius, “The devil of weakness not suffering her to live.” The Arabic reads, “With whom was a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years, and she was bowed together and was not able to stand up by any means.” This infirmity was a curving and bending of the whole body, so that the woman was compelled always to walk bent and stooping. Observe that diseases are often sent by the devils, through the permission of God, for sins of other reasons. Ver. 16 shows the cause of this infirmity, “This daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound,” Thus the devil afflicted Job with various diseases, chap. ii. The same is seen in Ps. lxxviii. 49, and Matt. ix. 23. The devil, therefore, made this woman crooked and bent, to compel her always to look down upon the earth.

Eighteen years. It was, therefore, an inveterate and incurable disease, and as such could not be healed by the physicians.

And was bowed together. Looking towards the ground, (cernua) crooked, with her head and back bent downwards—nay, she was less able even than a beast to look up at the sun and heavens, but must always look down at the rocks and the earth. For at the creation (Gen. i.)

Os homini sublime dedit, Cœlumque tueri Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus,-	“God gave to man a lofty countenance, And to regard the heavens commanded him. Bade him to lift his form erect, and gaze Upon the starry host,”—
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that he might look up at the sun and the heavens, and, by a heavenly life, journey towards God on high, and be received, into heaven and there enjoy the blessedness of the divine vision; for, as S. Basil says in the *Catena*, “We should seek heavenly things, and rise above those of earth.” The devil, then, to turn men from heaven, makes them look downwards, so that they see, love, and pursue only earthly things.