



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.

John was writing his eye-witness account of Jesus some thirty years later than the other three accounts, possibly around 95AD. There had been time for growth, reflection and observation. Many thousands of Christians had by then lost their lives for their faith in the Lord Jesus, both in Rome and in Jerusalem. John himself had been in prison and was now in exile, the last of Jesus' twelve apostles to remain alive.

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 John 5: 22-47**

Ver. 22.—*For neither doth the Father judge, &c.* The Arabic omits *for*, but the Greek has it, and appositely. For this is the second reason by which Christ proves that He is God, and the second *greater work* which He said the Father would *show* Him. As Cyril says, “He brings forward another Divine and excellent argument, by which He shows that He is by nature truly God. For to whom else does it belong to judge the world but to God only?”

*To His Son.* One God with Himself, but by His Incarnation made man. As S. Austin says (*lib. 1, de Trin., c. 13*), “No one shall see the Father at the judgment of the quick and the dead, but all shall see the Son, because He is the Son of Man, that He may be seen by the wicked also, when ‘they shall look on Him whom they pierced.’”

You will say, Christ has been created judge as man, according to the words (Acts x. 42), “Who has been constituted by God the judge of quick and dead,” therefore Christ cannot prove from His being judge that He is God. I answer, that this correctly proves

such an one ye will receive. *Another* therefore will be that Antichrist whom the Jews will receive, though they rejected Christ. To this apply the words of Paul (2 Thes. ii. 10), "Therefore God shall send upon them the working of error, that they may believe a lie, that all may be judged, who have not believed the truth, but have consented to iniquity." So SS. Chrysostom, Cyril, Augustine, and the ancient writers, *passim*. Again, *another* may mean any false prophet, pretending to be Christ, and therefore a forerunner of Antichrist, like that Egyptian, shortly after the time of Christ, who led thousands of men to destruction (see *Jos. Bell. Jud. lib. 2, c. 12*).

Ver. 44.—*How can ye believe*, &c. "Ye love human glory, brief and poor: wherefore ye condemn Me, who despise human glory, and teach that it ought to be contemned; and that the Divine and eternal glory ought to be aimed at, which God will begin in the saints on earth, and bring to perfection in Heaven."

Ver. 45.—*Think not*, &c. Listen to Cyril, "He declares that there was no need of any other accuser, for that although all others were silent, the law of Moses by itself was sufficient for the condemnation of the Jews who did not believe in Him." He names Moses because the Jews placed all their faith and trust in him. As they said, "We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence He is" (John ix. 28).

Ver. 46.—*For if ye had believed Moses, perchance* (Vulg.) *ye would also have believed Me*. *Perchance*; so the Vulgate often translates the Greek, *ἀν*: but it is here used in the sense of *assuredly*. It is an expression of *confirmation*, not of *doubt*. "*Assuredly* ye would have believed Me." Hence some copies omit the word *perchance*.

*For he wrote of Me*: both in Leviticus, and the whole Pentateuch; for all his ceremonies and narrations prefigured Me. Also he clearly and expressly wrote of Me (Deut. xviii. 15, 18), saying, "The **LORD** thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

Again Moses wrote of Christ (Gen. xlix. 10), when he speaks of the time at which Messiah was to come. "The sceptre shall not be taken away from Judah, nor a leader from his thigh, until He that is to be sent shall come: and the same shall be the expectation of the nations" (Vulg.)

For already the sceptre had failed from Jacob, and had been transferred to Herod. Therefore it was the time of Messiah's Advent.

Ver. 47.—*But if*, &c. This is an argument *ad hominem*. For the Jews preferred Moses to Christ. Wherefore He rightly reasons against them thus: "If ye do not believe the writings of Moses (of whom ye make the highest account) which he wrote concerning Me, far less will ye believe My own words. In vain therefore do I bring so many testimonies, since I see you confirmed and obstinate in your hatred and rebellion against Me. Therefore I conclude My discourse. I will keep silence and depart."

it, because the power of judgment is a thing peculiar to God: it is a matter of the highest and most ample right. Wherefore neither would God communicate it, nor could it be fittingly communicated to a mere man, but to Christ alone, who is both God and man. For He as God has the supreme authority to judge, but as man, He is able to exercise this judgment visibly before men, to acquit, or to condemn. For a judge ought to be seen and heard by those who are accused.

Ver. 23.—*That all*, &c. For the Jews who would not then honour the Son of God, or acknowledge Him to be such, when they shall see His Divine power and majesty in the day of judgment, will be compelled to acknowledge, honour, and adore Him as God.

*Like as they honour the Father*: the words *like as* signify equality, not similitude.

*He who honoureth not the Son*, &c. Because by denying the Son he denies also the Father; for father and son are correlative terms: and he who has not a son cannot be a father. With regard to God, he who denies that the Son is the Son of God, denies that God the Father is truly and properly the Father, and has begotten. Tacitly he asserts that He could not beget a consubstantial and co-equal son. Moreover *he denies the Father*, because the Father *sent the Son* into the world, that by Him He might be honoured, in such a manner that He should be acknowledged to be the Father properly so called, and to have begotten a Son of the same substance with Himself, and to be adored with the same *latria* as Himself. He therefore who denies that the Son is God, denies that the Father begat God, which is the highest blasphemy of the Father. For he deprives the Father of that offspring which is His equal and worthy of Himself, and instead of a Divine and uncreated offspring assigns to Him one that is created and mean. Wherefore he denies Him to be a proper and Divine Father.

Ver. 24.—*Verily, verily*, &c. See what has been said on iii. 3. *Heareth*, so as to believe and obey My word. Thus He subjoins, *and believeth in Him that sent Me*, and by consequence believeth in Me as His Son, sent by the Father into the world to save it. He saith not, *and believeth in Me*, but speaks with greater amplitude. For in saying, *and believeth in Him that sent Me*, He implies the mystery of the Trinity, and the Incarnation, which two things are the chief articles of the Faith, and chiefly necessary to salvation. For He who sent the Son is God the Father; the Father and the Son together necessarily breathe the Holy Ghost. Lo, you have the whole Trinity.

*Hath, i.e.*, by right, deservedly, and in hope. See on iii. 16.

*Hath passed, i.e.*, certainly will pass (the perfect is used instead of the future because of the certainty of the thing, meaning, he will as certainly and infallibly pass as if He had already passed), *from death*, the temporal

death of the body, *unto life*, eternal and blessed, in heaven. For although the reprobate who will be damned will also be raised again to life, that they may burn in hell, yet that life in hell is rather a continual death, than life. For, as St. Austin saith, (*de Civ., lib. 6, c. 12*), “There is no more complete and worse death, than where death dieth not.” For in hell there will be living death, and deathly life, that is, always dying, but never dead. Again He speaks yet more plainly. He who believeth and obeyeth God the Father, and the Son who is sent by Him, *hath passed from the death* of the soul, dead through sin, to the spiritual life of grace, that he may after the death of the body pass to the life of glory.

Ver. 25.—*Verily, verify*, &c. “Lest thou shouldst think that this is to come to pass after a very long time, He subjoins, *and now is*. For if He were only announcing things future, there might not unreasonably be doubt, but He saith that these things shall come to pass whilst He is still conversant upon earth.” So Chrysostom. For, as Theophylact says, “He is speaking here of those three whom He was about to raise, the widow’s son, the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, and especially of Lazarus. For this last He was about to raise in Judea. And Christ is here speaking in Judea to Jews. This then is the signification of *now is*. Christ then rises from the spiritual resurrection of souls from sin to the life of grace, to the resurrection of those bodies which He was about to raise whilst He lived on earth. From this He rises to the full resurrection glory of the bodies which He will raise in the day of judgment. For from His power to raise souls from the death of sin to the life of grace, as from a thing greater and more difficult, Christ proves that He has power to raise the body, a thing less difficult. So Toletus, Jansen, and others. But S. Cyril and others think that the reference in this place is to the general resurrection, and they take the expression, *and now is*, to refer to the last judgment. For S. John (1st Epist. ii. 18) calls the whole time of the New Law *the last hour, i.e., the last time*, because this is the last stage of the world, and therefore all things which are done in it seem to be, as it were, present, and to be done in this present hour.

Some add that Christ is here speaking of the saints whom He raised when He Himself arose from the dead (S. Matt. xxvii. 52). The fullest meaning of the passage is to understand it of all whom Christ has raised, and will raise from the dead.

*And they that hear, i.e.,* who shall feel the force of the voice of Christ, or who shall obey Him, as bearing the voice of the Son of God, who calls the things which are not as though they were.

Ver. 26.—*For as the Father, &c. To have life in Himself* signifies three things.

1. To have life from Himself and from His own Essence, and from no other source. For the Essence of God is life, and His life is His Essence. God therefore essentially, and by His Essence, is essential, uncreated, and infinite life.
2. That God *has life in Himself*, is that He is the fountain of all life, of angels, men, and animals. As Euthymius says, *To have life in Himself* means that after the manner of a living fountain He is the Author of life, according to the words, “With Thee is the well of life” (Ps. xxxvi. 10).
3. Which follows from the two previous meanings, *to have life in Himself* means to

Ver. 40.—*And (yet), ye will not, &c.* “Ye do not wish to cleave to Me, to believe in Me, to receive My doctrine and My law.”

Ver. 41.—*I receive not brightness* (Vulg. *claritatem*), Greek, *δόξαν*, i.e., *glory, from men*. There is an anticipation, “Ye, O ye Scribes, suspect, and object that I preach such great things of Myself, and so carefully endeavour to prove My dignity and authority out of the desire of vain glory, that I may catch the breeze of popularity, being desirous of being taken to be the Son of God. I answer that I do not preach these things about Myself in order that I may get glory from men, but for your own sakes, that I may save you. For I am even athirst for your salvation. For I know that no one can be saved, and possess eternal life, but by Me, whom God has appointed the Saviour of the world.” So S. Cyril.

Ver. 42.—*But I know you, &c.* “I know and penetrate the inmost recesses of your hearts (for I, being God, am the Searcher of hearts), and I see in them nothing of Divine love, but that they are full of ambition, avarice, and pride. And this is the reason why ye will not receive those clear testimonies which I bring forward in My favour. The root from whence your unbelief and obstinacy spring is not ambition of glory in Me, but your own lack of charity. For if ye truly loved God, ye would indeed acknowledge that I have been sent by Him, and am clearly described in the Scriptures.” Thus even now the cause of heresy in many is a vitiated love, because indeed many love the liberty of the flesh which heresy teaches, and do not love God, who forbids it.

Cyril connects this verse with what precedes, thus,—“I have not proclaimed these great things about Myself for the sake of glory, that I may gain human praise, but that ye may learn (as I know) that the love of God is not in you, deprived of which, how can ye come to Me who am the Son of God?”

Differently also Maldonatus and Toletus: “I preach that I am Messiah, and the Son of God, not because I seek the vain glory of men, but because I know that ye have not that love of God which leads to eternal life, so that I may lead you to this love by faith, by which ye may believe in Me.”

Ver. 43.—*I am come, &c., in My Father’s name*, as the Son-sent by God the Father, that by His authority I may fulfil those things which He has promised to you concerning Messiah, to His alone praise and glory, so that through Him there may be showered upon you the knowledge of God, grace, salvation, and eternal life. This I have clearly proved to you by the many testimonies which the Father hath given Me. Yet ye do not receive Me, but treat Me as a false prophet. Wherefore by the just judgment of God it shall come to pass, that if another, who is really a false prophet, shall come to you, one who is not sent by God, but who shall come in his own name, i.e., in his own authority, falsely boasting himself to be the Messiah,

Word of the Father, and the image of His Substance (or Person), whom whosoever seeth sees also the Father, ye despise this way, and will not believe Me. Wherefore ye know not the Father, and are deprived of Divine knowledge.”

5. Toletus: “Ye, O ye Jews, being terrified by the voice of the angel’s trumpet, and by the fire that lightened on Sinai, asked that ye might not hear any more that terrible voice, nor see the dreadful fire, but that God might speak to you by Moses as a mediator. But you keep not the promise by which you bound yourselves. You accepted the stipulation that ye would hear the Prophet of your own nation whom He should send. But His word and compact abide not in you, because what ye promised ye are not willing to fulfil. For, behold, I am He whom He has sent, and ye neither believe Me, nor hear Me, as ye promised.”

The first meaning seems the best and most apposite.

Ver. 39.—*Search* (scrutamini) *the Scriptures*, &c. The word for *Search* in Greek, as well as Latin, may be taken either in the indicative, or the imperative mood. Cyril takes it in the indicative: “Ye, O ye scribes, assiduously turn and search the Scriptures which bear testimony concerning Me, but ye do not care to understand them, because ye will not come unto Me.” But SS. Augustine and Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius, and others, take it in the imperative: “Search ye the Scriptures, and in them ye will find God the Father bearing witness to Me.”

Moreover, by the word *Search*, Christ, says S. Chrysostom, pressed upon the Jews not merely the bare reading of the Scriptures, but a thorough and diligent examination of them. He did not say, *Read the Scriptures*, but *Search* them. Dig out the hidden treasures which they contain concerning Me and Divine things, just as those who search for veins of gold and silver dig in the earth to find them. Thus the Beræans to whom Paul preached (Acts xvii.) searched the Scriptures, with a sincere desire to know nothing but the truth. Therefore in the Scriptures they found Christ whom Paul preached to them.

*Because in them, i.e.*, in understanding and believing them, *ye think*, &c. Because if any one believes and does what the Scriptures bid him, he will attain eternal life. From this it is plain that most of the Jews, and especially the Pharisees, believed in the immortality of the soul, and in an existence after death, in which God would give eternal life to the just, and death eternal to the unjust.

*And* (Vulg.), *i.e.*, *because*, for the Hebrew *vau*, or *and*, often has a causative force, meaning *because*, for Christ now gives the reason why He said, *Search the Scriptures: because they are they which testify of Me*. Many parts do this literally, many more in an allegorical and mystical sense. For “Christ is the end of the Law” (Rom. x. 4). And as S. Peter says, “To Him give all the prophets witness, that all who believe in Him should receive remission of sins through His name.” Let therefore the reader of Holy Scripture, but especially interpreters, doctors, and preachers search the Scriptures, and they will find Christ in them all, either openly revealed, or else veiled in shadows and figures.

have life in His own power, to be the Lord of life to all things living, so that He according to His own good pleasure gives them life, preserves it, and takes it away. This makes plain the unity of Essence, *i.e.*, of Deity, in the Father and the Son. For if the Son had a different Essence from the Father, then He would have life in another, that is to say, in the Father, who gave Him life. But now He hath life in Himself, *i.e.*, in His own Divine Essence, which He hath altogether in common with the Father. So S. Chrysostom. “Behold,” he says, “how they differ not in any respect whatsoever, save that the one is the Father, and the other the Son.”

*So hath He given also*, &c. In that He is the Son of God, and that according to the three ways just spoken of. As S. Augustine says, that His life might not have need of life, that He should not be understood to have life by way of participation: for if He had life by way of participation, He might, by losing the participation, become without life. Such doctrine concerning the Son accept not, think not, believe not. The Father therefore continues as life, the Son also continues as life. The Father is life in Himself, not from the Son: the Son is life in Himself, but from the Father.

Ver. 27.—*And hath given*, &c. Because Christ as God hath life in Himself, from hence, in that He is man, He hath power to judge all men. The word *because* must here be taken specifically, and means *inasmuch as*. But it may be taken even more expressively in a reduplicative and causative sense, as giving the express reason why God gave Christ judicial authority. That reason is because Christ is the Son of Man, *i.e.*, because He deigned to become Incarnate. As though it were said, “God hath willed to judge men by Christ a man, that judgment might take place in a congruous manner, that is, after a sensible and human manner, that as He Himself saved the world by the man Christ, so He would also judge it by the same, by that man, I say, who is God, who took human life, and laid it down for man’s salvation.”

Wherefore it is that He by this great emptying of Himself, by which He willed to become man, merited this exaltation of judicial power, that He who was the Saviour of all should be the judge of all. So Maldonatus and others. S. Augustine gives also a twofold reason. The first is, “that those who are to be judged might see their judge. For those who shall be judged will be both good and bad. It was right that in the judgment the form of a servant should be shown both to the good and the bad, but the form of God should be reserved for the good only.” The second reason is, “because the judge shall have that form in which He stood before His judge. That form which was judged shall judge: unrighteously was it judged, but righteously shall it judge.”

Ver. 28.—*Marvel not*, &c. . . . *the hour, i.e.*, the time of the Evangelical Law, which is the last, and in the end of which shall be the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment.

*In their graves:* those who are dead and buried, including also the unburied dead. For as S. Augustine says, “By those who are buried in ordinary course, He signified also those who do not receive ordinary burial.”

*The voice of the Son of God:* this shall be the sound of the archangel’s, probably Michael’s trumpet, *Arise, ye dead, come to judgment.* This shall be accompanied by the sound of the trumpets and voices of other angels. The sound is spoken of as the voice of God, because by His command, through the ministry of angels, an effect shall be produced on the air which shall resound throughout the whole world, and be effectual as at least a moral instrument to raise the dead. For it is not necessary to attribute to this trumpet any physical power of raising the dead.

Ver. 29.—*They that have done good, &c. . . . shall proceed,* Greek *ἐκπορεύσονται*, i.e., *shall go forth*, out of their tombs and their graves, towards the Valley of Jehoshaphat, where the universal judgment shall take place.

Christ here sets before the unbelieving Jews His authority to judge, that through fear of it He may make them fear, may make them contrite, and convert them. He did the same at the end of His life, when, being adjured by Caiaphas, the High Priest, to say if He was the Son of God, He answered that He was, and added (Matt. xxvi. 64), “Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”

There is nothing more terrible, and at the same time more effectual for rousing the minds of men to repentance and leading a holy life than a lively representation of the last judgment. So Christ, when He ascended into heaven, commanded His apostles by the angels to preach his return to judgment (Acts i. 11). S. Paul pressed the same thing upon the Areopagites (Acts xvii. 31). For in that judgment shall the destiny of each be finally decided for everlasting happiness or everlasting woe. “In all thy works,” therefore, “remember thy last end, and thou wilt never sin” (Ecclus. vii. 40). In very deed that fateful day will be the last of this world, and the horizon of eternity, which shall separate the just from the unjust and set them far apart, heaping upon the just utmost felicity, and weighing down the unjust with calamity, and that for ever and ever. Think constantly of this wonderful difference, be zealous for holiness, live for eternity.

Ver.30.—*I cannot, &c.* Christ shows that His judgment, by which, as man, He will judge all men, will be a last judgment, for his reason that He cannot either judge or will any other thing than that which the Father judges and wills. For He, in that He is God, has the very same judgment, the very self-same Divine mind and will that the Father has. But in that He is man, He is wholly governed by the Divinity and the indwelling Word, so that He can neither judge nor will anything but that which the Godhead judges and wills. So S. Augustine.

*As I hear, so I judge:* always, and especially in the judgment day. *I hear*, i.e., *I know, I understand.* As S. Chrysostom says, “By *hearing* nothing else is meant than that nothing else is possible but the Father’s judgment. I so judge as if the Father Himself

Ver. 38.—*Ye have not His word abiding* (Arabic, *made strong*) *in you, &c.* The connection and subsequent argument of these words is obscure, which different writers explain in different ways.

1. You may explain them as a sort of concession, thus. “You, O ye scribes, when I allege the testimony of God My Father concerning Me, make objection that ye have not heard it, that ye have neither seen His face, nor His appearance, as Moses saw, whom ye profess to believe. I grant what you say, but I add that no one, not even Moses, heard God’s own voice, nor saw His appearance, nor His face. They only beheld that immense fire by which God was concealed, and heard a sound formed in the air by an angel, instead of God’s voice. For I alone, who am the Son of God by nature, have heard His real voice, and seen His appearance, or His Divine face, which I see continually. Nevertheless I urge upon you that ye have heard the voice of God giving attestation to Me, when at My baptism the Father publicly declared, *This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* Again, ye have heard the word of God concerning Me in the Holy Scriptures, Moses and the prophets, who bear witness that I am the Messiah. But ye, although ye have heard this word and testimony of God concerning Me, yet have it not abiding in you, because ye receive not in your minds, nor understand, nor believe it, inasmuch as ye do not believe in *Me*, as sent by God. In this ye gravely err and sin. For if ye have heard the word of an angel in God’s stead speaking with Moses as His servant, and believe him, much more ought ye to believe the Word of God bearing witness to Me that I am His Son, especially since Moses bears witness to Me, and bids you to hearken unto Me, as follows. So Euthymius. This meaning seems clear, plain, and true.

2. However, S. Hilary (*lib. 9, de Trin.*) thus connects and expounds this whole passage. “This is why ye have not heard His voice, nor seen His appearance, neither doth His word abide in you, because ye do not believe in Me.” As though it were said, “If ye would believe in Me, ye would hear the Father’s voice, and see His appearance. For he that seeth Me seeth the Father also. In like manner, he that heareth Me heareth the Father also, and the word of the Father abideth in him.”

3. SS. Cyril and Chrysostom think that these words were spoken to confound the Jews, who boasted that they had heard and seen God promulgating the Decalogue on Sinai. “Ye boast falsely, O ye Jews, that ye have seen and heard God on Sinai, for God is a pure Spirit. Wherefore that voice which ye heard, and that appearance of fire which ye saw on Sinai, was neither the voice nor the true appearance of God, but only a corporeal symbol and figure, shadowing forth to you who are fleshly and ignorant the invisible Godhead.”

4. S. Athanasius (*lib. 4, cont. Arian.*) by the *Word*, Greek, *λόγος*, understands Christ the Son of God, who is the Word of the Father. This he asserts is aptly joined with the appearance and form of God, because He is *the character*, and *the lively image* of the Father. And the meaning is, “Ye have not heard the voice of God, nor seen His form; and when there remained for you one only way to do this, by believing in Me, who am the

1. Because He did them with this end and object, that by them He might prove that He was Christ and God.

2. Because Jesus did all the miracles which the prophets had foretold would be done by Christ. 3. Because although certain of the prophets and holy men had done some miracles, they had done neither so many nor so great as Jesus had done. Again, the prophets had wrought miracles, not by their own power, but through invoking God; but Christ did them by His own power, and His own authority, as being the Lord. Whence it was easy to discern that He was the Messiah and God.

In two special ways therefore the miracles of Jesus prove that He is God. First, by the way in which He wrought them, as I have said; because He employed that most mighty power, peculiar to Himself, in working miracles. Then He reserved some miracles to Himself, which by their very nature prove beyond possibility of doubt that He was God. Of this sort was His birth of a Virgin, His knowing the secrets of the heart, and what was in man, and all things. This last was the reason which the apostles gave for believing that He came forth from God. Of like nature was His foretelling all things which were about to happen in His Passion, death, and resurrection, according to the Scriptures. Also that when He willed He laid down His life upon the cross, and resumed it on the third day; that He ascended into heaven; that He sent the Holy Ghost; lastly, that He transmitted that marvellous power of working miracles to His apostles and seventy-two disciples. This also was peculiar to Christ of which I am about to speak,—the force and the power at all times and in all places, ready and at hand, wholly unrestricted, of working such great, such incredible miracles, and so wholly beyond the power of nature; so full and perfect, so salutary, so true, so sure and glorious, so Divine, and so in accordance with the character of the Son of God; among which stands pre-eminent that salutary and instantaneous power of healing every kind of disease in all who in all places and at all times approached Him for the sake of recovering their health. This absolute power, and ever-abiding virtue, belongs to Christ alone. Neither Elijah, nor Eliseus, nor even Moses, nor any angel, had it in the time of the Old Testament; for all these only wrought miracles at intervals, as appears from perusing their histories. Moreover, their miracles are summed up in a definite number; the miracles of Christ were continuous and incessant, and could not be numbered. So S. Augustine and others. Add to all this the results of the death of Christ, the conversion of the whole world by twelve fishermen, the fervour of the faithful in the primitive Church, the unconquerable strength of innumerable martyrs, yea, the exultation in their torments of even boys, virgins, and women. All these things proclaim aloud that Christ is to be worshipped, loved, and adored as the Son of God, for He alone could work such Divine works peculiarly belonging to God.

Ver. 37.—*The Father, &c. . . hath borne witness, as at My baptism. Again, He hath borne witness concerning Me, through the Scriptures by Moses and the prophets.*

Observe, Christ in this place, besides the testimony of John, adduces three other and greater witnesses to show that He is the Messiah: 1. By His miracles (ver. 36); 2. By the Father's voice at His baptism; 3. By the Scriptures (ver. 39).

were judge.”

*Because I seek not Mine own will, i.e., Mine own alone, or diverse from the Father's will, for I have no such will, but the will of Him that sent Me: for My Divine will is identical with the Father's, and My human will is wholly conformable to the Divine will. As S. Augustine says, “not that He has no will of His own in judging, but because His will is not so His own as to be diverse from the Father's will.” He gives the reason à priori why His future judgment should be just, because, indeed, His will is altogether subject and conformed to the Divine will, because it subsists in the Divine Person of the Word, and is ruled by it. For the will bends and rules the intellect and its judgment in whatever direction it pleases.*

Ver. 31.—*If I bear witness of Myself, that I am the Son of God, and therefore as man altogether conformed to the judgment and will of God, My witness is not true, that is, legitimate, judicial, worthy of credit. The word true here is not opposed to false, but to untrustworthy, uncertain. It answers to the Hebrew word neeman, faithful, worthy of credit. For it may be that a man may utter most true testimony concerning himself, and yet may fail to gain credit because of a suspicion that he has too great love of himself, as Euthymius says.*

There is a *prolepsis* by which Christ meets a tacit objection of the scribes, to the following effect. “Thou, O Jesus, proclaimest Thyself to be the Son of God, and so in all things to follow the judgment of God. But we will not believe Thee unless Thou shalt prove what Thou sayest by the testimony of God, or of men worthy of credit. This testimony of Thine in a matter which peculiarly concerns Thyself appears to us open to suspicion.” Jesus replies, “I grant you that My testimony concerning Myself is not legitimate, nor worthy of credit, if I alone bear witness of Myself. I grant therefore that you need not believe Me alone; but I am not alone, but others worthy of credit bear witness of Me, as will appear by what follows.” Christ is here speaking of the common opinion of the Jews, not uttering His own sentiments, as appears from chap. viii. 13, where the Jews openly object to Christ, *Thou bearest testimony of Thyself, Thy testimony is not true.* Then Christ answers, *My testimony is true, &c., because I am not alone, but I, and the Father who sent Me.* So S. Cyril.

Ver. 32.—*There is another who beareth, &c. Another, viz., God the Father, who at My baptism spoke in thunder from heaven, This is My beloved Son.* So S. Cyril, Bede. Again, *another, i.e., John the Baptist, testifies to Me.* So S. Chrysostom and others. *Another* then here means, there are others who testify that I am the Son of God, namely, God the Father, John the Baptist, Moses and the Prophets, also My Divine works and miracles. For all of these Christ proceeds to adduce as witnesses to prove that He is Messiah, and the Son of God.

*And I know that it is true.* So far as I Myself am concerned, I do not need these witnesses, for by Divine knowledge I know that what they testify is true, that I am the Son of God. But I bring forward their testimony for your sakes, that ye may believe what is attested by so many witnesses.

Ver. 33.—*Ye sent unto John, &c.* Ye sent messengers to him as a man in your estimation holy, and worthy of all credit, to ask him if he were the Messiah. John answered that not he, but I, am the Messiah. This testimony he gave not out of friendship, or favour to Me, but to *the truth*. For that he would testify to nothing but the truth, ye yourselves thought, when ye were willing to receive him as the Messiah. *Therefore ye cannot reject his testimony, says Euthymius.*

Ver. 34.—*But I receive not, &c.* I do not require the witness of John, for I am God, and the Son of God, to whom John, Moses, and the Prophets ought to yield, and be taught by, and receive authority from.

*But this I say that ye may be saved:* meaning, as S. Chrysostom says, “I do not need the testimony of man, for I am God. But since John, whom ye admire as a prophet, is of so great authority with you, when ye do not believe Me working miracles, I bring back to your remembrance his testimony, that I may draw you and save you.”

Ver. 35.—*He was a burning and shining lamp.* Greek, *ὁ λύχνος, the illustrious and famous lamp.* John was not the light itself, shining of itself (for this was what Christ Himself was), but he was the lamp or lantern which, receiving light from Christ, burnt in himself with the knowledge and love of God, and afforded light to others by the example of his sanctity, and the fervour of his preaching. For God sent John after a long silence for ages of all the prophets, as it were a heavenly prophet, to be a lamp to illuminate the dark ignorance of the Jews, and to show them the true Light, Christ the Lord, and to bear a torch before Him. So S. Cyril and others. For the Only Begotten One is Light by nature, who, out of Light, that is, the Substance of the Father, hath shone forth. John indeed was a *lamp*, because he shone with light derived from Him. He shone through oil, *i.e.*, with the grace of the Holy Spirit, which coming into our souls as it were lamps, nourishes and keeps them. Wherefore the type of John was the lamp of oil burning before God in the Temple in the Holy of Holies. For so did John shine before Christ. Therefore was John the Baptist always a burning and shining lamp in the tabernacle of witness, as Cyril says.

*Moraliter, S. Bernard (Serm. de S. Joan Bapt.)* teaches that holy men and preachers ought first to burn with charity and zeal in themselves before they shine in preaching to others. “*John was a burning and shining lamp.* It does not say, *shining and burning*, because the brightness of John sprang from his fervour, not his fervour from his splendour. For there are some who do not shine because they burn, but rather burn in order that they may shine. But these plainly do not burn with the spirit of charity, but with the love of vanity. Listen to Alcuin on this passage: “John was a lamp, enlightened by light from Christ, burning with faith and love, shining in word and action, who was sent before to confound the enemies of Christ, according to the words, ‘I have prepared a lamp for My Christ, I will clothe His enemies with

confusion” (Vulg.)

Such a one was S. Athanasius. Hence S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat.* 21), speaking in his praise, calls him “the eye of the world, the prelate of priests, the leader and master of confessors, a sublime voice, a firm pillar of the faith, next to John the Baptist, a second burning and shining lamp.” He adds, “Athanasius was as an adamant to the persecutors” (by his invincible patience), “a magnet to disputers, to attract them to himself, and to make them be at harmony one with another.” And again, “Let virgins praise him as their betrothed, wives as their director, anchorites as him who wakes them up, monks as their lawgiver, the simple as their guide, those given to speculation as their theologian, the joyous as their moderator, the unfortunate as their consoler, the aged as their staff, youths as their instructor, the poor as a dispenser, the rich as their almoner, the sick as their physician, the whole as the guardian of their health, and, in short, all as he who is made all things to all that he may gain all, or as many as possible.” Such a one was S. Basil, of whom the same Nazianzen says, “The voice of Basil was as thunder, because his life was as lightning.” Because he lightened in his life, therefore did he thunder with his voice.

*But ye wished to rejoice for an hour (Vulg.), i.e.*, for a short time, *in his light.* When John began to preach with so much sanctity of life and zeal, ye rejoiced because so great a prophet had been sent by God, who, ye trusted, would be your Messiah. But when John began to rebuke your wickedness, and to indicate that I, the poor and lowly One, was the Messiah, ye despised John. Ye would not believe his testimony, because if ye had believed it, ye would have received Me as the Messiah.

Ver. 36.—*But I have greater witness, &c.: i.e.*, than John’s witness; *greater* in the sense of *surer, more efficacious*, that I am Messiah, the Son of God. This greater testimony is My works, My miracles which the Father hath given Me, that by them I may show that He Hath sent Me. “For one might find fault with John’s testimony, as if it were given out of favour,” says Euthymius; “but the works being free from all suspicion stop the mouths of the contentious,” says S. Chrysostom. “For the works might convince even the insane.”

*The works (the miracles) which I do, &c.*, such as the recent healing of the paralytic. I speak of My supernatural works, which could not be effected by any natural cause, but are peculiar to God alone. Wherefore they are as it were the seal of God, by which He bears testimony to Me, and seals and confirms My doctrine. So S. Chrysostom and others.

From this it follows that the Jews both could and ought to have known of a certainty that Jesus was the Messiah, or the Christ, and the Son of God, by the miracles which He wrought.