

TEMPTATIONS.

THERE IS AN EPISODE IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST WHICH WAS NOT WITNESSED BY ANY EVANGELIST: YET IT IS REPORTED BY ST. MATHEW, ST. MARK AND ST. LUKE. WE OWE THE ACCOUNT OF THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE SAVIOUR TO CHRIST HIMSELF, WHO COMMUNICATED IT TO THE APOSTLES. THE SOURCE COULD NOT BE MORE RELIABLE. THE FACT THAT THE TEMPTATIONS TOOK PLACE, WHEN CHRIST WAS ALONE, IN A PARTICULARLY FRIGHTFUL DISTRICT, COVERED WITH BARE ROCKS, CUT BY DEEP RAVINES AND INHABITED BY BEASTS, AND THAT OUR LORD THOUGHT FIT TO RECOUNT HIS INTERNAL EXPERIENCE TO HIS DISCIPLES, SUGGESTS THAT THEY HAD A PROFOUND MEANING FOR HIM AND FOR OURSELVES.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER JESUS WAS BAPTIZED, THE SPIRIT OF GOD DESCENDING UPON HIM, TO TAKE MORE AND MORE COMPLETE POSSESSION OF HIS SACRED HUMANITY, ^{and} DROVE HIM OUT INTO THE DESERT. ST. MATHEW TELLS US THE PURPOSE OF THIS ^DSUDEN MOVE, WHICH WAS NO OTHER THAN JESUS MIGHT BE "TEMPTED BY THE DEVIL."

THESE WORDS SEEM TO STATE A MYSTERY. THE SON OF GOD TEMPTED, CONSEQUENTLY PROVOKED TO EVIL! THE SON OF GOD IN IMMEDIATE CONTACT WITH THE PRINCE OF DEVILS, FACE TO FACE WITH THE ARCHDECEIVER! WITH THE HELP OF ST. PAUL AND THE FATHERS, CATHOLIC THEOLOGY THROWS BRILLIANT LIGHT ON THIS EXTRAORDINARY INCIDENT. 1) IN BECOMING MAN, THE DIVINE WORD ACCEPTED ALL THE CONDITIONS, ALL THE HUMILIATIONS OF OUR FALLEN NATURE. THIS IS WHY, SAYS THE APOSTLE OF THE GENTILES, HE WAS "ONE TEMPTED IN ALL THINGS, LIKE AS WE ARE". ST. PAUL DOES NOT HESITATE EVEN TO SAY THAT "IT BEHOVED HIM IN ALL THINGS TO BE MADE, LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN... FOR IN THAT, WHEREIN HE HIMSELF