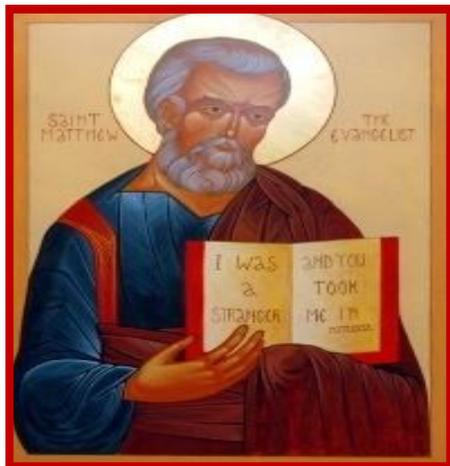


For Me and thee. You will ask why Christ only paid this tribute for Himself and Peter? I answer, He did not pay for the rest of the disciples, either because, as Lyra thinks, only the heads of families were bound to pay this tribute, or because the disciples of Christ were poor men. Wherefore Christ tacitly desired that they should be excused by the tax gatherers on account of their poverty or because they belonged to other places, and had already paid the tribute in those cities. Lastly, Abulensis thinks that for all the Apostles, who had wives and children, and therefore were heads of families, this didrachma was paid out of the common coffer which Judas carried; and that Matthew only related the payment of Christ's didrachma because of the miracle of its being found in the mouth of the fish, that He might show that He was not under an obligation to pay it, nor was subject to Cæsar. For Peter, however, Christ paid, both because Peter was the instrument of the exaction, as well as of the payment, as also because Peter had a house and family at Capernaum. It was also *honoris causa*, to intimate that Peter was the vicar of his Church and household, and destined by him to be the head and prince of the rest of the Apostles. So SS. Chrysostom, Jerome, Origen, and others.

Moraliter: Learn from hence Christ's zeal for poverty, that He had not at home so much as one shekel to pay the tribute, but obtained it miraculously from a fish that he might teach that God by means of fishes and the rest of the creatures provides necessary things for the poor in spirit, as He provided food for Elias by the ministry of ravens.



PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.pamphletstoinpire.com



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 17: 6-26

Verse 6- *And when the disciples heard, &c.* 1. Because this cloud seemed to them to portend something new, strange, and Divine. 2. Because (as the Syriac has) they beheld Moses and Elias going away and entering into the cloud, and through it vanishing from their sight. 3. They were afraid when they heard the voice, because (as Abulensis says) it was as loud as thunder; and though it was a sweet voice, yet its echoing reverberation terrified them. Thus, too, S. Ephrem says: "At the sound of this voice the Apostles fell flat upon the earth; for terrible was the thunder, and the voice shook the earth." And S. Jerome says: "Human weakness cannot sustain to bear the sight of this great glory; trembling both in mind and body, it falls to the ground." Origen, S. Chrysostom, and Euthymius add—that being struck with fear they fell upon their faces, that they might worship God, and make supplication unto Him that the thunder and lightning might not strike them.

collectors of the tribute did not venture to ask Christ Himself for it, on account of the fame of His sanctity and miracles; but they said to Peter, in private, is not your Master accustomed to pay the didrachma?

Verse 25- *He said, yea:* Peter asserted that it was Christ's custom, as he had seen in previous years, always to pay this tribute.

When He was come into the house, hired by Christ at Capernaum, as I have said, iv. 13.

Verse 25 (Continued)- *And He said, &c.* Christ being conscious in His spirit of the conversation which had passed between Peter and the tax collectors, *prevented him,* i.e., first asked him about the matter, and showed that He was not under obligation to pay this tribute. *The kings of the earth, &c.* It is an argument from the less to the greater, as S. Chrysostom teaches: in this way, the children of kings, of common right, are free from the tribute paid to kings. Much more therefore am I, together with My Apostles, who are My family; I, I say, who am king of kings, and the true and only begotten Son of God Himself, free from every kind of tribute which the kings of the earth impose upon their subjects. So S. Jerome and others.

Wherefore certain Canonists are wrong in gathering from this reasoning of Christ that the clergy, by Divine right, are exempt from all taxes. For by parity of reasoning it might be concluded that all Christians are exempted from payment of taxes, as the Anabaptists assert. For Christians are the adopted children of God, born again in baptism. The falsehood of this idea is shown by the Apostle (Rom. xiii. 7) and the whole Church: for this adoption pertains to a higher order of inheritance, even a Heavenly one. Properly, however, in accordance with these words of Christ, kings and princes have exempted ecclesiastics, who are of the household and family of Christ, from the payment of taxes. And this is all which is meant by S. Jerome and the Canons when they say that the clergy are exempt from taxes, not only by human but Divine right; because, in truth, Divine right intimates that this exemption ought to be conceded. (See Lessius *de Justitia*, l. 2, c. 33, *dub.* 4, where he shows that the exemption of the clergy from paying taxes is not of Divine but of human right.)

Verse 26- *Nevertheless, &c.* It is as though He said, lest the collectors should be offended, and think we despise Tiberius Cæsar, as a Gentile, and reject his authority, like Judas of Galilee. *Piece of money,* Greek and Vulgate *stater*: this is the same as the Hebrew shekel, namely a pound. For formerly money not stamped was paid by weight. The shekel weighed four drachmæ, which were equivalent to four Spanish reals, or a florin of Brabant. Observe, Christ here afforded an example of justice, humility and obedience, and taught that Christianity is not opposed to civil government, but is rather an aid and advantage to it.

Verse 24- *And when they were come, &c. . . . tribute, the Syriac adds, poll tax, as paid by each individual. Pay tribute, the Arabic has, pay what is due.* The collectors do not make an assertion, but ask a question, because these tax-gatherers were newly in office, or at least had fresh servants, who did not know, or did not remember that in the year which was past, Christ had paid the tribute at Capernaum, as other people did.

Verse 24 (Continued)- *Tribute money:* The Gr. and the Vulg. have *didrachma*, that is, a half shekel, equal in value to two Spanish reals. The shekel weighed four didrachma. See what I have said on Exodus xxx. 13. Baronius and others are of opinion that this didrachma was the sacred half shekel, which was required by the Divine law to be paid to the temple. (Exodus xxx. 13.)

There God ordained that every Israelite male of twenty years old and upward should pay a half shekel for the service of the Sanctuary. This was when a census was taken. But subsequently, the Jews of their own accord, out of devotion, and that they might more entirely fulfil the law, decreed that all should pay this half shekel every year for the sustentation of the Priests and Levites, for repairing the temple, for furnishing victims for the sacrifices, and many other similar purposes. All this is plain from 2 Chron. xxiv. 5, 6, 7: also from Josephus, who shows that the Jews who lived at a distance from the Holy Land were accustomed to collect this sacred didrachma, and send it to the temple at Jerusalem. (Jos. Ant. xviii. 12.)

But the tribute here spoken of was a civil tax, and payable either to the Romans, or to Herod Antipas. This is seen from Christ's words to Peter—*of whom do the kings of the earth take custom, or tribute?* This then was royal tribute, and payable either to a king or an emperor. The same thing is plain from xxii. 21, where the Herodians ask Christ, "whether it were lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not?" The origin of this tribute being levied was a little before the time of Christ, when, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, the grandsons of Simon Maccabæus were contending which should have the high priesthood. Pompey, being called in to arbitrate between them, adjudged it to Hyrcanus: but the people of Jerusalem, who favoured the other candidate, restored it to Aristobulus. After that Pompey took Jerusalem, and reduced Judea to subjection to Rome, and exacted an annual tribute. Moreover because the Jews were accustomed to pay a didrachma to the temple, they were also ordered by the Romans to pay the same sum to them, until after the rebellion, when Jerusalem was besieged and captured by Vespasian, and the temple destroyed, he ordered them to pay that didrachma to the Roman capitol. The Jews greatly disliked paying this tribute to the Romans. They said that they were the people of God, and therefore free; and that they ought to pay tribute to Him, not to Cæsar. This feeling it was which gave rise, about the time of Christ, to the sect of the Galilæans, whose leader was Judas of Galilee, who refused all payment of tribute to Cæsar, and all acknowledgment of his authority. Christ and His Apostles were suspected of belonging to this sect, because they were Galilæans, and were preachers of the new, heavenly kingdom. In order therefore that Christ might show the groundlessness of this imputation, He, on the present occasion, paid the didrachma. So S. Jerome, Bede, Jansen, and others. The

Verse 8- *When they lifted up their eyes, &c.* This signified symbolically that the Law and the Prophets had disappeared now that Christ was present, and that He Who brought to men the true light of the Gospel alone remained. Again: this glory and delight of the Transfiguration quickly passed away, but Christ would show that all things in this world—even those that are lofty and divine—are transient, but that in Heaven they will be eternal, so that we may pant after it; for on earth all things are measured by time, but in Heaven they possess an enduring eternity.

Note: SS. Matthew, Mark, and Luke relate the history of the Transfiguration differently; but the following is a series and order of circumstances, which will reconcile the Evangelists one with another. 1. Christ prayed. In the meantime the disciples, being heavy with sleep, from the fatigue of ascending the mountain and the length of Christ's prayer, whilst they were sleeping, He was transfigured. 2. Moses and Elias came, and talked with Christ concerning His death upon the cross, which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem. 3. The Apostles, being roused from sleep by the brightness and the talking, beheld the glory of Christ, and Moses and Elias conversing with Him. 4. When their conversation was ended, and they made as though they were going away, Peter being (as it were) inebriated with pleasure and grieving at their departure, sought to make three tabernacles. 5. There came the cloud, obscuring Moses and Elias; and then the voice speaking to Christ, *This is My beloved Son*, when the Apostles, being affrighted, fell to the earth; and were presently comforted and raised up by Christ; and, lifting up their eyes, saw Jesus alone.

Verse 9- *And as they were coming down, &c.—to no one.* Not only to the people, as S. Jerome says, but not even to the other Apostles; that they might not give them an occasion of sorrow or envy because they were not present with Peter and James and John at the Transfiguration. So Damascene: "lest the madness of envy should drive the traitor to fury." Whence Mark says, *they kept the matter close between themselves.* The reason why Christ enjoined upon them this silence was, because there would a fitting time come for the revelation of this mystery; and because the Apostles would understand and believe it when—after His Passion and death, in which they would be scandalized and troubled—they were about to behold Him rising again in glory, of which this Transfiguration was a type. For by Christ's resurrection they were about to understand of a surety that Christ underwent the death of the cross for us—not because He was compelled, but voluntarily, out of His exceeding love; and that now—being endowed with glory—He will come to judgment at the end of the world, and will crown with the same glory those who (after His example and precept) have denied themselves, have borne the cross, and in following Him have lost their lives for the sake of His love.

Verse 10- *And the disciples asked Him, &c.* The reason of this question was because these three Apostles had seen Elias in the Transfiguration, and had

beheld him going away. They marvel, therefore, that he did not remain and become the forerunner of Christ and His glorious kingdom, according to the prophecy of Malachi (iv. 5)—a prophecy quoted and enforced by the Scribes. But they erred, by confusing the times. They did not fully distinguish between Christ's first coming in the flesh and His second Advent in glory. Of this latter Elias will be the precursor, as John the Baptist was of the former. But although the Apostles in some manner distinguished between Christ's first Advent and His second (for the first they had seen, but had not yet seen the second), nevertheless they expected that the latter was nigh at hand. For they had heard Christ speak of His approaching resurrection, a type whereof they had beheld in His Transfiguration; and they thought, although erroneously, that after it Christ would immediately reign gloriously, inaugurating that kingdom of glory which He shall establish at His second Advent. This was why they wondered, and asked why Elias did not remain that he might go before Christ.

Verse 11- *Restore all things:* that is, convert the Jews to Christ as the Messiah promised to themselves and their forefathers. As Malachi says: "He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers." See what I have there said. Matthew (as is usual with him) follows the LXX, which instead of *turn*, or *convert*, has ἀποκαταστήσει, *i.e.*, *shall restore*. Hence the Arabic translates, *shall teach you all things*.

Verse 12- *But I say unto you,* &c. Christ passes at once from the literal to the mystical Elias, *i.e.*, John the Baptist: for concerning John, the angel Gabriel had foretold to his father Zacharias, in S. Luke: "And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (i. 17.)

Falsely do the Calvinists refer all these things to the first Advent of Christ, and explain both mentions of Elias—viz., in verses 11 and 12—to mean John the Baptist. For they think that Elias, whom Malachi predicted shall come as the precursor of Christ (iv. 5), is John the Baptist, and that there is no other who shall come with Enoch before Christ's second Advent. I have refuted this error at length on Malachi iv. 5.

For it was Christ's intention in this place only to explain that saying of the scribes, derived from Malachi, "Elias shall come, and shall show you Christ,"—that what Malachi had spoken of Christ's second Advent might be applied mystically to His first. For the Scribes did not distinguish between the two Advents of Christ, even as the Jews fail to do so still. For they deny that Christ has come, and are expecting Him as still about to come, because Elias has not yet appeared to point Him out. Christ therefore, that He might, in His condescension, give a full explanation to the Scribes, concedes that an Elias would be a precursor of both His Advents; but that in the first it would be the typical, in the second the literal and real Elias. And He means to say that it was not because Elias had not yet come that the Jews persisted in not believing Him to be the Messiah, but because they were perverse and obstinate in their wickedness. For that Elias, who had, been promised before Christ's first Advent, namely John the Baptist, had already come, and had already pointed out Christ to the Scribes, that He was the Messiah; and they would not believe him. Therefore Christ

Verse 21- *This kind,* &c. Observe first, *this kind* does not mean every kind of demons, as S. Chrysostom thinks, but those of a higher order, which are most powerful, obstinate and malicious, like this one whom Christ here cast out.

Observe secondly. This sort of demons can only be driven out by prayer and fasting; because these two things lift men up from the flesh to God. As S. Chrysostom says, "Fasting is the chief work of the higher philosophy, and places men on a level with angels, and vanquishes the incorporeal powers." Observe thirdly. Christ does not require prayer and fasting in both the person who works the miracle and in him for whose benefit the miracle is wrought, as S. Chrysostom supposes, but in him only who works the miracle, as Origen has observed. Yet there can be no doubt that faith and prayer on the part of the recipient greatly aid in the working of the miracle. You may say, that it is not said of Christ, when He cast out this devil, that He prayed or fasted. I answer, that He had prayed and fasted a little while before, when He was transfigured on Mount Tabor. Besides, prayer and fasting are required in mere men, not in Christ, who was God, and as God, was able by His word alone to put the devils to flight, yea to annihilate them. So Abulensis.

Verse 22- *While they abode,* &c. Christ reiterates His prophecy concerning His Cross and Passion, which He uttered first at Cæsarea Philippi (xvi. 22), that the disciples might not be affrighted, nor scandalized when the time came, nor fall from faith in Him as the Messiah, because He suffered such a shameful death. For the Cross was an offence to the Apostles, so that they all forsook Him and fled. The Cross therefore needed to be again and again preached to them, and impressed upon them, so that they might know that Christ did not suffer it *because* He was compelled, *but of His own will*, and in obedience to the Father's will; that He might redeem mankind.

Moreover He reiterated this preaching of the Cross in Galilee, after He had healed the lunatic when He came down from Tabor, and the Galileans on account of that miracle had given Him great praise and honour, as we may learn from SS. Mark and Luke, in order that He might repress any vain-glorious thoughts which were likely to arise in the minds of the Apostles, by putting them in mind of His Cross and Passion.

Verse 23- *And shall kill Him,* &c. When the Apostles heard speak of Christ being put to death, because they were unwilling that He should die, and that they should be separated from Him by death, He alleviates this their sorrow by adding, *And the third day He shall rise again*. But they did not understand these words of Christ. They were not able to receive them. Whence they were, for a long time, doubtful concerning His resurrection. And this was why Christ by many apparitions and miracles was obliged to convince them that He had really risen again, so that He might root out all doubt from their minds

He is wont to give, so also there is to some extent in our power the faculty of working miracles; and the more any one increases in faith and confidence, the more does he increase in this faculty. The more familiar any one is with God, the more gifts does he obtain from Him, and Christ here signifies this; and the same is plan from the lives and actions of the saints. Thus S. Bernard teaches, that we may gain the gift of prophecy, so that we may know the secret things of God, if in truth we cause ourselves to enter into most intimate friendship with God. For of this Christ speaks (John xv.15): "I have called you friends, for all things which I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you."

Faith, as a grain of mustard seed, i.e., faith small in appearance, but of great virtue and efficacy; humble faith, which boasteth not itself, and therefore small in man's judgment, but verily quick, perfect burning like mustard seed. For when such faith is united to humility, it takes away every shadow of unbelief. It works miracles and removes mountains. This faith shone brightly in S. Gregory, Bishop of Neocæsarea; for he, when a mountain stood in the way of his building a church, by his prayers removed it to another place. (See Nyssen in his *Life*: and Eusebius, H. E. 7, 25.) He performed many other miracles, from which he received the name of Thaumaturgus, i.e., wonder-worker. In like manner, a mountain in Tartary was removed by Christians, when a tyrant required such a miracle of them in accordance with this promise of Christ. (See Marco Polo, *On Tartary*) S. Jerome gives a similar instance in his *Life of S. Hilarion*. For he, when the sea, through an earthquake, raised vast masses of waters upon the shore—which threatened the city of Epidaurus with destruction—was placed by its citizens upon the shore as a bulwark against the waves. "He drew three figures of the cross on the sand, and stretched forth his hands against the sea when it was swelling to a vast height before him, when it stood still; and roaring for a long time, and (as it were) being angry with the bulwark, by degrees it sunk down to its ordinary level. Verily that which was said to the Apostles, *If ye believe, ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou cast into the sea, and it shall be done*, may be fulfilled even to the letter. For what difference is there between a mountain going down into the sea, and immense mountains of waters being suddenly arrested at the feet of an old man?"

Mystically: a mountain is severe temptation, especially to ambition and pride, as S. Jerome teaches. Such a temptation is best overcome by faith and hope. Wherefore S. Francis, being troubled by a dreadful temptation in spirit, betaking himself to prayer, with tears, heard a voice from Heaven, saying, "Francis, if thou shalt have faith as a grain of mustard seed, thou shalt command this mountain to pass away, and it shall pass away." He, not knowing what was the meaning of the oracle, cried out, "Lord, what is this mountain?" The answer came, "The mountain is temptation." Then Francis added, with many tears, "O Lord, be it unto me according to thy word." And immediately all the temptation was removed, and he obtained perfect tranquillity. (Wadding, in *Annal. Minor.* A.D. 1218, num. 2.)

adds, *and they knew him not*, i.e., they refused to recognize him, as the precursor of Christ. *And they did unto him whatsoever they listed*, i.e., when he reprov'd their vices, they hated and persecuted him, and delivered him up to Herod, who sought his life.

Verse 13- *Then understood*, &c. Viz., that John the Baptist was the mystical Elias, and the forerunner of Christ.

Verse 14- *And when He was come*, &c. Luke adds, *and it came to pass on the following day, when He was coming down from the mount*, &c. From this it is plain that this lunatic was cured on the day following the Transfiguration.

Verse 15- *A lunatic*, Gr. *σεληνιάζεται*, that is at the changes of the moon, at new and full moon he suffers from epilepsy, not from any natural cause, but because he is beset by a devil. The Arabic has, *he is grievously vexed at the time of the new moon*. Whence Mark has (ix. 17): "And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit: And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth and pineth away," as is common in epilepsy. And Luke (ix. 39): "I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him." Hence Origen, SS. Chrysostom and Jerome teach that the ordinary epilepsy is not to be ascribed so much to the moon and the state of the humours of the body, as to the devil, who makes use of the changes of the moon and vicious secretions. Mahomet, who suffered from epilepsy, pretended that he was seized and influenced by the Holy Ghost, when he was really possessed by Satan. For this reason too the Turks venerate persons suffering from epilepsy, as though they were under the influence of the Holy Ghost, and were prophets. When the moon is new and at the full, she increases and agitates the tumors, especially the melancholic and phlegmatic tumors of the brain, over which she has power. And she so acts upon them that they disturb the brain, and cause noises, spittings, and agitation of the whole body. For they who are afflicted with mania and epilepsy, are especially troubled with black bile, that is melancholy, at the time of full moon, because then the moon brings more light and heat, though weaker than those of the sun. But the sun sets free, and puts into motion the black bile, though it does not consume it. The black bile when set in motion, will produce these foaming's, and noises, and gnashing of the teeth. And epileptic patients, on account of the phlegm and crude tumors, are afflicted when the moon is waning, but especially at the new moon, because then the moon has less light and heat. And phlegm and phlegmatic tumors are intensified by cold, especially when it becomes excessive.

Verse 16- *I brought him*, &c. After the manner of men, he ascribes to the

Apostles what was the fault of his own want of faith.

Verse 17- *O faithless generation*, &c. Origen thinks these words were addressed to the nine Apostles who remained below, when Christ took the other three with Him to the top of Tabor. He thinks that, as far as these nine were concerned, faith was weak. As S. Hilary says, "Whilst Christ had gone up upon the mountain with three of the Apostles, a kind of torpor of faith crept over the remaining nine, who were left with the people, both because they heard from the father of the lunatic, and saw with their own eyes the magnitude of the evil, and the violence and raging madness of the demon within him." But, with greater probability, SS. Jerome, Chrysostom, and Theophylact think these words were spoken to the father of the lunatic, and to the Jews and Scribes. For in them was greater incredulity, and by consequence they were more to blame that the devil was not cast out, than the disciples were. This may be gathered from Mark ix. 24, when the father, being asked by Christ if he believed in Him, answered. *Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.* Nevertheless, Christ privately rebukes the Apostles (V. 20), because they had less faith than there was need of in so great a work. To the Jews, therefore, Christ said, *O faithless and perverse generation.* And Christ goes on to tell them that the reason why His disciples could not heal the child was not any want of power either on His part or on theirs. It was as though He said to the father of the child, "I have given them power to cast out devils, but the obstacle is thine own unbelief and that of the Jews, which oppose the grace of God; because thou dost not believe, but doubtest whether I and they are able to heal him." Thus S. Cyril. "The words of Christ," says S. Jerome, "are like those of a physician, who should see a patient acting contrary to his orders. He would say, 'How long shall I keep coming to your house? How long shall I have my trouble for nothing, whilst I order one thing and you do the contrary?' But it was not so much that He was angry with the man, as with his fault, and that in the person of one man He reproveth the Jews for their unbelief, since he added immediately, 'bring him to Me.'"

Bring him, &c. Mark adds (ix. 20), "And they brought him unto Him: and when he saw Him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed roaring." "After the demon perceived the Lord, he convulses the child," says Titus of Bosra, "because, being angry at the presence of Jesus, and fearing Him, lest he should be driven out, he began to rage, and horribly to vex and torment the lunatic." Mark proceeds, "And He asked his father how long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, 'Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if Thou canst do anything' [*If Thou canst.* See the incredulity which Christ reproveth, for he doubted Christ's power], 'have compassion on us, and help us.' Jesus said unto him, 'If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.'" By believing in Me thou mayest obtain the healing of thy child. Suitably did Christ require that he should have faith in Him. It was not fitting that he should heal those who did not believe in Him, or that He should thrust His benefits upon those who turned away from Him. Mark proceeds, "And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, 'Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.'" That is, *I believe*, but I am weak in faith, do Thou increase and strengthen it that whatsoever there is in me of doubt and unbelief may be taken away. We cannot doubt that Christ did hear such humble and such fervent prayers, and did take away

from him all unbelief; for by and bye He healed the child, as the child of one believing.

Verse 18- *And Jesus rebuked the devil*, &c. Mark adds: "When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit. I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose." From all this we see how very powerful and malignant this devil was, who had made the child deaf and dumb, and who dared so to resist Christ, and to bring the lunatic to the very point of death. From hence it seems probable that this demon had belonged originally to one of the superior orders of angels. For they too invade and possess men. This was why Christ's disciples could not cast him out, but his expulsion was reserved for Christ Himself, Who by His mighty power and command drove him forth. This is the meaning of the Greek—*ἐπετίμησε*, i.e., *He rebuked*, and *with threats commadated* the devil, saying, *I command thee, Come out of him*; and if thou dost not obey, I will punish thee severely. This, too, was why Christ said to His Apostles, when they asked Him why they could not cast him out, *this kind goeth out by nothing save by prayer and fasting.*

Verse 19- *Jesus said*, &c. The Arabic has, *on account of the smallness of your faith.* The Apostles had faith, but to cast out so powerful and fierce a devil greater faith was required than the Apostles possessed: whence the Syriac renders the next verse as follows—*if there had been in you faith*, &c.

Verse 20- *Verily I say unto you*, &c.; *this mountain*—viz., Tabor, from which I am coming down. This is miraculous faith, which is not different from justifying faith, as the heretics maintain, but the same; for there is only one faith (Eph. iv. 5). This faith, however, is united with a sure confidence in God's assistance to perform the miracle which is aimed at. This confidence arises, first from the liberty of a holy conscience, which is familiar with God, which makes use of God as a friend, and penetrates into the treasures of His grace, that it may enjoy them; according to those words of S. John (1 John iii. 21): "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him."

2. From an interior instigation of God, as it were animating men, and stirring them up to such a miraculous work, and tacitly promising them His help to effect it. *Vide* Franc. Saurez, *Tract. de Fide disp.* 8, *sect.* 1, where he teaches that the faith of miracles, as regards its substance and essence, is an act of the Catholic faith by which we believe that God is omnipotent and faithful to His promises, and which is so drawn out and applied to the particular action, that it is able to beget the confidence which is necessary for working the miracle. From whence you may gather, that as this faith and confidence are in our own will and power, with the grace of God which