NICETA AND AMBROSIASTER. II.

AMBROSIASTER is not a discovery of the present generation of patristic scholars in quite the same sense as Niceta. Three hundred years ago the Louvain edition of St Augustine had already posed the question, whether the author of the Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles, which Augustine attributed to St Hilary but Cassiodorus and later tradition generally to St Ambrose, was to be identified with the author of the Questions on the Old and New Testaments, which the MSS unanimously ascribe to St Augustine—and had answered it in the affirmative. But beyond this general conclusion little progress was made until our own time. Who the Ambrosiaster was, where and when he lived, were questions that were hardly asked, much less answered. The Benedictines of St Maur, when publishing the *Quaestiones* in the appendix to the third volume of their edition of St Augustine, contented themselves with proving that it was certainly not a genuine work of that father: and they defended their retention of the separate and admittedly erroneous title for the last twenty-nine Questions—'Quaestiones ex utroque [Testamento] mixtim'—on the ground of the inconvenience of changing a customary arrangement in the case of a book of so little importance, *in opere praesertim non magni momenti.* In effect, the Maurists and their contemporaries set themselves as their principal task (and it was no light one) to distinguish the genuine and the spurious in their editions of the leading authors of Christian antiquity: and perhaps we are in some danger now of inverting the proportions of things, and of allotting less than their real pre-eminence to the writings of the great fathers whose influence dominated not only their own but subsequent generations. Anyhow the old presumption that, when once a treatise was relegated to the appendix, its claim on intelligent study ceased and any sort of editing was good enough for it, has vanished for ever. The Vienna series of Latin Fathers is to include a re-edition of both the *Commentaries*

and the *Questions*, which will be published for the first time with something like an exhaustive examination of the MSS: the former book is entrusted to Father Brewer, a Jesuit of Feldkirch, the latter is in the charge of a scholar well known to the readers of this JOURNAL, Mr A. Souter of Caius College, Cambridge, for several years assistant lecturer to Prof. W. M. Ramsay at Aberdeen, and now Yates Professor at Mansfield College. Meanwhile, pending the appearance of his edition, Mr Souter has published by way of *prolegomena* a disquisition on the manuscripts of the *Quaestiones* and a more general 'Study of Ambrosiaster'[1]: and it is of these that we have now to speak.

Mr Souter begins at the beginning, and devotes the greater part of his 'Study' to a re-examination of the problem of the common authorship of the *Commentaries* and the *Questions*, and to a fresh defence of the identity. The outline of the argument was familiar ground enough. The *Commentaries* were written after, but not long after, the abortive persecution of Julian ('novissime', 2 Thess. ii 7), under the pontificate of Damasus ('ecclesia . . cuius hodie rector est Damasus', 1 Tim. iii 15); while the *Questions* were written when 'about 300 years' had been 'superadded' to the fulfilment of Daniel's seventy weeks at the Fall of Jerusalem (*Quaest.* 44 'adversus Iudaeos', *ad fin.*), and 'in this city of Rome' (*Quaest.* 115 'de Fato', *ad init.*): and the presumption from identity of time and place to identity of authorship was an obvious one. We have seen that the Louvain editors of St Augustine drew this conclusion as far back as the sixteenth century. The Benedictine editors of the same father spoke of it as an opinion which approved itself to 'eruditis hodie quamplurimis'. In our own generation the discussion was reopened on the same side by Dr Joseph Langen, the Old Catholic professor at Bonn, in a University 'programm' *De commentariorum in epistulas Paulinas qui Ambrosii et Quaestionum biblicarum quae Augustini nomine feruntur scriptore dissertatio* (1880). If one German writer in 1883 ventured still to maintain the opposite view—what is there that one German writer could not

[1] *De codicibus manuscriptis Augustini quae feruntur quaestionum Veteris et Novi Testamenti* CXXVII (in the Transactions of the Vienna Imperial Academy of Sciences), 1904: *A Study of Ambrosiaster* (vol. vii no. 4 in the Cambridge 'Texts and Studies'), 1905

be found to maintain?—Harnack in his *History of Dogma*, Jülicher in the *Realencyclopädie* of Pauly-Wissowa, Morin in an article to be further noticed below, treated the identity as a point to be assumed rather than argued: 'un examen tant soit peu attentif des deux séries d'écrits ne saurait laisser de doute touchant l'identité d'auteur'.

Yet there is no reason to regret the time and space which Mr Souter has given to the renewed investigation, not merely because the question has now been settled by him once for all, but still more because of the valuable example of method set in the chapters headed 'Community of Illustrations and Allusions'; 'Comparison of Scripture quotations'; 'Comparison of (1) Style, and (2) Language'; 'Identity of Thought' as shewn by '(1) Favourite Texts of Scripture, (2) Interpretations of Scripture'. The method of proof from internal evidence is the natural substitute for external evidence, when this is lacking, as it so often is: and it is no inconsiderable advantage to have a sort of model or standard argument set up in a case where the method will be admitted on all hands to lead to conclusive results. Mr Souter shews how the author in both works has the same interest in Roman government and administration, in Roman law and the principles of law in general, in astrology, in pagan religion and ritual; the same special acquaintance with Egypt; the same minute knowledge of Jewish traditions and customs[1]. He shews how the same Scriptural citations tend to recur in both works, with the same interpretations and in the same form of text[2]. And he shews finally, with a fullness of detail which leaves nothing to be desired, that the characteristic phraseology of both works is one and the same. I do not indeed think that all the items of his long list are of equal weight. I suspect, from indications which reveal themselves here and there, that Mr Souter's vast knowledge of Latin is founded (and there can be no better foundation) on the classics, and that he has approached the study of Christian Latin through the two greatest

[1] The latter subject, I do not quite know why, is treated by Mr Souter, not in the chapter on 'Community of Illustrations and Allusions', but at a much later point (pp. 180–183). See more on this matter at the end of the present article.

[2] pp. 150–152 : 152–157 : 41–62. It is again a little difficult to understand why the various parts of this subject are separated by the intervention of the long chapter on 'Comparison of Style and Language'.

of Latin Christian writers, Augustine and Jerome. But the language of Jerome is much nearer the classical than the patristic standard: and even the language of Augustine is a good way removed above the average ecclesiastical style of his day. Those who have become more or less habituated to the style and language of the secondary Christian writers will hesitate to base any presumption of authorship on usages which have become to them as natural and familiar as 'necnon et', 'quanto magis', 'numquid', 'propter quod', or on words like 'adbreviare', 'adimplere', 'advertere', 'qua audacia', 'cessare', 'de cetero', 'compendio', 'competit', 'congruus', 'devicta morte', or the like. But after all deductions have been made, enough, and more than enough, remains to prove the thesis to demonstration: among instances of special importance one might select the following:— 'adubi autem', 'per id quod', 'cum quando', 'abdico', 'absolutum (in absoluto) est', 'adaeque', 'addisco', 'apophoretum', 'apparentia', 'brutus', 'certus quia', 'coimaginare', 'dignus' and 'condignus' with dative, 'conlocare meritum', 'consubstantivus'[1], 'corrigo' intransitive, 'coruscus' as noun, 'credens' and 'diffidens' for believers and unbelievers, 'crementum', 'dehabeo', 'de non esse', 'de non fieri', 'dignitosus', &c. Taken as a whole, these eighty pages form a quite invaluable introduction to Latin Christian lexicography. With the possible exception of Mr Watson—of whose remarkable essay on the 'Style and Language of St Cyprian' Mr Souter speaks with appropriate respect, not to say enthusiasm—Mr Souter has established himself as the leading authority in Great Britain upon this subject.

Of the two works which have now been proved to emanate from one and the same author, the fate has been singularly unequal. The Commentaries on St Paul have attracted more (if anything) than their due meed of attention, at least in the most ancient and the most modern times. Jülicher calls them 'the best commentary on St Paul's epistles previous to the sixteenth century', and Harnack has been no less lavish in his praise. At the other end of the centuries, Cassiodorus had heard of an exposition by St Ambrose of all the Pauline epistles, said to be 'suavissima expositione completum': and though this rather

[1] Among all the versions of the Nicene Creed, I know of only one which uses this rendering of ὁμοούσιος.

guarantees his contemporaries' opinion of the Ambrosiaster than his own, it is probable that another commentary which was in his hands, and which treated the thirteen epistles, as he tells us, 'non ignorabili adnotatione', was really nothing else than the same commentary of Ambrosiaster in its earlier and anonymous form. The evidence of the *scriptoria*, less direct but not less cogent, tells the same tale: Mr Souter catalogues about forty extant MSS, beginning from a Monte Cassino MS of the sixth century[1], and this list 'could be easily extended' (p. 16). On the other hand, in spite of the great name to which they became attached, the *Quaestiones* have been perhaps unduly overlooked. It is another merit of Mr Souter's book that it will do something to restore the balance; for as this is the work which he is himself engaged in editing, it is naturally the one which looms the larger in his 'Study'.

Of the *Quaestiones* not more than twenty-three MSS in all have been discovered as the result of Mr Souter's diligent researches, nor is it likely that many have escaped his eye; and these twenty-three are shared between three different recensions. The ordinary printed form of the book contains 127 *Quaestiones*, and this is the only recension represented in manuscripts anterior to the twelfth century: but the Benedictines were already familiar with another recension containing 151 *Quaestiones*, divided into two classes, *Q. ex Veteri* (56) and *Q. ex Novo* (95) *Testamento*. In spite, however, of the larger total of the Questions, this recension is in fact shorter than the other: for the 62 Questions which appear among the 151 but are absent from the 127 are for the most part very brief, while the 38 which belong to the 127 but not to the 151 include such considerable treatises as Q. 44 'adversus Iudaeos', Q. 102 'contra Novatianum', Q. 114 'adversus Paganos', Q. 115 'de Fato'. The polemic against Photinus (Q. 91 among the '127') seems to be the same in both editions: but that against Arianism attains considerably bigger proportions in the '127' edition (Q. 97), and the celebrated invective against the Roman deacons (Q. 101) is peculiar to it.

[1] Mr Souter appears to imply, on pp. 12, 13, that the portion of this MS which contains Origen on the Romans is homogeneous with the rest. But in fact while the Ambrosiaster leaves are not later than 569 A.D., the Origen leaves date from about 700 A.D. One would like to suppose that the sixth-century portion was written in the monastery of Cassiodorus.

A third recension of 118 Questions in three classes—38 on the Old Testament, 59 on the New, and 21 reckoned separately—was unknown to previous editors: but according to Mr Souter's present judgement (pp. 189, 192) it only represents the work of some later scholar, and unlike the other two is not to be attributed to the author himself[1].

The question of priority between the '127' and the '151' editions Mr Souter decides, and no doubt rightly, in favour of the shorter of the two, and that, as we have just seen, is the edition of the '151'. Thus the '127' edition is not only that which is given by most of the MSS and by all the older ones, but is also that which represents the writer's later and maturer views. On all grounds therefore it is entitled to, and will receive, the place of honour in the forthcoming Vienna edition.

Of the preface to this edition a preliminary sketch, dealing with the interrelations of the leading MSS of the '127' recension, has been published by Mr Souter in his already mentioned contribution to the transactions of the Vienna Academy. Eight early MSS—i. e. of the ninth and tenth centuries—have come down to us: and of these Mr Souter selects as the best a Metz MS (no. 322) of the tenth century. On the joint evidence of its orthography and of its mistakes he concludes that it was copied from an Italian uncial MS of the sixth or seventh century: though for my own part the confusions between s and r, r and s, would rather lead me to think of a semi-uncial exemplar. More nearly allied than the rest to the Metz MS is a ninth-century Colbert MS, known to the Benedictine editor and now preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 2709, which perhaps betrays an Anglo-Saxon or Irish line of descent. Of a second family the three principal representatives are now respectively at Carlsruhe (Augiensis IX, from Reichenau), Ghent (cod. 95, from St Maximin at Trèves), and Munich (lat. 6312, from Freising). A connecting-link between the two families is found in another Paris MS, lat. 17385, from Nôtre-Dame[2]. It is noteworthy that, although Ambrosiaster was a Roman, these MSS come without exception

[1] A very convenient table of the three recensions is given on pp. 192–194.

[2] Mr Souter latinizes this MS as 'Nostradamensis', which led me at first to connect it with the astrologer. Personally I should employ the more cumbrous but more respectful form 'codex N. Dominae Parisinae' (or 'Parisiensis').

from the Rhine country or from Northern France: and we are therefore the less surprised to find that they descend from a common archetype, as is proved by the existence in all of them of a common *lacuna*. In fact to supply the ending of Q. 109 and the commencement of Q. 110, where a leaf must have been lost from the archetype of the transalpine family, we are obliged to have recourse to a late Padua MS of the thirteenth century [1]—a palmary instance of the occasional value of quite late MSS. Nor is it only in supplying this *lacuna* that the Padua MS comes to the front: it is found to agree with many of the otherwise unsupported readings of the Metz MS, and, representing a wholly separate line of ancestry, it thus affords a striking confirmation of the general soundness of Mr Souter's judgement upon the text. Altogether some three thousand passages will be altered by him, on manuscript authority, to a different form from that in which they appear in all existing editions. The work is due for publication within the course of the next year or two, and it is needless to say that scholars are expecting it with avidity. But in the meantime it is premature to enter into further details about the text, and we turn back to the problem of the authorship.

Who, then, was this active writer, whose *Commentaries* are the earliest extant commentary in either Greek or Latin on all the Pauline Epistles, whose *Quaestiones* too are the earliest substantial book on Biblical difficulties that has come down to us? Older than Ambrose, Jerome or Augustine—posterior indeed to no considerable Latin Christian writers but Tertullian and Cyprian, Lactantius and Hilary—can we not succeed in identifying this 'Anonymous', of whom at least we know for certain that he lived and wrote in the capital of the world and centre of Western Christendom at no obscure period of its history?

For the internal affairs of the Roman Church during the pontificate of Damasus (366–384) are very far from being a blank to us. The disputes which attended the election of that pope

[1] In the JOURNAL for Oct. 1904 (vi 61) Mr Souter published for the first time the lost commencement of Q. 110: the end of Q. 109 was wanting in the *editio princeps* (called 'Ratisponensis' from the editor, but published at Lyons in 1497), but in some hitherto unexplained fashion found its way into later editions.

and crystallized into a schism coterminous with his papacy produced a literature of their own, and attracted the interest even of outsiders like the pagan historian Ammianus Marcellinus[1]. At the death of pope Liberius the heartburnings which had been excited by his exile, and by the intrusion of the antipope Felix into his place, were not yet completely allayed. Although Felix had predeceased Liberius, and the latter had reconciled the clergy who had adhered to the intruder, yet some of those who had remained faithful all through to Liberius persisted in regarding the opposite party as involved in the guilt of heresy and as incapable of restoration—following in this the principles of the rigorist confessor Lucifer of Cagliari. When, soon after, Liberius himself died, this puritan minority elected the deacon Ursinus for his successor, while the choice of the majority fell upon another deacon, Damasus: and to escape the charge of setting up altar against altar, each side claimed that its bishop was the first to be set on the vacant throne. The partisans of Damasus, who included no doubt not only the vast majority among the clergy but the greater part of the laity, assailed the basilica of Sicininus, the chief stronghold of the Ursinians, with such vigour that at the end of the day over a hundred corpses were found within the sacred building. Not content with this success, the victorious party bombarded the civil power with requests for its interference, and a series of imperial rescripts to the prefect of the city completed the discomfiture of the Ursinians by depriving them of their last remaining churches—henceforward they met in the catacombs—and by banishing from Rome the antipope himself and his most conspicuous supporters. To continue the contest on the main issue was no longer possible: but the law-courts were open to an individual prosecutor, and a Jewish convert of the name of Isaac, acting no doubt as the mouthpiece of the Ursinians, brought criminal charges, involving apparently even a capital penalty, against the person of Damasus. The emperor however withdrew the case from the cognizance of the courts, acquitted the pope, and banished his accuser to Spain, where he was said to have relapsed again into Judaism. Finally, in 383 or 384, when Damasus' imperial protectors, Valentinian I and Gratian, were both dead, two Ursinian presbyters, Faustinus

[1] Amm. Marc. *Hist.* xxvii 3 §§ 12–15.

and Marcellinus—of whom Faustinus is known also as author of a dogmatic treatise entitled indifferently *de Trinitate* and *contra Arrianos*—addressed a long petition or 'libellus precum' to Theodosius, in which they gave a history of the whole schism from their point of view and appealed to the emperor's clemency for toleration. The death of Damasus at the end of 384 appears to have terminated the schism by removing its excuse: and its only further effect in history was that, just as it had been the cue of the Ursinians in the interests of Liberius to blacken the reputation of Felix, so the Damasine or official point of view tended to regard Felix as legitimate and with that end to emphasize whatever told to the discredit of Liberius.

This long digression into Roman Church politics is less remote than might be supposed from the literary problem of the authorship of the *Questions* and the *Commentaries*: for no less than three out of the four identifications of the Anonymous that have been proposed in recent years are with personages connected with the Ursinian movement. The most commonly accepted theory has perhaps been that which, starting from the ascription by St Augustine of a passage in the *Commentaries* to 'sanctus Hilarius', and explaining the error as due to a confusion of some other Hilary with St Hilary of Poitiers, selected the Luciferian deacon Hilary of Rome. Langen objected, not without reason, that the author of the *Quaestio* 'On the arrogance of the Roman Levites' can hardly have been a Roman Levite himself, and proposed instead the Ursinian presbyter Faustinus. On this hypothesis, he would interpret the closing words of *Quaest.* 125, 'iam enim in libello adversus Arrianam impietatem digesto reliqua plenius tractata sunt quae Trinitatis complexa sunt indiscretam unitatem', as a reference to Faustinus' treatise on the Trinity: but they are most naturally understood of the long *Quaest.* 97 against Arius. Yet a third Ursinian was suggested by Dom Morin in the *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuses* for 1899, Isaac the ex-Jew. Four years later Morin retracted that suggestion and, falling back on the earlier starting-point in Augustine's 'sanctus Hilarius', substituted the name of another Hilary, Decimius Hilarianus Hilarius, governor of Africa in 377, prefect of the city in 383, praetorian prefect of Italy in 396. To the latter view Mr Souter professes his adhesion: it 'entirely satisfies

the conditions of the problem' (p. 2), and 'those who differ from it will have to read the works of the author carefully in the forthcoming Vienna editions before coming to a conclusion on the subject' (p. 183).

This is strong language: and I am afraid I shall seem over bold if in the face of it, and without waiting for the forthcoming editions, and although my knowledge of the texts is (it is hardly necessary to say) vastly inferior to Dom Morin's or to Mr Souter's, I confess myself an obstinate and impenitent believer in Morin's discarded thesis. I am as strongly impressed to-day with what appear to me to be the weighty probabilities in favour of the authorship of Isaac the Jew, as I was when I wrote in the first number of this JOURNAL (Oct. 1899: i 155), 'it seems hardly premature to say that Dom Morin has solved one of the great problems of patristic literature'.

Let us begin by clearing the ground of any arguments that can be alleged in support of the candidature of Hilarianus Hilarius. These are, as far as I can see, only two. In the first place, with him, as with any other personage of the name of Hilary, we should have a ready explanation of the false ascription to Hilary of Poitiers. But in fact no explanation is needed. The *Commentaries* were published—we are all agreed on that point—anonymously, and to Augustine's generation St Hilary stood on the same sort of pinnacle as did St Ambrose or St Augustine himself to the men of a somewhat later day. It is scarcely more strange to find the name of Hilary attached to the work at the beginning of the fifth century than to find the name of Ambrose in the same position at the beginning of the sixth: the passion for abolishing the anonymous was not born full-grown with our extant MSS. So much for the one argument in favour of Hilarianus. The other is based upon our author's manifest acquaintance both with the technicalities and with the principles of Roman law and administration. But this is rather a slight foundation on which to build up an identification with a particular administrator.

The *crux* of the whole problem is the silence of St Jerome. Nowhere in his voluminous writings—neither in his expositions of Scripture, nor in his correspondence, nor in his bibliography of Christian authors—does that father mention directly the existence

of the *Commentaries* or the *Questions*, still less name their author. Yet Jerome studied at Rome as a young man, returned to reside there during the last years of Damasus' pontificate, and to the end of his life kept up a lively intercourse with his friends in the capital. His acquaintance with theological literature was unequalled: biblical research and exegesis was the study to which above all others he devoted himself. If he ignored the substantial contributions made to his own subject by a Roman Christian contemporary, it cannot have been because he was ignorant of them. Indeed a careful examination of his works has detected points of contact, few but unmistakeable, with our author. The five problems from the early chapters of Genesis, which Damasus sent to Jerome for solution in the year 384[1], at a time when the scholar was in almost daily contact with the pope, all reappear among the first twelve of the *Quaestiones*. The same defence of the essential identity between the presbyterate and the episcopate is to be found in *Quaestio* 101 and in the 146th of St Jerome's letters. And even if there were nothing so far to prove that Jerome is not the original and our author the copyist, a third case shews decisively on which side the obligation lay: for in his 73rd epistle, written in the year 398, Jerome speaks of having received from his correspondent 'volumen *ἀνώνυμον ἀδέσποτον*, et nescio utrum tu de titulo nomen subtraxeris, an ille qui scripsit, ut periculum fugeret disputandi, auctorem noluit confiteri'; and the singular view which he proceeds to discuss and refute, namely the identification of Melchisedech with the Holy Spirit, is that propounded by our author in *Quaestio* 109.

The three references so far adduced are all discussed by Mr Souter in one part or another of his *Study*[2]: not so a fourth, in which it seems to me that St Jerome lets us glance for a moment beneath the veil which he kept so carefully drawn over the personality and writings of our author, and, though he still suppresses his name, allows himself to make some hardly obscure intimations about his history and character. The passage is so important, and has until lately passed so

[1] Jerome *Ep.* 35.
[2] *A Study of Ambrosiaster*, pp. 11, 170, 173.

entirely unnoticed[1], that I make no apology for transcribing it in full: it occurs in the Commentary on Titus (iii 9: Vallarsi vii 735)—

'Est et illis' [*sc.* the Jews] 'alia occasio superbiae, quoniam, sicut nos qui Latini sumus Latina nomina et origines de lingua nostra habentia [*al.* trahentia] facilius memoriae tradimus, ita illi a parva aetate vernacula sui sermonis vocabula penitissimis [*al.* peritissimis] sensibus imbiberunt [*al.* imbuerunt] et ab exordio Adam usque ad extremum Zorobabel omnium generationes ita memoriter velociterque percurrunt, ut eos suum putes referre nomen. hoc nos—qui aut alias litteras didicimus, aut certe sero credidimus in Christum, aut etiam si infantes sumus ecclesiae mancipati magis scripturarum sensum quam verba sectamur—si forte non ita novimus, putant se in nominibus referendis et in supputatione annorum et in nepotibus et abnepotibus, avis proavis et atavis, doctiores. audivi ego quendam de Hebraeis, qui se Romae in Christum credidisse simulabat, de genealogiis Domini nostri Iesu Christi quae scriptae sunt in Mattheo et Luca facere quaestionem, quod videlicet a Salomone usque ad Ioseph nec numero sibi nec vocabulorum aequalitate consentiant: qui cum *corda simplicium pervertisset*, quasi ex adytis et oraculo deferebat quasdam ut sibi videbatur solutiones, cum magis debuerit *iustitiam et misericordiam et dilectionem Dei* quaerere, et post illa (si forte occurrisset) de nominibus et numeris disputare. satis forsitan de Hebraeorum supercilio, et plus quam necesse fuerit, dixerimus: sed occasio nobis data est de *genealogiis et contentione et rixis quae ex lege veniunt* disserendi.'

Now it is natural to identify the lecture which Jerome had heard on the subject of the Gospel genealogies with no. 56 of our author's *Quaestiones* 'Quare in Mattheo pater Ioseph Iacob scribitur, et in Luca Heli': and that on the following grounds. The lecture was apparently given in Rome: the *Quaestiones*, as we know, belong to Rome also. The occasion of it, coinciding

[1] I have been anticipated in calling attention to it by the most erudite patristic scholar of our time, Dr Th. Zahn, who cited it, I find, when first noticing Dom Morin's Isaac-hypothesis in the *Theologisches Literaturblatt*, July 7, 1899. [I imagine it is to this that Mr Souter's note on p. 11 refers 'See also Zahn *op. cit.* for a passage which will be discussed later'. I cannot discover that Mr Souter has discussed it later: but in the absence of an index of subject-matter it is difficult to make sure.]

with one of Jerome's residences in Rome, must be placed between 365 and 385: and this is the date also of the *Quaestiones*. The method of the lecturer is described with the words 'facere quaestionem': the correspondence with the title of the book is exact. The explanation given of the discrepancies between the two genealogies Jerome scornfully alludes to as a 'so-called' solution, 'oracularly' given—i.e. not one which would satisfy a rational enquirer: and on turning to the text of the *Quaestiones*, we find that our author's two suggestions are (1) that the word υἱός, throughout verses 23–38 of Luc. iii, is always to be referred back to Ἰησοῦς of verse 23, 'Jesus was son of Joseph, son of Heli . . . son of Adam, pre-existent Son of God', and (2) that as each relationship is thus referred only to Jesus Himself, and as the text itself emphasizes the putative character of His relationship to Joseph, so a similarly putative character applies to the other relationships also, and we need not suppose that any genealogical tree, or steps of actual descent through father and son, was intended by the third evangelist. It will hardly be denied that 'quasdam ut sibi videbatur solutiones' 'quasi ex adytis et oraculo' is not inappropriate (and for St Jerome not excessive) language to apply to exegesis of this sort. And the final sneer against 'disputation about names and numbers' hits off one of the most marked characteristics of an author who can establish for instance (*Quaest.* 87) the doctrine of the Trinity by an exposition of the mathematical value of 9 as the square of 3.

But if it be once admitted that the lecturer whom St Jerome heard was identical with the author of the *Quaestiones*, the problem which we set out to face is as good as solved. For we know, on this hypothesis, that he was a Jew: that he made what was in Jerome's opinion an insincere conversion to Christianity: and that he would have done better to have studied ethics than exegesis, 'justice and mercy and the love of God' rather than 'names and numbers'. Whatever else is uncertain, it is certain that this description can fit no one but Isaac. Isaac was an ex-Jew: his prosecution of Damasus on a capital charge and in a civil court may well have seemed to the pope's partisans the negation of justice and mercy and the love of God: and if the assertions of the latter party may be believed, his adhesion

to Christianity proved in the day of his exile to be only skin-deep—'facto ad synagogam recursu caelestia mysteria profanavit'[1].

If then it appears that St Jerome both must have known, and did know, our author's works, his silence can only have been due to a consciously deliberate 'boycott' of one whom he felt he had strong and valid reason to disapprove. Nothing of a sort to satisfy even remotely this condition can be shewn to apply to Hilarianus Hilarius[2]. But assume that Jerome believed the writer of the *Questions* and the *Commentary* to have been a schismatic, a calumniator of the successor of St Peter, an apostate from the Christian faith, and there was every inducement for him to suppress all mention of the fact that such a man had made serious contributions to theological study, and to let the waters of oblivion flow over them and their author alike.

If it was true then to say, as I said above, that the *crux* of the problem lay in the silence of St Jerome, it is true also that in the case of Isaac, and it would seem of Isaac only, there would be a definite and satisfactory explanation of it. But the evidence of St Jerome is not the only evidence that can be brought into court in favour of the Isaac-hypothesis. The *prima facie* case so far made out admits of being strengthened on more than one side. There is reason for supposing that another theological treatise of Isaac's is extant, while as regards Hilarianus there is nothing to shew that he was a writer at all: while at least one of the favourite topics of the author of the *Quaestiones*, his unusual knowledge of matters Jewish, points strongly in the direction of Isaac as against all other competitors. Something must be said on each of these two heads.

The writer of the *Quaestiones* was admittedly a man who was deeply interested in Christian theology, and expressed himself freely on its most mysterious dogmas, at whatever value his capacities for doing so may be estimated. Whatever praise or blame belongs to him in this respect may be predicated also of Isaac the Jew, if Sirmond was right in attributing to the partisan

[1] In the letter of Damasus' council [of 382, according to Father Puller] to the emperor *Et hoc gloriae vestrae.*

[2] As Mr Souter frankly admits (p. 185).

of Ursinus the little tract which he discovered under the name of 'Fides Isatis ex Iudaeo' and published in 1630[1], and in identifying it with a 'librum obscurissimae disputationis et involuti sermonis' on the Trinity and Incarnation which Gennadius of Marseilles (*de viris illustribus* 26) ascribes to an Isaac who is not further particularized. Morin has established some quite remarkable resemblances between this fragment and the *Quaestiones*: to mention only one of them, 'Isaac the ex-Jew' discusses, in his theological treatise, the significance of the numbers 2, 3 and 5, just as we have seen the author of *Quaestio* 87 under similar circumstances expatiate on the meaning of 3 and its square.

Again the *Quaestiones* and the *Commentary*, as more than one independent reader has noticed, shew an acquaintance with Jewish history and customs which is quite unique among patristic writings in its range and detail. Mr Souter has himself collected (pp. 180–183) a long—but, as he himself tells us, a far from exhaustive—list of such references, and there is no need to repeat them here: a single illustration from each work will suffice. In the *Quaestiones* (Q. 115) allusion is made to the fact that, though conversions from paganism to Judaism from time to time occurred, the opposite case of conversion from Judaism to paganism was quite unknown. In the Commentary on 1 Cor. xiv 30, 31 (ἐὰν δὲ ἄλλῳ ἀποκαλυφθῇ καθημένῳ) it is suggested that the apostle is recommending to his Christian disciples of heathen origin the custom of the synagogue, where they 'dispute seated, the elders in dignity on chairs, the next in order on benches, the lowest on mats on the floor'. As Mr Souter justly remarks, there is 'nothing either patronizing or hostile' in their attitude. But to find a Christian writer of the fourth century who refers a good deal to the Jews and Judaism, without being either patronizing or hostile, is remarkable enough in itself, and Mr Souter makes it doubly difficult of explanation when he makes our author a Roman of high birth. He conjectures that Hilarius had perhaps held office as *dux* or *comes* in Egypt, and had there 'acquired his remarkable interest in the Jews'. But I experience some difficulty in conceiving of any governor who was both a Roman of high birth and a Christian, having intimate dealings

[1] From a MS of Pithou's, containing much miscellaneous theological and canonical matter, now Paris. lat. 1564 (saec. ix).

with the Jewish provincials under him—except indeed in the way of borrowing money.

This quite unique interest in Judaism on the part of the writer of the *Commentary* and the *Questions*, taken together with his interest in Law, makes it natural to look to him as the author of a comparison of the Laws of Moses and the Laws of Rome, which some unknown Roman lawyer published not long after the year 390 and (as it appears) in Rome itself[1]. The work is divided into sixteen chapters; the citation from 'Moses' or the 'divine law' in each case comes first, and is followed by citations from one or more of the jurists, Gaius, Papinian, Ulpian, Paulus, Modestinus, or from the collections of imperial *rescripta* made by Gregorianus and Hermogenianus: in one case a law of Valentinian Theodosius and Arcadius, of the year 390, is quoted not from the books but from direct personal knowledge. And the *a priori* arguments for the Ambrosiaster's authorship receive some confirmation from the curious fact that the edict or edicts of Diocletian against the Manicheans are mentioned in no other writings than the *Commentaries* of the Ambrosiaster and the *Collatio*[2].

It is tempting to pursue the policy of identification still further. A young Roman Catholic scholar, Dr Joseph Wittig, in a lately published paper bearing the title *Der Ambrosiaster 'Hilarius'*, has enumerated thirteen works which he attributes to our author. The support which he gives to the 'Isaac' hypothesis is very welcome, and his theory that 'Hilarius' is a vernacular rendering of the Hebrew Isaac (='laughing') is at the least extremely ingenious: but much of his paper loses itself, it seems to me, in fine-drawn subtleties, and the temptation to abolish the anonymous is one which the wise man will do well to resist.

Mr Souter is comparatively modest in this respect. He does not ascribe to the Ambrosiaster, apart from the *Commentaries* and the *Questions*, more than two other writings: and of one of these, a Vienna papyrus fragment *contra Arrianos*, he limits himself to saying (p. 164) that Dom Morin has with great probability

[1] *Mosaicarum et Romanarum Legum Collatio*, edited first by P. Pithou, Paris, 1573, and with exhaustive prolegomena by Mommsen in the *Collectio librorum iuris antiiustiniani*, tom. iii (Berlin, 1890) pp. 107–198.

[2] The attribution of the *Collatio* to the Ambrosiaster has suggested itself independently also to Mr Souter and to the writer of the pamphlet mentioned in the next paragraph, my acquaintance with which I owe to Mr Souter's kindness.

claimed it for our author. The other is the exegetical fragment on St Matthew xxiv, published first by Mercati and afterwards in the JOURNAL (v 218–241) by myself. Mr Souter immediately pointed out (v 608–621) a number of unmistakeable coincidences with both the *Commentaries* and the *Quaestiones*, which would 'convince every person who reads them attentively that they all come from the same author', and I welcome the present opportunity of expressing myself upon the subject in answer to this challenge. No one can deny the force of Mr Souter's parallels: that they establish some sort of connexion between the fragment and the Ambrosiaster is quite clear, but it is not equally clear, to me at any rate, that the connexion is that of common authorship. I still feel it rather difficult to understand a reference to the 'laurel crown' as a test of paganism after the middle of the fourth century: nor does Mr Souter's allegation of Julian's quite abortive persecution help matters much. I feel it still more difficult to believe, not that Chiliasm was still a topic of interest in the fourth century—Mr Souter misinterpreted me on this head—but that a Chiliastic writer of the date and place of the Ambrosiaster could have had to combat such a grossly material form of Chiliasm as the fragment has in view. These were two of my original arguments: and I should now add a third, based on the consideration of Mr Souter's parallels, which do not leave on me the impression of common authorship so much as of exemplar and copy. The style of the fragment is rugged, forcible, uncouth: the passages quoted from Ambrosiaster seem rather to expand and polish the material, and to whittle down its peculiarities. Two alternatives, besides that of common authorship, are open: the one that the fragment belongs to some older Latin author whom Ambrosiaster closely studied, the other that it was Greek in origin and that Ambrosiaster was himself the translator of it into Latin. Neither of these alternatives is without its difficulties: and Mr Souter's view, which is of course the simplest, may be also the truest.

I should like to have concluded this paper with some attempt to estimate the value of the Ambrosiaster's contribution to biblical study, and to account for the contrast between the opinion held of him respectively by St Jerome and by modern German theo-

logians. For my part I must own that the unsystematic plan and often unconvincing argument of the *Quaestiones* incline me a little to take sides with St Jerome: and if something must be allowed for his prejudice against a schismatic and apostate, I suspect something must also be allowed for modern prejudice in favour of an exegete who asserts the identity of 'bishop' and 'presbyter'. But opportunity and knowledge alike fail me: and perhaps the times will not be ripe for such an undertaking till we are in possession of the improved texts for which we are looking. One whose own work has lain along rather discursive lines may be permitted to congratulate Mr Souter on his wisdom in selecting for his maiden work a definite subject and a single author, and to augur from the present *primitiae* a long and brilliant series of services to biblical and patristic study. Mr Souter is a scholar and an enthusiast: when his historical powers have developed and matured, the combination will be a difficult one to beat.

C. H. TURNER.