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IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE
WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH
GOD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH
HIM, AND HE WAS WITH HIM,
BEFORE ALL THINGS, THROUGH
WHICH ALL THINGS WERE MADE.
THAT WAS THE TRUE LIGHT
WHICH GIVES LIFE TO ALL
THAT SEE HIM, AND HE
HAS GIVEN LIFE TO ALL
WHOM HE HAS SOUGHT.
OF HIS FULL GRACE AND
TRUTH HE TESTIFIED IN
THE DARKNESS, BUT THE DARK-
NESS HAS NOT UNDERSTOOD IT.

the gospel of JOHN

CHAPTER 20: 1-21

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 20: 1-21

Douay Rheims Version

Christ's resurrection and manifestation to his disciples.

1. And on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalen cometh early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre: and she saw the stone taken away from the sepulchre.
2. She ran therefore and cometh to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved and saith to them: They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre: and we know not where they have laid him.
3. Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple: and they came to the sepulchre.
4. And they both ran together: and that other disciple did outrun Peter and came first to the sepulchre.
5. And when he stooped down, he saw the linen cloths lying: but yet he went not in.

of Pentecost, as he writes in his notes on the Apostolic Constitution, vi. 11. Bellarmine (*de Rom. Pontif*, i. 24), following Turrecremata, thinks that only S. Peter was ordained Bishop by our Lord, and that the other Apostles were ordained by S. Peter. Suarez considers it more probable that all the Apostles were ordained Bishops by Christ, though not certain as to time and place (*see Tract de Fide, Disput. v. sect. 1 num. 8*). S. Augustine takes this latter view (*Quæst. xcvi. in Quæst. N. and Vet. Test.*) (2.) The word 'as' signifies similarity of origin. The beginning of Christ's mission, as also that of the Apostles, was God Himself. (3.) It signifies likeness of object or end, that is, the propagation of the faith and the salvation of the world. So S. Cyril and Leontius. (4.) Likeness of mode, that ye way confirm your teaching by miracles, as I have confirmed Mine. (5.) Likeness of mutual love. As the Father sent Me to shed My blood from love of Him, with the same love do I send you. For it is a mark of the supreme love of God when He makes any one his witness and martyr.

Hear S. Gregory. "In sending you forth among the perils of persecutors, I love you with the same love that the Father had to Me, when He sent Me to endure My Passion."

wounds into heaven, and will retain them for ever. See Zech. xiii. 6, John xix. 37. It was miraculously so ordered by God that these wounds interfered not with the actions and motions of His Body. (See Suarez, iii. *part, Quæst. xliv., Disput. xlvii. art. 4, sect. 2.*)

S. Augustine accordingly thinks (*de civ. xxii. 20*) that it will be thus with the wounds of the martyrs. He thus writes, "Are we so inspired with love for the martyrs as to wish to behold in their bodies the scars of the wounds which they suffered for Christ? And it may be we shall see them. For this will not be a deformity, but an honour; and even though some of their limbs have been cut off, yet will they not appear without them at the resurrection. For it was said to them, 'Not a hair of your head shall perish.'" He adds, and "these proofs of their virtue must not be counted as defects."

S. Cyril (*ut supra*) seems to deny this; but he is not speaking of martyrs, but of those who have some natural defect, as those who are blind, deaf, &c. These will rise again with all their faculties.

Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord, and recognised Him by His wounds. S. Augustine (*de Civ. xxii. 19*) says, "The brightness with which the righteous will shine as the sun, seems to have rather been veiled in Christ's person than wanting. For man's feeble sight could not have endured it, when steadily looking at Him, in order to recognise Him." They were glad, not only because they saw that Christ was risen, but also because they hoped that all His gracious promises would now be made good.

Ver. 21.—*Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you.* Why again? The Interlinear Gloss says, "It was a repeated confirmation, Peace upon peace, according to the prophet." Bede says, "He repeats it, because the virtue of charity is twofold, or because He is the peace who makes both one." The Gloss, "He offers peace, who came for the sake of peace; and He repeats His words to show that all things whether in heaven or in earth are restored to peace through Him." S. Chrysostom, "Because they were waging an unappeasable contest with the Jews." He proclaims peace in order to console them, and sets forth also the power of the cross, by which He drove away all sorrow, and conferred every good, which is peace. But a further joy was announced to the women, for they had to bear the curse, "in sorrow shalt thou bring forth," and they were indeed in sorrow.

As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. With like power, authority, end, mode, and love. Observe here by this word 'as' Christ in a manner puts His Apostles on an equality with Himself, that is proportionately, as His successors and vicars. This word signifies likeness in office; with the same power and special authority with which the Father sent Me to found His Church, do I send you as its teachers and rulers (as I am Myself), that ye may have power to remit sin, as I also have. So Rupertus, S. Cyril, Theophylact, who maintain that by these words Christ made His Apostles His Vicars, the teachers and pastors of the world, and communicated to them His own office and authority, that is to say, all ecclesiastical authority, in fact made them Bishops. But Turrianus thinks that they were created Bishops on the day

6. Then cometh Simon Peter, following him, and went into the sepulchre: and saw the linen cloths lying,
7. And the napkin that had been about his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but apart, wrapped up into one place.
8. Then that other disciple also went in, who came first to the sepulchre: and he saw and believed.
9. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.
10. The disciples therefore departed again to their home.
11. But Mary stood at the sepulchre without, weeping. Now as she was weeping, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre,
12. And she saw two angels in white, sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid.
13. They say to her: Woman, why weepest thou? She saith to them: Because they have taken away my Lord: and I know not where they have laid him.
14. When she had thus said, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing: and she knew not that it was Jesus.
15. Jesus saith to her: Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, thinking that it was the gardener, saith to him: Sir, if thou hast taken him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him: and I will take him away.
16. Jesus saith to her: Mary. She turning, saith to him: Rabboni (which is to say, Master).
17. Jesus saith to her: Do not touch me: for I am not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brethren and say to them: I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God.
18. Mary Magdalen cometh and telleth the disciples: I have seen the Lord; and these things he said to me.
19. Now when it was late the same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them: Peace be to you.
20. And when he had said this, he shewed them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord.
21. He said therefore to them again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you.
22. When he had said this, he breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost.
23. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.
24. Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.
25. The other disciples therefore said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the place of the nails and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26. And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said: Peace be to you.

27. Then he said to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither and see my hands. And bring hither the hand and put it into my side. And be not faithless, but believing.

28. Thomas answered and said to him: My Lord and my God.

29. Jesus saith to him: Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and have believed.

30. Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book.

31. But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing, you may have life in his name.

Ver. 1.—*On the first day of the week.* Literally, of the Sabbath, the week being called the Sabbath, after its principal day, or the day of the Pasch. (see on Matt. xxviii.)

Mary Magdalene came. The other gospels speak of the other women but she only is mentioned here, as being their leader, and more zealous and active than the rest.

When it was yet dark. In the early dawn (*profundo diluculo*), says S. Luke. Note here her activity, watchfulness, and ardour. She seeks Christ in the dawn, and hence she is the first to see Him as the rising sun. As S. Ambrose says on the title of Ps. lv., “For the morning undertaking.” This morning undertaking we can ascribe to Mary Magdalene, who went very early in the morning to watch at the tomb, and first greeted the resurrection of the Lord, and as the sunlight grew brighter, she only, and before the rest, recognised the rising of the Sun of righteousness, and as by this morning greeting she rejoiced at the return of daylight, so did she rejoice the more that Christ was raised from the dead, and in her was fulfilled the prophecy, In the evening weeping will tarry (*see vulg.*) (heaviness may endure for the night, *E. V.*) but at morning is joy (Ps. xxx. 6).

Unto the sepulchre. To anoint the Body of Jesus, says Nonnus.

And saw the stone taken away. And the Angels, who said that Christ had risen, but the Magdalene did not believe it, and ran to Peter and John, saying, “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.” See notes on S. Matt. xxviii.

8. S. Jerome remarks (*Ep. cl. Hedibiam*), Her error was connected with piety—piety in longing to see Him whose Majesty she knew, but her mistake was in what she said.

Ver. 2.—*Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter,* as the Chief Apostle, and as designated by Christ as His Vicar and successor, (*Matt. xvi.*), *and that other disciple whom Jesus loved,* i.e., S. John, who would be more diligent than the rest in searching for the Body of Christ.

Ver. 4.—*So they ran both together.* Before the rest, as loving Him above the rest, says S. Gregory.

not knock at the doors, lest they should be alarmed, but as God entered through them, though closed.”

Tropologically. Christ appears to those who have closed the doors of their mind to the world and the flesh, and gives them unexpectedly the sweetest peace. As S. Gregory (*Lib. iv. in Lib. i. Reg. cap. v.*) says, “They have their doors closed, who keep their bodies strictly guarded against human frailty and carelessness. They too are within, because they rest in the inward love of the life above. And the Lord appears to them on His Resurrection, because they behold His glory the more clearly, the more strictly they despise the world and imitate the mystery of His Passion. And they too can be filled with His Spirit within, because they enjoy His gifts and graces in abundance who have trained themselves for their enjoyment by despising the things of sight.”

And stood. Without any previous sign of His coming, with the swiftness of thought.

Tropologically. S. Bernard says (*Serm. vi. de Ascens.*), “Thou art deceived, O Thomas, in hoping to see the Lord when separated from the company of the Apostles. The truth loves not holes and corners, takes no pleasure in places apart. He stands in the midst, that is, He takes pleasure in common discipline, common life, common studies.”

And saith unto them, Peace be unto you. This is the usual Hebrew mode of greeting, for peace brings with it every good, war every evil.

Ver. 20.—*And when He had so said, He showed them His hands and His side.* It is clear from this verse (and still more clearly from ver. 27) that Christ after His Resurrection retained not only the scars, but even the very holes, of His wounds, and that really and not in appearance. So S. Augustine teaches in answer to Porphyrius (*Epist. xlix. [al cii.] ad Deogratias*). He did not fill them up with His glorified flesh, but left them open, in order that they might be incontrovertible proofs of the truth of His Body, and of Its Resurrection. So S. Cyril and Leontius. S. Augustine says (*in loc.*), “The nails had wounded His hands, the spear had pierced His side, and the marks of the wounds were left, to heal the hearts of the doubtful.”

2. This was a sign of His victory over sin, the world, the flesh, and the devil. So S. Augustine and S. Ambrose in Luke (*cap. ult.*)

3. To inspire us with greater confidence, inasmuch as Christ, by displaying these wounds to the Father, intercedes for us. See S. Anselm on Heb. ix. and [Pseudo]-Cyprian, *de Baptismo Christi*.

4. To enkindle our love, and to lead us in return willingly to bear even death itself for His sake. So S. Ambrose (*ut supra*), and S. Gregory in Cant. iii.

5. That Christ might in the day of judgment convict Jews and reprobates of impiety and ingratitude, in neglecting such great grace. So S. Augustine. All theologians teach us (as well as S. Cyril, xii. 58) that Christ carried these

And say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God. Remind them of what I said to them before My Passion, that after a few days I should ascend to God the Father. He says, “My Father and your Father,” Mine by nature, yours by grace, as S. Augustine says, to show that they had in common God as their Father. He as His Father by nature, they by adoption. So S. Ambrose (*de Virginitate*). Moreover, S. Hilary (*de Trinit., Book xi.*), “He is His Father, as of all others, in respect of His human nature; and God, as He is the God of all men, in that nature in which He is a servant for God the Only Begotten is without brethren.” But it is simpler to say that He called Him “My Father,” to designate His own Divine Nature, and “My God” to set forth the human nature He had assumed, and that thus He was Very God, and very man. So S. Ambrose (*ut supra*), referring to Heb. ii. 11.

It means then, Tell the Apostles to banish their fear and sorrow, for I have risen from the dead, and love them as brethren, and therefore shall soon ascend to heaven, to prepare a place for them, that they may follow Me thither, and that I may send them the Holy Spirit from thence, to make them resolute preachers of My Gospel.

Ver. 18.—*Mary came and told the disciples, I have seen the Lord, and He has said these things to me.* She thus became an apostle and evangelist to the Apostles. And accordingly, when she was driven into exile by the Jews, and arrived at Marseilles, she preached the gospel to the people there. And she fully deserved this honour, by her glowing love to Christ, her faith and constancy, which led her to the sepulchre by herself at early dawn, where she waited patiently till she saw her Jesus.

Ver. 19.—*Then the same day at evening, on the first day of the week.* Or the feast of the Pasch. (See notes on Matt. xxviii. 1.)

When the doors were shut. Calvin says that Christ opened the doors, or entered through an open window, so as not to be compelled to admit that one dimension could penetrate another—*penetratio dimensionum*, or that two bodies could exist together in the same place, which Durandus (*in iv. dist. 44, Quæst. vi.*) says is even beyond the power of God. But S. John here intimates the contrary, for he says that the doors were shut, to signify that Christ passed through the closed doors, as He did both at His conception and nativity, and passed through the stone when He rose from the grave, thus manifesting the almighty power of His Godhead, and the gifts conferred upon His glorified Body. On this subject see Bellarmine, *de Eucharistia*, iii. 6, who quotes both Greek and Latin fathers on this point. As S. Augustine, “The closed doors opposed not His Body. Let us grant that God can do anything, which we admit, though we cannot understand. It all turns on the power of the Creator.” (S. Ambrose on *Luke xxiv*; S. Hilary, *de Trin. lib. iii.*; S. Justin Martyr, *Resp. ad Græcor Quæstiones*; Epiphanius, *Hæresi*, lxiv.) “As our Lord rose from the grave, not by raising up another Body, but the very same, changing it into the subtle nature of a spirit, thus He entered the closed doors, a thing impossible to our gross bodies,” &c. (Origen). And S. Cyril, “The Lord entered suddenly, the doors being closed, overcoming the ordinary nature of things by His omnipotence; for being true God, He is not under the power of nature.” And Euthymius, quoting S. Chrysostom, “He did

And he (John) did outrun Peter, as the younger and more active, and moreover as more desirous of seeing that Body which he had just before seen marred on the cross.

Ver. 5.—*And he stooping down*, to look into the tomb, *saw the linen clothes* with which the Body of Christ had been wrapped. *Yet went he not in*, paying deference to Peter, as his senior and more worthy, says Lyranus, or else hindered by fear, or seized with a kind of sacred dread at the Body of Christ which was buried there.

Ver. 6.—*Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre.* Peter (says S. Chrysostom) entered with ardour, and carefully inspected everything. For the soldiers who guarded the tomb, when they saw the angel and the earthquake, ran away through fear. See also S. Jerome, *Quæst. vi. ad Hedib.* *And seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin which was about His head* (covering His face, as is generally done to the dead, for the sake of seemliness), *not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.* “This,” says S. Chrysostom, “was a sign of His Resurrection, for if they had removed the body they would not have stripped it, and if they had stolen it, they would not have been so careful to fold up the napkin, and put it aside by itself; for John had said before that He was buried with myrrh, which makes linen clothes cling close to the body, so that no one would be deceived by those who said that it was stolen away; for what thief would trouble himself so much about an unnecessary matter?”

Ver. 8.—*Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre.*

Topologically, Toletus says that by John are signified all Christians, but by Peter the Pontiffs, Vicars of Christ. Peter then entered the tomb first as the highest in dignity, as the Vicar of Christ; but John came last, because it is possible that he who is first in rank, is behind others in desert and holiness. *And he saw and believed.* Both of them, that is, believed that what Mary Magdalene said was true, namely, that the Body of Christ had been taken away. So says S. Augustine, Theophylact, and Jansen. S. Cyril, Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Nyssen add that both believed that Christ had risen. But this word “believed” more clearly and correctly applies only to S. John, who remembered the words of Christ, that He would rise on the third day. But Peter, on account of the strangeness of a Resurrection, and from His earnest desire to see Him alive again, was more slow to believe that Christ had risen. Whence the Angel significantly said to the women, “Go, tell His disciples and Peter.” (*Mark xvi. 7.*)

Ver. 9.—*For as yet they knew not the scriptures, that He must rise again from the dead.* For although He had solemnly assured them that He would rise, yet on account of its strange and wonderful nature they believed it

not, but thought that He spoke in a figure and parable, as He was wont to do.

Ver. 10.—*Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.* Peter wondering, John believing He had risen, the Magdalene alone remaining at the sepulchre, to learn something more certain about the Body of her beloved Christ. See S. Augustine (*in loc.*) “And hence it came to pass that she alone saw Him, she who remained to seek for Him, for perseverance in a good work is a virtue,” says S. Gregory, *Hom.* xxv.

Ver. 11.—*But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping.* Because she anxiously looked about on every side for the Body of Jesus, as glowing in love for Him, and was beside herself; and not finding Him, wept for grief. “The eyes (says S. Augustine *in loc.*) who sought, but found Him not, had leisure to weep, and sorrowed more for His being taken from the tomb than that He had died on the Cross, because not even a memorial remained of so great a Teacher, whose life had been taken away.”

And as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre. Though she looked in before and saw that the sepulchre was empty. For, as says S. Gregory (*in loc.*), “A single look suffices not one who loves. The power of love increases the earnestness of the inquiry: she persevered in seeking, and accordingly she found. And so it was that her desires expanded and increased, and could thus take in that which they found.”

Ver. 12.—*And saw two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.* All these were tokens of His glorious Resurrection, and prepared the mind of the Magdalene to believe it. One sat at the head and the other at the feet, to signify that the whole Body of Christ had risen, and that, by assuming the immortal form and glory of angels, He had entered into their company, and had left these two angels, as guardians of the tomb, to announce the fact to the Magdalene.

Origen says that, mystically, the angel at the feet represented the active, the angel at the head the contemplative, life. For they are both of them from Jesus, about Jesus, through Jesus, and on account of Jesus.

Ver. 13.—*They say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou?* This is no place for weeping, but rather for rejoicing, and being glad. Because thou seest not here the dead Body of thy Beloved One, thou oughtest to infer that Jesus has risen, and is no longer among the dead, but among the living; and more than this, that He is passing a blessed and heavenly life among the glorious angels, such as we are ourselves.

She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

I weep for three reasons.

(1.) Because of the ignominious death of my Lord.

afterwards allowed Himself to be touched by her and the other women, because they were then on their way to tell the Apostles that He had risen. (Matt. xxviii. 9.)

1. It is said that Christ when speaking these words touched the forehead of the Magdalene, and that Sylvester Prieras saw those marks when her tomb was opened in 1497 (see Surius, *in Vita S. M. Magdalenæ*).
2. S. Epiphanius (*Her.* xxvi) gives a moral reason, viz., that Christ did not wish to be touched by any woman, except in the presence of others; an example followed by SS. Augustine and Ambrose, S. Martin, S. Chrysostom, S. Charles Borromeo, and others.
3. Rupertus gives an allegorical reason. Mary, he says, here represented the Gentile Church which was to come to Christ, not by corporal but by spiritual contact, after His Ascension.

See also Chrysostom, Serm. lxxv.

It is most probable, as S. Augustine (*de Consen. Evang.* iii. 24), Theophylact, and Euthymius (*in cap. ult. Matt.*), and S. Jerome (*Epist. ad Hedibiam, Quæst.* v.) say, that Mary hastened away, and came up with the other women who went away with Peter and John, and that she then saw Christ again when He appeared to them all; that she then touched His feet, and adored Him (see Matt. xxviii. 9). But Toletus says it was not so.

Tropologically. Hence learn that it is more acceptable to Christ to comfort those who are in any affliction, than to look only to one's self. So that when necessity, or piety or charity require it, it is allowable to postpone the Sermon, or even Mass, on a Feast day, for the purpose of aiding the sick and suffering. See notes on Matt. ix. 13.

Symbolically. S. Bernard (*Serm. v. in Fest. Omn. Sanct.*) says, “This is a word of glory, ‘A wise son is the glory of his father.’ Touch Me not then, says the Glory. Seek not glory as yet, rather avoid it. And touch Me not till we come to the Father, where all our glorying is secure.”

But go to My brethren. He calls them “Brethren” out of His wondrous condescension, being, as He is, not only as God but also as man, the Head and Lord of all. For all men are brethren as descended from Adam, and as the sons of God by grace. But the term properly applies to them as Apostles. And Christ was an Apostle, as being sent by God, and He associated with Him in His office Peter and the rest. The Pontiff calls in like manner the Cardinals and Bishops his brethren, though he is their superior. Christ speaks of them in this way to inspire them with courage, as though He said, Though they have forsaken Me, yet I do not forsake them; and by taking on Me the nature of man on rising again, I will show Myself to be their Brother.

such reverence? But when she heard Jesus addressing her by name, and recognised His voice, she was enraptured with joy, and at once looked straight towards Him. The voice of the Shepherd reaching the ears of the lamb, at once opened her eyes, and soothed all her senses with its secret power and wonted sweetness; and so carried her away out of herself, that she at once was carried away with un hoped-for and inexplicable joy, and cried out “*Rabboni*,” my Master. I, as Thy disciple, Thy spiritual daughter, give myself wholly to Thee. In Thee who hast risen, I myself live again, I exult and rejoice. So S. Cyril, Chrysostom, and others. And accordingly she fell down at His knees, and wished, as she was wont, reverently to touch His head and His feet, and cover them with kisses. Just as the Shunammite embraces the feet of Eliseus the prophet (2 Kings iv. 27). This is plain from Christ’s instant prohibition.

Rabboni. This was a word of greater reverence than Rabbi, and was used by the Magdalene only after His Resurrection. [But see Mark x. 51.]

Ver. 17.—*Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father, &c.* This is a difficult passage, and the connection between the two parts is even more difficult. (1.) S. Augustine explains the connection thus, “Touch Me not, for as yet thou art not worthy to touch Me; for in thy thoughts regarding Me, I have not as yet ascended to My Father, for as yet thou dost not perfectly believe that I am the Son of God, and that I ascend to My Father.” And S. Jerome (*Quæst. v. ad Hedibiam*) explains it much in the same way. But this is a mystical rather than a literal explanation. As also is that of S. Leontius (*Serm. ii. de Ascens.*), “I do not wish you to approach Me bodily, or recognise Me with thy bodily senses. I reserve thee for higher things. I am preparing for thee greater things. When I shall have ascended to My Father, then wilt thou touch Me more perfectly and truly, for thou wilt comprehend that which thou touchest not, and believe that which thou seest not.” (2.) S. Cyril (*Lib. xii. cap. i.*) says, “He forbade her to touch Him, to signify that no one ought to approach His glorified Body, which was soon to be touched and received in the Eucharist, before receiving the Holy Spirit, which He had not yet sent.” But, on this ground neither would the other women, or Thomas, or the rest have been able to touch Him—which yet they did. (3.) S. Chrysostom (*in loc.*), Theophylact, and Euthymius say that He forbade her to touch Him, because He wished to be touched with greater reverence than heretofore: since He would not henceforth hold converse with men, but with angels and blessed spirits. But it does not appear that the Magdalene failed in reverence. And after all, what connection has this with the reason given, “I have not yet ascended to My Father”? (4.) [Pseudo]-Justin (*Quæst. a Gentibus, propos. xlvi.*), and after him Toletus and others, explain it thus: Touch Me not: for I am shortly about to ascend to heaven, and I wish to withdraw you gradually from My accustomed presence. Therefore, says [Pseudo]-Justin, “He did not constantly show Himself to His disciples after His Resurrection, nor yet withdraw Himself entirely from their sight, so that He was seen, and yet not seen.” But this explanation is not clear, and requires many things to be supplied, besides misinterpreting the reason given. (5.) The best explanation is this, “Do not waste any more time in thus touching Me. Go and bear the glad tidings of My Resurrection to My disciples at once. I do not just yet ascend into heaven. You will have ample time before then to touch and converse with Me.” (See Suarez, *par. iii. Disput. xlix. § 3*, Ribera (*in loc.*), and others.) Christ

(2.) Because His Body has been taken away, for if I saw It, I should kiss It, lament over It, and anoint It.

(3.) Because I do not know where to look for It. For did I know, I should haste to the spot, embrace It, and overwhelm It with kisses. See here how Jesus suffers the souls of those that love Him to remain in ignorance for a while, in order to sharpen and enkindle their desire for Him; and when it is thus sharpened and enkindled, to comfort and make them glad with the full revelation of Himself.

Ver. 14.—*And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.* Christ appeared behind the Magdalene, so that the angels who beheld Him rose up and bowed their heads, and exhibited other tokens of reverence and adoration towards Him. And this was why she turned about, viz., to see who it was whom the angels saluted so reverently. So S. Chrysostom (*Hom. 85*), and the author of the *Quæst. ad Antioch (Quest. lxxviii.)*, [Pseudo-Athanasian]. Some think that Christ made a noise with His feet to attract her attention.

And saw Jesus. “The first to share the joy: as loving more than all.”

And knew not that it was Jesus. As appearing in the form of the gardener. Just as He appeared in the form of a stranger at Emmaus. For glorified bodies can put on any appearance they please, not by changing their own appearance, but by presenting only a refracted appearance to the sight of others. Christ did this, in order that she should not be startled. He appeared to her in consequence of her intense love to Him. But because she did not believe that He was alive, He veiled Himself from her, and presented Himself to her outward sight as the person she fancied Him to be. So S. Gregory (*Hom. xxiii.*), speaking of the disciples at Emmaus.

Ver. 15.—*Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?* S. Ambrose (*Lib. iii. de Virg.*) explains the whole passage minutely: “Woman, why weepest thou? He who believeth not is a woman; for he that believes rises up into the ‘perfect man, into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.’ It is a reproach not on her sex, but on her slowness of belief. It is well said a woman hesitated, though a virgin had already believed. Why weepest thou? Thou thyself art in fault, as being incredulous. Dost thou weep because thou seest not Christ? Believe, and thou wilt see Him. Christ is close by thee, He never fails those that seek Him. Thou shouldst not weep, but have ready faith, as God requires. Think not of mortal things, and thou wilt not sorrow; think not of perishing things, and thou wilt have no cause for weeping. Thou weepest for that, at which others are glad. Whom seekest thou? seest thou not that Christ is at thy side?”

Origen wrote a striking Homily, and one full of devout feelings, respecting the Magdalene, in which he says, among other things, "Love made her stand there, and sorrow caused her to weep. She stood and looked around, if perchance she could see Him whom she loved. She wept, as thinking that He whom she was looking for, had been taken away. Her grief was renewed, because at first she sorrowed for Him as dead, and now she was sorrowing for Him as having been taken away. And this last sorrow was the greater because she had no consolation." And then he proceeds to lay open the sources of her sorrow, saying, "Peter and John were afraid, and therefore did not remain. But Mary feared not, because she felt that there was nothing left for her to fear. She had lost her Master, whom she loved with such singular affection, that she could not love or set her hopes on anything but Him. She had lost the life of her soul, and now she thought it would be better for her to die than to live, for she might perchance thus find Him when dead, whom she could not find while she lived. 'Love is strong as death.' What else could death do in her case? She was lifeless, she was insensible: feeling she felt not, seeing she saw not, hearing she heard not. And she was not really there, even where she seemed to be. Her whole thoughts were with her Master, and yet she knew not where He was. I seek not for the angels, who do but increase, and not remove my grief, but I seek my own Lord, and the Lord of angels." And after a few more bursts of glowing and holy affections, he adds, "I am straitened on every side, I know not what to choose. If I remain by the tomb, I find Him not; if I retire from it, I know not where to go, or where to seek for Him: hapless that I am. To leave the tomb is death to me, to remain by it is irremediable sorrow. But it is better for me to keep watch over His tomb, than to go far away from it. For perhaps when I return, I shall find that He has been taken away, and His sepulchre destroyed. I will therefore remain here and die, that at least I may be buried by the sepulchre of my Lord. Return, my beloved one,—return, the loved one of my vows." He then adds, "Why, Beloved Master, dost Thou trouble the spirit of this woman? Why dost Thou distress her mind? She depends entirely on Thee, she abides entirely on Thee, she hopes solely on Thee, and utterly despairs of herself. She seeks Thee, as seeking or thinking of no one besides. And perhaps she does not recognise Thee because she is not in her right mind, but quite beside herself for Thy sake. Why then dost Thou say, 'Why weepest thou-whom seekest thou?'"

She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him. Because, as Theophylact and Euthymius say, "He was meanly dressed, and because He seemed from His dress to be at home there. She knew that Joseph of Arimathæa did not live there, and supposed that He was the person left in charge of the garden. So F. Lucas. [Pseudo]-Origen proceeds, "O Mary, if thou art seeking for Jesus, why dost thou not recognise Him? And if thou dost recognise Him, why art thou seeking for Him? Behold Jesus cometh to thee, and He whom thou seekest asketh of thee, 'Woman, why weepest thou?' And thou supposest Him to be the gardener, as not knowing Him. For indeed Jesus is also the Gardener, as sowing the good seed in the garden of thy heart, and in the hearts of His faithful servants." Whence S. Gregory (*in loc.*), "Is He not the Gardener who planted in her breast, through His love, the flourishing seeds of virtues?"

Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. She does not say "Whom," but means Jesus, of Whom her heart was full. S. Thomas and others say, that this is the feeling of those who are deeply in love. They suppose that others are thinking about the same person as themselves. Although she might have thought that He knew the answer she had already given to the angels, *They have taken away my Lord, &c.*, as S. Chrysostom seems to indicate. [Pseudo]-Origen remarks, "Such great grief for Thy death had overwhelmed her, that she could not think of Thy resurrection. Joseph placed Thy body in the tomb, and Mary also buried her spirit there, and so indissolubly united it as it were to Thy body, that she could more easily separate her soul from the body which it animated, than she could separate her soul from Thy dead body, for which she was seeking. For the spirit of Mary was more in Thy body than in her own; and in seeking for Thy body she was at the same time seeking for her own spirit, and where she lost Thy body she lost also her own spirit. What wonder then she had no sense, since she had lost her spirit? What wonder if she knew Thee not, as not having the spirit wherewith to know Thee? Give her back then her spirit, I mean Thy body, and she will then regain her senses and abandon her error."

And I will take Him away—"What if He is in the High Priest's palace? What if He is in Pilate's house? Yes, I will take Him away. Love conquers everything. It counts impossibilities as possible, nay, as easy." So [Pseudo]-Origen and S. Chrysostom. Though S. Jerome (*Quæst. v. ad Hedib.*) regards them as the words of ignorance and want of consideration.

Ver. 16.—*Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master.* He called her not merely by her own name, but with that tone of voice, that sweetness, grace, and efficacy, with which He used to speak to her; and she at once recognised Him. Whence [Pseudo]-Origen, wondering at the condescension of Christ, exclaims, "O the change of this right hand of the most High (Ps. lxxvii. 10). My great grief is turned into great joy; the tears of sorrow are changed into the tears of love. When she heard the word 'Mary' (for thus He used to address her), she perceived a wondrous sweetness in the name, and knew that He who called her was her Master. Her spirit then revived and her senses returned, and when He wished to add something more, she could not wait, but from excess of joy she interrupted Him, saying, Rabboni. For she thought that having found the 'Word' she did not require a single *word* more, and she deemed it more profitable to touch the 'Word' than to hear any words whatever. O vehement and impatient love! It was not enough for her to see Jesus and to talk with Him; unless she also touched Him, for she knew that virtue went out from Him, and healed all."

She turned herself. For when He was slow in answering, she had looked away from Him towards the angels, as if to ask them who was this gardener who was talking with her, and why they stood up and greeted Him with