

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 9: 1-41

Douay Rheims Version

He gives sight to the man born blind.

1. And Jesus passing by, saw a man who was blind from his birth.
2. And his disciples asked him: Rabbi, who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?
3. Jesus answered: Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.
4. I must work the works of him that sent me, whilst it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.
5. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.
6. When he had said these things, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and spread the clay upon his eyes,

the law, are blind and foolish? Show us our blindness and foolishness.

Ver. 41.—*Jesus said to them, &c.*

(1.) S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius explain this of bodily blindness; meaning, If ye were blind in your bodies, ye would be less proud and sinful. For bodily blindness would humble your mind.

(2.) S. Augustine (*in loc.*) is more to the point. If ye were blind in your own opinion, if ye would acknowledge yourselves to be blind (*i.e.*, ignorant and foolish) in things which concern your salvation, ye would not have sin, for ye would seek a remedy for it, and would obtain it from Me.

(3.) Accurately and scholastically, If ye were blind through ignorance of Scripture and the law of nature, ye would not have sin, by acting according to this ignorance and not acknowledging Me as your Messiah. That is to say, If your ignorance were clearly without blame and invincible, ye would have some sin, but one which was less serious, and more excusable, and therefore ye might easily be enlightened and cured by Me, since My doctrine would dispel your ignorance. But now ye say to yourselves, "We see," that is, ye think ye see, and are so wise as to be excellent judges of Christ's advent and person. And therefore ye from your arrogant and evil thoughts continue in the sin of unbelief against Me; ye obstinately set your mind against Me, and thus refuse to believe in Me as the Messiah, though I have demonstrated that I am by very many signs and miracles. And therefore, ye cannot by any possibility be enlightened and healed by Me, because ye obstinately refuse to hear Me. So Jansen and others.

Believest thou? Christ did not demand faith from the blind man for the healing of his body, but He does for the healing of his soul: for, as S. Augustine says (*Serm. xv. de Verb. Apost.*), “He who made thee without thyself, doth not justify thee without thyself: He made thee without thy knowledge, He justifies thee through thy will.”

Ver. 37.—*And Jesus said, &c.* Thou seest him now for the first time, for he had been healed in the pool of Siloam, when Christ was not there. Christ therefore points out to him that it was He who restored his sight. He recalls his healing to his remembrance, says Theophylact, and that he had received the gift of sight from Him, so as to make him believe that He was not only the Son of man, but the Son of God.

Ver. 38.—*And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him*, as the Son of God, and very God, to be worshipped as God with the worship due to Him (*Iatria*). Moreover, the blind man, inwardly enlightened (and moved to it by Christ), by saying, “I believe,” brought out acts of hope, contrition, charity, devotion, and adoration towards Christ, and was by them cleansed from his sins and justified. He consequently became a holy and apostolic man. He was said to have been one of the seventy disciples, and to have become Bishop of Aix, in Provence, where he died and was buried by the side of Maximinus, to whom he had been coadjutor (see Peter de Natalis in *Cat. Sanctorum, lib. v. cap. 102*).

Ver. 39.—*And Jesus said* (not to him but to the Pharisees), *for judgment, &c* “That is for condemnation,” says S. Cyril, “to convict and condemn the proud and worldly Pharisees of blindness who seem in their own sight to be wise.”

But others explain it better, not of condemnation, but of inquiry and discrimination. I have come into the world to discriminate and separate believers from unbelievers, good from evil, godly from ungodly; in order that the people, who before had lived in ignorance of God and of salvation, and in darkness of mind, like this blind man, might by believing in Me be enlightened with the knowledge of God, and of things which concern their salvation; and that I might suffer the proud who refuse to believe in Me (like the Pharisees who are puffed up by their knowledge of the law) to be blinded, and might convict them of their blindness.

(2.) But *judgment* might possibly here mean the secret counsel and mysterious decree of God, determined and fixed by His righteous decree, whereby God ordained that the Gentiles who knew not God, and consequently were blind, might behold the Light of Faith in Christ, and humbly and eagerly accept it; while the Scribes and Pharisees and wise men of the world, puffed up by their own knowledge, might become darkened in unbelief, and reject the faith and enlightenment of Christ. Humility, therefore, enlightened by faith the unlearned Gentiles, who submitted themselves to Christ, while pride darkened with unbelief the learned Scribes who rejected Him. So S. Cyril, or rather Clivoveus, who filled up what was wanting in his commentary. (See Rom. xi. 33.) “His judgments are a great deep.” Theodoret applies this to Paul and Judas. For S. Paul having been blind received his sight, and Judas, after seeing, became blind. The words “that,” “therefore,” &c., frequently signify not the cause, but the result or consequence. For Christ came not in order that the Scribes should be made blind; but their blindness was a result of Christ’s preaching, not from anything on His part, but from their own pride and fault. So Cyril and others.

Ver. 40.—*And some of the Pharisees, &c.* The Pharisees felt themselves sharply touched by our Lord’s words, which they understood to speak not of the blindness of the body, but of the mind. They knew that they were not bodily blind, and therefore if He had said this, they would have hooted Him down as a fool. They said, *Are we blind also?* Hast thou come to give sight to those who are blind in body, and to make out that we who spiritually see, and are doctors of

7. And said to him: Go, wash in the pool of Siloe, which is interpreted, Sent. He went therefore and washed: and he came seeing.

8. The neighbours, therefore, and they who had seen him before that he was a beggar, said: Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said: This is he.

9. But others said: No, but he is like him. But he said: I am he.

10. They said therefore to him: How were thy eyes opened?

11. He answered: That man that is called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me: Go to the pool of Siloe and wash. And I went: I washed: and I see.

12. And they said to him: Where is he? He saith: I know not.

13. They bring him that had been blind to the Pharisees.

14. Now it was the sabbath, when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.

15. Again therefore the Pharisees asked him how he had received his sight. But he said to them: He put clay upon my eyes: and I washed: and I see.

16. Some therefore of the Pharisees said: This man is not of God, who keepeth not the sabbath. But others said: How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

17. They say therefore to the blind man again: What sayest thou of him that hath opened thy eyes? And he said: He is a prophet.

18. The Jews then did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight,

19. And asked them, saying: Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then doth he now see?

20. His parents answered them and said: We know that this is our son and that he was born blind:

21. But how he now seeth, we know not: or who hath opened his eyes, we know not. Ask himself: he is of age: Let him speak for himself.

22. These things his parents said, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had already agreed among themselves that if any man should confess him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

23. Therefore did his parents say: He is of age. Ask himself.

24. They therefore called the man again that had been blind and said to him: Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.

25. He said therefore to them: If he be a sinner, I know not. One thing I know, that whereas I was blind. now I see.

26. They said then to him: What did he to thee? How did he open thy eyes?

27. He answered them: I have told you already, and you have heard. Why would you hear it again? Will you also become his disciples?

28. They reviled him therefore and said: Be thou his disciple; but we are the disciples of Moses.

29. We know that God spoke to Moses: but as to this man, we know not from whence he is.

30. The man answered and said to them: why, herein is a wonderful thing, that you know not from whence he is, and he hath opened my eyes.

31. Now we know that God doth not hear sinners: but if a man be a server of God and doth his, will, him he heareth.

32. From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard, that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind.

33. Unless this man were of God, he could not do anything.

34. They answered and said to him: Thou wast wholly born in sins; and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

35. Jesus heard that they had cast him out. And when he had found him, he said to him: Dost thou believe in the Son of God?

36. He answered, and said: Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?

37. And Jesus said to him: Thou hast both seen him; and it is he that talketh with thee.

38. And he said: I believe, Lord. And falling down, he adored him.

39. And Jesus said: For judgment I am come into this world: that they who see not may see; and they who see may become blind.

40. And some of the Pharisees, who were with him, heard: and they said unto him: Are we also blind?

41. Jesus said to them: If you were blind, you should not have sin: but now you say: We see. Your sin remaineth.

Ver. 1.—*And as Jesus passed by*, &c. Passing through the midst of His enemies and the crowd of the people. This signifies (though some deny it) that this cure took place immediately after Christ had withdrawn from the temple. As soon as He had escaped His enemies, He became visible again, and His disciples followed Him. “He mitigated their anger by His withdrawal, and softened their hardness by working a miracle” says S. Chrysostom.

He looked upon him tenderly and fixedly, as pitying him, and intending to restore his sight. And this intent look caused the disciples to inquire the cause of his blindness. “He Himself” (says S. Chrysostom) “saw that he was blind. The blind man did not come to Him, but He looked on him so stedfastly, that the disciples asked the question which follows.” Mystically, sinners and unbelievers are blind, and are thus unable to see and seek for Christ. So that Christ must needs look on them first and enlighten them with the eyes of His grace.

His blindness was congenital and incurable. If it had been accidental, surgeons could have cured it. But when a man is cured who is blind from his birth, “it is not a matter of skill,” says S. Ambrose, “but of power. The Lord gave him soundness, but not by the exercise of the medicinal art. The Lord healed those whom none could cure.” His name is said to have been Cedonius or Celedonius (see ver. 38).

Mystically, this man is a type of mankind, blinded by original sin, which Jesus, “passing along the road of our mortality” (says the Gloss), “looked upon, pitied and enlightened.” “For blindness befell the first man through sin, and as we spring from

sanctity and character of him who prays. And therefore if a sinner (a heretic, *e.g.*) baptizes, this sacrament is valid, and derives its efficacy from the institution of Christ, who confers grace by the Sacrament. For Christ is the original author of Baptism, who baptizes by His ministers as by instruments. Besides, though God hears not the prayers of a sinner, as a private person, yet He hears the prayers of the same person, in his public capacity, because he is a minister of the Church. For the Church is holy, as having Christ as its holy Head, and as having many faithful and holy members, to whose prayers God hearkens.

Ver. 32.—*Since the world began*, &c. Granted that Moses and the Prophets wrought many miracles, yet they never restored sight to one who was born blind. Jesus who has restored my sight must needs be a greater Prophet than they. He retorted the words of the Pharisees on themselves, “Ye prefer Moses to Christ, but I prefer Christ. Ye choose to be Moses’ disciples, I am Christ’s.”

Ver. 33.—*If this man were not of God, He could do nothing, i.e.*, for curing my blindness. “He says this freely, stedfastly, and truly” (S. Augustine), “for to enlighten the blind is supernatural work, and specially belongs to God.”

Ver. 34.—*They answered, &c., in sins*, both in mind and body, for thou wast born blind by reason of thy sin. For they held the tenet of Pythagoras that the soul existed before the body, and that it was in consequence of its sins thrust down into a deformed (*i.e.*, a blind) body. So Cyril, Leontius, and others. Maldonatus explains, “Thou hast done nothing but sin from thy birth.” So S. Chrysostom and Theophylact. *And dost thou teach us?* Thou blind sinner, wilt thou teach us who have our sight, and are wise and righteous?

And they cast him out of the private house in which they were, as not deserving to be disputed with by such just teachers, says Maldonatus. Or out of the temple, as says S. Chrysostom, and consequently out of the synagogue, adds Leontius. That is, they excommunicated him. “But the Lord of the temple found him,” says Chrysostom, “and took him up.” Both statements are credible: that they drove him out of the house, and also excommunicated him, for this latter they had decided to do. As if they said, “Begone, thou apostate, and go to thine own Jesus.” But this leads us to suppose that all this took place in the House of judgment, a public place (see on verse 31). And that he was expelled from the synagogue appears more plainly from our Lord’s own words in the next chapter, *I am the door*.

Ver. 35.—*Jesus heard that they had cast him out*, &c. Christ received him kindly, and rewards his constancy. Having given sight to his body, He now enlightens his mind. In giving him bodily sight, He had cast in some scattered seeds of faith, which He now particularly forms into perfect shape: so as to make him believe, that He whom he looked upon as a mere prophet, for having given him sight, was God also, and the Son of God. The Gloss says, “The blind man had already a heart prepared to believe, but knew not in whom he had to believe.” This, in answer to his question, he learns from Christ.

Christ took trouble to find him in the place, where He knew he was. It is the part of a good shepherd to seek for a wandering sheep, who cannot by itself come back into the right way. “They expel,” says S. Augustine (*in loc.*), “the Lord receives, and he becomes a Christian, even the more because he was expelled.”

How opened He thine eyes? Just like hounds, says S. Chrysostom, who track their prey now here, now there.

Wherefore would ye hear it again? “Ye do not wish to learn, but merely to cavil,” says S. Chrysostom.

Will ye also be His disciples? “As I now see and envy not,” says the Gloss, “nay, I profess myself to be Jesus’ disciple, even so I wish you to become His disciples also.” “He speaks thus,” says S. Augustine, “as indignant at the hardness of the Jews, and as having been restored to sight, not enduring those who were blind (in heart).” Note here the heroic constancy and nobleness of the blind man in defending Jesus before the Pharisees, His sworn enemies. And hence he deserved to be taken up and exalted by Christ.

Ver. 28.—*They then reviled him*, &c. They cursed him, saying, Be thou accursed, or at all events heaped maledictions and reproaches upon him. But their curse was without effect, and was turned by Christ into a blessing. For it is an honour to the godly, to be cursed by the wicked. Whence S. Augustine says, “It is a curse if thou look into the heart of the speakers, but not if thou weighest the words themselves. May such a curse be on us, and on our children.”

But we know not this man whence he is, whether sent by God, as was Moses, or by the devil. So Euthymius.

Ver 30.—*The man answered*, &c. It was your business, as doctors and learned in the Law, to know that Jesus, who works so many miracles, must have been sent by God only. For it is God who works miracles by Him. “He brings in everywhere the miracle of his recovery of sight,” says S. Chrysostom, “because they could not gainsay that, but were convinced thereby.”

Ver. 31.—*Now we know*, &c. How can this be? For if sinners penitently ask pardon God vouchsafes it, and frequently bestows on sinners temporal blessings, and spiritual blessings also, if they ask for them. But I reply (1.) God ordinarily does not hear sinners; sinners, I mean, persisting in their sin. Yet sometimes, though rarely, He hears even them. So Jansen. This is plain from Scripture (see Ps. lix. 1, 2; Prov. xxviii. 9; Ps. l. 16 [Psalm fifty?]; Mal. ii. 2). But of the just it is said, “The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers” (Ps. xxxii. 16). And, “The eyes of the Lord are oil them that fear Him” (Ecclus. xv. 20). (2.) Secondly, and more befittingly to the case in point, He hears not sinners, so as to work miracles to establish their sanctity as He did by Jesus, to testify that He was the Messiah. So Maldonatus on this passage. (See also Suarez, *tom. ii. de Relig. lib. de Orat. cap. xxv.*) “God heareth not sinners if they pray with an evil intention,” as *e.g.*, to confirm their hypocrisy or lies.

(3.) S. Augustine (*De Bapt. contr. Don. iii. 20*) replies that this blind man spoke only generally, being still a catechumen, and not yet sufficiently instructed in the Faith. For generally it is not true, nor the view of Scripture, which in this place only states what was said by the blind man. Hear S. Augustine, “He speaks as one not yet anointed (*i.e.*, a catechumen). For God does hear sinners also. For else the publican would say in vain, ‘God be merciful to me, a sinner,’ from which confession he obtained justification, as this blind man obtained enlightenment.”

From this passage S. Cyprian (*Ep. lxiv. and lxxx.*) and the Donatists who followed his teaching inferred that Baptism by an heretical minister was invalid, and ought to be repeated; because a heretic is a great sinner whom God hears not. But quite wrongly. For in like manner, Baptism administered by a Catholic Priest living in sin would be void, and would require to be repeated. I say therefore that the efficacy of the Sacrament is one thing, the efficacy of prayer is another. For a sacrament derives its efficacy *ex opere operato*, but prayer *ex opere operantis*, from the

him, the human race is blind from its birth.” And Bede, “The way of Christ is His descent from heaven to earth. But He beheld the blind man, when He beheld mankind with pity.” Again: “This blind man denotes the Gentiles born and brought up in the darkness of unbelief and idolatry, to whom Christ passed over, when expelled from the hearts of the Jews, and enlightened them with the light of faith and His Gospel,” says Bede. And Christ wished to designate this in type by the enlightenment of this blind man. So S. Cyril, Rupert, and Bede.

Ver. 2.—*And His disciples*, &c. This question sprang out of the opinion of the ignorant multitude, who think that diseases are the punishments of sin, and, as S. Ambrose says, “They ascribe weaknesses of body to the deserts of their sins.” But they are wrong in this; for though it is often the case, yet not always. For Job, though innocent, was afflicted in order to try his patience, as Tobias also, and many others. S. Chrysostom and Theophylact say that this question was out of place and absurd.

Others think that the disciples were led to ask this question by what Christ said (v. 14), “Sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee.”

A man’s own fault, and not that of another, seems to be the cause of his own blindness, by way of punishment. Original sin is in truth the cause of all the evils and punishments which befall us in this life, and of the diseases of infants especially as S. Augustine teaches us (*Contr. Julian iii. 4*). But this was not the special reason why this man, above all other infants, was born blind. Whence S. Augustine says, “This man could not have been born without original sin; nor yet have added nothing to it by his life. He therefore and his parents had sin, but the sin was not the cause of his being born blind.”

S. Cyril supposes that the disciples were imbued with the error of Pythagoras and Plato, who thought that souls existed before their bodies, and that for their sins they were thrust down into bodies, as Origen afterwards held. But Leontius considers that the disciples did not speak of the sin of the blind man which took place before his birth, but after it. As if God, foreseeing what would happen punished him beforehand with blindness. But whatever might be the opinion of the disciples (and it is hard to conjecture), it is certain they were wrong. For souls did not exist before their bodies, and God only punishes past and not future sins. God, it is true, punishes the sins of parents in the persons of their children. And children are frequently born weak, blind, and deformed, &c., or soon die, in consequence of the vices of their parent (see 2 Sam. xii. 14, and Exod. xx. 5).

Ver. 3.—*Jesus answered*, &c. Christ denies not that he and his parents had sinned both by original and actual sin. But He denies that he was condemned to blindness for these sins, beyond other people, who had

committed the same and even greater sins. So S. Augustine. In vain therefore do the Pelagians misuse this passage to do away with original sin.

The reason why God inflicted blindness on this man was that the miraculous power of Christ should be made manifest in his case, and thus Christ be acknowledged as the true Messiah. So the Fathers quoted above. The Gloss gives the mystical meaning, that it was to signify what Christ would do in enlightening mankind in like manner by His grace, and the doctrine of the Gospel. And accordingly the man himself was enlightened not only in his body, but in his mind, as will be seen below. And therefore he suffered no wrong, but gained a benefit by his blindness (says S. Chrysostom), for in consequence of it he beheld with the eyes of his mind, Him who from nothing brought him into being, and received from Him enlightenment both in body and in mind.

Ver. 4.—*I must work*, &c. S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and others understand by the word “day” the present life, and by “night” the future life. But this is what is common to all men. But Christ speaks of this *day* as specially relating to Himself and His own work. And therefore S. Augustine, Cyril, and Bede put a better and closer meaning on the word *day*, as speaking of the life of Christ on earth, and *night* as referring to His absence, meaning by this, that just as men cannot work at night on account of the darkness, so after death shall I no longer work as I do now for the salvation and redemption of men. “My day” (viii. 56) means in like manner My birth and My life amongst men. He says this, as preparing the way for the healing of the blind man. “I am sent into the world to do good to men: this blind man presents himself and I will restore his sight.”

Symbolically: *Night*, says the Interlinear Gloss, is the persecution of the Apostles, especially by antichrist.

Tropologically. The time of life given to every one to gain eternal glory is his “*day*.”

Night is his death (see Eccles. ix 10). And S. Augustine (*in loc.*) says, “*Night* is that of which it is said, ‘Cast him into outer darkness.’ Then will be the *night*, when no man can work, but only receive for what he hath wrought. Work while thou art alive, lest thou be prevented by that night.” It was common among poets and philosophers to call life day, and death night, and many instances and authorities are given from Pagan writers to this purpose. But to take some Christian ones, Messodamus, a very holy man, was once asked by a friend to dine with him on the morrow. “I have had no morrow,” he replied, “for many years: every day have I looked for the coming of death.” And this is what S. Anthony (*apud* S. Athanasius) and Barlaam advised every devout and “religious” man to do. S. Jerome wisely says, “One who is ever thinking that he will die, easily makes light of everything,” for he regards each day as his last.

“Fixed is the day of death alike to all,
Brief life’s short hours soon pass beyond recall.”

examination, the consistent confession of the blind man, and consequently the glory of Christ, shone forth. S. Chrysostom wisely says, “It is the nature of truth to become stronger by the snares laid against it.” And that was now the case, for the parents are brought forward, who fully acknowledged their son, and confirmed his words.

Ver 18.—*But the Jews did not believe*, &c. They hoped to elicit something from them to refute either the blind man or Christ, “by finding that he was not born blind,” says S. Chrysostom, or was not quite blind but dim-sighted, or that he regained his sight by magic, and not by the miracle wrought by Christ. “They sought,” says S. Augustine, “how they might accuse him, that they might cast him out of the synagogue,” as they shortly afterwards did. Theophylact states that this was their dilemma. It is either false that your son now sees, or that he was blind at first. But it is admitted that he sees, it was therefore false that he was, as he says, previously blind. His parents reply cautiously. They knew him to be their son, and that he was born blind. But how he gained his sight they knew not. They speak with prudence so as not to deny the truth, nor yet incur the peril of excommunication. And hence they say, “He is of age,” meaning, says S. Augustine, “we should justly be compelled to speak for an infant, for it could not speak for itself. But he is a man who can speak for himself, therefore (say they) *ask him*.”

Ver. 22.—*For the Jews*, &c “But it was no evil to be put out of the synagogue,” says S. Augustine, “for they expelled, but Christ received him.” “But the parents said this, because they were less firm than their son, who stood forth as an intrepid witness of the truth,” says Theophylact.

Ver. 24.—*Then again called they the man*, &c. To give God the glory, is a form of obtestation or oath among the Jews (see Josh. vii. 19). Confess that this man is a sinner, and so wilt thou by this confession of the truth give glory to God, who is the chief and eternal truth. “To give glory to God” (says the Gloss) “is to speak the truth as in the presence of God.” They wished to persuade him under the pretext of religion (says S. Chrysostom), to deny that he was cured by Christ, or if he were, it was by magic and sleight of hand. “Deny,” says the Interlinear Gloss, “the benefit thou hast received by Christ. But this were to blaspheme, and not to give glory to God.”

Whether He be a sinner. “He answers prudently and cautiously, neither laying himself open to the charge, nor yet concealing the truth,” says the Interlinear Gloss. But S. Chrysostom objects, “How was it that just before he called Him a Prophet, and now he says, ‘Whether he be a sinner I know not?’” He does not say this by way of assertion, or through fear, but because he wished Jesus to be acquitted of the charges by the evidence of the fact. “I do not wish to argue the point with you. But I know for certain, that though once blind, now I see.”

providential care; for He came for the healing of all. Thus many poor people and of slender means obtain of the Blessed Virgin miracles of healing, at her shrines at Loretto and Sichem, both because they are in greater need than the rich, and are more innocent in their lives, also exhibit greater faith and devotion, and because she specially cares for them, as being destitute; just as it is said, "The poor committeth himself to Thee [is left to Thy care]; Thou art the helper of the orphan" (Ps. x. 14).

Ver. 10.—*Therefore said they unto him, &c.* "The man," says Euthymius and Theophylact, "knew not as yet that Jesus was God." The blind man had learned the name of Jesus from common report, or from asking the bystanders. That he called Him not Rabbi, must be ascribed partly to his simplicity and candour, and partly to his truthfulness. For in order that he might not give any weight to his own opinion respecting Christ, he spake only the bare truth, and merely called Him Jesus. Perhaps he did it, likewise, in order not to excite the Jews, who were opposed to Christ, the more against Him.

Ver. 12.—*And they said to him, Where is He? He said, I know not.* For Jesus had withdrawn Himself, as shrinking from praise; for He did not, says S. Chrysostom, "seek for glory, or self-display."

Ver. 13.—*They brought to the Pharisees, &c.* They brought him to the Pharisees, that they might examine the matter. This was done by the purpose of God, that the miracle might be fully attested and made widely known, so that the Pharisees could not deny it. Whence S. Augustine says, "The blind man confessed, the heart of the wicked was broken." "They bring him to the Pharisees, as being judges, and therefore assembled in their house of judgment." This house seems to have been a synagogue, close to the temple; for a question of religion and belief was at stake, which the Pharisees had to decide by examining the miracle, and to judge accordingly whether He who wrought it was the Messiah or not.

It was the Sabbath day. This is added to show their evil disposition; for they sought occasion against Jesus, and wished to detract from the miracle in consequence of its seeming violation of the law. For in truth to make clay in order to give sight to the blind, is not a breaking but a sanctification of the Sabbath.

Ver. 17.—*They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of Him who hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a Prophet.* That is a specially holy man, a wonder-worker. So Abraham (Gen xx. 7) is called a Prophet (see what is said on 1 Cor. xiv. *ad rem*, and Ecclus. xlvi. 12, on the various meanings of the word Prophet). "Being at present not anointed in heart, he did not confess Christ to be the Son of God. But yet he did not speak falsely of Him. For the Lord said of Himself, "A prophet is not without honour, save in His own country."

They asked the blind man the same question again and again, out of bitter hatred of Christ, and also to involve him in the same guilt with Christ. They wished also to elicit something out of his mouth to make him contradict himself, that so they might convict Him of a lie. But God caught them in their own craftiness. For by this frequent

Ver. 5.—*As long as I am in the world, &c.* And therefore I will give light to this blind man, to show that I am the Light of this world.

Ver. 6.—*And when He had thus said, &c.* He used clay, which naturally closes up the eyes, to show that He healed the man supernaturally. The symbolical reason was (S. Chrysostom says) to signify that He was the self-same (God) who formed man out of clay, and that it was His work to form and fashion again (by restoring his sight) a man who was formed by Him, but deformed by blindness. He showed thus that He was the Lord of all things, and of the Sabbath also, so as to work His cure on that day whatever outcry the Pharisees might make. So Cyril, Leontius, Theophylact. Accordingly the Interlinear Gloss says, "See, here is the eye-salve with which mankind is anointed, the thought, namely, of its own vileness, as being made of clay, so as to be cured of the pride which had blinded it. According to the saying, 'Remember, O man, that thou art dust, and into dust thou wilt return.'" Christ used His spittle, says Cyril, to show that even His Flesh had a supernatural power of healing. (2.) Because spittle is a symbol of recuperative power (several derivations of "saliva" are here suggested which are of no value, and several instances of cures by its use). (3.) He used it that no virtue should be ascribed to the pool of Siloam, but to the power of His own mouth from whence it came; for by the bidding of His own mouth He drove away the blindness. (4.) That thus this miracle might be the more fully attested. (5.) To test the faith and obedience of the blind man (see S. Chrysostom). Why did He send him to Siloam, that all men might see him going with the clay on his eyes? But there was no reason to fear that the cure would be attributed to Siloam, because many had washed there without being cured. But the faith of the blind man was shown by his not saying a word or having a thought against it, but he simply obeyed.

Allegorically. S. Augustine says, "Christ made clay of the spittle because the Word was made flesh." He anointed the eyes of the blind man, but yet he did not see, for when He anointed him He most likely made him a catechumen. He sends him to the pool of Siloam. For being baptized in Christ he is illuminated. The Gloss says, "The spittle is the wisdom which came forth from the mouth of the Most High; the earth is the flesh of Christ, to anoint the eyes is to make a catechumen. He that believeth in the Word made flesh is sent to wash, that is to be baptized in Siloam, that is in Him that was sent, *i.e.*, in Christ. But he who is baptized receives the light of the mind through faith, hope, and charity, which are infused into him by God in baptism."

Ver. 7.—*And said unto Him, &c.* Siloam is a stream at the foot of Mount Sion, which does not flow continuously, but at uncertain times of the day; it bursts forth (says S. Jerome) with a loud noise, and is then silent. It hides itself under the earth, and by channels runs into the pool of Siloam, and hence is conveyed silently and gently into the royal gardens, which it

waters. (See S. Jerome on Is. viii.) Epiphanius thus gives its history. "God made the fount of Siloam at the request of the Prophet (Isaiah), who shortly before his death prayed that He would grant the waters to flow from that place, and He immediately poured down from heaven living waters; whence the place obtained the name Siloam, which means *sent down*. And under king Hezekiah, before he built the pool, a small stream sprang up at the prayers of Isaiah (for they were hard pressed by the enemy), that the people might not perish for lack of water. The soldiers searched everywhere for water and could not tell where to find it. But when the poor Jews went to seek water it burst out for them in a stream. But strangers could not find it, for the water withdrew itself. And even up to the present time it bursts forth secretly, thus signifying a mystery." Epiphanius records this in his life of the Prophet. Baronius compares it to a stream in Palestine called Sabbaticus, because it flowed only on the Sabbath. (See Baronius A.D. 33, cap. xxvi., and Josephus, *de Bello Jud.* cap. xiv.) S. Irenæus (iv. 19) says that Siloam effected its cures very frequently on the Sabbath.

(2.) From Siloam, flowing as it did at intervals, and in a country where there was a want of water, the water was drawn gently and noiselessly into the pool, or bath, and thence passed into the gardens. From this letting in and letting out of the waters it was called Siloam from the root *schalach*.

But why did Christ send the blind man to this particular pool? (1.) Because it was a type of Himself, who was sent into the world, to enlighten it. (See S. Chrysostom and S. Irenæus, iv. 19.) (2.) Because Christ was meek and gentle like its waters, and because He was secretly and silently sent forth by the Father, as God in heaven, and on earth by His birth from the Virgin. He is also, like Siloam, a fountain of water, "springing up into eternal life." (3.) He is the Fount of graces, who distributes His gifts to the faithful by channels. (See Is. xii. 3, and Zech. xiii. 1, *and notes thereon*.) And Isaiah, who was an express type of Christ both in his life and martyrdom, caused this pool to be built. (4.) Solomon was anointed to be king near the spot. Hence the waters of Siloam signify the royal race of David. And Christ sent the blind man there to show that He was the Son of David. (5.) He sent the blind man to Siloam to recall the prophecy of Jacob (Gen. xlix. 10), as indicating that he was the messenger and ambassador sent from the Father. (6.) Siloam was the type of Christian Baptism, whereby we are spiritually enlightened. Baptism is called in Greek *φωτισμὸς* (See S. Ambrose, *Epist.* lxxv., and S. Augustine *in loc.*) And hence S. Irenæus (v. 15) thinks that this man was enlightened both in body and mind by the waters of Siloam. (7.) There is great affinity between water and light, ablution and illumination. The Hebrew word *ain* signifies both a fountain and light. Cicero and Quintilian, speak of the lights of wisdom, and floods of oratory, &c. And even the Psalmist uses both terms, "For with Thee is the well of life, and in Thy Light shall we see light." And here too Christ connects light with a fountain. For after having said, "I am the Light of the world," He sent the blind man to Siloam to recover his sight. Water washes away the noxious humours of the eyes, and thus gives them light.

Adrichomius describes Siloam and the virtue of its waters, speaking of the value Saracens and Turks put upon them, especially for restoring the sight. And no wonder. For as Christ, by being baptized in Jordan, sanctified the waters, and gave them the

power of washing away sins in baptism; in like manner by giving sight to the blind man by the waters of Siloam, He seemed to have conferred on them a somewhat similar power of giving sight to others, and accordingly S. Helena (says Nicephorus, viii. 30) erected some magnificent works about the pool. S. Chrysostom (*in loc.*) says that in Siloam was the virtue of Christ which cured the blind man. For as the apostles called Christ "a spiritual door," so was He a spiritual Siloam. (So too S. Cyril, and Basil on Isaiah viii. 6, and Eusebius, *Demonst. Evang.* vii. 2.)

Which is by interpretation. "Sent," because it was a type of the Messiah, whose name was Siloach (*i.e.*, sent, or to be sent, by God). For unless He had been sent, none of us (says S. Augustine) would have been delivered from his guilt.

He went therefore, &c. Not by the virtue of the waters of Siloam, but by that of Christ, who used these waters for the enlightenment of the blind man, as He uses the waters of Baptism for the purification and enlightenment of the soul. "In Siloam," says S. Chrysostom, "was the virtue of Christ, which cured the blind man." But the faith and obedience of the blind man merited this, not of condignity, but of congruity. For he believed that he would recover his sight by washing away in the waters of Siloam the clay which Christ had put on his eyes. For had he not believed this, he would not have kept the clay on his eyes, to the ridicule of those who saw him; nor would he have gone to Siloam, nor have there washed away the clay from his eyes. The Gloss says with less truth, "How was this man healed without faith, when nobody is said to have been healed outwardly by Christ without being healed within?" This is said of those who were sick on account of their sins, but he was suffering for the glory of God; for as I have shown, his faith and obedience were great, and by them was he alike justified, as we shall hear at the end of the chapter. So Elisha cleansed from his leprosy Naaman the Syrian by means of the waters of Jordan. And he also made sweet the bitter waters by the salt which was thrown into them. S. Augustine remarks that Christ was "the day who divided the light from the darkness, when He took away his blindness and restored him his sight."

Ver. 8, 9.—*The neighbours therefore, &c., and they that saw him, that he was a beggar, &c. (Vulg.)* "The greatness of the deed brought about incredulity," says S. Chrysostom. "And the opening of the eyes had changed the appearance of the blind man," says S. Augustine, "so that looking on him they doubted whether he who saw was the one who aforetime was blind; but carefully watching him as he walked along the long way, they acknowledged him to be the same, and that it could not be denied." So S. Chrysostom.

The wondrous mercy of God healed most carefully those who were beggars, counting those who were mean of birth to be worthy of His