



PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [www.pamphletstoinpire.com](http://www.pamphletstoinpire.com)



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.

Matthew writes his gospel account to give us the view of Jesus as the King. He records Jesus' authority in calling the disciples: "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19), and he also records more than any of the others about Jesus' teaching concerning God's kingdom and heavenly rule.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Continuation of Matthew Chapter 1: 23-25**

**Verse 23-** *Behold, a word exacting attention, consideration, and admiration. As it were, "Behold, O ye angels, and all mankind, see and admire a new and wonderful thing, a thing unheard of in all ages. For a virgin shall conceive and bring forth Emmanuel, that is, God made man." Whence Jeremiah, overcome with astonishment at the same event, exclaims (xxxi. 22), "The Lord hath created a new thing upon the earth: a woman shall compass a man."*

Cyrus, the first king of Persia, according to the testimony of Xenophon, never admired, and taught his friends to admire nothing on earth. For this is the mark of a great and a regal mind, to despise all things as being beneath him, as being of less importance than himself. And Seneca said that a wise man admired nothing, because, being above the earth, he despised all things lower than himself. But in Divine matters all things are worthy of admiration; because they are great, yea, the greatest things, especially the mystery of Emmanuel, because it is the great mystery of Divine

You may urge, S. Matthew says, *until she brought forth her firstborn son*; therefore she had other sons, by Joseph, namely those who in the Gospel are called the Lord's brethren. I reply by denying the conclusion. For, in Scripture, any one is called a first-born son, who has no elder brothers, even though he be an only son. This is plain from Exod. iv. 22, and xiiii 2. The word "first" denies the existence of any previous sons, but does not require, or presuppose, that there were any subsequent. Thus, an only son is even now called the first-born.

Therefore it is a doctrine of the faith that the Blessed Virgin always remained a virgin, as is plain from S. Luke i. 34, Ezek. xliv. 2, and by the universal consent of the Fathers, and the common consent, and perpetual tradition of the Church. (See S. Jerome, *contra Helvid.*, init. tom. 2.)

Godliness, as the Apostle says, 1 Tim. iii. 10. Therefore, the goodness of the great God is a thing to be astonished at and admired. "Who through the bowels of his mercy visited us, the day-spring from on high." "Behold, therefore, the infant Word, the wise Child, the God-Man," says S. Bernard. Theologians and contemplative writers teach that we can consider and meditate upon this mystery in various ways, as by the method of compassion, of joy, of thanksgiving, of love, of imitation, but most loftily by wonder, as though we were always stumbling, amazed and astounded at this so great condescension of our God, whereby He deigned to descend to us worms of the earth so as to become a worm with us; and this, not for His own sake, but for ours, that He might unite men as worms to Himself, and make them gods. Thus the Blessed Virgin was amazed, and thus, too, S. Paul, S. Bernard, and Francis, and other especially saintly persons, who plainly and entirely despised the world, and all the things which are in the world, as being petty, brief, and transitory, and fixed their whole love, thought, and amazement on the Word Incarnate, and had their conversation always with Jesus, despising all other things.

*Emmanuel*. The Syriac has *Amman Elohan*—*i.e.*, our God with us; but the word *our* is not in the Hebrew *Emmanuel*. From the Syriac it appears possible that S. Matthew, if he wrote in Syriac (as, many think, because the Jews for whom he was writing, in the time of Christ spoke in Syriac), interpreted the Hebrew *Emmanuel* by the Syriac *Emman Eloha*, or God with us. Munster, and others who have translated the Gospel of S. Matthew out of Latin into Hebrew, render the single Hebrew word *Emmanuel* by two, *Immanu Elohim*.

Some think that this interpretation was made by the Greek translator, who was followed by the Latin. The French shorten *Emmanuel* into *Noel*, which they duplicate and sing at Christmastide. Now, the name *Emmanuel* signifies the Incarnation of the WORD, and His whole Economy in the Flesh, because by It He was properly and physically God with us, by means of His flesh and His conversation, and ethically by reconciliation and grace. So S. Chrysostom.

You may say: How is the name Jesus the same as *Emmanuel*, as S. Matthew here intimates? Tertullian (*lib. contra Judæos*) answers that it is the same in sense if not in sound. For that God should be with us is the same thing as that a Saviour—*i.e.*, Jesus—should be with us. For none other than God could be our Saviour.

Observe the Hebraism by which *called* is put for *be*. *He shall be called Emmanuel*, that is, *He shall be Emmanuel*. This is by the figure of speech metonymy, to which the following passages are clearly similar: Jer. xxiii. 6, Zech. viii. 3, and Is. ix. 6—"And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God: the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of

peace.” For all these things are signified, either explicitly or implicitly by the name of Jesus.

Note, also, that Christ is not called by Matthew and Isaiah *Emmanu Jehovah*, or *Emmanu Adonai* or *Elohim*, though all these are names of God, because Jehovah connotes the essence of God, or signifies God as He is the first, chief, and uncircumscribable Entity, from whom all other entities derive their existence. *Adonai* connotes the dominion of God, and signifies God as He is the Ruler, the Judge, and the Avenger of all things. But *El* connotes the might and omnipotence of God, and signifies God as He is strong and omnipotent, because God manifested His utmost might and power in the Incarnation, and in Christ, for through Christ He hath vanquished His strongest enemies, even the devils, hell, death, and sin, yea, and all sins and vices, however many and however great. Whence, also, the Angel who announced this mystery, was called Gabriel—*i.e.*, the *strength of God*.

Hence, also, tropologically, observe: God is with us, not only in essence, presence, and power, as He is in all and every creature; but by the Incarnation He is also with us truly, properly, and really, as a Brother, living, speaking with us in the human nature assumed by Him, Therefore—2, He is with us, as a Head with its members. For Christ, as the Head of the faithful, causes to flow into them spiritual sense and motion, together with direction and government. 3. The Same, being Incarnate, is with us in the Eucharist, as it were our Food, feeding us with his own Flesh, and giving us to drink of His own Blood. So far, physically. 4. Christ, ethically, is with the Church as a bridegroom with a bride, assisting, protecting, sustaining, adorning, making her fruitful. Whence the Psalmist: “For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.” (Ps. xxii. 4.) Therefore the believer, in every difficulty, labour, or tribulation, invokes Emmanuel, that is, God with us, conversant in our flesh. And joyfully he cries, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall lack nothing. He shall lead me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.” And, Ps. xxvii. 1, “The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom, then, shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear; if a battle should rise up against me, in this will I be confident.” And with Paul, “If God be for us, who is against us?” so now, to any believer, but especially to a saint or a martyr, it is lawful to say what the Angel said to Gideon, “The Lord is with thee, O most valiant man.” (Judges vi. 12.)

**Verse 24-** *And Joseph rising from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:* that is, did not put her away, but retained her with him, for this was what the Angel commanded him.

**Verse 25-** *And knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son: and he called his name Jesus.*

1. S. Hilary, *in loc.*, cited by S. Thomas *in Catena*, Dionys. Carthus., and Gagneius expound as follows: As the Jews were not able to look upon and recognize the face of Moses on account of the rays of light which God had, as it were, breathed into him when He talked with him on Mount Sinai, so neither was Joseph able to look upon and to know the Blessed Virgin, forasmuch as she had God in her womb, and therefore her face was most radiant. But after Christ was born, this glory and effulgence left her face, and then she could be seen and known by Joseph.

2. On the contrary S. Epiphanius, *Hæresi* 30—that is, his treatise against the Ebionites—expounds thus: Joseph knew her not in mind. He did not discover the sanctity and the dignity of the Blessed Virgin, his wife, until she brought forth Christ. But these expositions are either incorrect or else symbolical and mystical.

3. According, therefore, to the true literal meaning, to know one’s wife signifies in Scripture the conjugal act. This, therefore, is excluded with reference to Christ, so as to signify that He was not conceived of Joseph, but by the Holy Ghost.

*Until.* From hence the heretics have taken occasion to say that Joseph knew her after she had brought forth her Son. Whence they deny that the Blessed Virgin always remained a Virgin, and that after bearing her Child she lost her virginity. Thus Helvidius, Jovinian, the Ebionites, and the rest of the Antidicomariani, who are confuted by S. Epiphanius, S. Jerome, S. Augustine and others, who teach that the word *until*, in this place, only signifies what took place up to the time of the birth, not what happened after the birth, which is not here referred to. For by this word *until*, Matthew wished to assert a wonderful thing—a thing hitherto unheard of, and, according to nature, incredible—even the Conception of Christ, without a father, by a virgin mother. Similarly, *until* is used, Ps. cx. 1., “Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool,” not because Thou shalt not after that sit any longer, but because Thou shalt then sit far more gloriously, as victor and triumphant at my right hand. And in Matthew v. 26, “Thou shalt not go out from thence until thou shalt pay the last farthing;” that is, thou shalt never come out from the fire of hell. And 2 Sam. vi. 23, “Therefore Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child unto the day of her death,” *i.e.*, never. And, Gen. viii. 7, concerning the raven, which Noah sent forth out of the ark: “Which went forth and did not return until the waters were dried up;” *i.e.*, it never returned. Thus, too, we say, “S. Agnes continued a virgin until death;” *i.e.*, she always remained a virgin, for she could not lose her virginity after she was dead.