

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 1: 19-49

Ver. 19.—*And this is the witness of John*, &c. John the Baptist often bare witness to Jesus, that He was the Messiah, or the Christ, both before and after His baptism. John the Evangelist therefore, omitting in this place the testimony which the Baptist bore to Jesus before His baptism, which had been related by the three other Evangelists, gives his testimony concerning Him after he had baptised Him. For this testimony was public, judicial, and most celebrated. It had been judicially demanded by the chief priests and magistrates, and had been received by them through the ambassadors whom they sent to John. The reason of this embassy was because the chief priests saw John leading in the desert an angelic life, preaching with great power, baptising, and moving men to repentance, as none of the other prophets had done. The chief priests thought therefore that it was their duty to ask him who he was, especially because they knew that the sceptre had passed from Judah to Herod, and the seventy weeks of Daniel being completed, the coming of Messiah must be nigh at hand. Wherefore, suspecting that John was the Messiah, they ask him, *Who art thou?*

Chrysostom, Euthymius, Lyra, &c., think Nathanael was ignorant that Christ was God, and only believed that He was the adopted Son of God, by a peculiar grace by which he saw that He was superior to all other prophets and saints.

I am disposed to think that Philip, from the testimony of John the Baptist concerning Jesus (ver. 34), believed Him to be the Son of God, but in a confused sort of way, without clearly discerning between natural and adoptive sonship, and that he persuaded Nathanael to think as he did himself. For although John the Baptist in saying that Christ was the Son of God meant His natural Son, by the Hypostatic Union of the Humanity with the Word, Philip and Nathanael did not as yet understand this until they had been more fully taught.

King of Israel, i.e., Messiah, son of David and Solomon, and therefore heir of the kingdom of the twelve tribes of Israel. This is what David foretold in the 2d Psalm, speaking in the person of Christ: "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion. I will declare His precept: the Lord said unto Me, Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee." From hence it is clear that David foretold that Messiah would be the Son of God by nature. But few before John the Baptist and Christ Himself clearly and fully understood this. The Œcumenical Council of Constantinople, by a constitution of Pope Vigilius, pronounces an anathema against those who would explain the words of Nathanael, *Thou art the Son of God*, to be so applied to Christ as though He were not very God, but as it were of the household of God, and were named God on account of the friendship which he had with God.

thou think that Christ is sprung from Nazareth, especially when Micah foretold that Christ was to spring from Judah and David, and to be born at Bethlehem?" So S. Chrysostom, who adds, "He shows therefore both knowledge of the Scripture, and simplicity of disposition, as well as a vehement desire for the coming of Christ in that he did not despise Philip's words. For he knew that Philip might be deceived with regard to things to be commemorated in his country." And Philip was partly wrong; for though Christ was conceived at Nazareth, He was born at Bethlehem, of which Philip was at this time ignorant.

Come and see. Syriac, Come and thou shalt see. "I will not dispute with thee about Nazareth, but come, see and hear Jesus: and you shall experience what I have experienced, that you may be ravished with His love, and believe that He is the very Christ." Listen to S. Chrysostom. "Philip does not tell him how He is the Christ, and how the prophets have foretold, but he leads him to Jesus, knowing that he will not go away from Him if he tastes His words and His doctrine. If you only see Him, he says, if you only speak with Him, you will at once agree with me." "We ought to believe," says Cyril, "that there was a certain unspeakable loveliness in the words of Christ which attracted the minds of the hearers by its great sweetness."

Ver. 47.—*Jesus saw Nathanael, &c.* He is a follower of the candour, simplicity, and sanctity of Israel, that is, of the patriarch Jacob, from whom he was descended. Wherefore the Syriac translates, *Behold a son of Israel indeed.* Jesus shows that He knew the pure state of Nathanael's mind, that thereby Nathanael might know that Jesus was not a mere man, but that He was also God, and the Searcher of hearts. S. Chrysostom thinks that Christ alludes to what Nathanael had said to Philip, *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* As if Jesus had said, "I am not displeased with what thou hast said about Me, because I know thou hast a candid mind, and art anxious to know the truth."

Ver. 48.—*Nathanael saith, &c.* "Observe," says S. Chrysostom, "the consistency of the man. He is not puffed up by praise, but he proceeds to inquire accurately, that he may learn something certain about Christ."

Jesus answered, &c. "When thou wast alone under the fig tree, and thoughtest that no one saw thee, I saw thee, and know what thou wast doing in secret there. Hence thou mayest gather that I am greater than man, even Messiah, the Son of God." So S. Cyril, S. Augustine, and others.

Mystically, S. Gregory (*Moral. l. 18, c. 20*), *Under the fig tree, i.e.,* beneath the shadow of the Law, *I saw thee,* that I might transfer thee to the vine of My Gospel.

Tropologically, learn from hence that God and Christ are everywhere present, and are to be feared, when thou art alone in thy chamber; yea, when thou secretly thinkest and desirest anything in thy heart, Christ is looking at thee, and beholding thy thoughts and desires. Take heed therefore lest thou do anything, or desire, or think anything, which will offend the eyes of His majesty. For so He beheld Nathanael, and what he was doing under the fig tree. So also God saw Adam under a fig tree eating its forbidden fruit.

Ver. 49.—*Nathanael answered, &c. Son of God:* that is, His natural and consubstantial Son, for this is the plain meaning of the words. So SS. Cyril, Augustine, Maldonatus, &c. But S.

S. Chrysostom gives another reason—that they asked out of envy and hatred of Jesus, in order that they might show that Jesus was not the Messiah. They would have preferred to bestow the title upon John. They disliked John's preferring Jesus to himself, and calling Him the Messiah or Christ. But although there might be some envy mingled with it, the true reason was, as I have said, that it was the counsel of God so to exalt John, that the chief priests might be driven to ask him whether he were the Christ or not, that being asked he might authoritatively answer that which was the truth, namely, that not he, but Jesus, was the Messiah, and that, being convicted by this testimony of John, they might be compelled either to receive Jesus as the Messiah or to be without excuse.

Who art thou? The chief priests appear tacitly at least to have inquired of John, whether he were the Christ or not; for John replies, *I am not the Christ.*

Moreover, they were aware that John was the son of the priest Zacharias, and therefore a priest himself. When therefore they say, *Who art thou?* they ask virtually, What office hast thou received from God? With what object has God sent thee to preach and baptize? For God was wont to commit greater offices to priests.

Tropologically, let every one often ask himself, *Who art Thou?* Firstly, as regards our substance. Listen to thy conscience making answer to thyself—the name of God my Creator is, **I AM THAT I AM** (Exod. iii.) My name therefore as a creature is "I am that am not," because I am nothing of myself, but out of my nothingness have been brought forth by God, and made a man. Wherefore my body and soul are not my own, but God's, who has given them, or rather lent them, to me. As S. Francis was wont to say, "Who art Thou, Lord? Who am I? Thou art an abyss of wisdom and long-suffering, and all goodness. I am an abyss of ignorance, weakness, of all evil and wretchedness. Thou art an abyss of being, I of nothingness." So when Christ appeared to S. Catherine of Sienna, He said, "Blessed art thou if thou knowest who I am, and who thou art. I am He who is, thou art she who is not."

Secondly, as to quality. *Who?* that is, *of what sort art thou?* Answer, As regards my body, I am weak, miserable, and wretched. As to my soul, as regards my reason, I am like unto the angels. As regards my sensual appetite, and concupiscence, I am like the brutes. Therefore I will follow my reason, and so become assimilated to the angels.

Thirdly, as regards relation. *Who?* that is, *whose son art thou?* Reply, I am the son of Adam, the first sinner, and therefore being born in sin, I am living in sin, and must die in sin, unless the grace of Christ rescue me from my sins, and sanctify and save me.

Fourthly, as regards employment. *Who art thou?* what trade or profession art thou? I am a carpenter, a baker, a governor, a shepherd, a lawyer. See then that thou exercise thyself in thy calling, whatsoever it be, as the law of God requires, namely, in such wise that thou live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope, and the coming of the glory of the great God, that thou mayest so pass through things temporal, that thou lose not, but gain the things eternal. Work, study, live for eternity. As S. Bernard was wont often to say to himself, “Bernard, tell me, wherefore art thou here?” And with this goad, as it were, he stirred himself up to zeal for all virtues.

Fifthly, as regards suffering. *Who art thou?* that is to say, *what dost thou suffer?* Reply, In the body I suffer hunger, thirst, disease, continual afflictions, so that there is scarcely the smallest space of time: in which I have not many things to bear. As regards my soul, I have far greater and more bitter afflictions, griefs, and anguish, anxieties, sorrows, angers, indignation, darkness, fear, &c., so that I seem to be, as it were, a mark at which all afflictions hurl their darts, and thrust me through with their arrows. Be thou therefore a very adamant of patience, that thou mayest patiently and generously endure all things, and win the everlasting crown of patience in heaven.

Sixthly, as regards *place*. *Who?* that is, *where art thou?* Answer, I am on earth, placed between heaven and hell, in such wise, that if I live holily, I may pass to heaven, if wickedly, to hell. Live therefore carefully, warily, and holily, that not hell, but heaven may receive thee, when this short mortal life is over.

Seventhly, as regards time. *Who art thou?* When wast thou born? How long hast thou lived? When shalt thou die? Answer, Born yesterday, today I live, to-morrow I die. “For we are of yesterday, and know nothing; all our days upon the earth are but a shadow” (Job viii. 9). Therefore despise all things temporal, which fly past as a bird doth. Love and covet heavenly things, which endure forever with God and the angels. So shalt thou, being eternal, be happy eternally, and abide in everlasting delights. For as S. Gregory says, “That we may be eternal, and happy eternally, let us imitate eternity. And this is to us a great eternity, even the imitation of eternity.”

Lastly, as regards posture and clothing. *Who art thou?* that is, what posture, or clothing hast thou? Reply, I stand, I sit, I lie. I wear the habit of a Christian, a priest, a bishop, a religious. Take heed then that thou live conformably to thy habit. For it is not the habit which makes the Christian, or the monk, but purity of life, humility, charity.

Ver. 20.—*And he confessed*, &c. That is, publicly, plainly, and fully that he was not the Christ. For when the Hebrews wished very strongly to assert anything, they doubled the affirmative, and trebled the negative. Observe the great humility of S. John: how firmly he refused the name of Christ when it was offered to him. For he loved the truth, and Jesus, to whom this name belonged. Men of the world love to boast, and say, I am a nobleman, a governor, a canon, a bishop. But John teaches us to say, “I am nothing,” because if I am anything, I have it from God.

Nathanael, his friend and comrade. You will inquire who was this Nathanael?

1. Claudius Espenæus, commenting on 2 Tim. iv., says that Nathanael was the same as Ursicinus, the first Bishop of Bourges.
2. The Greek Menæa says that Nathanael is the same as the Apostle Simon the Cananite. He is there commemorated on the 22d of April as follows: “The Holy Apostle Nathanael, which was Simon Zelotes, of Cana in Galilee, where Christ at the marriage feast turned the water into wine.” He is also commemorated in the Menæa on the 10th of May.
3. and more probably, Rupertus and Jansen in this passage think Nathanael is the Apostle Bartholomew. They show this, firstly, because the other Evangelists always join together Philip and Bartholomew, as John here joins Philip and Nathanael. Secondly, because we nowhere read of Christ’s calling Bartholomew, unless it were this call of Nathanael. Thirdly, because the other three Evangelists who make mention of Bartholomew make no mention of Nathanael, and *vice versâ* with S. John. Fourthly, because S. John (xxi. 2) associates Nathanael with the Apostles Peter, Thomas, James, and John in fishing, and the vision of Jesus. It would seem therefore that he was an Apostle, and yet it is not apparent who else he could be if he were not Bartholomew. Fifthly, because Bartholomew does not seem to be a proper name, but only to signify that he was the son of Tolmai; and his proper name seems to have been Nathanael. Sixthly, because Christ said of Nathanael, *Behold an Israelite indeed, it whom is no guile*. And then Christ promises him a vision of angels ascending and descending upon Himself. Christ therefore seems to have specially loved him, and to have chosen him for a friend and Apostle.

S. Augustine, however, dissents from this view, because he thinks Nathanael was a doctor of the Law. He discoursed with S. Philip out of the law. But Christ did not choose for His Apostles men learned in the Law, but rude and ignorant fishermen. To this it may be replied that Nathanael was a student, but not a doctor of the Law. Just as Philip, Andrew, and Peter all discoursed out of the Law concerning the coming of Messiah. If, however, Nathanael was not an Apostle, he was certainly a disciple, wherefore L. Dexter (*Chron. ad. A.D. 101*) says, “Nathanael, one of the seventy disciples of the Lord, sleeps in Treuga, a city of Spain,” now called Leon. Another writer adds that he slept in the Lord on the 30th of November.

Nathanael means in Hebrew *the gift of God*, or *God gave*, or *given by God*; in Latin, *Adeo-datus*. The prince of the tribe of Issachar in the time of Moses was called Nathanael (Num. i. 8). It may be that our Apostle was descended from him, and took his name.

Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. For Nazareth is only three hours distant from Cana, so that Nathanael of Cana might easily know of Jesus of Nazareth, Joseph’s son, as he was commonly reputed to be.

Ver. 46.—*Nathanael said unto him*, &c. For Nazareth of Galilee was a place ignoble and obscure, and despised by the Jews. Wherefore the Pharisees say (vii. 57), *Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet*. “How then, O Philip, canst

that He may reveal secrets, and show him that He is the Searcher of hearts and his God.

Thou shall be called Cephas. Christ promises to Simon the name of Cephas, or Peter, as much as to say, I will give thee, Simon, another name. I will call thee Cephas, *i.e.*, a rock or Peter, for I will make thee the rock of the Church, so that on thee and thy faith, and thy government the fabric of My Church may rest securely as upon a most solid foundation of rock. (See what is said on S. Matt. xvi. 18)

Ver. 43.—*On the morrow,* &c. That out of Galilee He might call untutored fishermen, to create them His Apostles, and the preachers of His Gospel, lest the Christian faith should be supposed to be the work of man, not of God. For the Apostles were Galileans. For the Galileans were poor and ignoble in comparison with the Jews who were sprung from Judah, which was the royal tribe.

He findeth Philip, not by chance, but going of set purpose to the place where He knew Philip was. There He found him whom He carefully sought, and whom He destined to be an Apostle.

And Jesus saith unto him. This is the first exterior calling by Christ. For Peter and Andrew were first called by an inward inspiration, not outwardly by Christ's external voice, but by hearing the voice of John the Baptist their master saying of Christ, *Behold the Lamb of God!* They were not called by Him, but of their own accord they came to Jesus, in order to find out His doctrine and life, but not, as it were, about to become His sure and firm disciples. Thus Toletus. To Philip therefore this praise and glory is due that he was the first of all to hear Christ say, *follow Me,* and to experience an outward call at the same time that the Holy Ghost influenced his mind inwardly; and obedient to this vocation he straightway followed Christ, for he was himself a student of the Mosaic law, and anxious about the coming of Christ, as Theophylact says. Theophylact gives as the cause of his following the attractive voice of Christ, "The voice of the Lord seems to have touched his mind as it were with a goad of love." For it was not merely the Saviour's voice which spoke, but He forthwith made those to whom He spoke worthy to be inflamed with His love, even as Cleophas said, "Did not our heart burn within us, whilst He talked with us by the way?"

Ver. 44.—*Now Philip was of Bethsaida,* &c. John adds this, says Theophylact, to intimate that Andrew and Peter had previously informed Philip, who was their townsman, that they had found the Messiah, and that He was Jesus of Nazareth. Wherefore Philip, as soon as he heard Christ call, *Follow Me,* immediately followed Him, because his mind was already prepared, and eager for Christ.

Moreover, Bethsaida was contiguous to the Sea of Galilee, and near Capharnaum, where Peter and Andrew had a house, as we learn from the 8th of S. Matthew. This, then, was the country of three of the Apostles, namely, Peter, Andrew, and Philip. *Bethsaida* means in Hebrew the *house of hunting,* or *fishing,* because fishermen, such as Peter and Andrew, dwelt there, and caught fish in the neighbouring sea.

Ver. 45.—*Philip findeth Nathanael,* &c. "Not by chance," as Cyril saith; "but he sought him with great diligence, for he knew that he was a very diligent searcher of the Scriptures." It would appear that he found him at Cana of Galilee, which was the native place of Nathanael, as is plain from chap. xxi. 2.

Ver. 21.—*And they asked him,* &c. When John denied that he was the Christ, the messengers asked him if he were Elias. For him God took away, that he might be the forerunner of Christ. And of him they were then in expectation, according to the words of Malachi (iv. 5), "Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord come," meaning the day of judgment, when Christ shall return to be the judge of all. But the Scribes did not understand this. They thought that there would be but one advent of Christ, and that a glorious one, the precursor of which would be Elias. Thus the Jews think even now that Christ has not yet come, but is about to come with Elias. And yet they ought to have known from the same Malachi (iii. 1) that there would be another precursor of Christ's first coming in the flesh, even John the Baptist. "For I," saith the Lord, "do send My messenger, and he shall prepare My way before My face."

Art thou that prophet? Greek, *ὁ προφήτης,* *the prophet* par excellence. "Art thou a new and great prophet, such an one as we think will come with Messiah, to be His herald?" So SS. Chrysostom and Cyril. But they (the Jews) were in error. For Christ needed not a prophet, as Moses, who was not eloquent, needed Aaron. But Christ was His own prophet, herald, priest, and lawgiver. Moreover John was not a prophet in the sense that he foretold things to come. But he pointed out with his finger, as it were, Christ present. Therefore was he more than a prophet, as Christ says in the 11th of Matthew.

Ver. 23.—*I am the Voice,* &c. (Isa. xl. 3), where I have expounded the meaning. Listen to what the Fathers say about it. "I am a servant, and prepare paths, your hearts, for the Lord," says Theophylact. "I come, he says, to say that He is at the doors who is expected, that you may be prepared to go whithersoever He may bid you," says Cyril.

Ver. 24.—*And they that were sent,* &c. John adds this, to suggest the occasion why they examined John the Baptist concerning baptism. These messengers who were sent to John were Pharisees, and therefore were well versed in the Scriptures. Consequently they knew that Messiah would baptize for the remission of sins, because Ezekiel (xxxvi. 25) and Zechariah (xiii. 1) had predicted that He would do so. But concerning other prophets and saints they had not read in Scripture that they would baptize. They ask John therefore to tell them by what authority he baptized, especially since he not only asserted that he was not Christ, but not even a prophet.

Ver. 25.—*And they asked him,* &c. "These Pharisees," says S. Cyril, in their arrogancy insult John, as though they said, Neither Elias, nor Eliseus, nor any of the other prophets dared to take upon themselves the office of baptizing. With what face then, or boldness, dost thou, who art not a prophet, arrogate this office to thyself?"

Ver. 26.—*John answered them,* &c. As though he had said, "God hath sent

me to baptize with water, that I might stir you up to repentance and tears, so as to fit you for Christ's baptism. For He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, for the remission of sins," as the remaining three Evangelists declare. Therefore John is silent about this.

There standeth one, &c. That is, Christ is living in the midst of you, and yet ye know Him not. That is, you do not recognise Him as Messiah, but look upon Him as a mere man, as vile and abject.

Ver. 27.—*He it is who, coming after me, &c.* After me Christ shall come to baptize you, that by His baptism He may perfect mine, and may wash and justify them that are penitent. As S. Cyril paraphrases, "I in preparation wash with water those who are polluted with sins as a beginning of repentance, and by this means leading you from what is lower I prepare you for more lofty things. For He who is the giver of greater things, and of the highest perfection, is about to come after me." Or, as S. Chrysostom says,

"My baptism is only a disposition and preparation for the baptism of Christ. Mine is of water and corporeal, Christ's is of fire and spiritual."

Whose shoe's latchet, &c. As though he said, "I am not worthy to be reckoned amongst the last of the servants of Christ, on account of the greatness of the Deity which is in Him."

Ver 28.—*These things were done in, &c. Bethany* is the reading of the Latin, Syriac, Arabic versions, of many codices, including the Vatican, of Bede, Alcuin, the Gloss, &c. But instead of *Bethany*, Origen, S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius, S. Epiphanius, and S. Jerome (*in loc. Heb.*) read *Bethabara*, where Gideon slew the Midianites. I observe with Toletus that Bethany and Bethabara were one and the same place, or at least that one was nigh the other, or on opposite banks of the Jordan. This was the place in which the Hebrews, when they came out of Egypt first crossed the Jordan under the leadership of Joshua, to enter the promised land. For *Bethabara* means in Hebrew *a house of passage; Bethany, a house of ships*. For vessels were waiting here to carry passengers over Jordan. This Bethany is derived from *Beth*, a house, and *any*, spelt with *alpha*, a ship. The Bethany of Martha and Lazarus was a different place, and spelt differently in Hebrew. That Bethany means *the house of humility, from Beth*, a house, and *any*, spelt with *ain*, humility.

John, then, chose this place wherein to baptize for several reasons, because of the abundance of water, also in memory of the ancient passage of the Israelites. S. Jerome says (*loc. Hebræis*), "Even at this present time many of our brethren who believe, desiring there to be born again, are baptized in the life-giving flood." They did this in memory of Christ, who was there baptized by John. This place is distant about four leagues from the Dead Sea.

Observe, Christ was baptized on the 6th of January. It was fifty-five days afterwards that John bore this witness to Christ, or about the 1st of March, when Jesus was

those nearest to us, partakers with us, and to draw them to God, is a mark and an effect of the Divine Vocation. For as fire kindles fire, so does zeal kindle zeal. Moreover, Peter, as well as Andrew, seems to have been a disciple, or at least a diligent hearer of John the Baptist. Which of the two was the elder is not known. The conversion of Peter is the glory and praise of Andrew.

Ver. 41.—*He first findeth, &c. . . . the Christ*, that is, *the Anointed*, not indued with corporeal anointing, but with spiritual grace, both that of the Hypostatic Union, as well as that grace which was habitual and specially excellent. This last was the grace by which as man He was created by God, and, as it were, Consecrated, first a priest, secondly, a teacher, thirdly, a prophet, fourthly, a king, fifthly, a lawgiver, sixthly, the Redeemer of the world. The Greek is *τόν Μεσσίαν, i.e., that Christ, that Anointed One*: the one, only, special Prophet, predicted by the rest, whom all were eagerly expecting as the Restorer of Israel. So Euthymius.

We have found the Messiah, whom I and thou are most eagerly expecting. It would seem that both Andrew and Peter, partly from the prophetic oracles, and partly from the testimony of John, were inflamed with the desire of seeing Christ. For, as Bede says, "No one finds but he who seeks: he who saith that he hath found shows that he had been a long while seeking." Euthymius, following S. Chrysostom, as he is wont, saith, "This is the speech of one who is very glad; We have found Him whom we sought, whom we hoped should come, whom the Scriptures announced." Andrew, therefore, that he might communicate his great joy at finding Christ, to his brother Peter exclaims, "*We have found the Messiah.*" Wherefore "they no more returned to S. John," as S. Chrysostom says, "but were so closely united to Christ, that they undertook John's office, and themselves preached Christ."

Hence we learn, *morally*, that God by His grace meets the longing soul, and so fills it that it may the more desire and thirst for Him. Yea, God is wont first to put this desire of Himself into the soul, that He may thereby prepare the soul for Himself and His gifts, and make it capable of receiving them.

Ver. 42.—*And he brought him to Jesus*. "It is probable," says S. Chrysostom, "that Andrew related many other things calculated to persuade. The other disciple was also present to confirm what he said. But Andrew, since it was not his office, and because he was not sufficient to tell of so great a light, brings him to that very fountain which he had discovered." Moreover, the mind of Peter, like a straw in presence of the fire, was inflamed with the desire of seeing and hearing Christ. Wherefore S. Chrysostom proceeds, "Consider the obedient mind of Peter from the beginning, and how full of good will. He brought him to Jesus; but let no one find fault with his too great readiness in believing. For it is not said that he immediately persuaded him, but only that he brought him to Jesus, there to learn all."

Jesus beholding him (as it were a fitting subject to preach and make known His glory, and therefore designing him to be His successor and vicar, that is, the Pontiff of the Church) *said, &c.* Simon Peter's father was called *Johanán* or *John*, by contraction *Jona*, as Jehoshua is contracted into Joshua and Jesus. Christ says this

For from what follows it is plain they had not given themselves up entirely to Christ, but only desired to make trial of Him.

Ver. 38.—*Jesus turning, &c. What seek ye?* It is the voice not of one who is ignorant, but of one who invites, and deals gently with their bashfulness. As S. Cyril says, “He asks what they sought, not as ignorant, for He knew all things as God, but that His question might afford the beginning of conversation.”

Rabbi: Syriac, *Rabboni*, i.e., *our master*; Arabic, *Rabban*, or *master*. By this expression the disciples honoured Christ, and sought His favour, and intimated that they wished to become His disciples. As Bede saith, “The question itself is an indication of faith: for when they say *Rabbi*, which means *master*, they follow and call Him their Master.” And S. Cyril says, “They called Him Master from whom they desired to learn.”

Where dwellest thou? Greek, *ποῦ μένεις*, i.e., *where remainest thou?* For Christ had but a hospice on earth, and no proper habitation or house, according to the words in Matthew: “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.” The disciples ask this question, that they may be able to converse privately with Christ in the house, and be instructed by Him in Divine things, and those which pertain to the more perfect life. They show that they wish to become His friends and servants.

Ver. 39.—*He said unto them, Come and see, &c. The tenth hour, i.e., four o’clock* in the afternoon, or about two hours before sunset. S. John adds these words, to show both the zeal of Christ, who though night was nigh, would not put them off to the following day, but entered immediately upon the things pertaining to salvation; as also to show the ardent devotion of the disciples to Christ, who, careless about their night’s lodging, had rather spend the night in listening to Christ, than at home in their beds. So Euthymius. For they remained with Him not merely the two hours which were left of daylight, as some suppose, but the whole night. For those two hours were not sufficient to speak about their affairs, and to know Christ. Neither could they have returned to John before nightfall. For, as Cyril says, “It is not fitting that we should speedily be satisfied with Divine things, and leave them.”

Moreover, what great things they heard from Christ, what draughts of piety they drank, what flames of love they felt kindled by Christ those only know who have had experience of them. Wherefore S. Austin exclaims, “How blessed they accounted the day! how blessed the night! Who can tell us the things which they heard from the Lord?” Certainly we may gather what was said from the effect produced: for Andrew was so inflamed with love for Christ that he forthwith strove to gain his brother Peter to Christ, and inflame him with love for Him.

Ver. 40.—*Now one of the two, &c.* John inserts this to show in what way Peter, who was to be the prince of the Apostles, and the head of the whole Church, was led to Christ. It was because Andrew, being glad at finding and hearing Christ, brought his own brother Peter, for whom he had a singular love, to Him, that he might make him partaker in so great a good. For this zeal, which burns to make others, especially

absent. On the day following Jesus presented Himself before John, when John renewed his testimony, saying, *Behold the Lamb of God.* (See *Epiphan. Hæres.* 51.)

Whence there follows (Ver. 29), *The next day again John saw, &c.* Observe that after Jesus was baptized He went into the desert, where He fasted for forty days, as is plain from S. Matthew iii. Then He came down from the Mount of Temptation, and returned to John, to visit and hear him; but especially that John might in His presence confirm the testimony which in His absence he had given to the messengers of the Jews; that he might point Him out with his very finger, and leave no place for hesitation to any.

Behold the Lamb of God. Nonnus paraphrases, “He lifted up his finger, and pointed Him out as He drew near to the people who beheld Him.” “The word Behold,” says S. Chrysostom, “is used because many were inquiring for Him: therefore he pointed Him out being present, saying, “This is He of whom I have been speaking.”

Lamb, Greek, *ὁ ἀμνος*, *the Lamb* divinely prefigured and predicted by Moses and Isaiah. “He is led as a lamb to the slaughter,” &c. (Isa. liii. 7).

Christ is thus called *the Lamb* by S. John the Baptist, and by His Apostle, S. John the Evangelist, in the Apocalypse. 1. Because He was prefigured by the Paschal Lamb, and by the daily morning and evening sacrifice of a lamb to God in the Temple, and by the other lambs which were offered for sin, according to the Law, and yet they could not take away sins. Wherefore they represented Christ, who was to take away sin by His Blood. So Origen, &c.

2. Because Christ was called a Lamb by Isaiah and Jeremiah (xi. 19), who was to be offered for the redemption of the world.

3. He is called a Lamb because of his lamb-like innocence, meekness, patience, and obedience, even unto death, which, like a lamb, He bore in silence. As S. Peter says, “Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously” (1 Pet. ii. 23).

Christ truly is called *the Lamb of God*, i.e., the offspring, not of sheep, but of God, who by the will of God was offered for man’s redemption. Thus the sacrifice which Abraham offered is called Abraham’s sacrifice, as Theophylact says. Or because He was offered up to God Himself. Or the *Lamb of God* is the Divine Lamb, because of the Deity which was in Him. Or as S. Clement of Alexandria says, because He was made for us the child and babe of the Father. So we call children, *lambs*. These are the words of Clement, Since the Scripture calls boys and infants lambs, he called God who is the Word, who for us was made man, who wished in all

things to be made like unto us, the Lamb of God, the Son of God, the Infant of the Father" (*Pædag. lib. 1 c. 5*).

Moreover, Christ for His strength and His victory is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah." He was a *Lamb* in His Passion, a *Lion* in His Resurrection.

Who taketh away the sins: taketh away, both as regards the stain which sin in act imprints upon the soul, and as regards the guilt of sin, which makes the sinner liable to hell. This He takes away by making expiation, and bearing the punishment in Himself, thus in justice and equity satisfying for sin by His death upon the cross. John said this, that no one might think Christ came to his baptism to wash away His own sins, as others did; for He had no sin, but was most innocent and most holy. Therefore God made Him the victim for the sins of the whole world, that He might sanctify all who repent and believe in Him. As S. Augustine says, "He who had no participation in our sinfulness is He who takes away our sin."

Sin: this is the reading of the Greek, Latin, and Syriac. The Arabic reads *sins*; but the sense is the same. By *sin* here is to be understood the first and universal sin of Adam, that is, original sin, which he by generation transmitted to all his posterity, and out of which all actual sins, whether venial or mortal, spring. Christ therefore, in taking away sin, takes away its source as well as its filth. So Bede, S. Thomas, Jansen, &c. As Isaiah saith, "The Lord laid upon Him the iniquities of us all." And, "He shall bear their iniquities;" and 1 John ii. 2, "And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

As S. Cyril says, "One is slain for all, that the whole human race may be won to God the Father." For there is in Christ a perpetual power of making expiation for sin in all ages and all nations, and in all men who are willing to receive His faith, His baptism, His repentance.

Ver. 31.—*And I knew Him not*, &c. As though he said, "Think not, O ye Jews, that I affirm Jesus to be the Messiah for the sake of friendship, or relationship, as though I were His friend and companion; for I declare unto you that *I knew Him not*, that I never saw Him, or spoke to Him, before His baptism. But as soon as I saw Him I recognised Him by the inspiration of God." "What wonder," says S. Chrysostom, "that he who from a child dwelt in the desert away from his father's house knew not Christ?"

But that He should be manifested, &c. That is, to the Jews, to whom the Messiah was promised, "that they all might be brought to believe in Him." Wherefore Nonnus paraphrases, "But that He whose face was unknown might be manifested to all the children of Israel, who have no ruler, I am come a precursor of the way not declared, baptizing an unlearned, ignorant, erring people."

Ver. 33.—*And I knew Him not*, &c. *With water*. Nonnus, "in the laver without fire and the Holy Ghost." A second time S. John declares that he knew not Jesus was the Christ by sight and converse, but by revelation from God, that no one might dare to

dispute his testimony. So S. Cyril.

Note the expression *abiding*. From this it is clear that it is peculiar to Christ to have all the graces of the Holy Spirit, and prophecy, *by way of habit*; but that in others only those gifts *abide* which are necessary for holiness of life: according to the words in chap. xiv., "He shall abide with you." (See Suarez, *Tract. de fide. disp. 8, sect. 6, n. 6.*)

Ver. 35.—*The next day*, &c. The Evangelist says that John bare witness to Jesus in three consecutive days that He was the Christ. He did this to make his witness the more sure and solid. The first testimony that he gave was judicial, when he was asked by the messengers of the Jews. This was in the first day. The second he gave on the day following, which was the 2d of March. The third time was here on the 3d of March, before his own disciples, that he might cause them to pass from himself to Jesus.

Ver. 36.—*And seeing Jesus as he walked*, &c. As though he said, "Behold Christ like a spotless Lamb, destined for a victim, that He may be offered to God upon the cross, for the sins of the whole world." When John spoke thus it was as though he said to his disciples, "Why do you follow me? follow Him who is the Lamb of God, the ransom of the world."

Here observe the prudence and modesty of John. He does not compel or urge his disciples to follow Christ, but only points Him out to them, that they might the more ardently pursue after so great a good when it was discovered by themselves. Like a man who, when a jewel is being sold for a small price, points out to merchants how great is its worth, and causes them of their own accord to long to purchase it.

Ver. 37.—*And two of his disciples*, &c. S. Chrysostom says, "There were indeed others of S. John's disciples, but they not only did not follow Christ, but were jealous of John's, their master's, honour, and preferred him to Christ, as is plain from iii. 26.

Two: one of those was Andrew, as appears from verse 40; who the other was is not known. S. Chrysostom asks, "Why is not the name of the other given? Either because it was the writer himself, S. John the Apostle, or because it was a person of no note." The first idea is the more probable. And what favours the conjecture is that John and James were companions in fishing with Peter and Andrew (Matt. iv.), when, shortly after Andrew and Peter, Christ calls John and James. Lastly, the great purity, the virginity, and holiness of S. John the Evangelist seem to have been the result of the teaching, the purity, and holiness of S. John the Baptist.

They followed Jesus: that they might know Him more fully, says Euthymius, and contract a friendship with Him: and if they should experience that advantage, they would follow Him wholly, and be altogether His disciples.