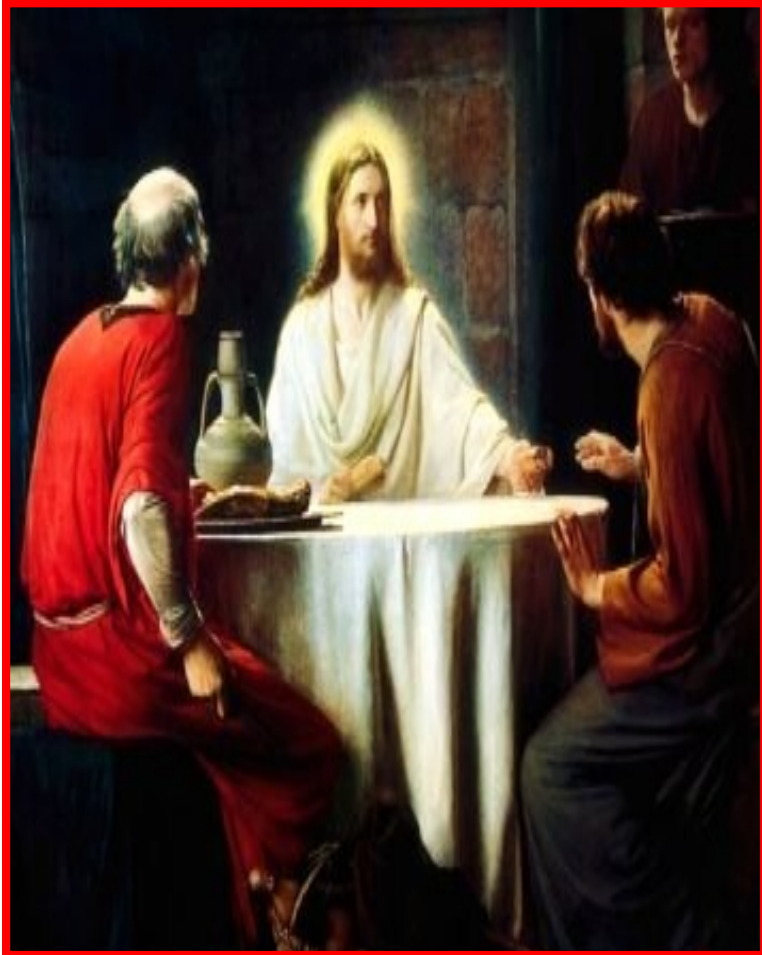
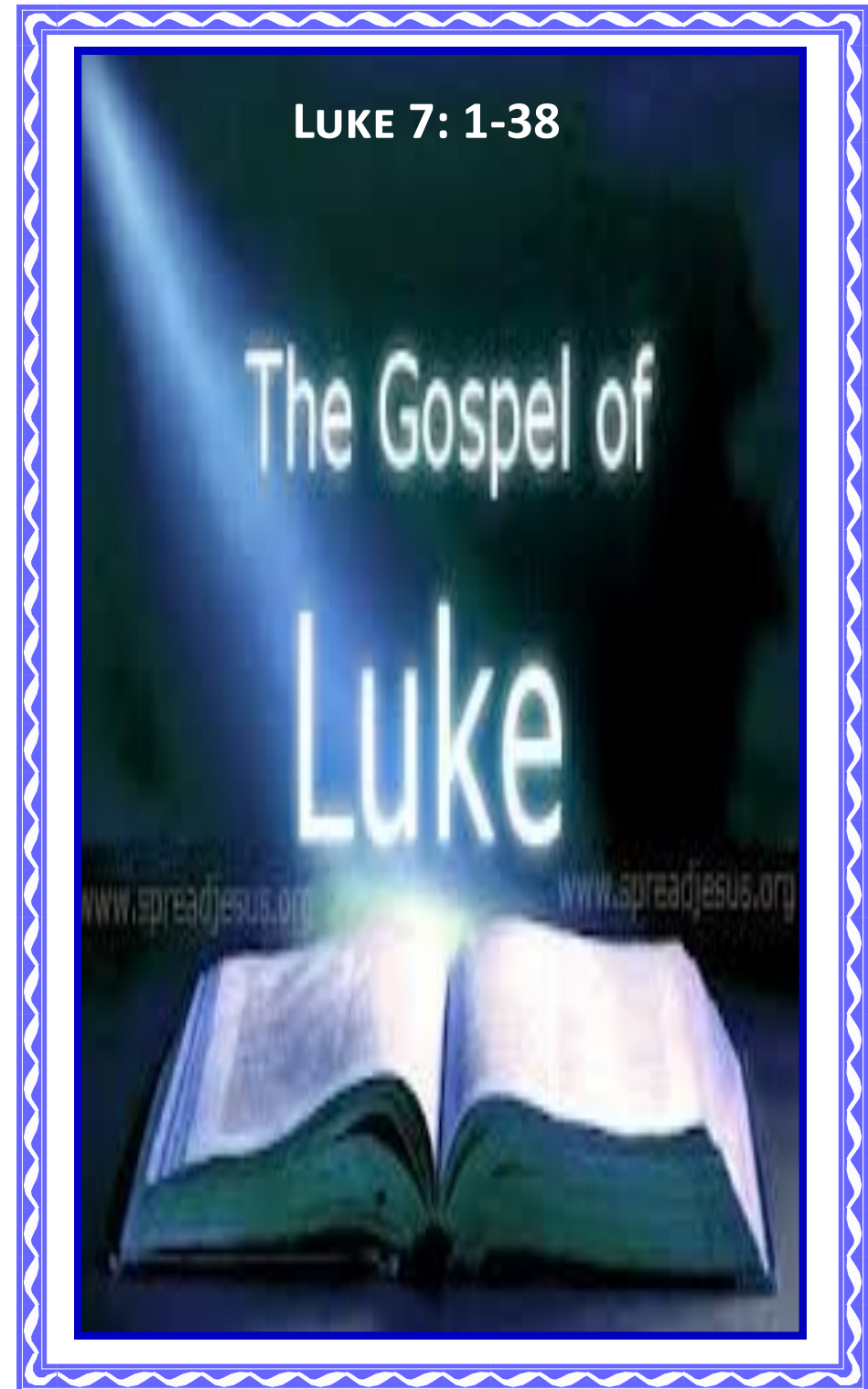


angelic choirs.” And so Christ revealed to S. Bridget that there were three saints specially pleasing to Him: the Blessed Virgin, John the Baptist, and Mary Magdalene, of whom He spake thus:—When Mary Magdalene was converted, the devils said, ‘How shall we gain power over her again, for we have lost a goodly prey? We cannot look at her because of her tears; so covered and protected is she by good works, that no spot or soil of sin can stain her soul; so holy is her life, so fervent her love for God, that we dare not draw nigh her.’”

Figuratively, S. Ambrose (lib. de Tobia, cap. xii.), says, “Whoso hath pity on the poor anoints the feet of Christ. For the poor are His feet, and on them He harmlessly walks.”



PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.pamphletstoinspire.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.*

Luke's gospel is a compilation of various interviews with eye-witnesses and close followers of Jesus (Luke 1:1-4). The author, Luke, probably did not become a Christian until several years after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He is first mentioned (implicitly) in Acts 16:10 (Acts is another book of the New Testament which Luke wrote). He did not, therefore, meet Jesus in the flesh and he himself was not an eye-witness.

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.

Luke 7: 1-38

Douay Rheims Version

Christ heals the centurion's servant. He raises the widow's son to life, answers the messengers sent by John and absolves the penitent sinner.

1. And when he had finished all his words in the hearing of the people, he entered into Capharnaum.
2. And the servant of a certain centurion who was dear to him, being sick, was ready to die.
3. And when he had heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the ancients of the Jews, desiring him to come and heal his servant.
4. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him earnestly, saying to him: He is worthy that thou shouldst do this for him.

The Magdalene boldly entered the house of Simon her friend at the time of the feast, that thus she might show the warmth of her love for Christ. Titus. For, as S. Paulinus says (*Epist. 4, ad Severum*), The Lord regarded not the ointment, but the love which impelled her, fearless of reproach or rejection, to enter uninvited the house of the Pharisee, and with that violence by which the kingdom of heaven is taken by force, she ran to the feet of Christ, and made them to be, if I may so express myself, her sanctuary and her altar. There she consecrated her tears—made offering of a sweet-smelling savour, and made sacrifice of her affections and passions; a broken and contrite heart, a sacrifice with which God is well-pleased. Therefore she not only obtained the forgiveness, of her sins, but where so ever the Gospel is preached, there what she hath done shall be told for a memorial of her.

Mystically. S. Peter Damian explains, that this ointment was made out of our sins; for she, mixed and macerated in the mortar of repentance, sprinkled with the oil of discernment, and softened in the caldron of discipline by the fires of remorse, is applied a precious and acceptable ointment to the Saviour's feet. He adds also that this ointment was fourfold, inasmuch as it was composed 1. of devotion; 2. many virtues; 3. piety; and 4. Pity.

Note what a noble example of penitence and of virtue the Magdalene presents.

1. Her remarkable faith in believing that Christ was able to forgive sins, a power which the Scribes and Pharisees denied Him, and which no other prophet possessed. Hence if we may credit S. Augustine (*Hom. 33*), she believed that He who had power to forgive sins, was more than man, and was led by divine illumination to acknowledge Christ to be God; for, as S. Augustine goes on to say, to believe that Christ can forgive sins, is to believe that He is God; and he adds, "She drew nigh unto the Lord impure, to return pure; sick, to return sound; a confessor of sin, to return a disciple of Christ."
2. Her wonderful devotion in continuing to kiss the feet of Jesus, and wash them with her tears until she heard Him say, "Thy sins are forgiven: go in peace."
3. Her great wisdom in not seeking pardon by the words of her mouth, but rather by the deep yearnings of her heart.
4. The depth of her penitence, in that for thirty years, after thus publicly showing her contrition, she lived in the desert a life given up to austerities and the practice of good works. Hence Petrarch writes:—

"Love and hope deep seated in the heart made cold and hunger sweet, and turned the hard rock into a pleasant couch," and adds, "Here, unseen by men, but surrounded by bands of angels, and supported by the daily Offices, thou wast permitted to hear the responsive chantings of the

meat day and night," Ps. xlii. 3. And S. Gregory (*Hom. 33*): "As I ponder over the penitence of the Magdalene, I long to keep silent and weep. For what heart so hard, as not to be softened by the tears of this penitent sinner, who considered what she had done, and was careless of what she would do—who entered unbidden to the feast, and wept amongst those who were feasting. Learn then how great must have been the compunction and sorrow which impelled her on such an occasion to weep."

And did wipe them with the hairs of her head. Other means were at hand, but in her deep penitence, the Magdalen would dedicate to the service of Christ the very hair which once she took such pride in adorning. Hence S. Cyprian (*De Ablutione*), She used her hair for a napkin, her eyes for a pitcher, and her tears for water. Her contrition showed itself by her tears; her faith washed the feet of the Lord, her love anointed them. She made her head to be a foot-stool, and wiped the sacred feet with her unloosened hair. Without reserve, she gave herself to Christ, and He, regarding the intention rather than the act, anointed the anointer, cleansed her who was cleansing, and wiped away her sins.

S. Euthymius assigns the cause, "He makes instruments of sin, instruments of righteousness." And more particularly S. Gregory (*Hom. 33*), "That which she had given up to the service of sin, now she offers for the glory of God. Her eyes, which had lusted after earthly things, she wears away with the tears of repentance. Her hair, which once added to the comeliness of her face, she now used to dry up her tears. With her mouth, which was wont to speak proudly, she now kisses the ground on which the feet of the Lord trod. All her sinful indulgences she sacrifices for the love of Christ, and making her former vices give place to virtues, wherewith she offended therewith she now serves God."

Hear also S. Chrysostom (*Hom. 6, on S. Matt.*): "So the woman which was a sinner, inflamed with the fires of love, and purged by her flood of tears from the stains and defilement of sin, exceeded even the virtue of virgins. For in the warmth of her penitence she exulted in her longings for Christ; washing His feet with her tears, wiping them with the hairs of her head, and anointing them with ointment of price. Thus she acted outwardly, but how much more fervent were the thoughts of her heart, which were known only to God."

And kissed his feet. She who once delighted in the kisses of unchaste desire, now chaste kisses the feet of Christ, and seeks thereby the pardon and forgiveness of her sins. For a kiss is a sign of forgiveness, as well as of kindness and of love. S. Ambrose. *Mystically.* The two feet of Christ, says S. Peter Damian, are mercy and judgment. To kiss one without the other is productive of rash security, or of an evil despair.

Publicly, at a public feast, in presence of all the guests, the Magdalene performed her act of penitence, that her openly avowed repentance might atone for the public scandal of her former life.

And anointed them with the ointment. The ancients made frequent use of ointments or perfumes. See Eccles. ix. 8. And these were generally prepared by women. 1 Sam. viii. 13.

5. For he loveth our nation: and he hath built us a synagogue.
6. And Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent his friends to him, saying: Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof.
7. For which cause neither did I think myself worthy to come to thee: but say the word, and my servant shall be healed.
8. For I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers: and I say to one, Go, and he goeth: and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doth it.
9. Which Jesus hearing, marvelled: and turning about to the multitude that followed him, he said: Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith, not even in Israel.
10. And they who were sent, being returned to the house, found the servant whole who had been sick.
11. And it came to pass afterwards that he went into a city that is called Naim: and there went with him his disciples and a great multitude.
12. And when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother: and she was a widow. And a great multitude of the city was with her.
13. Whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with mercy towards her, he said to her: Weep not.
14. And he came near and touched the bier. And they that carried it stood still. And he said: Young man, I say to thee, arise.
15. And he that was dead sat up and begun to speak. And he gave him to his mother.
16. And there came a fear upon them all: and they glorified God saying: A great prophet is risen up among us: and, God hath visited his people.
17. And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea and throughout all the country round about.
18. And John's disciples told him of all these things.
19. And John called to him two of his disciples and sent them to Jesus, saying: Art thou he that art to come? Or look we for another?
20. And when the men were come unto him, they said: John the Baptist hath sent us to thee, saying: Art thou he that art to come? Or look we for another?
21. (And in that same hour, he cured many of their diseases and hurts and evil spirits: and to many that were blind he gave sight.)
22. And answering, he said to them: Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen: the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, to the poor the gospel is preached.
23. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be scandalized in me.
24. And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak to the multitudes concerning John. What went ye out into the desert to see? A reed shaken with the wind?
25. But what went you out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold they that are in costly apparel and live delicately are in the houses of kings.

26. But what went you out to see? A prophet? Yea, I say to you, and more than a prophet.

27. This is he of whom it is written: Behold I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.

28. For I say to you: Amongst those that are born of men, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist. But he that is the lesser in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

29. And all the people hearing, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with John's baptism.

30. But the Pharisees and the lawyers despised the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized by him.

31. And the Lord said: Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? And to what are they like?

32. They are like to children sitting in the marketplace and speaking one to another and saying: We have piped to you, and you have not danced: we have mourned, and you have not wept.

33. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine. And you say: He hath a devil.

34. The Son of man is come eating and drinking. And you say: Behold a man that is a glutton and a drinker of wine, a friend of publicans and sinners.

35. And wisdom is justified by all her children.

36. And one of the Pharisees desired him to eat with him. And he went into the house of the Pharisee and sat down to meat.

37. And behold a woman that was in the city, a sinner, when she knew that he sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment.

38. And standing behind at his feet. she began to wash his feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment.

39. And the Pharisee, who had invited him, seeing it, spoke within himself, saying: This man, if he were if a prophet, would know surely who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner.

40. And Jesus answering, said to him: Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee. But he said: Master, say it.

41. A certain creditor had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence and the other fifty.

42. And whereas they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which therefore of the two loveth him most?

43. Simon answering, said: I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said to him: Thou hast judged rightly.

44. And turning to the woman, he said unto Simon: Dost thou see this woman? I entered into thy house: thou gavest me no water for my feet. But she with tears hath washed my feet; and with her hairs hath wiped them.

45. Thou gavest me no kiss. But she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46. My head with oil thou didst not anoint. But she with ointment hath anointed my feet.

thereof," (Cant. i. 7-12); and further, "I will rise now and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth" (Cant. iii. 2), which see.

Note here:—1. The reverence and modesty of the Magdalene, which is the grace of youth and of penitence. She drew nigh to Christ, not in front of Him, for she considered that she was, on account of her past misdeeds, unworthy of His holy presence, but at His feet. Therefore, S. Bernard accounts reverence or modesty (*Serm. 86, in Cant.*) to be the foundation of all virtues. "How great," he says, "is the grace and the beauty which a modest blush lends to the cheek!"

2. S. Mary Magdalene, as S. Chrysostom (*Hom. 11, on S. Matt.*) observes, was the first who came to Jesus for pardon and forgiveness. Those before her had sought restoration to bodily health alone. Therefore, wounded like a deer, she, wounded by the dart of Christ's love, runs to Him for succour. Christ had showed her her wretchedness; hence, overcome with sorrow and remorse, she could not bear for one moment longer the burden of her sins, but at once sought of Him pardon and release. Therefore, without waiting until Christ had left the Pharisee's house, she burst in uninvited to the feast. So foul and loathsome is even one mortal sin alone. As S. Anselm asserts (*De Similit. cap. cxc.*), "If of necessity I had to choose between sin and the torments of hell, I had rather plunge headlong into hell, than give sin the mastery over me;" and he adds, "I had rather enter hell pure from the stain of sin, than reign in heaven a prey to its pollutions."

3. The act of S. Mary Magdalene seems as if prompted by the words of the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," S. John i. 29; or by the invitation of Christ, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," S. Matt. xi. 28. Moreover, she was persuaded that He, who had delivered her from the possession of the seven devils (S. Luke viii. 2), would deliver her also from the bondage of sin. Therefore, in deepest contrition she draws nigh to Christ, acknowledging Him to be a prophet sent from God with power to forgive sins, and in full hope that He would pardon the guilt which she had contracted; for, S. Gregory says, Christ drew her to Himself by inward grace, and received her outwardly with pity and compassion.

And began to wash His feet with her tears. Observe how abundant were the tears of the penitent, inasmuch as they were able to wash and cleanse the dust-stained feet of the Lord. See S. Matt. x. 10. On their power and efficacy, S. Chrysostom has written (*Serm. de Pœnitentia*), and S. Ambrose, "Christ washed not His own feet, in order that we might wash them with our tears. Blessed tears, not only because they are able to wash away our guilt, but because they besprinkle the firstfruits of the heavenly Word, and incline His steps towards us."

Blessed tears, for they not only obtain pardon for the sinner, but strength and refreshment for the just. For truly is it written "My tears have been my

When she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house. It was not fitting that the Magdalene, whose sinful life was known to all, should anoint Christ in her own house, but rather in the house of another, so that there might be no suspicion of evil. Hence she was not ashamed to act as she did in the house of the Pharisee; for, as S. Gregory says (*Hom. 33*), Being filled with shame within, she did not think there was any cause for the show of shame without. And S. Augustine (*Hom. 58 de Temp.*) writes, The sinner who washed the feet of the Lord with her tears, and dried them with the hairs of her head, when she knew that the heavenly physician had come, entered the house an uninvited guest; and thus she, who had been shameless in sin, became yet more bold in seeking salvation, and so deserved to hear that her sins were forgiven. And again (*Hom. 23*), Thou hast seen how a woman of notoriously evil repute entered, uninvited, the house where her Physician sat at meat, and although little fitted for a feast, was fitted for the blessing which she thus boldly (*piâ impudentiâ*) sought to obtain. For she knew how great was her need, and that He to whom she had come, could grant her relief. For Christ accepted the invitation of the Pharisee, in order to provide those who sat at meat with the spiritual feast of the repentant Magdalene. Hence S. Chrysostom (*Serm. 93*): Christ sat at the feast, not to drink cups of wine flavoured with honey and perfumed with flowers, but the bitter tears of repentance; because God longs for the tears of the sinner. For, as S. Bernard says, the tears of penitence are the wine of angels, and yield them unbounded delight. And again (*Serm. 30 in Cant.*), Tears are an earnest of repentance, and a return to the blessing and favour of God, and therefore of sweet savour to His angels.

An alabaster box of ointment. See S. Matt. xxvi. 6.

Ver. 38.—And stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

At His feet. The ancients at their feasts reclined on couches, their heads resting on their hands, their feet turned away from the table, so that there might be room for others on the same couch. Hence it was easy for the Magdalene to fulfil her pious purpose, for tradition represents her as a woman of lofty stature.

She stood. Standing indicates not the posture, but the presence of any one.

She stood, i.e. she came, and fell on her knees, at the feet of Christ. For kneeling is the posture of penitence.

She drew nigh, says S. Augustine (*Hom. 23*), to the feet of the Lord, and she who for long had taken to evil ways, now seeks to direct her steps aright. For humble contrition she weeps, and washes the feet of Christ, and in the devotion with which she wiped and anointed them, although silent, she speaks.

In the Magdalene therefore was fulfilled that which is written: "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon;" also, "While the King sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell

47. Wherefore, I say to thee: Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much. But to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less.

48. And he said to her: Thy sins are forgiven thee.

49. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves: Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

50. And he said to the woman: Thy faith hath made thee safe. Go in peace.

Ver. 1.—Now when he had ended (or fulfilled) all his sayings.

Ver. 2.—Ready to die, nigh unto death. Syriac.

Ver. 3.—He sent to him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. S. Luke ascribes the request of the Jews to the Centurion himself, because they asked in his name; but the Centurion sought not that Christ should come unto him, but only that the Lord should be told, "My servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented." S. Matt. viii. The Jews asked therefore that which they knew the Centurion desired, although he was too humble-minded to seek it.

"That he would come," *i.e.*, would give up everything else, and apply himself to the healing of the servant. An expression equivalent to the Hebrew word *,אָבָא*, come.

Thus God came to Abimelech, Gen. xx; to Balaam, Num. xxii.; and to the Hebrews, Deut. xxxiii., when He appeared to them and gave them the Law. So it is said of the Baptist. John came, shewed himself, neither eating nor drinking. The force of the passage lies therefore in the word "heal," that he would heal his servant, whether he came—went down—to his house or not.

Ver. 6.—Lord, trouble not thyself, do not incur the fatigue (Syriac) of such a journey, but speak the word only, and heal my servant.

Ver. 11.—And it came to pass the day after that He went into a city called Nain. A city of Galilee two miles distant from Mount Tabor, situated on the river Kison, and called Nain, from the Hebrew word which denotes beauty. Thus Naomi says, "Call me not Naomi," *i.e.* fair or beautiful, "call me Mara; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me" (Ruth i 20)—words which the widow of Nain, mourning the loss of her only son, might well make her own. So also Ps. cxxxiii., "Behold how good and how pleasant (Nain) it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," and therefore how sad and sorrowful for brother to be separated from brother, mother from son, by the hand of death.

The place is specially mentioned for the confirmation of the miracle, and also because "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, preaching the

gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people" (S. Matt. ix. 35); and to show the bitterness of the mother's grief, for the death of her son at Nain was a greater trial to the mother than if they had been living in some country place. Just as it seems more hard for a man to be cut off in youth than in age, in health than in sickness, in prosperity than in adversity, in the spring tide rather than in the winter of life, as it is written (Ecclus. xli. i), "O Death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions, unto the man that bath nothing to vex him, and that hath prosperity in all things. O Death, acceptable is thy sentence unto the needy and unto him whose strength faileth, to whom everything is a care."

Ver. 12.—*Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, &c.* "Behold," *i.e.* by accident, humanly speaking, Christ met the bier; but the meeting was foreseen and fore-ordained of Christ, that He might raise the dead to life. He willed, however, that it should seem accidental and not designed, in order that it might be the more esteemed; for as the proverb runs, "that is of little value which is voluntarily offered for sale."

"*There was a dead man carried*" without the city. Because, for sanitary and other reasons, the Jews had their burial places without the walls.

So the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathæa, in which the body of Christ lay, was without Jerusalem. So also the valley of Jehoshaphat, the scene of the judgment to come and the general resurrection, is the common burial-place of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with the exception of the kings, for whom David had provided a sepulchre in Zion. 1 Kings ii. 10. For similar reasons the Romans, who were forbidden by the twelve tables to bury their dead within the city, used the Campus Martius as a place of sepulture, until Theodoric revoked the law; and there is abundant evidence to show that the Christians also, in the time of the persecution, used the crypts which they had excavated without the city for purposes of interment, but afterward, when peace was given to the Christians, they consecrated burial places within the walls near the temples in which they were wont to worship:

1. That the remembrance of death might be continually presented to the faithful as an incentive to a holy life. Like as the Spartans were commanded by Lycurgus to bury their dead within the city, in order to teach their young men that death was to be honoured and, not to be feared.
2. That by their consecration they might be secure against the wiles of the devils, who are wont to dwell in the tombs and possess the bodies of those departed. S. Luke viii. 27.
3. And also that the faithful when on their way to worship might be led to pray that those who lay buried around might be released from purgatory, and counted worthy of a glorious resurrection at the last day, and also that they might be partakers in the holy sacrifices offered in the temples and might benefit by the merits and by the prayers of those Saints who either lie buried, or are in some way especially

"So she, who hath so many sins committed,
Now from the very jaws of hell returns;
E'en to the threshold of a Life eternal,
After her fitful life of guilt and shame.

She, from a seething caldron of offences,
A fair and perfumed vase is now become;
From an uncomely vessel of dishonour
Translated to a vessel full of grace."

Doubtlessly Christ permitted her to be entangled in all the filth of a wanton life, that He might show the power of His grace in winning her back to purity again, for the worse the disease the greater the skill of the physician in curing it. Nor does this detract from the honour due to the Magdalene, for the greater her sins, the more admirable her penitence, and the stronger her resolution to forsake them.

God willed that she should be an example of penitence, that none should despair of pardon because of the heinousness of their offences, but trust to the infinite compassion of God, mindful of the saying of S. Paul, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.

"Truly," says S. Gregory, "a life anxious to atone for faults committed is oftentimes more pleasing to God than that innocence which rests in a torpid security."

Great, indeed, is the gift of innocence by which we are preserved from sin, but greater is the grace of penitence and remission of sin, and this grace is the greater in proportion to the greatness of the sin, for thus forgiveness is granted to the more unworthy, and so the grade becomes to him the greater, as S. Thomas teaches. Hence sinners who truly repent excel their brethren in humility, and in austerity and holiness of life, and often perform acts of heroism which those who have sinned less deeply are unable to do. As may be seen in the case of many saints, and especially in that of one who from a robber became the very mirror of monks. For the baseness of his former life, the baseness of his sin, the punishment due to his offences, and the pardoning love of God, are to the penitent so many incentives to a better and a holier life.

So the pearl is the emblem of penitence. For as the sun by its rays was said to convert the substance of the oyster into a precious jewel, so Christ by his transforming grace changed the woman that was a sinner into a pearl—a penitent saint.

1. Because this is the general interpretation of the Church, who in her Offices accepts what is here written by S. Luke as referring to the Magdalene alone.
2. Because S. John (xi. 2) writes, "It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick," thus plainly alluding to this passage of S. Luke, and signifying that only one woman anointed the Lord. For if there had been more than one, the words just quoted would have insufficiently described her. But the meaning is, "when I say Mary, I mean the penitent who anointed the feet of the Lord, as recounted by S. Luke, whom all know to be Mary Magdalene."
3. Because the Mary mentioned by S. John (xii. 2, 3) is clearly the same Mary Magdalene, the sister of Martha and of Lazarus, who anointed Christ here, as described by S. Luke, and again at Bethany, six days before the passover. For S. Matthew (xxvi. 6) and S. John (xii. i) both refer to the same event, as is evident if the two accounts are compared together. Therefore it was Mary Magdalene who anointed Christ, not three times, as Origen would have us believe, but twice only, once as is recorded by S. Luke, and again six days before His death.
4. The same thing is testified to by Church history and tradition, and also by the inscription on the tomb of the Magdalene, which Maximus, one of the seventy disciples, is said to have built.
5. And this is also the opinion of S. Augustine, S. Cyprian, and many other interpreters of scripture.

But it may be objected that this Magdalene followed Jesus from Galilee (S. Matt. xxvii. 55), and was a Galilean, and cannot have been the same as Mary the sister of Martha, who lived at Bethany, and was therefore of Judæa. I answer that she was of Judæa by descent, but seems to have lived in Galilee, it may be in the castle called Magdala, either because she had married the lord of that place, or because it had been allotted her as her share of the family property. Hence she was called Magdalene from the name of the place, Magdala. So Jansenius and others.

In the city. Some think in Jerusalem. But Jerusalem was in Judæa, and these things seem to have been done in Galilee where Christ was preaching. Hence it is very probable that the city was Nain, the scene of Christ's miracle, as Toletus and others conjecture; but some think that it was the town of Magdala in which she lived, an idea which Adricomius on the word Magdalum supports.

A sinner. Some recent writers, to honour the Magdalene, think that she was not unchaste, but only conceited and vain, and for this reason called a sinner. But in proportion as they thus honour the Magdalene, they detract from the grace of God and that penitence which enabled her to live a holy life. For by the word sinner we generally understand one who not only sins, but leads others also to sin. The word sinner therefore here signifies a harlot, *i.e.* one who has many lovers although she may not make a public market of her charms, and this interpretation is accepted by S. Augustine, S. Jerome, Isidore of Pelusium, S. Ambrose, Gregory, Bede, and S. Chrysostom, who holds (*Hom. 62 ad Pop.*) that to her refer the words of our Lord, "Verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." S. Matt. xxii. 31. Hence the Church hymn:—

commemorated therein. Thus Constantine the Great wished to be buried in the porch of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople, and Theodosius in the Church of S. Peter at Rome. And so, as most of the churches at Rome show the Christians built altars over the tombs of the martyrs, for reasons which I have given in my comments on the text, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain." Rev. vi. 9.

The only son, μονογενής, i.e. the only child of his mother, and therefore the sole object of her love. For he was to her hope and her future, the support of her declining years, and the light of her eyes. Hence the mother's grief was of the bitterest kind, like to that which the prophets tell of: "They shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son," Zech. xii. 10. And again, "O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning as for an only son, most bitter lamentation." Jer. vi. 26.

And much people of the city was with her. This widow seems to have been a woman highly esteemed by her fellow-citizens, "out of respect for whom they joined in the funeral procession." S. Ambrose. Furthermore, there is generally at the gate of a city a great crowd of people going in and coming out, particularly as formerly the gate was not only the market-place, but also the seat of judgment.

Hence God willed that the miracle should be thus publicly wrought, that many being witnesses of it, many might be led to give praise to Him. Bede.

Ver. 13.—*And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said into her, Weep not.* Nay, rather begin to rejoice, for I will restore your son to life again, mourn not as dead one whom thou shalt soon see brought back again to life. Bede. He forbids her to weep for him, who was, about to rise from the dead, S. Ambrose.

Ver. 14.—*And He came and touched the bier: and He said Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. The bier,* an open bier surely, as is common amongst the Jews.

Arise. Elijah, Elisha, and others restored the dead to life by means of prayer to God, but Christ at a word, as Lord of life and death, and therefore very God. He touched the bier, says Cyril, to show that his body was effectual for the salvation of men, for as iron heated in the fire does the work of fire, and kindles the chaff, so the flesh united to the Word gives life to mankind.

Ver. 15.—*And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. Sat up,* raised himself up into a sitting posture, and so returned to life; for to sit up and to begin to speak are sure signs of returning animation.

And He delivered him to his mother, i.e. He took him by the hand and placed him on his feet, then led him to his mother. Behold thy son! Take him home with thee, that thou mayest rejoice over him, and that he may render thee true filial obedience.

Ver. 16.—*And there came a fear on all.*

Ver. 17.—*And this rumour of Him went forth throughout all Judæa, and throughout all the region round about.* Fear, i.e. reverence, and a sacred awe, mixed with admiration and joy.

A great prophet. The Messiah, of whose coming all were in anxious expectation.

Allegorically. The widow is the Church who mourns her sons—those who have fallen into mortal sin and forfeited the grace of God—as dead, and seeks by her tears for their restoration; and in answer to her prayers, Christ—1. Causes the bearers to stand still, checks those evil passions which gain the mastery over the young, and breaks their power. 2. Touches the bier, i.e. the wood of the Cross, and by it raises the dead to life. For by virtue of Christ sinners are moved to repentance, and restored to favour with God. Hence, 3. The dead man sits up and begins to speak, begins to lead a new life and give praise unto God, so that those who are witnesses of this marvellous change are filled with admiration and are led to give glory unto God. So S. Ambrose and others.

Of this we have a living example in S. Monica, for she mourned unceasingly for her son, who was dead in trespasses and sins, but recalled by her prayers to such holiness of life that he afterwards became a chief doctor of the Church. S. Augustine, *Confessions*.

Again, more particularly, the widow is the Church, the son the people of the Gentiles enclosed in the bier of concupiscence, and borne along to hell as to a sepulchre. By touch of the bier, i.e. by the wood of the Cross, Christ gave life to the world.

Figuratively. By the example of the widow we see how a priest or director should act when any of his spiritual children have fallen into mortal sin and are being borne to the grave of everlasting misery. He should follow the bier with weeping and much lamentation, for thus he will receive comfort from the Lord who—(1.) Touching the bier will cause the bearers to stand still, i.e. cause evil lusts and passions to cease; (2.) will recall the dead to life; and (3.) will raise him up to the performance of good works, so as to confess his sins and tell of the loving kindness of God.

Thus at last he is restored to the Church, his mother, whose past sorrow will be eclipsed by her present joy, and thus also many will be led to extol the goodness of God.

Again, the widow represents the soul, her son the understanding, inactive and dead. When such a soul laments her spiritual death, especially if others also join in her mourning, Christ will grant an awakening. The bier is a conscience in a state of false

security. The bearers, the evil enticements and flatteries of companions which stand still, i.e. are restrained at the touch of Christ. Bede. Or, as Theophylact interprets it, the widow is the soul which has lost its husband, i.e. the word of life; the son is the understanding; the body, the coffin or bier.

To sum up. We read that Christ on three occasions recalled the dead to life.

1. The daughter of the ruler of the synagogue in the house, i.e. one who sins in thought and intention.
2. The son of the widow at the gate, i.e. one who sins openly, and imparts his guilt to others.
3. Lazarus in the tomb, the habitual sinner who lies as it were buried in sin without hope of recovery or release.

The first, Christ raised to life by secret prayer apart from others; the second by a word; the third by crying with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. Hence different degrees of sin have different remedies, but to rescue the habitual sinner from the death of sin there needs no less than the voice of Christ speaking loudly to the sinner's heart.

Ver. 29.—*And the publicans justified God.* Confessed the goodness of God in sending the Baptist, and in offering them salvation through his baptism and preaching. See verse 35; 1 Tim. iii. 16; and S. Matt. xi. 19. There is a question whether this verse and the one following, give the words of the Evangelist or of our Lord Himself. But as the opening words of the 31st verse, "and the Lord said," are absent from the best MSS., we may conclude, with Maldonatus, that these two verses are a part of the continuous discourse of Christ.

Ver. 30.—*But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves*, either within themselves, i.e. in their hearts, because they did not dare openly contravene His words, or as against themselves, i.e. for their own condemnation. Bede.

Ver. 36.—*And one of the Pharisees desired that he would eat with him, and He went into the Pharisee's house and sat down to meat.*

Ver. 37.—*And behold a woman in the city.* Behold, a wonderful thing, and a wonderful example of penitence. A woman called Mary Magdalene. S. Luke viii. 2. It is questioned whether this is the same woman who is mentioned by the two other Evangelists. S. Chrysostom thinks there were two; Origen, Theophylact, and Euthymius, three who thus anointed our Lord, and that each Evangelist wrote of a different person. S. Matt. xxvi. 7; S. John xii. 3. But I hold that it was one and the same woman—Mary Magdalene, the sister of Martha and of Lazarus, who anointed our Lord, as we read in the Gospels, on two but not three occasions; and this is clear,—