



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.

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### **Continuation of John 21: 18-25**

Ver. 18. — *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, &c., whither thou wouldst not*, i.e., by thy natural will of sense, or feeling. For by the rational will Peter desired this above all things. S. Chrysostom says, Christ predicts his martyrdom, showing him in what way and how much he ought to love Christ and His sheep, even unto His cross.

*When thou wast young*: by this is shown, says S. Chrysostom, that Peter was neither a young, nor an old, but a perfect man. For such a one it behooved the Pontiff and prince of the Apostles to be, that his age might win him authority, and yet be apt and strong for apostolic labours.

The meaning is, When thou wast young, and hadst bodily strength, thou wast free, and didst rise from thy couch, and clothedst thyself, and walkedst at thine own pleasure whither thou wouldst; but when thou shalt be old, at the time when men seek rest and ease, thou shalt by no means rest, but shalt have harder labours. For

they shall bind thee, and bring thee to the cross, where thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, *i.e.*, shalt be crucified.

Less correctly, therefore, Lyra explains *shall gird thee* to mean, 'Another shall bind thee with cords, not nail thee, to the cross. For the words, *shall gird*, refer not to the cross, but, as the Arabic and Syriac translate, to the loins of Peter, and to his hands and feet. *Another*, *i.e.* a licitor or a hangman, shall bind thy loins and thine arms, and carry thee as a criminal to the cross. Besides, S. Peter was not fastened to the cross with cords but with nails, as S. Chrysostom says expressly (*Hom. in Princ. Apost.*), "Rejoice, O Peter, who hast enjoyed the wood of the cross, and who wouldst not be crucified upright after the example of thy Master, but with thy head downwards, as it were ready for thy journey from earth to heaven. O blessed nails, which passed through those most holy limbs."

Admirably says S. Augustine, "That denier and lover, puffed up by presumption, cast down by denial, purified by tears, approved by confession, crowned by enduring, found such an end, that he died for perfect love of Christ's name, with Whom in his perverse precipitance he had promised to die. Made strong by His resurrection, he does what in his weakness he had rashly promised. And now he fears not the destruction of this life, because the Lord having arisen, had shown him the pattern of another life."

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Ver. 19.—*This He spake, signifying*, &c. Peter therefore by his death upon the cross glorified God, and so his death was not shameful, as Nero and the Romans thought, but was for the honour and glory both of God and Peter. The first reason was because Peter was crucified for the truth of the Faith. And this was glorious.

2. He glorified God, because for God and His Son Jesus Christ, whom he preached, he suffered crucifixion. But what is more glorious than to die for God?

3. Because in the death of the cross he was like Christ, so that as he was like Him in his life and pontificate, he might also be like Him in his cross and death. As S. Chrysostom observes, Christ does not say, thou shalt *die*, but thou shalt *glorify*, because to suffer for Christ is honour and glory. Hence the martyrdom of the cross is more honourable than other kinds of martyrdom, for which reason it was desired by many who were crucified. S. Maximus (*Serm. 1, de Natal. Apost.*) says, "Such was Peter, who when as a disciple of Christ he was brought to the cross, asked that he might be crucified upside down. He feared not the suffering, but he shrunk from equality with the Lord's cross, manifesting unto all men the power of his marvellous humility, and preserving amidst his torments the discipline of the mystery (of the cross)."

4. Because Peter, dying upon the cross for Christ, has from Him obtained great glory, as well in heaven as upon earth where he glorified God, who was, as it were, the origin and author of his glory. Hence the faithful

throughout the world, even kings and princes, flock to Rome, that they may visit and venerate the place of Peter's crucifixion and burial, and his basilica in the Vatican, which is the wonder of the world. As S. Augustine says (*Serm. 28, de Sanct.*), "Now at the memory of the Fisherman the emperor bends his knees; there sparkle the gems of his diadem, where shine the benefits of the Fisherman." And S. Chrysostom says, "Even kings and governors, leaving all things, run to the sepulchres of the Fisherman and the Tent-maker. And at Constantinople our princes deem it a great favour if their bodies may be buried, not near the Apostles, but outside the porches (of their churches). And kings become the doorkeepers of fishermen.

Morally, learn from hence to glory with SS. Peter and Paul in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to congratulate thyself when Christ makes thee a partaker of it, and sends thee some little portion of His cross, whether by sickness, or persecution, or reproach, or by any other affliction. For by no other thing is God more glorified than by martyrdom and the cross, if they be borne patiently and joyfully. The cross therefore is the honour and glory of Christ and Christians, not their shame and disgrace.

*And when He had thus said, &c.* Observe, with Cyril, Chrysostom, Maldonatus, and others, that Christ here by His action signified to Peter the same thing which He had spoken in word. He therefore rising, and going from the place to the dinner, invites Peter to follow Him, going before him on foot, and to signify that he was to follow Him as his lawfully appointed Vicar, in those things which He had already said to him, namely, in the pastoral care of His sheep, and the punishment of the cross. Therefore He saith to him, *Follow Me*, (1.) As in going, so also by succeeding Me in the government of the Church. Be thou therefore My successor as the Pastor and Ruler of My whole Church.

2. *Follow Me*, that as I have gone before thee to the cross, so do thou follow Me to the same. And let not the cross seem to thee too hard to undergo for Me, for I first endured it for thee. For thee and for the rest of the faithful I went before to it, and smoothed the way. For it behoves thee to follow Me, as well in thy life and pastoral office, as in death and the cross, that thou shouldest lay down thy life for the sheep, and be a guide to the rest of the faithful to the cross and martyrdom. Whence the Gloss says, "if the Shepherd has been sacrificed as a sheep, let not those who from sheep have become shepherds fear to be sacrificed." Hence when Peter was shut up in the Mamertine prison at Rome, the Christians were persuading him, and by their entreaties almost compelling him, to flee. To please them he did so. But outside the gate, which is now called the gate of S. Sebastian, Christ met him. Peter asked Him, Lord, whither goest Thou? The Lord answered him, I am going to Rome to be crucified a second time. Peter understood that Christ willed to be crucified, not in His own person, but in the person of Peter, His Vicar. Therefore he immediately returned to prison, and shortly afterwards underwent the death of the cross. The place where Christ thus met and conversed with Peter is still to be seen just outside Rome. It is adorned with a chapel, and is religiously visited, and is commonly known as *Domine, quo vadis?*

3. *Follow Me*, in the pastoral care, that thou mayest feed the faithful both by word and example, and especially by super-abounding charity.

Believe, Study, Live, Paint, for Eternity.

O how long, O how deep, O how infinite, O how blessed, or else how miserable, is that Mistress of everlasting ages, that endless, that ever-enduring eternity. "O frail man! how little is all thou doest for the hope of *eternity*." —*Eusebius Emisenus*.

Go from virtue to virtue until thou shalt see the God of gods in Sion. As Zeuxis the illustrious painter said, "I paint for eternity," so say thou, "I live for eternity." Say to thyself, I am painting the picture of a holy life. I am painting a portrait which I may show to God and the angels in heaven, to be for ever before their eyes, that the blessed ones may admire it, and praise it through all eternity. Imitate Christ therefore, and follow His life and faith. That faith is the true and ancient faith which Christ delivered to Peter, Peter to his successors the Supreme Pontiffs and the Roman Church, to be as it were a deposit to be kept inviolable. Flee therefore from every novelty in the faith, which the innovators fashion of themselves, and thrust upon thee. For a new faith is faithless, deceitful, and a lie. It is not faith, but perfidy.

S. Paul, writing to the Romans, bestows upon them this commendation (i. 8.), "Your faith is announced in all the world." S. Irenæus, who was the disciple of S. Polycarp, and through him of S. John, calls the Roman Church (*Lib. 3, caps. 3, 4*) the rich repository of ecclesiastical traditions, because, as he says, "The Apostles most fully deposited in her all things which appertain to the Truth, that whosoever will may take from her the water (*potum*) of life." S. Cyprian (*Ep. 45*) calls her the mother (*matricem*) of the churches. For to this Church, that is, those who are faithful everywhere, saith Irenæus, "it is necessary that every Church should agree, on account of its more powerful principality, in which Church that tradition which is from the Apostles has been preserved by those who are in every place." Tertullian (*lib. de præscrip. heret. c. 36*) says, "Thou hast Rome, from whence we too have authority. O happy Church, into which the Apostles with their blood poured all their doctrine, where Peter was made like unto the Passion of the Lord, where Paul was crowned after the manner of John the Baptist, where the apostle John was immersed in boiling oil and felt no hurt." Again, S. Jerome saith (*Pref. in l. 2, Com. in Ep. ad Galat.*), "Do you wish to know, O Paula and Eustochium, how the Apostle delineated every province by its own characteristics? Even until this very day the vestiges remain both of their virtues and their faults. The faith of the Roman Christians is commended. Where indeed are the churches still frequented with so much zeal as at Rome? Where is there such flocking to the tombs of the martyrs? Where do the Amens so resound like peals of heavenly thunder, whilst the deserted idol temples shake to their foundations? All this is not because the Romans have any different faith from that of all the churches of Christ, but because their devotion and their childlike faith is greater."

Learn therefore the Gospel and the faith of Christ from the Roman Church: and show it forth in your life and conduct. And daily make much progress therein, so shalt thou follow Christ, and be with Him in heavenly glory. The work which here thou workest in a moment shall abide for ever, and give thee gladness. The work which here thou workest not, thou shalt lose everlastingly, so that never more shalt thou be able to compass it. This will God Himself require of thee in the last and fateful day of the universe, when with all His angels the judge shall sit upon His throne, to take account of the quick and the dead, and to try thee as to thy Christian life and profession, that if thou hast followed the right path He may award thee heaven, but if not, consign thee to hell. It is here thou castest the die for eternity. Take heed that thou castest aright. For the throw once cast may never be recalled.

Listen to Theophylact: in that He saith, *Follow Me*, He made him the Prelate of all the faithful. Lastly, He manifested His affection towards him. For we wish those who are more strictly bound to us to follow us.

Admirably saith S. Irenæus, "To follow the Saviour is to partake of salvation: to follow, the light is to partake of light, now they who are in the light do not themselves illuminate the light, but are enlightened by it."

Vers. 20, 21.—*Peter, turning, saw that disciple, &c.* Peter, in obedience to Christ, was beginning to follow Him,—presently John also, and the rest of his companions followed. Peter then, being anxious about John and his companions, turned and looked back. Seeing them following, he omitted mention of the rest, and asked Christ what was to become of John, whether, namely, John was to follow Christ in the same way as himself, and to die upon a cross. Peter asked this, both because he loved John above the rest, and also because he knew that Christ loved him above the rest, and that he had reclined upon His breast at supper. He wondered that Christ should pass over this very dearly beloved John; and so he calls him to His remembrance. As though he said, "What will be the fate of Thy well-beloved John? Surely, as Thou didst prefer him to me at the supper, Thou mightest now rightly prefer him in the pastoral office, and subject me to him as a pastor. But since it has seemed good to Thee to do otherwise, at least I would desire to know what is to be the history of his life and death." Finally, the question was asked, because Peter here pays back, as it were, to John, the question which John at his instigation had asked at the last supper, when he asked Jesus who should betray Him? Peter asked Jesus concerning John, thinking that John desired to know what was to be his future lot, and yet did not dare to ask Christ. Listen to S. Chrysostom. "Because the Lord had foretold him great things, and had committed, the whole world to him, and prophesied his martyrdom, and testified larger love, desiring also to receive John as his partner, he said, *But this man, what (of him)?* For Peter dearly loved John, and thinking that he wished to ask a question concerning himself, but did not dare, he undertook to ask for him."

From hence let prelates learn not to follow their own affections, nor indulge their love, but to follow reason in all things, and to appoint such pastors only as they deem most meet for the pastoral office. Even so here Christ did not appoint John, although he was His most dearly beloved kinsman, to be His Vicar, and successor, and the Pontiff of the Church, but Peter.

Ver. 22.—*Jesus saith unto him, So I will him to tarry till I come, what to thee?* There is a threefold reading here. The first, the Greek, and from it the Syriac, Arabic and Ethiopic versions, *If I will him to tarry*. The second is, S. Jerome's (*lib. 2, cent. Jovin*) and others, *If so*. The third is the Latin, and

especially the Roman, codices, *So I will him to tarry*. This is the reading of S. Augustine, Bede, Rupert, the Gloss, S. Thomas, Lyra, and others. George Trapezuntius endeavours, although a Greek, to defend this reading by many arguments. Cardinal Bessarion refutes him, and defends the first reading. It is in favour of the first reading that the Latin *si* is easily changed into *sic*. But the Greek *ἐάν*, could not easily be transformed into *οὐτως*. Again, the first reading gives a plain sense: thus, "If I will that John should remain in life, and not be crucified as I will thee to be, what is it to thee? Follow Me, and leave John to My care." For Christ wishes only to repress Peter's curiosity, that, intent upon himself alone, he should leave the care of John to Christ. So S. Cyril, &c.

The arguments in favour of the third reading are, 1. That the Roman edition, corrected by order of the Pope, as well as many MSS. and Latin interpreters, have it. 2. That according to it Christ gives more satisfaction to Peter's question. 3. That from it the disciples would more readily take up the opinion about John, that he was not to die. 4. Because Trapezuntius, who was an excellent Greek scholar, shows that the Greek particle *ἐάν* and the Latin *si* have this force, that joined with the indicative mood they may be taken affirmatively, but with the subjunctive mood, hypothetically. For it is one thing to say, *if I love thee, I do not injure thee*: but another to say, *if I loved thee, I will not injure thee*. In the first proposition love is affirmed: in the second not, but the matter is put doubtfully. Since therefore the Evangelist here uses the indicative mood, the proposition is affirmative. Moreover, says Trapezuntius, the Fathers in this place translated *sic*, *so*, instead of *si*, *if*, lest persons but slenderly acquainted with the Greek and Latin tongues should misunderstand the meaning of *si*, because of its double force. The Latins, *if*, therefore, both here and in some other places, is affirmative, not doubtful. Thus Virgil (*Æn.* vi.) says, *If the fates call (vocant) thee, that is, when the fates call thee*. And in the same book, *If Orpheus could (potuit) call back the manes of his wife*, he affirms that he could.

Observe from the words, *So I will him to tarry till I come*, many have thought that John is not dead, but will come with Elias and Enoch to contend with Antichrist. Indeed the angel seems to assert this in the Apocalypse, saying to John, "Thou must prophesy again before the Gentiles." (*Rev.* x. ii.) So thought Hippolytus (*Tract. de Consummat. Sæculi*), Dorotheus, and Metaphrastes (*Life of S. John*), Damascene (*Orat. de Trans.*). The latter supports his opinion by Luke ix. 27: "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death until they see the kingdom of God." So, too, S. Ambrose understands the passage (*lib.* vii. *in Luc.*) Theophylact, Salmeron, and Barradi are all inclined to take the same view.

Others, again, whom S. Augustine refutes, think that S. John is alive within the tomb, because the earth above his sepulchre is said to quiver; and think that this is occasioned by S. John's breathing.

But I say it is far more like the truth, and to myself a matter of certainty, that S. John died a natural death.

Divine, and therefore altogether infinite, action of Christ. So Christ by one word and conception of His mind, knows all things, comprehends them, saith and speaks them. Moreover, one such word of His is so fruitful and sublime that all angels and men could not adequately and fully express it in an infinite number of words and books. Indeed, one of the Seraphim knows more, says and does more, in a single act than the infirm angels and men in many acts. Much more is this so with Christ, who far surpasses all the Seraphim. This second sort of Christ's actions were human acts, such as to *speaking*, to *eat*, to *walk*. If these be regarded merely as human acts, they might be written in a few books. But if they be regarded as they were done by Christ, and directed by the interior spirit of prudence, charity, and the other virtues, they could not be worthily described by any human pen, because no one could by writing adequately express the spirit and virtues of Christ. For Christ did all His works with all their accompaniments so perfectly, so angelically, that no authors could perfectly set them forth before the eyes of men. For each several action of Christ contained in itself so many virtues, excellences, and perfections, that it could not be equaled by any number of our actions.

The third kind of the actions of Christ were mixed, *i.e.*, partly human, and partly Divine. These therefore are called by S. Dionysius *theandric*, *i.e.*, *Divinely-human actions*. Such are to preach the Gospel, to raise the dead, to institute the Eucharist and the other Sacraments, things which Christ did as man, but in which He was directed by the Deity, hypostatically united to Himself. Far less then can these actions, regarded as to their worthiness, be adequately unfolded and set forth by all the writers who are, have been, or ever will be. For they are actions directly emanating from God, and therefore containing in themselves a Divine power and excellency, which far surpass the genius and ability of all authors to write them, according to the words in Job (xi. 7), "Canst thou comprehend the footsteps of God, and find out the Almighty to perfection? He is higher than heaven, what wilt thou do? Deeper than hell, whence wilt thou know? The measure is longer than the earth, broader than the sea."

Lastly, the truth of this hyperbole is made plain by the event and experience. For we see every year so many discourses, lectures, sermons, concerning the life and deeds of Christ, so many books written, so many commentaries, that to enumerate them would be impossible. And so, if the world were to endure for ever, the same thing would go on from year to year. If all were to be gathered in one (at last), the world could not contain them. Wherefore S. Leontius (*Serm. de. Nativ.* 9) saith, "The greatness of the Divine working exceeds the capacity of human speech. Never therefore will subjects of thanksgiving fail, because the abundance of them that praise will never cease."

Tropologically: From hence learn of Christ to fulfil thy years with virtues. Be continually occupied in the doing of many great and heroic works of virtue.

Christ, all who have been their hearers and disciples, know that this disciple testifies and writes the truth. For at that time there were but few survivors of those who had conversed with Christ, but many survived who had heard the same things from them. For John wrote this Gospel against Cerinthus, Meander, Ebion, and other rising heretics, who denied that Christ was God, and therefore detracted from His preaching and Gospel, as though it were false and feigned.

*There are also many other things, &c.* After the words *the world itself*, the Syriac version adds, *as I think*. First, S. Augustine, Bede, S. Thomas, and others explain the words, *the world itself could not contain the books*, not of local space, but of the capacity of readers. As it were, “The whole world could not receive, *i.e.* could not understand, could not penetrate the mysteries of the doctrine and life of Christ, because they are too profound and Divine.” But in this sense who is able to contain, in the sense of thoroughly penetrating, one single sentence of Christ concerning the mysteries of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, the Eucharist, &c.?

S. Jerome and others interpret *capere* by *to receive by faith, to believe this*. As it were, “If so many, and such unheard-of, and stupendous miracles of Christ were related, worldly men could not bear them, but would think either that the eyes of men were deluded by magic arts, or else that all were dreams and fables, and that so many and such great things could not be done by any one.” Therefore the Evangelists say but little concerning the greatest miracles. But to this is opposed that the unbelieving would believe not one single miracle of Christ, whilst the faithful would have believed them all. Observe, moreover, the Evangelist says *books*, not *miracles*.

3. And giving the true meaning, the words are an hyperbole. As though it were said, If every one of the words and deeds of Christ were written down, so many and so great things would have to be written, that the world would be filled with books—so many books would require to be written, that they would be, so to say, innumerable. Thus it is commonly said, In such a library there are books innumerable, that is very many. Such is the expression in chap. xii. 19, “The whole world is gone after Him,” meaning, very many follow Jesus. So Cyril, Chrysostom, Bede, Theophylact, Jansen, Toletus, and others. From hence it is plain that the Evangelists have omitted very many of the words and deeds of Christ, and recorded comparatively few, that from them we might acknowledge Christ to be both God and man, and might, as the proverb goes, estimate the power of a lion by his claw.

You may say, This hyperbole seems extravagant, for the whole world could contain innumerable myriads of books. I reply, it is not too bold an hyperbole, yea, it is too feeble if we take into account the greatness, the excellence, and the majesty of the things to be written. For observe that there were in Christ two natures, the Divine and the human—therefore His actions had a twofold, yea a threefold, character. First, in that they were Divine, He knew all things, and comprehended all things, He loved the Father with an infinite love, He breathed the Holy Spirit, and so on. Which things, were they to be written about in accordance with their worthiness, infinite books must be written, which the world could not contain. For however many might be written by men, they could not adequately set forth, much less exhaust, one single

This is the general tradition of the Fathers, as Irenæus, Tertullian, Eusebius, SS. Jerome, Augustine and Chrysostom, S. Ambrose, Bede and others. From whom Baronius gathers that S. John died A.D. 101, in the ninth year of Pope Clement, the second year of Trajan’s reign, sixty-eight from Christ’s crucifixion, and of his age the ninety-third. I say he died at Ephesus, and was buried near that city, and was succeeded in the bishopric of Ephesus by Onesimus, the disciple of S. Paul. The tradition of the Church which celebrates the Feast of S. John as departed this life, and as now reigning with Christ in heaven, confirms this. For this is the lot of none except after death.

Gregory of Tours (*Hist. Franc. lib. i. c. 26*) describes the way in which S. John died. “John the Evangelist, an old man and full of days, laid himself down in his tomb.” And in his first book on the glory of the Martyrs he says, “John went down alive into the tomb, and commanded it to be covered with earth. Now from his sepulchre there is an abundant supply of manna like fine meal, from which the blessed relics are carried all over the world, and afford healing to the sick.” Peter Damian says in his second Sermon on S. John, “Who is there whom the marvellous strangeness of this happy migration does not move? Who does not wonder at the glory of this most happy consummation? For he who lived marvellously died also marvellously. And forasmuch as he did not lead the common life of men, he passed not hence by a common death. For as histories relate, he ordered a square chamber to be constructed in the church, and by and by descended into it. Then stretching forth his hands, he remained a long while in prayer, and so passed to eternity. In a short space so great a light shone upon him from heaven, that no one could bear to look at it. After that the chamber was found to contain only manna, which, as is said, it continues to produce abundantly until this very day. For so it seemed good that the disciple who was so dear to the Author of life should depart out of this world, and that he should be a stranger to the pangs of death who had been a stranger to the corruption of the flesh.”

Nicephorus adds that the body of S. John, like that of the Blessed Virgin, was not found in his sepulchre, but that it rose again, and was raised by Christ to heaven. S. Ambrose makes mention of this opinion (*Ser. 20. in PS.cxviii.*) S. Thomas also, and B. Peter Damian held this as a pious opinion. Nevertheless it has no sure foundation either in Scripture, or in the tradition of the Ancients. Indeed it is opposed to the fact that in the Council of Ephesus the relics of the martyrs, and especially of S. John, were ordered to be collected. And Pope Celestine, in his epistle to the Council of Ephesus, says, “Before all things ye ought especially to consider, and again and again call to mind (these things), you, to whom John the Apostle preached, whose relics present with you ye honour.”

If then the relics of S. John were at Ephesus, he cannot yet have risen again, unless any one should maintain that they were the relics, not of his body,

but of his clothes, his books, &c., or possibly of his hair and beard. Be this as it may, it is not possible at the present time to find any other relics of the body of S. John.

You will ask, how is it that S. John is called by the Fathers and the Church a martyr, if he died a natural death? I reply, with S. Jerome, that S. John was a martyr because he was thrown into a caldron of boiling oil at Rome before the Latin Gate by the Emperor Domitian on account of his preaching Christ, as Tertullian testifies (*de Præscrip. c. 36*). The most ancient testimony of the Roman Church confirms this. In memory thereof a church has been erected on the site, and the Church has appointed a yearly commemoration of the same on the 6th of May. For although S. John did not then die, but came out of the caldron unhurt, yet because he willingly offered himself to such a cruel death for the sake of Christ, and because that boiling oil would naturally and necessarily have produced death, unless he had been miraculously preserved unhurt, therefore S. John was truly a martyr, and is rightly called a martyr.

Moreover, this present passage, as well as S. Luke ix. 27, and Revelation x. 11, as I there show, do not favour a contrary opinion. For the meaning is, (1.) "I wish thee, O Peter, to follow Me by the cross, but John I will to remain *so (sic)*, i.e., without the cross, or a violent death, *until I come*, that having died by a natural death I should take him to Myself in heaven." So S. Augustine, Bede, &c.

(2.) It may mean, "I will John to abide in life until I come to the public destruction of Jerusalem. Until I come, by means of Titus and the Romans, to avenge the death of Myself as Messiah by the destruction of the whole Jewish nation. For S. Peter and the rest of the Apostles were put to death before the destruction of Jerusalem. S. John alone of the Apostles survived it. So those two brethren, James and John, were the beginning and the end of the Apostolic martyrdoms. So Theophylact and others. Some add with Theophylact that S. John remained in Judea until its destruction, and that it was that which was meant by Christ.

Christ willed S. John to survive for so long a time for four reasons. The first was that John might be a foundation and pillar of the Church against the already nascent heretics, and that he might testify to all that the words and deeds of Christ which were written by the other Evangelists, as well as by himself in this Gospel, are most true, yea, that he saw them with his eyes, and heard them with his ears. 2d. That this his longevity might stand in the place of martyrdom, for John greatly desired to die, that he might enjoy Christ, saying as he did at the end of the Apocalypse, *Come, Lord Jesus*. 3d. That when the destruction of Judea was at hand he might warn the Christians to depart out of it. 4th. That he might testify to all that the destruction of the Jews was caused by their having put Christ to death, and that it had been foretold by Christ, and that he might by this strengthen believers in the faith of Christ and convert the unbelieving Jews.

Lastly, whether you read *if*, or *so*, the meaning will be the same if *si* be understood. Wherefore some read *si sic (if so)*, as if Christ said, "Granted that I wish John to remain, what is it to thee?"

Moreover, S. Cæsarius, the brother of S. Gregory Nazianzen, (*Dial. 5*), gives this fresh interpretation, "I wish John to remain here by the sea of Galilee," but this seems too literal and frigid.

Anagogically, the contemplative and beatific and triumphant life in heaven is here represented in St. John, and the active and militant life on earth in S. Peter. Listen to S. Augustine (*Tract. 124*) "Why did the Lord love John the most when Peter loved the Lord the most? By so much I understand he is better who most loves Christ, but he is happier whom Christ most loves. I think then that two modes of life are here signified, one which is in faith by the Apostle Peter, on account of the primacy of his apostleship; and therefore it is said to him, *Follow Me*, by imitation, viz., in bearing temporal ills. But the other life, which is in hope, by S. John, concerning whom it is said, *So I will him to tarry till I come*, when, that is, I am about to give him everlasting blessings. Let perfect action follow Me, being made strong by the example of my Passion: but let contemplation remain in an inchoate condition, *i.e.*, let it look for perfection when I come."

Both are more briefly stated in the Gloss: "That one should love most is for mercy to be made manifest, and justice hidden. Here two modes of life are commended to the Church. For the government of the storm-tossed Church the keys are given, for binding and loosing sins. For the sake of that quiet rest upon the bosom of Jesus a man lies down where he may drink of truth. And because John is a virgin, he is a type of that life to come, where they neither marry nor are given in marriage."

Tropologically, virginity, and the incorruption of virgins, integrity, and immortality, as they seem always to remain in the same state living and flourishing, are here represented, since S. John continued a very long time. For chaste souls imitate the holiness and purity of God. Hence they are made like unto God, and are beloved by Him. For this cause the Blessed Peter Damian calls S. John an organ of the Divine mysteries, a ray of heaven, a celestial eagle.

*Wherefore that saying went abroad, &c.*, namely, that S. John would not die, but would remain alive until Christ should come at the day of judgment, and then carry him alive with Him to heaven. And no marvel, for, as I have said a little above, many of the Fathers thought the same.

Ver. 23.—*Yet Jesus said not, &c.* This is the correction. John corrects the mistaken opinion of the disciples concerning himself, that he should not die. Whence it may be gathered that the meaning of Christ's words was different, and that John really died, as I have shown upon verse 22.

Ver. 24.—*This is that disciple, &c.*, viz. John, who for the sake of modesty speaks of himself in the third person. As though he said, "This is not the testimony of myself alone, but I, and all who have been conversant with