

ST AMBROSE
ON THE SACRAMENTS
&
ON THE MYSTERIES

St Ambrose
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and
ON THE MYSTERIES

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE two treatises contained in the present volume were originally published in a work entitled *St Ambrose On the Mysteries and the Treatise On the Sacraments by an Unknown Author* (S.P.C.K., 1919). The translation was undertaken by The Rev. T. Thompson, author of *The Offices of Baptism and Confirmation* in the Cambridge Liturgical Handbooks series. He died before it was completed, the last few sections being the rendering of the late Mr F. H. Colson, formerly Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, who also contributed some valuable suggestions for the interpretation of certain passages. The volume is now out of print, but the importance of the treatises for the history of liturgical developments in the West, and the new light thrown in recent years upon the relations of the two treatises and their connexion with St Ambrose, call for a fresh treatment of the whole problem, both literary and liturgical, which they present.

I have, in the Introduction to the present work, indicated the reasons which have led me to revise the view of the authorship of *On the Sacraments* expressed in the earlier work, and to maintain that both treatises may now be assigned to St Ambrose. I owe much in the way of encouragement in undertaking this new edition to the late Dom R. H. Connolly. He unreservedly placed at my disposal materials collected by him, and at every stage in matters relating especially to the literary problems involved was ready with counsel and suggestions. Mr Thompson's translation has been retained with a few necessary emendations, and a few notes left by him have been included and are marked (T.).

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INTRODUCTION

I

THE PROBLEM OF AUTHORSHIP

THE two treatises *On the Mysteries* and *On the Sacraments* have come into prominent notice at various epochs in the history of the Western Church. In the Eucharistic controversies of the ninth century in which Paschasius and Ratramn played a prominent part, and again in the similar controversy aroused by Berengar's teaching in the eleventh century, we find them appealed to and quoted by the rival schools of thought. In the Reformation period they received renewed attention, and their authenticity was assailed by Protestant writers on the assumption that such teaching on the Eucharist as they contain could not have come from Ambrose. These objections raised to the authorship of Ambrose in the case of the treatise *On the Mysteries* have not generally won acceptance from modern scholars, though they were revived by Loofs in his article "Abendmahl" in Hauck's *Realenzyklopädie* and in his *Leitfaden z. Studium der Dogmengesch.* He, however, failed to make out a convincing case for his view that the language on the Eucharist found in the treatise was inconsistent with that of other and undisputed writings of Ambrose. On the word *transfigurare* see p. 38.

The treatise *On the Sacraments* has received much more drastic criticism, not only on theological grounds, but also on account of its apparent difference of style and its less orderly treatment of its materials than is found in the more sober and

literary manner of *On the Mysteries* and other writings of Ambrose. As both treatises have so much in common, the one has been supposed to be an expanded and debased version of the other. Thus Aubertin described the author of *On the Sacraments* as "the ape of Ambrose" and assigned it to the seventh century, while Daillé placed it a century later.

From an opposite quarter Cardinal Bona and the Benedictines of St Maur also expressed their doubts, and though the latter published it in their edition of Ambrose, they admitted that its different style and "frigid and puerile questions" are unlike the manner of the other treatise. They suggested that it may have been built up out of the known opinions and words of Ambrose. This doubt has continued to mark the attitude of scholars in modern times, with few but important exceptions.

Dom Morin, however, in an article in the *Maria Laach Jahrbuch f. Liturgiewissenschaft* (1928) pointed out that in more recent years it is the liturgical scholars who have found difficulties in fitting *On the Sacraments* into a place and date which accords with their ideas of the development of the liturgy in the West. Duchesne, he says, "holding that Milan was the cradle of the Gallican Liturgies could not admit that there was in that Church in the time of Ambrose a Canon of the Mass of invariable tenor", such as is found in this work. The Milanese scholars (i.e. Ceriani in his *Notitia liturgiae Ambrosianae*, and Magistretti, *La liturgia della chiesa milanese*) "on their part regarded it as a kind of dogma that their actual liturgy existed from the fourth century almost in the form which it presents in manuscripts of the ninth century, being, so to speak, an ancestor with regard to that of Rome". They found it therefore difficult to know what to make of this treatise, which contained "many formulae and ceremonies almost all more or less different from those of the Ambrosian rite".

Duchesne (*Christian Worship*, E.T., 2nd. ed., p. 177), in accordance with his views, assigned *On the Sacraments* to "some North Italian Church where the Roman use was combined with that of Milan, probably Ravenna", and fixed its date about A.D. 400. This date, or some few years later, has been generally assumed by most of those who have discussed the work. Ceriani admits the difficulty arising from the Oriental features in the Canon of the Mass found in the treatise, and agrees with the view that it cannot be the work of a Milanese bishop (*Notitia*, pp. 67 f.).

The attribution by Tillemont of *On the Sacraments* to Maximus of Turin has found little support. With this survey of the problems which have been propounded with regard to the treatises, we may now pass on to consider the documents themselves.

§ 1. *Relation of the Treatise ON THE SACRAMENTS (DE SACRAMENTIS) to ON THE MYSTERIES (DE MYSTERIIS)*
(referred to here and throughout as S. and M.)

The two treatises are evidently closely related and have a large amount of common material. It has been generally assumed that S. is dependent on M. and is the work of another author, who had M. before him, while it is difficult to conceive that the author of M. should have transformed his work into S. So the Maurists contended, and they have been widely followed since. On the other hand, a more exact study of the different characters of the treatises suggests another explanation.

1. The difference in literary style is accounted for by the fact that S. is the report of addresses orally delivered on the different days of Easter week, with notes of the time of delivery. "Let us content ourselves to-day—To-morrow I will declare" (i. 6. 24); "Yesterday, we discoursed" (iii. 1. 1); "To-morrow we will treat" (iii. 2. 15); "To-

morrow, Saturday, and on Sunday we will speak " (iv. 6. 29). In M. there are no such marks of time. It is a literary work, a continuous piece of instruction, with no indication that the several subjects were dealt with on separate days of the week.

2. S. refers in several places to the lessons read at the services in Easter week, at which the addresses were given (see ii. 2. 3 and 7. 23; iii. 2. 8; vi. 2. 9). In M. there are only three quite general references to Scripture readings, such as we find in other writings of Ambrose. Nor does M. sum up points made in a previous address, as we find S. doing in the references given above. M. throughout is concise and avoids repetition.

3. In M. there is an absence of liturgical texts, the reason being that in a work intended for general circulation their inclusion would involve a breach of the *disciplina arcani*, which forbade the publication, to others than the baptized, of the most sacred truths and mysteries of the Christian religion. Thus in *de Cain* (i. 9. 37) Ambrose gives a warning against careless speech and want of caution in divulging the mysteries of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. And this reserve extends largely to what is done, as well as to what is said, in the rites. But in S. liturgical formulae, including the interrogative creed at the moment of baptism (ii. 7. 20) and even the central portion of the Canon of the Mass (iv. 5. 21, 22; 6. 27) are freely quoted, and the Lord's Prayer is given in full and commented on clause by clause, the reason being that in these addresses the author is explaining to the newly baptized the faith which they have accepted and the Sacraments to which they have been admitted.

4. The biblical types of baptism in S. are set out without any regard to the order in which they are found in the Bible, and some are used more than once, with a different application. In one passage (ii. 4. 12) reference is made to the fact that the biblical order has not been followed. In M. they are

found in orderly sequence following their position in the Bible. This can be explained if we assume that in preparing M. the author had S. before him, and, in a literary work intended for publication, reduced to order the more informal references given in orally delivered addresses; while it is not consistent with any direct dependence of S. upon M.

5. In the short interrogative Creed at baptism S. quotes the form "Dost thou believe in the Lord Jesus Christ *and in His Cross?*" The words in italics are not found in any of the Creeds or in any of the baptismal rites, though there is a reference to them in Ambrose, in *Lucam* v. 103. M., however (v. 28), merely alludes to the fact that the baptized express their belief in the Son exactly as in the Father and in the Holy Spirit, with the one exception that they confess "the necessity of belief in the Cross of the Lord Jesus alone". Here again the allusion of M. is more naturally explained as an indirect reference to S. than on the reverse view. M. could not, in view of the *disciplina arcani*, quote the full formula.

6. A further indication of the use of S. by M. is found in the introductory section of each. S. begins (i. 1. 1) by saying that to have given a "reasoned account" (*rationem*) of the sacraments before the hearers had received baptism would not have been right. M. (i. 2) similarly says that it is going to speak about the mysteries and to give a reasoned account (*rationem*) of the sacraments, and that to have done this, before baptism, to the uninitiated would be regarded as traitorous. But the promise of a "reasoned account" is not really fulfilled in M. as the *disciplina arcani* compelled the exercise of reserve in dealing with the various liturgical features in the rites of baptism. But the correspondence of the two passages is so close as to suggest that the author of M. has taken over inadvertently the words of S.

7. The subject matter of M. corresponds very largely with that of S., but the correspondence ceases when S. begins

to deal with the subject of prayer (v. 4 f.). This is not included in M. as it would have involved the treatment of the Lord's Prayer, which could not be disclosed in a work intended for publication.

8. The biblical quotations in S. and M. are dealt with in a separate section of this Introduction, and full discussion of them will be found in the notes on them in the text of the treatises. Here it will suffice to note that those in S. are often loosely worded or summarized, and that many of their characteristic variations and inaccuracies find close parallels, even in minute points, in undisputed writings of Ambrose, thus showing the imprint of the same mind. On the other hand, the quotations in M. when they cover the same ground as S. are more accurate and suggest that the author of M. is correcting S. In some of the quotations S. shows independence of M., but finds support in other writings of Ambrose. See e.g. the notes on the quotations from John 13. 8-10 in S. iii. 1. 4-7, and on Cant. 8. 5 in S. iv. 2. 5.

9. The different style of S., as compared with the more formal and literary style of M., is accounted for by the circumstances in which the addresses of S. were given. In oral delivery to the newly baptized, who needed instruction in matters on which they were not yet well informed, the treatment would be less formal, more conversational, and adapted to their intelligence. Ambrose elsewhere (*de Isaac* 7. 57) has explained the method in such cases. He says that the teacher "though he himself is both eloquent and learned, yet comes down to the level of their intelligence and uses simple and homely and ordinary language that he may make himself understood". This explains a feature criticized by the Maurists and already referred to, i.e. the introduction by S. of a new point by means of a short rhetorical question. Parallels may be found in other works of Ambrose which reproduce addresses orally delivered, such as the *Hexameron*.

This latter treatise (vi. 1. 2) also includes a phrase criticized by the Maurists, *sanctitas vestra* ("your holiness"), found twice in S. (i. 6. 24; vi. 5. 26), and applied as a title to the neophytes who are being addressed. Another personal form of address, *fratres dilectissimi*, found in S. iii. 2. 15, also occurs in *Hexaem.* v. 12. 36.

Again, there are in other writings of Ambrose examples of the vocabulary of S. and of the rare words, or words not known in other authors, that it employs. Instances are: the use of *sors* (singular) usually found in the plural *sordes*; such words as *operatorius*, *praerogativa*, and *peregrinari* ("to be perplexed"), and the use of *adstruere* with the meaning "to approve" or "support"; and such mannerisms as *fides et devotio, non mediocris, contuitu* (in the sense of "with regard to"), and the use of the word *accipe* to introduce a text or illustration.

The doxologies in S., which, as Dom Morin has pointed out, are very distinctive and oriental in character, are substantially identical with those which close several of the works of Ambrose. They are five in number and end with the same elaborate formula. Among them we find in what appears to be a liturgical formula the words *magnificentia, potestas* (S. iv. 6. 29; vi. 5. 24), and in one of them (vi. 5. 26) the word *perpetuitas*. All these features find parallels in the doxologies of undisputed writings of Ambrose. The notes on the text will supply further illustrations of the many subtle links with his style.

These facts have led to a revival of a suggestion made first of all by Probst in his *Liturgie des vierten Jahrh. u. deren Reform* (1893), and independently by Dom Morin in the *Revue bénédictine* (1894), xi. 343 f. According to them S. contains the actual words of the addresses given by Ambrose and taken down by a *notarius*, but only made public some time after his death, when the *disciplina arcani* had been relaxed.

Caspari had originally made the same suggestion with regard to the *Explanatio Symboli*, which exhibits the same features and style as S., and which in the two earliest MSS. of S. (St Gall and the Vatican MS. formerly at Bobbio) precedes S. In the latter of the two MSS., at the end of the *Explanatio* there is a note, "the first book ends. The second begins", the second being the first book of S. Thus the two works are brought together as though they were one complete whole.

Though the above suggested origin of S. failed to gain general acceptance, it was steadily maintained by Dom Morin, who reinforced it in a brilliant article in the *Maria Laach Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft* 8^e Bd. (1928), pp. 86 f. Dom R. H. Connolly has in recent years vindicated it by a detailed and exhaustive examination of the literary characteristics and style of Ambrose in relation to those of S., including a careful study of the Biblical quotations. His conclusions were embodied in an essay on the authorship of S., of which a typescript copy, in view of the difficulties of publication, has been deposited in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, where it is available for students. A summary of his investigations may be read in two pamphlets, printed privately: *The de Sacramentis a work of St Ambrose* (n. d.), reproduced from the *Downside Review*, and *The de Sacramentis a work of St Ambrose. Two papers* (1942). He advances on the suggestion of Dom Morin by contending that Ambrose himself made use of the report of the addresses drawn up by the *notarius* when he was preparing M. This would explain several of the features noted above which suggest that M. is secondary to S. and dependent on it. The editors of the *Vienna Corpus* are preparing for their series a volume in which S. is to be included among the genuine works of Ambrose, but this has been delayed owing to the conditions created by the War. One of the editors, Otto Faller, quoted by Dom Morin, sums up his view of the matter by saying, "He who

knows Ambrose, after a more careful reading of the work *On the Sacraments*, cannot do otherwise than find Ambrose in every corner, if I may say so, of its manner of speech."

§ 2. *The Biblical Quotations in S. and M.*

The undisputed works of Ambrose supply evidence of the sources available to him for the text of the Old Testament. He was unacquainted with Hebrew but familiar with the Greek version (the LXX), the chief authority in the Church of his time. He also refers to the readings of the other Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, probably through some knowledge of parts of the Hexapla of Origen, where these were arranged in parallel columns. The pre-Vulgate Latin versions, which, as Jerome says, exhibited many variations in types of text, supplied him with frequent quotations, though he often alludes to the LXX and prefers to follow its readings as having greater authority (see *de Incarn.* 82).

In the New Testament, as in the Old Testament, though using a pre-Vulgate text, he frequently appeals to the original Greek. Illustrations of this are also found in S. and M., with the formula "the Greek has" (*Graecus habet*), "The Latin said" (*Latinus dixit*), when introducing a quotation, or "what the Latin and the Greek said" (*quod Latinus dixit et quod Graecus*) (S. v. 2. 11; v. 4. 24). The masculine ending, especially with *dixit*, is puzzling to translate, though with *habet* the word *codex* (or "text") might be supplied. This same formula is the common usage in the writings of Ambrose. When it is a matter of interpretation, however, we find "in Greek it is called" (*Graece dicitur*) or "the Greeks call" (*Graeci dicunt*) as in S. v. 4. 24, where the reference is to the words "daily bread" in the Lord's Prayer, or "according to the Greeks" (M. iv. 25), with reference to John 1. 32.

Elsewhere, in his works generally, the quotations of Am-

brose are often loose and due to memory, or a summary or paraphrase of the passage. The question of the sources of the quotations in S. and M. is complicated by the lack of a critical text of both treatises, which have not yet been published in the Vienna Corpus edition. The Maurists in their edition do not appear to have had access to the St Gall MS. (seventh–eighth centuries) or the Vatican MS. formerly of Bobbio (ninth–tenth centuries), and there is reason to believe that in some cases the transmitted text has been assimilated by scribes to the Vulgate, on which Jerome did not begin work before 383, while most of his work on the Old Testament was not published till after the death of Ambrose in 397.

In recent years Dom Connolly, to whose collections I am indebted for most of the information on which the following account is based, has made an exhaustive inquiry into the quotations of S.

Features common to S. and M. are as follows: (1) quotations which accord with the LXX; (2) quotations found in pre-Vulgate (Old Latin) texts; (3) divergences from the LXX, often finding parallels in other and undisputed writings of Ambrose, and due either to loose quotations from memory or to paraphrase in a form in which the author has been accustomed to quote the particular text, especially when, as in S., the work is a transcript of addresses orally given. A parallel case is found in his *Hexaemeron*, also based originally on oral addresses.

In the case of M., a work undertaken with a view to publication, the LXX readings are followed more closely than in S., and there are instances in which M. would appear to have corrected the looser and less accurate forms of S.

Many of the divergences of S., and in a less degree of M. (where they are fewer), from the Greek, without support from what is known of pre-Vulgate Latin texts, find parallels in other, undisputed works of Ambrose, and afford clear

evidence of bearing the imprint of his mind. Among such instances quoted by Dom Connolly are:

(1) Ecclesiastes 2. 14: "The wise man's eyes are in his head." Several times Ambrose quotes this correctly (as in M. vi. 30), and in one place follows exactly the LXX in the curious form *sapientis oculi ejus in capite ipsius* (in *Lucam* vii. 86). But in four passages (S. iii. i. 1; in *Ps.* i. 28; in *Ps.* cxviii. 16. 24 and 20. 1) he has *sensus* for *oculi*. This represents his own interpretation of *oculi*, influenced by the memory of Cicero, *de Natura deorum* ii. 140, where the senses are said to be "the interpreters and messengers of things in the head", the eyes being, as it were, on the look-out from a lofty position. The language of Cicero has similarly moulded the phraseology of *de Noe* 7. 17, where the eyes are said to be *speculatores* "on the look-out" as in Cicero, and the head is compared to a citadel.

(2) John 6. 68 f. In S. vi. i. 3 this runs: "Thou hast the words of eternal life, and how shall I withdraw from thee?" Here is an addition in the form of a comment by the preacher. Yet the passage is quoted in this or a similar form three times by Ambrose in his sermons on the Psalms (in *Ps.* xliii. 10; in *Ps.* xxxix. 16; in *Ps.* cxviii. 9. 22).

(3) In several passages of S. we find a combination of texts, which have no essential connexion, brought together for the purpose of the author's exposition. Examples are: S. vi. 3. 12 f. where Ps. 141 (LXX: 140). 3 and Col. 4. 3 are quoted with reference to Matt. 6. 6. The same texts with reference to Matt. 6 are found in *de Cain* i. 9. 35 f., and in both passages the same variations of reading, *ostium circuitus labiis* (verse 3 of the Psalm), and *aperiatur mihi ostium verbi* (Col.), are found. Other similar combinations of texts with parallels from other writings of Ambrose will be found in the notes on S. iv. 2. 5; v. 4. 26.

(4) An example of abbreviated quotation occurs twice in

S. (i. 2. 6; iv. 2. 7). It is Matt. 24. 28 (Luke 17. 37). Only once is this text fully quoted by Ambrose. Elsewhere (*de Fuga saec.* 5. 30; *de Abraham* ii. 11. 86; *de Excess. Fratris* ii. 108) it is found as in S.

For these and other numerous parallels between S. and Ambrose see Connolly's pamphlet, *The de Sacramentis a work of Ambrose. Two papers* (Downside Abbey, 1942).

In view of the importance of the biblical quotations in their bearing on the authorship of S. they have been dealt with more fully in the notes than they would otherwise have been, in order that the reader may have the details before him on which to base his judgement. Ambrose does not always quote consistently either in his undisputed works or in S., and different renderings of the same text are found.

There remain a few passages where it might be suggested that the quotations show knowledge of the Vulgate:

(1) M. vii. 40. Cant. 8. 2: "Thou shalt teach me" (absent from LXX, but found in the Hebrew and Vulgate). Elsewhere, however, in *Ps.* cxviii. 19. 25, Ambrose shows knowledge of this reading, which was plainly current in his time, probably from some Greek Hexapla version.

(2) S. iv. 2. 5. Cant. 8. 5: "from the wilderness" (so Vulg. and Hebrew, but absent from LXX). In two passages (*de Ob. Val.* 77; in *Ps.* cxviii. 14. 34) Ambrose mentions this as a variant reading for *dealbata* ("made white"), which is the LXX reading. In S. we have the two variant readings combined.

More important than these are:

(3) S. v. 1. 3. 1 Cor. 10. 4: "*spiritual* rock". The Maurists insert the word "*spiritual*" in their text, but admit that the majority of MSS. are without it. The omission is found in Irenaeus, *adv. Haer.* iv. 25. 3 (Latin version, Harvey). In all other quotations of the passage in Ambrose, including M., it is absent, except in *in Lucam* vi. 97. The

word may then have come in through assimilation by some scribe to the text of the Vulgate.

(4) S. v. 3. 13. Ps. 23 (Vulg. 22). 5: "my cup". M. viii. 43 has "thy cup" (so LXX). The Vulgate has "calix meus". Ambrose nowhere has *meum* (but regularly has *poculum* for Vulg. *calix*). There is a variant reading *meum* in M. and in *Apol. David* (i. 12. 59), but both in these and in S. it is most likely, especially in view of the other variants from the Vulgate in M. and S. and the absence of *meum* from Old Latin texts, that *meum* has crept in through assimilation to the Vulgate. Familiarity with the Latin Psalter would easily lead scribes to effect this.

(5) M. ix. 55. Cant. 4. 11: "A dropping honeycomb" (*favus distillans*; so Vulg.). There is a v. l. *favum distillant* (so LXX). Here again assimilation by a scribe to the Vulgate seems most probable.

The result of the above discussion is to indicate the secondary and dependent character of M. as compared with S., and this will be assumed in the present work, where S. is printed before M., and the parallel passages are duly noted. It is understood that it is intended to follow the same order of the treatises in the Vienna Corpus edition when it reaches the stage of publication.

II

LITURGICAL

A. THE RITES OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION AT MILAN IN THE TIME OF ST AMBROSE

As we have seen (pp. 3 f.), the addresses in S. were given to the newly baptized in Easter week, and the material of them

appears to have been subsequently used by Ambrose for the more general and continuous treatise found in M.

Both throw much light on the rites of Baptism and Confirmation, culminating in the reception of the Eucharist, as observed at Milan in the time of Ambrose, when the candidates were normally adults and when Easter was the usual time for Baptism (Ambrose, *de Elia* 34; *Hexaemeron* i. 4. 14). But they presuppose, and incidentally refer to, the longer course of instruction which has been carried on through Lent. In view of the care of the ancient Church for the selection and adequate instruction of those who were to be baptized, some account of this preparatory stage will form a natural introduction to the rites themselves.

§ 1. *On Catechetical Instruction*

As the Church grew in numbers and influence, and its converts were still mostly adults, the need of greater caution in accepting candidates for baptism, and fuller instruction than had been common in the earlier period, came to be emphasized. Tertullian, in his treatise *On Baptism* (i, xviii), had already indicated this, and early in the third century we find in the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus clear evidence of the measures taken to deal with it at Rome. From this latter document we learn that the word *catechumen*¹ came to be applied to those converts who were undergoing instruction with a view to baptism, and that this catechumenate normally extended over a period of three years, though Hippolytus says that it was not the time, but the good conduct of those who were undergoing such a course, that was the deciding factor.

¹ The word *κατηχεῖν* ("to instruct") is used in an earlier and less technical sense in Luke i. 4: Acts 18. 25: 1 Cor. 14. 19: Gal. 6. 6. From it are derived the words *catechize* and *catechism*.

The central act of Christian worship, the Eucharist, was divided into two parts. The catechumens were admitted to the first of these, hence known as the *missa catechumenorum*, which consisted mainly of Scripture lessons and sermon, but were dismissed before the *missa fidelium*, or Eucharist proper, began.

The conversion of the Empire flooded the Church with converts, many of whom were Christian only in name, and were unwilling to take upon themselves the full obligations of the Christian life involved in baptism, especially as a severe view was held of the heinousness of sin after baptism (cf. Heb. 6. 6, and see Augustine, *Confess.* i. 11). Hence though crowds flocked into the catechumenate, many stopped there, and the custom became prevalent of postponing as long as possible the reception of baptism. The Emperor Constantine was baptized on his death-bed. Augustine, born in 354, had as a boy been admitted as a catechumen, but his baptism took place only in 387.

In *de Elia* 23. 83 f. Ambrose deals with the hesitations and fears of those who postpone baptism. Unable to cope with the great crowd of catechumens the Church reserved the full instruction to those catechumens who expressed their intention of presenting themselves for baptism. Those who thus expressed their intention had to give in their names (see S. iii. 2. 12), and Ambrose (*in Lucam* iv. 76) tells us how, during the Epiphany season, he had invited his hearers to do this. Henceforth they were known as *competentes* (Ambrose, *Ep.* 20. 4), or at Rome *electi*, the corresponding Eastern term being φωτιζόμενοι ("those who are being illuminated"). At Milan during Lent Ambrose daily instructed the candidates in Christian morals and the elements of religion (M. i. 1). Many of his extant sermons, based on the books of Scripture read during Lent, are of this character. Thus, he tells us, in the passage of M. referred to above, that in Lent the lives of the patriarchs (Genesis) and the precepts of

Proverbs were read, and his own sermons *On Abraham* contain references which show that they were intended for candidates for baptism.¹

The importance of this work of instruction was such that leading bishops of the Church engaged in it themselves, and also wrote treatises intended for the guidance of catechists. Examples of these are Augustine's work *de catechizandis rudibus* and the *Catechetical Oration* of Gregory of Nyssa. The best-known example of the actual instruction given is the *Catecheses* of Cyril of Jerusalem. Other examples are found among the sermons of Chrysostom and in those of Augustine (*ad Competentes*) and to the newly baptized (*ad Infantes*).

The services at which the lessons referred to above were read, and the instructions given, were undoubtedly the *missae catechumenorum*, of which we find survivals in the later Milanese books, i.e. the *Manuale* (tenth century) and the *Ordo* of Beroldus (twelfth century). From these sources we learn that they were held at the third and ninth hours on weekdays in Lent, except on Saturdays when the "scrutinies" were held. Of these "scrutinies" or examinations of the candidates' fitness for baptism, which find a place in the references of Augustine and in the later liturgical books of Rome and Milan, there is no mention in the two treatises S. and M. Nor do they refer in express terms to the "delivery of the Creed" (*traditio symboli*), which formed an important part of the preparation of candidates in the West. Elsewhere, however, Ambrose (*Ep.* 20. 4. 6) tells us that this delivery of the Creed took place on the Sunday before Easter.² This ceremony

¹ See *de Abraham* i. 4. 25, "viri, maxime qui ad gratiam domini tenditis"; 7. 59, "qui ad gratiam baptismatis tenditis"; cf. 9. 89.

² The *Explanatio Symboli*, which presents much the same features as S. and appears to be a report of addresses by Ambrose on the Creed, forms, as we have seen (see p. 8), in two MSS. the introductory book to the addresses of S.

illustrates another feature in the discipline of the early Church, its reserve in imparting the most sacred truths and mysteries of the Christian religion (on this see p. 4). This reserve, which came to be known as *disciplina arcani*, was partly due to motives of reverence, suggested by Matt. 7. 6. It was also due to the sound educational principle that truth must be conveyed gradually and adapted to the circumstances and apprehension of the hearers. Both principles are stated by Ambrose, in *Lucam* vi. 105. At Rome, somewhat later, a like reserve was practised with regard to the delivery and exposition of the Gospels, for at Rome the catechumens were dismissed before the reading of the Gospel at Mass, though that was not the case at Milan. The Lord's Prayer came under the same reserve, and was delivered and expounded to the candidates before baptism at Rome, but after baptism in Easter week at Milan, as is indicated in S. (though M. is silent on this, in view of the reserve imposed upon Ambrose in a work intended for publication).

As we have seen, the two treatises S. and M. supply only fragmentary evidence of the preparatory stage of the catechumenate. Beyond the references in S. ii. 4. 13 and M. iv. 20 to the signing with the cross at the beginning of the catechumenate, and the passing reference in M. i. 1 to the daily instructions and lessons read from Genesis and Proverbs (see note on the above passage), they reveal little or nothing.¹ But on the rites of baptism their information is much fuller, and throws considerable light on the lessons read and the instructions given in Easter week on the Sacraments and on the Lord's Prayer. The *Catecheses* of Cyril of Jerusalem show a similar practice, whereas at Hippo in Africa in the

¹ The *Explanatio Symboli* (see p. 16) has a passing reference to the scrutinies (*celebrata ad haec mysteria scrutaminum*), but no details are given.

time of Augustine the instruction appears to have been completed in the main before baptism, though Easter week was still devoted to further addresses exhorting the candidates to perseverance. See Augustine, Sermons ccxxiv–ccxxviii (*ad Infantes*).

The practice of postponing instruction on the Sacraments until after Baptism and Communion is justified by Ambrose on two grounds: (1) To disclose the mysteries to those who were as yet uninitiated would be the betrayal of a sacred trust (M. i. 2; cf. S. i. 1. 1), i.e. a violation of the reserve imposed by the Church at that period. (2) It is better to let the light of the mysteries make its own appeal to those who come fresh to them rather than to introduce them by a discourse (M. i. 2). With the widespread growth of infant baptism this elaborate system of the discipline and instruction of candidates became meaningless, though many of the ancient forms survived in the Milanese rite as evidenced by the *Manuale* (tenth century) and the *Ordo* of Beroldus (twelfth century).

§ 2. *The Rites of Baptism and Confirmation*

The account of the baptismal customs given in S. and M. is of great value as our earliest source of information for the Milanese rite, with the later forms of which it presents many interesting points of contact. There is, however, a gap of several centuries between this account and the later Milanese sacramentary of Bergamo (ninth–tenth centuries) and the still later *Manuale* (tenth century) and the *Ordo* of Beroldus (twelfth century). In these later books there has been much rearrangement in the order of the rite: some ceremonies have disappeared, and others have been introduced. On these later forms see T. Thompson, *Offices of Baptism and Confirmation*, pp. 133 f.

The order and contents of the rite, as found in S. and M., are as follows:

1. The *Effeta* or "opening of the ears" (S. i. 1. 2, 3; M. i. 3, 4).

The account in M. only refers in general terms to the *Effeta* and its significance, the details of which are more fully dealt with in S. From the latter we learn that it took place on the Saturday, i.e. Easter Eve, as was the case at Rome, where, however, it was connected with the delivery of the Gospels, a rite not found at Milan (see p. 17). The *Effeta* derived its name from the word and actions of our Lord in the healing of the deaf and dumb man recorded in Mark 7. 34. The rite was performed by the bishop (*sacerdos*: see note on S. i. 1. 2), who touched the ears and nostrils of the candidate. There is no mention of the use of saliva or oil, as in the Roman rite. The ceremony is explained as the opening of the faculties to understand the questions and answers in the renunciations which follow, and also with a view to the fruitful reception of the sacraments (M. i. 3; S. i. 1. 2).

2. The unction at the font by priest and deacon (S. i. 2. 4).

This is found in the Roman rite, but is not in the later Milanese forms, nor is it mentioned in M. It has been suggested that its presence in S. shows the influence of Roman custom, and implies a difference of rite from M. But a more probable explanation of the silence of M. can be given. The reserve of M. in imparting full details of the baptismal ceremonies (see pp. 4 f.) in a work intended for public reading would be specially applicable here. The anointing of the body, or parts of the body other than the head, would be performed on women candidates as well as on men. There was no order of deaconesses in the West, as there was in the East, where deaconesses assisted in the case of women (*Didascalia* iii. 12, ed. Connolly, p. 146). As the candidates were stripped before entering the font (see Ambrose, *in Ps.* lxi. 32),

Jews and Pagans might criticize the unction on the ground of decency. This would account for the silence of M. Dr Homes Dudden (*Life and Times of St Ambrose*, I. 338) suggests that decency was safeguarded by the provision of separate baptisteries (in Ambrose, *Ep.* xx. 4, the majority of MSS. read *in baptisteriis*) or by an arrangement of curtains.

S. compares the unction to that of the athlete, and speaks of the candidate as Christ's athlete "about to wrestle in the fight of the world" (i. 2. 4; see note).

3. The renunciations (S. i. 2. 5; M. ii. 5, 7).

Here again the account of S. is fuller and more exact. The renunciations were twofold: (1) of the devil and his works, (2) of the world and its pleasures, the answer in each case being "I renounce". There follows in S. the admonition, "Be mindful of thy words and never let the contents of thy bond pass from thy memory", a formula which reappears in substantially the same words in the later Milanese books (see note on S. i. 2. 5). At Rome the renunciation was threefold; in the Gallican books there is a single renunciation. The later Milanese books remain faithful to the practice found in S.

Dom Morin's suggested emendation in M. ii. 7 would give the rendering "and by way of renouncing him to spit in his face" (see note on the passage). This is improbable, as it would introduce a custom for which there is no Western evidence, and which is found only at a later period in some Greek and Armenian rites.

In M.'s account of the renunciations the questions are put by the bishop, who also consecrates the water (iii. 8). In S. (i. 2. 4) there is a certain ambiguity. The ministers mentioned immediately before the unction are "levite" (i.e. deacon) and "presbyter". The next section begins without any reference to the change of subject, and without any explicit mention of the speaker, "When *he* asked thee". But the bishop's

presence and action in the *Effeta* have already been indicated, and are again stated in connexion with the consecration of the font. And this use of the singular "When *he* asked thee", when two persons (deacon and presbyter) have been mentioned, is consistent with the words being spoken by the bishop, who has been present throughout. This is more explicit in M., which may be here clearing up the ambiguity of S.

4. The consecration of the water (S. i. 5. 18; ii. 5. 14; M. iii. 8, 14; iv. 20).

Here again the details of the consecration are derived almost entirely from S., which speaks of an exorcism (i. 5. 18), as in the later Milanese and Gallican forms, and of an invocation (ii. 5. 14) that the presence of the Trinity may come down, which suggests the Trinitarian formula. To these details M. (iii. 14) adds the signing of the water with the cross. There is no mention of the pouring of chrism into the font, as in later Milanese and other Western rites.

5. The descent into the font: the baptismal profession and immersion (S. ii. 7. 20; M. iv. 21; v. 28). The font is sunk into the floor of the baptistery, and its appearance is described as "somewhat like that of a tomb in shape" (S. iii. 1. 1 and note).

The baptismal profession was made in response to three questions: "Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty?"; "Dost thou believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in His Cross?"; "Dost thou believe also in the Holy Ghost?" To each question the candidate replied "I believe", and an immersion followed each response (S. ii. 7. 20). The addition of the words "*and in His Cross*" to the second question, quoted by S. and referred to by M., is not found elsewhere, and in the later Milanese books it has been replaced by the Roman form "who was born and suffered". The immersion after each response is found in the Gelasian

Sacramentary. Threefold immersion was usual in the West, except in Spain, where a single immersion was adopted.

The actual formula of baptism is not expressly quoted by S. or M. though both refer to Matt. 28. 19 in such a way as to imply its use. See S. ii. 7. 22; M. iv. 20. In the *Manuale Ambrosianum* (Magistretti, ii. p. 208) the directions in one MS. are: at the first immersion, "In the name of the Father"; at the second immersion, "and of the Son"; at the third immersion "and of the Holy Spirit". An earlier MS. has no formula for the first immersion. "In the name of the Father" is used with the second immersion, and "Of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" accompanies the third immersion.

6. Unction of the head with chrism (S. ii. 7. 24; M. vi. 29, 30).

This, too, was performed by the bishop (*sacerdos* is used in both works; see note S. i. 1. 2). From S. iii. 1. 1 we learn that it was performed with chrism (*μύρον*). The prayer quoted by S. as used by the bishop (S. ii. 7. 24) resembles, with a few changes of wording,¹ the prayer found in the Gelasian Sacramentary (Wilson, p. 86) in connexion with the post-baptismal unction at Rome, where, however, the minister was the presbyter, not the bishop. The unction is interpreted by S. (iii. 1. 1) as the enrichment of the faculties by Divine grace, and the summary of the effects of the baptism and the unction speaks of the whole rite as "regeneration". M. (vi. 30) sees in the unction a parallel to the anointing of Aaron—Ps. 133 (Vulg. 132). 2—and explains it as the consecration of the newly baptized to their place in the priestly body of the Church. In S. the same language is used at

¹ Both S. and Gelas. have (though in different terms) the reference to remission of sins, but while S. concludes the prayer with the words *ipse te ungit in vitam aeternam*, Gelas. has *ipse te linit chrismate salutis in Christo Jesu Domino nostro in vitam aeternam*.

a later stage (iv. 1. 3); here the baptized are "anointed to the priesthood" and "the kingdom".

7. The washing of the feet of the newly baptized (S. iii. 1. 4-7; M. vi. 31-33).

It was begun by the bishop and completed by the presbyters (S. iii. 1. 4). The author is aware that the rite was not practised at Rome, and defends the Milanese use of it. "In all things I desire to follow the Roman Church. Yet we too are not without discernment; and what other places have done well to retain, we too do well to maintain." This statement is not found in M., where Ambrose, writing for a general public, would naturally avoid language which seemed to involve criticism of other churches including possibly Rome, whereas in the freer atmosphere of orally delivered addresses to his own neophytes no such fears would arise. The feet-washing was current in Africa, Gaul (*Missale Gothicum*, *Missale Gallicanum Vetus*, the Bobbio Missal), and in Ireland (Stowe Missal). It is mentioned in Canon 48 of the Spanish Council of Elvira c. 305, where according to one reading it is forbidden,¹ and this may explain its absence from later Spanish liturgical books. It survived, however, at Milan and is found in the *Manuale Ambrosianum* and in Beroldus. Augustine (*Ep.* lv. *ad Januarium* 33) saw the danger of attaching an exaggerated value to it, and asserted that it was a pattern of humility, but no part of the sacrament of baptism. Ambrose, on the other hand, while recognizing its value as a lesson in humility (S. iii. 1. 7; M. vi. 33), assigns it a sacramental efficacy. While all guilt is washed away in baptism, there remains the transmitted hereditary tendency to sin (the *lubricum delinquendi* described in *Ps.* xlviii. 9), and for this there is needed a "reinforcement of sanctification"

¹ The words are: "Neque pedes lavandi sunt a sacerdotibus sed clericis; where, however, according to Routh, *Reliquiae Sacrae*, iv. 268, there is the variant *vel* for *sed*.

supplied by the feet-washing (S. iii. 1. 7). The language in M. is similar (vi. 32). Our own sins are remitted in baptism. The hereditary sins (i.e. the tendency to sin transmitted by the first man Adam) need to be cleansed. For fuller discussion see notes on above passages.

8. The vesting with white robes (M. vii. 34; alluded to in S. v. 3. 14: *familia candidata*).

This custom appears in the East in the fourth century (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.* xxii. 8) and is mentioned, as finding a place in the Roman rite, early in the sixth century by John the Deacon (*Ep. ad Senarium* 6). It is found in the Spanish *Liber Ordinum*, which contains much ancient material, and also in the *Missale Gothicum* and Bobbio Missal. The memory of it survives in the Roman books in the titles of some of the prayers for Easter week and its octave: *totius albae orationes*, Gelasian Sacramentary; *feria ii in albis, die dominico post albas*, Gregorian Sacr.

9. The "spiritual seal" (S. iii. 2. 8-10; vi. 2. 6-8; M. vii. 41, 42).

To this rite S. gives also the title *perfectio* as being the "completion" of baptism. Both treatises speak of it as a "seal" (*signaculum*) and connect it with the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit. While M. makes no mention of the officiant, but introduces the rite in connexion with an exposition of the Canticles, S. precedes the enumeration of the sevenfold gifts by the words "when, at the invocation of the priest" (*sacerdos*, i.e. the bishop; see note S. i. 1. 2) "the Holy Spirit is bestowed". As the list of the seven gifts is given in a form which suggests that it is a liturgical formula, differing from the biblical text (see note S. iii. 2. 8), it has been suggested that the words formed part of the formula employed by the bishop. This, however, is conjectural and cannot be regarded as certain as it is not expressly stated by S. that the seven gifts were included as a formula (see further note, p. 76).

There is no mention of a laying on of the hand or of unction, but in a later passage S. (vi. 2. 5-8) in a summary of the baptismal rites says (§ 7) "Therefore God anointed thee, the Lord signed thee. How? Because thou wast signed with the image of the cross itself into His passion, thou receivedst a seal unto His likeness, that thou mayest rise unto His image, and live after His pattern." This may point to a signing with the cross in the giving of the "seal", as in later Ambrosian and Roman usage. Of this signing M. (vii. 42) says "God the Father hath *sealed* thee, Christ the Lord hath *confirmed* thee, and *hath given the earnest* (or pledge) *of the Spirit in thy heart*, as thou hast learned from the apostolic lesson." Here the words italicized show that the passage is 2 Cor. I. 21, 22. In S. iii. 2. 8 the "spiritual seal" is said to have been heard of in the lesson for the day, and this points again to the Apostle's words, which are partly quoted in vi. 2. 6.

The relation of the post-baptismal unction to the giving of "the spiritual seal" has led to much discussion. In S. the two are plainly distinct, and this fact (in view of the relationship of the two treatises indicated previously in this Introduction) determines the interpretation of the vaguer language in M. The significance of the "sealing" is clearly the seven-fold gift of the Holy Spirit, and so it corresponds to "Confirmation" in later languages. But in the later Ambrosian Sacramentary of Bergamo there is only *one* unction and that was after baptism. It was performed by the bishop (*sacerdos*: presbyters and deacons having been previously mentioned). He signs the neophytes with chrism and with a formula closely resembling that used in the post-baptismal unction of S., but ending with the words "*ipse te linit chrismate salutis in Christo Jesu domino nostro in vitam aeternam*".¹ In the *Manuale Ambrosianum* after baptism the presbyter anoints

¹ S. has simply "*ipse te ungit in vitam aeternam*".

the baptized on the *head* with chrism in the form of a cross, though in the later *Ordo* of Beroldus the archbishop signs the baptized on the brow in the form of a cross using the same prayer as that used by the presbyter, and also by the bishop in the single unction of the Sacramentary of Bergamo. The same prayer is found in the post-baptismal unction by the presbyter in the Roman Sacramentaries, Gelasian and Gregorian, though it is followed by the bishop's laying on of the hand with a prayer which begins much like the former prayer but includes a petition for the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit, and this is followed in the Gelasian Sacramentary by a signing on the *brow* with chrism with the words "The sign of Christ *unto eternal life*". This prayer for the sevenfold gifts is thought to be an amplification or filling out of the shorter prayer by an express request for the gift of the Spirit, a request which is only more vaguely and indirectly made in the earlier phrase *chrisma salutis*¹ or "the sign of Christ *unto life eternal*" in the Gelasian formula of signing. Magistretti (*Pontificale in usum eccl. Mediolan.* pp. xxii f.) suggests that this fuller prayer came into use when presbyters in the absence of the bishop began to anoint the newly baptized. At Rome Pope Innocent I (*Ep.* xxv *ad Decentium*), about 416, ordained that presbyters, when they baptize, either in the absence or in the presence of the bishop, may

¹ For *chrisma salutis* see Gelasian Sacramentary, where the form for the consecration of the chrism by the bishop concludes with the prayer "ut sit his qui renati fuerint ex aqua et spiritu sancto *chrisma salutis*" (Wilson, p. 71); for *in vitam aeternam* see Gelasian formula of signing on the brow with chrism (following the laying on of the hand as above): "Signum Christi *in vitam aeternam*". For the idea underlying both phrases cf. Eph. i. 13, 14. Both phrases are combined by Pope Leo I, *Sermo de Nativitate* (P.L. LIV, 207), in the words "Renati per aquam et Spiritum sanctum accepistis *chrisma salutis* et signaculum *vitalis aeternae*." In the Roman Pontifical the words are "I confirm thee with the *chrism of salvation*".

anoint the baptized with chrism, provided it had been consecrated by the bishop. Presbyters may not, however, sign the *brow* with it; for that is the privilege of bishops when they bestow the Holy Spirit. The Roman rite of Confirmation has in later times been used at Milan (Magistretti, p. xxiv).

For the various views on the question see articles in Cabrol, *Dictionnaire d'arch. chrét. et de lit.*: "Confirmation" (de Puniet), "Onction" (Leclercq), "Ambrosien rit" (Lejay).

10. The procession to the altar followed the completion of the above rites (S. iii. 2. 15; iv. 2. 5, 7 and 3. 8; M. viii. 43). Both S. and M. refer to Pss. 43 and 23. But the use of Ps. 43 in the Roman and Ambrosian Missals in the preparatory portion of the Mass is of later origin.¹ From Ambrose (*in Ps. cxviii*, prol. 2) we learn that though the newly baptized communicated along with the faithful, they did not take part in the people's offering of bread and wine before Low Sunday.

In the later Ambrosian books mention is made of *missae pro baptizatis* celebrated during the weekdays of Easter week. These were distinct from the masses attended by the general body of the faithful. The latter were celebrated in a different church (see p. 35) and at a later hour.

Beyond references to the lessons read at the services in which the addresses were given, the two treatises S. and M. throw no light on the character of the services in Easter week.

B. THE LITURGY

ONE of the most valuable features of S. for the liturgical student is that it supplies us with a series of prayers (iv. 5. 21,

¹ The treatise *de Lapsu Virginis* speaks of lights borne by the neophytes (v. 19), but this work is probably not by Ambrose. It has been assigned to Niceta of Remesiana by Burn (who prints it in his edition of Niceta) and by Souter, *J. Th. S.* vi. (1905) pp. 433 f.

22 and 6. 26, 27) which, when read consecutively, exhibit a general correspondence in order and contents with those of the Canon of the Roman Mass as found in the Gelasian Sacramentary. The text of the Canon in the Vatican MS. of the Gelasian Sacramentary is really Gregorian, "the actual text of the Roman Canon in use in theseventh century" (E. Bishop, *Liturgica Historica*, pp. 81 f.). When compared with it, the prayers in S. are shown to contain much of the substance of the prayers *Quam oblationem*, *Qui pridie*, *Unde et memores*, *Supra quae*, and *Supplices te*, with some omissions, and, in the case of the last two prayers, with some transposition of order. There are many exact parallels of language, but also striking divergences.

1. The prayer (iv. 5. 21) corresponding to *Quam oblationem* (but beginning "Make for us this oblation"—*Fac nobis hanc oblationem*) contains, like that prayer, a petition that the oblation may be made "approved, ratified, reasonable, acceptable", but whereas the Gelasian form goes on "that it may become (or be made) to us (*ut fiat nobis*) the body and blood of thy dearly beloved Son", S. has "because it is the figure (*figura*) of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ".

2. The commemoration of the institution (iv. 5. 21) begins, like the Gelasian form, with the words "Who the day before he suffered" (*Qui pridie quam pateretur*), as distinct from the Eastern and Mozarabic forms, which follow 1 Cor. 11. 23, but the actual recital of the institution shows many divergences and lacks some of the characteristic features of the later Roman form.

3. The Anamnesis, corresponding to *Unde et memores*, is shorter than the Gelasian form and exhibits some notable differences of wording.

4. In place of *Supra quae* and *Supplices te* there is in S. a single prayer, beginning (iv. 6. 27) "And we ask and pray

that thou wouldst receive this oblation", the order of the contents of the two prayers being reversed, and the references to the gifts of Abel and the sacrifices of Abraham and Melchizedek following, instead of preceding, the prayer for the reception of the oblation "on thy altar on high".

5. But the most striking feature, amid these general points of contact with the Gelasian form, is the number of details in which S. finds parallels with Eastern phrases and forms. The recital of the institution contains variants which find parallels in the Syrian and other Eastern rites. Examples are the addition of the words in italics: "he delivered it to *his apostles and to his disciples*" (twice), "This is my body *which shall be broken for many*", "ye will make a memorial of me *until I come again*"; the phrases "reasonable offering", "unbloody offering" (*rationabilem hostiam, incruentam hostiam*), in the prayer *Ergo memores* ("Therefore having in remembrance"); and the plural "by the hands of thy *angels*", in the petition for the reception of the oblation on "thy altar on high". Lastly, the doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer is another Eastern feature.¹

What is the origin of these prayers? Duchesne (*Christian Worship*, E.T., p. 177) suggested that they are an adaptation of the Roman Canon to the use of some North Italian Church, where the uses of Rome and Milan were combined.

Others have seen in them an older form of the Roman Canon itself (Ceriani). We know of certain changes in the Canon made in the period between the date of S. and the date of the text found in the Gelasian Sacramentary. The *Liber Pontificalis* (ed. Duchesne, pp. 239, 312) attributes to Pope Leo the words *sanctum sacrificium, immaculatam hostiam*, and to Pope Gregory the clause *diesque nostros . . . iubeas*

¹ On the doxologies in S. see p. 7. On Eastern parallels to the phrases quoted, see the present author's *Early History of the Liturgy* (2nd. ed. 1947) pp. 161 f.

grege numerari. The absence of these from S. indicates that the text of S. is earlier than Pope Leo. But there is further evidence that points to an earlier recension of the Roman Canon than that found in the Vatican MS. of the Gelasian Sacramentary. This evidence, as Mr Edmund Bishop has shown (*Liturgica Historica*, pp. 92 f.), is contained in the texts of the Bobbio and Stowe Missals and of the *Missale Francorum*, which had substituted the Roman Canon for their "Gallican" use. Alluding to the persistency of the tradition of verbal minutiae in the early MSS. of the Canon, in spite of all their variants, Mr Bishop pointed out two variants from the Gelasian text, both of which are found in S. Thus Stowe and the *Missale Francorum* both have *Supplices te rogamus et petimus*, and again, here supported also by Bobbio, *iube haec perferri . . . in sublimi altari* (Bobbio, *alterio*) *tuo*. The corresponding passage in S. (iv. 6. 27) similarly has *et petimus et precamur ut hanc oblationem suscipias in sublimi altari tuo*.

Dom Connolly (*Downside Review*, Vol. xxxvi, 1917, pp. 58 f.) has pointed out the presence, in a *Post Secreta* prayer of the *Missale Gothicum* (H.B.S., ed. Bannister, p. 138, No. 527), of a continuous extract from an Anamnesis of the Canon which corresponds nearly word for word with the relevant parts of the prayers in S. It begins with the words "Having in remembrance his most glorious passion", includes the phrases "reasonable offering, unbloody offering", and concludes with "this holy bread and cup of salvation (*calicem salutare*)", the rest reverting to a "Gallican" formula. Another parallel with S. mentioned by Dom Connolly in the same article is found in a rubric of the Gelasian Sacramentary after the *Hanc igitur* for Thursday in Holy Week (Wilson, p. 67), where in place of the Gregorian text *in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas* we find *in suis sanctis manibus*, as in S.

Lastly, M. Batiffol (*L'Eucharistie*, 5^{ème} éd., pp. 357 f.)

called attention to a *Post Pridie* prayer in the Mozarabic *Liber Ordinum* (ed. Férotin, pp. 321 f.), where amid many echoes of the Roman Canon, we find a version of the *Quam oblationem* which in one important respect resembles the corresponding prayer in S. While the latter runs:

“ Make for us this oblation approved, ratified, reasonable, acceptable, seeing that it is the figure (*figura*) of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ ”,

the Mozarabic prayer is as follows:

“ Whose oblation do thou deign to bless, ratify, and make reasonable, which is the image and likeness (*imago et similitudo*) of the body and blood of Jesus Christ thy Son, our redeemer ”.

In view of this evidence and the attitude of the writer to the usages of the Roman Church (iii. 1. 5) it seems reasonable to conclude that the Canon of S. is based upon that of the Roman Church, though at an earlier stage in its history than the form found in the Gelasian Sacramentary.

There still, however, remains the problem of the Eastern affinities exhibited, as we have seen, in a number of small details, and in the presence of the doxology at the close of the Lord's Prayer. Here Dom Morin's article in the *Maria Laach Jahrbuch f. Liturgiewissenschaft* is particularly illuminating. Ambrose, who was a Roman magistrate at the time of his election, entered upon his episcopate as successor to the Semi-Arian bishop, Auxentius, who had held the see from 355 to 374. During that period many innovations must have been introduced into the liturgical forms of the Church. Auxentius had been brought up in Cappadocia, and his Creed, which speaks of God the Father as “ invisible, impassible ” (Hahn, *Bibliothek der Symbole*, 1897, pp. 148 f.), is, he says, that which he had learned from childhood.¹ In

¹ In the *Explanatio Symboli*, which Dom Morin has shown convincing reasons for attributing to Ambrose, the speaker makes a

dealing with his predecessor's innovations, the prudence which Ambrose had exercised as a Roman magistrate would guide him. Instead of eliminating indiscriminately all the changes, to some of which his flock had been accustomed and possibly attached, he dealt only with those which it was necessary to omit or correct. And for his guidance in this matter he could find no better source than the custom of the great Church of Rome, "whose type and form", he tells us (S. iii. 1. 5), "we follow in all things", while reserving to himself the right to retain customs which he considered harmless in themselves and which he judged it well to retain. "In all things", he says, "I desire to follow the Roman Church. Yet we, too, are not without discernment" (this is in reference to the washing of the feet of the newly baptized; see note on the passage). It is in this way that Dom Morin has explained the Oriental features in the Canon of S., while pointing out that its general structure is based on that of Rome. Hence he brings together the elements of truth in the contention of Duchesne on the one hand and of Ceriani and the Milanese scholars on the other hand. "Duchesne", he says (p. 101), "was right in suspecting a more or less considerable share of Oriental elements in the Milanese rite in the time of Ambrose. On the other hand, Ceriani and his disciples rightly claimed the substantial identity of the Ambrosian and Roman liturgies."

A few minor features in the account of the liturgy in S. call for passing notice. Mention is made of "praises offered to God" and prayer "for the people, kings and others" (iv. 4. 14), but no certain conclusions about the exact order

vehement attack on these additions to the Creed and justifies their omission (see p. 102 of the article cited above) on the ground of the use made of them by the Arians. Both Ambrose (*Ep.* xlii. 5 in the letter of a synod to Siricius) and the *Explanatio Symboli* affirm their adherence to the Creed of Rome.

of these features can be drawn from such a statement (see *The Early History of the Liturgy*, referred to above, p. 156). Elsewhere S. gives the form of administration *Corpus Christi*, and the communicant's response *Amen* (iv. 5. 25).

C. THE LESSONS FROM THE SCRIPTURES

THERE are several references to the lessons read in church in S. and M. In the case of S. these are often quite explicit, and from them and the less definite statements of M. we can form some idea of the order and contents of the lessons. Their evidence shows that certain books were already assigned to particular seasons, and that the beginning of a fixed course of lessons for the more important seasons of the Church had already been made. It will suffice to indicate briefly the main facts, and to adduce parallels to the later system of lessons exhibited in the *Manuale Ambrosianum* and the still earlier Sacramentary of Bergamo (where, however, only the Epistles and Gospels are given). Such parallels can only yield results of varying and unequal value. In some cases they point to a real connexion between the earlier and the later practice. Others are merely interesting "attestations", while others again (e.g. some of those cited under 3) show the kind of teaching which was associated with the passages and led to their finding a place in the Milanese cycle of lessons.

1. In M. i. 1 Ambrose speaks of lessons from the lives of the patriarchs and from Proverbs as read during Lent. This corresponds to the later Milanese practice found in the *Manuale*, in which lessons from Genesis and Proverbs were read at the *missae catechumenorum* at the third and ninth hours each weekday in Lent except Saturdays.¹ From Ambrose,

¹ For details see footnotes to the services in Lent in Magistretti's ed. of the *Manuale*, and on these *missae catechumenorum* see W. C. Bishop, *Ch. Quarterly Review* lxxii (1911), pp. 56 f.

Ep. xx. 14. 25 we learn that in Holy Week it was the established custom to read lessons from the books of Job and Jonah.¹ From the date supplied by his letter it appears that the book of Job was read on the Wednesday and Jonah on the Thursday. In the *Manuale* we find Job, along with Tobit, read on the first three days of Holy Week, and the lesson from Jonah on the Thursday. From S. iii. 1. 4 (cf. M. vi. 31) it appears that John 13. 4 f. was read at the time of the washing of the feet of the newly baptized, whereas in the *Manuale* it is appointed for the Mass of the newly baptized on Saturday in Easter week.

The addresses contained in S. began on the Tuesday in Easter week, and ended on the following Sunday. As to the lessons read at the masses for the newly baptized on those days, S. supplies the following facts. In the second address (ii. 2. 3; cf. M. iv. 22) it is said that John 5. 4 f. was read "yesterday". In the same address (ii. 7. 23) Rom. 6. 3 is referred to as read in "the lesson for the day" (*in lectione praesenti*). In the third address (iii. 2. 8) there is a reference to the "spiritual seal" of which they had heard in the lesson for the day (*quod audistis hodie legi*). The reference is to 2 Cor. 1. 21 f., as is shown by the parallel section M. vii. 42, where that passage is spoken of as learned by them "from the apostolic lesson". In the sixth address (S. vi. 2. 9) the passage 1 Cor. 12. 4 f. is said to have been read "the day before yesterday" (*nudius tertius*). Putting these results together, the following table shows the lessons read on the first four days of Easter week, and the corresponding days on which the same chapters appear in the system of lessons found

¹ The words of Ambrose are: *audistis . . . librum Job legi, qui solemnī munere est decursus et tempore (§ 14) . . . Sequenti die lectus est de more liber Jonae (§ 25)*. On the sequence of days in the events recorded in *Ep.* xx see Homes Dudden, *Life and Times of St Ambrose*, i. 275-78.

in the *Manuale* or in the Sacramentary of Bergamo (indicated by *M.* and *B.*).

	Easter week.	<u>Manuale and Bergamo</u>	
John 5 (the paralytic) (S. ii. 2. 3; cf. M. iv. 22)	Tuesday	Tuesday in Easter week (Mass of newly- baptized). ¹ Friday, 1st week in Lent.	<i>M.</i> <i>B.</i>
Rom. 6. 3 f. (S. ii. 7. 23)	Wednesday	Monday in Easter week (Mass of the people).	<i>B.</i>
2 Cor. 1. 21 f. (S. iii. 2. 8; cf. M. vii. 42)	Thursday	—	
1 Cor. 12. 4 (S. vi. 2. 9)	Friday	Pentecost (Mass of the people).	<i>M.</i> and <i>B.</i>

2. Three other lessons referred to as read in church, though the day is not indicated, find a place in the *Manuale*, and one of them also in Bergamo, in connexion with the services of Lent and Easter week.

	<u>Manuale and Bergamo</u>	
John 9 (the man born blind) (S. iii. 2. 11)	3rd Sunday in Lent (<i>Dominica de Caeco</i>).	<i>M.</i> and <i>B.</i>
Gen. 14 (Melchizedek) (M. viii. 45; cf. S. iv. 3. 10)	Friday in Easter week (Mass of the people).	<i>M.</i>

¹ In the *Manuale* the masses of the newly baptized are said to be in the "winter church" (*in eccl. hyem.*), i.e. the metropolitan basilica, as contrasted with the older church of St Thecla (destroyed in 1548). Both churches were metropolitan, and had the status of cathedral churches. This will help in identifying the lessons and the particular Mass in which they were read.

	<i>Manuale and Bergamo</i>	
2 Kings 5 (Naaman) (S. i. 5. 13; cf. M. iii. 16)	Tuesday in Easter week (Mass of the people). Monday, 3rd week in Lent.	M. B.

3. The following passages, commented on, or alluded to, in illustration of the baptismal rites, though not referred to as actually read in church, find a place among the lessons contained in the *Manuale*, and in some cases in Bergamo.

	<i>Manuale and Bergamo</i>	
Gen. 1 (S. iii. 1. 3; cf. M. iii. 9)	Easter Vigil.	M. and B.
Gen. 6; 7 (Noah) (M. iii. 10; cf. S. i. 6. 23)	Easter Eve (<i>Missa catechumenorum</i>).	M.
Exodus 12. 1-12 (the Pass- over) (S. i. 4. 12)	Easter Vigil.	B.
Exodus 14 (the Red Sea) (S. i. 6. 20; M. ix. 51)	Easter Vigil.	M. and B.
Exodus 15 (Song of Moses) (M. iii. 12)	Easter Vigil.	M. and B.
2 Kings 6 (the axe-head) (S. ii. 4. 11; iv. 4. 18; M. ix. 51)	Wednesday in Easter week (Mass of the people).	M.
Isaiah 11 (the sevenfold gifts) (S. iii. 2. 8; M. vii. 42)	Vigil of Pentecost.	M.
John 3. 5 (the new birth) (M. iv. 20)	Easter Vigil (Mass of newly baptized).	M. and B.
John 6 (the bread of life) (S. vi. 1. 2-4)	Thursday and Friday in Easter week (Mass of newly baptized).	M.

	<i>Manuale</i> and Bergamo	
1 Cor. 10. 2 f. (Israel in the wilderness) (S. i. 6. 20; M. iii. 12; viii. 49)	Wednesday in Easter week (Mass of the people).	M. and B.
1 Tim. 2 (on prayer) (S. vi. 3. 11 and 5. 22)	Saturday in Easter week (Mass of the people).	M. and B.

III

EUCCHARISTIC DOCTRINE

THE two treatises S. and M. have played an important part in the Eucharistic controversies of the Western Church, owing to two features in their presentation of the Eucharist: (1) Their pronounced teaching on the conversion of the elements into the body and blood of Christ; (2) their emphasis on the words of institution as effecting this "consecration" or "change". In both respects they profoundly influenced later teaching. There is nothing parallel to their language in Western writers before their time. The conception of a "conversion" of the elements into the body and blood of Christ was probably derived by Ambrose, as was so much else in his theology, from Greek sources. It appears for the first time (apart from some anticipation of it in Gnostic writers) in the *Catecheses* of Cyril of Jerusalem, and was elaborated with a special theory of his own by Gregory of Nyssa (*Oratio Catechetica*, c. 37), with whose language Ambrose exhibits occasional parallels.¹

¹ With the phrases in Ambrose *naturam convertere, mutare naturam* cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Or. Cat.* 37, μεταστοιχείωσας τὴν τῶν φαινομένων τὴν φύσιν; and with the use of *species* (M. ix. 52, *ut species mutet elementorum*) cf. the use of εἶδος in Gregory, l.c., πρὸς τὸ τοῦ σώματος εἶδος τῆς τροφῆς μεθιοταμένης. In *de*

Hitherto, in the West, side by side with the unreflective realism which simply speaks of the elements as the body and blood of Christ, we find, as in Tertullian, the bread spoken of as "the figure" (*figura*) of the body of Christ, or as "representing" (*repraesentare*) His body. Such language, however, has a more definite sense than the corresponding English words, and suggests the idea of exhibiting or making present the sacred realities of which it speaks.¹ This stage of reflection is exhibited in the prayers of S. iv. 5. 21, which speak of the oblation as "the figure" (*figura*) of the body and blood of Christ and refer to it in mystical language as "this holy bread and cup of eternal life" (S. iv. 6. 27). Nor was such language confined to the West. It finds many parallels in Eastern sources during the fourth century,² and it survives in the Liturgy of St Basil, which, in the words introducing the Invocation, speaks of "offering the types (*ἀντίτυπα*) of the holy body and blood of thy Christ".³ It is to be observed, however, that both in the first of the prayers of S. quoted above, and in the passage of the liturgy of St Basil, it is of the elements as offered, before consecration, that the words are used. Augustine is in the same line of tradition as Tertullian, in that he uses the expressions "figure" and "sign" (*figura* and *signum*) "of the body of Christ" (*Enarr. in Ps. iii. 1*;

Fide iv. 10. 124 Ambrose speaks of the sacraments as "by means of the sacred prayer transformed (*transfigurantur*) into flesh and blood". Here *transfigurare* (corresponding to *μετασχηματίζειν*) is a synonym of *mutare*. For the use of the word in this sense see Tertullian, *adv. Praxeas* 27; Suetonius, *Nero* 28, *Caligula* 22. Feltoe (*J. Th. S. xi. 575 f.*) traces the use of the words *transfigurare* and *transformare* in later Gallican liturgical forms to Greek influence.

¹ See e.g. *adv. Marc.* iii. 19; iv. 40; i. 14. And on the interpretation see *J. Th. S. vii. 596 f.* (C. H. Turner); iii. 173 (Swete); for *repraesentare* see also Lexicons.

² See the present author's *Early History of the Liturgy*, 2nd ed. (1947), pp. 222 f.

³ Brightman, *Litt. E. and W.* 329, 23 f.

C. Adimant. xii. 3), while still employing the more direct realist language (*Sermo* 227: "that bread which you see on the altar, sanctified by the word of God, is the body of Christ"). He advances, however, on this earlier language, by developing a theory of sacraments characterized by the distinction between the visible sign and the invisible reality. But his emphasis on the spiritual and mystical aspects of the sacraments, and the importance which he assigns to "faith" and to "the word", lead him to use language which might seem at times to imply a figurative or symbolical view.¹

But in Cyril of Jerusalem in the East (A.D. 347) and in Ambrose in the West a different terminology is found. The consecration of the Eucharist is represented as effecting a mysterious change in the elements by which they become the body and blood of Christ. Cyril of Jerusalem had already appealed to the miracle of Cana as affording a parallel to this change.² Ambrose develops such teaching. The consecration, effected by the words of Christ recited by the priest, is a miraculous act of God, to which parallels may be found in the miracles of Moses and Elisha, and the Virgin birth, as well as in the act of creation itself (S. iv. 4. 15-19; M. ix. 51-53). Ambrose does not hesitate to speak of the change effected as a "change of nature", and, as we have seen, illustrates this from other examples of changes "in a way beyond nature", or "outside the order of nature" (*praeter naturam, praeter naturae ordinem*, M. ix. 51, 53). On the other hand, he emphasizes the spiritual character of the Eucharistic food. "Christ is in that sacrament, because it is the body of Christ; therefore it is not bodily food, but

¹ On Augustine see art. "Eucharist" in Hastings, *Encycl. of Religion and Ethics* v. 554; Tixeront, *Histoire des Dogmes* ii. 412 f.; Darwell Stone, *Hist. of Doctrine of Eucharist* i. 92 f., where illustrative passages are given.

² *Cat.* xxii. 2.

spiritual. Whence also the Apostle says of the type of it that 'our fathers ate spiritual food and drank spiritual drink'. For the body of God is a spiritual body; the body of Christ is the body of a divine Spirit, because Christ is Spirit" (M. ix. 58). In two passages of S., Ambrose speaks of the sacrament as received "in a likeness" (*similitudo*). In S. iv. 4. 20, in dealing with the objection "I do not see the appearance of blood", he explains that, in order to remove any revulsion at the thought of receiving the body of Christ under its natural conditions, it is given in another form, namely "the likeness (*similitudo*) of the death", "the likeness of the precious blood". He is thinking of the outward signs under which the sacrament was administered. Similarly in S. vi. 1. 2, 3, dealing with the same objection, he explains: "Lest others should say this, feeling a shrinking from actual blood, and that yet the grace of redemption might remain, therefore thou receivest the sacrament in a similitude (*in similitudinem*), but truly obtainest the grace and virtue of the nature", and in the following section he argues that "because our Lord Jesus Christ is alike a sharer both in divinity and body", those who receive his flesh partake "of His divine essence in that food".

The train of thought opened up by Ambrose exercised, as we have seen (pp. 1, 37), a profound influence on later Western theology. It encountered a rival influence in the more spiritualizing and mystical teaching of Augustine. In the later controversies in the ninth century aroused by the "conversion" doctrine of Paschasius, and in the eleventh century by Berengar and his opponents, both the treatises S. and M. were appealed to. The teaching of Ambrose was the starting-point of those who maintained the identity of the elements with the body and blood of Christ in virtue of the conversion miraculously effected by consecration—the teaching finally formulated in the doctrine of Transubstantiation

at the Council of the Lateran in 1215. Augustine is the authority appealed to by those who distinguished the visible sign from the invisible reality, and who tended to maintain a spiritual presence of power and efficacy, a view which in still later developments tended to pass in its most extreme forms into a purely figurative or commemorative idea of the sacrament.

A second feature in the Eucharistic teaching of S. and M. is the emphasis which they lay upon the words of institution as effecting the consecration of the sacrament. Speculation about the "moment of consecration" received an impulse from the very definite teaching of Cyril of Jerusalem. In his *Catecheses* he attributes the consecration to the operation of the Holy Spirit, who is invoked in the Eucharistic prayer to "make (*ποιεῖν*) the bread the body of Christ, and the wine His blood", and he adds, "for whatsoever the Holy Spirit touches is sanctified and changed".¹ How unfixed, however, were the conceptions of the "form" of consecration in the latter part of the fourth century in the East is shown by Chrysostom, who sometimes attributes it to the operation of the Holy Spirit, and elsewhere to the efficacy of the words of institution recited afresh by the priest at every Eucharist.² In Ambrose, however, we find clear expression given to the view that it is the words of Christ "This is My body", "This is My blood", recited by the priest, which effect the consecration of the sacrament. The whole course of the argument in S. and M. rests on the operative power of these words to "change the natures" of the sacramental elements into realities of a higher order. In the East the teaching found in Cyril of Jerusalem became formulated later on in the doctrine that the Holy Spirit, invoked by the prayer of the priest, is the operative power which effects the sacra-

¹ *Cat.* xxiii. 7.

² *de Sacerdot.* iii. 4; *de Prodit. Judae* i. 6.

mental mystery, whereas the teaching found in Ambrose is the starting-point of the development which led to the Western view that the "form" of the sacrament is the recital of the words of Christ.¹

Beyond the quite general reference in S. v. 4. 25, where he says "As often as sacrifice is offered, the Lord's death, the Lord's resurrection, the Lord's ascension and the remission of sins is signified", Ambrose in the two treatises S. and M. does not dwell at all upon the Eucharist as a sacrifice, though in other works he develops this at some length. But in the prayers quoted in S. iv. 5. 21, 22 and 6. 27 we see the kind of language in which this aspect found expression in the liturgical forms in use at Milan in his day. It is marked by a primitive simplicity. The oblation is spoken of as "a reasonable offering", "an unbloody offering"—phrases common in early Christian writings—and it is compared to the gifts of Abel and the sacrifices of Abraham and Melchizedek. The sacrifice, in fact, is conceived of as commemorative and eucharistic, rather than as propitiatory. The Eucharist is the "thank-offering" of priest and people alike. The language of the Roman Canon exhibits much the same conception, and the long continuance at Rome and in the West of the practice whereby the people made their offerings of bread and wine serves to perpetuate this conception, which is reflected in so many of the *Secreta* prayers in the later Roman service books.

¹ On the recognition by Western writers of the Holy Spirit as the agent of all sanctification see *The Early History of the Liturgy*, p. 220, and refs. there given.

IV

ST AMBROSE ON THE MYSTICAL
INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

THE mystical interpretation of Scripture is one of the features which S. and M. share with other writings of Ambrose. This method Ambrose derived from Philo of Alexandria and Origen, though it had precedents in the Greek world in the treatment of the Homeric poems. It finds striking illustration in the Epistle to the Hebrews in the author's use of the story of Melchizedek in c. 7, cf. S. iv. 3. 10, 12; M. viii. 45 f. It is also found in early Rabbinic sources, from which it passed into Christian use. See e.g. Gal. 4. 21-31.

In a passage of *in Ps.* xxxvi. 1. 2 Ambrose states the principles which govern this method: "All divine scripture is either natural (i.e. literal), or mystical or moral." Examples of its use occur constantly in his writings on the Old Testament (e.g. *Hexaemeron*, *de Paradiso*, *de Abraham*, *de Isaac et Anima*, and his exposition of the Psalms) as well as in such works as *de Institutione Virginis*, and *de Obitu Valentiniani* (cc. 59 f.). By its use, while giving due place to the literal and historical meaning, he was able to draw out the practical moral lessons of the passages dealt with, and also point to their deeper spiritual significance (*de Noe* 10. 34: *altior et profundior interpretatio*). In M. i. 1 he refers to "questions of right conduct" (*de moralibus*) on which he had discoursed when the lives of the patriarchs or precepts of Proverbs were read, and in *Hexaemeron* ii. 5. 20 he speaks of both the moral and the mystical senses. Especially noteworthy in S. and M. is his use of the mystical interpretation of the Song of Songs (referred to in this volume as Canticles). This interpretation of the poem had already been given to it by those who secured its place in the Jewish Canon of Scripture. It first found

clear expression in Christian circles in Origen's commentary, from which it passed to Methodius in his *Banquet of the Virgins* and later to St Gregory of Nyssa. It was through Ambrose that it passed into the West¹ and at a later date found expression in the writings of St Bernard.

It is to Origen that Ambrose owes the idea that the imagery of Canticles may be applied either to the Church or to the individual soul. It is introduced in S. and M. at two points: (1) to illustrate the joy of the Church presented to the Bridegroom in all the purity and glory of baptismal grace (S. iv. 2. 5; M. vii. 35, 37-41); (2) to show the wonder and joy of the divine feast spread by Christ (S. v. 3. 14-17; M. ix. 55-58). For parallels to passages in other writings of Ambrose see notes on the above passages of S. and M.

Though capable of great abuse as leading to arbitrary and subjective treatment, the allegorical interpretation had certain advantages for the expositor. (1) It helped him to explain away actions or words which, if interpreted literally, might seem derogatory to the Deity, or reflect unfavourably on the character of Old Testament saints. (2) It enabled him to maintain the essential unity of the Old and New Testaments, as presenting preparation and fulfilment of the purposes of revelation. (3) It minimized the risk of allowing the literal meaning of Scripture to obscure its deeper and permanent truth for the guidance alike of the devotional and the practical life. This was for Ambrose its supreme value, and in it he found a rich source of moral and religious instruction. There is a useful discussion of the whole subject in Homes Dudden, *Life and Times of St Ambrose*, ii. 457 f., and in R. H. Malden, *J. Th. S.*, xvi. 50 f.

¹ Sabatier says that the chief evidence for the Old Latin version of Canticles is found in Ambrose, with a few verses from Jerome, Augustine, and others.

V

EDITIONS

THE earliest printed texts of the works of Ambrose appeared between the years 1474 and 1506. Among these the edition of Amerbach (Basle, 1492) claims chief notice. These earlier texts were superseded by the edition of Erasmus, published at Basle in four volumes at Froben's press in 1527. This was followed in turn by the editions of Costerius (published by Episcopus at Basle), and that of Gillot (Paris, 1568). By the desire of Popes Pius IV and Pius V a fresh edition was undertaken, and was begun by the monk Felix de Montalto (surnamed Peretti), who afterwards became Pope Sixtus V. This was the famous Roman edition, which was published in five volumes between the years 1580 and 1585, and superseded all previous editions. In the latter part of the seventeenth century the Benedictines of St Maur, to whom students owe so much for their labours on the MSS. and texts of the Fathers, produced a fresh edition, based on a considerable number of MSS., in two folio volumes, published at Paris (J. du Frische and N. le Nourry) 1686-90. This was reprinted at Venice in 1748-51, and again in 1781-82. A further reprint appeared in Migne's *Patrologia Latina* (vols. xiv-xvii), published at Paris in 1845, and again in 1866 and 1880-82. Both *de Mysteriis* and *de Sacramentis* are included in vol. xvi of this work. Another edition, founded on that of the Maurists, but not displaying the same care or critical acumen, appeared at Milan in six volumes in 1875-83 under the editorship of P. A. Ballerini. An edition of the works of Ambrose is in course of publication in the Vienna *Corpus scriptorum eccl. latinorum*, in which *de Mysteriis* and *de Sacramentis* will be included, though they have not yet reached the stage of publication. See *Introd.*, pp. 8, 13.

Rauschen, *Florilegium Patristicum* vii (Bonn, 1909), has printed texts of both treatises.

An English translation of selected works and letters of Ambrose was published by H. de Romestin in vol. x of the *Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Parker, Oxford and New York, 1896). It includes *de Mysteriis* but not *de Sacramentis*.

Valuable materials, with useful references, for the study of St Ambrose and his writings will be found in Homes Dudden, *Life and Times of St Ambrose*, 2 vols., Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1935.

ON THE SACRAMENTS

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

Why instruction on the sacraments was deferred. The "opening of the ears".

I. THE sacraments which you have received are the theme of my discourse. To have given a reasoned account of these earlier would not have been right; ¹ for in a Christian man faith is first. Therefore, at Rome ² the title of "faithful" is given to those who have been baptized; and also *our father Abraham was justified by faith, not by works.*³ So you received baptism; you believed. For it is wrong for me to

¹ Cf. M. i. 2 (note). The statement that *fides* precedes *ratio* similarly appears in *de Abraham* i. 21.

² The reading *Romae* is that of most MSS. Three MSS. read *recto nomine*, and the Roman edition *recte* ("rightly"). The variants are intended to explain the sense in which the word "faithful" is to be taken: i.e. only the baptized are called "faithful". So the word is used in Hippolytus, *Ap. Tradition*. Dom Morin, in his article in the *Maria Laach Jahrbuch*, says that the statement suggests that the case was otherwise at Milan, as it also was at Jerusalem and in Illyricum. For Jerusalem see Cyril of J., *Procat.* vi, where he explains the sense in which catechumens are called "faithful", and for Illyricum see Niceta, frag. 2 (ed. Burn, p. 7), where it is said that the catechumen being "a guest, as it were, and neighbour of the faithful begins to be called faithful". In both these two last passages it is implied that the grace of faith has been operative before baptism.

³ A summary of Rom. 4. 2, 3, 9.

think otherwise; for thou wouldst not have been called to grace, had not Christ thought thee worthy of his grace.

2. Therefore, what did we do on the Saturday? What but "the opening"?¹ Which mysteries of "opening" were performed, when the priest² touched thine ears and nostrils. It is this which our Lord Jesus Christ³ indicates in the Gospel, when *a deaf and dumb*⁴ man was brought to him, and he touched his ears and his mouth: the ears, because he was deaf; the mouth, because he was dumb: and said, *ephpheta*. It is a Hebrew word, which rendered into Latin is *adaperire*, that is, *be opened*. The reason, therefore, that the priest touched thine ears was that thine ears might be opened to the discourse and the address of the priest.

3. But thou sayest to me, "Why the nostrils?" In that case, because he was dumb, he touched his mouth; that,

¹ Cf. M. i. 3. The ceremony of the *Effeta*, to which at Milan the name "the opening of the ears" was given, was performed on Easter Eve. See Introduction, p. 19.

² The following is the use of the titles of the ministry in this work. "Deacon" is not used; its place is taken by "levite". The word *presbyter* is applied to the second order of the ministry. The highest order is denominated alike "bishop" and "priest" (*sacerdos*). In this chapter it is clear that "bishop" and "priest" are the same person (cf. § 3); and it appears that throughout the book the word "priest" is applied only to the bishop. This was the older practice (T.). We find, however, occasionally in earlier times, e.g. in Tertullian, an anticipation of its later application to the presbyter, and this use of the term became generally current in the West towards the close of the fourth century. For the use of terms in M. see note on M. ii. 6.

³ The word "Lord" before "Jesus" constantly occurs in Ambrose, not only in S. and M., but in his other writings also. It is found, too, in the later Milanese practice of prefixing that title wherever the name "Jesus" was read in the Gospel. The same practice prevailed in Gallican forms and still exists in the Ambrosian rite at Milan. Cf. M. ix. 54.

⁴ Mark 7. 32 f.

since he could not speak heavenly mysteries, he might receive utterance from Christ. Also, in that case because it was a man; in our case, because women are baptized, and there is not the same purity in the servant ¹ as in the Lord (for what comparison can there be, when the latter forgives sins, the former has his sins remitted?), therefore, on account of the grace bestowed by his act and office, the bishop touches not the mouth but the nostrils; that thou mayest receive *a sweet savour* of eternal godliness, and that thou mayest say, *For we are a sweet savour of Christ unto God*,² as the holy Apostle said; and there may be in thee the full fragrance of faith and devotion.

CHAPTER II

The unction before baptism. Of the renunciations, and the dignity of the office of priests, who were witnesses of their baptismal promises.

4. WE came to the font; thou didst enter. Consider whom thou sawest; consider what thou saidst, recall it carefully. A levite met thee, a presbyter met thee.³ Thou wast anointed as Christ's athlete; ⁴ as about to wrestle in the fight of this world, thou didst profess the objects of thy wrestling. He who wrestles has something to hope for; where the contest is, there is the crown. Thou wrestlest in the world, but thou art crowned by Christ, and thou art crowned for contests in the world; for, though the reward is in heaven, yet the earning of the reward is placed here.

¹ Cf. M. i. 4.

² 2 Cor. 2. 15.

³ Cf. M. ii. 6.

⁴ S. here compares the unction before baptism to that of the athlete in preparation for his contest. There is a similar passage in *de Elia* 79, where Ambrose says, "We contend in a kind of spiritual arena". "The athlete", he says, "is exercised daily, he is anointed daily." It is a favourite comparison with him. This unction is not mentioned in M. See Introduction, p. 19.

5. When he asked thee, "Dost thou renounce the devil and his works?", what didst thou reply? "I renounce." "Dost thou renounce the world and its pleasures?", what didst thou reply? "I renounce." Be mindful¹ of thy words, and never let the contents of thy bond pass from thy memory. If thou givest a man thy note of hand, thou art held to be under acknowledgement of receiving his money; thou art held bound, and the lender keeps thee to it, however unwilling thou mayest be. If thou deniest, thou goest before the judge, and there thou art convicted by thy bond.

6. Consider where thou didst promise, or to whom thou didst promise. Thou sawest a levite. But he is the minister of Christ; thou hast seen him ministering at the altar. Therefore thy note of hand is kept, not on earth, but in heaven. Consider where thou receivest the heavenly mysteries. If the body of Christ is here, the angels are stationed here also. *Where the body is, there also are the eagles*,² hast thou read in the Gospel. Where the body of Christ is, there also the eagles are wont to fly, that they may shun earthly things, pursue heavenly.

7. Why do I say this? Because men also are angels, whosoever proclaim Christ, and seem to be admitted into the place of angels. How? Take the case of the Baptist. John was born of a man and a woman. Yet hear how even

¹ This admonition is found in substance as a formula in the Milanese *Ordo* of Beroldus (Magistretti, p. 92), and the *Manuale Ambrosianum* (Magistretti, II. 467). See Thompson, *Offices of Baptism and Confirmation*, p. 129. It is not quoted in the parallel passage, M. ii. 5. Mr W. C. Bishop suggested to me that the words may have been introduced into the later Ambrosian rite from S. on the assumption that that work was composed by Ambrose and that the words describe a part of the service.

² Matt. 24. 28: Luke 17. 37. Cf. iv. 2. 7. A brief paraphrase is found in this form in *de Abraham* ii. 11. 86, *de Excess. Fratr.* ii. 108, and in abbreviated form elsewhere in two passages of Ambrose.

he is an angel: *Behold, I send my angel before thy face, and he shall prepare thy way before thee.*¹ Take another passage of the prophet Malachi: *For the priest's lips keep knowledge, and they seek the law at his mouth: for he is the angel of God Almighty.*² These things are said to extol the dignity of the priest, not to claim anything for personal merits.³

8. Therefore, thou hast renounced the world, thou hast renounced this life. Be careful. A man who owes money is always considering his bond. And thou who owest faith to Christ, keep faith, which is much more precious than money; for faith is an eternal possession, money a temporal. And, therefore, always remember what thou hast promised, and thou wilt be more cautious. If thou keepest thy promise, thou wilt also thy bond.

CHAPTER III

In the baptismal rite there was more than appeared to the outward eye.

9. THEN thou drewest near; ⁴ thou sawest the font, thou sawest also the priest above the font. Nor can I doubt that this may have occurred to your mind, which occurred to the

¹ Mal. 3. 1. There is a play on the word *angelus*, which may mean either "messenger" or "angel".

² Mal. 2. 7. Cf. M. ii. 6. Both passages read *exquirunt* (Vulg. *requirunt*). Cyprian, *Test.* ii. 5, has *exquirent*, thus agreeing with S. and M. in the verb, but not in the tense, as the two latter both have the present tense, whereas Cyprian, LXX and Vulg. have the future. As Cyprian also has *omnipotentis* (LXX, in place of Vulg. *exercituum*) his text may represent an Old Latin reading, reproduced in S. and M. apart from their substitution of the present for the future tense.

³ Cf. M. v. 27.

⁴ With this and the following section cf. M. iii. 8.

Syrian Naaman; for, although he was cleansed, yet he doubted previously. Why? I will tell; listen.

10. Thou didst enter, thou sawest the water, thou sawest the priest, thou sawest a levite. Let not some one haply say, "Is this all?" Yes, it is all. It is truly all,¹ where all is innocency, all is godliness, all is grace, all is sanctification. Thou hast seen all that thou couldst see with the eyes of thy body and with human vision. Thou hast not seen the things which are effected, because they cannot be seen. The things which are not seen are far greater than those which are seen; since *the things which are seen are temporal, the things which are not seen are eternal.*²

CHAPTER IV

The sacraments of Christians are more divine, and earlier, than those of the Jews. The meaning of the Passover.

11. THEREFORE, let us say this first (hold my words as a pledge, and exact full payment). We marvel at the mysteries of the Jews, which were given to our fathers, pre-eminent first in the antiquity of their sacraments, then in their holiness. This I promise, that the sacraments of Christians are more divine and older than those of the Jews.³

12. What stands out so much as the fact that the people of the Jews *passed through the sea*?⁴—to speak for the present of baptism. Yet the Jews who *passed through* all died in the

¹ Mr Colson suggested that, as the author in what follows contends that what is visible to the eye is not all that is involved in baptism, a negative answer is required. By removing the full stop after *Immo est totum* we get the sense, "No, the whole, the true whole, is where all is innocency."

² 2 Cor. 4. 18. For the quotation cf. M. iii. 8.

³ Cf. M. iii. 9 (*init.*).

⁴ 1 Cor. 10. 1. Cf. M. iii. 12.

wilderness. But he who passes through this font, that is from earthly to heavenly things—for this is the “passing over”,¹ therefore *pascha*, that is, his *passover*, a passing over from sin to life, from guilt to grace, from defilement to sanctification—he who passes through this font dies not, but rises again.

CHAPTER V

The story of Naaman, and the baptism of Christ.

13. To resume, *Naaman was a leper*.² A certain maid said to his wife, “If my lord wishes to be cleansed, let him go into the land of Israel, and there he will find him who can take the leprosy from him.” She spoke to her mistress, the wife spoke to her husband, Naaman spoke to the king of Syria, who sent him as his favourite to the king of Israel. The king of Israel heard that a man had been sent to him to be cured of his leprosy, and *he rent his garment*. Then Elisha the prophet charges him: “*Wherefore hast thou rent thy garment*, as if God were not able to cleanse a leper? Send him *to me*.” He sent him, and, when he came, the prophet said, “Go to Jordan, dip, and thou shalt be healed.”

14. He began to reflect and to say: “Is this all? I have come from Syria into the land of Judah, and I am told, Go and descend into Jordan, dip, and thou shalt be healed, as if there were not better rivers in my native land.” So *his ser-*

¹ A reference to Exodus 12. 11, where the Latin has “est enim Phase (id est transitus) domini”. Cf. Ex. 12. 27: “Victima transitus domini est, quando transivit super domos filiorum Israel in Aegypto.” Here it is applied to the passing through the Red Sea by the Israelites. In *Hexaem.* i. 4. 14 there is also a reference to the *pascha* and the same quotation of 1 Cor. 10. 1, and as here the “passing” is interpreted of the passing from the passions of the flesh to grace (i.e. baptism) and soundness of mind.

² 2 Kings 5. 1. With this and the following sections cf. M. iii. 16, 17.

vants said to him, "My lord, why dost thou not carry out the word of the prophet? Do it rather, and make trial." Then he went to Jordan, dipped, and arose whole.

15. What, then, does it mean? Thou sawest water. But it is not all water that heals, but that water heals which has the grace of Christ. The element is one thing, the consecration is another; the work is one thing, the working another. The water is the work,¹ the working is of the Holy Spirit. Water does not heal, unless the Spirit has descended and consecrated that water; as thou hast read that, when our Lord Jesus Christ was giving the pattern of baptism, he *came to John*; and John said to him, "*I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?*" Christ answered him, "*Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.*"² See how all righteousness is based on baptism.

16. Why, then, did Christ descend, unless that that flesh might be cleansed, the flesh which he took of our nature? For the washing away of his sins was not necessary for Christ, *who did no sin*; ³ but it was necessary for us who remain subject to sin. Therefore, if baptism is for our sake, a pattern has been established for us, the pattern of our faith has been set forth.

17. Christ descended, John stood by baptizing, and, lo, *the Holy Ghost descended as a dove*.⁴ It was not a dove that

¹ "Work" (*opus*) is here used, somewhat strangely, for the "matter" of the sacrament (T.). The sentence is omitted by some MSS.

² Matt. 3. 14, 15. This interpretation of the words as meaning the institution of Christian baptism is found in *Apol. David* i. 8. 44, though Ambrose adds that others are at liberty to understand it differently. In S. ii. 6. 18, "the counsel of God" (Luke 7. 30) is interpreted as Christian baptism. Ambrose elsewhere (*in Ps. cxviii. 1. 17*) combines the two interpretations.

³ 1 Pet. 2. 22.

⁴ Matt. 3. 16; Mark 1. 10; John 1. 32. Cf. M. iv. 24, 25.

descended, but *as a dove*. Remember what I said, Christ took flesh, not as it were flesh; but it was the reality of that flesh, real flesh, which Christ took. The Holy Spirit, however, descended from heaven, not in the reality of a dove, but in the likeness of a dove. Therefore, John saw and believed.

18. Christ descended, the Holy Spirit also descended. Why did Christ descend first, the Holy Spirit afterwards, since the form and practice of baptism provides that the font should be consecrated first, and then the person to be baptized should descend? For as soon as the priest enters, he makes an exorcism ¹ over the element of water; afterwards he offers an invocation and a prayer, that the font may be consecrated, and the presence of the eternal Trinity may come down. But Christ descended first, the Spirit followed. For what reason? That the Lord Jesus might not seem himself as it were to need the mystery of sanctification; but that he might sanctify, and the Spirit also sanctify.

19. Therefore Christ descended into the water, *and the Holy Spirit descended as a dove*. Also God the Father ² spake from heaven. Thou hast the presence of the Trinity.³

CHAPTER VI

Baptism prefigured in the crossing of the Red Sea and in the story of the Flood.

20. AGAIN, that there was a figure of our baptism in the Red Sea is asserted by the Apostle, when he says *that our*

¹ On the consecration of the font see Introduction, p. 21.

² The order of the words is *Pater Deus*. This is a characteristic feature of Ambrose. Examples are: M. iv. 25 and viii. 46; *de Fide* iii. 7. 52, v. 9. 118; *de Spir.* S. i. 3. 42, ii. 12. 142; *de Incarn.* v. 38.

³ Cf. M. v. 26.

*fathers were all baptized in the cloud and in the sea.*¹ And he added, *Now all these things happened unto them by way of figure;*² to them in a figure, but to us in reality. Then Moses held his rod; the people of the Jews had been shut in: on one side the Egyptian pressed on with arms, and on the other side the Hebrews were shut in by the sea. They could neither cross the seas nor return to the enemy. They began to murmur.³

21. See that it tempt thee not, that they were heard. Although the Lord heard, yet they are not without fault who murmured. It is thy duty, when thou art in a strait, to believe that thou wilt escape, not to murmur; to appeal, to entreat, not to utter complaint.

22. Moses held his rod, and led the people of the Hebrews at night *in a pillar* of light, and in the day *in a pillar of cloud.*⁴ What is the light but truth, since it sheds a full and open brightness? What is the *pillar* of light but Christ the Lord, who scattered the shadows of unbelief, and poured the light of truth and spiritual grace on human hearts? The *pillar of cloud*, on the other hand, is the Holy Spirit. The people was in the sea, and the *pillar* of light went on before; then the *pillar of cloud* followed, as if the shadowing of the Holy Spirit. Thou seest that by the Holy Spirit and by the water he has shown a type of baptism.

¹ 1 Cor. 10. 2. Cf. M. iii. 12, where the text is quoted in full. The Latin version of Irenaeus, *adv. Haer.* iv. 13. 5 (Harvey), omits, as does the present passage, "all passed through the sea". The abbreviated form finds a parallel in Ambrose *in Ps.* xxxviii. 25 and *in Ps.* cxviii. 16. 29 (where "into Moses" is added).

² 1 Cor. 10. 11. The divergence from the Vulgate (*facta sunt* for *contingebant*) finds a parallel in *Apol. David* i. 3. 11, where, however *omnia* is omitted.

³ Ex. 14. 9 f.

⁴ Ex. 13. 21 f. The phrase *columna lucis* (Vulg. *columna ignis*) is peculiar and seems to have no support from other texts.

23. As early as the flood ¹ there was also a figure of baptism, and, certainly, the mysteries of the Jews did not as yet exist. Therefore, if the figure of our baptism preceded, thou seest that the mysteries of the Christians are earlier than were those of the Jews.

24. But meanwhile, in view of the weakness of our voice ² and the consideration of the time at our disposal, let us content ourselves to-day with just having touched the mysteries concerning the holy font. Tomorrow, if the Lord shall grant strength and ability to speak, I will declare them more fully. It behoves your holiness ³ to have your ears prepared, your mind the more ready, that you may be able to retain what we may gather from the course of the Scriptures, and shall declare unto you, that you may have the grace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to which Trinity belongs an everlasting kingdom, from all ages, both now, and always, and for ever and ever.

¹ See for this ii. 1. 1 below, and cf. M. iii. 10.

² Augustine (*Conf.* vi. 3. 3) refers to the need for Ambrose to take care of his voice, which easily lost tone. In *Ap. David altera* v. 28 (which, on the ground of many exact and minute parallels with other writings of Ambrose, Connolly would assign to him) there is a similar reference to the speaker's weakness of voice.

³ The phrase "your holiness" (*sanctitas vestra*), applied as a title to the congregation as a body, finds a parallel in *Hexaem.* vi. 1. 2.

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

Further illustration from the story of the Flood. Of the baptisms of heathen and Jews.

1. YESTERDAY we began to expound how in the flood also there was a prefiguring of baptism. What is the flood, but that in which the righteous is saved to be a seed-plot of righteousness,¹ while sin dies? Therefore, when the Lord saw that the transgressions of mankind were multiplied, he saved the righteous one alone with his offspring, but he bade the water rise even above the mountains. And therefore, in that flood all corruption of the flesh perished; only the family and pattern of the righteous survived. Is not the flood the same thing as baptism, whereby all sins are washed away; only the mind and grace of the righteous is revived? ²

2. There are many kinds of baptisms; but the Apostle cries, *one baptism*.³ Why? There are baptisms of the Gentiles, but they are no baptisms.⁴ They are baths, bap-

¹ With this cf. *de Noe* i. 1 : *reservavit ut esset iustitiae seminarium*; the underlined words are found in S. Another coincidence is the word *iustus* for Noah, who is not named by S., but in *de Noe* i. 2 Ambrose says that *iustus* is the Latin for the name Noah.

² For this paragraph cf. 1 Pet. 3. 20 f., and Gen. 6; 7.

³ Eph. 4. 5.

⁴ Cf. M. iv. 23, where it is said that "the baptism of the unbelievers does not heal, does not cleanse, but defiles". In the present passage S., after saying that the baptisms of Gentiles are not baptisms, but "baths", adds, "The flesh is washed, but guilt is

tisms they cannot be. The flesh is washed, but guilt is not washed away; nay, it is contracted in that bath. There were, however, baptisms of the Jews, some superfluous, others figurative. And the mere figure helps us, since it is the herald of reality.

CHAPTER II

The healing of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda.

3. WHAT was read yesterday? ¹ *An angel, it says, went down at a certain season into the pool, and, so often as the angel descended, the water was troubled: and whosoever first descended, was made whole of every disease whatsoever he had.*²

not washed away". This last sentence is found in exactly the same words in Ambrose, in *Ps.* xl. 5, where he contrasts Christian baptism with the *taurobolium* of heathen rites, and concludes with the sentence quoted above. He has in mind the rites of Cybele in which a baptism with the blood of a bull was held to be a means of "regeneration to eternal life". See on this Homes Dudden, *Life and Times of St Ambrose*, i. 246.

The words in the above passage of Ambrose, "guilt is not washed away, . . . it is contracted", find parallels elsewhere in Ambrose. The exact phrase *culpam diluere* occurs not only in his hymn *Aeterne rerum conditor*, but also in *Hexaem.* v. 24. 88, and in the latter passage *contraxerat* corresponds to the use of the same word in S., which says that *culpa* ("guilt") is "contracted".

¹ On the system of lessons indicated in this book see Introduction, pp. 33 f.

² John 5. 4. Cf. M. iv. 22. The verse is an early interpolation known to Tertullian (*de Bapt.* 5). The whole verse is omitted in the best Greek MSS. and in some MSS. of the Vulgate. The variants in S. and M. are all supported by one or other MSS. of Vulg. with two exceptions, *quoties descendisset* and *sanabatur*, which are loose quotations peculiar to S. The reading *natatorium* for "pool" found in M. occurs also in *de Spir.* S. i. 7. 82, though in the comment following M. has the more familiar *piscina* as in S. Both M. and S. have *languore* for *infirmirate*.

Which signifies a figure of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was to come.

4. Why *an angel*? Because he himself is the *Angel of Great Counsel*.¹ At a certain season, because he was kept till the last hour, that he might catch the day at its setting, and delay its setting.² Therefore, as often as the angel descended, *the water was troubled*. Thou sayest perchance: "Why is it not troubled now?" Learn why. Signs for the unbelieving, faith for believers.

5. *Whosoever first descended, was made whole of every sickness*. What is the meaning of *first*?³ Does it mean in time, or in honour? Understand in both ways. If it means *he who descended first* in time *was made whole* first, it signifies the people of the Jews, as opposed to the people of the Gentiles. If it means *he who descended first* in honour, that signifies that he who had the fear of God, the love of righteousness, the grace of charity, and the desire of purity, he rather *was made whole*. Yet at that time one only *was made whole*; at that time, I say, by way of figure *he who first descended* was alone healed. How much greater is the grace of the Church, wherein all are saved, whosoever descend!

6. But observe the mystical sense. Our Lord Jesus Christ came to the pool; many sick were lying there. And, naturally, there were many sick lying there, where only one was healed. Then he saith to the sick of the palsy, "Descend." He saith, "*I have no man*."⁴ Consider where thou art baptized.⁵ What source can there be for baptism,

¹ A reference to Isaiah 9. 6, according to the LXX.

² For this idea cf. Ambrose, *de Abraham* i. 6. 50.

³ Reading *quid est prior*. Some MSS. read *qui* for *quid*. In that case *qui* is relative, not interrogative, and the meaning will be "He who is first, is he first in time or in honour?"

⁴ John 5. 7. Cf. M. iv. 24. There is nothing in the Gospel parallel to the word "descend". The writer is quoting from memory.

⁵ i.e. under what circumstances.

save the cross of Christ, the death of Christ? Herein is the whole mystery, in that he suffered for thee. In him thou art redeemed, in him thou wilt be saved.

7. "*I have no man*", he said: that is, *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.*¹ He could not descend, he could not be saved, who did not believe that our Lord Jesus had taken flesh of the Virgin. But this man who was looking for *the mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ*,² waiting for him of whom it was said, *And the Lord shall send a man who shall save them*,³—he said, "*I have no man*"; and therefore he deserved to attain to health, because he believed in one who was to come. Yet he would have been better and more perfect, if he had believed that he whose coming he hoped for had already come.

CHAPTER III

*The interpretation of the "captive maid" in the story of Naaman.
Summary of types already indicated.*

8. Now look at the types one by one. We said that baptism was prefigured in the Jordan, when Naaman the leper was cleansed. Who is that captive maid, but one who had the likeness of the Church, and exhibited a figure of it? ⁴ For the people of the nations was captive. It was captive: I do not mean a captivity under some hostile people; but I mean that captivity which is worse, when the devil and his minions rule with cruel sway, and subject to themselves the captive necks of sinners.

9. Therefore thou hast one baptism here, another in the

¹ 1 Cor. 15. 21. The reading "*quia per hominem*" is an Old Latin rendering for Vulg. *quoniam enim per hom.*

² 1 Tim. 2. 5.

³ Isa. 19. 20, following the LXX.

⁴ For this application see M. iii. 18.

flood; thou hast a third kind when the fathers were baptized in the Red Sea; thou hast a fourth kind in the pool, when *the water was troubled*. Now I ask thee whether thou oughtest not to believe that thou hast the presence of the Trinity in this baptism which is administered in the Church.

CHAPTER IV

Our Lord's command to baptize. Further O.T. types of baptism.

10. IT is, then, the same baptism which our Lord Jesus Christ speaks of in his Gospel to the Apostles: *Go, baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*.¹ This is the word of the Saviour.

11. Tell me, O man. Elijah called fire from heaven, and fire came down from heaven.² Elisha called on the name of the Lord, and the axe-head which had sunk came up out of the water.³ Here is another kind of baptism. Why? Because every man before baptism is weighed down like iron, and sinks: when he has been baptized he is no longer like iron, but now rises like the fruit-bearing wood, which is a lighter kind of thing.⁴ Therefore in this instance there is also another figure. The axe was that with which *wood* was *cut down*. The haft fell from the axe, that is, the iron sank. The son of the prophet knew not what to do; but this alone he knew, to ask the prophet Elisha and to demand help. Then *he cast in wood*, and *the iron* was raised. Dost thou see, therefore, how the weakness of all men is raised on the cross of Christ?

¹ Matt. 28. 19. With this abbreviated quotation cf. *de Spir. S.* ii. 8. 71.

² 1 Kings 18. 38, quoted in a different connexion in M. ix. 52.

³ 2 Kings 6. 4-6, quoted in a different connexion in M. ix. 51.

⁴ *sed tanquam iam levior fructuosi ligni species elevatur*. On *species* see note, M. ix. 52.

12. Another example—though we are not keeping to our order, for who can recount all the deeds of Christ, as the Apostles said? ¹ When Moses came into the desert and the people thirsted, and came to the spring of Marah, and wished to drink water (because, as soon as they drew, they tasted the bitterness, and began to be unable to drink), therefore Moses *cast wood* into the spring, and the water which previously was bitter began to be sweet. ²

13. What does it mean, but that every creature is subject to corruption, that water is bitter to all? Although it is sweet for a time, although it is pleasant for a time, yet it is bitter, since it cannot take away sin. When thou hast drunk, thou wilt thirst; when thou hast imbibed the sweetness of the draught, thou wilt taste its bitterness. Water, therefore, is bitter. But when thou hast received the cross of Christ, ³ and the heavenly sacrament, it begins to be sweet and pleasant; and rightly sweet, because guilt is thereby cancelled. Therefore, if baptisms by way of figure could do so much, how much more can baptism in reality do!

CHAPTER V

The presence of the Holy Trinity in baptism is vindicated. The Spirit at the Baptism of Christ and on the day of Pentecost manifested by outward signs to convince unbelievers.

14. Now, then, let us consider. The priest comes; he says a prayer at the font; he invokes the name of the Father,

¹ Cf. John 21. 25.

² Ex. 15. 23 f. For this and the following section see M. iii. 14.

³ Probably a reference to the signing of the catechumen with the cross, as in M. iv. 20. It probably took place at the beginning of the catechumenate, and is found in the Gelasian Sacramentary in the *Ordo ad catechumenum ex pagano faciendum* (Wilson, p. 113). In M. iii. 14 the symbolism of the incident is applied to the signing of the water at the consecration of the font.

the presence of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; he uses heavenly words.¹ What heavenly words? They are those of Christ, that we should *baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*² If, therefore, at the word of men, at the invocation of a saint, the presence of the Trinity came down, how much more does it come where the eternal word is acting! Do you wish to know that the Spirit descends? Thou hast heard that he *descended as a dove.*³ Why *as a dove*? That unbelievers might be called to belief. In the beginning there had to be a sign, later there ought to be the fulfilment.

15. Take another example. After the death of our Lord Jesus Christ the Apostles *were in one place*, and they were praying on the day of Pentecost. *And suddenly there came a great sound as if the Spirit were carried along with great violence, and there appeared divided tongues as of fire.*⁴ What does this mean, but the descent of the Holy Spirit, who wished to show himself to unbelievers in bodily form also; that is in bodily form by a sign, spiritually by a sacrament? Therefore, there was given an evident proof of his coming. But

¹ With this account of the consecration of the font cf. M. iii. 8, 14. The exorcism is mentioned in S. i. 5. 18, but not in M. It is, however, found in later Milanese and Gallican books. See Thompson, *Offices of Baptism and Confirmation*, p. 130.

² Matt. 28. 19.

³ Matt. 3. 16; Mark 1. 10; John 1. 32.

⁴ Acts 2. 2, 3. The quotation is free, but it agrees with a formal citation in *de Spir.* S. i. 14. 142 in the following points against Vulg.: *subito* for *repente*; *vi magna Spiritus ferretur* for *advenientis Spiritus vehementis*; *visae sunt* for *apparuerunt*; *dispersae* for *dispertitae*. An Old Latin text is obviously the basis. S. has also two minor agreements with other works of Ambrose, when he is quoting loosely: *cum* (for *tquam*) *vi magna* (in *Ps.* xxxviii. 16), and the omission of *illis* after *visae sunt* (*de Isaac* 8. 77). These are subtle links which indicate the same hand. Cf. also *de Spir.* S. ii. 2. 23, where again some of the same variations are found.

to us is now offered the privilege of faith. For in the beginning signs were shown for unbelievers; now in the fullness of the Church we must gather truth not by a sign, but by faith.

CHAPTER VI

The Fall and its consequences. The redemptive grace of baptism.

16. Now let us examine what it is which is called baptism. Thou camest to the font, thou wentest down in it; thou didst watch the high priest, thou didst see the levites and the presbyter in the font.¹ What is baptism?

17. *In the beginning* our God made man, so that, if he did not taste sin, he would not *surely die*.² He committed sin, he became subject to death, he was driven out of Paradise. But the Lord, who wished his benefits to endure, who wished to destroy all the wiles of the serpent, and also to root out everything harmful, first gave sentence upon the man, *Earth thou art, and unto earth thou shalt go*; ³ and he made man subject to death. It was a Divine sentence; it could not be paid by human means. A remedy was granted that man should die, and rise again. Why? In order that the thing which had been previously counted as a condemnation might be counted as a benefit. What is that thing but death? Thou askest how. Because death intervening makes an end of sin.⁴ For when we die, we certainly cease to sin. Therefore, the sentence seemed satisfied, because man who

¹ Cf. M. ii. 6; iii. 8. ² Gen. i. 1; 2. 17. ³ Gen. 3. 19.

⁴ The idea that death is the "end of sin" is found in several passages of Ambrose. See *de Isaac* 8. 76; *de Cain* ii. 9. 32; *de Bono Mortis* 4. 15; in *Ps. cxviii.* 18. 3. In the last of these passages there is a reference to some philosophers who have contended that death is of benefit to the wicked, death being the end of sin. In what follows in S., and in *de Isaac*, the idea is applied to baptism as implying a death unto sin and a resurrection to new life.

had been made to live, on condition that he did not sin, was beginning to die. But, in order that the continual goodness of God might endure, man died, but Christ found the resurrection, that is, a way to restore the heavenly benefit which had been lost by the serpent's guile. Each, therefore, is for our good, since death is the end of sins, and the resurrection is the refashioning of our nature.¹

18. Nevertheless, that the craft or guile of the devil might not prevail in this world, baptism was devised. Concerning which baptism hear what the Scripture saith, nay, the Son of God, that *the Pharisees*, who would not be *baptized with the baptism of John*, rejected the counsel of God.² Therefore, baptism is the counsel of God. How great is the grace, where there is the counsel of God.

19. Hear, therefore. In order that the bands of the devil might be loosed in this world also, a means was found that man might die while living, and while living rise again. What is "living"? It is the living life of the body, when it came to the font, and was dipped into the font. What is water, but from the earth? Therefore, the heavenly sentence is satisfied without the insensibility which death brings. Thy dipping paid that sentence, *Earth thou art, and unto earth thou shalt go*; the sentence fulfilled, there is room for the heavenly benefit and remedy. So then, water is from the earth; moreover, the conditions of our life did not allow that we should be covered with earth, and rise from the earth; further, it is not earth, but water, that washes. Therefore the font is, as it were, a burial.³

¹ The teaching of this passage on the place of death and the resurrection in the Divine economy shows the influence of Greek theology, and recalls the similar teaching of Methodius and Gregory of Nyssa.

² Luke 7. 30. On this see note on S. i. 5. 15.

³ This exposition of the significance of baptism again finds a close parallel in Eastern theologians, e.g. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.* xx. 4. 5; Gregory of Nyssa, *Or. Cat.* 35.

CHAPTER VII

The threefold confession of faith and the threefold immersion in baptism described and explained. The unction after baptism.

20. THOU wast asked,¹ "Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty?" Thou saidst, "I believe", and didst dip, that is, thou wast buried. Again thou wast asked, "Dost thou believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in his cross?" Thou saidst, "I believe", and didst dip; therefore, thou wast also *buried with Christ*; ² for he who is *buried with Christ*, rises again with Christ. A third time thou was asked, "Dost thou believe also in the Holy Ghost?" Thou saidst, "I believe", and didst dip a third time, that the triple confession might absolve the manifold fall of thy former life.

21. Thus (that we may give you an example), after the holy Apostle Peter seemed to have fallen during the Lord's passion by the weakness of human nature, he who had previously denied was afterwards thrice asked by Christ if he loved Christ, that he might cancel and annul that fall. Then he said, "*Thou knowest, Lord, that I love Thee.*" ³ He said it thrice, that he might be thrice absolved.⁴

22. Therefore, the Father forgives sin, just as the Son forgives; likewise also the Holy Ghost. But he bade us be baptized in one name, that is, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. Wonder not that he spoke of one name, when there is one Substance, one Divinity, one Majesty. This is the name of which it was said, *Wherein*

¹ With this section cf. M. iv. 21; v. 28.

² Rom. 6. 4; Col. 2. 12.

³ John 21. 15 f. The word "knowest" (*nostī*) corresponds to *γινώσκεις*, which in v. 17 replaces *οἶδας* of the previous verses. This appears to be an Old Latin rendering found in two MSS. and also in *Apol. David* i. 9. 50; *de Ob. Theod.* 19.

⁴ There is a similar application in Ambrose, *de Spir. S.* ii. 10. 105.

all *must be saved*.¹ In this name ye have all been saved, ye have been restored to the *grace of life*.²

23. Therefore the Apostle cries, as you have heard in the lesson just read, that *whosoever is baptized, is baptized in the death of Jesus*.³ What is *in the death*? It is that, as Christ died, so thou also shouldst taste of death; that, as Christ *died unto sin*, and *liveth unto God*,⁴ so thou also shouldst be dead unto the former allurements of sins through the sacrament of baptism, and shouldst rise again through the grace of Christ. It is a death, therefore; but not a death in the reality of bodily death, but in the likeness. For when thou dippest thou takest on the likeness of death and burial, thou receivest the sacrament of that cross, because Christ hung on the cross, and his body was pierced with nails. Therefore, when thou art crucified, thou cleavest to Christ; thou cleavest to the nails of our Lord Jesus Christ; let not the devil be able to tear thee away. Let the nail of Christ hold thee fast, seeing that the weakness of human nature is seeking to call thee back.

24. Therefore thou didst dip, thou camest to the priest.⁵ What did he say to thee? "God the Father Almighty," he saith, "who hath regenerated thee by water and the Holy Ghost, and hath forgiven thee thy sins, himself anoint thee unto eternal life."⁶ See whereunto thou art anointed;

¹ Cf. Acts 4. 12. A free quotation.

² An allusion to I Pet. 3. 7.

³ Rom. 6. 3, freely quoted.

⁴ Rom. 6. 10.

⁵ On the word "priest" (*sacerdos*), used here to denote the bishop, see note on i. 1. 2. Cf. the parallel passage in M. vi. 29.

⁶ This prayer, with slight variations, is found in the two Roman Sacramentaries, the Gregorian (Wilson, H.B.S., p. 57), and the Gelasian (Wilson, p. 86); also in the *Missale Gallicanum vetus* (Muratori, ii, 741), and in the Bobbio Missal (Lowe, H.B.S., p. 75). On the significance of the prayer see Introduction, pp. 22, 25.

“unto eternal life”, he saith. Do not set this life before that life. For example, if any foe arise, if he wishes to take away thy faith, if he threatens death to make someone transgress, see what thou choosest. Do not choose that wherein thou wast not anointed, but choose that wherein thou wast anointed, so as to prefer eternal life to temporal life, through Christ our Lord.—AMEN.

BOOK III

CHAPTER I

The significance of the unction upon the head, and the meaning of "regeneration". The washing of the feet of the newly baptized is defended and explained.

1. YESTERDAY we discoursed on the font, whose appearance is somewhat like that of a tomb in shape; ¹ into which, believing in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, we are received, and plunged, and we emerge, that is, we are raised up. Moreover, thou receivest *myron*,² that is, *ointment upon the head*. Why upon the head? Because *the senses of a wise man are in his head*,³ says Solomon. For wisdom is lifeless without grace; but when wisdom has received grace, then its work begins to be perfect. This is called regeneration.⁴

¹ The font in early times was sunk into the floor of the baptistery; it was often square, and thus resembled one class of tombs (T.). Cf. *de Spir. S.* i. 6. 69, for the ideas of this passage.

² *μύρον*; oil mingled with balsam; it is employed for the unction after baptism (T.). For the quotation, cf. *M.* vi. 29 (note).

³ *Eccles.* 2. 14, reading "senses" for "eyes" of LXX and Vulg. The latter reading occurs in many passages of Ambrose, though in several of them he implies that *oculi* stands for *sensus* (e.g. in *Ps.* xliiii. 61, where after saying that the head is where the senses are, he quotes the present text). In three passages (in *Ps.* i. 28; in *Ps.* cxviii. 16. 24 and 20. 1), with the above interpretation in mind, he actually reads *sensus*. In *M.* vi. 30 Ambrose quotes the text in its proper form, thus correcting S. The passage is discussed by Connolly, *The de S., a work of Ambrose. Two papers*, p. 101.

⁴ On the relation of the unction to baptism and confirmation see Introduction, pp. 22, 25 f.

2. What is regeneration? Thou readest in the Acts of the Apostles that the verse which is found in the second Psalm, *Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee*, appears to refer to the resurrection. For the holy Apostle Peter in the Acts of the Apostles interpreted it thus, that at the time that the Son rose from the dead, the Father's voice rang out, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*.¹ Whence he is also called *the first-born from the dead*.² Therefore, what is resurrection, but when we rise from death to life? So, therefore, in baptism also, since there is a likeness of death, without doubt when thou dost dip and rise again, there is a likeness of the resurrection. Rightly, therefore, according to the interpretation of the Apostle Peter, as that resurrection was a regeneration, so also is this resurrection a regeneration.

3. But what dost thou mean by this dipping in the water? Is it for this reason that thou art perplexed,³ that hesitation possesses thee? Certainly, we read, *Let the earth bring forth from herself fruit that springs up*. Likewise also thou hast read of the waters, *Let the waters bring forth living creatures*, and living creatures were born.⁴ And those, indeed, were in the beginning of creation; but for thee it has been reserved that water should regenerate thee to grace, as it generated those others to life. Imitate the fish, which, though it has obtained less grace, yet should fill thee with wonder. It is in the sea, and above the waves; it is in the sea, and swims over the billows. In the sea the storm rages, the winds howl; but the fish swims, it does not sink, because it is wont to swim. Therefore this world is a sea to thee also. It has divers

¹ The passage, here attributed to St Peter, is found in St Paul's speech at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13. 33).

² Col. 1. 18.

³ *peregrinarius*. Cf. 1 Pet. 4. 12 (Vulg.), *nolite peregrinari in fervore*.

⁴ See Gen. 1. 11, 20. Both passages are quoted inexactly.

billows, heavy waves, fierce storms. And do thou be a fish, that the wave of the world sink thee not.¹ Well, however, does the Father say to the Son, *This day have I begotten thee*; ² that is, when thou didst redeem the people, when thou didst call them to the kingdom of heaven, when thou didst fulfil my will, thou didst prove thyself to be my son.³

4. Thou camest up out of the font. What followed? ⁴ Thou hast heard the lesson. The high priest was girt up (for though presbyters also carried it out, yet the ministry is begun by the high priest); the high priest, I say, was girt up and washed thy feet. What is this sacrament? ⁵ Doubtless thou hast heard that when the Lord had washed the feet of the other disciples, *He cometh to Peter*; ⁶ and *Peter saith to him, Dost thou wash my feet?* That is, Dost thou, the Lord, wash the feet of the servant? Dost thou, the spotless, wash my feet? Dost thou, the maker of the heavens, wash my feet? Thou hast this in another place also. *He cometh to John*, and John saith to him, “*I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?*” ⁷ I am a sinner, and dost thou come to me a sinner, that thou mayest as it were lay down thy sins *who hast done no sin?* ⁸ See *all righteousness*,⁹ see the

¹ For similar ideas and language see the hymn of St Ambrose *Amor Christi nobilis*, where the following parallels are found:

*Turbante dum natat salo
Immobilis fide stetit*

and again:

*Piscis bonus pia est fides
Mundi supernatans salum.*

² Ps. 2. 7. ³ Closely parallel to language of *in Ps.* xl. 35.

⁴ With this section cf. *M.* vi. 31, with note. See also Introduction, p. 23.

⁵ The word used is *mysterium*, which is here equivalent to “sacrament” in the wider sense (T.).

⁶ John 13. 6.

⁷ Matt. 3. 14.

⁸ 1 Pet. 2. 22.

⁹ Matt. 3. 15.

humility, see the grace, see the sanctification: ¹ *Unless I wash thy feet*, he saith, *thou wilt have no part with me.*²

5. We are not ignorant that the Roman Church has not this custom. Her type and form we follow in all things; however, she has not this custom of washing the feet. See then, perhaps she has declined it on account of the numbers.³ There are, however, some who say and try to urge that this ought to be done, not as a sacrament, not at baptism, not at the regeneration; but only as we should wash the feet of a guest. The latter is an act of humility, the former a work of sanctification.⁴ Accordingly, learn how it is a sacrament and a means of sanctification: *Unless I wash thy feet, thou wilt have no part with me.* This I say, not to find fault with others, but to recommend my own usage.⁵ In all things I desire to follow the Roman Church. Yet we, too, are not without discernment; and what other places have done well to retain, we, too, do well to maintain.

6. It is the Apostle Peter himself that we follow; to his

¹ The clause is somewhat compressed. The meaning is: See how "all righteousness" is fulfilled in both examples; see the humility displayed by our Lord; see the grace and sanctifying virtue of this sacrament. *Sanctificatio* is used, as below in § 5, for the virtue and effect of a sacrament (T.).

² John 13. 8. So M. vi. 31, which, however, has *si non* for *nisi*. The same form of the quotation with the addition *tibi pedes* and the future *habebis* occurs in *in Ps. xlviii. 8* and *de Spir. S. i. prol. 12*, and in one Old Latin MS. The addition "thy feet" (*tibi pedes*) is also found in some Old Latin MSS. and in Jerome (with *pedes tuas*), *Ep. xviii. 12*.

³ If the number of candidates for baptism was very large, the ceremony of washing the feet would be long and laborious (T.).

⁴ Similarly, Augustine, *Ep. lv. (ad Januar.) 33*, maintained that the "feet washing" was a type of humility, but not a part of the sacrament of baptism. On the "feet washing" in Africa see Thompson, *Offices of Baptism and Confirmation*, p. 108.

⁵ If *vel* be read for *sed*, we should get a good sense, "or to commend my own services". See on this Introduction, p. 23.

devotion we cling. What does the Roman Church answer to this? Certainly the Apostle Peter himself supports us in this claim, he who was priest of the Roman Church. Peter himself says, *Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head*.¹ Look at the faith. His demurring at first showed his humility; his offer afterwards showed his devotion and faith.

7. Because he had said *my hands and my head*, the Lord answered him, *He that hath washed needeth not to wash again, save to wash his feet only*.² Why is this? Because in baptism all guilt is washed away.³ Guilt, therefore, vanishes.

¹ John 13. 9. The reading *non solum, sed etiam* is found also in *in Ps.* xlviii. 8, whereas M. has *non tantum, sed et*. Both readings are found in various MSS. of the Old Latin version.

² John 13. 10. The reading here *necesse habet* is found in *in Ps.* xlviii. 8, in *Lucam* viii. 78, and in one MS. of Vulgate. Still earlier it occurs in Tertullian, *de Bapt.* 12. Elsewhere, M. vi. 31 and *in Ps.* xl. 24, Ambrose agrees with Vulgate. The variant *iterum lavare* here is also found with *necesse habet* in *de Virginitate*, 10. 58; in *Ps.* xlviii. 8. Ambrose is apparently acquainted with two forms of the text.

³ Cf. M. vi. 32 with notes. There is the same distinction in both passages between actual sin with its guilt (*culpa*) and transmitted (or hereditary) sin. The guilt of actual sin is cleansed in baptism. But there remains "the poison poured over Adam's feet", and this survives in his descendants, and needs to be cleansed by a "reinforcement of sanctification", supplied by the feet-washing, which thus has a sacramental significance. The same ideas find fuller treatment by Ambrose in *in Ps.* xlviii. 8-10, and in *de Spir. S.* i. prol. 12-16. The starting-point is the Latin rendering of Gen. 3. 15, *et tu insidiaberis calcaneo eius* (so Vulg.; cf. English R.V. margin "lie in wait for"). The LXX has *καὶ σὺ τηρήσεις αὐτοῦ πτέρναν*; cf. Irenaeus, *adv. Haer.* iv. 66. 2 (Harvey), *observabis*. The idea expressed here, and in *de Spir. S.* and *in Ps.* xlviii. 8, by Ambrose is that the serpent's bite of Adam's heel spread poison in his nature and this was transmitted to his descendants. The poison is the proclivity to sin, the *lubricum delinquendi* (*in Ps.* xlviii. 9), concupiscence in its more general sense. In the treatment in *in Ps.* xlviii. 8

But, because Adam was tripped up by the devil, and poison was poured over his feet, therefore thou washest thy feet; that at that point where the serpent made his treacherous attack a stronger reinforcement of sanctification may be applied, that he may not be able to trip thee up afterwards. Therefore, thou washest thy feet, to wash off the poison of the serpent. It is a help towards humility also, that in a sacrament we should not shrink from that which we scorn in an act of service.

CHAPTER II

The "spiritual seal" and the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit. The effect of baptism illustrated from the healing of the blind man in John 9. Those who deny the need of baptism are refuted.

8. THERE follows the spiritual seal,¹ which you have heard mentioned in the lesson to-day. For after the font it remains for the "perfecting" ² to take place, when, at the invocation of the priest, the Holy Spirit is bestowed, *the spirit*

Ambrose uses the very phrase found in S. and refers to the serpent's poison which it was our Lord's purpose to cleanse when he washed the disciples' feet. In *de Spir.* S. i. prol. 12-16 there is a similar defence of the feet-washing in the rite of baptism, which he admits that some were unable to accept. There, as in the present passage, Ambrose also refers to the feet-washing as an act of humility.

Ambrose in all the above passages does not appear to regard inherited sin as guilt. Elsewhere, however, in *de Excessu Fratris* ii. 6, he goes much farther in the direction of Augustine and asserts that by his solidarity with Adam man is *culpae obnoxius*. Connolly, *The de Sacramentis a work of Ambrose. Two Papers* (1942), discusses the passages, pp. 22 f.

¹ Cf. M. vii. 41, 42.

² *Perfectio* is almost a technical term for the rite following Baptism, i.e. Confirmation (T.). For the use of the word in connexion with the "seal" see *de Isaac* 8. 75, where the seal is described as *perfectionis et caritatis insigne*.

of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and godliness, the spirit of holy fear,¹ as it were seven virtues of the Spirit.

9. And, indeed, all virtues belong to the Spirit; but these are as it were cardinal, as it were principal.² For what is so principal, as godliness? What is so principal, as the knowledge of God? What is so principal, as strength? What is so principal, as the counsel of God? What is so principal, as the fear of God? As the fear of the world is weakness, so the fear of God is great power.

10. These are the seven virtues, when thou art sealed;³ for, as the holy Apostle saith, *The wisdom of our God is manifold*.⁴ And, as the wisdom of God is manifold, so is the Holy Ghost manifold, who hath divers and various virtues.

¹ Isa. 11. 2 f. This exact form of quotation is found both in M. and also in *in Ps.* cxviii. 5. 38. It contains several variations from the Vulgate, which, with the exception of *virtutis* (so Novatian, *de Trin.* 29) for *fortitudinis* (Vulg.), do not appear to be found outside the writings of Ambrose. For "spiritus consilii et virtutis" see *de Spir. S.* ii. 2. 20, *in Ps.* xlvii. 12; for "spiritus cognitionis" (Vulg. *scientiae*) see *de Noe* 3. 7; and, in another connexion, for the phrase *sancti timoris* see *in Ps.* cxviii. 8. 56; *de Paenit.* i. 8. 37. In the explanation of the gifts, however, it may be noted that S. uses *fortitudo* for *virtus* and *timor Dei* for *sanctus timor*. See Connolly, *The de S. a work of Ambrose. Two Papers* (pp. 11 f.). Dom Morin (*Fabrbuch*, p. 100) suggests that all the variations are derived from a liturgical formula with which the "spiritual seal" was accompanied, though it may be noted that this is not expressly stated in S., which, however, precedes the quotation with the words "at the invocation of the priest (*sacerdotis*) the Holy Spirit is bestowed". Connolly, l.c., suggests that M., which carefully avoids liturgical formulae, is able to quote this as being a slightly variant form of a biblical text. M., however, makes no reference to the invocation of the priest which precedes it in S. See further, Introduction, p. 24.

² The words *principales virtutes* occur in Ambrose, *de Offic.* i. 24. 115, and the term *cardinales virtutes* in *in Lucam* v. 49.

³ *consignaris*.

⁴ Eph. 3. 10.

Whence also we speak of the *God of hosts*; ¹ which can be applied to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. But that belongs to another discourse, another time.

11. After this what follows? Thou hast to come to the altar,² whither thou hast not come before; thou hast to see the things which thou didst not see before, that is, the mystery which thou hast read in the Gospel; ³ if, however, thou hast not read it, thou hast certainly heard it. A blind man presented himself to the Saviour to be healed. And he, who healed others merely by a word and utterance, and brought back the light of the eyes by a command, yet in the book of the Gospel which is entitled "according to John" ⁴—who truly beyond the others saw great mysteries, and described, and declared them—he wished to prefigure this mystery ⁵ in the miracle. All the Evangelists, indeed, were holy, all the Apostles, except the traitor—all were holy; yet Saint John, who wrote his Gospel last, having been sought and chosen by Christ to be in a sense his kinsman,⁶ uttered eternal mysteries with a louder trumpet. Whatever he spoke is a mystery. Another Evangelist told of the cure of a blind man; Matthew did, Luke did, Mark did. What does John alone say?—He took *clay*, and anointed his eyes, and said unto him, "*Go to Siloam.*" And rising he went, and washed, and came seeing.⁷

¹ *Deus virtutum*, as often in the Latin Psalter.

² Cf. M. viii. 43 (*init.*). ³ John 9. 1 f.

⁴ *in libro evangelii qui scribitur secundum Joannem*. The same form of reference to an individual Gospel is found in *de Paenitentia* i. 4. 17; *Ep.* xxvi. 2. For *in libro evangelii secundum* see in *Ps.* xl. 36; in *Ps.* cxviii. 10. 21.

⁵ The word *mysterium* in this passage, as elsewhere, is used in various senses. It is a "sacrament", "a passage of Scripture with an inner meaning", and "a divine purpose" (T.).

⁶ Possibly a reference to John 19. 26, 27.

⁷ John 9. 6 f. This particular incident is not found in the other Evangelists, but similar cures of blind men are recorded in Matt. 9. 27 f.; 12. 22; 20. 30 f.; Mark 8. 22 f.; 10. 46 f.; Luke 18. 35 f.

12. Consider thou also the eyes of thine heart. Formerly thou sawest only the things that are bodily, with bodily eyes; but the things which pertain to the sacraments thou wast not yet able to see with the eyes of the heart. Therefore, when thou gavest thy name,¹ he took *clay, and anointed thine eyes*. What does it mean? It means that thou shouldst confess thy sin, recognize thy guilt, repent of thy trespasses, that is, acknowledge the lot of human birth. For although he who comes to baptism does not confess his sin,² yet he makes a complete confession of all sins by the very fact that he asks to be baptized, that he may be justified, that is, pass from guilt to grace.

13. Do not think it superfluous. There are some³—I know for certain there was one who said so; when we said to him, “At thy time of life thou shouldst certainly be baptized”, he objected, “Why should I be baptized? I have no sin. Have I contracted sin?” He had no clay, because Christ had not washed,⁴ that is, had not opened, his eyes; for no man is without sin.

14. Therefore, he who takes refuge in the baptism of Christ acknowledges himself a man.⁵ So on thee also he

¹ i.e. as a candidate for baptism. See Introduction, p. 15.

² Ambrose, in *Lucam* vi. 3, speaks of baptism “in which there is confession and pardon of sins”. This, however, need not mean more than is implied in the present passage of S., where it is said that the very fact of seeking baptism involves “a complete confession of all sins”.

³ In this passage commentators have claimed to see a reference to the Pelagian denial of original sin, and find in it an indication that S. is not a work of Ambrose. But the language is too vague and general to support any such definite application.

⁴ *laverat*. The Rom. edition and one MS. read *liniverat*. Possibly *leverat*, the reading of several MSS., is correct: i.e. “had not anointed”.

⁵ This exact phrase *agnoscit se hominem*, with the idea that it is penitence which is equivalent to acknowledging that we are human,

has put clay, that is modesty, prudence, reflection upon thy weakness, and he has said to thee, "*Go to Siloam.*"¹ What is Siloam? *Which is*, it says, *by interpretation, Sent.* That is, Go to that fount² wherein the cross of the Lord is proclaimed;³ go to that fount wherein Christ redeemed the faults of all men.

15. Thou didst go, thou didst wash, thou camest to the altar. Thou didst begin to see what thou hadst not seen before; that is, through the font of the Lord and the preaching of the Lord's passion thine eyes were then opened. Thou who seemedst before to be blinded in heart, didst begin to see the light of the sacraments. Therefore, dearly beloved brethren,⁴ we have arrived at the altar, to a richer theme. And for the reason that the time is advanced, we cannot begin a fresh subject; since it is a lengthier theme, let what has been said to-day suffice; and to-morrow, if it please the Lord, we will treat of those sacraments.

is found in three passages of Ambrose: in *Ps.* cxviii. 16. 11; in *Lucam* iii. 37; *Apol. David* i. 4. 19; and in *Ap. David altera* iii. 16 (which has good claim to be by Ambrose: see Connolly, *Some disputed works of Ambrose*, reprinted from *Downside Review*, Vol. LXV, p. 9). The same phrase is found in different connexions in *de Isaac* i. 1; *de Ob. Theod.* 16.

¹ John 9. 7. The omission of "wash in the pool of" before "Siloam" may be due to a brief summary, but the word "wash" (*lava*) is omitted in some Old Latin MSS. Irenaeus, *adv. Haer.* v. 13. 5 (Harvey), omits "in the pool of" and reads in *Siloam et lavare*.

² The word *fontem* can mean either a "spring" or a "baptismal font". There is a play on the double meaning (T.).

³ Cf. *M.* iii. 14. An allusion to the signing of the water with the cross at the consecration of the font.

⁴ For the phrase *fratres dilectissimi* see *Hexaem.* v. 12. 36, where, as here, we have a reproduction of addresses orally delivered.

BOOK IV

CHAPTER I

The symbolism of the Tabernacle applied to Christian baptism.

1. UNDER the old covenant *the priests* used to enter continually *into the first tabernacle*; *into the second tabernacle the high priest* entered *once in the year*. The Apostle Paul¹ clearly recalling this in the Epistle to the Hebrews, explains the tenor of the Old Testament. Now, there was in *the second tabernacle the manna*; there was also *the rod of Aaron, which* withered and afterwards *blossomed* again; there was likewise the censer.²

2. What is the purpose of this? It is that you may understand what is *the second tabernacle*, into which the priest introduced you, into which *the high priest* was accustomed to enter *once in the year*, that is, to the baptistery,³ where *the rod*

¹ For the ascription of the Ep. to the Hebrews to St Paul see M. viii. 45. The attribution to St Paul appears first in Clement of Alexandria, and though doubts were expressed by Origen and others, it became a common view in the East during the fourth century. In the West, though quite early evidence of its use is found, its acceptance as canonical was more gradual, owing to the doubts about authorship.

² In the above passage the author has in mind Heb. 9. 4-7. The word *thymiaterium* (rendered "censer") is a transliteration of the Greek, which has been variously rendered "censer" or "altar of incense". The Vulgate has *turibulum*. That the writer means "censer" is shown by iv. 1. 4.

³ On the baptistery as "the holy of holies" see M. ii. 5. The parallel to "once in the year", in the author's mind, is to be found in the fact that Easter was the normal time for baptism.

of *Aaron blossomed*; it was withered before, afterwards it blossomed again. Thou, too, wast withered, and didst begin to blossom again in the streaming font. Thou hadst withered through sins, thou hadst withered through faults and trespasses; but now thou hast begun to bear fruit, *planted by the rivers of water*.¹

3. But perhaps thou sayest, "What has this to do with the people, if the priest's rod had withered and blossomed again? "What is the people itself but priestly? To whom it was said, *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation*,² as saith the Apostle Peter. Every one is anointed to the priesthood, is anointed to the kingdom also; but it is a spiritual kingdom and a spiritual priesthood.

4. In the *second tabernacle* is the censer also, which is wont to diffuse a sweet savour. So you also are now *a sweet savour of Christ*; ³ no longer is there in you any stain of sins,⁴ any savour of ranker error.

CHAPTER II

The grace of innocence and "renewal of youth" resulting from baptism.

5. IT follows that you come to the altar. You began to come; the angels watched, they saw you approaching, and that human nature, which before was stained with the murky filth of sin, suddenly shone bright in their sight. And accordingly they said, *Who is this that cometh up from the*

¹ Ps. i. 3.

² 1 Pet. 2. 9. The text agrees verbally with that in *de Fuga saec.* 2. 6 and with Vulg.

³ 2 Cor. 2. 15.

⁴ *sors delictorum*. This use of *sors* (= *sordes*) is found in three other passages of Ambrose: *Hexaem* iv. i. i; in *Ps.* lxi. 4; in *Ps.* cxviii. 16. 14; but is not known elsewhere. Some MSS. read *sordes*.

wilderness made white? ¹ The angels then also wonder. Wilt thou know that they wonder? Hear, then, the Apostle Paul saying that those things have been bestowed on us *which even angels long to see*; ² and again, *What eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*³

6. Then recall what thou hast received. Holy David the prophet saw this grace in a figure, and desired it. Wilt thou know that he desired it? Again hear him saying, *Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow.*⁴ Why? Because snow, although it is white, quickly turns black with any dirt, and is spoilt; this grace which thou hast received, if thou hold fast that which thou hast received, will be lasting and eternal.

7. Thou camest thus with desire to the altar, since thou hadst seen such grace. Thou camest with desire to the altar, to receive the sacrament; let thy soul say, *And I will go unto*

¹ Cant. 8. 5. Cf. M. vii. 35. Both passages follow LXX in reading *dealbata* ("made white"). The words "from the wilderness" are not found in M. or in the LXX, but correspond to the Hebrew and Vulg. In two passages elsewhere Ambrose shows acquaintance with the reading "white" (see above), and with "from the wilderness" as a variant reading (*de Ob. Valent.* 77; in *Ps.* cxviii. 14. 34). For the latter see also *de Isaac* 5. 44. Here he has combined the two readings.

² 1 Pet. 1. 12. The writer by a slip of memory attributes the words to St Paul. The text *concupiscunt et angeli videre* corresponds with that in *Ep.* lxxx. 4 and (omitting *et*) with Irenaeus, *adv. Haer.* v. 36.

³ 1 Cor. 2. 9. Quoted by M. iv. 19; viii. 44. Both passages in M. have the words "which hath not entered into the heart of man" omitted here and in *Ep.* lxxx. 4 (cf. Isa. 64. 4). *Ep.* lxxx. 4 has also *diligentibus* as in S. and M. viii. 44. There is a similar combination of the two passages 1 Pet. 1. 12 and 1 Cor. 2. 9 in *Ep.* lxxx. 4.

⁴ Ps. 51. 7 (Vulg. 50. 9).

*the altar of my God, unto God who maketh glad my youth.*¹ Thou hast put off the old age of sins, thou hast taken the youth of grace; this the heavenly sacraments bestowed on thee. Therefore, again hear David saying, *Thy youth shall be renewed as the eagle's.*² Thou beginnest to be a good eagle, seeking heaven, scorning earthly things. Good eagles are about the altar; for *where the body is, there also are the eagles.*³ The altar is a type of the body,⁴ and the body of Christ is on the altar; ye are eagles, renewed by the washing away of sin.

CHAPTER III

Comparison of the Jewish and Christian sacraments. Melchizedek a type of Christ.

8. THOU camest to the altar, thou sawest the sacraments laid upon the altar, and thou didst wonder at those creatures; ⁵ yet they are ordinary and familiar.

¹ Ps. 43 (Vulg. 42). 4. In *Interpell.* ii. 9. 35 the same three psalms quoted here in §§ 6, 7 are used to indicate the renewing and cleansing of baptism. Both passages have "*my God*" (omitted by M. viii. 43 with LXX and Vulg.). The psalm is quoted by M. in the same connexion as here, the approach to the altar. But its use in the Roman and Milanese Missals is of late date. See Ceriani, *Notitia Lit. Ambros.*, p. 24.

² Ps. 103 (Vulg. 102). 5. The words are quoted by Ambrose in *in Lucam* viii. 55 with the same comment about seeking heavenly and scorning earthly things.

³ Matt. 24. 28 : Luke 17. 37. Cf. i. 2. 6.

⁴ The sense of this expression is illustrated by the following passage from the *Glossa Ordinaria* (Migne, *P.L.*, cl. 405). The Body of Christ "is called an altar in other places of the divine Scriptures also, because on it, that is, on faith in it, as on an altar, our offered prayers and works become acceptable" (quoted by Westcott on Heb. 13. 10). (T.)

⁵ *creaturam*. Cf. Book of Common Prayer, "these thy creatures of bread and wine". The writer is thinking of the placing of the

9. Perhaps someone will say: "To the Jews God granted such grace, *he rained down manna upon them*¹ from heaven; what more has he given to his faithful, what more has he bestowed on those to whom he promised more?"

10. Hear what things I say, namely, that the mysteries of the Christians are older than those of the Jews,² and the sacraments of the Christians are more divine than those of the Jews. How? Hear. When did the Jews begin? At the earliest, with Judah, the great-grandson of Abraham; or, if thou preferrest to take this view, with the Law, that is, when the Jews were deemed worthy to receive the Law. Therefore, they were called Jews from the great-grandson of Abraham, or since the time of holy Moses. And if God *rained down manna* from heaven then upon the murmuring Jews, still there was for thee a yet earlier figure of these sacraments, when Abraham was alive, when he gathered *the men born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and then pursued the adversaries, delivering his nephew out of captivity; then he came in triumph; Melchizedek the priest met him, offered him bread and wine.*³ Who had the *bread and wine*? Abraham had not. But who had? Melchizedek. He, then, is the author of the sacraments. Who is Melchizedek? He who is indicated as *King of righteousness, King of peace.*⁴ Who is the *King of righteousness*? Can any man be *King of righteousness*? Who, then, is the *King of righteousness*, but the *Righteousness of God*, he who is *the Peace of God, the*

elements upon the altar. From Ambrose (*in Ps. cxviii, prol. 2*) it appears that at Milan, as elsewhere in the West, the people made their offerings of bread and wine for the Eucharist, but the newly baptized did not partake in this "offering" until Low Sunday.

¹ Ps. 78. 25 (Vulg. 77. 24). Cf. M. viii. 44.

² With this section cf. M. viii. 45, 46.

³ Gen. 14. 14 f.

⁴ Heb. 7. 2.

*Wisdom of God?*¹ He who could say, *My peace I give unto you, my peace I leave with you.*²

11. Therefore, first understand that these sacraments which thou receivest are older than are the sacraments of Moses, whatever they are that the Jews say they have; and that the Christian people began before the people of the Jews—we, however, as predetermined, while they actually bore the name.

12. Melchizedek, therefore, offered *bread and wine*. Who is Melchizedek? *Without father*, it says, *without mother, without order of generation, having neither beginning of days nor end of life*; this is in the Epistle to the Hebrews.³ He is *without father*, it says, and *without mother*. *Like unto whom? The Son of God*. The Son of God was born *without mother* in his heavenly generation, because he was born of God the Father only. And again, he was born *without father*, when he was born of the Virgin; for he was not generated of the seed of a man, but born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,⁴ brought forth from a virgin womb, in all things *like to*

¹ Eph. 2. 14: 1 Cor. 1. 24, 30.

² John 14. 27. The variation in the order of the clauses is found in some Old Latin and Vulgate MSS.

³ Heb. 7. 3. The reading *generationis ordine* is apparently peculiar to S.; but *generationis enumeratione* is found in Ambrose, *Ep.* lxiv. 49.

⁴ The words *natus est de spiritu sancto et Maria virgine* are found in the old Roman creed of Rufinus, and also in the *Explanatio Symboli*, which Dom Morin (*Maria Laach Jahrbuch*) has shown good reason for attributing to Ambrose, who in *Ep.* xlii. 5 says "Let belief be given to the Apostles' creed, which the Roman church always guards and preserves unimpaired", while in the *Explanatio* it is said of the creed which is there commented on "This is the creed which the Roman church holds, where Peter the first of the Apostles sat and thither brought the common pronouncement of all." An edition of the *Explanatio* by Dom Connolly was prepared before his death, and will be published in due course. The text of the creed is printed in Hahn, *Bibliothek der Symbole*. The preceding

*the Son of God.*¹ Melchizedek was also a priest; since Christ, too, is a priest to whom it is said, *Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*²

CHAPTER IV

The bread and wine of the Eucharist become Christ's body and blood in virtue of the words of consecration, which are Christ's own words. Illustrations from the Virgin birth and miracles of O.T.

13. WHO, then, is the author of the sacraments but the Lord Jesus? From heaven those sacraments came; for all counsel is from heaven. But it was truly a great and divine miracle that God *rained down manna* from heaven upon the people and the people ate without toiling.

14. Thou sayest perhaps, "My bread is³ of the usual kind." But that bread is bread before the words of the sacraments; when consecration has been added, from bread it becomes the flesh of Christ. Let us therefore prove this. How can that which is bread be the body of Christ? By consecration. But in what words and in whose language is the consecration? Those of the Lord Jesus. For all the other things which are said in the earlier parts of the service are said by the priest—praises are offered to God, prayer is

words *Non enim ex virili semine generatus est, sed natus de Spiritu sancto* recall the hymn of Ambrose, *Veni redemptor gentium*, which has *non ex virili semine sed mystico spiramine*.

¹ Heb. 7. 3.

² Heb. 7. 17. Cf. Ps. 110 (Vulg. 109). 4.

³ Some see in this a reference to the offering of bread and wine by the people. But at Milan (see note on iv. 3. 8) the newly baptized did not "offer" until Low Sunday. Possibly the meaning is quite general: "The bread which I see is ordinary bread". With this section cf. M. ix. 50.

asked for the people, for kings, and the rest;¹ when it comes to the consecration of the venerable sacrament, the priest no longer uses his own language, but he uses the language of Christ. Therefore, the word of Christ consecrates this sacrament.²

15. What is the word of Christ? That, to be sure, whereby all things are made. The Lord commanded, and the heaven was made; the Lord commanded, and the earth was made; the Lord commanded, and the seas were made; the Lord commanded, and every creature was produced. Thou seest, therefore, how effective is the word of Christ. If, therefore, there is such power in the word of the Lord Jesus, that the things which were not began to be, how much more is it effective, that things previously existing should, without ceasing to exist, be changed into something else?³

¹ In this description Probst (*Lit. des viert. Jahrh.* p. 249) sees a parallel to the order of the prayers in the Roman Canon. In the Gelasian Sacramentary the *Sanctus*, which corresponds to the "praises", is followed by the prayers *Te igitur* (a prayer for the Church and Pope) and *Memento, domine*, a prayer for the congregation "who offer this sacrifice of praise". The letter of Pope Innocent I to Decentius (A.D. 416) shows that at Rome in his time the names of offerers were recited within the Canon. But it is possible that S. is not observing the strict order and that the prayers referred to are "the prayers of the faithful" earlier in the service. There is no prayer for kings in the Gelasian Canon, but such a prayer is found in the Good Friday prayers (Wilson, *Gel. Sacram.*, p. 76), which are a survival of the "prayers of the faithful".

² Cf. M. ix. 52. For *conficere* ("consecrate") see note on that passage.

³ *ut sint quae erant et in aliud commutentur*. The words have also been rendered "that they should be what they were and be changed into something else". Thus rendered the words have been interpreted as an assertion by the author of the continued existence, after consecration, of the natures of the bread and wine. The passage was discussed in the Eucharistic controversies of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Lanfranc and Alger of Liège appear to have interpreted the words in the above sense, but sought

The heaven was not, the sea was not, the earth was not; but hear David saying, *He spake, and they were made: he commanded, and they were created.*¹

16. Therefore, that I may answer thee, it was not the body of Christ before consecration; but after consecration, I tell thee, it is now the body of Christ. *He spake, and it was made: he commanded, and it was created.* Thou thyself didst formerly exist, but thou wast an old creature; after thou wast consecrated, thou didst begin to be a new creature. Wilt thou know how thou art a new creature? *Everyone, it says, in Christ is a new creature.*²

17. Hear, then, how the word of Christ is wont to change every creature, and changes, at will, the ordinances of nature.

to evade the conclusions drawn from them by contending that the words refer to the outward appearances of bread and wine. One MS. omits the words altogether. The Roman edition reads *ut quae erant in aliud commutentur* ("that the things which were should be changed into something else"), and the same reading was known to Lanfranc. The variations in reading reflect the controversial use made of the passage. On the other hand, the translation given in the text, which is supported by Cardinal Perrone, appears to be justified on two grounds:

(1) The parallel language in M. ix. 52. "The word of Christ, then, which could make out of nothing that which was not, can it not change the things which are into that which they were not? For to give new natures to things is no less wonderful than to change their natures" (see notes).

(2) In the present passage the author is arguing that creation out of nothing is an even greater miracle than the conversion of existing things into something else. The greater implies the less. If the word of Christ can effect the one, it can effect the other. The words *ut sint* are not intended to lay stress on the continued existence of bread and wine *as bread and wine*, but emphasize the fact that the change effected in them does not involve destruction or a new act of creation. That is probably all that is in the author's mind.

¹ Ps. 33 (Vulg. 32). 9. Cf. M. ix. 52.

² 2 Cor. 5. 17 (freely quoted).

In what way? thou askest. Hear; and, first of all, let us take an example from his generation. It is usual that a man is not generated save from a man and a woman and the use of marriage; but because the Lord willed it, because he chose this mystery,¹ Christ was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin, that is, *the mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*.² Thou seest, then, that he was born contrary to the ordinances and course of nature; he was born as man from a virgin.

18. Hear another example.³ The people of the Jews were hard pressed by the Egyptians; they were shut in by the sea. At the divine command Moses touched the waters with his rod, and the wave divided, certainly not according to the use of its own nature, but according to the grace of the heavenly command. Hear another.⁴ The people thirsted, they came to the spring. The spring was bitter; holy Moses *cast wood* into the spring, and the spring which had been bitter was made sweet, that is, it changed the use of its nature, it received the sweetness of grace. Hear also a fourth example.⁵ *The axe head had fallen into the waters*; as iron it sank by its own use. Elisha *cast wood*; straightway *the iron* rose, and *swam* upon the waters, certainly contrary to the use of iron, for the matter of iron is heavier than the element of water.

19. From all these examples, then, dost thou not understand how effectual is the heavenly word? If the heavenly word was effectual in the earthly spring, if it was effectual in other things, is it not effectual in the heavenly sacraments? Therefore thou hast learnt that what was bread becomes the

¹ The mystery (*sacramentum*) is the Incarnation. Cf. 1 Tim. 3. 16, where the Vulg. rendering of *μυστήριον* is *sacramentum*. For this parallel to the Incarnation see M. ix. 53.

² 1 Tim. 2. 5.

³ Ex. 14. Cf. for this section M. ix. 51.

⁴ Ex. 15. 23-25. ⁵ 2 Kings 6. 5, 6.

body of Christ,¹ and that wine and water are put into the chalice, but become blood by the consecration of the heavenly word.

20. But perhaps thou sayest, "I do not see the appearance² of blood." But it has the likeness; for as thou hast taken *the likeness of the death*,³ so also thou drinkest the likeness of the precious blood, that there may be no shrinking from actual blood, and yet the price of redemption may effect its work. Thou hast learnt, therefore, that what thou receivest is the body of Christ.

CHAPTER V

The words with which the priest consecrates the sacrament are quoted, and the sacrament is shown to be a greater gift than that of the manna.

21. WILT thou know that it is consecrated by heavenly words? Hear what the words are. The priest speaks.⁴ "Make for us", he says, "this oblation approved, ratified, reasonable, acceptable, seeing that it is the figure of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who⁵ the day before he suffered *took bread* in his holy hands, and *looked up to heaven* to thee, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God, and *giving*

¹ *ex pane fit corpus Christi*. With this section cf. M. ix. 52.

² *speciem*. Here, as *video* suggests, it denotes "appearance", as in M. iv. 25. See also M. ix. 52, with notes on both passages.

³ Rom. 6. 5.

⁴ On the prayers which follow see Introduction, pp. 28 f., and for the expression "*figure* of the body of Christ", pp. 31, 38.

⁵ The recital of the institution is a conflation of the four accounts in Matt. 26. 26 f. : Mark 14. 22 f. : Luke 22. 19 f. : 1 Cor. 11. 23 f. with the addition "looked up to heaven" from the account of the feeding of the multitude in Mark 6. 41. The addition is found in the Gelasian Canon and in the Liturgies of the Apostolic Constitutions, and of St James and St Mark. The two last also have "disciples and apostles". See further Introduction, pp. 28 f.

thanks, he blessed, brake, and having broken, delivered it to his apostles and to his disciples, saying, Take, and eat ye all of this; for this is my body, which shall be broken for many.

22. "*Likewise also after supper, the day before he suffered, he took the cup, looked up to heaven to thee, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God, and giving thanks, blessed it and delivered it to his apostles and to his disciples, saying, Take, and drink ye all of this; for this is my blood.*" Observe all those expressions. Those words are the Evangelists' up to *Take*, whether the body or the blood. After that they are the words of Christ: *Take, and drink ye all of this; for this is my blood.* And observe them in detail.

23. *Who the day before he suffered, he says, in his holy hands took bread.* Before it is consecrated, it is bread, but when the words of Christ have been added, it is the body of Christ. Therefore hear him saying: *Take and eat ye all of it; for this is my body.* And before the words of Christ it is a cup full of wine and water. When the words of Christ have operated, then and there it is made to be ¹ the blood of Christ which redeemed the people. Therefore, see in how many ways the word of Christ is mighty to change all things. There the Lord Jesus himself testifies to us that we receive his body and blood. Ought we to doubt of his trustworthiness and testimony?

24. Now come back with me to the point which I set out to prove. It is a great and awful thing that he rained manna on the Jews from heaven. But distinguish. What is greater, manna from heaven or the body of Christ? Certainly the body of Christ who is the maker of heaven. Then he who *ate manna died*. Whosoever eats this body shall have remission of sins and *shall never die*.²

25. Therefore [when thou receivest]³ it is not superfluous

¹ *sanguis Christi efficitur.* ² A reference to John 6. 49, 50.

³ The words in brackets are omitted by some authorities.

that thou sayest *Amen*, already in spirit confessing that thou receivest the body of Christ. The priest says to thee, The body of Christ. And thou sayest, *Amen*, that is, True.¹ What the tongue confesses let the heart hold fast.

CHAPTER VI

The sacrament a memorial of Christ's death and a proclamation of the forgiveness of sins.

26. BUT that thou mayest know that this is a sacrament, it was prefigured beforehand. Then learn how great is the sacrament. See what he says: *As often as ye do this, so often will ye make a memorial of me until I come again.*²

27. And the priest says: ³ "Therefore having in remembrance his most glorious passion and resurrection from the dead

¹ The words "The body of Christ" are the words of the priest at the administration, to which the communicants respond, *Amen*. Cf. M. ix. 54. There is good evidence of this custom both in East and West. See e.g. Hippolytus, *Ap. Tradition*; Tertullian, *de Spectaculis* 25; Augustine, *Serm.* 272; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.* xxiii. 21.

² The words appear to be a liturgical formula, concluding the recital of the institution. In that case "he says" refers to the priest (cf. "the priest says" in § 25). The words are based on I Cor. II. 26. The attribution to our Lord ("until I come") is found in the Liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions and several Eastern rites, as well as in the Ambrosian Sacramentary of Biasca, and it appears as an addition by a later scribe in the Stowe Missal. The Roman Canon has the form *haec quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis*, and this appears to be attested about the middle of the fifth century in a *Commentary on the Psalms* attributed to Arnobius the younger (quoted by Dom Morin, *Revue Bén.* xxiv, 1907, pp. 404 f.). As Dom Connolly pointed out to me, either the formula of S. represents a local variation, or the Roman form must have ousted an earlier form some time before Arnobius, if the passage ascribed to him is genuine.

³ This prayer corresponds to the Anamnesis of the Roman Canon. On the prayer which follows see Introduction, pp. 28 f.

and ascension into heaven, we offer to thee this spotless offering, reasonable offering,¹ unbloody offering,² this holy bread and cup of eternal life: and we ask and pray that thou wouldst receive this oblation on thy altar on high by the hands of thy angels,³ as thou didst vouchsafe to receive the presents of thy righteous servant Abel, and the sacrifice of our patriarch Abraham, and that which the high priest Melchizedek offered to thee."

28. Therefore as often as thou receivest—what saith the Apostle to thee?—as often as we receive, we *show the Lord's death*; ⁴ if we show his death, we show remission of sins. If, as often as blood is poured forth, it is poured for remission of sins, I ought always to receive it, that my sins may always be forgiven me. I, who am always sinning, ought always to have a remedy.

29. Meanwhile, we have explained to you to-day, also, as much as we could. But to-morrow, Saturday, and on Sunday ⁵ we will speak of the order of prayer as we are able. May the Lord our God preserve to you the grace which he has given and may he deign to illuminate more fully the eyes which he has opened for you, through his only begotten Son, our Lord God, king and saviour, through whom and with whom to him is praise, honour, glory, majesty, power with the Holy Spirit from all ages, both now and ever, and world without end.—AMEN.

¹ Cf. Rom. 12. 1. The word for "offering" (*hostia*) is that used in the Latin version of Rom. 12. 1 and of Heb. 13. 15 (*hostiam laudis*, "sacrifice of praise").

² This expression is frequently found in early Christian writers, and in Eastern rites, as well as in some Gallican books.

³ The Roman Canon has the singular "angel", possibly a reference to the angel in Rev. 8. 3 f. Cf. Tertullian, *de Orat.* 12.

⁴ 1 Cor. 11. 26.

⁵ On the days on which the addresses were delivered see Introduction, pp. 34 f.

BOOK V

CHAPTER I

The writer returns to the story of Melchizedek, and gives two reasons why water is mixed with wine in the chalice.

1. YESTERDAY our sermon and discourse was carried as far as the sacraments of the holy altar. And we learned that those sacraments were prefigured in the times of Abraham, when holy Melchizedek offered sacrifice, *having neither beginning nor end of days*. Hear, O man, what the Apostle Paul says to the Hebrews. Where are those who say that the Son of God is of time? Of Melchizedek¹ it was said that he has *neither beginning nor end of days*.² If Melchizedek has not a beginning of days, could Christ have it? But the figure is not greater than the reality. Thou seest therefore that he himself is *the first and last*.³ First, because he is the author of all things; last, not because he comes to an end, but because he concludes all things.

2. We said, therefore, that the cup and the bread are set on the altar. What is poured into the cup? Wine. And

¹ Another reading is *esse de tempore Melchisedech*, "that the Son of God is of the time of Melchizedek", which the editors explain as a reference to a sect mentioned by Epiphanius and Augustine, which held that Melchizedek was a heavenly power, superior to Christ. They appealed in support of their view to Heb. 5. 10. The reading in the text seems preferable, the reference being to the Arian denial of the eternal Sonship.

² Heb. 7. 3.

³ Rev. 1. 17.

what else? Water.¹ But thou sayest to me: "How, then did Melchizedek offer bread and wine? What means the mixture of water?" Hear the reason.

3. First of all, what does the type which was prefigured in the time of Moses tell us? That when the people of the Jews thirsted and murmured because they could not find water, God bade Moses touch the rock with his rod. He touched the rock, and the rock poured forth a flood of water,² as the Apostle says, *But they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ.*³ It was not an immovable rock which followed the people. Drink thou also, that Christ may follow thee. Behold the mystery. Moses, that is to say, a prophet; the rod, that is the word of God. The priest touches the rock with the word of God, and the water flows and the people of God drink. Therefore the priest touches the cup, the water streams in the cup, *springs up into eternal life*,⁴ and the people of God drink, who have obtained the grace of God. This, then, thou hast learned.

4. Hear also another reason. At the time of the Lord's

¹ The mixture of water with wine in the chalice is referred to by many early writers, beginning with Justin Martyr, and is commented on by Cyprian, *Ep.* lxiii.

² Ex. 17. 1-7: Num. 20. 2-11.

³ 1 Cor. 10. 4. Cf. M. viii. 49, where the word "spiritual" is omitted. In the present passage of S. the Maurists have the word in their text, but they say that many more MSS. omit it. In all other passages where the verse is quoted by Ambrose the word is absent except in *Lucam* vi. 97. The word may have come into the text through assimilation to the Vulgate. In Irenaeus *adv. Haer.* iv. 25. 3 (Harvey), the Latin version omits both "spiritual" and "them" (*eos*), and the latter word is also absent from *in Lucam* vi. 97.

The following words, "It was not an immovable rock", are found in *de Fide* iv. 5. 52, followed by the quotation from 1 Cor. 10.

⁴ John 4. 14.

passion, when a great sabbath was nigh, because our Lord Jesus Christ was alive, or the robbers, men were sent to smite them; coming they found the Lord Jesus Christ dead; then one of the soldiers touched his side with his lance, and from his side water flowed and blood.¹ Why water? why blood? Water to cleanse, blood to redeem. Why from his side? Because whence the guilt, thence the grace; guilt through woman, grace through the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER II

The blessings of the sacrament illustrated from Canticles.

5. THOU hast come to the altar; the Lord Jesus calls thee or thy soul or the Church and says, *Let her kiss me with the kisses of her mouth.*² Wouldst thou apply it to Christ?

¹ John 19. 31-34. Cf. M. viii. 48. There are parallel passages in *de Ben. Patriarch.* 4. 24, and in *Ps.* xlv. 12; in both passages the order *aqua, sanguis* is as here, instead of the reverse order found in the Greek and Vulgate.

² Cant. I. 2 (Vulg. I. 1). The readings *ab osculis* and *super vinum* in § 8 below follow LXX (Vulg. *osculo, vino*). With *ab osculis*, cf. *de Isaac* 3. 7, 8; *Ep.* xli. 14; with *super vinum*, cf. *de Isaac* 3. 9; *de Virginibus* ii. 6. 42. In §§ 5-7 the passage is interpreted in two ways. As the subject of *osculetur* ("let . . . kiss") is not expressed in the Latin, it may be interpreted either of Christ as the speaker, or of the Church (or individual soul, or human nature) as addressing Christ. In § 6 Christ is taken to be the speaker. The reading "He sees", *videt* (for *vides*, which the Maurists say is that of the MSS.), seems to be needed, and is followed here. In § 7 it is Christ who is addressed by the soul or human nature or the Church. This twofold application of the imagery of Canticles either to the Church or to the individual soul goes back to Origen's Commentary on Canticles, part of which is extant in the Latin translation of Rufinus. Cf. the similar treatment of the language of Canticles in M. vii. 37.

Nothing sweeter. Wouldst thou apply it to thy soul? Nothing pleasanter.

6. *Let her kiss me.* He sees that thou art clean from all sin because thy sins are purged away. Therefore he judges thee worthy of the heavenly sacrament and therefore he invites thee to a heavenly banquet. *Let her kiss me with the kisses of her mouth.*

7. Yet on account of what follows it is thy soul or human nature or the Church which, seeing itself cleansed from all sins, and worthy to be able to approach the altar of Christ (for what is the altar but the type of the body of Christ?),¹ has seen the wondrous sacraments and says, *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth*, that is, let Christ imprint a kiss on me.

8. Why? *Because thy breasts are better than wine.*² That is, the sensations which thou suppliest are better, thy sacraments are better, than wine: than that wine which, though it hath sweetness, joy, agreeableness, yet therein is worldly joy, while in thee is spiritual pleasure. Even in those days Solomon represents the marriage of Christ and the Church, or of the spirit and flesh and soul.

9. And we have further: *Thy name is an ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.*³ Who are those virgins but the souls of individuals which have put off the old age of this body, being renewed through the Holy Spirit?

10. *Draw us; we will run after the fragrance of thy ointments.*⁴ See what he says. Thou canst not follow Christ

¹ Cf. iv. 2. 7 (note).

² Cant. I. 2 (Vulg. I. 1).

³ Cant. I. 3 (Vulg. I. 2). Cf. M. vi. 29. Both M. and S. read *exinanitum* following LXX. So Ambrose, *de Inst. Virg.* 13. 83, and elsewhere (Vulg. *effusum*).

⁴ Cant. I. 4 (Vulg. I. 3). Cf. M. vi. 29. Both M. and S. read *adtrahere nos* (Vulg. *trahere nos*). So *de Isaac* 3. 10; in *Ps.* xliii. 28. Both these last passages further agree in reading *post odorem unguentorum* for *post te in odorem unguentorum*, where M. follows LXX (so Vulg., where *curremus* precedes *in odorem*).

unless he himself draws thee. Therefore, that thou mayest know this: *When I am lifted up*, he says, *I will draw all unto me*.¹

11. *The king hath brought me into his chamber*.² The Greek text has "into his storehouse³ and into his cellar", where are good draughts, pleasant savours, sweet honey, divers fruits, varied foods, that thy banquet may be seasoned with numerous dishes.

CHAPTER III

Further illustrations of the blessings of Communion from Psalm 23 and from Canticles.

12. THEREFORE thou hast come to the altar, thou hast received the body of Christ. Hear again what sacraments thou hast obtained. Hear holy David speaking. He, too, foresaw these mysteries in the spirit and rejoiced and said that he *lacked nothing*.⁴ Why? Because he that hath received the body of Christ shall never hunger.⁵

13. How often hast thou heard the twenty-second Psalm⁶ and not understood? See how it is suited to the heavenly sacraments. *The Lord is my shepherd*; ⁷ *and I shall not want*.

¹ John 12. 32. Exactly the same form of quotation with *cum* for *si*, and omission of *a terra*, is found in Ambrose in *Ps.* xlv. 24 and in *Ps.* cxviii. 12. 22.

² Cant. 1. 4 (Vulg. 1. 3). The reading in *cubiculum suum* (Vulg. in *cellaria sua*) is found in *de Isaac* 4. 11 and in *Ps.* cxviii. 1. 5.

³ The LXX has *ταμείον*, which the author renders by the two words *promptuarium* and *cellarium*.

⁴ Ps. 23 (Vulg. 22). 1. ⁵ John 6. 35. Cf. M. viii. 48.

⁶ The author follows the numbering of the Psalms in the Latin Version, which is also that of the LXX.

⁷ Ps. 23 (Vulg. 22). 1-5. Cf. M. viii. 43, which agrees with S. in several variants from the Vulgate. In v. 1 *pascit* for *regit* (a different rendering of *ποιμαίνει*); v. 4 *ambulem* for *ambulavero*; v. 5 *poculum* for *calix*. On the other hand, the present passage has

In a place of pasture there hath he made me to lie down. He hath tended me by the water of comfort, he converteth my soul. He hath led me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff, they have comforted me. Rod is rule, staff is passion; that is the eternal Divinity of Christ, but also his passion in the body. The one created, the other redeemed. Thou hast prepared a table before me against them that trouble me. Thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my inebriating cup how glorious it is !

14. Therefore thou hast come to the altar, thou hast received the grace of Christ, thou hast obtained the heavenly sacraments. The Church rejoices in the redemption of many and is glad with spiritual exultation that her white-robed household stand at her side.¹ Thou hast this in Canticles. In joy she calls Christ, having a feast which can seem worthy of heavenly banqueting. Therefore she says: *Let my brother come down into his garden and take the fruit of his fruit-trees.*² What are his fruit-trees? Thou

"my cup" (Vulg.) for "*thy cup*", the latter being read by LXX, M., and other passages in Ambrose. The word "my" is probably due to assimilation to the Vulgate in the course of textual transmission. Though Ambrose nowhere else, according to the best MSS., has "*my cup*", there are variants both in M. and *Apol. David* i. 12. 59 which have "*my*". Familiarity with the Latin Psalter on the part of scribes would render such assimilation likely. The reading "my" is that of the Hebrew text. On the other hand, "in a place of pasture", v. 2 (*in loco pascuae*), is found here, as in M. and Vulgate and in other passages of Ambrose, though in two passages Ambrose has, with LXX, "a green pasture".

¹ A reference to the newly baptized in their white robes. Cf. M. vii. 34. The word *familia* (rendered "household") is of common occurrence in the prayers of the Western service-books.

² Cant. 4. 16 (Vulg. 5. 1). Cf. M. ix. 56, which follows LXX in reading "eat" for "take".

becamest a dry tree in Adam; but now through the grace of Christ thou hast budded into a fruitful tree.

15. The Lord Jesus willingly accepts and with heavenly condescension answers to his Church. *I am come down*, he says,¹ *into my garden; I have gathered the vintage of myrrh with my ointments. I have eaten my bread with my honey and I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat*, he says, *my brethren, and be drunk.*

16. *I have gathered the vintage of myrrh with my ointments.* What is that vintage? Learn the vine and you shall recognize the vintage. *Thou hast brought*, he says, *a vine out of Egypt*,² that is, the people of God. Ye are the vine, ye are the vintage; planted as a vine, as a vintage have ye given fruit. *I have gathered the vintage of myrrh with my unguents*, that is, for the sweet savour which you have received.

17. *I have eaten my bread with my honey.* Dost thou see that in this bread there is no bitterness, but all is sweetness? *I have drunk my wine with my milk.* Dost thou see that the joy is of that kind which is not defiled with the stains of any sin? For as often as thou drinkest thou receivest remission of sins and art inebriated with the spirit. Whence also the Apostle says: *Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Holy Spirit.*³ For he who is drunk with wine staggers and

¹ Cant. 5. 1. The passage here, as in M. ix. 57, 58, is based on LXX and shows several variations from the Vulgate. The quotation both here and in M. agrees in the main with that found in *de Bono Mort.* 5. 20, the only exceptions being "come down" (*descendi*) for "entered" (*ingressus sum*) and the compressed quotation in the last sentence, where M. and *de Bono Mort.* follow the LXX exactly. For the slight variants in M. ix. 57 see note on that passage.

² Ps. 80. 8 (Vulg. 79. 9).

³ Eph. 5. 18. The reading "Holy Spirit" is found in Ambrose, *de Noe* 29. 111 (so Vulg.). It is also found in Ambrosiaster. The phrase *praeclara ebrietas*, "a glorious inebriation", is also found in the same context in the above passage of *de Noe*.

reels: he who is inebriated with the Spirit is rooted in Christ. And therefore it is a glorious inebriation, which works sobriety of mind. This is what we briefly mention with respect to the sacraments.

CHAPTER IV

Exposition of the Lord's Prayer.

18. Now, what remains save prayer? And think not that it is a matter of little worth, to know how to pray. The holy Apostles said to the Lord Jesus: *Lord teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.*¹ Then the Lord says a prayer, *Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily*² *bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. And suffer us not to be led into temptation,*³ *but deliver us from evil.* Thou seest how short the prayer is and full of all excellencies. What grace in the first word!

19. O man, thou didst not dare to raise thy face to heaven, thou didst direct thine eyes to the earth, and suddenly thou didst receive the grace of Christ; all thy sins were forgiven. From a bad servant thou becamest a good son. Therefore be bold, not because of thy own action, but because of the grace of Christ. *For by grace are ye saved,*⁴ says the Apostle. Therefore there is no arrogance here, but faith; to proclaim

¹ Luke 11. 1.

² *quotidianum*. So Vulgate in Luke, but *supersubstantialem* in Matt. (see § 24, note). In the following clause the author follows the version in Matt., reading *debita* ("debts").

³ The Old Latin version of this clause; found in Cyprian, *de Or. Dom.* 25. Still earlier Tertullian, *de Oratione* 8, had so interpreted the clause.

⁴ Eph. 2. 8.

what thou hast received is not pride, but devotion. Therefore raise thy eyes to the Father who has begotten thee through the laver, to the Father who has redeemed thee through the Son, and say *Our Father*. A good boldness¹ that, but modest. Thou callest him "Father" as a son; but do not claim anything specifically for thyself. He is the Father of Christ alone specially, he is Father of us all in common, because he begot him alone, us he created. Therefore say thou also through grace, *Our Father*, that thou mayest deserve to be a son. Commend thyself in regard and consideration of the Church.²

20. *Our Father, which art in heaven.* What is in heaven? Hear the scripture saying: *The Lord is high above all heavens.* And everywhere thou findest it written that *the Lord is above the heaven of heavens*,³ as if there were not in heaven angels too, as if there were not in heaven dominations too,⁴ but in those heavens of which it was said: *The heavens*

¹ *praesumptio*. For the idea cf. the prologue to the Lord's Prayer in the Roman Canon, *audemus dicere* ("we are bold to say"), which is found also in the Eastern rites, and is alluded to by Cyril of Jerusalem, Jerome, and others.

² i.e. "on the ground of your being a son of the Church". The use of the words "*Our Father*" implies the Church and our sonship in it. The word *contuitu*, "in regard" or "in respect of", with a genitive, is common in Ambrose. Cf. *de Excessu fratris* ii. 17, *necessitatis contuitu*; *Ep.* lxxiii. 13, *laboris contuitu revocati*.

³ In the former part of this passage the author has in mind Ps. 113 (Vulg. 112). 4, which is here freely rendered. The words "the Lord is above the heaven of heavens" appear to correspond to no single passage, but represent the sense of such passages as Ps. 57 (Vulg. 56). 6: Ps. 68. 33 (Vulg. 67. 34): 2 Chron. 6. 18 (cf. 2 Chron. 2. 6: 1 Kings 8. 27).

⁴ The passage is obscure, and the sense would be improved by reading "quasi non in caelis *ubi* et angeli, quasi non in caelis *ubi* et dominationes", implying that He is not in the heavens where the angels are, but in the higher heaven. The emphasis is on the fact that the Lord is "*above* the heavens".

*declare the glory of God.*¹ Heaven is there where guilt hath ceased, where crimes keep holiday. Heaven is where there is no stroke of death.

21. *Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.* What is *hallowed*? Is it as if we desired that he should be hallowed who says: *Ye shall be holy, for I am holy,*² as if any hallowing could accrue to him from our prayer? Not at all. But may it be hallowed in us, that its hallowing may reach us.

22. *Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come.* As if the kingdom of God were not eternal. Jesus himself says: *In this was I born,*³ and dost thou say to the Father, *Thy kingdom come*, as if it had not come? But the kingdom of God then comes, when you have obtained his grace. For he himself says: *The kingdom of God is within you.*⁴

23. *Thy kingdom come; thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. By the blood of Christ all things are set at peace, whether in heaven or on earth.*⁵ Heaven is hallowed, the devil is cast down. The place of his resort is that place,⁶ where is also the man whom he has deceived. *Thy will be done*, i.e. let there be peace on earth as in heaven.

¹ Ps. 19 (Vulg. 18). 1.

² Lev. 11. 44; 19.2; 20. 7.

³ John 18. 37. The reading *in hoc* is found in the Vulgate, though the following clause about "bearing witness" is introduced by *ad hoc*. The Greek has no such distinction. Both here and in *de Isaac* 5. 46, *de Joseph* 12. 67, *de Fide* ii. 12. 103, *in hoc* is explained as in the ablative case, and is interpreted to denote the essential Kingship of Christ, i.e. "in this state of Kingship was I born". This interpretation was known to Augustine (*in Ioann. tract. cxv. 4*), who may have heard it from Ambrose or read it in his works, but it is rejected by him.

⁴ Luke 17. 21.

⁵ Cf. Col. 1. 20.

⁶ Another reading is: *ubi versatur? ubi et homo*. "Where does he resort? There, where man is." With this and the previous sentence cf. *in Ps. cxviii. 12. 10*, where the same ideas are found, and where the phrase *deiectus est diabolus* occurs.

24. *Give us this day our daily bread.* I remember my sermon when I was dealing with the Sacraments.¹ I said to you that before the words of Christ that which is offered is called bread: when the words of Christ have been uttered, it is no longer called bread, but is named body. Why then in the Lord's Prayer, which follows afterwards, does he say: *Our bread?* He called it bread indeed, but he called it *ἐπιούσιον*,² that is supersubstantial. It is not the bread which passes into the body, but that *bread of eternal life*³ which supports the substance of our soul. Therefore in Greek it is called *ἐπιούσιον*. The Latin, however, calls this bread "daily" which the Greeks call "coming". For the Greeks call the coming day *τὴν ἐπιούσαν ἡμέραν*. Therefore what the Latin and what the Greek text said seem both useful. The Greek indicated both in one expression,⁴ the Latin said "daily".

¹ Cf. iv. 4. 14, 19; iv. 5. 25.

² This discussion is based on Origen, *de Oratione* 27. 7 f., where Origen comments on the words *ἐπιούσιον ἄρτον* found in Matt. 6. 11; Luke 11. 3. He connects them with *οὐσία* ("absolute existence" or "being", "that from which all things derive their being") and he quotes John 6. 27-35, 51 in support of the meaning "bread which contributes to existence", "which supports the substance of the soul", as in the interpretation here. Origen's interpretation descended to later commentators. The Old Latin version (as all older versions) renders it *quotidianum* ("daily"), and so Jerome in Luke, though in Matthew he changed it (following Origen) into *supersubstantialem*, a natural Latin rendering of Origen's interpretation. In the present passage of S. the Old Latin text of the prayer is used, and *quotidianum*, "daily", is represented as the actual text. Ambrose also discusses the interpretations of the word and gives Origen's view in *de Fide*, iii. 15. 127. A similar interpretation to that of Origen is found in Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.* xxiii. 15.

³ A concise summary of the language of John 6. 27, 33, 51.

⁴ The writer means that *ἐπιούσιον* is capable of a twofold interpretation. (1) "Bread which contributes to existence" (Origen),

25. If it is daily bread, why dost thou take it once a year,¹ as the Greeks in the East are accustomed to do? Take daily what is to profit thee daily. So live that thou mayest deserve to receive it daily. He who does not deserve to receive it daily, does not deserve to receive it once a year; as holy Job offered sacrifice daily for his sons, lest perchance they should have done any sin in heart or word.² Therefore dost thou hear that as often as sacrifice is offered, the Lord's death, the Lord's resurrection, the Lord's ascension and the remission of sins is signified,³ and dost thou not take this bread of life daily? He who has a wound needs a medicine. The wound is that we are under sin; the medicine is the heavenly and venerable sacrament.

26. *Give us this day our daily bread.* If thou receivest daily, "this day" is "daily" to thee. If Christ is for thee "this day", he rises again for thee "daily". How? *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*⁴ Therefore "this day" is when Christ rises again. *Yesterday and to-day he*

which the writer, like Origen, explains as that "which supports the substance of the soul". (2) "Bread for the coming day" (τὴν ἐπιούσαν ἡμέραν), which in the Latin Version is represented by *quotidianum* ("daily"). This latter rendering leads him to speak of "daily communion".

¹ Similarly Augustine (*de Serm. Dom. in monte*, ii. 7. 26) complains that many in the East do not communicate daily, though our Lord speaks of "daily bread". Chrysostom in several of his homilies complains of the neglect of communion at Constantinople, and in one passage (*in Heb.* xvii, 4) he asserts that many communicate once a year, others twice, others often. Ambrose (*de Paenitentia*, ii. 9. 89) similarly refers to those who abstain from communion.

² Job i. 5.

³ The writer is probably referring to the Anamnesis, the words of which he has quoted above (iv. 6. 27). For *elevatio* of the "ascension" cf. Acts i. 9 (Vulg.): *elevatus est*.

⁴ Ps. 2. 7. Cf. *in Ps.* xl. 35; *de Fide* v. i. 25, which both connect Ps. 2. 7 and Heb. 13. 8.

himself is,¹ says the Apostle Paul. But in another place he says, *The night is far spent, the day is at hand*.² Yesternight is far spent, the present day is at hand.

27. There follows: *Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors*. What is the debt but sin? Therefore if thou hadst not borrowed money at interest, thou wouldst not now be in want; therefore sin is imputed to thee. Thou hast had money, wherewith thou wast born rich. Thou wast rich, being made in the image and likeness of God.³ Thou hast lost what thou hadst, that is humility; whilst thou desirest to indicate thy pride, thou hast lost money, thou hast become naked as Adam,⁴ thou hast accepted from the devil a debt which was not necessary. And therefore thou who wast free in Christ hast become a debtor to the devil. The enemy held thy bond, but the Lord crucified it, and blotted it out⁵ with his blood. He took away thy debt, he restored thy liberty.

28. Well, therefore, does he say: *And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors*. Mark what thou sayest. As I forgive so do thou also forgive me. If thou hast forgiven, thou doest well in suing⁶ that it be forgiven thee. If thou dost not forgive, how canst thou sue him, that it may be forgiven thee?

29. *And suffer us not to be led into temptation, but deliver us from evil*. Mark what he says: *And suffer us not to be led into temptation* which we cannot endure.⁷ He doth not say:

¹ Heb. 13. 8.

² Rom. 13. 12. The two passages Heb. 13. 8 and Rom. 13. 12 are similarly connected in *in Lucam vii. 222*.

³ Gen. 1. 26.

⁴ Gen. 3. 7.

⁵ Cf. Col. 2. 14.

⁶ *bene convenis*. Another reading is *bene convenit*, "it is right and proper that it be forgiven thee".

⁷ Cf. I Cor. 10. 13. The words *quam ferre non possumus* ("which we cannot endure") here are explanatory, and not a part of the Lord's Prayer, as the author quotes the full text of that prayer

“Lead us not into temptation”, but as an athlete he wishes such a trial as human nature can bear: ¹ that each may be delivered *from evil*, that is from the foe, from sin.

30. But the Lord who has taken away your sin, and pardoned your faults, is mighty to defend and guard you against the wiles of the devil your adversary, that the foe who is wont to beget guilt may not creep upon you. But he who commits himself to God fears not the devil. For *if God is for us, who is against us?* ² To him, therefore, be praise and glory from the ages and now, always, and for ever and ever.—AMEN.

without them in v. 4. 18. But the words are found in some texts of the Lord's Prayer, and are quoted by Jerome, Hilary, and Ps. Aug., *Serm. lxxxiv*. For the reading “suffer us not to be led” (*ne patiaris induci nos*) see note on v. 4. 18.

¹ The word *athleta* is often found in Ambrose. See e.g. in *Ps. xxxvii. 43*, where 1 Cor. 10. 13 is also quoted. For *humana conditio* in the sense of frail “human nature” cf. in *Lucam iv. 42*, which also has an allusion to 1 Cor. 10. 13.

² Rom. 8. 31. The use of *qui* instead of *quis* in this quotation for the interrogative “Who” is not uncommon in Ambrose.

BOOK VI

CHAPTER I

The reality of the gift of Christ's flesh and blood in the sacrament is shown and illustrated from John 6.

1. As our Lord Jesus Christ is the true Son of God, not after the manner of men, through grace, but as a son of the essence of his father, so it is true flesh, as he himself said,¹ which we receive, and his true blood is our drink.

2. But perchance thou mayest say, what the disciples of Christ also said then when they heard him saying: *Unless a man eat my flesh and drink my blood, he shall not dwell in me, nor shall he have eternal life*²—perchance thou mayest say: “How are these things real? I who see the likeness, do not see the reality of blood.”

3. First of all, I told thee of the word of Christ, which acts so that it can change and alter the appointed forms³ of nature. Then when the disciples of Christ endured not his saying, hearing that he gave his flesh to eat and gave his blood to drink, they turned back; but Peter alone said: *Thou hast the words of eternal life, and how shall I withdraw from*

¹ John 6. 55.

² The quotation is a conflation of John 6. 53, 54, 56. For a similar confusion of vv. 53 and 54, also in the negative form, see *de Paradiso* 9. 42.

³ *genera instituta*. Some MSS. read *genera et instituta* (so Lanfranc). Erasmus has *instituta generalia*, “the general ordinances”.

*thee?*¹ Accordingly, lest others should say this, feeling a shrinking from actual blood, and that yet the grace of redemption might remain, therefore thou receivest the sacrament in a similitude, but truly obtainest the grace and virtue of the nature.²

4. *I am*, says he, *the living bread which came down from heaven*.³ But flesh did not come down from heaven, that is to say, he took flesh of the Virgin on earth. How, then, did bread come down from heaven, and that, too, living bread? Because our Lord Jesus Christ is alike a sharer both in divinity and body. And thou who receivest his flesh partakest of his divine essence in that food.⁴

¹ John 6. 68 (quoted freely). The addition "how shall I withdraw from thee?" is found in equivalent words in three passages in Ambrose, *in Ps.* xxxix. 16; *in Ps.* xliii. 10; *in Ps.* cxviii. 9. 22.

² The meaning is that, though the communicant receives the body of Christ "in a similitude" (i.e. under the forms of bread and wine), yet he no less truly receives the virtue of the reality, i.e. the body of Christ. The outward appearance of the bread is a "symbol", or "similitude", but it is a symbol of a "grace" and "virtue" which are truly received. See Introduction, p. 40.

³ John 6. 51. Cf. M. viii. 47.

⁴ Cf. *de Incarn.* 5. 35. While S. has *idem Dominus noster . . . consors est et divinitatis et corporis*, the above passage has *unus sit consors divinitatis et corporis*. The *communicatio idiomatum* in Christ is here applied to the Eucharist, as in *de Fide* ii. 7. 58, where Ambrose says that because the same person, Christ, is both God and man, it is said that the Lord of majesty was crucified, and that the Son of man came down from heaven. On this ground Ambrose (*de Spir. S.* iii. 11. 74-79) defends the worship of the humanity of Christ and speaks of "the flesh of Christ which we worship in the mysteries, and which the Apostles worshipped in the Lord Jesus". The passage in *de Incarn.* ends with the words "He is not one Person of the Father and another Person of the Virgin, but the same Person, in one way of the Father, and in another of the Virgin".

CHAPTER II

The sacraments show the operation of the Trinity and the equality of the Three Persons. Refutation of Arian teaching.

5. THEREFORE thou hast been taught about ¹ the sacraments, thou hast learnt all things most fully, because thou hast been baptized in the name of the Trinity. In all that we have done, the mystery of the Trinity has been preserved. Everywhere Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one operation, one sanctification, though certain things seem to be as it were special.²

6. How? It is *God* who *anointed* thee, and the Lord *signed* thee, and put the Holy Spirit in thy heart.³ Thou hast therefore received the Holy Spirit in thy heart. Hear another truth, that as the Holy Spirit is in the heart, so also is Christ in the heart. How? Thou hast Christ saying this to his Church in Canticles: *Set me as a seal in thy heart, as a seal upon thy arms.*⁴

7. Therefore God anointed thee, the Lord signed thee. How? Because thou wast signed with the image of the cross itself unto his passion, thou receivedst a seal unto his likeness, that thou mayest rise unto his image, and live after his pattern, who was crucified to sin and *liveth to God.*⁵ And thy *old man* plunged into the font was *crucified* to sin, but rose again unto God.⁶

¹ *accepisti de.* Another rendering is "thou hast received of" the sacraments. But the more natural phrase in that case would have been *accepisti sacramenta.*

² i.e. to the different Persons of the Trinity. ³ 2 Cor. I. 21, 22.

⁴ Cant. 8. 6. For this and following section cf. M. vii. 41. For *signaculum in corde tuo* (Vulg. *super cor tuum*) and *signaculum in brachiis tuis* M. has *signaculum in cor tuum* and *sigillum in brachium tuum* (Vulg. *super b. t.*), and these same variations are found in *de Isaac* 8. 75.

⁵ Rom. 6. 10.

⁶ Rom. 6. 6.

8. Then, thou hast elsewhere a special work that, while God called thee, in baptism thou art as it were specially crucified with Christ.¹ Then (as an instance of special operation), when thou receivest the spiritual seal, note that there is a distinction of persons, but that the whole mystery of the Trinity is bound up together.

9. Then, what said the Apostle to thee, as was read the day before yesterday? *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord. There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.*² All, says he, God worketh. These words, too, were read of the Spirit of God: *one and the same Spirit dividing to each as He wills.*³ Harken to the Scripture saying that the Spirit divides according to His own will,⁴ not in obedience to others. So, then, the Spirit divides to you grace as He wills, not as He is bidden, and chiefly so because He is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ. And hold fast this, that He is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit the Paraclete.

10. The Arians think that they derogate from the Holy Spirit, if they speak of Him as the Spirit the Paraclete. What does Paraclete mean but consoler? As though we did not read of the Father that He Himself is the *God of consolation*.⁵ Thou seest, then, that they think that an attribute which pious affection proclaims as showing the power of the eternal Father, must be derogatory to the Holy Spirit.

¹ Cf. Gal. 2. 20.

² 1 Cor. 12. 4-6. Some MSS. read *mysteriorum* for *ministeriorum*. But the latter, which is an Old Latin reading, is found in the quotations of the passage by most of the Latin Fathers and in *de Spir. S.* ii. 12. 138.

³ 1 Cor. 12. 11.

⁴ Similar language is used by Ambrose, interpreting the above passage, in *de Fide* ii. 6. 47 f., where his comment closely recalls his language here.

⁵ 2 Cor. 1. 3.

CHAPTER III

How and where Christians ought to pray.

11. Now learn how we should pray. Many are the excellences of prayer. Where we should pray is no small matter, no small subject of inquiry. The Apostle says: *I desire men should pray in every place, lifting up pure hands without wrath and disputing.*¹ And the Lord says in the Gospel: *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy chamber, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father.*² Does not there seem to be a contradiction between the words of the Apostle, *Pray in every place*, and those of the Lord, *Enter into thy chamber and pray*? But there is no contradiction. Let us, then, clear up this point. Then, how thou shouldst begin prayer, under what system order its various parts, what subjoin, what state as petition,³ how close the prayer, then for whom thou shouldst pray—all these we may discuss.

12. First, where thou shouldst pray. Paul seems to say one thing and the Lord another. Was it possible that Paul could teach anything contrary to the precepts of Christ? Surely not. Why? Because he is not the opponent, but the interpreter of Christ.⁴ *Be ye imitators, he says, of me, as I also of Christ.*⁵ What then? Thou canst pray everywhere, and yet always pray in thy chamber. Everywhere thou hast thy

¹ 1 Tim. 2. 8. Origen deals with the same passage in *de Orat.* 31.

² Matt. 6. 6. With the reading *oras* (Vulg. *orabis*) cf. in *Ps.* xl. 41; in *Ps.* xliii. 29; *de Inst. Virg.* i. 7.

³ *quo ordine distinguere, quid subtexere, quid allegare.* This is explained below, §§ 22–25. *Subtexere* ("subjoin") seems to correspond to the *obsecratio* or "supplication" in § 22; *allegare* to the *postulatio* ("petition"); see note on § 22. The question "for whom we should pray" is, however, never dealt with.

⁴ For *interpres Christi* applied to St Paul cf. in *Ps.* xliii. 89; *de Paenitentia* i. 3. 12.

⁵ 1 Cor. 11. 1.

chamber. Though thou be amidst the nations, amidst the Jews, thou hast everywhere thy secret place. Thy mind is thy chamber. Though thou be set in a multitude, yet in the inner man thou possessest thy place of secrecy and retirement.¹

13. *But thou when thou prayest enter into thy chamber.* Well does he say *enter*; that thou mayest not pray like the Jew, to whom it is said: *This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.*² Let not, then, thy prayer proceed only from thy lips. Let the whole intention of thy mind be fixed, enter into the recess of thy heart, enter it with thy whole self. Let not him whom thou wishest to please see thee to be careless.³ Let him see that thou prayest from the heart, that when thou prayest from the heart he may deign to hear thee.

14. *But thou when thou prayest, enter into thy chamber.* In another place thou hast this too: *Go, my people, enter into thy secret places, shut thy door, hide thyself for a little, until the anger of the Lord be overpast.*⁴ This the Lord spake by the prophet, but in the Gospel he said: *But thou when thou prayest, enter into thy chamber, and, when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father.*

15. What is meant by "shutting the door"? Hear what door thou hast which thou shouldest shut when thou prayest. Would that the women would listen to this!⁵ Thou hast heard it already. Holy David taught thee when he said: *Lord, set a guard upon my mouth and a door round about my lips.*⁶ Elsewhere there is the door which the

¹ Cf. *de Inst. Virg.* i. 7; *de Cain* i. 9. 35.

² Matt. 15. 8: Mark 7. 6. Cf. Isa. 29. 13. ³ *perfunctorium*.

⁴ Isa. 26. 20. The readings *ambula* (Vulg. *vade*) and *in recessus tuos* (Vulg. *in cubicula tua*) find a parallel in *de Excess. Fratris* ii. 67.

⁵ On this see Ambrose, *de Virginibus*, iii. 3. 11, where there is a similar injunction of silence in church.

⁶ Ps. 141 (Vulg. 140). 3. Here, as in *de Cain* i. 9. 36 and *Ep. xxiii.* 22, the reading is *ostium circuitus* (Vulg. *ostium circumstantiae*).

Apostle Paul speaks of when he says: *That the door of the word may be opened for me, to speak the mystery of Christ.*¹ That is, when thou prayest, do not shout aloud, nor let thy prayer go forth abroad, nor noise it among the people. In thy privacy pray, sure that he can hear thee in private, who sees all things, hears all things. And pray in secrecy to thy Father, who hears thy secret prayers.

CHAPTER IV

On prayer in secret. Exposition of 1 Tim. 2. 8.

16. BUT let us ask why this is profitable, why we should rather pray in secrecy, than with loud calling. Hearken. Let us take an example from the usage of men. If thou art asking of a man who hears quickly, thou dost not think that there is need of loud shouting. Thou askest softly in moderate tones. If thou askest of some deaf person, dost not thou begin to call aloud, that he may be able to hear thee? So, then, he who clamours thinks that God cannot hear him, unless he clamours. And in asking Him thus he derogates from His power. But he who prays in silence shows his faith, and confesses that God is *the searcher of the heart and reins*,² and hears thy prayer before it is uttered by thy lips.

17. Let us then consider this—*I would that men should pray in every place.*³ Why did he say “men”? Surely prayer is common both to men and women. I find no reason for this, unless, indeed, the holy Apostle said “men”,

¹ Col. 4. 3. The reading *aperiatur mihi ostium verbi* occurs in *de Cain* i. 9. 36; *de Fide* iv. 2. 20 (Vulg. *aperiat nobis ostium sermonis*). For the combination of the two texts from the above Psalm and from Colossians see Introduction, p. 11.

² Rev. 2. 23. Cf. Jer. 17. 10: Ps. 7. 9 (Vulg. 7. 10).

³ 1 Tim. 2. 8.

lest the women should be too forward and wrongly understand the words *in every place* and begin to clamour everywhere. Such women we cannot endure in the Church.

18. *I would that men*, that is, those who can observe the precept, *should pray in every place, lifting up pure hands*. What is meant by *lifting up pure hands*? Oughtest thou in thy prayer to show forth the cross of the Lord to all and sundry? ¹ That, indeed, is a proof of thy piety,² not of thy modesty. But it is possible for thee to pray, without displaying any outward figure, but lifting up thy actions. If thou wouldst have thy prayer³ effective, lift pure hands by thy innocence. Lift them not every day.⁴ Thou hast lifted them once for all; there is no need to lift them again.

19. *I would that men should pray in every place, lifting up pure hands without wrath and disputing*. Nothing can be truer. *Wrath*, it says, *destroys even the wise*.⁵ Therefore at all times, as far as is possible, a Christian man should control his anger, and especially when he comes to prayer. Let not the fierceness of wrath disturb thy mind, let not a kind of fury hinder thy prayer. But rather come with tranquil mind. For why wilt thou be angry? Has thy servant committed a fault? Thou comest to pray that thy faults may be forgiven thee, and thou art indignant with another! That is what is meant by "without wrath".

¹ The reference is to the hands outstretched in prayer, in which many Christian writers saw the symbolism of the cross. Cf. Minucius Felix, *Octav.* 29: *crucis signum est . . . cum homo porrectis manibus deum pura mente veneratur*.

² *virtutis*. Or the meaning may be "courage".

³ *orationem*. Another reading is *operationem*.

⁴ The thought seems to be that the Christian at baptism enters on the life of innocence. This is the "lifting up of pure hands", and this should not have to be repeated.

⁵ Prov. 15. 1 (LXX. Not in Heb. or Vulg.).

CHAPTER V

On the modesty which women ought to show in prayer. The parts of prayer are illustrated from 1 Tim. 2. 1. Application to the Lord's Prayer and Psalm 8. Conclusion.

20. Now as to "disputing". Often a man of business comes to prayer, or a covetous man. One thinks of money, the other ¹ of gain, one of honour to be won, the other of avarice; and yet he thinks that God can hear him. And therefore when thou prayest, it is right that thou shouldest put divine things before human things.

21. *Likewise, too, I would that the women pray, not flaunting themselves in ornaments or in pearls*, says the Apostle Paul.² The Apostle Peter also says ³: "The influence of a woman availeth much to turn the affections of her husband by the good conversation of his wife, and to convert the unbeliever to the grace of Christ." Such power has the grave demeanour and chastity of a wife and her good conversation to summon her husband to faith and devotion, and the same is often effected by the words of a wise man. Therefore let a woman's *adornment*, he says, *not be in decking of the hair or braided locks, but in prayer from a pure heart*, where is the *hidden man of the heart*, which is *always rich in the sight of God*.⁴ Thou hast, therefore, wherein thou mayest be rich.⁵ In Christ are thy riches, the badges of chastity and purity, faith, devotion, and mercy. *These are the treasures of righteousness*, as the prophet said.⁶

¹ Or we may render "another . . . another . . . another".

² The quotation is a very free citation of 1 Tim. 2. 9.

³ A free paraphrase of 1 Pet. 3. 1, 2.

⁴ A conflation of passages from 1 Pet. 3. 1-4: 1 Tim. 2. 9: 2 Tim. 2. 22.

⁵ For "the hidden man of the heart" see quotation and comment in *Ep.* xxxviii. 1-3, and cf. *de Offic.* i. 18. 70; *Exhort. Virg.* 10. 64.

⁶ Isa. 33. 6 (LXX). Hebrew and Vulg. are different.

22. Next comes the question: What should be the beginning of prayer? Tell me, if you wished to make a request of a man and were to begin thus: "Come, grant me what I seek of thee", does not this seem an arrogant form of prayer? Prayer, therefore, should begin with the praise of God, that thou mayest ask of the almighty God, to whom all things are possible, who has the will to grant. Then follows the supplication, as the Apostle taught us when he said, *I beseech, therefore, that first of all prayers, supplications, petitions, giving of thanks be made.*¹ The first part of the prayer, therefore, ought to contain the praise of God, the second the supplication, the third the petition, the fourth the giving of thanks. Thou shouldest not, like a starveling for food, begin with food, but with the praises of God.

¹ Cf. I Tim. 2. 1. The whole of the following passage is based on Origen, *de Oratione*, two separate and independent passages of which have supplied hints and suggestions for the discussion which follows. In ch. xiv. 2 Origen comments on I Tim. 2. 1, but does not adopt the four elements of prayer there spoken of as the basis of his later discussion in ch. xxxiii. 1, where the four elements are praise, thanksgiving, confession of sins, and petition for heavenly gifts, for personal and general needs, and for relations and friends, concluding with a Trinitarian doxology. Finally, in § 6 Origen says that it is reasonable that prayer having begun in praise should end in praise. By a confused recollection of these passages, in S. the four elements of prayer are adopted, but are based upon I Tim. 2.1. As in Origen, it is asserted that prayer should begin with praises of God, and while the fourth element in I Tim. is "giving of thanks", in § 23 S. quotes Origen's words about ending with the praises of God, as at the beginning of prayer. A shorter and more cursory treatment is found in Ambrose, *de Inst. Virg.* ii. 8-10, where as here I Tim. 2. 1 forms the basis of discussion, and, as in S. vi. 5. 25, is applied to Ps. 8, with a passing reference to the Lord's Prayer, which, in view of the *disciplina arcani*, Ambrose says it is not fitting that he should discuss (*quam vulgare non opus est*), whereas in S., which consists of oral discourses to the newly baptized, it is treated of in § 24.

23. Thus, it is that your prudent speakers have this rule that they court the favour of the judge. They begin with his praises, that they may have the goodwill of him who tries the case. Then he gradually begins to beg the judge to deign to listen to him patiently. Thirdly, he dares to put forward his petition, to set forth what he seeks. Fourthly, as he began with the praises of God, so he should end with praise.¹

24. Thou findest this in the Lord's prayer, *Our Father, which art in heaven*. It is an act of praise to God to declare him a Father. Therein lies the glory that belongs to fatherly goodness. It is the praise of God, that he dwells in heaven, not on earth. *Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name*. That is, that he should hallow his servants. For his name is hallowed in us, when men are declared to be Christians. So then *Hallowed be thy name* shows a wish. *Thy kingdom come*—a petition that the kingdom of Christ be in us. If God reigns in us, the adversary cannot find a place. Guilt does not reign, sin does not reign. But virtue reigns, chastity reigns, devotion reigns. Then: *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread*. This petition is the chief of those things which are asked. *And forgive us*, he says, *our debts, as we also forgive our debtors*. Therefore daily receive,² that daily thou mayest ask forgiveness for thy debt. *And suffer us not to be led into temptation, but deliver us from evil*. What follows? Harken what the priest says: "Through our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom, with whom, there is to thee honour, praise, glory, majesty, power, with the Holy Spirit, from all ages, both now and always and for ever and ever.—AMEN."³

¹ With this section cf. Origen, *de Orat.* 33. 6.

² i.e. "receive that bread", a reference to the preceding petition.

³ Parallel examples of a doxology at the close of the Lord's Prayer are found in the Greek Liturgies (James, Mark, Basil,

25. Another example. Though the Psalms of David are one book, possessing the excellences of prayer, which we have mentioned above, yet often, too, in a single psalm we find represented all these parts of prayer, as we see in the eighth psalm. Thus he begins as follows: *O Lord, our Lord, how wonderful is thy name in all the earth.*¹ So, then, we have the first part of the prayer.² Then the supplication. *For I shall behold thy heavens, the works of thy fingers,* that is, *I shall behold the heavens, the moon and the stars which thou hast founded.* He surely does not mean "I shall see the sky", but "I shall see the heavens, in which celestial grace and splendour begin to shine". These heavens, then, the prophet promised should be given to him, since he deserved³ celestial grace from the Lord. *The moon and the stars which thou hast founded.* He calls the Church the moon, and the saints shining with celestial grace he calls the stars.⁴ Then

Chrysostom). A similar doxology forms the conclusion of the Canon and precedes the Lord's Prayer in the Ambrosian Sacramentary of Biasca (tenth century), and also occurs in this latter position in the Roman Canon (*Gelasian Sacramentary*, Wilson, p. 236). In this respect the rite described in S. corresponded with the Greek rites mentioned above. From its liturgical use the doxology passed into the text of Matt. 6. 13. See Introduction, pp. 29, 31 f.

¹ Psalm 8. 1 f.

² Or "the prayer proper comes first", *oratio* signifying the opening of praise. This seems to be the use in *de Inst. Virg.* ii. 9, *hactenus oratio: inde sequitur obsecratio*. It must be remembered that *oratio* would suggest any speech, as well as prayer.

³ *mereretur*. The reading of the Benedictine edd. *mererentur* cannot be right.

⁴ Cf. Keble, *Christian Year* (Septuagesima):

The Moon above, the Church below,
A wondrous race they run

The Saints, like stars, around His seat,
Perform their courses still.

observe his petition: *What is man that thou are mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, and hast set him over the works of thy hands.*¹ Then there is another thanksgiving: *Thou hast put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field.*²

26. We have taught, so far as we could grasp them, truths which perhaps we have not learned,³ and we have set them

¹ In the quotations from Ps. 8 there are two variations from Vulg., both being found elsewhere in Ambrose. (1) "*Lunam et stellas quas fundasti*" (Vulg. *quae*). For *quas* cf. *de Spir. S.* iii. 5. 33. (2) *Minorasti*, cf. *Interpell. David* ii. 4. 17 (Vulg. *Minuisti*).

² In *de Inst. Virg.* ii. 9 Ambrose also illustrates the parts of prayer from Ps. 8. The opening ascription of praise (*oratio*) and the concluding thanksgiving (*gratiarum actio*) are both as in S. But the "supplication" (*obsecratio*) in *de Inst. Virg.* is found in the words "that thou mayest destroy the enemy", and the petition (*postulatio*) in the words "I shall behold the heavens". The moon and the stars are interpreted as in S. of the Church and its members (cf. Keble's lines quoted above). The idea in both interpretations is that the Psalm is prophetic, and as it dealt with the future might be regarded as expressing aspirations and prayers. Thus the words "I shall behold thy heavens" refer to the future establishment of the true heaven, where Christ is the sun, and the Church the moon, while the words "What is man . . . that thou visitest him?" foreshadow the humiliation and exaltation of Christ.

³ Ambrose elsewhere speaks in this apologetic manner. In *de Officiis* i. 1. 4 he speaks of himself as snatched away from public administration to the episcopate, and says in words almost identical with those here "I began to teach you what I myself had not learned"; and in *de Paenit.* ii. 8. 72 he refers to his lack of early training for the clerical order. The phrase "so far as we could grasp them" (*pro captu nostro*) occurs in *de Cain* i. 1. 1 along with the phrase *ut potuimus* also found in this passage of S.; the former phrase is found in *Ep.* lxvii. 11. In *Ecclus.* 18. 19, "Learn before thou speak" (*antequam loquaris, disce*), quoted in *de Noe* 31. 119, we find the origin of the saying, which frequently is used by Ambrose.

forth as far as we were able. May your holiness,¹ informed by priestly training, labour to hold fast what it has received from God. And may that oblation, like a pure offering,² always find in you its seal, that you yourselves may be able to attain to grace and the rewards of virtue by our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom is glory, honour, praise, everlastingness, from the ages, and now, and always, and for ever and ever.—AMEN.

¹ On this expression see note on i. 6. 24.

² The words *oblatio* and *hostia* have only been used hitherto by S. in the quotations from the Canon of the Mass in iv. 5. 21 and 6. 27. In the Prologue to his exposition of Psalm 118 Ambrose says that the newly baptized did not make their offering of bread and wine for the Eucharist till the eighth day after baptism, that is, on the following Sunday. The words here would seem to refer to this offering. This sixth and last lecture of S. was delivered on the Sunday after Easter. See Introduction, p. 34. Here, however, the offerer's gift is given a personal turn, though somewhat obscurely expressed. In *de Cain* ii. 6. 19 Ambrose says, "Now it has been revealed that those are indicated who are renewed by the sacraments of baptism. For this is truly a sacrifice, when each one offers himself as an offering (*hostiam*), begins from himself, in order that afterwards he may be able to offer his own gift." On the word *hostia* see note on iv. 6. 27.

ON THE MYSTERIES

CHAPTER I

After referring to his instructions given in Lent, Ambrose proposes to give an exposition of the sacraments and explains why this was deferred till now. He expounds the meaning of the "opening of the ears".

1. ON questions of right conduct we discoursed daily at the time when the lives of the patriarchs or the precepts of the Proverbs were being read,¹ in order that, trained and instructed thereby, you might become accustomed to walk in the paths of our elders and to tread in their steps, and to obey the divine oracles; to the end that you might, after being renewed by baptism, continue to practise the life which befitted the regenerate.

2. Now the season reminds us to speak about the mysteries, and to give a reasoned account of the sacraments;² for if

¹ Ambrose is referring to the lessons which were read at Milan in Lent, when the *competentes*, or candidates for baptism, attended the *missae catechumenorum*. The sermons of Ambrose, *de Abraham*, illustrate the kind of instruction given to them. Book I deals with *moralia*, "right conduct"; Book II, as ch. i says, deals with the mystical sense of the narrative. While the former was practical the latter drew upon Philo's allegorical interpretation, and was of a doctrinal character. Cf. *Hexaem.* ii. 5. 20, where *mysticum* and *morale* both occur.

² This seems to have in mind the similar statement in S. i. i. 1, where it is said that the "reasoned account" ought not to have been given before baptism. This was in view of the *disciplina arcani*, which led to the practice of withholding instruction on the Sacraments till after the Easter Communion. But the *disciplina arcani*

we had thought that such an account should be propounded before baptism to the uninitiated, we should be esteemed traitors rather than teachers; further, because it were better that the light of the mysteries should reveal itself unasked and unexpected than preceded by some discourse.

3. Open, therefore, your ears, and draw in the *sweet savour*¹ of eternal life breathed on you by the office of the sacraments: which we indicated to you when in performing the mystery of the "opening"² we said, *Ephpheta, which is, Be opened*, that each one who is coming to grace might know what he is asked, should be bound to remember what he answered.³

4. This mystery Christ performed in the Gospel, as we read, when he cured a deaf and dumb man. But he touched his mouth, because he was curing one who was dumb and also a man: on the one hand, that he might open his mouth by the sound of the voice bestowed on him, on the other hand, because to touch the mouth was proper in the case of a man, but was not proper in the case of a woman.

also prevents Ambrose in the present treatise, a work intended for publication, from giving this "reasoned account" with the fullness displayed in S., which is a record of the addresses actually given in Easter week. See Introduction, pp. 4, 5.

¹ 2 Cor. 2. 16.

² Cf. S. i. 1. 2 (note).

³ The "grace" referred to is baptism. *Gratia* is used in the same sense in S. i. 1. 1, and in *Ps.* i. 14; in *Ps.* xiv, praef. 1; *de Abraham* i. 4. 25. The "opening of the ears" was a preparation for the questioning and the answers in the renunciations and baptismal creed which were to follow. Hence, the reference to Mark 7. 34 in § 4 below. The rite is more fully described in S. i. 1. 2, where the purpose of it is said to be that the ears may be opened to the words of the priest. There is a similar reference and allusion to Mark 7. 34 in *Ps.* xl. 2, which, compared with M., suggests that the "opening of the ears" was a kind of rehearsal for the baptism which was about to follow.

CHAPTER II

Ambrose recalls the baptismal promises and the witnesses in whose presence they were made.

5. AFTER this the *Holy of holies*¹ was unbarred to thee, thou didst enter the shrine of regeneration; remember what thou wast asked, recollect what thou didst answer. Thou didst renounce the devil and his works, the world and its luxury and pleasures. Thy answer is kept, not in the tomb of the dead, but in the book of the living.

6. Thou sawest there a levite, thou sawest a priest, thou sawest the high priest.² Do not consider the bodily forms, but the grace of the mysteries. Thou didst speak in the presence of the angels, as it is written that *the priest's lips keep knowledge, and they seek the law at his mouth: for he is the angel of the Lord Almighty*.³ There is no room here for deceit or denial; he is the "angel" who announces the kingdom of Christ and eternal life. He shall be to thee as one not to be valued for his outward appearance, but for his office. What he has delivered to thee, consider; ponder its use, recognize its character.

7. Thou didst enter, therefore, to look upon thine adversary, whom thou mayest suppose that thou shouldst re-

¹ Heb. 9. 3. Here it refers to the baptistery.

² The words are: *levita, sacerdos, summus sacerdos*. Here *sacerdos* ("priest") is used in the same sense as *presbyter* in S., a usage which was beginning to come in from the time of Ambrose (*de Offic.* ii. 69); so Jerome and Ambrosiaster. But elsewhere in M. and in S. it denotes the bishop, here referred to as *summus sacerdos*. See further note on S. i. 1. 2.

³ Mal. 2. 7. Here M. follows LXX in reading *domini* (so Vulg.) for *dei* in S. i. 2. 7. For the other readings see note on the above passage in S.

nounce to his face;¹ thou dost turn to the east. For he who renounces the devil, turns to Christ, looks at him with direct gaze.

CHAPTER III

The operation of the Divine power in baptism is illustrated by Old Testament types.

8. WHAT sawest thou? Water, to be sure, but not water only; levites ministering there, the high priest questioning² and consecrating. First of all, the Apostle has taught thee that we must *not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*³ For elsewhere, too, thou readest *For the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are comprehended by the things which are made; his eternal power and divinity* also are understood from his works.⁴ Whence also the Lord himself says,

¹ The reading is *cui renuntiandum in os putaris* (v.l. *putares; putaris = putaveris*). Dom Morin, however, adopts a reading found only in one MS., *sputaris*, and suggests *cui renuntiando in os sputares*, "by way of renouncing him, to spit in his face". But there is no evidence for this ceremony in the West, nor is it found in Cyril of Jerusalem. It appears only in later Greek and Armenian rites, and the reading is due to repetition of the letter *s* by a scribe. The natural construction is to take *in os* with *renuntiandum*: "renounce him to his face". See Dom Morin, *Revue bénédictine* xvi (1899), pp. 414 f., and, for Greek and Armenian examples, Thompson, *Offices of Baptism and Confirmation*, pp. 74, 82. For *εἰς πρόσωπον* (= *φανερῶς*) edd. quote Didymus and Greek scholiasts.

² In S. i. 2. 5 the questions might seem to be put by the presbyter, here by the bishop. But see Introduction, pp. 20 f.

³ 2 Cor. 4. 18. Cf. S. i. 3. 10.

⁴ Rom. 1. 20. A free quotation. In *Hexaem.* i. 4. 16, *quia* is found as here for *enim* (Vulg.), and *intelliguntur* for *comprehenduntur* (Vulg. *intellecta conspiciuntur*).

*If ye believe not me, believe at least the works.*¹ Believe, therefore, that the presence of the Divinity is there. Thou believest the working, dost not thou believe the presence? Whence would ensue the working, did not the presence precede?

9. But consider how old the mystery is, prefigured in the beginning of the world itself. *In the very beginning*, when God made heaven and earth, the Spirit, it says, *moved upon the waters.*² He who *moved upon the waters*, did he not work *upon the waters*? But why do I say "work"? As regards presence,³ he *moved*. Did not he who *moved* work? Admit that he was working in the creation of the world, when the prophet says to thee,⁴ *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the Spirit of his mouth.* Each rests upon prophetic testimony, both that he moved, and that he worked. That he moved, Moses says: that he worked, David testifies.

10. Take another testimony. All flesh was corrupt from its sins. *My Spirit*, said God, *shall not abide in men, for they are flesh.*⁵ Whereby God shows that by carnal uncleanness and the stain of more serious sin, spiritual grace is alienated. Whence God, wishing to repair what was wanting, made a flood, and bade righteous Noah go up into the ark.⁶ He, as the flood abated, sent forth first a raven, which did not return; then he sent forth a dove, which, we read, returned with an olive branch.⁷ Thou seest the water, thou seest

¹ John 10. 38. The reading *credit* follows the Greek text more closely than Vulg., which has *vultis credere*.

² Gen. 1. 2. The reading is that of the LXX, *superferebatur* (Vulg. *ferebatur*).

³ *Quod ad praesentiam spectat.* The meaning is: "All that was certainly visible was the moving."

⁴ Ps. 33 (Vulg. 32). 6. Text as Vulg. and Irenaeus, *adv. Haer.* i. 15 (Harvey). Probably Old Latin.

⁵ Gen. 6. 3, following LXX. ⁶ Gen. 7. 1 f. ⁷ Gen. 8. 7 f.

the wood, thou beholdest the dove, and dost thou doubt the mystery?

11. So the water is that in which the flesh is plunged, to wash away every sin of the flesh; every wrong act is buried there. The wood is that whereon the Lord Jesus was nailed when he suffered for us.¹ The dove is that in whose *shape the Holy Ghost descended*, as thou hast learned in the New Testament,² who breathes into thee peace of soul, calm of mind. The raven is a figure of sin, which goes forth and does not return, if thou art careful to guard and conform to righteousness.

12. There is also a third testimony, as the Apostle teaches thee, *that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized in Moses in the cloud and in the sea.*³ Thus, Moses himself also says in his Song, *Thou didst send thy Spirit, and the sea covered them.*⁴ Thou observest that even then was holy baptism prefigured in that passing through of the Hebrews, in which the Egyptian perished and the Hebrew escaped. For what else are we taught in this sacrament daily, but that guilt is drowned and error destroyed, while goodness and innocence remained safe to the end?

13. Thou hearest *that our fathers were under the cloud*; and a good cloud which cooled the fires of carnal passions. The good cloud overshadows those whom the Holy Spirit visits; so he *came upon* the virgin Mary *and the power of the Highest overshadowed* her,⁵ when she bare redemption for the human race. And that miracle was wrought by Moses in a figure.⁶ If, then, the Spirit was present in the figure, is he not present in the reality, since the Scripture says to thee, *For*

¹ Cf. § 14 below, and S. ii. 4. 11-13.

² Luke 3. 22.

³ 1 Cor. 10. 1, 2. Cf. S. i. 6. 20 (note).

⁴ Ex. 15. 10 (so LXX).

⁵ Luke 1. 35.

⁶ Ex. 14. 21 f.

*the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ?*¹

14. The font of Marah was most bitter; Moses *cast wood* into it, and it was *made sweet*.² For water without the proclamation of the Lord's cross serves no purpose of future salvation; but when it has been consecrated by the mystery of the saving cross,³ then it is fitted for the use of the spiritual laver and the cup of salvation. As, therefore, Moses, that is, the prophet, *cast wood* into that font, so also the priest casts the proclamation of the Lord's cross into this font, and the water becomes sweet unto grace.

15. Do not, therefore, trust only the eyes of thy body; that which is not seen is more truly seen. For the one is temporal; in the other the eternal is seen, which is not apprehended by the eyes but is discerned by the intellect and mind.

16. Thus again, let the lesson from the Kings⁴ that has been read teach thee. Naaman was a Syrian, and a leper, nor could he be cleansed by any one. Then said a maid, who was of the captives, that there was a prophet in Israel who could cleanse him from the taint of leprosy. Taking gold and silver, it says, he went his way to the king of Israel. He, learning the cause of his arrival, *rent his clothes*, saying that it was really a plot against him, since demands were made of him which were beyond royal power. But Elisha bade the king send the Syrian to him, that he might know that there was a *God in Israel*.⁵ And when he came, he commanded him to dip seven times in the river Jordan.

17. Then he began to think within himself that he had the better waters of his own country in which he had often

¹ John I. 17.

² Ex. 15. 23 f.

³ Cf. iv. 20; and S. ii. 4. 13.

⁴ 2 Kings 5. 1 f.

⁵ 2 Kings 5. 8. Ambrose, by a slip of memory, substitutes "a God in Israel" for "a prophet in Israel".

dipped without being cleansed from leprosy, and drawn away by this thought, he was minded to disobey the prophet's commands; but he yielded to the advice and solicitations of his servants, and dipped; and he was straightway cleansed, and understood that it was due not to water, but to grace, that each one was cleansed.

18. Learn now who that young captive maiden is.¹ Of a truth she is the congregation from the Gentiles, that is, the Church of the Lord once sunk in the captivity of sin, when she did not as yet possess the liberty of grace; by whose counsel the vain people of the nations heard the prophetic word. And this at first and for long they doubted; afterwards, however, they believed that it should be obeyed, and were washed from all taint of faults. Now they doubted² before they were healed; thou art already healed, and therefore oughtest not to doubt.

CHAPTER IV

The presence of the Spirit is necessary to the efficacy of baptism. Illustrations from the healing of the paralytic in John 5 and from the operation of the Spirit in the baptism of Christ.

19. FOR this cause wast thou forewarned not to believe merely what thou sawest, lest perchance thou, too, shouldest say, "Is this that great mystery *which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man?*"³ I see water which I used to see daily; can that cleanse me into which I have often descended without ever being cleansed?" Hence know that water does not cleanse without the Spirit.

¹ With this cf. S. ii. 3. 8.

² *ille quidem dubitavit.* This probably refers to *populus* rather than Naaman.

³ 1 Cor. 2. 9. Cf. viii. 44 and S. iv. 2. 5 (with note).

20. And for this very reason thou hast read that the *three* witnesses in baptism *are one, the water, the blood, and the Spirit*,¹ because if thou takest away one of these the sacrament of baptism no longer remains. For what is water without the cross of Christ? A common element without any sacramental effect. Nor again is there any mystery of regeneration without water, *for except a man be born anew of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*.² But even a catechumen believes in the cross of the Lord Jesus, wherewith he also is signed; ³ but unless he is baptized *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*,⁴ he cannot receive the remission of sins nor imbibe the gift of spiritual grace.

21. So the Syrian dipped seven times ⁵ under the Law. But thou wast baptized in the name of the Trinity, thou didst confess the Father—remember what thou didst—thou didst confess the Son, thou didst confess the Holy Spirit. Do not forget the order of things in this faith. Thou didst die to the world, and didst rise to God. And as if *buried together* in this element of the world, thou art *dead to sin*,⁶ and raised to eternal life. Believe, therefore, that the water is not without power.

22. Therefore it was told thee how that *an angel of the Lord went down at a certain season into the pool, and the water was troubled: and whosoever first after the troubling of the water descended into the pool was made whole of whatsoever*

¹ 1 John 5. 8. The same order, "water", "blood", "Spirit", is found in the reference to this passage in Ambrose, *Expos. in Lucam* x. 48, where the passage is similarly applied.

² John 3. 5. Vulg. omits *enim*.

³ This signing of the catechumen with the cross is here distinguished from the rite of baptism. It is referred to in S. ii. 4. 13: see note.

⁴ Matt. 28. 19.

⁵ 2 Kings 5. 14.

⁶ Col. 1. 12, 13: Rom. 6. 4.

*disease he had.*¹ This pool was in Jerusalem, and in it one person a year was healed; but no one was healed before the angel had descended. For a sign that the angel had descended the water was troubled because of the unbelieving. For them the sign, for thee faith; for them an angel descended, for thee the Holy Spirit; for them the created element was troubled, for thee Christ acts, the very Lord of creation.

23. Then one was cured, now all are made whole; or, to be exact, one only—the Christian people; for in the case of some, even the *water is deceitful.*² The baptism of the unbelievers does not heal, does not cleanse, but defiles.³ The Jew *baptizes pots and cups*, as if inanimate things were capable of sin or grace. Baptize thou this animate cup of thine, in which thy good works may shine, in which the splendour of thy grace may glow. Therefore also that pool was as a figure, that thou mayest believe that the divine power descends into this font.

24. Thus again, the sick of the palsy was waiting for a *man.*⁴ Who was that but the Lord Jesus, born of the Virgin? At whose coming no longer would the shadow heal men one at a time, but the truth would heal all. He, therefore, it is who was expected to descend, of whom God the Father said to John the Baptist, *Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending from heaven, and remaining on him, the same is he*

¹ John 5. 4. See S. ii. 2. 3 with note.

² A reference to Jer. 15. 18 (LXX ὕδωρ ψευδές). Ambrose sees in this a condemnation of the baptisms practised by unbelievers. He then goes on to contrast the Jew's custom of washing (*baptizato*) pots and cups (Mark 7. 4) with Christian baptism. In the parallel passage in S. ii. 1. 2 Jewish baptisms are spoken of as in some cases superfluous (M. expands this) and in others figurative. This latter type both S. and M. illustrate by reference to 1 Cor. 10. 1, 2. See S. i. 6. 20; M. iii. 12. For the baptisms of the Gentiles see S. ii. 1. 2 with note.

³ See S. ii. 1. 2 (note).

⁴ John 5. 7. Cf. S. ii. 2. 7.

which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.¹ Of whom John bare witness, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and remaining on him. And why did the Spirit descend here like a dove, but that thou mightest see, but that thou mightest recognize that that dove too which righteous Noah sent out of the ark was a likeness of this dove, that thou mightest recognize a type of the sacrament?

25. And perhaps thou mayest say, "Since that was a real dove which was sent forth, here only *as it were a dove descended*, how do we say that the likeness was there, the reality here?"² For according to the Greeks it is written that the Spirit descended *in the likeness* of a dove. But what is so real as the divinity which *abideth for ever*?³ The created thing, however, cannot be the reality, but only a likeness, which is readily dissolved and changed. At the same time because in

¹ John I. 33. The words "from heaven" (not in Greek or Vulg.) are an addition found also in *de Spir* S. i. 8. 87 and due to the memory of John I. 32 quoted below, where both Greek and Vulg. have the words.

² This section is very confused. The thought seems to be as follows. Since in Luke 3. 22 the Spirit descends in "bodily form" or "likeness" (*εἶδος*, the regular equivalent of *species*) it may seem perverse to ascribe *species* to the dove of Gen. 8 (as M. has done in § 24) rather than to the divine dove. Still, in the ordinary sense, the word *species*, which implies mortality, is properly used of the created and not of the divine, though there is another sense in which it may be predicated even of the divine. The argument is further confused by the interpolation of the suggestion that the reason why the Spirit took the form of a dove was to be a type of the simplicity of the true Christian. The sense is more clearly indicated if, as has been done in the translation, the full stops are removed after *simplicitas* and *columbae*.

³ Cf. John 8. 35. The words "the divinity which abideth for ever" (*divinitas quae manet semper*) find a close parallel in *de Fide* iii. 15. 127, where Ambrose derives *οὐσία* from *οὔσα αἰεί* and interprets it to mean *quod semper manet* and adds *et ideo manens semper οὐσία dicitur divina substantia*. There is similar language, with *manens semper*, in *de Fide* iv. 8. 91.

those who are baptized there should be innocence, not in appearance, but in reality (whence the Lord also says, *Be ye wise as serpents, and innocent as doves*),¹ rightly, therefore, did he descend *like a dove*, to remind us that we ought to have the innocence of a dove. But that the word "likeness" is to be taken also as meaning reality is shown by what we read both of Christ, *And he was found in likeness as a man*,² and of God the Father, *Nor have you seen his likeness*.³

CHAPTER V

Further testimonies to the Divine working in baptism. The baptismal profession of faith.

26. Is there still any reason why thou shouldst doubt, when the Father clearly calls to thee in the Gospel and says, *This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased*; ⁴ when the Son calls, on whom the Holy Spirit showed himself *as a dove*: when the Holy Spirit also calls, who descended *as a dove*: when David calls, *The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of majesty has thundered: the Lord is upon many waters*: ⁵ when the Scripture witnesses to thee that at the prayers of Jerubbaal fire descended from heaven, ⁶ and again, on Elijah's praying, fire was sent which consecrated the sacrifice? ⁷

¹ Matt. 10. 16. The reading *astuti* for *prudentes* (Vulg.) is found in Augustine, *de Doctr. Chr.* ii. 16. 24.

² Phil. 2. 7. For *specie* ("likeness") Vulg. has *habitu*. The reading in the text is found in Ambrose, *Ep.* 46. 8.

³ John 5. 37.

⁴ Matt. 3. 17 (freely quoted).

⁵ Ps. 29 (Vulg. 28). 3.

⁶ A reference to Gideon (Judges 6. 21). The name Jerubbaal is found in Judges 6. 32.

⁷ Kings 18. 38.

27. Do not consider the merits of persons, but the office of priests.¹ And if thou lookest at merits, consider the priest as Elijah; look at the merits of Peter, too, or of Paul,² who received this mystery from the Lord Jesus, and handed it on to us. Visible fire was sent to them, that they might believe; for us, who believe, one who is invisible acts: to them for a figure, to us for admonition. Believe, therefore, that invoked by the prayers of the priests the Lord Jesus is present who says, *Where there are two or three, there am I also*; ³ how much more where the Church is, where his mysteries are, does he deign to bestow his presence!

28. Thou didst descend, then; remember what thou didst answer, that thou believest in the Father, thou believest in the Son, thou believest in the Holy Spirit.⁴ It is not a case of, I believe in a greater and a less and a least; ⁵ but thou art bound by the same pledge of thine own voice to believe in the Son exactly as thou believest in the Father, to believe in the Holy Spirit exactly as thou believest in the Son; with this one exception, that thou confessest the necessity of belief in the cross ⁶ of the Lord Jesus alone.

¹ Cf. S. i. 2. 7.

² The meaning is: if we allow the thought of merit to enter into our thought of the priest, it must be the merit of those whom he succeeds and represents, Elijah, Peter, Paul.

³ Matt. 18. 20 (freely quoted).

⁴ The interrogatory Creed at Milan is quoted more fully in S. ii. 7. 20.

⁵ Ambrose has in view the Arians, who denied the co-equality of the Persons of the Trinity.

⁶ Cf. S. ii. 7. 20, where the formula runs: "Dost thou believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and in his cross?" There is a reference to the same formula in *in Lucam* v. 103.

CHAPTER VI

The significance of the unction after baptism and of the washing of the feet of the baptized.

29. AFTER all this thou didst go up to the priest.¹ Consider what followed. Was it not that which David said, *It is like the ointment upon the head, that ran down unto the beard, even unto Aaron's beard?*² This is the ointment of which Solomon also says, *Thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore did the maidens love thee and draw thee.*³ How many souls regenerated to-day have loved thee, Lord Jesus,⁴ saying, *Draw us after thee, we run to the odour of thy garments,*⁵ that they may drink in the odour of the resurrection!

30. Understand why this is done, because *the wise man's eyes are in his head.*⁶ It flowed down *unto the beard*—that is,

¹ Ambrose is referring to the unction of the head after baptism. The word *sacerdos* ("priest") here refers to the bishop (see ii. 6, note). The prayer accompanying the unction is given in S. ii. 7. 24. See Introduction, pp. 25 f.

² Ps. 133 (Vulg. 132). 2. Quoted in reference to this rite in *de Elia* 36.

³ Cant. i. 3 (Vulg. i. 2). For this and the following quotations see S. v. 2. 9 (notes). The quotation here agrees with LXX in reading *exinanitum* and *attraxerunt te*. So *de Virginibus* ii. 6. 42.

⁴ For this short personal address to the Lord Jesus see Connolly, *Downside Review*, Vol. LXV, Jan. 1947, p. 13, where he shows that it constantly occurs in Ambrose, quoting among other examples in *Ps.* cxviii. 12. 4 and the closely parallel appeal in *Ap. David altera* 36, which he would also ascribe to Ambrose.

⁵ Cant. i. 4 (Vulg. i. 3). Ambrose substitutes "garments" for "ointments" (LXX and Vulg.) The "odour of thy garments" is, however, found in Cant. 4. 11 (LXX and Vulg.) and may have influenced the wording here.

⁶ Eccles. 2. 14. Introduced at the same point as in S. iii. 1. 1 (see note). Ambrose here corrects the reading found there, and following LXX reads "eyes" for "senses" of S. His meaning here is that the head is anointed because it is the seat of the intelligence. So it is explained in S.

unto the grace of youth—even unto *Aaron's beard*, for this purpose, that thou mayest become *a chosen generation*, priestly, *precious*¹; for we are all anointed with spiritual grace unto the kingdom of God and the priesthood.²

31. Thou didst go up from the font. Remember the Gospel lesson.³ For our Lord Jesus in the Gospel washed the feet of his disciples. When *he came to Simon Peter*, Peter said, *Thou shalt never wash my feet*. He did not perceive the mystery, and therefore he refused the ministry; because he thought that it was an offence against the humility of a servant, if he should patiently allow the Lord's service to himself. To whom the Lord answered, *If I do not wash thy feet, thou wilt have no part with me*.⁴ Hearing this, Peter said, *Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head*. The Lord answered, *He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit*.

32. Peter was clean, but he needed to wash his feet; for he still had sin by derivation from the first man, when the serpent tripped him and led him into trespass.⁵ His foot is washed that hereditary sins may be removed; for our own sins are remitted by baptism.⁶

¹ 1 Pet. 2. 9. The word "precious" does not occur in that passage, but was probably suggested by the context (v. 6), or by the words "a people for God's own possession".

² Cf. S. iv. 1. 3.

³ John 13. 4 f. Apparently the Gospel lesson was read at the time of the washing of the feet of the newly baptized.

⁴ John 13. 8. For the text of this and the two following quotations from vv. 9 and 10 see notes on the parallel passage S. iii. 1. 4-7.

⁵ A reference to Gen. 3. 1 f. The words to the serpent in Gen. 3. 15 (Vulg. *insidiaberis calcaneo eius*) are interpreted more fully in S. iii. 1. 7 and in other passages of Ambrose. See note on passage in S.

⁶ Ambrose here, as in S. iii. 1. 7, connects baptism with the removal of actual, personal sin, and regards the washing of the feet as having a similar efficacy with regard to transmitted (or hereditary) sin. On the ceremony of washing the feet see Introduction, pp. 23 f.

. 33. At the same time recognize that there is a mystical meaning in the actual ministry of humility; for he says, *If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, how much more ought ye also to wash one another's feet!*¹ For since the *Author of salvation*² himself redeemed us through obedience, how much more ought we, his poor servants, to display the service of humility and obedience!

CHAPTER VII

The meaning of the white garments in which the baptized were clothed is expounded and illustrated by a mystical exposition of the Song of Songs. The "spiritual seal" and its interpretation.

34. THOU receivedst after this white raiment³ for a sign that thou hast put off the covering of sins, thou hast put on the chaste garments of innocence, whereof the Prophet said *Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow.*⁴ For he who is baptized is plainly cleansed both according to the Law and according to the Gospel; according to the Law, because Moses with a *bunch of hyssop*⁵ sprinkled the blood of the lamb: according to the Gospel, because Christ's *raiment* was *white as snow*, when he showed the glory of his resurrection in the Gospel.⁶ He, then, is made *whiter than snow* whose guilt is forgiven. Whence also the Lord saith by Isaiah, *If your sins be as scarlet, I will make them as white as snow.*⁷

¹ John 13. 14. A free quotation, but the words "how much more" have Old Latin attestation.

² Heb. 2. 10.

³ See Introduction, p. 24.

⁴ Ps. 51. 7 (Vulg. 50. 9).

⁵ Ex. 12. 22.

⁶ Matt. 28. 3.

⁷ Isa. 1. 18. The quotation agrees with the LXX, and is found in a corresponding form in Cyprian.

35. The Church, having received these garments by the *laver of regeneration*,¹ says in the Canticles, *I am black and comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem*:²—black through the frailty of her human condition, *comely* through grace; *black*, because consisting of sinners, *comely* by the sacrament of faith. Seeing these garments the *daughters of Jerusalem* say in amazement, *Who is this that cometh up made white?*³ She was black; whence is she now suddenly white?

36. The angels also doubted when Christ rose,⁴ the powers of the heavens doubted seeing that flesh ascended into heaven. So they said, *Who is the King of glory?* And when some said, *Lift up the gates of your Prince, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting gates, and the King of glory shall come in*; then others doubted saying, *Who is this King of glory?*⁵ In Isaiah, too, thou readest that the powers of the heavens doubting said, *Who is this that cometh up from Edom, the crimson of his garments is from Bozrah, beauteous in white apparel?*⁶

37. But Christ seeing his Church in white garments—the Church for whom he had put on *filthy garments*, as thou

¹ Titus 3. 5.

² Cant. 1. 5 (Vulg. 1. 4). The quotation agrees verbally with *de Spir. S.* ii. 10. 112, where it is similarly applied.

³ Cant. 8. 5 (LXX). Cf. S. iv. 2. 5 (note).

⁴ This interpretation of Ps. 24 (Vulg. 23), possibly suggested by such passages as Eph. 3. 10: 1 Pet. 1. 12, is found in *de Inst. Virg.* v. 39. Cf. *de Fide* iv. 1. 5. In the former of these passages, as here, there is a reference to Isa. 63. 1.

⁵ Ps. 24 (Vulg. 23). 8, 9. The quotation differs from LXX and Vulg. The text may be corrupt, and perhaps we should read with Vulg. *tollite portas, principes, vestras* ("Lift up your gates, ye princes"). The reading *vestras* is found in some MSS. of M.; in *Ps.* xxxviii. 35; *de Inst. Virg.* v. 39.

⁶ Isa. 63. 1 (LXX). Quoted also in *in Ps.* cxviii. 14. 34 more exactly than here in M., which has *ascendit* for *advenit*, and *stola candida* ("white robe"). The latter is found in a quotation by Jerome.

readest in the book of the prophet Zechariah ¹—or seeing, it may be, the soul ² clean and washed by the laver of regeneration, saith, *Behold, thou art fair, my neighbour ; behold, thou art fair ; thine eyes are as a dove's* ³—in whose likeness the Holy Spirit descended from heaven.⁴ Beautiful eyes as of a dove—because in the likeness thereof the Holy Spirit descended from heaven.

38. And further on, *Thy teeth are like a flock of the shorn, which have come up from the laver ; which all bear twins, and none is barren among them. Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet.*⁵ No slight praise is this. First, in the pleasant comparison with *the shorn*. For we know that goats both feed on high places without danger and get food on steep ascents securely ⁶; then when they are shorn, they are relieved of what is superfluous. With a flock of these the Church is compared, having in herself the many virtues of the souls who through the laver lay down superfluous sins, who offer to Christ mystic faith and the grace of right conduct, who tell of the cross of the Lord Jesus.

39. In these the Church is beautiful. Whence God the Word says to her, *Thou art all fair, my love ; there is no fault in thee*—because guilt is sunk in the waters. *Come hither from Lebanon, my spouse, come hither from Lebanon ; thou*

¹ Zech. 3. 3. The name of Joshua in that passage is represented by "Jesus" in LXX and Latin versions ; hence, the application which Ambrose makes of the passage.

² For this twofold application of the imagery of Canticles see S. v. 2. 5 (note).

³ Cant. 4. 1. The reading *proxima* ("neighbour") follows the LXX. The passage is similarly applied in *de Inst. Virg.* i. 4.

⁴ Luke 3. 22.

⁵ Cant. 4. 2, 3 (LXX).

⁶ The reference to "goats feeding securely on steep ascents" is suggested by the context of the preceding quotation. In Cant. 4. 1 Mount Gilead is referred to as the abode of the goats.

*shalt pass, and pass over from the beginning of faith*¹—because, in renouncing the world, she has passed this life, she has passed over to Christ. And again God the Word says to her, *How fair and pleasant thou art become, O love, in thy delights! Thy stature has become like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.*²

40. To whom the Church replies, *Who will give thee to me, my brother, that didst suck the breasts of my mother? Finding thee without I will kiss thee; and indeed they will not despise me. I will take thee, and bring thee into my mother's house and into the chamber of her who conceived me. Thou shalt teach me.*³ Dost thou see how she is delighted with the gift of graces, and desires to enter into the inner mysteries and consecrate all her senses to Christ? Still she seeks, still she stirs up love, and asks that it may be stirred up for her by the daughters of Jerusalem, by the grace of whom, that is, by the grace of faithful souls, she desires that the Bridegroom be roused to fuller love for her.

41. Whence the Lord Jesus himself also attracted by the zeal of such love, by the beauty of comeliness and grace (since there is no longer the foulness of sins in those who are washed), says to the Church, *Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a signet upon thine arm,*⁴ that is, thou art comely, my

¹ Cant. 4. 7, 8, following the LXX, which, however, reads πλησίον ("neighbour") for *caritas*, "my spouse" (Vulg. *amica*). The passage is quoted in the same form in Ambrose, *de Isaac*, v. 47.

² Cant. 7. 6, 7 (LXX).

³ Cant. 8. 1, 2. The words "into the chamber of her who conceived me" are found in the LXX, but are not in the Hebrew or Vulgate. The passage is quoted with these words in *de Inst. Virg.* i. 5, where the application closely resembles that found here. On the other hand, the words "thou shalt teach me" are absent from the LXX, but are found in the Vulgate, and are quoted by Ambrose, in *Ps.* cxviii. 19. 25. See Introduction, p. 11.

⁴ Cant. 8. 6. The passage is similarly applied in *de Inst. Virg.* xvii. 113.

*neighbour, thou art all fair, thou lackest nothing. Set me as a seal upon thine heart, that thy faith may shine with the fullness of the sacrament. Let thy works also shine and display the image of God, in whose image thou wast made. Let no persecution impair thy love, which much water cannot shut out, floods cannot overflow.*¹

42. Wherefore recollect that thou hast received the spiritual seal,² *the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and godliness, the spirit of holy fear,*³ and preserve what thou hast received. God the Father *hath sealed thee, Christ the Lord hath confirmed thee, and hath given the earnest of the Spirit in thy heart,* as thou hast learned from the apostolic lesson.⁴

CHAPTER VIII

The sacrament of the Eucharist prefigured in Psalm 23, in the incident of Melchizedek, and in the manna and water miraculously supplied to Israel in the wilderness.

43. RICH with these adornments the cleansed people hastens to the altar of Christ, saying, *And I will go unto the altar of God, even unto the God that maketh glad my youth*⁵;

¹ Cant. 8. 7. For a closely parallel application see *de Inst. Virg.* xvii. 113.

² For the "spiritual seal", cf. S. iii. 2. 8, where the rite referred to is called "the perfecting" (*perfectio*). It seems to have consisted of a "signing" (whether with or without unction we are not told), and is connected both here and in S. iii. 2. 8-10; vi. 2. 6 with the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit. It is referred to in similar terms in Ambrose, *de Spir.* S. i. 6. 72. See further Introduction, pp. 24 f.

³ Isa. 11. 2. See note on S. iii. 2. 8.

⁴ 2 Cor. 1. 21, 22, where the words *confirmat, signavit* are found in the Latin version. For a similar application see *de Spir.* S. i. 6. 72.

⁵ Ps. 43 (Vulg. 42). 4. On the use of this psalm in connexion with the Eucharist see S. iv. 2. 7 (note).

for, putting off the slough of long-standing sin, *renewed in the youth of the eagle*,¹ she hastens to approach that heavenly banquet. She comes, therefore, and seeing the holy altar duly ordered, cries and says, *Thou hast prepared a table before me.* She it is whom David represents as the speaker, in the words,² *The Lord is my shepherd, and I shall not want. In a place of pasture, there he hath placed me ; by the water of rest he hath tended me.* And below, *For though I walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil ; for thou art with me : Thy rod and thy staff they have comforted me. Thou hast prepared a table before me against them that trouble me : Thou hast anointed my head with oil ; and Thy inebriating cup, how glorious it is !*

44. Now let us consider the following point, lest perchance anyone, seeing the visible things (for those that are invisible are not seen, nor can they be apprehended by human eyes) may say perchance, "For the Jews God *rained manna*,³ *rained quails*; it is for the beloved Church that these things are which he has prepared, and of which it has been said, *That which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, and which hath not entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*"⁴

Therefore, that no one may say this, we wish with all earnestness to prove that the sacraments of the Church are both older than those of the synagogue and more excellent than manna is.⁵

45. That they are older is taught by the lesson from Genesis which has been read. For the synagogue derived its

¹ Ps. 103 (Vulg. 102). 5. Cf. S. iv. 2. 7.

² Ps. 23 (Vulg. 22). 1, 2, 4, 5. Cf. S. v. 3. 13, with note.

³ Ps. 78 (Vulg. 77). 24. Cf. Ex. 16. 4 f. For the quails see Ex. 16. 13.

⁴ 1 Cor. 2. 9. Cf. S. iv. 2. 5, with note.

⁵ With this and the three following sections cf. S. iv. 3. 10-12.

origin from the law of Moses. But Abraham is far earlier; who, when he had won the victory, defeating the enemy and recovering his own nephew, was then met by Melchizedek, who *brought forth* the gifts which Abraham received with reverence.¹ It was not Abraham that *brought them forth* but Melchizedek, who is represented as being *without father, without mother, having neither beginning of days nor end, but like unto the Son of God*; of whom Paul says in the Epistle to the Hebrews that he *abideth a priest continually*,² who in Latin is interpreted *King of righteousness, King of peace*.³

46. Do you not recognize who this is? Can a man be *King of righteousness*, when he is hardly righteous himself? Can he be *King of peace* when he can hardly be peaceable? It is he who is *without mother*, as touching his Godhead, because he was begotten of his Father, who is God, being of one substance with the Father; *without father*, as touching his incarnation, for he was born of the Virgin; *not having beginning and end*, because he is *the beginning and the end* ⁴ of all, *the first and the last*.⁵ Therefore the sacrament which thou hast received is not a human but a divine gift, *brought forth* ⁶ by him who blessed the father of faith, Abraham, whose grace and actions thou admirest.

47. It has been proved that the sacraments of the Church are older; now learn that they are better. It is, indeed, a wonderful thing that God should have *rained manna* ⁷ for

¹ Gen. 14. 17 f. The sacrifice of Melchizedek is constantly referred to as a type of the Eucharist in Church writers from the time of Cyprian onwards, and finds a place in the prayers of the Canon of the Mass quoted in S. iv. 6. 27. The incident is also dealt with in S. iv. 3. 10, 12. Cf. also Ambrose, *de Fide*, iii. 11. 87 f.

² Heb. 7. 3. For the attribution of the Epistle to St Paul, see S. iv. 1. 1 (note).

³ Heb. 7. 2.

⁴ Rev. 21. 6.

⁵ Rev. 22. 13.

⁶ An allusion to Gen. 14. 18.

⁷ Ps. 78. 25 (Vulg. 77. 24); cf. Ex. 16. 4.

the fathers, and they were fed on daily food from heaven. Whence it was said, *Man did eat angels' bread.*¹ But yet all who *did eat* that bread *died in the wilderness*²; this meat, however, which thou receivest is *the living bread which came down from heaven*,³ and furnisheth the substance of eternal life; and whosoever *eateth this, shall never die*⁴: and it is the body of Christ.

48. Consider now whether the *bread of angels* or the flesh of Christ (which is, indeed, the body of life) is the more excellent.⁵ That manna was *from heaven*, this is above heaven; that was *of heaven*, this is of the Lord of the heavens; that was liable to corruption, if it was kept for a second day; ⁶ this is far removed from all corruption, which whosoever shall taste devoutly, cannot feel corruption. For them water flowed from the rock,⁷ for thee blood from Christ;⁸ the water satisfied them for a season, the blood cleanses thee for ever. The Jews drank, and thirsted; thou when thou hast drunk canst not thirst. And that was in shadow, this is in reality.

49. If that which excites thy wonder is a shadow, how great is that, the very shadow of which excites thy wonder! Hear how that the things which happened unto the fathers are a shadow: *they drank*, it says, *of the rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things happened as a figure of us.*⁹ Thou hast learnt that they are more excellent. For the light is better than the shadow, the reality is better than the figure, the body of the Author and Giver is better than manna from heaven.

¹ Ps. 78. 26 (Vulg. 77. 25).

² John 6. 51.

³ With this section cf. S. iv. 5. 24.

⁴ Ex. 17. 6.

⁵ 1 Cor. 10. 4-6. Cf. S. v. 1. 3 with note.

⁶ John 6. 49.

⁷ John 6. 50, 51.

⁸ Cf. Ex. 16. 20.

⁹ John 19. 34.

CHAPTER IX

The change by which the elements of bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ is effected by Christ's words of institution. Illustrations from the miracles of the Old Testament and the Virgin Birth. The wonder and joy of the Sacrament are set forth in the language of the Song of Songs.

50. PERCHANCE thou mayest say, "I see something different; how dost thou claim that it is the body of Christ which I receive?" It still remains for us to prove this also. What precedents, then, shall we employ? Let us prove that this is not what nature formed but what the blessing consecrated, and that there is greater force in a blessing than in nature, because by a blessing even nature itself is changed.

51. Moses held a rod, *he cast it down, and it became a serpent*; again *he took hold of the tail* of the serpent, and it returned to its natural state of a rod.¹ Dost thou, then, see that both the serpent and the rod twice underwent a change of nature by prophetic grace? The rivers of Egypt ran with a pure flood of water; suddenly blood began to well out from the veins of their sources, and there was naught that men could drink in the rivers. Again at the prophet's prayer the blood in the rivers ceased, the natural state of the waters came back.² The people of the Hebrews was everywhere surrounded, on one side walled in by the Egyptians, on the other shut in by the sea; Moses lifted his rod, the water divided and assumed the character of solid walls,³ and a footway appeared amid the waves. The Jordan turned backward contrary to nature and returned to the source of its

¹ Ex. 4. 3, 4.

² Ex. 7. 20. The withdrawal of the plague is not recounted in Exodus, but is added by Ambrose on the analogy of Ex. 8. 13, 31.

³ *in murorum specie congelavit*. On *species* see note on ix. 52. The passage referred to is Ex. 14. 22. Ambrose makes a similar allusion to the incident in *de Spir. S.* iii. 4. 22.

stream.¹ Is it not clear that the natural state both of the waves of the sea and of the course of the river was changed? The people of the fathers was thirsty, Moses touched the rock, and water flowed from the rock.² Did not grace act in a way beyond nature, so that the rock poured forth water which it had not by nature? Marah was a most bitter stream, so that the thirsty people *could not drink*. Moses *cast wood into the water*, and the nature of the water lost its bitterness, which was tempered by a sudden infusion of grace.³ In the time of Elisha the prophet one of the sons of the prophets had the iron knocked off his axe, and straightway it sank. He who had lost the axehead besought Elisha; Elisha also *cast wood* into the water, and *the iron did swim*.⁴ Certainly we know that this also took place in a way beyond nature; for iron is a heavier kind of substance than liquid water.⁵

52. We observe, therefore, that grace is of greater power than nature; and yet it is only the grace of a prophet's blessing of which we are so far taking account. But if a human blessing was powerful enough to change nature, what do we say of the divine consecration itself where the very words of the Lord and Saviour act? ⁶ For the sacrament which thou receivest is consecrated ⁷ by the word of Christ. But if the

¹ Josh. 3. 16.

² Ex. 17. 6.

³ Ex. 15. 23-25.

⁴ 2 Kings 6. 4-6.

⁵ *gravior est enim ferri species quam aquarum liquor.*

⁶ According to Ambrose, the consecration of the elements in the Eucharist is effected by the recital of the words of institution. See Introduction, p. 41, and cf. S. iv. 4. 14-19.

⁷ *Christi sermone conficitur.* The word *conficere* is used in classical Latin of the "celebration" of sacred rites. In Latin Church writers of the fourth century it is often used as a synonym of *consecrare*. Strictly speaking, it is the elements which are "consecrated", but by a proleptic use that which the elements become is made the object of the verb "to consecrate", and so Ambrose speaks of "consecrating the body" of Christ (ix. 53, *hoc quod conficimus corpus ex virgine est*).

word of Elijah was powerful enough to bring down fire from heaven,¹ will not the word of Christ be powerful enough to change the characters of the elements? ² Thou hast read of the works of the whole creation that *he spake the word, and they were made; he commanded and they were created.*³ The word of Christ, then, which could make out of nothing that which was not, can it not change the things which are into that which they were not? For to give new natures to things is no less wonderful than to change their natures.⁴

53. But why do we employ arguments? Let us employ more immediate examples,⁵ and by the example of the incarnation let us prove the truth of the mystery. Did the usage of

¹ 1 Kings 18. 38.

² *ut species mutet elementorum.* The word *species* denotes the particular, special nature by which one kind of thing is distinguished from another. Cf. ix. 51, *in murorum specie congelavit*, "assumed the character of solid walls"; *ibid.*, *gravior est enim ferri species quam aquarum liquor*, "iron is a heavier kind of substance than liquid water"; ix. 54, *alia species nominatur*, "another kind of thing is named". Ambrose probably intends the word to represent the Greek term *εἶδος*, which is used in connexion with the change of the elements in the consecration of the Eucharist by Gregory of Nyssa, *Catechetical Oration*, ch. 37. Elsewhere in this treatise *species* is used in the less technical sense of "form" or "appearance": see iv. 25, where Ambrose discusses the application of the word to the dove at the Baptism (see note); and cf. S. iv. 4. 20, *speciem sanguinis non video*, where *species* probably means "the appearance" of blood.

³ Ps. 33 (Vulg. 32). 9.

⁴ The argument, as in S. iv. 4. 15, is that if it is possible for God to make something out of nothing, *a fortiori* it is possible for Him to make something into something else. By a "new nature", then, is meant one which does not succeed a former or older nature, but is the first of its kind to exist.

⁵ *Suis utamur exemplis.* Lit., "examples belonging to itself", or "examples belonging to the nature of the case". The idea is that the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Sacrament belong to the same order and are essentially the same.

nature precede when the Lord Jesus was born of Mary? If we look to the order of generation, it usually results from the union of a woman with a man. It is clear, therefore, that the Virgin gave birth outside the order of nature. And this body which we consecrate is from the Virgin; why do you seek the natural order here in the case of the body of Christ, when the Lord Jesus himself was born of the Virgin in a way beyond nature? It was certainly the true flesh of Christ which was crucified, which was buried; truly, therefore, the sacrament is of his flesh.

54. The Lord¹ Jesus himself cries, *This is my body*.² Before the blessing of the heavenly words another kind of thing is named,³ after consecration it is designated "body". He himself speaks of his blood. Before consecration it is spoken of as something else, after consecration it is named "blood". And thou sayest, *Amen*,⁴ that is, it is true. What the mouth speaks let the mind within confess; what the speech utters let the affections feel.

55. With these sacraments, therefore, Christ feeds his Church; by them the soul's very being is strengthened. And seeing her continuous growth in grace, he rightly saith to her, *How fair are thy breasts become, my sister, my spouse! how fair are they become from wine! and the smell of thy garments is better than all spices. Thy lips, O my spouse, are a dropping honeycomb; milk and honey are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon. A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed*.⁵

¹ On the use of the word "Lord" (*dominus*) before "Jesus" see S. i. 1. 2 (note).

² Matt. 26. 26: Mark 14. 22.

³ *alia species nominatur*. See note on ix. 52 for *species*.

⁴ Cf. S. iv. 5. 25 (note).

⁵ Cant. 4. 10-12. The reading *favus distillans* ("a dropping honeycomb") agrees with Vulg. There is a v. l. *favum distillant* (LXX). The text in course of transmission may have been assimilated to the Vulgate. See Introduction, p. 13.

Whereby he signifies that the mystery should remain sealed with thee, that it be not profaned by the works of an evil life and the betrayal of chastity, that it be not divulged to those for whom it is not meet, that it be not spread among the unbelieving by babbling loquacity.¹ Thou oughtest, therefore, to keep a good watch over thy faith, that an unblemished perfection of life and silence may be maintained.

56. Whence also the Church, guarding the deep and heavenly mysteries, repels the fiercer storms of wind and invites the sweetness of vernal grace; and knowing that her garden cannot displease Christ, she calls the Spouse himself, saying, *Arise, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, and let my unguents flow down. Let my brother come down into his garden, and eat the fruit of his fruit-trees.*² For it hath good and fruitful trees, which have wet their roots with the stream of the sacred font,³ and have burst out into good fruit from the bud of a new fertility, so that they are no longer cut down with the axe of which the prophet spake,⁴ but are fertilized with the richness of the Gospel.

57. Thus, too, the Lord, rejoiced by their fruitfulness, answers, *I have come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my unguents; I have eaten my food with my honey; I have drunk my drink with my*

¹ A reference to the *disciplina arcani*, more fully dealt with in *de Cain* i. 37, where there is a warning against disclosing the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and similar language about the silent witness of Christian life and conduct. Warnings against divulging divine mysteries are found in *in Ps.* xlv. 1 and *in Ps.* cxviii. 2. 26.

² Cant. 4. 16 (Vulg. 4. 16; 5. 1). Cf. S. v. 3. 14 with note on text. The quotation here agrees verbally with that of *de Excess. Fratris* ii. 119.

³ The words *sacri fontis irriguo* find an exact parallel in *Interpell.* ii. 1. 5 and *in Lucam* vii. 95. Cf. S. iv. 1. 2, *in fonte irriguo*, found also in *in Ps.* xlv. 3. For other examples of *fontis irriguo* see *Ap. David* i. 59; *de Virginitate* 58.

⁴ Probably Ambrose has in mind Matt. 3. 10.

milk.¹ Why he speaks of food and drink, understand, O believer. Nay, this is not doubtful. Thou hast read that he tells us that in us he is in prison:² even so in us does he eat and drink.

58. Whence also the Church seeing so great grace, bids her sons, bids her neighbours come together to the sacraments, saying, *Eat, O my neighbours ; and drink and be inebriated, my brethren*. What we are to eat, what we are to drink, the Holy Spirit hath made clear to thee elsewhere by the Prophet, saying, *Taste and see that the Lord is good : blessed is the man that trusteth in him*.³ Christ is in that sacrament, because it is the body of Christ; therefore it is not bodily food, but spiritual. Whence also the Apostle says of the type of it that *our fathers ate spiritual meat, and drank spiritual drink*.⁴ For the body of God is a spiritual body; the body of Christ is the body of a divine Spirit, because Christ is Spirit,⁵ as we read, *The spirit before our face is Christ the Lord*.⁶ And in the

¹ Cant. 5. 1, following LXX, but with the variants "food" for "bread" and "drink" for "wine". Cf. S. v. 3. 15 with note on this passage and on the quotation which follows here in § 58.

² Matt. 25. 36.

³ Ps. 34. 8 (Vulg. 33. 9).

⁴ 1 Cor. 10. 3, 4.

⁵ Ambrose has in view such passages as 1 Cor. 15. 45 : 2 Cor. 3. 17. The thought expressed is that, though the sacrament is of Christ's body, that does not prevent it from being a source of nourishment to the soul. For since it is the body of Christ, it is the body of a divine spirit, because Christ is Spirit. Athanasius has similar language in *Ep. ad Serap.* iv. 19.

⁶ Lamentations 4. 20, which in the LXX (here followed by the Latin Versions) runs: "The Spirit of our face, Christ the Lord, was taken in their destructions." The passage is frequently quoted in early writers as Messianic. See Justin, *Ap.* i. 55; Iren., *adv. Haer.* iii. 11. 2 (Harvey); Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* iii. 6; *adv. Prax.* 14. The passage is quoted in the same form as here in *de Spir.* S. i. 9. 100.

Epistle of Peter we have, *Christ died for us*.¹ Thus this meat *strengthens our heart*, and this drink *maketh glad the heart of man*,² as the Prophet has declared.

59. Wherefore, having obtained all things, let us recognize that we are regenerate. Nor let us say, "How are we regenerate? Have we *entered into our mother's womb, and been born again*?"³ I do not perceive the usage of nature." But there is nothing of the natural order here, where there is the excellency of grace. Accordingly, it is not always the usage of nature that produces birth; we confess that Christ the Lord was born of a Virgin, and we deny the order of nature. For Mary did not conceive from a man; but she *was with child* of the Holy Ghost, as Matthew says that *she was found with child of the Holy Ghost*.⁴ If, then, *the Holy Ghost, coming upon*⁵ the Virgin effected conception, and fulfilled the work of generation, surely we must not doubt that, coming upon the font or upon those on whom baptism is conferred, he effects the reality of regeneration.

¹ 1 Pet. 2. 21, with "died" for "suffered". The link between this quotation and the preceding passage from Lamentations is supplied by the reference to the Messiah as being "taken in their destructions" in that passage. This leads on to the thought of the Passion.

² Ps. 104 (Vulg. 103). 15.

⁴ Matt. 1. 18.

³ John 3. 4.

⁵ Luke 1. 35.

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