

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 10: 18-42

Ver. 18.—*No one taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.* For though the Jews are about to slay Me by force, yet this force of theirs would not avail against Me, unless I allow it of My own accord. And again, “Though I allow it, yet it is still in My power to die, or not to die. For by My Godhead I can impart such strength to My manhood, that it cannot be destroyed by any nails, blows, scourgings, or wounds which I suffer by My own will; just as I support the bodies of the beatified, and render them impassible.” So Toletus. And hence Christ on the Cross cried aloud and gave up the ghost to show that He died without compulsion, and of His own accord, when He might, had He so willed, have lived on. For He who had strength to cry aloud, had strength also to live, so that the centurion beholding this said, “Truly this was the Son of God” (Matt. xxvii. 54).

I have power, &c. By My mighty and glorious Resurrection, which My soul will effect through the Power of My Divinity, hypostatically united to it. He here signifies that He is God as well as man; as man He lays down His life, as God He resumes it. So S. Cyril.

This commandment have I received from My Father. This was the reason for laying down His life. He was so ordered by the Father, lest the Jews should object "You have taken this duty on yourself, that Thou mightest be worshipped, as the Mediator, Messiah, and Saviour of the world." It is hence clear that it was a weighty commandment He received, that of suffering and dying on the Cross. "He became obedient" (to the commandment of the Father, for obedience properly so called presupposes a command, and is in fact its correlative; for obedience is that which is ordered, and a command implies obedience, for it is the formal object of obedience) "even to the death of the cross." So S. Cyril, S. Ambrose (*de Fide*, v. 5), & Thomas, Suarez and others. But this command did not physically compel the will of Christ to obey it. It left it free. But it pertained to the Person of the Word to "prevent" the will of Jesus by supplies of grace, to which It foresaw it would willingly consent, and obey the command. And it was in this respect, that is in consequence of the continual keeping (*custodiam*) of the Word, that the manhood of Christ was said to be extrinsically impeccable, not because the Word predetermined It, but because It supplied It with fitting aids, with which It foresaw it would freely obey the command. For by this foreknowledge of future conditional events the freedom of Christ's will is fully preserved (see Suarez, part iii. Quæst. xviii.). And by this generous obedience in so difficult a matter, Christ obtained salvation for us, and glory for Himself. Set then, O Religious, this command of the Father, and this obedience of Christ before thine eyes, when any difficult task is imposed on thee by thy Superior. R. Juda says admirably (*Pirke Avoth. cap. v.*), "Be daring as a leopard, swift as an eagle, nimble as a deer, courageous as a lion, to do the will of thy Father which is in heaven"

Ver. 20.—*And many of them said, &c.*

Ver. 21.—*Others said, &c.* For he is proud as Lucifer, and instigated by him, He calls God His Father and makes Himself the Son of God.

He is thoroughly mad in saying that he lays down His life of Himself, though we see that He is alive, and no one does so except by compulsion. Moreover, Christ did not reply to these calumnies, as not being worthy of an answer, and also because He allowed those who supported Him to answer, for we give greater credit to others than to one who testifies of himself.

Ver. 22.—*And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication.* When the first temple was dedicated, as S. Cyril holds, or rebuilt by Zerubbabel, as S. Chrysostom and others suppose, or what is more probable its rededication, after its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes. The feast was held on the 25th of the month Casleu. It was celebrated with great rejoicing, and was called the feast of Lights (see Josephus, *Ant* xii. 2, and *2 Macc.* i. 18). All which S. John records from chap vii. 2 to this point took place in the two

months between the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of the Dedication: and in the three following months up to the Feast of the Passover there occurred the events which are recorded here to the end of the Gospel, and also in S. Luke from chap. xv. onwards.

Tropologically:—These *Encænias* set forth the renewal of a mind polluted by sin, and sanctified and consecrated anew to God by repentance.

And it was winter. This was stated, says Theophylact, to signify the approaching time of the Passion which took place the following spring. S. Cyril adds that it was said in order to give the reason why Jesus walked in the Porch, so as to be under cover from the cold. Mystically there is here signified (says the Gloss) the coldness of the Jews, who draw not near to the fire, *i.e.* who believe not in Christ. S. Augustine says, “The Jews were cold in charity and love, and were burning with eagerness to do hurt; they approached Him not as followers, but pressed on Him as persecutors.” “Do thou also,” says Theophylact, “while it is winter, that is while this present life is shaken with the whirlwinds of iniquity, keep the spiritual dedication feast, by daily renewing thyself, and by ordering the ascensions of thy heart.” Christ will be present to thee in Solomon’s Porch, making for thee a peaceable resting-place.

Ver. 23.—*And Jesus waited in the temple.* In the Porch (or Portico), the outer part of the temple. *In Solomon’s porch.* The temple of the Jews had two parts. The first, the Sanctuary, frequented only by the Priests, who discharged three functions, burning morning and evening incense on the altar of incense, lighting the lamps and replacing the shew-bread every Sabbath. The inner part, the Holy of Holies, which the High Priest alone entered once every year on the day of expiation. But since Christ was not descended from the tribe of Levi, He could not enter either of these parts of the temple.

But in front of the temple there was a Court or Vestibule; the upper part was the court of the Priests, the outer part, adjoining the inner court, was the court of the people, where they prayed and witnessed the sacrifices which were offered in the Court of the Priests. It was in this Court that Christ went to and fro and taught, and it had porticoes all round it, in which the people took shelter from the weather. Ribera (*de Templo*, 1. 6) and others think that this was called Solomon’s Porch. Others with Villalpandus, Maldonatus, &c., think more probably that this particular portico was called Solomon’s as having been built by him long after the building of the temple, when the slope of the hill was levelled, and the portico was built at the eastern side of the temple. (See Josephus, *B. Jud.* vi. 6.) It was called Solomon’s to distinguish it from the other porticoes which others added to the temple. Or else, as Baronius thinks, when the temple was burnt by the Chaldeans this portico alone remained, or else was rebuilt in the same form as that in which it had been erected by Solomon. (See on Acts iii. 11.)

Ver. 24.—*Then came the Jews,* &c. How long dost thou keep us in suspense? We wish to see the Messiah, and hope that Thou wilt declare Thyself to be He. They pretend this, in order to draw a confession from Christ, on which to accuse Him. For as says S.

Ver. 38.—*But if I do,* &c., *and I in the Father,* working by the same Godhead and omnipotence which I have received from Him. Accordingly S. Augustine, Cyril, Leontius, &c., consider that the words, “I in the Father and the Father in Me,” mean the same as “I and the Father are one.” S. Augustine says (*in loc.*), “We are in God, and God in us. But can we say, ‘I and God are one?’ Thou art in God, because God containeth thee; God is in thee, because thou art made the temple of God. But because thou art in God, and God in thee, canst thou therefore say, ‘He who seeth God seeth Me,’ as the only Begotten said, ‘He that seeth Me, seeth the Father also, and I and the Father are one?’ Recognise what is proper to the Lord, and also the duty of the servant. What is *proper* to the Lord is equality with the Father; the duty of the servant is to be partaker of the Saviour.”

Ver. 39.—*The Jews therefore sought again to take Him, but He escaped out of their hands.* “That their anger might be appeased by His withdrawal,” says S. Chrysostom. S. Augustine, acutely but symbolically, “They took Him not, because they had not the hand of faith.” He escaped by His Divine Power, making Himself invisible. As He did, viii. 59.

Ver. 40.—*And went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized.* In Bethabara, or Bethania, where Christ was baptized by him. He afterwards baptized in Ænon (see chap. iii. 23), frequently shifting His abode. He went through other districts of Jordan, He withdrew to Bethabara, that the people who followed Him thither might call to mind the testimony which John had borne to Him on the very spot, and also the testimony of God the Father at His baptism, and might on this account believe in Him. So S. Chrysostom.

And there abode: till the Passover and his own Passion drew nigh, when He returned to Jerusalem, and raised up Lazarus, which provoked the scribes and rulers against Him.

Ver. 41.—*And many resorted,* &c. *And yet we believed him.* Therefore we ought the more firmly to believe in Jesus, who proves that He is the Messiah by so many signs and miracles. So S. Chrysostom.

There was also another reason for their believing in Christ; namely, that they found Him to be mightier than John in His miracles, in the power of His discourses, in His holiness of life, as John had foretold. And hence they inferred, If we see that the other things which John spake of Him are true, it is therefore equally true (as he said) that Jesus was the Messiah.

Ver. 42.—*And many believed on Him,* for doubtless, as S. Augustine says, “they apprehended Him when He was tarrying with them, and not as the Jews wished to apprehend Him, as He was going away. Let us therefore by the lamp attain to the day; for John was a lamp, and bore witness to the day.”

the Highest;” “ye are the angels of the high God.” And that which is properly said of angels is extended to all Israelites and the faithful, for they are the sons of God. But when the word “Elohim” is used “absolutely” (without limitation) it signifies the One and True God.

Christ therefore, instead of overthrowing the opinion of the Jews, rather confirms it.

Ver. 35.—*If He called them gods unto whom the word of God came*, whom the Word of God appointed judges and gave them authority by Moses and his successors, and commanded them to judge rightly as partaking His authority, making them (says Euthymius) gods, as it were, upon earth. *And the Scripture cannot be broken*: no one, *i.e.*, can take from them the name of judges, which the irrevocable word of Scripture has given them.

Ver. 36.—*Say ye of Him*, &c. This is an argument from the less to the greater. “If judges, who only participate in the power of God, are rightly called gods, much more can I be called God, who am the Very Word of God.”

S. Augustine and Bede more acutely, but less to the point, maintain that the force of the argument is this, if they who are merely partakers of the word of God are called gods, much more am I, who am not merely a partaker of the word of God, but the Word of God Itself.

Note here that the words, “He whom the Father hath sanctified,” have several meanings. (1.) He to whom the Father hath communicated the sanctity wherewith He is holy, whom the Father, when He begat Him, made to be holy, says S. Augustine. For God the Father who is holy begat the Son who is holy. So Bede, Toletus, and others. The Son is therefore holy in His generation and essence. (2.) The Father sanctified Christ as man, by means of the Hypostatical Union; for by this (speaking accurately) is the manhood of Christ sanctified in the highest degree. For by the very act wherewith the Person of the Word (Itself uncreated and infinite Sanctity) assumed the humanity, and united it hypostatically to Itself, It clearly sanctified it, and thus infused into its soul the pre-eminent sanctity of charity, grace, and all other virtues. And so S. Hilary says, “Jesus was sanctified to be His Son, since S. Paul says, ‘He was predestinated to be the Son of God with power, by the Spirit of sanctification.’” And so too S. Chrysostom, and S. Athanasius (*de Incarn. Verb. sub. init.*) “Sanctified” is therefore the same as “sealed,” as I said chap. vi. 27. (3.) Theophylact says, “He sanctified, that is He sanctioned His sacrifice for the world, showing that He was not such a god as the others were; for to save the world is the work of God, not of a man deified by grace. As Christ says (xvii. 19), *I sanctify Myself, i.e.*, I sacrifice Myself, I offer Myself as a holy Victim.” (4.) Maldonatus says: “He sanctified *Me, i.e.*, He designated and destined Me to the office of Saviour,” referring to Jer. i. 5, though the truer meaning of the passage is different, as I have there stated.

Ver. 37.—*If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not*. He appeals to the miracles which He wrought by the command and supernatural power of God the Father. For these, as being divine, proved Him to be the very Son of God.

Augustine, “They do not desire the truth, but are getting up a charge, to accuse Him of making Himself the Messiah.” So also S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius. But Christ so guarded His reply as not to give room for a false charge, and yet made it clear to the faithful that He was Christ the Son of God.

If thou art Christ, tell us plainly. That we may all be able to worship Thee openly as the Messiah. So did these hypocrites fulfil the predictions of David (Ps. xxii. 16 and Ps. cxviii. 12). For, as S. Chrysostom says, “Christ spake everything openly, and said nothing secretly.” And S. Augustine, “They sought to hear from Him that He was Christ, that so they might accuse Him of claiming kingly power.”

Ver. 25.—*Jesus answered them, I told you*, &c. I have told you plainly that I am the Messiah. But ye said, Thou bearest witness of Thyself. Thy witness is not true (John viii. 15). But what I have said I constantly confirm by miracles. For I do them in the name, that is by the authority, will, and supernatural Power of God the Father. But ye continue obstinately in your unbelief, and falsely state that they are the works of the devil. How then will ye believe My words? So S. Chrysostom.

Ver. 26.—*But ye believe not*, &c. Ye will not submit to Me as your Shepherd, and accept Me as your Messiah. But ye rather wish Me to submit Myself to you, and to be My superiors, censors, and calumniators. It is ambition which makes you grudge Me the headship of the Church; and that ye refuse to believe Me. S. Augustine by “sheep” understands the elect. But this is not the proper nor the adequate cause of their rejecting Christ. For reprobation is not the cause, but rather the result of unbelief and sin. It was not that God had cast off the Jews that they sinned by unbelief. But it was because they chose to disbelieve and sin, that God cast them off. And it was not an adequate cause, because many of them who disbelieved in Him, believed in Him afterwards through the preaching of the apostles. And again some then believed in Christ who were not predestinated, but afterwards fell away into sin, as Judas and others.

Ver. 27.—*My sheep hear my voice*. He leaves the inference to them: but ye hear not my voice, and are therefore not My sheep. (See above, ver. 4.)

Ver. 28.—*And I give unto them eternal life*. The sheep of Christ are of two kinds: first, all Christians; and secondly, those alone who are predestinated to glory. The words of Christ relate to the second class. And S. Augustine shows why they do not perish. For they are of those sheep of whom it is said, “The Lord knoweth who are His.” They are specially the sheep of Christ, none of whom perish. And yet of the former class Christ also says, “I give unto them eternal life,” that is, as far as I may. I make them the promise. I give them all necessary helps. I wish for their salvation. If then any of them perish it is not My fault but theirs, for they will not co-operate

with My grace. For neither the devil nor any one else is able to pluck them out of My hand, if they resolve to abide in it, and will not be torn away. For My grace, if they cooperate with it, has power to keep them from being taken from Me. But if they leave Me of their own will, it is not a tearing away, but their own voluntary act. So S. Cyril, Leontius, Theophylact, and Maldonatus. Christ means to say that no power can take them away, but they have full liberty to go away from Christ.

I give unto them eternal life, that is if they abide in faith and obedience to Me. I give it in this world through grace by hope, and I will hereafter give it in glory. He invites the Jews by this promise to become His sheep, and reproves them for refusing to do so. The faithful are in the “hand,” that is under the protection and guardianship of Christ. This is signified by the *hand*, which ministers to the whole body (see S. Isidore, *Etym.* xi. 1).

Ver. 29.—*My Father which gave them Me is greater than all* (the Vulgate and Latin fathers read “*majus*,” the Greek fathers *μείζων*), and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand. Because the Divine Nature which the Father gave Me, and its almighty power, is greater than all created beings, even angels and devils, and as no one can pluck them out of My Father’s hand, so can they not pluck them out of My own, for the hand and the power of the Father and Myself are one and the same. (So S. Augustine, Bede, Maldonatus; and see S. Ambrose, *de Spir. Sancto*, iii. 18. S. Hilary, *de Trin. lib.* vii., and Tertullian, *contra Praxeam*). He says this against the Jews who regarded Him as a mere man, “Know then that the Eternal Father gave Me a Divine Nature and Personality far higher than any created nature, whether angels or men.” Others explain it, that the sheep committed to Me by the Father must be more highly valued by Me than anything else; and no one can pluck them either out of My Father’s hand, or out of My own hand. But the first explanation is both the most sublime, and most full of meaning.

S. Cyril explains it thus, “My Father has committed to Me, His Incarnate Son, the care of His sheep. As God I have equal power with Him, and as man My hand is strengthened by the Almighty Hand of the Father.” Whence the Interlinear Gloss explains the word “hand” by “Me, who am the Hand of the Father.” For as S. Augustine says, “men call their ‘hands’ those persons through whom they do what they wish.” The two explanations come to the same thing.

Ver. 30.—*I and My Father are one*, not only by agreement and consent of will, as the Arians hold, but also one in Essence and Godhead, the same in number,² not in species, for otherwise there would be more Gods than one. Christ speaks here as God and the Word of the Father. And from this the fathers prove His Godhead against the Arians. And the Jews understood the words in the same sense, and consequently sought to stone Him as a blasphemer. And Christ Himself explained them in the same sense, for He said, I am the Son of God. It is clear also from His line of argument, “being one with the Father I have the same Almighty power.” For where the essence is the same, the power is also the same. So says S. Hilary (*de Trinit. lib.* viii.), “The Father and the Son are One, not as He speaks of the faithful (in chap. xvii.), ‘That they may be one,’ but one in nature, honour, and power.” “He steers between Scylla and

Charybdis,” says S. Augustine (*in loc.*) “between Arius and Sabellius; for by speaking of ‘One’ He signifies Oneness of nature. But by saying ‘we are’ He indicates a plurality of persons, which Sabellius denied, affirming that God was One in Person, as well as in Essence.” S. Augustine says the same (*de Trinit.* vi. 2). See Bellarmine (*de Christo*, i. 6).

Ver. 31.—*The Jews therefore look up stones to stone Him*, as a blasphemer. The Jews show in this their hypocrisy, malignity, and hatred of Christ, and that they did not honestly, but craftily and insidiously, ask Him whether He were the Christ. But Christ as being God kept them from casting on Him the stones which they held in their hands. “Hard as stones,” says S. Augustine, “they rushed to the stones.” Mystically, says S. Hilary (*de Trinit. lib.* vii.), “And now also heretics hurl the stones of their words, to cast down, if they can, Christ from His throne; inspired, no doubt, by Lucifer, who aimed at obtaining this throne of Godhead, and therefore grudged it to Christ, and is active in taking it away by means of heretics.”

Ver. 32.—*Jesus answered*, &c. He replied not to the words, for none had been spoken, but to the crafty intention of the Jews. He answered, *i.e.*, He asked them for what cause do ye wish to stone Me? By works He means the miracles which He had wrought by the authority and supernatural aid of God the Father. And He thus quietly reproves their ingratitude and malignity. I have healed, He would say, your blind, and lame, and sick, by My Divine power, when destitute of all human aid; why do ye ungratefully repay My many kindnesses by evil treatment, and wish to stone Me?

Ver. 33.—*The Jews answered, For a good work*, &c. “The Jews” (says S. Augustine) “understood that which the Arians understand not. For they felt that it could not be said, ‘I and the Father are one,’ unless the Father and the Son were equal.”

Ver. 34.—*Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law* (Ps. lxxii. 6), *I said, Ye are gods?* The word in Hebrew is plural. God is called *Elohim*, as ruling and governing the world, and as the judge and punisher of evil-doing. Whence angels and judges who share this power are called gods, not by nature or by hypostatical union (as Christ), but by participating in the Divine judgments (see Ex. vii. 1, xxii. 28; Ps. viii. 6, in the Hebrew *Elohim*). But there, as S. Hilary observes (*Lib.* vii. *de Trinit.*), the word *Elohim* is limited by the context, so as to make it clear that the word does not signify God, but angels or judges. And so in Ps. lxxii., “God standeth in the congregation of princes. He is the judge among gods.” The gods who are judged are men or angels, He who judges them is the One True God. “Just as Christ here,” says S. Augustine, “judges as God the Pharisees and rulers of the Jews, who were gods, so to speak, upon earth.” On this account He quotes this psalm which is in Hebrew *Elohim*, *judges*. *Elohim*, the highest of all, judges the earthly rulers who are under Him. This is supported by the Chaldee Targum, which explains, “Ye are gods, and are all the children of