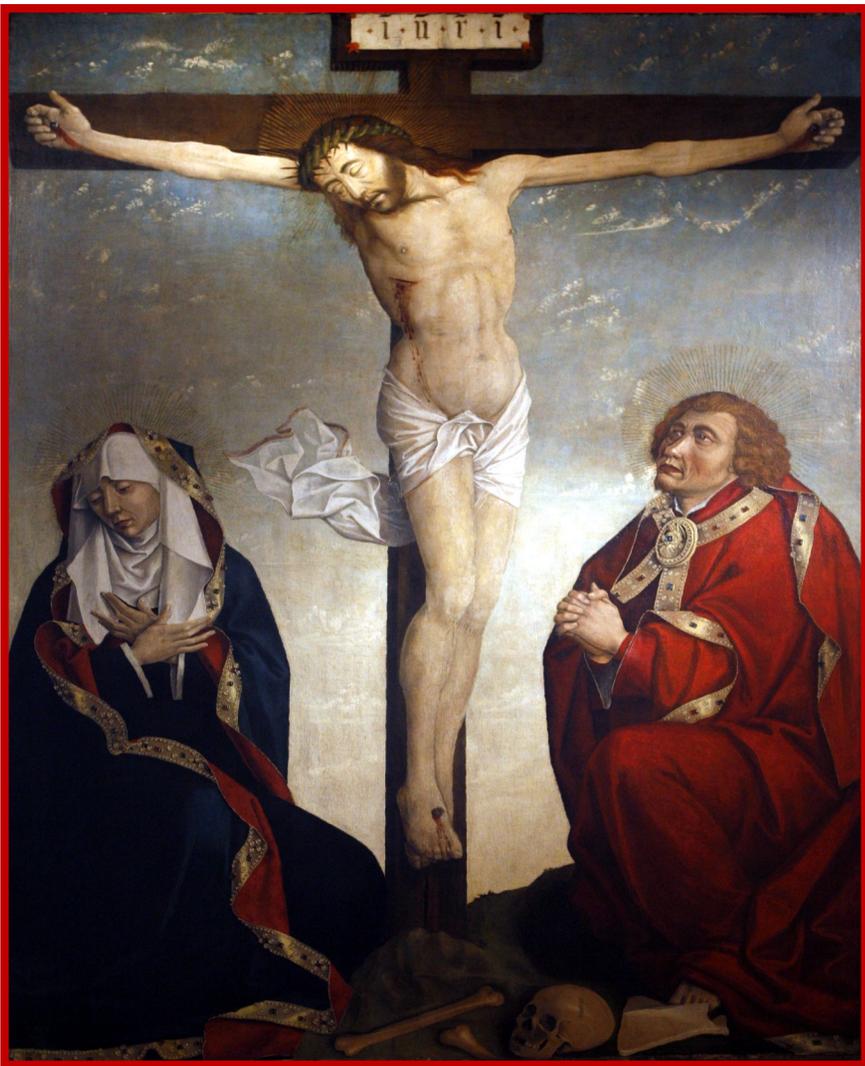


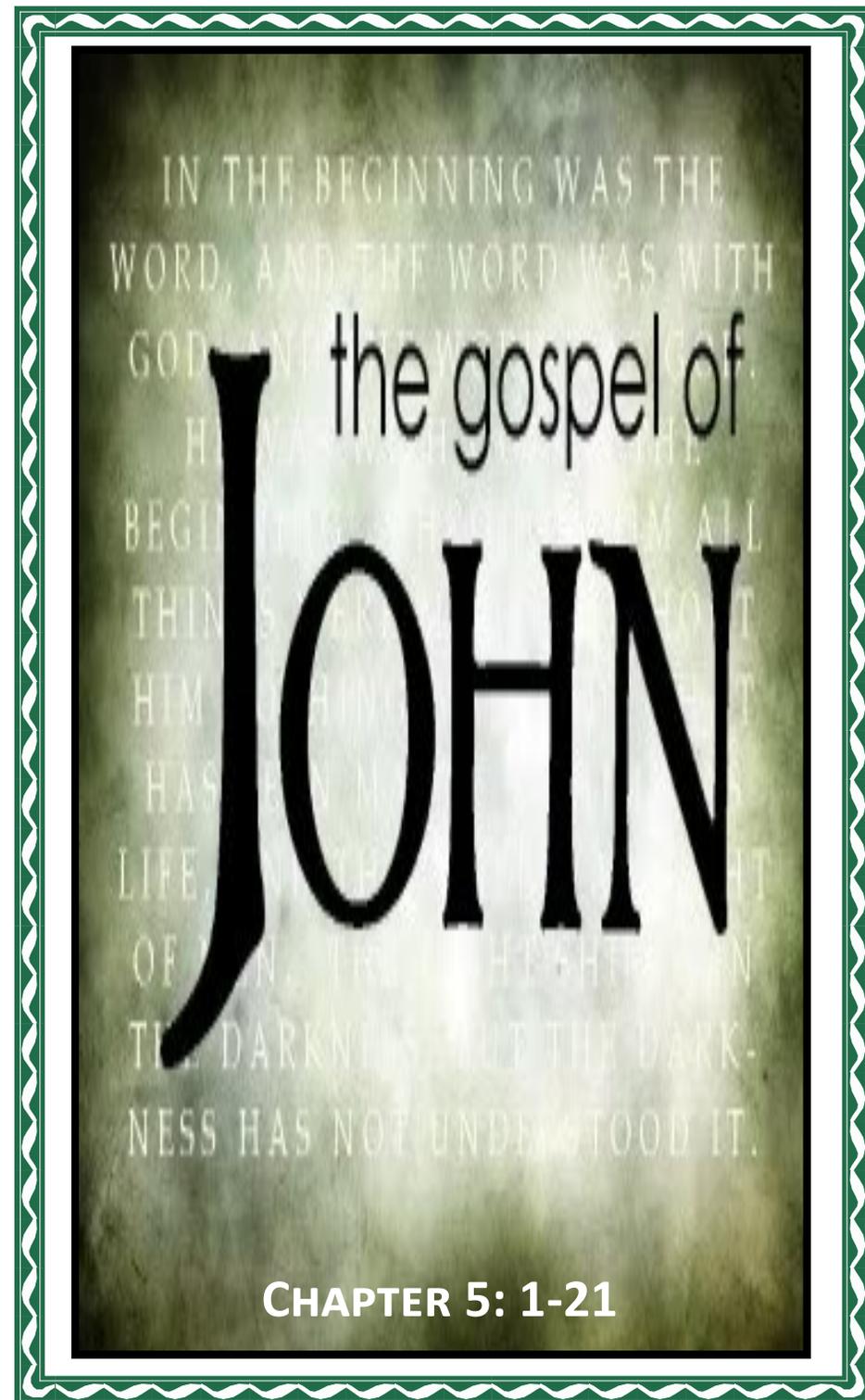
power and liberty to raise and quicken whom He will.

Whom He will. It is not that the Father wills to quicken some, and the Son wills to quicken others, but the same, because His will is conformable, yea, the same as the will of the Father. So Augustine.

Quickeneth, i.e., raiseth from the dead, both in this life, as He raised Lazarus, and in the day of judgment, when He will raise all mankind.



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For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.*

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.

John 5: 1-21

Douay Rheims Version

*Christ heals on the sabbath the man languishing thirty-eight years.
His discourse upon this occasion.*

1. After these things was a festival day of the Jews: and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
2. Now there is at Jerusalem a pond, called Probatice, which in Hebrew is named Bethsaida, having five porches.
3. In these lay a great multitude of sick, of blind, of lame, of withered: waiting for the moving of the water.
4. And an angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pond and the water was moved. And he that went down first into the pond after the motion of the water was made whole of whatsoever infirmity he lay under.
5. And there was a certain man there that had been eight and thirty years under his infirmity.

understand, to illuminate, to show. For the noblest and chief power of the soul is intellect and reason. These command the will, and guide it as it were blindfold; and by it they rule and move all the other senses and powers of the soul. Hence comes the axiom of the wise, "Mind effects all things:" it is the part of reason to govern. Just as strong as any one is in intellect, so far is he able to command. For the intellect in conceiving and understanding, by means of conception and intelligence, in a lively manner incorporates all those things into itself, and as it were possesses them. For it conceives all things in itself in a certain lively manner, and forms an appearance of them in itself, which presents to it all the goodness and beauty of things.

Wherefore the understanding is the eye of the mind. As in the body the eye is the noblest and most efficacious sense, which incorporates into itself the forms of all things, far more does the understanding do this in the mind. Wherefore the blessed in heaven, by means of the understanding, in understanding and seeing God, incorporate Him into themselves, possess Him, and are blessed by Him. This then is the reason of this mode of speech by which *to show* is taken for *to give, to communicate, to bring one into possession of the thing shown.* This is what Aristotle says, "The intellect by understanding becomes all things," because by a lively conception of things it assimilates itself to them, and them to itself. Thus it seizes and holds them, and makes them to exist in a nobler and better manner in itself than they are in themselves. For in themselves they are often dead and inanimate, but in the intellect they are living and animated. They live in the highest and most excellent vital act.

And will show greater things: by showing will give and communicate. These *greater things* are more illustrious mysteries and miracles, especially the raising of the dead, and the authority to judge all men; of both which Christ proceeds to speak.

That ye may marvel. He does not say *that ye may believe.* For the scribes and the Jews, when they saw so many miracles of Christ, wondered at His power, but yet were blinded by envy and hatred, and would not believe in Him as the Messiah. Still Christ did those things with the intention that they should believe in Him. The heretics act in just the same way even now. They admire the wisdom, holiness, and miracles of the orthodox saints, but will not follow their faith, nor imitate their manner of living. Such is heresy, and the blindness, obstinacy, and malignity of error.

Ver. 21.—*For as the Father &c.* Behold here is the first *greater work* which Christ said the Father *would show*, that is, *communicate*, to the Son. As S. Cyril says, "Marvel not that one who was utterly weakened by long disease was strengthened by a word, and took up his bed, and went away, for I am about altogether to destroy death, and to judge the whole world."

So also the Son, &c. He tacitly signifies that He is God, equal to the Father in

whom, as a *Term*, the Father expresses and imprints all His own vision and cognition, both *speculative* and *practical*. The meaning then is this, “Whatever I work, the Father worketh the same, and by altogether the same vision, cognition, will, power, and action. Wherefore if ye accuse Me because I have healed one paralysed on the Sabbath day, ye accuse God the Father also. For He hath wrought this with Me, because He in Me and by Me worketh all things. Indeed, I have received all My work from the Father. Wherefore, if ye believe that God the Father works all things rightly, wisely, and holily, ye ought to believe the same of Me, and therefore that this healing on the Sabbath was a work prudent, holy, and Divine.”

Doth likewise: altogether in the same manner, with the same liberty, the same power, the same authority. So S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat. 2, de Filio*). S. Cyril says, “They *do likewise*, or *work in like manner*, who are altogether of the same nature: but as to things which have a diverse essence there cannot be in them the same mode of working. As therefore He (the Son) is God of true God, He is able to do likewise the same things as the Father.”

Ver. 20.—*For the Father, &c. Showeth*, not as a master to a disciple, says Euthymius, but as a father to a son, as God to God. *Showeth* therefore means *gives*, *communicates*, especially because, as I have said, the Son *by demonstration, i.e., by understanding and vision*, proceedeth as the Word from the Father. To *show* in the sense of *give, exhibit, attribute*, is used in 1 Sam. xiv. 12; Exod. xxxiii. 19; Ps. iv. 6, &c. That this is the meaning here is plain from what follows. Moreover, the Father *showeth, i.e., communicates* all things to the Son in that He is God, not by free love, but by nature, out of the fecundity of the Divine Essence, of which the greatest sign among men is love. For he who among men communicates all things to his son, by so doing gives an eminent token that he loves him in the highest degree. Moreover, the Father communicates all things to the Son in that He is Man, of which communication love is not the sign, but the cause. “For the Father to *show* to the Son,” says Bede, “is by the Son to do what He doeth.”

Admirably does S. Athanasius say (*Disp. cont. Arium. lib. 1*), “The Almighty Father hath given to the Son omnipotence, majesty to majesty, to virtue He has given virtue, to the prudent one He has given prudence, foreknowledge to the foreknowing, eternity to eternity, Divinity to Divinity, equality to equality, immortality to immortality, invisibility to invisibility, to a king a kingdom, life to life; and He hath given not something other than that which He hath; and as much as He hath, so much hath He given.”

You will ask why *to manifest* and *to show* here and elsewhere are put for *to give* and *to communicate*. I reply (1.) because God by showing Himself and His works to the Son, communicates to Him His own knowledge, and consequently His essence. For God’s knowledge is the same thing as His essence. (2.) By *showing*, He illuminates the Son, *i.e., He communicates His own light of wisdom, and of all good, and Himself, wholly to Him*. For God is the uncreate and infinite Light, as S. John shows (1 Epist. i. 5). Lastly, by *showing, i.e., by understanding*, He produces the Word, *i.e., the Son*. For in God the most noble thing is understanding, and the most noble action is to

6. Him when Jesus had seen lying, and knew that he had been now a long time, he saith to him: Wilt thou be made whole?
7. The infirm man answered him: Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pond. For whilst I am coming, another goeth down before me.
8. Jesus saith to him: Arise, take up thy bed and walk.
9. And immediately the man was made whole: and he took up his bed and walked. And it was the sabbath that day.
10. The Jews therefore said to him that was healed: It is the sabbath. It is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed.
11. He answered them: He that made me whole, he said to me: Take up thy bed and walk.
12. They asked him therefore: Who is that man who said to thee: Take up thy bed and walk?
13. But he who was healed knew not who it was: for Jesus went aside from the multitude standing in the place.
14. Afterwards, Jesus findeth him in the temple and saith to him: Behold thou art made whole: sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee.
15. The man went his way and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole.
16. Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, because he did these things on the sabbath.
17. But Jesus answered them: My Father worketh until now; and I work.
18. Hereupon therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he did not only break the sabbath but also said God was his Father, making himself equal to God.
19. Then Jesus answered and said to them: Amen, amen, I say unto you, the Son cannot do any thing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he doth, these the Son also doth in like manner.
20. For the Father loveth the Son and sheweth him all things which himself doth: and greater works than these will he shew him, that you may wonder.
21. For as the Father raiseth up the dead and giveth life: so the Son also giveth life to whom he will.
22. For neither does the Father judge any man: but hath given all judgment to the Son.
23. That all men may honour the Son, as they honour the Father. He who honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father who hath sent him.
24. Amen, amen, I say unto you that he who heareth my word and believeth him that sent me hath life everlasting: and cometh not into judgment, but is passed from death to life.
25. Amen, amen, I say unto you, that the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.
26. For as the Father hath life in himself, so he hath given to the Son also to have life in himself.

27. And he hath given him power to do judgment, because he is the Son of man.
28. Wonder not at this: for the hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God.
29. And they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life: but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.
30. I cannot of myself do any thing. As I hear, so I judge. And my judgment is just: because I seek not my own will. but the will of him that sent me.
31. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.
32. There is another that beareth witness of me: and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.
33. You sent to John: and he gave testimony to the truth.
34. But I receive not testimony from man: but I say these things, that you may be saved.
35. He was a burning and a shining light: and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.
36. But I have a greater testimony than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to perfect, the works themselves which I do, give testimony of me, that the Father hath sent me.
37. And the Father himself who hath sent me hath given testimony of me: neither have you heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.
38. And you have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him you believe not.
39. Search the scriptures: for you think in them to have life everlasting. And the same are they that give testimony of me.
40. And you will not come to me that you may have life.
41. I receive not glory from men.
42. But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you.
43. I am come in the name of my Father, and you receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive.
44. How can you believe, who receive glory one from another: and the glory which is from God alone, you do not seek?
45. Think not that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one that accuseth you, Moses, in whom you trust.
46. For if you did believe Moses, you would perhaps believe me also: for he wrote of me.
47. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?

Ver. 1.—After these things, &c. Observe, John here omits many things which Christ did in Galilee, but which Matthew records from the 4th to the 12th chapter of his Gospel. For what Matthew relates in his 12th chapter concerning the disciples plucking the ears of corn took place after the following feast, as will appear presently.

A feast. SS. Chrysostom, Cyril, and others think that this was the Feast of Pentecost. With more probability, S. Irenæus (*lib. 2, c. 39*), Rupertus, and others, think it was the Passover.

that *the self same things* which the Father works, were wrought by Him, and therefore that He in all things co-operated, not as a servant, but as a Son, of the same substance with the Father. As Cyril says, “Seeing that He was a man, and not knowing that God dwelt in Him, they could not bear that He should call God His Father in a special manner.” The chief priests and scribes therefore wished to kill Jesus, because they feared lest, as His glory increased, their authority should decrease; indeed lest Jesus, persuading the people that He was God, should be preferred by the people to the priests, and should deprive them of their authority, and should bring in His own new priests and pontiffs, which we see He actually did do.

Ver. 19.—*Verily, Verily, &c. . . cannot:* “not from defect of power,” says Euthymius, “but on account of inseparability. For it is impossible that the Son should do anything which the Father does not.” So S. Chrysostom and S. Augustine. *Except, or unless.* This word is not here exceptive, signifying the same as *but only*. It has the same meaning in Matt. xii. 4.

What He seeth: Greek, *βλέπει, i.e., may see.* For it is not before He worketh, but as soon as He seeth the Father working, that He, Christ, worketh with Him. For Christ as God does not produce what is similar, but what is identical with the work of the Father. For the action of the Father, which both see and work together, is the same. I say *action*, but not the Hypostatic Union, nor the things which depend upon it, for this union has not to do with action, but with the *terminus in quo*. Wherefore, although the whole Blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by their Divine action, have brought about this Hypostatic Union, yet the union itself is terminated in the Son, and does not extend to the Father and the Holy Ghost.

Wherefore the Son only, not the Father and the Holy Ghost, became incarnate, and died, &c.

Observe, Christ in this place only means to say that He has received from God the Father His Divine Essence, power, and working, as from His Author. He makes use of the word *see*, as if the Son did nothing except what He seeth the Father do, or what He sees to be the work of His Father. For children and pupils are wont to imitate the ways and deeds of their fathers and teachers. Christ is speaking after the manner of men, or as amongst men it becomes a son to speak of his father.

It may be added that Christ in a proper and theological sense uses the word *see*, because He proceeds from the Father as the Word, which is the *term* of the vision and the *notional cognition* of God the Father. For the Father, as seeing and understanding Himself and all things, produces and begets the Word, and by this communicates to Him His own vision and action. Therefore the Son neither seeth, nor doeth anything except what He seeth the Father see, or do. For He Himself is the Word and the Idea, in

original disease." So a relapse into a fault is worse than the fault on account of the greater ingratitude, boldness, impudence.

Ver. 15.—*The man went away, and told, &c.* Not out of malevolence, but from gratitude, that he might not hide the author of so great a kindness. So Augustine, Chrysostom, and others. "He went away and told," says Euthymius, "not as being wicked, that he might betray, but as being grateful to disclose who was his benefactor. Because he thought he should be guilty of a crime if he kept silence, therefore he proclaimed the benefit."

Ver. 16.—*Wherefore the Jews persecuted Jesus, &c.* Some Greek MS., also the Syriac and Arabic Versions, add, *And sought to kill Him. Wherefore, i.e.,* on this pretext, for the true cause was envy. For the Jews, especially the scribes and Pharisees, were envious at this glory of Jesus, and grieved that the people should prefer Him to themselves. They were indignant that their wickedness was reproved by Him, and condemned by His holiness. For they wished to be paid court to as Rabbis, and doctors of the Law, and oracles of wisdom and sanctity.

Ver. 17.—*But Jesus answered, &c. "The Father worketh,"* says S. Augustine (*lib. 4. de Gen., cap. 12*), "both affording suitable government to things created and having in Himself eternal tranquillity:" for, as he says elsewhere, "being still He worketh, and working He is at rest." And after an interval, "The power and virtue of the Creator is the cause of existence of every creature. And if this virtue were ever to cease from governing created things, their forms (*species*) would cease at the same time, and all nature would come to an end." Like as the light in the air vanishes if the sun withdraw his rays, by which light is produced. The meaning is, "You, O ye scribes, object against Me the law of Sabbatical rest, which God commanded you because He Himself rested on the Sabbath from all His work. But I answer that God on the Sabbath only rested from producing new species of things. But He did not rest in such a manner that He is not every Sabbath continually working, that is to say, governing and preserving the world, and all the things that are in it, moving the heavens, bringing forth one thing out of another, feeding and healing all living things, &c. This, which is work of the highest beneficence, is not servile work, but pious and Divine. Such work is indeed lawful; yea, it adorns and hallows the Sabbath. So too I, who am the co-equal Son of the Father, always work, and always have wrought the same things with Him. For neither do I work without the Father, nor the Father without Me." So S. Augustine and others.

Observe the Hebraism: *and I work*, that is, *so, or in like manner, I work*. For the word *and*, when it is the mark of conjunction, since it joins like things, is a sign of comparison and similitude, and means the same thing as *thus*, as is constantly the case in the Book of Proverbs.

Ver. 18.—*Wherefore, &c. His Father, Greek, πατέζα ίδιον, i.e., His own Father,* because Christ alone is the peculiar, and by nature, Son of God.

Making Himself equal with God, because He had said that not merely *like things*, but

They show this:

1. Because in chap. iv., ver. 35, Jesus said there were still four months unto harvest. That therefore must have been before the Passover: thus the Passover must have been the first great subsequent feast.
2. Because the Passover was the feast of feasts. When therefore it is said absolutely, *there was a feast*, the Passover, which was the feast *par excellence*, is to be understood.
3. Because Christ after His baptism preached for three years and a half, according to the common consent of divines. It follows from this that there ought to be notices in the Gospels of four Passovers, which is the case.

The *first* is mentioned by John in ii. 13; the *second* in this place; the *third* in vi. 4; the *fourth*, just before His death, xix. 14. But if the feast mentioned in this 5th chapter were not the Passover, we could only gather the mention of three by S. John.

Here then comes to a close the account of the first year and three months of Christ's ministry, that is to say, from January 6, when He was baptized, until this second Passover, which was kept in Nisan, or March.

Ver. 2.—*Now there is . . . sheep-market: Vulgate, Probatice.* The pool took its name both because it was nigh the gate adjacent to the Temple, through which the flocks of sheep for the sacrifices were driven, and also because the sheep, which were offered to God every morning and evening in the Temple, were there gathered together and washed.

A pool: i.e. a place which contained fishes, or at least might have held them. The Greek is *κολυμβήθζα, a place to swim in*, because fishes, or even men, might swim in it. The Vulgate has *piscina*. This *poo1* was constructed by Solomon for the service of the Temple; hence it is called by Josephus (*Bell. Jud., vi. 6*) *Solomon's Pool*. In it the Nethinims washed the victims which they handed over to the priests to be offered in the Temple. Some Greek codices instead of *pool* read *πύλη, a Porch, or gate*, but S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Cyril, Euthymius, S. Jerome, and others *passim*, read *κολυμβήθζα, i.e., a pool*. The Syriac has a *baptistery, or font*.

Bethsaida: so read the Vulgate, and among the Greeks SS. Chrysostom and Cyril. And appositely, for *Bethsaida* means in Hebrew *a house, i.e., a place of hunting, or fishing*. And this is the signification of the Greek *κολυμβήθζα, a place for fish to swim in*. The Greek MSS., however, read *Βηθεσδά*: so also S. Jerome (*loc. Hebræis*). *Bethesda* means in Hebrew *a place of pouring forth*, because the rain from the roofs of the houses, and streams of water from aqueducts, flowed into it. The Syriac has *Bethchesda, or house of mercy*, from the Hebrew *ῥονchesed, mercy*, because there God showed His *mercy* to the miserable sick whom He

healed; or else because righteous men relieved with their alms the sick poor who lay there.

Having five porches, or porticoes: these *porches or porticoes* were places covered above, but open below, either for walking, or taking rest in, that sick persons might rest in them secure from rain, or the heat of the sun, and immediately step out of them into the pool when its angel moved the water.

Ver. 3.—*In them . . . languishing people* (Vulg.); Greek, ἀσθενόντων; Eng. Ver. *sick folk; withered* (Vulg.) *aridorum, dry, i.e.,* whose arm, or hand, or foot, or some other limb, was lifeless.

An angel of the Lord; either *Raphael*, or some other. Raphael, who presides over bodily healing, is so called from the Hebrew, which signifies the *medicine, or physician of God*. Whence he cured Tobit of his blindness.

According to a time (Vulg.), *i.e.,* at a certain time determined by God, or the angel, but unknown to men. Wherefore what Tertullian and Cyril say does not seem to be correct, that it was only once in the year, namely, at Pentecost, that the angel went down into the pool. For if so, the sick folk would not have lain beside it (for so long a time), but would have waited at home until Pentecost was close at hand. As Euthymius says, “By speaking of a stated time, he showed that the miracle was not continually taking place, but at certain times, unknown indeed to men, though often, as I think, in the course of the year.”

The water was moved (Vulg.); Greek, ἐταράσσεται ὑδάτι, *i.e. he disturbed or troubled the water*. “The sound of moving signified that angels were present to sanctify the water,” says S. Cyril. “The water was moved in order to show that the angel had descended,” says S. Ambrose.

And he that first went down, &c. In order to show the value of labour and diligence, and that we ought to be swift and active to take God’s benefits. Thus it was necessary for him who would gather the manna to rise at dawn, for when the sun was risen it melted, “that it might be made known unto all that it was needful to prevent the rising of the sun for Thy blessing, and to worship Thee at the dawning of the day” (Wisd. vi. 28). For God gives His gifts to the watchful and earnest, not to the slow and sleepy. Thus in the race only he who excels the rest receives the prize (1 Cor. ix. 24).

You will ask why, after *the troubling of the water*, as it is in the Greek, only he who first stepped in after the troubling was healed? I answer, that the literal reason was to show that this power of healing did not proceed from any natural virtue of the water, but from the moving of the angel, and the command of God. This moving of the angel did not impress any physical power or quality upon the water to heal any disease, but it was a sign of the Divine power and working, which were about to heal that sick person who had previously, by his own diligence, stirred up himself, and had, gone down into the water that he might there receive the miraculous blessing of God.

seemed to have done it out of favour. But now that he praised Him in His absence, it is evident that he did so from the love of the truth.

Ver. 14.—*Afterwards Jesus, &c.* The Arabic is, *Now thou art healed, return not to sin, lest a worse evil be done thee*. In the Temple. From this it appears that this man who was healed by Christ, as soon as he had carried his bed to his house, went to the Temple to give God thanks for His great benefit of healing. As Chrysostom says, “Assuredly a great mark of piety and reverence. He did not go to the marketplace, or the porch; he did not indulge in pleasure, or ease; he was occupied in the Temple.”

Sin no more. From hence it is plain that God often sends diseases upon sick persons on account of their sins; and that this man had been afflicted because of his sins. Thus this paralytic, who had been sick for thirty-eight years, from a time before Christ was born, had committed some crime, which God wished him to suffer for, and expiate, by this protracted disease. Christ therefore tacitly admonishes the man’s conscience that he should be mindful of his sin, and be contrite, and avoid it for the time to come. At the same time He intimates that He, being a Prophet, knew this by Divine revelation. Wherefore when sickness is sent by God upon any one, let him examine his conscience, and blot out by repentance and confession the sin for which God has sent the sickness, and let him pray to God to pardon his sin, and take away the disease.

I said, *often sends*, for God sometimes sends diseases upon holy men that he may prove, increase, and crown their patience, as He did in the case of Job, whose whole dispute with his friends turned upon this point; his friends urging that his sins had given occasion to his being so grievously afflicted, whilst he, on the contrary, contended that he was free from sins, and had not deserved those afflictions. And God in the last chapter adjudges the dispute in his favour, and condemns his friends. The same thing will appear in the case of the man who was born blind (chap. ix.), of whom Christ spake thus, “Neither did this man sin, nor his parents, that he was born blind.”

Moreover, as Christ healed this sick man’s body at the pool, so did He both by His inward inspiration, and by his external admonition, heal his soul in the Temple. He brought back to his memory the sins of his youth, by reason of which he had deserved so long a sickness, and he moved his heart to contrition for them, and to ask pardon from God, that so he might be justified. Indeed, Christ healed his body for this very reason that He might heal his soul.

Let a worse thing, &c. “For,” as Theophylact says, “he who is not made better by a former punishment is kept for greater torments, as being insensate, and a despiser.” “And this happens,” says Euthymius, “either in this life, or in the life to come, or in both.” “A relapse is worse than the

sanctify above other days by good works, such as healing a sick man like this paralytic: and also because He hereby wished to show the Jews that He was the Lord of the Sabbath. For in bidding him take up his bed, which was a thing forbidden by the old Law, He showed that He was Messiah and God. Moreover, because the Sabbath was a day dedicated to rest and the praise of God, Christ gave rest from his pains to this sick man, and so afforded a notable occasion for praising God on this day.

Ver. 10.—*The Jews therefore, &c.* As Nonnus paraphrases, “Clamorously they uttered an accusing charge, ‘It is the Sabbath, which every one ought to keep wholly in rest: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.’” Speaking generally, they say the truth; for among the Jews it was a matter of the highest obligation to keep the Sabbath. All work was then forbidden, as appears from Exodus xx. 8. And especially the carrying of burdens on that day is forbidden by Jeremiah (xvii. 21, &c.). Christ, however, here says the contrary to the sick man whom He cured, because He, being Lord of the Sabbath, could dispense with its obligation. Moreover, what was forbidden by the Law upon the Sabbath was servile work, not a pious and Divine work like this. Christ bade the man who was healed take up his bed that the crowds of people who were flocking into the Temple on the Sabbath might become acquainted with the miracle, and acknowledge Jesus, its author, to be the Messiah, giving Him thanks.

Ver. 11.—*He answered them, &c.* Understand, This was indeed a Divine man, and by Divine power has healed me. Therefore He is a friend of God, and would not bid me do anything except what is pleasing to God. As S. Augustine says, “Should I not receive a command from Him from whom I have received healing?” Just indeed was this defence of the sick man, which the Jews ought to have understood and accepted, but being blinded by pride they could not receive it, and so sinned by persecuting Christ and fell into hell.

Ver. 12.—*Therefore they asked him, &c.* Being indignant, they say with threats, “Who is that bold and insolent man, who dare bid thee, contrary to the Law, carry thy bed upon the Sabbath day? Verily, that man is not of God who does not keep the Sabbath which God has ordained.” Thus they spoke through a blind prejudice derived from this Law, which they did not understand. Whereas, on the contrary, they ought to have understood that He who had miraculously healed the sick man, could not have done it except by the singular authority and help of God, and therefore that He had equally received from God the right to say on the Sabbath, *Take up thy bed and walk.*

Ver. 13.—*But he who was healed, &c.* The man knew not the name of Jesus, nor whither He had gone, nor indeed who He was, for he had never seen Him before.

Departed. Euthymius gives the reason. “As soon as He had healed the man, He withdrew because of the crowd, partly to avoid the praise of the just, and partly to take away occasion for the envy of the unjust.” S. Chrysostom gives another reason: That the man’s testimony in the absence of Jesus might be less liable to suspicion. For if he who was healed had praised Christ to the Jews before His face, he might have

This *moving*, therefore, was an invitation to the sick to receive healing in the troubled water.

Appositely indeed did the angel make use of this sign of motion, because, whilst it was being moved, the virtue of the water became lively and efficacious. For life consists in motion, death in quietude and torpor.

Tropologically, the reason was to signify that the sinner, when he is converted and healed by God, is wont to be troubled and agitated in his conscience by various emotions of fear, shame, and hope. For by these God moves a man to repentance and contrition, that he may thereby be healed, as the Council of Trent teaches.

Of whatsoever disease. From hence it is plain that the healing virtue of this pool did not proceed from the victims which were washed in it, nor from wood lying at the bottom, of which the cross of Christ was afterwards made, as some have supposed, but was supernatural and miraculous. For God wished to bestow this benefit upon believing people about the time of Christ’s coming (for there is no mention of it in the Old Testament), in order that Christ thus healing a sick man might show that He was God, who had given this property to the pool, and therefore that He without it could heal the sick. Wherefore it would seem that this gift was taken away from the ungrateful Jews when they killed Christ, for we find no subsequent mention of it. As Tertullian says (*cont. Jud.*, c. 13), “The pool of Bethesda, which, to the coming of Christ, healed the sicknesses of Israel, afterwards ceased from bestowing its benefits through their persevering fury.”

Allegorically, God willed that this pool should be a token of His Passion and His Baptism. For as the angel descended into the water, so Christ went down to His Passion and torments; and in them, as in water, He was immersed and buried. And as the pool was red with the blood of the victims which were washed in it, so was Christ ruddy, and stained with His own blood (Isa. lxiii. 2), that by the merit of His blood He might cause baptism (wherefore the Syriac here translates *baptistery*), in whose water believers are washed, to heal all spiritual infirmities. So Tertullian (*de Baptismo*, c. 5), S. Ambrose (*de Spir. Sc.*, lib. 1, c. 7), and S. Chrysostom. The latter says, “For when God wished to instruct us in the belief of baptism now nigh at hand, He drove away not only pollutions, but diseases by means of water: for the nearer the images and figures were to the truth, they were more illustrious than the ancient figures.” And S. Austin says, “To descend into the troubled water is humbly to believe in the Lord’s Passion. There one was healed to signify unity. Whosoever came afterwards was not healed, because whoso is outside of unity cannot be healed.”

Ver. 5.—*A man having an infirmity:* Greek and Vulgate. S. Chrysostom and others say that this sick man was a paralytic.

Tropologically, this infirm man represents one who has grown old in a course of sin: who lies without strength in habits of vice, and is without any power to do good. For as palsy dissolves the bonds which knit the limbs together, so does a habit of sin enervate and dissolve the strength of the soul, so that men cannot arise out of it, and resist it, unless they are raised and strengthened by the mighty grace of God. Hence it is plain that such a palsy as this was naturally incurable; and we see that for thirty-eight years it could not be healed by any skill. Christ therefore took upon Himself to heal this palsy rather than the diseases of the other sick who were there, in order to show forth both His Almighty power and His infinite mercy. This was why Christ determined to heal Paul, who was labouring even beyond the rest of the incredulous and impious Jews under the worst spiritual disease of unbelief, as he himself shows us in the beginning of his 1st Epistle to Timothy. As S. Austin says, "The great Physician descended from heaven because one who was sick unto death lay on the earth." On the symbolical meaning of the thirty-eight years see S. Augustine *in loc.*, where he says, amongst other things, that it was the symbol of weakness, as forty is the symbol of healing and perfection. "If therefore," he says, "the number forty has the perfection of the Law, and the Law is not fulfilled except by the twofold precept of charity, what wonder that he was sick, who lacked two of the forty?" The twofold love, viz., of God and his neighbour, was lacking.

Ver. 6.—*When Jesus saw*, &c. Christ knew well that he had a desire to be healed, but He asked the question -

1. To afford the sick man an opportunity for conversation, and from thence of being healed. As S. Cyril says, "Herein was a great proof of the compassion of Christ, that He did not (always) wait for the entreaties of those who were sick, but prevented them by His mercy."

2. That He might sharpen the man's attention to the instantaneous character of the miracle, and so to the words and deeds of Christ. From all these He might know with certainty that he was healed, not by the pool, nor by medicine, but by Christ alone, who was superior to all the virtue of the pool, or of medicine, and so might believe in Him as a prophet, and the Messiah, and might in penitence ask and obtain of Him remission of his sins. Wherefore He healed him beside the healing pool, but without touching it, that He might show that it was He who had given its virtue to the pool, and that He therefore, without the aid of the pool, could heal him by His word alone.

Ver. 7.—*The sick man answered*, &c. The sick man does not answer Christ's question directly. He takes for granted that every one knew that he desired to be healed. Therefore he makes mention of the way of obtaining healing by means of the pool. As though he had said, "I am prevented by palsy from going into the pool, for I have none to carry me. I am a poor man. If therefore Thou canst help me in this matter, do so." For he thought that when Christ asked the question, *Dost thou wish to be healed?* He meant, "Dost thou wish that I should carry thee into the pool, when the angel moves the water, that thou mayest in it be healed?" As yet he did not know the power of Jesus, for he had never seen Him.

The Syriac translates a little differently: *Even so, Lord* (I do wish to be healed), *but I*

have not a man. Beautifully does S. Augustine say, "In very deed was that man (Jesus) necessary for his salvation, but it was that man who is also God."

Ver. 8.—*Jesus saith unto him*, &c. These words of Christ were practical and efficacious. In saying *Arise*, He caused him to arise, and healed him. As S. Augustine says, "It was not a command of work, but an operation of healing." And S. Cyril, "Such power and virtue were not of man; it is a property of God alone to command like this." Christ bade him take up his bed, that it might be evident to all that He had healed him, yea, that he had been made instantly stout and strong, so as to be able to carry his bed. Wherefore Euthymius in this passage observes that Christ was accustomed, after the miracles which He wrought, to add something by which their truth and greatness might be perceived. Thus in this instance He bade the paralytic take up his bed, which he could not have done unless he was healed; yea, stout and strong. So after the multiplication of the loaves, He ordered more fragments to be taken up than were originally in the bread. So He said to the leper whom He healed, "Go show thyself to the priest." So He ordered something to be given to eat to the girl whom He raised from the dead (Mark v. 43).

Tropologically, S. Gregory (*Hom. 12 in Ezech.*) applies these words to sinners who have been justified by penance, who, by the just judgment of God, suffer temptations from their former sins. He says, "The sick man restored to health is bidden to carry the bed in which he had been carried. For it is necessary that every one who is healed should bear the contumely of the flesh, in which he had before lain in his sickness. What then is it to say, *Take up thy bed, and go unto thine house*, but, Bear the temptations of the flesh, in which thou hast hitherto lain?"

Thus S. Mary of Egypt for seventeen years after her conversion suffered dreadful temptations of the flesh, because she had previously lived for that number of years immodestly. Sins therefore are their own executioners, and their own righteous avengers. What before pleased afterwards torments: what willingly thou hast done, the same thou shalt hereafter unwillingly suffer.

Symbolically, S. Augustine says (*Tract. 17*), "*Arise*; that is, love God, who is above. *Take up thy bed*; i.e., love thy neighbour, bear his infirmities, according to the words, 'Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.' When thou wast weak thy neighbour carried thee: thou art made whole, carry now thy neighbour. Carry him with whom thou walkest, that thou mayest come to Him with whom thou desirest to abide."

Ver. 9.—*And immediately* (Syriac) *in that moment . . . for on that day was the Sabbath*. Christ designedly healed upon the Sabbath, both because the Sabbath was the highest festival of the Jews, which therefore it was right to