

John: 8:12-20

From Catena Aurea:

12. Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lii. 2) As they had brought Galilee as an objection against Him, and doubted His being one of the Prophets, as if that was all He claimed to be, He wished to shew that He was not one of the Prophets, but the Lord of the whole earth: Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the Light of the world: not of Galilee, or of Palestine, or of Judæa.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. xxxiv. 2) The Manichæans suppose the sun of the natural world to be our Lord Christ; but the Catholic Church reprobates such a notion; for our Lord Christ was not made the sun, but the sun was made by Him: inasmuch as all things were made by Him. (c. 1:3) And for our sake did He come to be under the sun, being the light which made the sun: He hid Himself under the cloud of the flesh, not to obscure, but to temper His light. Speaking then through the cloud of the flesh, the Light unfailing, the Light of wisdom says to men, I am the Light of the world.

THEOPHYLACT. You may bring these words against Nestorius: for our Lord does not say, In Me is the light of the world, but, I am the Light of the world: He who appeared man, was both the Son of God, and the Light of the world; not, as Nestorius fondly holds, the Son of God dwelling in a mere man.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. xxxiv. s. 5) He withdraws you however from the eyes of the flesh, to those of the heart, in that He adds, He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. He thinks it not enough to say, shall have light, but adds, of life. These words of our Lord agree with those of the Psalm, In Thy light shall we see light; for with Thee is the well of life. (Ps. 35) For bodily uses, light is one thing, and a well another; and a well ministers to the mouth, light to the eyes. With God the light and the well are the same. He who shines upon thee, that thou mayest see Him, the Same flows unto thee, that thou mayest drink Him. What He promises is put in the future tense; what we ought to do in the present. He that followeth Me, He says, shall have; i. e. by faith now, in sight hereafter. The visible sun accompanieth thee, only if thou goest westward, whither it goeth also; and even if thou follow it, it will forsake thee, at its setting. Thy God is every where wholly; He will not fall from thee, if thou fall not from

Him. Darkness is to be feared, not that of the eyes, but that of the mind; and if of the eyes, of the inner not the outer eyes; not those by which white and black, but those by which just and unjust, are discerned.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lii. 2) Walketh not in darkness, i. e. spiritually abideth not in error. Here He tacitly praises Nicodemus and the officers, and censures those who had plotted against Him; as being in darkness and error, and unable to come to the light.

8:13–18

13. The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

14. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

15. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.

16. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

17. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

18. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lii. 2) Our Lord having said, I am the Light of the world; and, he that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness, the Jews wish to overthrow what He has said: The Pharisees therefore said unto Him, Thou bearest record of Thyself, Thy record is not true.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lii. 2) Our Lord however overthrew their argument: Jesus answered and said, Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true. This is an accommodation to those who thought Him no more than a mere man. He adds the reason, For I know whence I come, and whither I go; i. e. I am God, from God, and the Son of God: though this He does not say expressly, from His habit of mingling lofty and lowly words together. Now God is surely a competent witness to Himself.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. xxxv. 6) The witness of light is true, whether the light shew itself, or other things. The Prophet spake the truth, but whence had he it, but by drawing from the fount of truth? Jesus then is a competent witness to Himself. (s. 5). For I know whence I come, and whither I go: this has reference to the Father; for the Son gave glory to the Father who sent Him. How greatly then should man glorify the Creator, who made Him. He did not separate from His Father, however, when He came, or desert us when He returned: unlike that sun which in going to the west, leaves the east. And as that sun throws its light

on the faces both of him who sees, and him who sees not; only the one sees with the light, the other sees not: so the Wisdom of God, the Word, is every where present, even to the minds of unbelievers; but they have not the eyes of the understanding, wherewith to see. To distinguish then between believers and enemies among the Jews, as between light and darkness, He adds, But ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. (Tract. xxxvi. 3). These Jews saw the man, and did not believe in the God, and therefore our Lord says, Ye judge after the flesh, i. e. in saying, Thou bearest record of Thyself, Thy record is not true.

THEOPHYLACT. As if to say: Ye judge untruly, according to the flesh, thinking, because I am in the flesh, that I am flesh only, and not God.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. xxxvi. 3. in Joan.) Understanding Me not as God, and seeing Me as man, ye think Me arrogant in bearing witness of Myself. For any man who bears high testimony to himself, is thought proud and arrogant. But men are frail, and may either speak the truth, or lie: the Light cannot lie.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. l. 2) As to live according to the flesh is to live amiss; so to judge according to the flesh, is to judge unjustly. They might say, however, If we judge wrongly, why dost Thou not convict us, why dost Thou not condemn us? So He adds, I judge no man.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. xxxvi. s. 4) Which may be understood in two ways; I judge no man, i. e. not now: as He says elsewhere, God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved: not that He abandons, but only defers, His justice. Or having said, Ye judge according to the flesh, He says immediately, I judge no man, to let you know that Christ does not judge according to the flesh, as men judged Him. For that Christ is a judge appears from the next words, And yet if I judge, My judgment is true.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lii. 2) As if to say: In saying, I judge no man, I meant that I did not anticipate judgment. If I judged justly, I should condemn you, but now is not the time for judging. He alludes however to the future judgment, in what follows; For I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me; which means that He will not condemn them alone, but He and the Father together. This is intended too to quiet suspicion, as men did not think the Son worthy to be believed, unless He had the testimony of the Father also.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. xxxvi. 7) But if the Father is with Thee, how did He send Thee? O Lord, Thy mission is Thy incarnation. Christ was here according to the flesh without withdrawing from the Father, because the Father and the Son are every where. Blush, thou Sabellian; our Lord doth not say, I am the Father, and I

the self-same person am the Son; but, I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. Make a distinction then of persons, and distinction of intelligences: acknowledge that the Father is the Father, the Son the Son: but beware of saying, that the Father is greater, the Son less. Theirs is one substance, one coeternity, perfect equality. Therefore, He says, My judgment is true, because I am the Son of God. But that thou mayest understand how that the Father is with Me, it is not for the Son ever to leave the Father. I have taken up the form of a servant; but I have not lost the form of God. He had spoken of judgment: now He speaks of witness: It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

AUGUSTINE. Is this made a bad use of by the Manichæans, that our Lord does not say, in the law of God, but, in your law? Who does not recognise here a manner of speaking customary in Scripture? In your law, i. e. the law given to you. The Apostle speaks of his Gospel in the same way, though he testifies to having received it not from men, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. xxxvi. 10) There is much difficulty, and a great mystery seems to be contained, in God's words, In the mouth of two or three witnesses, let every word be established. (Deut. 10) It is possible that two may speak false. The chaste Susannah was arraigned by two false witnesses: the whole people spake against Christ falsely. How then must we understand the word, By the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established: except as an intimation of the mystery of the Trinity, in which is perpetual stability of truth? Receive then our testimony, lest ye feel our judgment. I delay My judgment: I delay not My testimony: I am one that beareth witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lii. 3) It is written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. If this is to be taken literally, in what respect does our Lord differ from men? The rule has been laid down for men, on the ground that one man alone is not to be relied on: but how can this be applicable to God? These words are quoted then with another meaning. When two men bear witness, both to an indifferent matter, their witness is true: this constitutes the testimony of two men. But if one of them bear witness to himself, then they are no longer two witnesses. Thus our Lord means to shew that He is consubstantial with the Father, and does not need another witness, i. e. besides the Father's. I and the Father that sent Me. Again, on human principles, when a man bears witness, his honesty is supposed; he is not borne witness to; and a man is admitted as a fair and competent witness in an indifferent matter, but not in one relating to himself, unless he is supported by other testimony. But here it is quite otherwise. Our Lord, though giving testimony in His own case, and though saying that He is borne witness to by another, pronounces Himself worthy of belief; thus shewing His all-sufficiency. He says He deserves to be believed.

8:19–20

19. Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

20. These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. xxxvii. 1) Those who had heard our Lord say, Ye judge after the flesh, shewed that they did so; for they understood what He said of His Father in a carnal sense: Then said they unto Him, Where is Thy Father? meaning, We have heard Thee say, I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me. We see Thee alone; prove to us then that Thy Father is with Thee.

THEOPHYLACT. Some remark that this is said in contumely and contempt; to insinuate either that He is born of fornication, and knows not who His Father is; or as a slur on the low situation of His father, i. e. Joseph; as if to say, Thy father is an obscure, ignoble person; why dost Thou so often mention him? So because they asked the question, to tempt Him, not to get at the truth, Jesus answered, Ye neither know Me, nor My Father.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. xxxvii. 2.) As if He said, Ye ask where is Thy Father? As if ye knew Me already, and I were nothing else but what ye see. But ye know Me not, and therefore I tell you nothing of My Father. Ye think Me indeed a mere man, and therefore among men look for My Father. But, forasmuch as I am different altogether, according to My seen and unseen natures, and speak of My Father in the hidden sense according to My hidden nature; it is plain that ye must first know Me, and then ye will know My Father; If ye had known Me, ye would have known My Father also.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lii. 3) He tells them, it is of no avail for them to say they know the Father, if they do not know the Son.

ORIGEN. (tom. xix. l. in Joan. in princ.) Ye neither know Me, nor My Father: this seems inconsistent with what was said above, Ye both know Me, and know whence I am. But the latter is spoken in reply to some from Jerusalem, who asked, Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Ye neither know Me is addressed to the Pharisees. To the former persons from Jerusalem however He said, He that sent Me, is true, Whom ye know not. You will ask then, How is that true, If ye know Me, ye would know My Father also? when they of Jerusalem, to whom He said, Ye know Me, did not know the Father. To this we must

reply, that our Saviour sometimes speaks of Himself as man, and some-times as God. Ye both know Me, He says as man: ye neither know Me, as God.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. xxxvii. 7) What does this mean: If ye knew Me, ye would know My Father also, but, I and My Father are one? It is a common expression, when you see one man very like another, If you have seen him, you have seen the other. You say this, because they are so like. And thus our Lord says, If ye had known Me, ye had known My Father also; not that the Father is the Son, but that the Son is like the Father.

THEOPHYLACT. Let the Arian blush: for if, as he says, the Son be a creature, how does it follow that he who knows the creature, knows God? For not even by knowing the substance of Angels, does one know the Divine Substance? Forasmuch therefore as he who knows the Son, knows the Father, it is certain that the Son is consubstantial with the Father.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. xxxviii. s. 3) This word perhaps is used only by way of rebuke, though it seems to express doubt. As used by men indeed it is the expression of doubt, but He who knew all things could only mean by that doubt to rebuke unbelief. Nay, even we sometimes say perhaps, when they are certain of a thing, e. g. when you are angry with your slave, and say, Do not you heed me? Consider, perhaps I am your master. So our Lord's doubt is a reproof to the unbelievers, when He says, Ye should have known perhaps My Father also.

ORIGEN. (tom. xix. l. in Joan. in princ.) It is proper to observe, that the followers of other sects think this text proves clearly, that the God, whom the Jews worshipped, was not the Father of Christ. For if, say they, our Saviour said this to the Pharisees, who worshipped God as the Governor of the world, it is evident that the Father of Jesus, whom the Pharisees knew not, was a different person from the Creator. But they do not observe that this is a usual manner of speaking in Scripture. Though a man may know the existence of God, and have learned from the Father that He only must be worshipped, yet if his life is not good, he is said not to have the knowledge of God. Thus the sons of Eli, on account of their wickedness, are said not to have known God. And thus again the Pharisees did not know the Father; because they did not live according to their Creator's command. And there is another thing meant too by knowing God, different from merely believing in Him. It is said, Be still then, and know that I am God. (Ps. 45:10) And this, it is certain, was written for a people that believed in the Creator. But to know by believing, and believe simply, are different things. To the Pharisees, to whom He says, Ye neither know Me, nor My Father, He could with right have said, Ye do not even believe in My Father; for he who denies the Son, has not the Father,

either by faith or knowledge. But Scripture gives us another sense of knowing a thing, viz. being joined to that thing. Adam knew his wife, when he was joined to her. And if he who is joined to a woman knows that woman, he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit, and knows the Lord. And in this sense the Pharisees neither knew the Father, nor the Son. But may not a man know God, and yet not know the Father? Yes; these are two different conceptions. And therefore among an infinite number of prayers offered up in the Law, we do not find any one addressed to God the Father. They only pray to Him as God and Lord; in order not to anticipate the grace shed by Jesus over the whole world, calling all men to the Sonship, according to the Psalm, I will declare Thy name unto my brethren.

These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as He taught in the temple.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. iii. 1) He spake in the temple magisterially, and now He was speaking to those who railed at and accused Him, for making Himself equal to the Father.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. xxxvii. 8) Great however is His confidence and fearlessness: it not being possible that He should undergo any suffering, but that which He voluntarily undertook. Wherefore it follows, And no man laid hands on Him, for His hour was not yet come. Some, when they hear this, think Christ to have been under the control of fate. But if fate comes from the verb *fari*, to speak, as some derive it, how can the Word of God be under the control of fate? Where are the fates? In the heavens, you say, in the courses and revolutions of the stars. How then can fate have power over Him, by Whom the heavens and stars were made; when even thy will, if thou exert it aright, transcends the stars? Dost thou think that because the flesh of Christ was placed beneath the heavens, that therefore His power was subjected to the heavens? His hour then had not yet come; i. e. the hour, not on which he should be obliged to die, but on which He should deign to be put to death.

ORIGEN. (tom. xix. in Joan.) Whenever it is added, Jesus spoke these words in such a place, you will, if you attend, discover a meaning in the addition. The treasury (*γαζοφυλακίω*) was a place for keeping the money, which was given for the honour of God, and the support of the poor. The coins are the divine words, stamped with the likeness of the great King. In this sense then let every one contribute to the edification of the Church, carrying into that spiritual treasury all that he can collect, to the honour of God, and the common good. But while all were thus contributing to the treasury of the temple, it was especially the office of Jews to contribute his gifts, which were the words of eternal life. While Jesus therefore was speaking in the treasury, no one laid hands on Him; His discourse being stronger than those who wished to take Him; for there is no weakness in that which the Word of God utters.

From Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture:

8:12a I Am the Light of the World

The Light of the Whole World.

Chrysostom: Since they were continually bringing up Galilee and “the prophet” (as if that was all he claimed to be), he wanted to show that he was not one of the prophets but the Master of the world. “I am the Light of the world,” not only of Galilee, or of Palestine, or of Judea. Homilies on the Gospel of John 52.2.

The Light That Made the Sun.

Augustine: The Manichaeans suppose the sun visible to our natural eyes to be our Lord Christ, ... but the right faith of the universal church condemns such fiction.... He is God of God, Light of Light. The sun’s light was made by this Light. And the Light that made the sun, under which he also made us, was himself made under the sun for our sake. That Light that made the sun was made, I say, [to come humbly] under the sun for our sake.... He hid himself under the cloud of the flesh, not to obscure but to temper his light. Speaking then through the cloud of the flesh, the Light unfailing, the Light of wisdom says to humanity, “I am the Light of the world.” Tractates on the Gospel of John 34.2, 4–5.

The Fatherly Light of Christ Leads Us to Immortality.

Irenaeus: No one was able, either in heaven or in earth or under the earth, to open the book of the Father ... so that all things ... might behold their King and that the Fatherly light might meet with and rest upon the flesh of our Lord and come to us from his radiant flesh. In this way, human beings might attain to immortality, having been invested with the Fatherly light. Against Heresies 4.20.2.

The Children of Perfect Light.

Gregory of Nazianus: Listen to the voice of God, which sounds so exceedingly clear to me—I who am both disciple and master of these mysteries. This is how I hope to God it may sound to you: “I am the Light of the world.” Therefore approach him and be enlightened, and do not let your faces be ashamed, being

signed with the true Light. It is a season of new birth; let us be born again. It is a time of reformation; let us receive again the first Adam. Let us not remain what we are, but let us become what we once were. The Light shines in darkness in this life and in the flesh. It is chased by the darkness but is not overtaken by it. I am referring to the power of the enemy that leaps up in its shamelessness against the visible Adam. But it encounters God and is defeated. Let us put away the darkness so that we may draw near to the Light and may then become perfect Light, the children of perfect Light. On the Holy Lights, Oration 39.2.

The Brightness of Souls.

Maximus the Confessor: [Christ] is the brightness of souls, the one who drives away the darkness of ignorance, and the one who reveals mysteries that can be perceived only by the pure. Chapters on Knowledge 2.70.

Jesus, the Light, Is One.

Ammonius: He called himself “the light,” not because “the light is in me”—lest someone split the one Christ into a duality of Sons. Christ, the Son, is one, both before the flesh and after the flesh. He is in truth the one and only Son of God the Father even when he became man since he did not partially embrace the human nature. For his body is his own, and it is blasphemy to divide Christ after his incarnation into two sons or into two beings. Fragments on John 266.

The Only Begotten Is Light by Nature.

Cyril of Alexandria: Jesus reveals the ignorance of the scribes and Pharisees when he cries out, “I am the light of the world.” He is saying, “You who go through the whole of holy Scripture and think that you will assess what is spoken about me through the prophets have strayed far from the way of life. And it is no wonder, for he who reveals mysteries and illumines the whole world, he who shines like a sun into the hearts of those who would receive him—he is not in you. He who does not have the divine and spiritual light within himself must surely walk in darkness and stumble in great foolishness.” The Only Begotten is light by nature, beaming forth from God the Father who is light by nature.... But we must note again that he says that he is the light not especially or solely for the people of Israel but for “all the world.” Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.2.

8:12b Walking in the Light of Life

The Sun Leaves, but Christ Remains the Light of Life.

Augustine: [That unfailing Light] has taken you from the eyes of the flesh and brought you back again to the eyes of the heart! He does not think it enough to say ... “shall have light” but adds “of life,” even as in the psalm it was said, “[In your light shall we see light]; for with you is the fountain of life.” See how the words of our Lord agree with the truth of that psalm where light is placed with the fountain of life and now here he speaks of the “light of life.” For bodily uses, light is one thing and a well another. Our mouths seek a fountain; our eyes seek the light. When we thirst, we seek a fountain; when we are in darkness we seek light. And if we happen to get thirsty in the night, we kindle a light to come to a fountain. With God the light and the well are the same. The one who shines on you so that you may see him is the same one who flows to you so that you may drink him.

You see then what kind of light this is if you see inwardly the light of which he says, “He that follows me shall not walk in darkness.” Follow the sun, and let us see if you will not walk in darkness. When the sun rises, it comes toward you and heads on to the west. But perhaps your journey is toward the east. So if you follow the sun, then you will certainly err and instead of going east you will go west, whether by land ... or by sea. Finally, you decide that you should follow the sun, and you travel to the west, where it also travels. Let us see if, after it sets, you will not still walk in darkness. See how, though you are unwilling to desert it, yet it will desert you in order to finish out its service for the day. But our Lord Jesus Christ, even when he was not made known to all through the cloud of his flesh, still held all things by the power of his wisdom. Your God is everywhere entirely. If you do not fall away from him, he will never fall away from you. Tractates on the Gospel of John 34.5–6.

Future Promise, Present Duty.

Augustine: What he has promised he has put in the future tense. Notice, he doesn't say “has” but “shall have the light of life.” And yet, he does not say “he that shall follow me” but “he who follows me.” He puts in the present tense what our duty is, but in the future tense what he has promised to do.... What we follow now by faith we shall have hereafter by sight.... When shall we walk by sight? When, in the future, we have the light of life and come to that vision whereby this night will have passed away. Tractates on the Gospel of John 34.7.

Israel Followed the Light in the Desert as We Do Now.

Cyril of Alexandria: Since he knew they would challenge him, he fashions his speech after a more ancient image of things that also draws on the experience of their ancestors.... For when Israel was crossing the wide desert, hurrying to the promised land, a cloud was suspended over them like a canopy during the day, driving off the sun's flame. By night a pillar of fire contended with the darkness and marked out for the travelers their unerring road. For just as they escaped from straying who at that time followed the fire that guided and led them—being led straight to their right and holy ground without having to deal with the night or darkness—so “the one who follows me,” that is, “who follows in the tracks of my teachings,” will not be left in the dark but will gain “the light of life,” that is, “the revelation of my mysteries that are able to lead him by the hand to everlasting life.” Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.2.

Tacit Praise of Nicodemus.

Chrysostom: He uses “light” and “darkness” in a spiritual sense, meaning “do not remain in error.” Here he tacitly praises Nicodemus ... and the officers ... and censures those who were secretly plotting against him as being in darkness and error but who will be unable to overcome the light. Homilies on the Gospel of John 52.2.

8:13 Your Record Is Not True

The Pharisees Falsely Accuse Jesus.

Cyril of Alexandria: Who can rightly say, “I am the light of the world,” except one who is truly God by nature? Let the Pharisees go through the entire divinely inspired Scripture and search into the sacred and divine Word and show us who of the holy prophets ever dared to say such a thing or when an angel ever made such a claim.... The crowd of Pharisees thought that he spoke falsely. In their exceeding foolishness, they had no idea that there are those who set forth their own nature and tell what is essentially inherent in them, not out of boasting or because they are bent on making a name for themselves. Rather, they are simply declaring what they really are.... And so, even when our Savior Christ says that he is the light, he is speaking the truth and will not be found boasting.... But they attack him as though he is one of us. Without hesitation they say “Your record is not true” of the one who cannot lie. And yet, he decided to lead by the hand those who had gone astray ... telling them what they had missed about him when they committed

sacrilege by ascribing love of lying to him who is from above and begotten of God the Father. Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.2.

8:14 Jesus' Witness of Himself Is True

God Is a Competent Witness to Himself.

Chrysostom: In order to refute their arguments and to show that he adapted his expressions to address the suspicions of those who thought he was no more than a mere man, our Lord says, "Though I bear record of myself, my record is still true." And he adds the reason, "For I know where I come from," in other words, I am from God, I am God and the Son of God. Now, God is surely a competent witness to himself. Homilies on the Gospel of John 52.2.

A Light Enlightens Others and Makes Itself Known.

Augustine: The light shows both other things and also itself. You light a lamp, for instance, to look for your coat, and the burning lamp affords you light to find your coat. Do you light the lamp to see the lamp itself when it burns? A burning lamp is indeed capable at the same time of exposing to view other things that the darkness covered and of showing itself to your eyes.... The witness of the light then is true, whether it shows itself or other things. For without light you cannot see light, and without light you cannot see any thing else that is not light. If light is capable of showing other things that are not lights, is it not capable of showing itself?... Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ is a competent witness to himself. Tractates on the Gospel of John 35.4, 6.

Jesus Refers to the Father.

Augustine: "For, I know where I come from and where I am going." This has reference to the Father; for the Son, who is himself equal [to the Father], gave glory to him by whom he was sent. How greatly then should one glorify the Creator who made him!... He did not separate from his Father, however, when he came, or desert us when he returned—unlike that sun which in going to the west leaves the east. Tractates on the Gospel of John 35.4–5.

Not Everyone Sees the Light.

Augustine: A burning lamp is indeed capable at the same time of exposing to view other things that the darkness covered and of showing itself to your eyes. So also the Lord Christ distinguished between his faithful ones and his enemies, as between light and darkness: as between those whom he illuminated with the ray of faith and those on whose closed eyes he shed his light. So, too, the sun shines on the face of the sighted and of the blind. Both alike, while standing and facing the sun, have the sun shine on them, but both are not enlightened in the eyesight. The one sees; the other does not. The sun is present to both, but one of them is absent from the present sun. So likewise the Wisdom of God, the Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is everywhere present because truth is everywhere, wisdom is everywhere ... Therefore the light bears witness to itself. It opens the healthy eyes and is its own witness so that it may be known as the light.... It is also present [to unbelievers], but they do not have the eyes of the heart with which to see it. Tractates on the Gospel of John 35.4.

8:15 Judging After the Flesh

They See the Man, Not God.

Augustine: These Jews then saw the man; they neither perceived nor believed him to be God. Tractates on the Gospel of John 36.3.

They Judge Badly While Christ Defers His Judgment.

Chrysostom: Just as living after the flesh means to live badly, so judging after the flesh is to judge badly.... And so he is saying that they judge unjustly. "But if we judge unjustly," someone might say, then why do you not rebuke us? Why do you not punish us? Why do you not condemn us?" "Because," Jesus says, "This is not what I came for." This is the meaning of "I judge no one." Homilies on the Gospel of John 52.2.

Judgment Deferred.

Augustine: This question may be solved in two ways: I judge no man, that is, I do not judge him now. He says this elsewhere: "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved." It is not that he abandons his justice but rather only defers it. Or, having said, "You judge according to the flesh," he says immediately, "I judge no man." He adds this to let you know that

Christ does not judge according to the flesh, as people judged him. Therefore let no scruple of doubt remain in our heart against the faith that we hold and declare concerning Christ as judge. Christ is come first to save but then to judge. Tractates on the Gospel of John 36.4.

8:16 My Judgment Is True

Jesus Judges with the Father.

Augustine: Let it not by any means surprise anyone that he says, "My judgment is true"; because I am not alone, but it is I and the Father that sent me that judge. Tractates on the Gospel of John 36.12.

The Son Proceeds but Is No Less in Dignity.

Cyril of Alexandria: But we must know that by his saying again that he was sent, he does not show that he is second in dignity to the Father. For we must not imagine a mission befitting a servant, even though, because he was clothed in a servant's form, he might rightly say even this of himself. But he was sent as Word from Mind, as the Sun's radiance from itself. For these I suppose are processions from those things in which they are, from their appearing to issue forth, yet they exist naturally and immovably in those things from which they come. For we should not suppose that the things that mind and sun have produced, that is, Word or radiance, are devoid of Word or radiance once they have gone forth from them.... For mind will never be wordless, nor will words ever exist without the mind that fashioned them. Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.5.

8:17 The Validity in the Law of Two Witnesses

Two or Three Witnesses Intimates the Trinity.

Augustine: It is a huge question, my brothers, and to me it certainly appears to be a mystery when God says, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses, let every word be established." ... It is possible, however, that two witnesses may lie. The chaste Susannah was arraigned by two false witnesses.... The whole people spoke against Christ falsely.... How then must we understand the word "By the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established," except as an intimation of the mystery of the Trinity in which there is a perpetual stability of truth? Do you wish to have a good cause? Have two or three witnesses: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.... Receive our testimony then [the Trinity says], otherwise you will

feel our judgment.... I delay my judgment, [Jesus says]. I do not delay my testimony. Tractates on the Gospel of John 36.10.

8:18 The Father Bears Witness

The Equality of Honor of the Father and of the Son.

Chrysostom: It is written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. If this is to be taken literally, in what respect does our Lord differ from human beings? The rule has been laid down for humanity on the ground that one man alone is not to be relied on. But how can this be applicable to God?... These words are quoted then with another meaning. When two men bear witness, both to an impersonal matter, their witness is true. This constitutes the testimony of two men. But if one of them bears witness to himself, then they are no longer two witnesses. Thus our Lord means to show that he is consubstantial with the Father, and does not need another witness, that is, besides the Father's, "I and the Father that sent me." ... Again, on human principles, when a person bears witness, his honesty is assumed. And a person is admitted as a fair and competent witness in an impersonal matter but not in one relating to himself unless he is supported by other testimony. But here it is quite the opposite. Our Lord, though giving testimony in his own case, and though saying that he is borne witness to by another, pronounces himself worthy of belief, thus, showing his all-sufficiency. He says that he deserves to be believed. Homilies on the Gospel of John 52.3.

8:19 Ignorance of Christ Is Ignorance of the Father

The Son Is the Doorway to the Father.

Cyril of Alexandria: Those who suppose that Christ is the son of Joseph or was born as a result of fornication and who do not know that the Word shone forth from God the Father—how can such people not understand Jesus' words, "You know neither me nor my Father"? If they had known that the Word has shone forth from the Father and was for our sakes made in the flesh according to the divine Scripture, then they would have known the one who begat Jesus. For those who zealously seek after knowledge are given accurate knowledge of the Father through the Son.... The Father and the Son are mutually revealing. When the Father is mentioned, one recalls his offspring, and similarly when the Son is mentioned we remember the one who begat him. And so, the Son is like the doorway leading to knowledge of the Father,

and it is in this sense that Jesus says, “No one comes to the Father but by me.” Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.2.

I and the Father Are One.

Augustine: “If you knew me you would know my Father also.” What does this mean, except “I and the Father are one”? It is a common expression used when you see one person very much like another.... If you have seen him or her, you have seen the other. You say this because they are so alike.... And so our Lord says, “If you had known me, you would have known my Father also.” It is not that the Father is the Son, but that the Son is like the Father. Tractates on the Gospel of John 37.7.

Who Is the Creator?

Origen: It is necessary to observe that the heterodox think that this text proves clearly that the God whom the Jews worshiped was not the Father of Christ. For if, they say, the Savior said “you know neither me nor my Father” to the Pharisees who worshiped the Creator, then it is evident that the Pharisees did not know the Father of Jesus because he was different from the Creator.... But they who say these things have not understood the divine Scriptures or observed the usage of language in them....

If anyone knew about the Creator and his priestly service, the sons of Eli did, having been raised at the place of worship. Yet, because they sinned, it is written of them in the First Book of Kings that they ... “did not know the Lord.” ...

So, again, the Pharisees did not know the Father since they did not live according to the Creator’s will. For knowing God can also refer to knowing God, which is something different from merely believing in him.... But who could not agree that the words written in the Psalms, “Be still and know that I am God,” were written for a people who believe in the Creator? Commentary on the Gospel of John 19.12–13, 15–17.

Knowing God and Knowing the Father.

Origen: There is a difference between knowing God and believing in him. To the Pharisees, to whom he says, “You neither know me nor my Father,” he had the right to say, “You do not even believe in my Father,” for he who denies the Son does not have the Father, either by faith or knowledge. But Scripture gives us another sense of knowing a thing, that is, being joined to that thing. Adam knew his wife when

he was joined to her.... If one who has joined to a prostitute has known the prostitute and one who has joined to his wife has known his wife, then one who has joined to the Lord has known the Lord in a holy manner. And in this sense the Pharisees neither knew the Father nor the Son....

Maybe it is possible for someone to know God and yet not know the Father. For if there is one aspect of him in accordance with which he is Father and another in which he is God, perhaps it is possible for someone to know God but not to know the Father.... Therefore among an infinite number of prayers offered up in the law, we do not find any one addressed to God as "Father." Perhaps it is because they did not know the Father. They only pray to him as God and Lord, ... not anticipating the grace shed by Jesus over the whole world, calling all to sonship and to praise the Father in the midst of the assembly, as it is written, "I will declare your name to my brothers." Commentary on the Gospel of John 19.21–24, 26–28.

8:20a Jesus Spoke in the Treasury

Jesus' Gift to the Treasury Is His Words.

Origen: The Evangelist would not have added these words were it not to convey something useful.... Whenever it says "these are the words that he spoke in such and such a place," you will discover a reason for the addition....

The treasury was a place where coins were contributed for the honor of God and the support of the poor. What else would these coins be than the divine words that have the image of the great King stamped on them and that are examined by trustworthy money changers who know how to separate counterfeit coins from the genuine ones?...

But if everyone contributed to the temple treasury in support of the needy for the common good, Jesus, more than anyone else was surely a worthy contributor. He gave the words of eternal life and his teaching about God and himself. His statement, "I am the light of the world," which was spoken in the treasury, was more valuable than any coin ... as were all his other teachings in that place. And all the gold of the others who brought what they had into the treasury was like a bit of sand in comparison to the words of Jesus, for every word of his was wisdom. Commentary on the Gospel of John 19.40, 43–44, 53–55.

8:20b Jesus' Hour Had Not Yet Come

The Hour of His Choosing.

Augustine: This is an instance of power, not of necessity. He waited for this hour. It was not the fated but the fitting and voluntary hour. This was that all might first be fulfilled that was supposed to be fulfilled before his death. Tractates on the Gospel of John 37.9.