



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 8: 1-20**

Douay Rheims Version

*The woman taken in adultery. Christ justifies his doctrine.*

1. And Jesus went unto mount Olivet.
2. And early in the morning he came again into the temple: and all the people came to him. And sitting down he taught them.
3. And the scribes and Pharisees bring unto him a woman taken in adultery: and they set her in the midst,
4. And said to him: Master, this woman was even now taken in adultery.
5. Now Moses in the law commanded us to stone such a one. But what sayest thou?
6. And this they said tempting him, that they might accuse him. But Jesus bowing himself down, wrote with his finger on the ground.
7. When therefore they continued asking him, he lifted up himself and said to them: He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

holiness, who teach men to despise earthly riches, as mean and perishing, and to aim at heavenly riches, as being great and eternal. Follow not the Pharisees who are blindly intent on these earthly riches, for Vespasian will speedily carry them all away; but rather follow Me, the Light of the world, for I preach to you poverty of spirit as the way to gain boundless riches in heaven. And on the other hand, "Woe to you rich," &c. (Luke vi. 24). This then was the cause of the intense hatred they felt against Christ, which led them to persecute Him even to death on the cross. It was out of this treasury that they sacrilegiously took the thirty pieces of silver which they gave to Judas to betray Jesus. And therefore in the very same spot He willed that He would by that means be lifted up on the cross, and draw all men unto Him.

Origen gives a mystical reason. "Christ," he says, "spake these things in the treasury, because the treasury, or rather the treasures, are His divine discourses, impressed with the image of the great King. Coins (he says) are divine words. Let every one then contribute to the treasury, *i.e.*, for the edification of the Church, whatever he is able for the honour of God, and the common benefit." And Bede, "Christ speaks in the treasury, because He spake to the Jews in parables which were covered and kept close. But the treasury then began (as it were) to be opened, when He explained them to His disciples, and unlocked the heavenly mysteries therein conceived."

*For His hour was not yet come.* "Not the fated, but the opportune and self-chosen hour," says the Interlinear Gloss. "Some," says S. Augustine, "on hearing this, believe that Christ was subject to fate. But how can He be under fate, by whom the heaven and the stars were made, when Thy will, if Thou thinkest aught, transcends even the stars? The hour therefore had not come, not 'the hour in which He should be forced to die, but in which He deigned to be slain.'"

*Jesus answered, &c.* Christ did not wish to answer clearly and directly, “My Father is in heaven,” because He knew that the question was put in order to ensnare Him. He therefore, though answering their question directly, yet spoke so guardedly that the Pharisees could not bring any charge against Him. As if He said, Ye think that I am a man, and that I have only an earthly father. But ye are wrong, for ye know not that I am God as well as man. And therefore ye understand not that I have no other Father than God in heaven, though I have proved this by so many miracles.

But how does this agree with what Christ said (vii. 28), *Ye both know Me, and know whence I am?* I answer, Christ then spoke of Himself as man, but here He speaks of Himself as God. Origen adds that then Christ spoke to the people of Jerusalem who knew Him, but here to the Pharisees who knew Him not, and were moreover His enemies. The word “if” is here equivalent to assuredly. See Leontius. As Christ says to Philip (xiv. 9), *He that seeth Me seeth My Father also.*

S. Augustine explains it somewhat differently; “Ye ask, who is My Father, because ye know Me not, for ye think not that I am God eternal in heaven.”

(2.) Cyril speaks more profoundly and to the point. “The names of Father and Son imply each other,” Christ therefore is the gate (as it were) leading to the Father. “Let us learn then,” he adds, “what He is by nature, and then we shall rightly understand as in an express image the Antitype Itself.” For the Father is manifested in the Son, as in a mirror, in the proper nature of His offspring. (See Wisdom vii. 26 and Heb. i 3.)

Origen considers that “know” means to “love.” If ye loved Me ye would surely love My Father. For evil livers practically know not God, as is said of Eli’s sons.

Ver. 20.—*These words, &c. . . in the temple (i.e., the Court of the Temple).* Rupertus thinks that the reason why no man laid hands on Him was because the treasury was a remote spot, frequented only by the Priests who wished to take money out, and the lay people who wished to pay it in. But it was in fact a public and much-frequented place, being a large portico close to the court of the temple, and in it were preserved all the treasures of the temple. Christ then spake all these things openly and boldly in a place where He could easily have been taken. But He by His Divine power restrained their hands and their resolve, because the destined hour had not yet come.

Adrichonius (*Descript. Hieros.* 103) describes the treasury as a chest wherein all requisites were kept for the sacrifices, the support of the poor, repair of the temple, &c. When Heliodorus attempted to plunder it, he was said to have been scourged by angels, and Pilate was prevented by a popular tumult from applying its contents to bringing water into the city. It was afterwards plundered by the Romans. Here also the poor woman cast in her two mites. It was from this chest that the whole porch where it stood was called the treasury.

The other reason why Christ spoke thus in the treasury was of a more hidden kind. Because it was the dark hiding-place of the Pharisees, where they wrought all those evil devices which Christ recounts, Matt. v. and xxiii. In this very spot He condemns their dark deeds by saying, “I am the Light of the world,” the true Light of wisdom and

8. And again stooping down, he wrote on the ground.
9. But they hearing this, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest. And Jesus alone remained, and the woman standing in the midst.
10. Then Jesus lifting up himself, said to her: Woman, where are they that accused thee? Hath no man condemned thee?
11. Who said: No man, Lord. And Jesus said: Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more.
12. Again therefore, Jesus spoke to: them, saying: I am the light of the world. He that followeth me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
13. The Pharisees therefore said to him: Thou givest testimony of thyself. Thy testimony is not true.
14. Jesus answered and said to them: Although I give testimony of myself, my testimony is true: for I know whence I came and whither I go.
15. You judge according to the flesh: I judge not any man.
16. And if I do judge, my judgment is true: because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.
17. And in your law it is written that the testimony of two men is true.
18. I am one that give testimony of myself: and the Father that sent me giveth testimony of me.
19. They said therefore to him: Where is thy Father? Jesus answered: Neither me do you know, nor my Father. If you did know me, perhaps you would know my Father also.
20. These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, teaching in the temple: and no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.
21. Again therefore Jesus said to them: I go: and you shall seek me. And you shall die in your sin. Whither I go, you cannot come.
22. The Jews therefore said: Will he kill himself, because he said: Whither I go you cannot come?
23. And he said to them: You are from beneath: I am from above. You are of this world: I am not of this world.
24. Therefore I said to you that you shall die in your sins. For if you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sin.
25. They said therefore to him: Who art thou? Jesus said to them: The beginning, who also speak unto you.
26. Many things I have to speak and to judge of you. But he that sent me, is true: and the things I have heard of him, these same I speak in the world.
27. And they understood not that he called God his Father.
28. Jesus therefore said to them: When you shall have lifted up, the Son of man, then shall you know that I am he and that I do nothing of myself. But as the Father hath taught me, these things I speak.
29. And he that sent me is with me: and he hath not left me alone. For I do always the things that please him.
30. When he spoke these things, many believed in him.
31. Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed him: If you continue in my word, you shall be my disciples indeed.

32. And you shall know the truth: and the truth shall make you free.  
33. They answered him: We are the seed of Abraham: and we have never been slaves to any man. How sayest thou: You shall be free?  
34. Jesus answered them: Amen, amen, I say unto you that whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.  
35. Now the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the son abideth for ever.  
36. If therefore the son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.  
37. I know that you are the children of Abraham: but you seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.  
38. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and you do the things that you have seen with your father.  
39. They answered and said to him: Abraham is our father. Jesus saith them: If you be the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham.  
40. But now you seek to kill me, a man who have spoken the truth to you, which I have heard of God. This Abraham did not.  
41. You do the works of your father. They said therefore to him: We are not born of fornication: we have one Father, even God.  
42. Jesus therefore said to them: If God were your Father, you would indeed love me. For from God I proceeded and came. For I came not of myself: but he sent me.  
43. Why do you not know my speech? Because you cannot hear my word.  
44. You are of your father the devil: and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning: and he stood not in the truth, because truth is not in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof.  
45. But if I say the truth, you believe me not.  
46. Which of you shall convince me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe me:  
47. He that is of God heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God.  
48. The Jews therefore answered and said to him: Do not we say well that thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?  
49. Jesus answered: I have not a devil: but I honour my Father. And you have dishonoured me.  
50. But I seek not my own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.  
51. Amen, amen, I say to you: If any man keep my word, he shall not see death for ever.  
52. The Jews therefore said: Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets: and thou sayest: If any man keep my word, he shall not taste death for ever.  
53. Art thou greater than our father Abraham who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom dost thou make thyself?  
54. Jesus answered: If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father that glorifieth me, of whom you say that he is your God.  
55. And you have not known him: but I know him. And if I shall say that I know him not, I shall be like to you, a liar. But I do know him and do keep his word.  
56. Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day: he saw it and was glad.

the Father are ever One by Our Godhead; the judgment of both and the will of both are alike One." As He says elsewhere, "I do nothing of Myself," for I have never proceeded to any punishment, which was not in the mind of the Father. "For whatever thoughts the nature of the Father entertains, the same are completed in Me also, for I shine forth from His bosom, and am the true offspring of His substance," says S. Cyril.

Ver. 17.—*It is also written in your Law* (Deut. xvii. 6, xix. 5), *that the testimony of two men is true*: that is to be admitted by the judge, who can base on it a legal sentence, though the testimony may as a matter of fact be false. But a judge must go by the evidence; and so his sentences may be legally right, but in reality wrong. If then the testimony of two men be true, how much more must the sentence of two Divine Persons, the Father and the Son, be accepted as most true, most equitable, and most just? Christ applies this to His own case. For that the Father is with Him, and witnesses to Him, and that He is the Son of the Father, He had more than sufficiently proved, and therefore assumes it. "It is," says Augustine, "a grand and most mysterious question when God says in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established;" for Susanna was accused by two false witnesses, and all the people witnessed falsely against Christ. But in this way is the Trinity represented as in mystery; for therein is the ever-enduring firmness of truth. If thou wishest to have a good cause, have three witnesses, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

Ver. 18.—*I am one that bear witness of Myself*, &c. But thou wilt say, no one's testimony is accepted in his own case, and therefore Christ's testimony to Himself ought not to be accepted. But the answer is, that Christ as God witnesses to Himself as man. But God and man are two beings, and in Christ God was different from man: in nature, I mean, not in person. And from this very passage the Fathers gather against both Nestorians and Eutycheans, that in Christ there was one Person, the Divine, but two natures, the Divine and the human. So Cyril, Chrysostom, and S. Ambrose (*de Fide* v. 2). Besides this, God the Father and God the Son bore witness that Jesus was the Christ by the miracles which they wrought both through Him and for Him (see chap. v. 31, 32). And especially when the Father spake in thunder out of heaven, *This is My beloved Son*. So Bede.

Ver. 19.—*Then said they unto Him, Where is Thy Father?* They said this, in order to elicit from Him a clear statement that God was His Father, in order to accuse Him of blasphemy, as they did, chap. v. 18, xix. 7. So Chrysostom and others.

But Cyril and Leontius less probably think that the Pharisees spoke contemptuously and sarcastically, as if He were the Son of some unknown father. S. Augustine and Bede think that they referred to Joseph, as being His father in the flesh. But the first is the best meaning.

(1.) Ye judge of Me, not according to truth and equity, but from the carnal hatred ye have against Me; as living according to the flesh is to live ill, so judging according to the flesh is to judge unjustly.

(2.) From My Body, which ye see, ye count Me a mere man; because I am in the flesh ye count Me mere flesh, judging wrongly. And thus ye rule that Truth can lie. For I am the Truth (S. Cyril).

(3.) Ye judge by your senses alone, by that which ye see of Me; that I am a mean, poor, abject man, not the Messiah, not God who hides Himself in My flesh; and therefore ye condemn Me as a proud blasphemer for asserting Myself to be the Son of God. And this ye would not do, if ye judged of Me by reason and the spirit of truth. For this would declare to you that I am what I assert, Messiah, the Son of God. "They saw the man," says S. Augustine, "but did not believe Him to be God." And the Gloss, "they thought Him to be a man, who was not to be believed when praising Himself." "Moreover," says S. Cyril, "He acts like a physician who heeds not the insults of his patients who are mad, but applies to them the fitting remedies; fighting against disease, but not against the patient, whom he wishes to restore to health of body and mind."

*I judge no man*, not as ye do, by outward appearance, but according to reason and the spirit.

(4.) S. Chrysostom says, "Because the Jews might make this objection to Christ, 'If we judge wrongly of Thee, why dost not thou convince us?' Christ replies, *I judge no one*. It is not My business. Were I now to judge you, I should assuredly condemn you. But this is not the time for doing so."

(5.) To *judge* in this place, means to perform a kind of judicial act, and hence it means to testify, or bear witness, for witnesses force as it were the judge to give sentence in accordance with their testimony. And hence a witness is a kind of judge (see Is. lv. 4). For the whole question between Christ and the Jews was with reference to His testimony, whether it could be lawfully accepted. And He maintains that it can be, as He was not alone, but the Father was with him (see S. Ambrose, *Lib. v. Epist. 20*). And this is plain from what Christ says, verses 17 and 18, "I am He that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me." But He uses the word "judge" because He seemed just before to have judged the adulteress, which the Pharisees resented. But He meant thereby that He had not judicially acquitted her, though He might have done so, as the Son of God. For I am not a mere man, as ye suppose, nor am I alone, for God the Father is with Me. And in this sense "*I judge*" is understood in its own proper sense, "I pass not a judicial sentence."

Ver. 16.—*And yet if I judge* (i.e., bear witness of Myself) *My judgment* (i.e., witness) *is true*, i.e., fit to be taken in court, *for I am not alone*, &c. S. Chrysostom explains, "If I judge, I should justly condemn you, because I should not judge by Myself, but I and the Father together." But the true meaning is that given in verse 15.

*I and the Father that sent Me*. "For I took the form of a servant, but lost not the form of God," says S. Augustine; "Thy Incarnation was Thy mission." And the Interlinear Gloss, "Though I am a man, yet I left not the Father; though sent in the flesh, yet I and

57. The Jews therefore said to him: Thou art not yet fifty years old. And hast thou seen Abraham?

58. Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I AM.

59. They took up stones therefore to cast at him. But Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

Ver. 1.—*But Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives*. On the last day of the Feast Jesus had taught in the temple, and confuted the Pharisees, while they, after their wont, returned home to a sumptuous banquet. But no one showed hospitality to Jesus for fear of the rulers and Pharisees. He went therefore probably to Gethsemane, to continue there all night in prayer (see xviii. 1, 2, and Matt. xxvi. 36). Food was either secretly sent Him by Martha from Bethany, or bought by the disciples at Jerusalem. He selected this spot as His nightly refuge, or rather His place of prayer, six months before His death, and used to retire there to pray by night (see Matt. xxvi. 36). The Mount of Olives was a type of Christ's sorrow, when He there prayed for the pardon of sinners: as the feast of tabernacles signified that He and His people are but strangers and pilgrims here, on their way to their heavenly country, travelling from the wealthy and splendid city Jerusalem, to the mountain of heavenly refreshment.

Ver. 2.—*And early in the morning*, &c. He gave the night to prayer, the day to teaching, setting an example to apostolic men, as S. Paul, S. Francis Xavier, and others.

Vers. 3, 4, 5.—*But the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery*, &c. *Now Moses in the Law commanded us that such should be stoned*. This story is not found in the Greek Fathers, but as it is found in the Vulgate and thus approved by the Council of Trent, Cornelius à Lapide regards it as canonical.

Here note that the Mosaic law ordered adulteresses to be killed. But the rulers ordered them to be stoned, according to the Rabbinical tradition. For the Law ordered a betrothed woman should be stoned, if she had committed adultery, and thence the Scribes extended this punishment to an adulterous wife. But the punishment of stoning (Lev. xx. 10) is to be extended to all the cases mentioned in that chapter. (See also Ezek. xvi. 38, 40.) And this is clear from the History of Susanna, where, by the law of requital, her false accusers were stoned. This was also the punishment of adulteresses in many heathen nations. (See notes on Gen. xxxviii. 24, and Num. v. *ad fin.*)

Ver. 6.—*This they said, tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him*, as being opposed to the law, if He said that she was not to be stoned, but as cruel and harsh if He said otherwise. But they rather supposed He

would not order her to be stoned, “in order to keep up His appearance of gentleness, and not to lose the favour of the people.” So Rupertus, Bede, and S. Augustine, who says, “They saw that He was very gentle; they said therefore among themselves, If He rules that she be let go, He will not observe that righteousness which the Law enjoins. But not to lose His (character for) gentleness, by which He has already won the love of the people, He will say that she ought to be released. And we shall hence find occasion to accuse Him. But the Lord in His answer both observed justice, and did not forego His gentleness.” They thought to accuse Him of violating the law by her acquittal, and would say to Him, says S. Augustine, “Thou art an enemy of the law, thou judgest contrary to Moses, or rather against Him who gave the law. Thou art guilty of death, and must be stoned together with her.”

*But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground.*

To turn away His face, not so much from the adulteress as from her accusers, as if to say, “Why do ye bring her before Me, who am not a civil judge, but the physician and Saviour of sinners?” So S. Augustine. Some Greek MSS. add *μη πζοσποιοούμενος, not attending to them and their accusations*. Though Toletus and others translate, “not pretending, but really writing on the ground.” Either meaning is suitable.

(2.) Christ refers to Jer. xvii. 1. “The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond,” and as S. Augustine, S. Jerome and others say more fittingly on verse 13, “They that depart from thee, shall be written in the earth.” Jeremiah has here painted you, O Scribes, to the life. Ye accuse this adulteress, but ye have committed greater sins than hers; ye deserve punishment rather than she doth; ye deserve to be stoned more than she does, even to be cast into hell. For your sins of rebellion, unbelief, obstinacy, and persecution against Me are indelible, written as it were with a pen of iron, and the point of a diamond, because ye have forsaken the Lord and turned your back upon Him, therefore has He in His turn turned His back upon you.” (See Jer. xviii. 17.) Ye have neglected heavenly, and followed after worldly goods, and therefore ye will speedily pass away with them, just as that which is written in the earth soon comes to nothing by a breath of wind, and by the foot passing over it. Ye have departed from God, and therefore ye will not be written in Heaven, but on the earth, yea in its very centre, in hell itself. (See *S Augustine Lib. iv. de. Consen. Evang., cap. 10.*) And S. Ambrose (Ep. lxxvi. *ad Studitem*) says, “He wrote on the ground, for sinners are written on the earth, the just in heaven.” Symbolically, S. Augustine (as above) gives two other reasons. (1.) To show that He worked miracles on earth, for, though God, He humbled Himself to become man, for miracles are signs which are wrought on earth. (2.) To point out that the time had now come for His law to be written on the fruitful earth, not on barren stones. (3.) He adds here (*Tract. xxxiii.*) a third reason, that it was to signify that it was He who had written the old law on tables of stone, but that the new law was to be written on the productive earth. But what did Christ write? He could not in the paved court of the temple cut out the shape of the letters, but merely delineate them with His finger. But He seems to have marked out something to put them to shame, or to expose their sin. For He added, in explanation of what He had done, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” S. Jerome even says that He wrote the mortal sins of the

*Christi*), which contains as many axioms as sentences, which I study daily with much delight and profit. I know many who are striving after perfection, and who strive to conform their several actions to some one action, doctrine, or saying of Christ, ever looking at it as their ideal, and endeavouring to set it forth in all their actions. This is a pious and profitable means of attaining perfect holiness. For Christ was specially given as a mirror of sanctity. For what is more holy than the Saint of saints? What brighter than the Sun, and Light Itself? what wiser than Wisdom Itself?

Ver. 13.—*The Pharisees therefore*, &c. That is, is not worthy of credit. For no one is accepted as a witness in his own case, but must produce other witnesses (see above, v. 31).

These were not the same Pharisees as those who had accused the adulteress, but others, who wished to avenge the disgrace of their fellows, and in their malevolence against Christ, brought this charge against Him, to put Him to shame. “Being nurtured in ignorance,” says S. Cyril, “and not knowing Him to be Emmanuel, they suspected Him of aiming at His own glory, and attack Him, as though one of ourselves.”

Ver. 14.—*Jesus answered*, &c. Not only true in itself, but such as ought to be accepted and believed. This testimony of the Light is true, whether it show or hide Itself, says S. Augustine. The light itself needs no other witness. It shows itself clearly by its own light to be bright and shining. And thus is Christ the Light of the world, showing Itself to the world by Its miraculous works. Christ needed not any other witness, and yet He brings forward the highest and most indisputable witness, even God the Father. *For I know whence I came, and whither I go*. And therefore My testimony is true, as being confirmed by the testimony of God the Father, says the Gloss. This I know, but ye do not because ye will not know, though ye ought to know it both from My miracles and My words. But I know that I was sent from heaven, as the Messenger of the Father, being the Son of God, and Very God, from Very God. And when My ministry is over I shall return to Him again. So S. Augustine and Leontius. But He speaks obscurely, lest He should seem to boast, and for fear of kindling the more the anger of the Jews against Him. He might else have spoken more plainly. I am the Son of God, and therefore My testimony is true and legitimate, for the testimony of God, Who is the chief and irrefragable truth, is indisputable. “He wished the Father to be understood,” says S. Augustine, “from Whom He departed not, when coming to us, as He left not us when He returned to heaven. But as the Sun shines on those that see and those that are blind, though the one sees and the other does not, so the wisdom of God is everywhere present, even to unbelievers, though they have not the eyes to behold Him,” distinguishing thus His friends and enemies.

Ver. 15.—*Ye judge after the flesh*.

the sun. And S. Augustine, being a Platonist, at one time had his doubts about it (see *Euchir.* lviii.) But commenting on this passage he mentions and confutes their folly. "Christ the Lord was not the sun which was made, He was its Maker, 'For all things were made by Him,' &c. He therefore is the Light, which made this light of ours. Let us love It, let us long to understand It, let us thirst for It, that so at length we may attain to the Light Itself, and so live therein that we may never die. For He is the Light, of whom the Psalmist foretold, 'Thou shalt save both man and beast, so manifold is Thy mercy.'" And further on, "By this Light was the light of the sun made, and the Light which made the sun (beneath which He made us also) was made beneath the sun for our sakes. He, I say who made the sun. Despise not the veil (*nubem*) of His flesh. The sun is covered by a cloud, not to obscure, but to temper its rays. Speaking then through the veil of His flesh, the Light which never fails, the Light of knowledge, the Light of wisdom says to men, *I am the Light of the world.*" But how Christ as God is the boundless and uncreated Light and as man the created "light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," I have shown at length on chap. i. 4, and also on Is. xlv. 1, that Christ is the Sun of His Kingdom.

*Of this world.* And not, like the Prophets, merely the light of Israel and Judah. He tacitly here foretells the conversion of the Gentiles. So S. Cyril, who adds that He here alludes to the pillar of the cloud in the wilderness. For Christ as a brilliant light shines before us in the darkness and sin of the world, and guides us to heaven. *He that followeth Me*, by believing in Me as the Christ, and obeying My commands, *walketh not in darkness*, in which the wise men of this world walked, but liveth without error and sin, in the light of true faith and virtue.

*But shall have the light of life.* "Now by faith, hereafter by sight," says S. Augustine, who adds "These words agree with those of the Psalmist, 'In Thy Light shall we see light, for with Thee is the fount of life.'" In things of the body the light is one thing, the fountain another. But with God the Light and the Fount are one and the same. It shines for thee, that thou mayest see; It flows for thee, that thou mayest drink. If thou followest this sun which thou seest, it leaves thee when it sets; but if thou fallest not away from God, He will never set to thee.

*The light of life*, therefore, according to Augustine and Bede, the light of glory, giving blessing to the faithful and saints which they themselves will obtain from Him in heaven. Others understand by it the light of faith, leading us to glory and very blessedness. For faith is a torch, guiding the faithful through the darkness of the world, showing them the true way of life, by which they can without stumbling attain to eternal blessedness. So S. Cyril, "He will attain to that revelation of the mysteries in Me, which will bring him to eternal life." But (3) *the light of life* can be explained as *the quickening life*, for faith, conjoined with the grace of God and charity, is the Divine and supernatural light, which quickens the soul, breathing into it the life of grace here, and the life of glory hereafter.

Hence learn that the doctrine and life of Christ must be imitated by every man who wishes to be truly enlightened, and to be purged from all blindness of mind. S. Thomas à Kempis lays this down as an axiom in his golden book (*De imitatione*

Scribes and of all men (*Lib. ii. Contra Pelag.*), S. Ambrose (*Ep. lvi.*) that He wrote Jer. xxii. 29; and (*Epist. lxxix.*) that He wrote among other words, *Thou seest the mote in thy brother's eye, but seest not the beam in thine own.* Others think that He wrote "*Mene, Mene*" (Dan. v. 25). But nothing certain can be stated.

Ver. 7.—*When therefore they continued asking Him.* Because they did not see clearly what He had written, or pretended they did not. They therefore urge Him to reply explicitly to their captious question, believing that He could not escape from the horns of a dilemma by going against the law if He acquitted the woman or against His own compassion, were He to condemn her.

*He lifted up Himself and said, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.* Ye Scribes and Pharisees have committed greater sins than this woman, as your conscience testifies; do not therefore so rigidly and importunately urge her condemnation, but rather have pity for her, as sinners for a sinner, as guilty for a guilty one, as criminals for a criminal. For otherwise, if ye condemn her, ye ought to condemn yourselves; if ye wish to stone her, ye yourselves ought to be stoned, nay more, to be burned. Observe Christ's prudence. He maintains the law in conceding that an adulteress was guilty of death, but adds that the Scribes should not so pertinaciously urge her death, but rather have compassion on her, since outwardly professing sanctity, but inwardly conscious of greater sins, they should wish indulgence to be shown to themselves both by God and man. So S. Augustine. "Ye have heard, Let the law be fulfilled, let the adulteress be stoned. But in punishing her must the law be fulfilled by those who deserve punishment?" And again, "Jesus said not, Let her not be stoned; lest He should seem to speak against the law. But be it far from Him to say, Let her be stoned; for He came not to destroy that which He had formed, but to save that which had perished. What then answered He? '*He who is without sin of you,*' &c O answer of wisdom! How did He make them look unto themselves! They brought charges against others, they did not carefully search out themselves within." "What more divine," says S. Ambrose, "than that saying, that He should punish sin who is Himself devoid of it? For how couldest thou endure one who punishes another's sin, and defends his own? For does he not condemn himself the more, who condemns in another what he himself commits?"

But thou wilt say Christ here seems to do away with the use of tribunals of justice, and their strictness. But I answer, Christ launched not this sentence against judges, but only against the Scribes, who as private persons contended that Christ should take on Himself to judge the adulteress, and condemn her according to law. This He refused to do, and having been sent to save, and not to condemn sinners, He retorted it upon themselves, as follows; "If ye are not judges, and yet are so desirous of punishing this adultery, take it upon yourselves, stone the adulteress, if ye are so pure

and holy as not to have committed adultery, or any other sin;" for if the Scribes had condemned her to be stoned, Jesus would not have freed her from the punishment she justly deserved. Moreover, it is the judge's duty to condemn a criminal, when convicted, though conscious that he is himself guilty of the same or a similar offence. And yet, if guilty himself it is unseemly in him to condemn another for a like offence.

Christ then in these words quietly advises judges to lead innocent lives themselves. As a moral rule, Christ teaches us that we ought to judge ourselves before we judge others. S. Gregory (*Moral. Lib. 13. cap. iv.*) gives the reason. "For he who judges not himself in the first place, knows not how to pass right judgment on another. For his own conscience supplies no rule to go by. These Scribes then are summoned first to look within, and find out their own faults, before reproofing others." On which head there are well known proverbs. "First prune thy own vineyards," &c.

Ver 8.—*And again stooping down He wrote on the ground.* Both to inspire them with shame, and also to give the Scribes time to withdraw creditably. So S. Jerome (*Lib. ii contra Pelag.*), and Bede, who adds, "He saw that they were staggered, and would be more likely to retire at once than to put any more questions."

Ver. 9.—*But on hearing this they went out one by one.* Some Greek copies add, "*Convicted by their own conscience,*" as being adulterers, or even worse. For what Jesus said was true, and ought to strike home to them. And hence S. Augustine says (*Epist. liv.*), "Methinks that even the husband himself who had been wronged, would on hearing these words have shrunk back from his desire for punishment."

*Went out.* "By their very withdrawal," says S. Augustine, "confessing that they were guilty of like offences. For they were smitten with a keen sense of justice on looking within, and finding themselves guilty." They feared also lest Christ should proceed still further to expose their crimes.

*Beginning at the eldest.* As being more inveterate sinners, like the false accusers of Susanna, or because they first felt the force of His words. As says S. Ambrose, "They first felt the strength of His answer, which they could not reply to, and being quicker of apprehension, they were the first to go away."

*And He was left alone,* &c. "Two were left," says S. Augustine, "misery and commiseration;" deep calling upon deep, the depth of her misery on the depth of His compassion. But she fled not, as having experienced His grace, and hoping for more.

Ver. 10.—*When Jesus had lifted up Himself,* &c. Lifting up on her His eyes of gentleness, as He had repulsed His adversaries with the words of righteousness, as saith S. Augustine. He spoke to her, (1.) to show that He had driven away her accusers, and that she could acknowledge what Jesus had, in His mercy, done for her, and ask pardon from Him of her sin. (2.) That He might the more readily absolve her, because her accusers had withdrawn their charge, and had fled away, as doubting the justice of their cause.

Ver. 11.—*She said, No man, Lord,* &c. I who am alone free from all sin, and appointed by God to judge the world, might most justly condemn thee. But I do not, because I came not to judge, but to save the world. Thus S. Ambrose; "See how He moderated His answer, so that the Jews could not accuse him for acquitting her; but rather throw it back on themselves, if they chose to complain. For she is dismissed, not absolved; inasmuch as no one accused her, she was not acquitted as innocent. Why then should they complain who had already withdrawn from prosecuting the charge and from enforcing the punishment? Moreover Christ by these words absolved the woman not only in open court before the people, but in the court of heaven, before God, as is plain from what He subjoins. *Go,* as being certain that I have forgiven thy adultery. As He said to the Magdalene, "Go in peace" (*Luke vii. 50*). But Christ says not that openly, but secretly; lest the Pharisees should have something to carp at. Christ therefore inspired in her secret sorrow for her sins and an act of contrition, and then pardoned her sins, condoning her sin and its punishment together. "He condemns not," says S. Ambrose, "as being our Redemption, but reproves her as our life, and cleanses her as our fountain." And Euthymius, "Such an exposure and shame before so many adversaries was a sufficient punishment, more especially when He knew that she was heartily penitent." So Jansen and others.

*And sin no more.* Returning as a dog to its vomit. For thou wilt thus in thy ingratitude sin more grievously, and wilt defile thy soul; and though I do not condemn thee, yet will I certainly condemn thee in the day of judgment. Hear S. Augustine. "What means, *I will not condemn thee?* Dost Thou, O Lord, favour sin? Assuredly not; for listen to what follows, *Go and sin no more.* The Lord therefore condemned the sin, but not the person. For else He would have said, *Go and live as thou wilt,* being sure of my forgiveness." To which Bede adds, "Since He is pitiful and tender He forgives the past; but as just, and loving justice, He forbids her sin any more."

Ver. 12.—*Then said Jesus again unto them, I am the Light of the world.* The Gloss connects these words with what had immediately preceded, in this way:—"He adds what His Divinity could effect, in order that no one should doubt His power of forgiving sin." Marvel not that I set free the adulteress from the darkness of sin, for I am the uncreated Light of the world, *i. e.*, God. And He adds below (ver. 15), "*Judge no one;*" I neither sentence nor acquit the woman in a human court, but in the court of heaven. But others refer back His words to verse 2, where His discourse had been broken off by the Scribes. Having put them to shame, He resumes His teaching. So S. Chrysostom and others. S. Chrysostom adds, "The Jews objected to Christ that He was a Galilean; He shows that He was not merely one of the Prophets, but the Lord of heaven and earth."

*I am the Light of the world;* and hence the Manicheans thought that He was