

*THE FATHERS
OF THE CHURCH*

A NEW TRANSLATION

VOLUME 44

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

A NEW TRANSLATION

EDITORIAL BOARD

HERMIGILD DRESSLER, O.F.M.
Quincy College
Editorial Director

ROBERT P. RUSSELL, O.S.A.
Villanova University

THOMAS P. HALTON
The Catholic University of America

WILLIAM R. TONGUE
The Catholic University of America

SISTER M. JOSEPHINE BRENNAN, I.H.M.
Marywood College

FORMER EDITORIAL DIRECTORS

LUDWIG SCHOPP, ROY J. DEFERRARI, BERNARD M. PEEBLES

SAINTE AMBROSE

*THEOLOGICAL
AND DOGMATIC WORKS*

Translated by

ROY J. DEFERRARI, PH.D.

The Catholic University of America



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA PRESS
in association with
CONSORTIUM BOOKS
Washington, D.C.

NIHIL OBSTAT:

HARRY A. ECHLE

Censor Librorum

IMPRIMATUR:

✙ PATRICK A. O'BOYLE

Archbishop of Washington

August 1, 1962

The *nihil obstat* and *imprimatur* are official declarations that a book or pamphlet is free of doctrinal or moral error. No implication is contained therein that those who have granted the *nihil obstat* and *imprimatur* agree with the content, opinions, or statements expressed.

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 77-081355

ISBN 8132-0044-X

Copyright © 1963 by

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA PRESS, INC.

All rights reserved

Reprinted 1977

C O N T E N T S

INTRODUCTION	vii
THE MYSTERIES	
Introduction	3
Text	5
THE HOLY SPIRIT	
Introduction	31
Book I	35
Book II	97
Book III	153
THE SACRAMENT OF THE INCARNATION OF OUR LORD	
Introduction	217
Text	219
THE SACRAMENTS	
Introduction	265
Book I	269
Book II	279
Book III	289
Book IV	297
Book V	309
Book VI	319
INDEX	329

INTRODUCTION

ST. AMBROSE WAS BORN in 339 in Augusta Treverorum, the modern Trier or Trèves, famous for its size and beauty and as a residence of emperors and as the political capital of the Roman territory west of the Alps.

His family was both Roman and distinguished. It had given consuls and prefects to the Empire, and at least one martyr, a virgin named Soteris, to the Church. At the time of Ambrose's birth, his father, Aurelius Ambrose, held the high office of Pretorian Prefect of the Gauls.

There were already two children in the family: the older Marcellina, a girl of great strength of character and always inclined to the religious life; the younger a boy, Uranius Satyrus, of delicate health and excessively shy, between whom and Ambrose there developed an intense brotherly affection.

Paulinus, St. Ambrose's biographer, tells little about the early life of Ambrose. After his father died, his mother, whose name is nowhere mentioned, went with her family to live in Rome, where Marcellina received the veil from Pope Liberius in the Basilica of St. Peter on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6, 353. St. Ambrose in *De virginibus* (3.11-14)

summarizes the address which Pope Liberius gave on this occasion. Since at this time there were no convents of virgins in Rome, Marcellina together with another consecrated virgin continued to live in her mother's house.

In the meantime, St. Ambrose and Satyrus had begun their schooling, which was divided into three parts: training in the elementary school; in the school of the grammaticus, which consisted of the critical study of the chief masterpieces of Greek and Latin literature; and in the school of the rhetor, which included instruction in the theory of oratory and oratorical composition, and in the practice of the application of these rules. In addition to this program, certain supplementary studies were available to youth of great promise. It appears that Ambrose studied philosophy and mathematics. Although he claims to be only an amateur in the field, he also exhibits some knowledge of medicine.

After completing their education, Ambrose and Satyrus left Rome in 365 and went to Sirmium as advocates attached to the Court of the Italian Prefecture. The prefect, Vulcatius Rufinus, was an old man of a distinguished family and honorable career. They soon attracted his attention by the brilliance of their oratory. In 368, Rufinus died and was succeeded by very rich and generous Sextus Petronius Probus, a young man of thirty-four years. He promoted the brothers to the Prefect's Judicial Committee. Probably in 370, Satyrus was a provincial governor, and Ambrose was named 'Consular,' or Governor, of the province of Aemelia Liguria.

After some years, probably in October, 373, Auxentius, the intended Arian Bishop of Milan, died. The exiled Catholic Bishop Dionysius by this time was also dead. It was necessary to elect a new bishop, and the Catholics and Arians contended violently to supply the winning candidate. Suddenly, with sur-

prising unanimity, both parties agreed on Ambrose as bishop. St. Ambrose resorted to all sorts of subterfuges to avoid the appointment, but he finally yielded, as Paulinus says, 'recognizing the Divine Will concerning him.' The consecration was performed on December 1 by the bishops of the province, the principal consecrator being the Bishop of Aquileia. He had been baptized on November 24.

After his consecration, St. Ambrose made a donation of his acquired property to the Church, but retained his inherited property under his own control, although devoting the bulk of the income to charitable purposes. This was in accord with his own regulations for his clergy. He committed such property as he retained to the charge of his brother Satyrus, except a life interest for his sister. Satyrus gave up his own office to come to Ambrose's assistance, and to enable him to devote himself entirely to theological study and his other episcopal duties.

St. Ambrose spent much of his time in prayer, laying special stress on the duty of prayer at night. Next to prayer he valued the discipline of fasting. He strongly urged his people to practice fasting, especially in Lent, and he himself was scrupulous in this observance. He also considered fine clothes unsuitable for the clergy, and he himself cultivated simplicity in attire.

St. Ambrose held daily audiences which were attended by crowds of people of all classes and conditions, even by strangers from distant countries. When the long receptions were over, he devoted himself to study. It was probably at this time, chiefly, that Ambrose became acquainted with the works of various Jewish and Christian writers, on some of whom he leaned extensively in his own compositions. His favorite authors clearly were Philo, Origen, and Basil, but he

shows some knowledge of the various works of Josephus, Eusebius, Hippolytus, Didymus, and Athanasius. He even studied the works of certain heretics, in order to be better able to refute their erroneous views.

His work as bishop of a great city was varied and extremely arduous. The following duties are noteworthy:

1. The administration of baptism and penance. He took great care to give adequate instruction to catechumens, the most famous of whom was St. Augustine. He was equally conscientious with the exercise of penitential discipline.

2. The superintendence of the charities of the Church. The details of this work were entrusted to the deacons, but the final responsibility rested with the bishop. He also was consulted directly on special cases.

3. The defence of the oppressed.

4. The hearing and determining of civil causes.

5. The discipline of his clergy.

In addition, as the sole metropolitan of northern Italy, he had the general supervision of the various dioceses of the province. He convoked ordinary and extraordinary provincial councils, heard appeals, issued directions as to the proper day for observing Easter, and consecrated bishops to the vacant sees.

During the fourth century the position of women had materially improved. The State gave them more protection against unjust and cruel treatment, and the Church held them in high honor, even allowing them to minister as deaconesses. The women of this period seem to have been more deeply influenced by Christianity than paganism, and in the Church they found many opportunities for the exercise of their energies. Pure marriage, widowhood, and virginity are the three degrees of the virtue of chastity. According to St. Am-

brose, there is room in the Church for all three, although they are not of equal excellence.

Probably in February, 375, Uranius Satyrus, Ambrose's beloved elder brother, died.¹ The day of his death (September 17) as given in the Roman Martyrology is clearly wrong. They were very close. They shared everything: their property, thoughts and feelings, care and pleasures, even their very sickness and health. According to Ambrose, death is not an evil and should not be lamented: first, because it is the law of nature and the common lot of all men; secondly, because it brings release from the miseries of this life; and thirdly, because of the sure and certain hope of the resurrection of the body and the life of the world to come.

All the Arian activity in Milan, his own city, must have embarrassed and distressed Ambrose greatly. The Empress mother Justina was still an Arian by religion and she detested Ambrose. Moreover, she was a very ambitious woman, who was determined to exercise supreme power by means of influence over her son, the child emperor, Valentinian II. She saw in Ambrose an energetic enemy of her faith and also a dangerous political rival. The empress gathered round herself a party of opposition to the bishop, whose aim was to discredit, and, if possible, to bring about the removal of the too powerful bishop. The point around which the battle would be waged was the question of providing facilities for Arian worship in Milan, which at that moment were non-existent. Outside the walls of Milan there was a Catholic church called Portiana or the Basilica of Portius, and Justina was resolved to place this building at the disposal of the Arians. When this was refused, a second application was made

¹ See Vol. 22 of this series for an English version of the two sermons St. Ambrose delivered on this occasion.

for the larger and newer basilica within the city. When asked to give this church over, Ambrose replied: 'The emperor has his palaces, let him leave the churches to the bishops.' The emperor sent soldiers to secure the delivery of the basilica, but St. Ambrose with some of his faithful followers occupied it first, and remained in it, singing psalms and hymns until the soldiers were ordered to retire.

St. Ambrose was destined to play an equally important part in the struggle between Christianity and paganism. It is important to note that Milan, not Rome, Ambrose, not Pope Damasus, determined the final victory of Christianity over paganism. One of the many remains at that time of heathen worship was the Altar of Victory in the senate house at Rome, which had been removed under Gratian. Symmachus, the Prefect of Rome, himself a pagan although a friend of St. Ambrose, petitioned Valentinian II to restore it, but Ambrose succeeded in defeating this petition by two letters (17 and 18) addressed to the young emperor. When Theodosius took over the imperial power in 387, still another attempt was made, but to no avail. Still later, the usurper Eugenius considered it good politics to cultivate the good will of the pagans and so ordered the Altar of Victory to be set up once more and the temples to remain open as of old. This triumph, however, was very short lived. When in the spring of 394 Theodosius defeated Eugenius at Aquileia, he brought paganism to an end, at least as a public religion. Naturally it lingered for a long time in private in the midst of indifferences, toleration, and sometimes persecution.

St. Ambrose was not only ready to exert his influence on the rulers of his day, but, as the occasion demanded, to make use of rebuke and Church discipline. Shortly after his consecration, St. Ambrose remonstrated with Valentinian I on

the severity of his reign and a number of abuses within his government. The emperor made the following famous reply: 'Well, if I have offended, prescribe for me the remedies which the law of God requires.' In 390, Theodosius had a mild sedition in Thessalonica put down with undue severity, bringing about the slaughter of some 7,000 persons. St. Ambrose at once disregarded any serious consequence for himself, and wrote him the now famous letter 51, exhorting him to repentance, and declaring that he could not be present at any celebration of the Mass until he had publicly expressed repentance. He complied with this condition at once. On another occasion the same Theodosius, following the practice in the East, entered the sanctuary of the church, a privilege reserved only for the clergy in the West. St. Ambrose rebuked him severely and made him retire to another section of the church with the laity.

Ambrose, however, was of great assistance to the imperial family in temporal affairs. To cite briefly only a few of these occasions, he undertook two different missions on behalf of Valentinian II to Trèves for the purpose of warding off an invasion by the usurper Maximus. When Valentinian II died, Ambrose delivered the eulogy which stands as one of the finest examples of early Christian funeral orations. He performed a similar service for Theodosius in 395. On several occasions, too, he interceded for the Roman emperor with the Goths. Perhaps the most important achievement of St. Ambrose in his dealings with the Roman emperors was the establishment of the principle that the Church and the State are two independent authorities, each autonomous within its own sphere, but each rendering general assistance and support to the other.

St. Ambrose's contribution to the music of the Western

Church must not be left unmentioned. He improved the song itself by introducing a more lively and melodious song, which was now rendered not by professional singers alone, but by the whole congregation, singing alternately in two choirs. He also supplied new hymns of his own composition. While Hilary of Poitiers was the first Latin hymn writer and composer of a hymn book, he did not succeed in getting his people to sing his compositions. They were excessively dull and ill adapted for congregational singing. Thus Ambrose may very properly be regarded as the father and founder of Latin hymnody.

Only two years after the death of Theodosius in 395, St. Ambrose died very early in the morning of Easter eve. Within an hour after death, his body was taken to the cathedral to lie in state that day and throughout the following night. On Easter Sunday after Mass, it was taken from the cathedral to the Ambrosian Basilica, where it was buried close to the relics of Saints Gervasius and Protasius. The church of Sant'Ambrogio in Milan still shelters the dust of St. Ambrose.

The present volume contains four of the six treatises of St. Ambrose usually classified under the general title of Dogmatic and Controversial Works. These are *De mysteriis*, *De Spiritu Sancto*, *De incarnationis dominicae sacramento*, and *De sacramentis*. The last has been held of doubtful authenticity, but Fr. O. Faller, S.J., now convincingly establishes its Ambrosian authorship. The other two works of this group, *De fide* and *De poenitentia* will appear in another volume of this series.

Our translation of *De mysteriis* and the *De sacramentis* is based on the recent text by Fr. Faller in the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*; the other two, on the Benedictine text, reprinted in Migne. All the treatises of this

volume, with the exception of *De sacramentis*, have been translated by H. de Romeston in the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 10 (New York 1896). *De sacramentis* and *De mysteriis* have been translated by Thompson and Srawley (London 1950). Of great value, also, is the unprinted master's dissertation of Brother Louis Cavell of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, entitled *Sancti Ambrosii 'De Incarnationis Dominicae Sacramento Liber,' A Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Washington 1955). The translations of passages from Scripture in this volume are taken or adapted from the Challoner-Rheims Version in the Confraternity edition. Each treatise will have a brief introduction of importance for itself.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE TIMES AND WORKS OF ST. AMBROSE

- 339 St. Ambrose born at Trèves early in this year.
- 343 Beginning of heresy of Photinus.
- 348 Birth of Prudentius, the Christian Vergil.
- 349 Synod of Sirmium against Photinus.
- 350 Death of Emperor Constans. St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers. Magnentius declared Emperor of West.
- 351 Condemnation of Photinus by a semi-Arian synod.
- 352 Liberius succeeds Julius as Pope.
- 353-4 St. Ambrose taken by mother to live in Rome. His sister Marcellina receives veil from Liberius at Christmas. Emperor Magnentius commits suicide.
- 354 Birth of St. Augustine on November 13. Death of Emperor Gallus.

- 355 Arian synod at Milan banishes Pope Liberius, Dionysius, Bishop of Milan, and Lucifer, Bishop of Cagliari.
- 356 St. Hilary of Poitiers is banished.
- 357 According to Arians, Liberius subscribes an Arian Creed, and returns to Rome 358. Between April 28 and May 29, Emperor Constantius visits Rome.
- 359 Council of Ariminum. Birth of Gratian on April 18.
- 361 Julian made emperor on November 3.
- 363 Emperor Julian dies on June 26. Felix becomes pope.
- 364 Emperor Jovinian dies. Valentinian and Valens become emperors.
- 365 Having completed education, Ambrose and Satyrus leave Rome and go to Sirmium as advocates.
- 366 Liberius dies in September. Damasus is elected in his place, but Ursinus also claims see.
- 367 Gratian, still a boy, declared Augustus on August 24 by Valentinian, his father.
- 370 Ambrose named 'Consular' or Governor of province of Aemilia-Liguria.
- 372 Conspiracy of Theodorus against Valens.
- 373 Auxentius, Arian bishop of Milan, dies sometime in October. St. Ambrose, still a catechumen, elected Bishop of Milan by acclamation, and consecrated on December 1. He was baptized on November 24, and on the following six days was made to pass formally through the successive grades of the ministry. St. Martin Bishop of Tours.
- 374-5 St. Ambrose sends delegation of clerics to St. Basil, Bishop of Caesarea, to ask for body of St. Dionysius, late Catholic Bishop of Milan. Cf. St. Basil, Letter 197.
- 375 Valentinian dies in November. His son Valentinian, though only four years old, recognized by Gratian as

Emperor of East. Gratian refuses title of Pontifex Maximus. Satyrus, brother of St. Ambrose, dies in February. Two treatises on his death (*De Excessu fratris sui Satyri*) are written. Some hymns are written in September.

- 376 St. Ambrose writes *De virginibus* in three books and *De viduis* in one. Goths cross Danube.
- 377 St. Ambrose writes *De paradiso* and *De Cain*, also *De virginitate* (June). The Goths rebel at Marcianople.
- 378 First two books of *De fide* are written during August and September at request of Gratian, who sets out to support Valens against Goths. *De Noe* is written in autumn. Valens is killed at Adrianople. St. Ambrose sells church plate to redeem the many Christians made captives.
- 379-380 Disastrous famine in Rome. Cf. *De officiis* 3.46-48.
- 379 Theodosius is proclaimed Augustus at Sirmium. Consulship of Ausonius. Gratian, on way back from Thrace, asks Ambrose to come and meet him. He receives first two books of the *De fide* and asks for one on Holy Spirit. The latter is written two years later. In July the sequestrated basilica at Milan is restored to Catholics by Gratian. Maximus the Cynic goes to Constantinople.
- 380 Emperor Theodosius is baptized at Thessalonica. Books 3 and 4 of the *De fide* are written. St. Ambrose attends synod at Rome under Damasus. He consecrates Anamius Bishop of Sirmium, although Arians oppose. Council of Zaragossa in autumn. Theodosius enter Constantinople on November 24. On November 26 the Arians are expelled from the churches of Constantinople.
- 381 Athanaricus, leader of the Goths, dies at Constantinople. *De Spiritu Sancto* in three books is written. Peter, Bishop

- of Alexandria, dies. Ecumenical Council of Constantinople under Meletius of Antioch opens. At Aquileia a council, in which St. Ambrose takes leading part, opens against heretics Palladius and Secundianus. Cf. Letters 9-12 of Ambrose. Nectarius consecrated Bishop of Constantinople, and Flavian Bishop of Antioch. Toward the end of the year the *De incarnationis dominicae sacramento* is written.
- 382 Council of Italian bishops under Ambrose's direction meets to consider difficulties at Antioch and Constantinople. Cf. Letters 13, to Theodosius, and 14, his reply. Theodosius calls similar council at Constantinople. On October 3, Theodosius makes peace with the Goths. Emperor Gratian orders the removal of statue of Victory from Roman Forum. Cf. Letters 17 and 18. Acholius, Bishop of Thessalonica, dies during winter and is succeeded by Anysius.
- 383 Priscillianists visit Rome in vain effort to win Pope Damasus and St. Ambrose to their cause. Gratian, through plot directed by Maximus, is assassinated at Lyons on August 25. Famine in Rome. Cf. *De officiis* 3.7 and 49; Letter 18.
- 383-4 St. Ambrose sends first legation to Maximus in behalf of Empress Justina and her son Valentinian II.
- 384 Symmachus, prefect of city, appeals to Valentinian for restoration of Altar of Victory. St. Ambrose makes reply. Cf. Letters 17 and 18. A synod is held at Bordeaux against the Priscillianists. Pope Damasus dies and is succeeded by Siricius. *De poenitentia* probably written in this year.
- 385 The Spanish Bishops Idacius and Ithacius instigate death sentence against Priscillian and his followers at Trèves.

- Ithacians consecrate Felix as Bishop. Cf. Letters 42-51. Persecution of Catholics at Milan by Justina during Holy Week. Cf. Letter 20. Valentinian II passes law granting Arians equal rights with Catholics. Auxentius lays claim to see of Milan. Cf. Sermon against Auxentius and Letter 21. St. Ambrose succeeds in procuring restitution of deposit which a widow had entrusted to the Church at Trent and which had been carried off by imperial order. Cf. *De officiis* 2.29, 150, 151. Consecration of new basilica at Milan.
- 386 Discovery of bodies of St. Gervasius and St. Protasius. Cf. Letter 22. St. Ambrose writes Letter 23 to the bishops of province of Aemilia, regarding right day for observing Easter. In spring, St. Ambrose writes the *Sermo contra Auxentium* and *De Iacob*, and in middle of year *De officiis*.
- 387 St. Augustine is baptized by St. Ambrose at Milan on Easter. Second mission of St. Ambrose to Maximus. Cf. Letter 24. St. Ambrose is expelled from Trèves because he refuses to communicate with murderer of his sovereign. Maximus crosses into Italy and enters Milan. In this year St. Ambrose writes *In psalm. 61 enarratio*, *Hexaemeron*, *Apologia prophetiae David*, and possibly *De mysteriis*. *De sacramentis* was in all probability written earlier.
- 388 Arians destroy residence of Bishop Nectarius at Constantinople. Cf. Letter 30 sec. 13. Empress Justina dies. Valentinian II is converted by Theodosius. Theodosius wages war against Maximus, who is thoroughly defeated (cf. Letter 40, sec. 23), and is executed at Aquileia. Third application is made for restoration of Altar of Victory. St. Ambrose composes *De Ioseph* and *De inter-*

- pellatione Iob et David*. In December St. Ambrose and Theodosius collide on affair at Collinicum.
- 389 *De elia et ieiunio* is composed before Lent, and from May until February 390 the series of sermons, *Expositio psalmi CXVIII*.
- 390 Theodosius punishes a sedition at Thessalonica with excessive cruelty. St. Ambrose rebukes him severely and excludes him from communion. The Emperor repents and is readmitted to communion. Synod against Ithacian heretics and Felix, Bishop of Trèves, is held at Milan. Cf. Letter 51. Publication of *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam* and the *In psalm. I enarratio*.
- 391-2 Anti-pagan edict for Rome (Cod. Theod. XVI 10.10) promulgated on February 24; for Egypt (Cod. Theod. XVI 10.11), on June 16. Part of Roman senate approaches Valentinian to request restoration of the Altar of Victory in Forum. Cf. Letter 57, sec. 5. *De institutione virginis* was written at about this time. Council of Capua was held in winter.
- 392 *De institutione virginis* published at Easter time. Valentinian II killed at Vienne by Arbogast. Cf. Letter 53 sec. 2; *De ob. Valent.* 25ff. His body is brought to Milan. St. Ambrose delivers *Consolatio de obitu Valent.* Still another delegation regarding Altar of Victory is sent by senate to Eugenius. Cf. Letter 57, sec. 6ff. Condemnation of Jovinian by Pope Siricius and Roman synod.
- 393 When Eugenius arrives at Milan, St. Ambrose leaves for Bononia Faventia and Florence. He writes letters to Eugenius and Sabinus. On January 10, Honorius, who was born September 9, 384, was created emperor.
- 393-4 In Florence St. Ambrose dedicates a basilica and depo-

sits therein the bodies of martyrs Vitalis and Agricola he brought from Bononia. Delivers *Exhortatio virginitatis*; also writes Letter 59.

- 394 Theodosius sets out against Eugenius from Constantinople. Early in August St. Ambrose returns to Milan. On September 6, Theodosius defeats and slays Eugenius. St. Ambrose intercedes and wins pardon for followers of Eugenius. St. Ambrose writes *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 35-40; also Letters 61 and 62. Arbogast commits suicide on September 8. Toward end of year, Paulinus, later Bishop of Nola, and his wife Therasia renounce world. Theodosius becomes ill, and Honorius arrives at Milan.
- 395 Theodosius dies in Milan. St. Ambrose delivers *De obitu Theodosii*. Honorius and Arcadius become emperors. St. Augustine made Bishop of Hippo. Arcadius marries Eudoxia on April 27. On November 27, Rufinus is murdered. Remains of Saint Nazarius and Celsus are discovered by St. Ambrose and brought to Basilica of Apostles. Composition of *De nabuthe Iezraelita*.
- 396 Affair of Cresconius and Ambrose's correspondence with Queen Fritigil. Because of dissensions at Vercellae, St. Ambrose visits Church there and writes Letter 63.
- 397 St. Ambrose consecrates a bishop at Ticinum. A little later he falls ill. He commences but is unable to finish *Enarratio in Psalm. 43*. He recommends Simplicianus as his successor and dies very early in the morning of Easter Eve. He is buried in Ambrosian Basilica on April 5.

Some of the more important letters of St. Ambrose have been listed in the table above. The entire collection of ninety-one extant letters is presented in an English version by Sister Mary Melchior Beyenka, O. P., in Volume 26 of this series.

Sister Mary Melchior divides the collection into the following groups: Letters to Emperors; Letters to Bishops; Synodal Letters; Letters to Priests; Letters to His Sister; Letters to Laymen.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

The important sources for the life of St. Ambrose, besides his complete works, are the following:

Life of St. Ambrose, by his secretary Paulinus. It is probably the most reliable of all the biographies of saints belonging to this period.

Rufinus, *Ecclesiastical History*. This is independent of Paulinus, and has its information from a friend of St. Ambrose, Bishop Chromatius of Aquileia; its substantial accuracy is unquestioned.

St. Augustine, who knew Ambrose and was baptized by him in 387. Cf. St. Augustine: *Confess.* 5.13 and 14; 6.1-4; 9.5-7; *Epp.* 36, 44, 54, 147; *De civitate Dei* 22.8; *De cura pro mort.* 21; *De gratia Christi* 47; *Contr. Julian. Pelagi* 1.10; *Serm.* 286.4.

St. Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 124; *Chronicon, Olymp.* 288; *Epp.* 15.4; 22.22; 48.14 and 18; 84.7; 121.6; *Apol. adv. Rufinum*, 1,2; *Transl. Hom. XXXIX Origenis in ev. Luc. Prolog.*

Sulpicius Severus, *Chron.* 2.48; Orosius, *Hist. adv. paganos*, 7.36; Anonymous, *Gallican Chronicle* A.D. 452 in *Chronica Minora*, ed. Mommsen, M.G.H. 9.616; Prosper 375 and 380; Idatius 382 and 385; Ennodius, ed. F. Vogel, 195, 346; Cassiodorus, *Instit. Div. Litt.* 20; *Chron.* 380; Marcellinus 398; Gregory of Tours, *De miraculis sancti Martini* 1.5; *De glor. martyrum* 47.

Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.30; 5.11. This is regarded as of little value; its chronology is especially confused.

Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.24; 7.13,25. His sources are Rufinus and Socrates.

Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.6-7; 5.13,17,18. The chief source appears to be Sozomen.

St. Basil, *Ep.* 197. Written to St. Ambrose, who had been elevated to archbishopate of Milan only the year before, this letter is an answer to a request that the relics of St. Dionysius of Milan, who died in Cappadocia, he returned to his native city.

Editions and Translations:

- Botte, Dom Bernard, Ambroise de Milan, *Des sacrements des Mystères* (Paris 1919).
- Faller, O., *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 73, containing among other works *De sacramentis* and *De mysteriis* (Vienna 1955).
- Frisch, J. du, et N. le Nourry, *Sancti Ambrosii Mediolanensis Episcopi Opera*, 2 vols. (Paris 1686-1690).
- Migne J., *Patrologiae Latinae Cursus Completus* (3rd reprint of the Benedictine edition), (Paris 1845).
- Romestin, H. de, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ser. 2 (New York 1896) 10.

General Works:

- Broglic, Duc de, *Saint Ambrose*, trans. Margaret Maitland (London 1899).
- Dudden, F. Homes, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, 2 vols. (Oxford 1935).
- Labriolle, Pierre de, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, trans. Herbert Wilson (St. Louis 1928).
- Loughlin, J. F., 'Saint Ambrose,' in *Catholic Encyclopedia* (London 1907).
- Nagl, Maria Assunta, *Der Heilige Ambrosius* (Münster 1951).
- Palanque, Jean Remy, *Saint Ambroise et l'empire romain* (Paris 1933).
- Ratti, A., 'The Ambrosian Church of Milan,' in *Essays in History* (London 1933) 1-110.
- Thompson, T. and J. H. Srawley, *St. Ambrose On the Sacraments and On the Mysteries* (London 1950).

THE MYSTERIES

Translated by

ROY J. DEFERRARI, PH.D.

The Catholic University of America

INTRODUCTION

THE TITLE OF THIS TREATISE varies in the manuscripts. Some have *De mysteriis sive initiandis*. The most ancient, however, have *De divinis mysteriis*, or simply *De mysteriis*.

Some scholars have tried to show that this treatise has been falsely ascribed to St. Ambrose. Their arguments, however, have little weight. Many parallels and points of contact between *De mysteriis* and well established works of St. Ambrose, as well as strong manuscript evidence, leave no doubt as to its Ambrosian authorship. The date of the treatise, however, is uncertain.¹

The work consists of addresses given to the newly baptized during Easter week. They treat of the rites and meaning of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Holy Eucharist. At two points (35-41; 55-58), a mystical commentary on certain passages of the Cantic of Canticles is brought in.

¹ Dudden 697-698; Faller 51-60.

THE MYSTERIES¹

Chapter 1

WE HAVE GIVEN a daily sermon on morals, when the deeds of the Patriarchs or the precepts of the Proverbs were read, in order that, being informed and instructed by them, you might become accustomed to enter upon the ways of our forefathers and to pursue their road, and to obey the divine commands, whereby renewed by baptism you might hold to that manner of life which befits those who are washed.

(2) Now time warns us to speak of the mysteries and to set forth the very purpose of the sacraments. If we had thought that this should have been taught those not yet initiated before baptism, we would be considered to have betrayed rather than to have portrayed the mysteries; then there is the consideration that the light of the mysteries will infuse itself better in the unsuspecting than if some sermon had preceded them.

¹ The word *mysteria* ('mysteries') has its usual general meaning in the writings of the Fathers, also the special Christian meaning as here, a synonym of *sacramenta* ('sacraments'). In the Greek Church today 'the mysteries' rather than 'the sacraments' is regularly used.

(3) So open your ears and enjoy the good odor of eternal life which has been breathed upon you by the grace of the sacraments. This we pointed out to you as we celebrated the mystery of the opening² and said: "Ephpheta," that is, "Be thou opened,"³ so that everyone about to come to grace might know what he was asked and might necessarily remember what he responded.

(4) Christ celebrated this mystery in the Gospel,⁴ as we have read, when He healed the deaf and dumb man. But He touched the mouth because He was curing both a dumb person and a man, in the one case, that his mouth might open with the sound of the infused voice, in the other, because this touch befitted a man and would not have befitted a woman.

Chapter 2

(5) After this Holy of holies¹ was opened to you, you entered the sanctuary of regeneration. Recall what you were asked; recall what you responded! You renounced the Devil and his works, the world with its luxury and pleasures. Your words are kept not in the tomb of the dead, but in the book of the living.

(6) There you saw the Levite,² you saw the priest, you saw the highest priest.³ Do not consider the bodily forms, but the grace of their ministrations. You have spoken in the

2 A symbolical act, as explained in the next section.

3 Mark 7.34.

4 Cf. Mark 7.32.37.

1 A figurative name for the baptistery.

2 The deacon.

3 The bishop.

presence of the angels, as it is written: 'For the lips of the priest guard knowledge, and they seek the law from his mouth, because he is an angel of the Lord Almighty.'⁴ There is no deceiving; there is no denying. He is an angel, who announces the kingdom of Christ, who announces life eternal, to be esteemed by you not according to appearance, but according to office. Consider what he has given over; reflect on his experience; recognize his position.

(7) Having entered, therefore, that you might recognize your adversary, whom you think you should renounce to his face, you turn toward the east. For he who renounces the devil, turns toward Christ, recognizes Him by a direct glance.

Chapter 3

(8) What have you seen? Water, certainly, but not this alone; the Levites (deacons) ministering there, the highest priest (bishop) questioning and consecrating. First of all, the Apostle taught you that 'we are not to consider the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen, for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.'¹ For elsewhere you have: 'The invisible things of God from the creation of the world are understood through the things that have been made; His eternal power also and divinity are estimated by His works.'² Therefore, too, the Lord Himself says: 'If you do not believe me, at least believe

4 Cf. Mal. 2.7.

1 Cf. 2 Cor. 4.18.

2 Cf. Rom. 1.20.

the works.³ Believe, therefore, that the presence of Divinity is at hand there. Do you believe the operation? Do you not believe the presence? Whence would the operation follow, unless the presence went before?

(9) Consider, moreover, how old the mystery is and pre-figured in the origin of the world itself. In the very beginning, when God made heaven and earth, it says: 'The Spirit moved over the waters.'⁴ He who was moving over the waters, was He not working over the waters? Why should I say: 'He was working'? As regards His presence, He was moving. Was He not working who was moving? Recognize that He was working in that making of the world, when the Prophet says to you: 'By the word of the Lord the heavens were made and all their strength by the breath of His mouth.'⁵ Each statement relies on the testimony of the Prophet, both that He was moving over and that He was working. That He was moving over, Moses says; that He was working, David testifies.

(10) Accept another testimony. All flesh was corrupted by its iniquities. 'My Spirit,' says God, 'shall not remain in men, for they are flesh.'⁶ By this, God shows that spiritual grace is turned aside by carnal impurity and by the stain of more serious sin. Therefore, God in His desire to repair what He had given caused the flood, and ordered Noe the just man to embark on the ark. When, as the flood subsided, he first sent forth a raven which did not return; he afterwards sent forth a dove, which is said to have returned with an olive twig.⁷ You see the water; you see the wood; you perceive the dove—and do you doubt the mystery?

3 John 10.38.

4 Cf. Gen. 1.2.

5 Cf. Ps. 32.6.

6 Cf. Gen. 6.3.

7 Cf. Gen. 6.12; 8.12.

(11) The water is that in which the flesh is immersed, that all carnal sin may be washed away. All disgrace is buried there. The wood is that on which the Lord Jesus was fastened, when He suffered for us. The dove is that in whose form the Holy Spirit descended, as you have learned in the New Testament, who inspires peace of soul and tranquility of mind in us. The raven is the figure of sin, which goes out and does not return, if in you also the custody and form of justice be preserved.

(12) There is also a third testimony, as the Apostle teaches you: 'That our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized in Moses in the cloud and in the sea.'⁸ And finally Moses himself says in his canticle: 'You sent your wind and the sea covered them.'⁹ You notice that in that crossing of the Hebrews the figure of holy baptism even then was prefigured, wherein the Egyptian perished and the Hebrew escaped. For what else are we taught daily in this sacrament but that sin is overwhelmed and error abolished, but piety and innocence continue on entire?

(13) You hear that our fathers were under a cloud, that is, a good cloud which cooled the fires of carnal passions, a good cloud; it overshadows those whom the Holy Spirit visits. Finally it came upon the Virgin Mary, and the power of the Most High overshadowed her,¹⁰ when she conceived the Redemption for the human race. And that miracle was performed in a figure by Moses. If then the Spirit was in a figure, He is now present in truth, when Scripture says to you: 'For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.'¹¹

8 1 Cor. 10.1.2.

9 Cf. Exod. 15.10.

10 Cf. Luke 1.35.

11 John 1.17.

(14) Marra was a bitter fountain. Moses cast the wood in it, and it became sweet.¹² For water without the preaching of the cross of the Lord is to no advantage for future salvation; but when it has been consecrated by the mystery of the saving cross, then it is ordered for the use of the spiritual laver and the cup of salvation. So, just as Moses, that is, the Prophet, cast wood into that fountain, also into this fountain the priest casts the message of the cross of the Lord, and the water becomes sweet for grace.

(15) Therefore, you should not trust only in the eyes of your body. Rather is that seen which is not seen, for the one is temporal, the other eternal. Rather is that seen which is not comprehended by the eyes, but is discerned by the spirit and the mind.

(16) Finally, let the reading from Kings¹³ which we have just gone over teach you. Naaman was a Syrian and he had leprosy and he could not be cleansed by anyone. Then a maiden from among the captives said that there was a prophet in Israel who could cleanse him of the pollution of leprosy. The account says that having taken gold and silver he went forth to the king of Israel. This one, when he learned the reason for his coming, tore his garments, saying that he rather was being tried, since those things were being demanded of him which were not within the power of a king. Helisaeus, however, made known to the king that he should direct the Syrian to himself, in order that he might learn that there was a God in Israel. And when he had come, he ordered him to dip seven times in the Jordan river.

(17) Then he began to reflect that the rivers of his own country had better waters, in which he had often dipped and

¹² Cf. Exod. 15.23-25.

¹³ Cf. 4 Kings 5.1-19.

he had never been cleansed of leprosy, and being induced by this he did not obey the commands of the Prophet. However, on the advice and persuasion of his servants he acquiesced and dipped, and when he was immediately cleansed he understood that one's being cleansed was not connected with the waters, but with grace.

(18) Understand now who that 'maiden of the captives' is! Obviously, the younger congregation of the Gentiles, that is, the Church of the Lord formerly weighed down by the captivity of sin, when it did not yet possess the liberty of grace, by whose counsel that foolish people of the Gentiles heard the word of prophecy which long before it had doubted;¹⁴ afterwards, however, when it believed that it should obey, it was washed of every pollution of sin. And this man¹⁵ doubted before he was healed; you have already been healed and so ought not to doubt.

Chapter 4

(19) On this account it was formerly foretold you that you should not believe this alone which you saw, lest perchance you, too, might say: 'Is this that great mystery which the eye has not seen nor the ear heard nor has it entered into the heart of man?¹ I see waters which I used to see daily; are these able to cleanse me, into which I have often descended and have never been cleansed?' From this learn that water cleanses not without the Spirit.²

14 Cf. Rom. 7.23-25.

15 Naaman.

1 Cf. 1 Cor. 29.

2 Cf. John 3.5.

(20) And so you have read that the three witnesses in baptism are one: the water, the blood, and the Spirit, for, if you take away one of these, the sacrament of baptism does not stand.³ For what is water without the cross of Christ except a common element without any sacramental effect? And again without water there is no mystery of regeneration. For 'unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'⁴ Moreover, even a catechumen believes in the cross of the Lord Jesus, with which he, too, is signed, but, unless he be baptized 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,'⁵ he cannot receive remission of sins nor drink in the benefit of spiritual grace.

(21) Therefore, that Syrian dipped seven times⁶ under the law, but you were baptized in the name of the Trinity, you confessed the Father (recall what you did), you confessed the Son, you confessed the Spirit. Retain the order of things. In this faith you died to the world, you arose to God, and, as if buried in that element of the world, dead to sin you were revived to eternal life.⁷ Believe, therefore, that these waters are not without power.

(22) Therefore, it is said to you: 'An angel of the Lord used to come down at certain times into the pool and the water was moved, and the first to go down into the pool after the troubling of the water was healed of whatever infirmity he had.'⁸ This pool was in Jerusalem, in which one was healed every year. But no one was healed before the angel had

3 Cf. 1 John 5.8.

4 John 3.5.

5 Cf. Matt. 28.19.

6 Cf. 4 Kings 5.14.

7 Cf. Rom. 6.11,4.

8 John 5.4.

descended. So the angel descended, and, that there might be a sign that the angel had descended, the water was moved. The water was moved because of the unbelievers, for them a sign, for you faith; for them an angel came down, for you the Holy Spirit; for them a creature was moved, for you Christ operates, the Lord of the creature.

23) Then one was cured; now all are healed, or at least one Christian people alone. For there is in some even a 'deceitful water';⁹ the baptism of unbelievers does not heal, does not cleanse, but pollutes. The Jew washes pots and cups, as if insensible things could receive either blame or grace; but do you baptize this insensible cup of yours, in which your good deeds may shine, in which the splendor of your grace may gleam forth. Therefore, that pool also is by way of a figure, that you may believe that the power of God also descends into this fountain.¹⁰

(24) Finally, the paralytic was awaiting a man. Who was He but the Lord Jesus born of the Virgin, at whose coming no longer would the shadow heal men one by one, but the truth all men together? This, then, was the one whose descent was being waited for, of whom God the Father said to John the Baptist: 'Upon whom thou wilt see the Spirit descending from heaven and abiding upon Him, He it is who baptizes with the Holy Spirit,' of whom John has testified, saying: 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven as a dove and remaining upon Him.'¹¹ Why did the Spirit here descend like a dove, except that you might see, except that you might know that the dove, also, which the just Noe sent forth from the ark, was likeness of this dove, that you might recognize the type of the mystery?

9 Cf. Jer. 15.18.

10 Cf. John 5.7.

11 John 1.33,32.

(25) Perhaps you may say: 'Since that was a true dove, which was sent forth, and this One descended like a dove, how do we say that it was a likeness in one place, and truth in another, when according to the Greeks it is written that the Spirit descended "in the likeness of a dove"?' But what is so true as the Divinity, which remains always?¹² Moreover, the creature cannot be the truth, but a likeness which is easily destroyed and changed. At the same time the simplicity of those who are baptized should not be in likeness but should be true. Therefore, the Lord also says: 'Be therefore wise as servants, and guileless as doves.'¹³ Rightly, then, did He descend like a dove to admonish us that we should have the simplicity of a dove. Moreover, we read that the likeness is to be accepted as the truth both with regard to Christ: 'And was found in likeness as a man,' and with regard to God the Father: 'Nor have you seen His likeness.'¹⁴

Chapter 5

(26) Is there still some reason for you to doubt, when the Father clearly calls out to you in the Gospel, saying: 'This is my Son in whom I am well pleased'; the Son calls out, upon whom the Holy Spirit showed Himself as a dove; the Holy Spirit also calls out, who descended as a dove; David calls out: 'The voice of the Lord is upon the waters, the God of majesty has thundered, the Lord upon many waters';¹ when Scripture testifies to you that, in response to the prayers

¹² Cf. Luke 3.22; John 1.33.

¹³ Matt. 10.16.

¹⁴ Cf. Phil. 2.7; John 5.37.

¹ Ps. 28.3.

of Jerobaal, fire came down from heaven, and, again, when Elias prayed, fire was sent which consecrated the sacrifice.²

(27) You should consider not the merits of persons, but the duties of priests. And if you regard merits, just as you consider Elias, regard, also, the merits of Peter or of Paul, who handed down to us this mystery which they had received from the Lord Jesus. A visible fire was sent to them that they might believe, an invisible one works for us who believe; for them it was as a figure, for us as a warning. Believe, then, that the Lord Jesus is present, invoked by the prayers of priests, who said: 'Where two or three shall be, there am I also.'³ How much more does He deign to impart His presence there where the Church is, where the mysteries are!

(28) You have descended then [into the water]; remember what you replied [to the questions], that you believe in the Father, you believe in the Son, you believe in the Holy Spirit. You do not have in your response: 'I believe in a greater and a lesser and a lowest [person].' But you are bound by the same guarantee of your own voice to believe in the Son exactly as you believe in the Father, to believe in the Spirit exactly as you believe in the Son, with this only exception, that you confess that you must believe in the cross of the Lord Jesus alone.

Chapter 6

(29) After this, of course, you went up to the priest. Consider what followed. Was it not that which David says: 'Like the ointment on the head, that ran down upon the

² Cf. Judges 6.19-21; 3 Kings 18.36-38.

³ Cf. Matt. 18.20.

beard, the beard of Aaron.¹ This is the ointment of which Solomon also says:² 'Thy name is as ointment poured out; therefore young maidens have loved thee and drawn thee.' How many souls renewed today have loved Thee Lord Jesus, saying: 'Draw us after thee; let us run to the odor of thy garments,' that they may drink in the odor of the Resurrection.

(30) Understand why this is done: 'For the eyes of a wise man are in his head.'³ Therefore, it flows upon the beard, that is, upon the grace of youth; therefore, 'upon the beard of Aaron,' that you may become 'a chosen race,'⁴ sacerdotal, precious; for we all are anointed unto the kingdom of God and unto the priesthood with spiritual grace.

(31) You went up from the font; remember the lesson of the Gospel.⁵ For our Lord Jesus in the Gospel washed the feet of His disciples. When He came to Simon Peter, and Peter said: 'Thou shalt never wash my feet,' he did not notice the mystery, and so refused the ministry, because he believed that the humility of the servant was being overtaxed, if he should patiently permit the ministry of the Lord. And the Lord answered him: 'If I do not wash your feet, you will not have a part with me.' On hearing this, Peter said: 'Lord not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.' The Lord replied: 'He who is washed needs only to wash his feet, but is wholly clean.'

(32) Peter was clean, but he should have washed his feet, for he had the sin of the first man by succession, when the serpent overthrew him and persuaded him to error. So his feet are washed, that hereditary sins may be taken away; for our own sins are remitted through baptism.

1 Cf. Ps. 132.2.

2 Cant. 1.2,3.

3 Eccle. 2.14.

4 Cf. 1 Peter 2.9.

5 Cf. John 13.8-10.

(33) At the same time note that the mystery itself consists in the ministry of humility. For He says: 'If I have washed your feet, I the Lord and Master,' how much more 'ought you also to wash one another's feet.'⁶ For since the very Author of salvation has redeemed us through obedience, how much more ought we, His servants, to offer the service of humility and obedience.

Chapter 7

(34) After this you received white garments as a sign that you had put off the covering of sins, and had put on the chaste robes of innocence, of which the prophet said: 'Sprinkle me with hyssop and I shall be cleansed, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.'¹ For he who is baptized is seen to have been cleansed both according to the law and according to the Gospel; according to the law, because Moses sprinkled the blood of a lamb with a bunch of hyssop;² according to the Gospel, because the garments of Christ were white as snow,³ when in the Gospel He showed the glory of His Resurrection. He whose sin is forgiven is made whiter than snow; and so the Lord said through Isaias: 'If your sins be as scarlet, I shall make them white as snow.'⁴

(35) The Church, having assumed these vestments through the laver of regeneration, says in the Canticles:⁵ 'I am black but beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,' black through the

6 Cf. John 13.14.

1 Ps. 50.9.

2 Cf. Exod. 12.22.

3 Cf. Matt. 17.2.

4 Isa. 1.18.

5 Cant. 1.4; 8.5.

frailty of human condition, beautiful through grace; black, because I am made up of sinners, beautiful by the sacrament of faith. Perceiving these vestments, the daughters of Jerusalem in amazement say: 'Who is this that cometh up made white?' She was black; how was she suddenly made white?

(36) For the angels also doubted, when Christ rose again; the powers of heaven when they saw doubted that flesh was coming up into heaven. Finally they said: 'Who is this king of glory?' And when some said: 'Lift up the gates, ye princes, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting gates, and the king of glory will come in,' others doubted, saying: 'Who is this king of glory?'⁶ In Isaias, also, you have it that the powers of the heavens doubted and said: 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, the redness of his garments from Bosra, beautiful in his white robe?'⁷

(37) Christ, moreover, on seeing His Church in white vestments—for whom He himself, as you have it in the book of Zacharias the Prophet, had put on 'filthy garments'⁸—that is, a soul pure and washed by the laver of regeneration, says: 'Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold thou art fair, thy eyes are as a dove's,'⁹ in whose likeness the Holy Spirit descended from heaven. Beautiful are the eyes, because, as we said above, He descended as a dove.

(38) And below: 'Thy teeth are as flocks of sheep, that are shorn, which came up from the washing, all with twins, and there is none barren among them; thy lips are as a scarlet lace.'¹⁰ No ordinary praise is this, first by the pleasing comparison with the shorn sheep; for we know that goats feed

6 Cf. Ps. 23.7,8,7.

7 Isa. 63.1.

8 Zach. 3.3.

9 Cant. 4.1.

10 Cf. Cant. 4.2,3.

in high places without danger and securely take food in steep places; then, when they are shorn, are relieved of the superfluous. The Church is compared to a flock of these, having within herself the many virtues of souls, that put aside through the laver superfluous sins, that offer to Christ the mystic faith and the moral grace, that speak of the cross of the Lord Jesus.

(39) In these the Church is beautiful. Therefore, God the Word says to her: 'Thou art all fair, my love, and there is not a spot in thee,' because sin has been washed away; 'Come hither from Libanus, my spouse, come hither from Libanus; from the beginning of faith thou shalt pass over and pass on,'¹¹ because, renouncing the world, she passed over temporal things and passed on to Christ. And again God the Word says to her: 'Why art thou made beautiful and sweet, O love, in thy delights? Thy stature has become like the palm, and thy breasts as clusters of grapes.'¹²

(40) And the Church answers Him: 'Who shall give thee to me, my brother, sucking the breasts of my mother? I shall find thee without and shall kiss thee, and no one shall despise me. I shall take hold of thee and bring thee into my mother's house, and into the secret place of her who conceived me. You will teach me.'¹³ Do you see how, delighted with the gift of grace she desires to attain to the interior mysteries and to consecrate all her affections to Christ? She still seeks, she still rouses His love and asks that it be roused for her by the daughters of Jerusalem, by whose grace, that is, the grace of faithful souls, she desires that her spouse be provoked to a richer love for her.

(41) Therefore, the Lord Jesus himself, invited by the

¹¹ Cant. 4.7; cf. 4.1.8.

¹² Cant. 7.6.7.

¹³ Cant. 8.1,2.

zeal of such great love, by the beauty of elegance and grace, because now no sins of defilement were among the baptized, says to the Church: 'Put me as a seal upon thy heart as a sign upon thy arm,'¹⁴ that is, 'Thou art elegant, my beloved, thou art all fair, nothing is lacking to thee. Place me as a seal upon thy heart,' that thy faith may shine with the fulness of the sacrament. Let your works also shine and bring forth the image of God, according to whose image you were made. Let not your love be diminished by any persecution, a love which many waters, cannot shut off, nor rivers overflow.'

(42) So recall that you have received a spiritual seal, 'the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of piety, the spirit of holy fear,'¹⁵ and preserve what you have received. God the Father sealed you; Christ the Lord confirmed you, and gave a pledge, the Spirit, in your hearts, as you have learned in the lesson of the Apostle.¹⁶

Chapter 8

(43) The cleansed people, rich in these insignia, hasten to the altar of Christ, saying: 'And I shall go unto the altar of God who gives joy to my youth.'¹ For the people, having put aside the defilements of ancient error, renewed in the youth of an eagle, hasten to approach that heavenly banquet.

¹⁴ Cf. Cant. 8.6.

¹⁵ Cf. Isa. 11.2-3.

¹⁶ Cf. 2 Cor. 5.5. In the early Church, just as in the Eastern Church today, confirmation was given immediately after baptism. The reference here seems to be to confirmation.

¹ Cf. Ps. 42.4.

They come, therefore, and, seeing the sacred altar arranged, exclaim saying: 'Thou hast prepared a table in my sight.' David introduces these people as speaking when he says: 'The Lord feeds me and I shall lack nothing; in a place of good feeding there he placed me; he led me beside the water of refreshment.' And below: 'For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff these have comforted me. Thou doest prepare a table in my sight, against those who trouble me. Thou hast anointed my head with oil, and thy cup inebriating me is wonderful.'²

(44) Now let us consider this, lest anyone perchance seeing the visible—since the things that are invisible are not seen and cannot be comprehended by human eyes—may by chance say: 'For the Jews God rained manna; He rained quail,³ but for this His Church well-beloved by Him, there are these things which He has prepared, concerning which it has been said: "That eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man what things God has prepared for those who love Him."⁴ Therefore, lest anyone say this, we wish with the highest zeal to prove that both the sacraments of the Church are more ancient than those of the synagogue and more excellent than manna is.

(45) The lesson from Genesis, which has been read, teaches them to be more ancient. For the synagogue took its beginning from the law of Moses, but Abraham was far earlier. After he had conquered his enemies and had received

² Cf. Ps. 22.1-5. The baptistery was apart from the church. Here the newly 'enlightened' were baptized and confirmed, after which they were led in solemn procession into the church to attend the celebration of the mysteries and to receive their first Communion.

³ Cf. Exod. 16.13.

⁴ 1 Cor. 2.9.

back his own nephew, when he was enjoying victory, then Melchisedech met him and brought forth those things, which Abraham venerated and received.⁵ Abraham did not bring them forth, but Melchisedech, who is introduced 'without father, without mother, having neither beginning of days nor end, but like to the Son of God,' of whom Paul says to the Hebrews: 'He continues a priest for ever,'⁶ who in the Latin version is called King of justice, King of peace.

(46) Do you not recognize who this is? Can a man be a king of justice, when he himself is scarcely just; can he be a king of peace, when he can scarcely be peaceable?—'Without a mother' according to Divinity, because He was begotten of God the Father, of one substance with the Father; 'without a father' according to the Incarnation, because He was born of the Virgin, 'having neither beginning nor end,' for He himself is 'the beginning and the end' of all things, 'the first and the last.' Therefore, the sacrament which you have received is not a gift of man but of God, brought forth by Him who blessed Abraham, the father of faith, him whose grace and deeds you admire.

(47) It has been proven that the sacraments of the Church are more ancient; now realize that they are more powerful. In very fact it is a marvelous thing that God rained manna on the fathers, and they were fed by daily nourishment from heaven. Therefore, it is said: 'Man has eaten the bread of angels.'⁷ But yet all those who ate that bread died in the desert, but this food which you receive, this 'living bread, which came down from heaven,' furnishes the substance of

5 Gen. 14.14-18.

6 Heb. 7.3.

7 Ps. 77.25.

eternal life, and whoever eats this bread 'will not die forever'; for it is the body of Christ.⁸

(48) Consider now whether the bread of angels is more excellent or the flesh of Christ, which indeed is the body of life. That manna was from heaven, this is above the heavens; that was of heaven, this of the Lord of the heavens; that was subject to corruption, if it were kept for a second day, this is foreign to every corruption, because whosoever shall taste in a holy manner shall not be able to feel corruption. For them water flowed from the rock, for you blood [flowed] from Christ; water satisfied them for the hour, blood satiates you for eternity. The Jew drinks and is thirsty; when you drink, you will not be able to be thirsty; that was in a shadow, this in truth.

(49) If that which you admire is a shadow, how great is that whose shadow you admire? Hear that what came to pass among the fathers is a shadow. It is said: 'For they drank of the rock that followed, and the rock was Christ; but with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were laid low in the desert. Now these things came to pass in a figure for us.'⁹ You recognize the more excellent things; for the light is more powerful than the shade, truth than figure, the body of its author than manna from heaven.

Chapter 9

(50) Perhaps you may say: 'I see something else; how do you tell me that I receive the Body of Christ?' This still remains for us to prove. Therefore, we make use of examples

⁸ Cf. John 6.49-58.

⁹ 1 Cor. 10.4-6.

great enough to prove that this is not what nature formed but what benediction consecrated, and that the power of benediction is greater than that of nature, because even nature itself is changed by benediction.

(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 the nature of a rod. You see then that by the grace of the Prophet the nature of the serpent and that of the rod were interchanged twice. The rivers of Egypt were flowing with a pure stream of water; suddenly, from the veins of the springs blood began to burst forth; there was no drinking water in the rivers. Again at the prayer of the Prophet the blood of the rivers ceased; the nature of the waters returned. The people of the Hebrews were hemmed in on all sides, shut off on the one side by the Egyptians, enclosed on the other by the sea. Moses raised his rod, the water divided and hardened like walls, and a way for travel appeared between the waters.¹ The Jordan turning back contrary to nature returned to the source of its stream. Is it not clear that the nature of the waters of the sea and of the course of the river was changed?² The people of the fathers were thirsty; Moses touched the rock; and water flowed forth from the rock. Did not grace work contrary to nature for the rock to throw forth water which its nature did not have:³ The Mara was a very bitter stream, so that the people, although thirsty, were unable to drink it. Moses threw a piece of wood into the water, and the nature of the waters laid aside its bitterness, which grace when suddenly infused tempered.⁴ In the time of Eliseus the Prophet, one of the sons of the prophets lost

1 Cf. Exod. 4.1-4; 7.19-21; 14.21-22.

2 Cf. Josue 3.16.

3 Cf. Exod. 17.5-6.

4 Cf. Exod. 15.22-25.

the head of his axe, and it sank immediately. He who had lost his axe sought the help of Eliseus; Eliseus also threw a piece of wood into the water, and the axe floated.⁵ Surely we realize that this also happened contrary to nature, for the substance of iron is heavier than the liquid of waters.

(52) So we notice that grace is capable of accomplishing more than is nature, and yet thus far we have mentioned only the benediction of a prophet. But if the benediction of man had such power as to change nature, what do we say of divine consecration itself, in which the very words of our Lord and Saviour function? For that sacrament, which you receive, is effected by the words of Christ. But if the words of Elias had such power as to call down fire from heaven, will not the words of Christ have power enough to change the nature of the elements? You have read about the works of the world: 'that He spoke and they were done; He commanded and they were created.'⁶ So, cannot the words of Christ, which were able to make what was not out of nothing, change those things that are into the things that were not? For it is not of less importance to give things new natures than to change natures.

(53) But why do we use arguments? Let us use His own examples, and by the mysteries of the Incarnation let us establish the truth of the mysteries. Did the process of nature precede when the Lord Jesus was born of Mary? If we seek the usual course, a woman after mingling with a man usually conceives. It is clear then that the Virgin conceived contrary to the course of nature. And this body which we make is from the Virgin. Why do you seek here the course of nature in the body of Christ, when the Lord Jesus himself was born of the

⁵ Cf. 3 Kings 18.36-38.

⁶ Cf. Ps. 118.5

Virgin contrary to nature? Surely it is the true flesh of Christ, which was crucified, which was buried; therefore it is truly the sacrament of that flesh.

(54) The Lord Jesus himself declares: "This is my body."⁷ Before the benediction of the heavenly words another species is mentioned; after the consecration the body is signified. He Himself speaks of His blood. Before the consecration it is mentioned as something else; after the consecration it is called blood. And you say 'Amen,' that is, 'It is true.' What the mouth speaks, let the mind within confess; what words utter, let the heart feel.

(55) Christ then feeds His Church on these sacraments, by which the substance of the soul is made strong, and, seeing the continuous advancement of her grace, rightly says to her: 'How beautiful thy breasts have become, my sister, my spouse, how beautiful they have become from wine, and the odor of thy garments as the odor of Libanus. A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed.'⁸ By this he signifies that the mystery should remain sealed with you, lest it be violated by the works of an evil life and by the adulteration of chastity; lest it be divulged to whom it is not fitting; lest it be spread abroad among infidels by garrulous conversation. So the custody of your faith should be good, that the integrity of your life and silence may continue undefiled.

(56) Therefore, the Church also, preserving the depth of the heavenly mysteries, hurls back the severe storms of the winds, and invites the sweetness of blooming grace; and knowing that her garden cannot displease Christ, she calls to the Bridegroom, saying: 'Arise, O northwind, and come, O south-

⁷ Matt. 26.26; Mark 14.22; Luke 22.19; 1 Cor. 11.24.

⁸ Cf. Cant. 4.10-12.

wind, blow through my garden and let my ointments flow down. Let my brother go down into his garden and eat the fruit of his apple-trees.⁹ For it has good trees and fruitful, which have touched their roots in the water of the sacred fountain¹⁰ and have burst forth into good fruits with a growth of new richness, so as not to be cut now by the axe of the Prophet, but to abound with the fruitfulness of the Gospel.

(57) Finally, the Lord also, delighted with their fertility, replies: 'I have entered into my garden, my sister, my spouse. I have gathered my myrrh with my spices; I have eaten my food with my honey; I have drunk my drink with my milk.'¹¹ Understand, faithful one, why I have said 'food' and 'drink.' This, however, is not doubtful, that in us He himself eats and drinks, just as in us you read that He says that He is in prison.

(58) Therefore, the Church also, seeing so much grace, urges her sons, urges her neighbors to come together to the sacraments, saying: 'Eat, my neighbors, and drink and be inebriated, my brethren.'¹² What we eat, what we drink, the Holy Spirit expresses to you elsewhere, saying: 'Taste and see that the Lord is sweet: Blessed is the man who trusts in Him.'¹³ Christ is in that sacrament, because the body is Christ's. So the food is not corporeal but spiritual. Therefore the Apostle also says of its type: 'Our fathers ate the spiritual food and drank the spiritual drink,'¹⁴ for the body of God is a spiritual body; the body of Christ is the body of the Divine Spirit, for the Spirit is Christ, as we read: 'The Spirit before our face is Christ the Lord.'¹⁵ And in the Epistles of

9 Cf. Cant. 4.16-51.

10 Cf. Vergil, *Georgics* 4.32.

11 Cf. Cant. 5.1.

12 *Ibid.*

13 Cf. Ps. 33.9.

14 Cf. 1 Cor. 10.3.

15 Cf. Lam. 4.20.

Peter we have: 'And Christ has died for you.'¹⁶ Finally, that food strengthens our heart, and that drink 'rejoices the heart of man,'¹⁷ as the Prophet has recalled.

(59) Thus, then, having obtained everything, let us know that we have been regenerated. Let us not say: 'How were we regenerated? We have not entered into the womb of our mother and been born again? I do not recognize the course of nature?'—But no order of nature is here, where there is the excellence of grace. Finally the course of nature does not always produce generation; we confess that Christ the Lord was conceived of a Virgin and we deny the order of nature. For Mary did not conceive of man, but received of the Holy Spirit in her womb, as Matthew says: 'She was found with child of the Holy Spirit.'¹⁸ If, then, the Holy Spirit coming upon the Virgin effected conception, and effected the work of generation, surely there must be no doubt that the Spirit, coming upon the Font, or upon those who obtain baptism, effects the truth of regeneration.

16 Cf. 1 Peter 2.21.

17 Cf. Ps. 103.15.

18 Matt. 1.18.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION

THE THREE BOOKS of *The Holy Spirit* are a sequel to *The Faith*, and the two works are sometimes considered as one under the title of *The Trinity*. However, the two are definitely distinct works. *The Faith* was written in 378, and it was sometime after this that Emperor Gratian wrote to Ambrose requesting that he write something on the Holy Spirit. In reply, Ambrose asked for time to consider the matter. In the meantime also, Ambrose in 380 attended a council held by Damasus in Rome, where the chief topic of discussion was the orthodox faith concerning the Spirit. At this council also the heresy of the Macedonians, the so-called 'Contenders against the Spirit,' was condemned. Finally, probably in April, 381, Ambrose published his work in three books on the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is an attack on the Macedonians, who were so called after Macedonius, the semi-Arian bishop of Constantinople whose doctrine on the Holy Spirit they followed. Macedonius taught that the Holy Spirit 'had no claim to the divine honors which were attributed to the Son, being but a minister and a servant, as the holy angels may without

offence be called.¹ With regard to the Second Person of the Trinity, the Macedonians might or might not be Arians.

In *The Holy Spirit*, St. Ambrose, who knew Greek very well, drew on such Greek sources as St. Basil, Didymus, and others. The Greek East had already been obliged to face this heresy and thus had accumulated a rather extensive literature on the subject. It was natural, therefore, for Ambrose to make use of it.

St. Jerome, however, took a dim view of St. Ambrose as a literary artist. In his work on famous men (124), Jerome says: 'Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, is writing to the present day. Of whom, since he is alive, I will reserve my judgment, lest I be blamed either for flattery or for speaking the truth!' St. Ambrose and his *Holy Spirit* are undoubtedly the author and work severely criticized by St. Jerome as quoted by Rufinus in his *Apology*,² where he compares St. Ambrose with a daw decked in another bird's plumage, and charges Ambrose with writing 'bad things in Latin taken from good things in Greek.' He characterized the book itself as 'flaccid and spiritless, sleek and pretty, decorated with purple patches, but defective in its logic, and lacking that restrained and manly force which compels the assent of the reader even against his will.'

St. Jerome is, of course, most unreasonably severe. Rufinus strongly defended St. Ambrose, saying: 'The saintly Ambrose wrote his book on the Holy Spirit not in words only but with his own blood, for he offered his life blood to his persecutors, and shed it within himself, though God preserved his life for future labors.' Finally, St. Augustine's testimony is most worthy of note. He says: 'St. Ambrose, when treating of the

1 Sozomen, *H.E.* 4.27; Cf. Socrates, *H.E.* 2.45.

2 *Apol. adv. Hieron.* 2.23-25.

deep subject of the Holy Spirit, and showing that He is equal with the Father and the Son, makes use of a simple style of discourse; inasmuch as his subject required not the embellishments of language, but proofs to move the minds of his readers.³

An objective and impartial evaluation of St. Ambrose's work on the Holy Spirit will show that, while he borrowed extensively from his Greek sources, he did so with genuine discrimination. He not only selected his material carefully, but changed the order and arrangement to suit his purpose, and at times added much material of his own. To be sure, his logic may be regarded as less cogent than that of Didymus, and he is guilty of redundancies and other stylistic faults, but, as Dudden says, 'the treatise furnishes a clear, straightforward statement of the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and is peculiarly important as the first attempt made in the West to deal systematically and exhaustively with this great topic.'⁴

³ *Christian Doctrine* 4.21.

⁴ St. Ambrose, *His Life and Times* 198.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

BOOK I

Prologue

WHEN JEROBAAL, AS WE READ, was beating out the harvest of wheat with a rod under an oak tree,¹ he received a message from God to free the people of God from the power of strangers. Nor is it any wonder that he was chosen for grace, since already then, being established under the shadow of the holy cross and of the adorable wisdom in the predestined mystery of the future Incarnation, he was producing perceptible grains of rich corn from their hiding places, and was separating the elect of the saints from the sweepings of the empty chaff. For these elect, disciplined by the rod of truth, laying aside the superfluities of the old man together with his actions, are thus gathered in the Church as in a wine-press; for the Church is the wine-press

¹ Cf. Judges 6.11; also, *ibid.* 6.32: 'From that day Gedeon was called Jerobaal, because Joas had said: Let Baal revenge himself on him that hath cast down his altar.'

of the eternal fountain, in which the fruit of the heavenly vine overflows.

(2) And Gedeon, moved by this message, when he heard that, although thousands of people failed, the Lord would save his people from the enemy by one man,² offered the young of goats, according to the precept of the angel, and placed unleavened bread upon the rock, and covered them with broth, and, as soon as the angel of God touched these with the tip of the rod which he was carrying, fire burst forth from the rock; and so the sacrifice which was being offered was consumed.³ By this sign it seems to have been declared that the rock possessed the figure of the body of Christ, because it is written: 'And they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them; and the rock was Christ.'⁴ This surely referred not to His divinity but to His flesh, which flowed over the hearts of the thirsting people with the perpetual stream of His blood.

(3) Already at that time then it was declared in a mystery that the Lord Jesus in His flesh, when crucified, would destroy not only the sins of the doers but also the desires of souls. For the flesh of the kid is referred to the fault of the deed, the broth to the enticements of desires, as it is written: 'For the people burned with excessive desire, and said: Who shall give us flesh to eat?'⁵ That the angel put forth the rod, and touched the rock, from which fire came forth,⁶ shows that the flesh of the Lord, filled with the Divine Spirit, would burn away all the sins of mankind. Therefore, the Lord also says: 'I am come to send fire on the earth.'⁷

2 Cf. Judges 6.14.

3 Cf. Judges 6.19-21.

4 1 Cor. 10.4.

5 Num. 11.4.

6 Judges 6.21.

7 Luke 12.49.

(4) So the man who is learned and has foreknowledge of the future observes the heavenly mysteries, and therefore, according to the message from God, slew a bullock destined by his father for the idols, and he himself sacrificed another bullock of seven years to God.⁸ By doing this he revealed very manifestly that after the coming of the Lord all the sacrifices of the Gentiles are to be abolished, and only the sacrifice of the Lord's passion is to be offered to God for the redemption of the people. For that bullock was in figure Christ, in whom, as Isaias said,⁹ dwelt the fullness of the seven spiritual virtues. This bullock Abraham also offered when he saw the day of the Lord and was glad.¹⁰ He it is who was offered now in the figure of a kid, now in that of a sheep, now in that of a bullock. Of a kid, because He is a sacrifice for sins; of a sheep, because He is a willing offering; of a bullock, because He is a victim without stain.

(5) Holy Gedeon then foresaw the mystery. Then he selected three hundred for battle that he might show that not by the number of the multitude but by the sacrament of the cross was the world to be freed from the attack of more serious enemies. And yet, although he was brave and faithful, he asked of the Lord still fuller proofs of future victory, saying: 'If thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said O Lord, behold, I put this fleece of wool on the floor; if there be dew on the fleece, and it be dry on all the ground, I shall know that by my hand, as thou hast said, thou wilt deliver Israel. And it was so.' But afterwards he added that dew should again flow forth upon the whole earth, and that dryness be on the wool.¹¹

8 Cf. Judges 6.25.

9 Cf. Isa. 11.2.

10 Cf. John 8.56.

11 Cf. Judges 7.6; 6.36-38.

(6) Someone asks, perchance, whether he does not seem to be as it were incredulous, who, although informed by many proofs, asked for still more. But how can he seem to have asked in doubt and uncertainty who was speaking mysteries? He was not then in doubt but careful lest we be in doubt. For how could he be in doubt whose prayer was effective? Moreover, how could he have approached battle without anxiety, if he had not understood the message from God; for the dew on the fleece was the faith among the Jews, because the words of God descended like dew.¹²

(7) Therefore, when the whole world became withered by the unfruitful heat of Gentile superstition, then was that dew of heavenly visitation upon the fleece. But after the lost sheep of the house of Israel¹³ (from whom I think that the figure of the Jewish fleece was foreshadowed), after those sheep, I say, refused the fountain of living water,¹⁴ the dew of the moistening faith dried up in the breasts of the Jews, and that divine fountain turned away its course into the hearts of the Gentiles. Hence it is that now the whole world is moistened by the dew of faith, but the Jews indeed have lost their prophets and counselors.

(8) And it is no wonder that they undergo the dryness of unbelief, whom the Lord deprived of the fertility of the prophetic shower, saying: 'I shall command my clouds not to rain upon that vineyard.'¹⁵ For there is the salutary rain of the prophetic cloud, as David also has said: 'He shall come down like rain upon the fleece and as showers falling gently upon the earth.'¹⁶ This rain the divine Scriptures promised

12 Cf. Deut. 32.2.

13 Cf. Matt. 15.24.

14 Cf. Jer. 2.13.

15 Cf. Isa. 5.6.

16 Ps. 71.6.

us for the whole world to water the earth with the divine dew of the Spirit at the coming of the Lord and Saviour. So now the Lord has come, the rain also has come, the Lord has come bringing with Him the heavenly drops; and so now we drink, who before were thirsty, and we drink that divine Spirit with an interior draught.

(9) So holy Gedeon foresaw this, that the nations of the gentiles also were about to drink of the true and spiritual dew by the reception of the faith, and so he inquired more diligently; for the caution of the saints is necessary, since indeed Josue, the son of Nun, also asked, when he saw the leader of the heavenly host: 'Art thou one of ours or of our adversaries?'¹⁷ lest perchance he might be deceived by some tricks of the adversary.

(10) Yet not without significance is the fact that he placed the fleece neither in a field nor in a meadow, but placed it in a threshing floor: 'For the harvest is great, but the laborers are few,'¹⁸ because through faith in the Lord there was to be a harvest fruitful in virtues.

(11) Nor was this without significance, that he dried the fleece of the Jews, and poured its dew into a basin, so that it was filled with water, yet he himself did not wash his feet with that water.¹⁹ The prerogative of so great a mystery was due another. He was being awaited who alone could wash away the squalor of all. Gedeon was not so great as to claim this mystery for himself. For not Gedeon but 'the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister.'²⁰ And so let us learn in whom these mysteries are seen to be fulfilled. Not in holy Jerobaal, for they were still beginnings.

17 Jos. 5.13.

18 Luke 10.2.

19 Cf. Judges 6.39,40.

20 Matt. 20.28.

Therefore, the Gentiles were conquered, for the dryness was still upon the Gentiles; therefore, Israel conquered, because the dew then remained on the fleece.

(12) Let us come to the Gospel of God. I find the Lord divesting Himself of His garments, and girding Himself with a towel, pouring water into a basin, washing the feet of His disciples.²¹ This water was that heavenly dew; this was prophesied: that the Lord Jesus would wash the feet of His disciples with that heavenly dew. And now let the feet of our souls be extended. The Lord Jesus wishes to wash our feet also, for not to Peter alone but to each one of the faithful does He say: 'If I wash not thy feet, thou shalt have no part with me.'²²

(13) Come, therefore, O Lord Jesus, divest Yourself of Your garments which You have put on for my sake. Be You naked, that You may clothe us with your mercy. Gird Yourself with a towel for our sakes, that You may gird us with Your gift of immortality. Pour water into the basin; wash not only our feet but also the head, and not only the foot-prints of the body, but also of the mind. I wish to put off all the filth of our frailty, so that I, too, may say: 'I have put off my garment, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?'²³

(14) How great is that majesty! As a servant, You wash the feet of Your disciples, as God You pour dew from heaven. Not only do you wash the feet, but You also invite us to recline with You, and You exhort us by the example of Your graciousness saying: 'You call me Master, and Lord; and you say well; for so I am. If I then, being Lord and Master,

²¹ Cf. John 13.4.5.

²² Cf. John 13.8.

²³ Cant. 5.3.

have washed your feet; you also ought to wash one another's feet.'²⁴

(15) I also, then, wish to wash the feet of my brethren; I wish to fulfil the mandate of the Lord; I do not wish to be ashamed of myself nor to disdain what He Himself did first. Good is the mystery of humility, because, while I wash the filth of others, I wash away my own. But not all were able to drink in this mystery. Indeed, Abraham also wished to wash feet, but because of a feeling of hospitality.²⁵ Gedeon, too, wished to wash the feet of the angel of the Lord who appeared to him;²⁶ but he wished to do this to one; he wished to do it as one who was offering obedience, not as one who was offering fellowship. This is a great mystery, which no one knows. Then He said to Peter: 'What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.'²⁷ This, I say, is a divine mystery, which even they who have washed will need. It is not then the simple water of a heavenly mystery, by which we succeed in deserving to have a part with Christ.

(16) There is also a kind of water which we pour into the basin of our soul, water from the fleece and from the Book of Judges, water from the Book of Psalms.²⁸ The water is the dew of the heavenly message. Therefore, Lord Jesus, let this water come into my soul, into my flesh, that by the moisture of this rain the valleys of our minds and the fields of our inmost heart may grow green.²⁹ Let Your drops come upon me, besprinkling grace and immortality. Wash the steps of my mind, that I may not sin again. Wash off the heel

24 John 13.13,14.

25 Cf. Gen. 18.4.

26 This reference cannot be identified.

27 John 13.7.

28 Cf. Ps. 22.2.

29 Cf. Ps. 71.6.

of my spirit,³⁰ that I may be able to abolish the curse, that I may not feel the bite of the serpent on my inner foot,³¹ but, as You Yourself have ordered Your followers that I may have the power with uninjured foot to tread upon the serpents and scorpions.³² You have redeemed the world; redeem the soul of one sinner.

(17) This is the special prerogative of Your compassion, by which You have redeemed the world through individuals. Elias was sent to one widow, Eliseus cleansed one;³³ You, O Lord Jesus, have today cleansed a thousand here for us. How many in the city of Rome, how many in Alexandria, how many in Antioch, how many also in Constantinople! For Constantinople also has now received the word of God, and has received the evident proofs of Your judgment. For as long as she cherished the poisons of the Arians shut up in her vitals, disturbed by wars with neighbors, her walls echoed with the arms of the enemy. But as soon as she rejected those alien from the faith, she saw the enemy himself, the judge of kings, whom she was always accustomed to fear, surrender; she received him as a suppliant; she buried him when he died; she possesses him entombed.³⁴ How many then also have you cleansed at Constantinople, how many finally today in the whole world.

(18) Damasus did not cleanse; Peter did not cleanse; Ambrose did not cleanse; Gregory did not cleanse;³⁵ for ours

30 Cf. Gen. 3.15.

31 That is, the soul.

32 Cf. Luke 10.19.

33 Cf. 3 Kings 17.9; 4 Kings 5.14.

34 Athanaricus, king or *judex* (judge) of the West Goths in Dacia. Emperor Valens defeated him in 369.

35 Damasus of Rome, Peter of Alexandria (the news of whose death had probably not yet reached Milan), Gregory of Constantinople, and Ambrose of Milan.

are the services, but Yours are the sacraments. For it is not of human power to confer the divine; but it is Your gift, O Lord, and the Father's, who spoke through the Prophets, saying: 'I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and their daughters shall prophesy.'³⁶ This is the heavenly dew in figure; these those free rains, as we read: 'God separating free rain for His inheritance.'³⁷ For the Holy Spirit is not subject to a foreign power or law, but is arbiter of His own freedom, dividing all things according to the authority of His own will, as we read, to each one, as He wills.³⁸

Chapter 1

(19) So the Holy Spirit is not in the midst of all, but above all things. For, since, most merciful Emperor, you have been so fully instructed about the Son of God that you yourself may now teach, I shall not put you off any longer since you desire and demand to hear more explicitly about Him,¹ especially since you lately showed that you were so pleased by such an assertion that without any urging you ordered the Basilica to be restored to the Church.

(20) So, then, we hold the grace of your faith and the reward of ours; for we cannot say otherwise than that this grace was of the Holy Spirit, that, while all were unaware of it, you suddenly returned the Basilica. This, I say, is the gift, this the work of the Holy Spirit, who indeed was then preached by us, but was operating in you.

(21) Nor do I deplore the losses of the earlier time, since

³⁶ Joel 2.28.

³⁷ Cf. Ps. 97.10.

³⁸ Cf. 1 Cor. 12.10.

¹ The Holy Spirit.

that sequestration of the Basilica brought a kind of interest on a loan. For you sequestrated the Basilica that you might give proof of faith. Thus your piety fulfilled its purpose, which so sequestrated as to prove, and so proved as to restore. I have not lost the fruit, and I hold your judgment, and it has been made clear to all that in a kind of diversity of action you have never had a diversity of opinion. It has been made clear to all, I say, that when you sequestrated it had not been *your* deed, and that it was *your* deed when you restored.

(22) First, then, let us begin with the matters of less importance, that our treatise may ascend by certain steps, as it were, so that those who do not bear the faith may be influenced at least by reason. For they can say in the beginning: 'We do not say that the Spirit serves.' But when they say that Christ serves, how can they deny this with respect to the Spirit? But if they agree that Christ was in the form of a servant according to flesh, it is meet and fitting. So if according to His divinity Christ does not serve, the Spirit also does not serve. But if the Spirit does not serve, but all things serve, then above all things is the Spirit, who does not serve as all things do.

(23) Now this very matter which we have mentioned, let us establish by evidence. The beginning of the discussion is that all things serve. Moreover, it is clear that all things serve, since it is written: 'All things serve thee.'² The Spirit said this through the Prophet. He did not say: 'We serve' but 'they serve you,' that you might believe that He himself is excepted from serving. Therefore, since all things serve, and the Spirit does not serve, surely the Holy Spirit is not among all things.

² Ps. 118.91.

(24) For if we say that the Holy Spirit is among all things, surely when we read that 'the Spirit searcheth the profound things of God,'³ we deny that God the Father is above all things. For since the Spirit is from God, and is the Spirit of His mouth, how can we say that the Holy Spirit is among all things, when God is above all things, whose is the Spirit, certainly possessing full perfection and perfect power?

(25) But lest they think that the Apostle erred, let them accept whom he has followed as the authority of this belief. For the Lord in the Gospel said: 'When the Paraclete shall come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me.'⁴ So the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, and bears witness of the Son. A witness, both faithful and true, bears witness also of the Father, than whom nothing is more full for the expression of the divine majesty, nothing more clear regarding the unity of divine power, since the Spirit knows the same as the Son, who is the witness and the inseparable sharer of the Father's secrets.

(26) And so He excluded the society and the multitude of the creatures from the knowledge of God, but by not excluding the Holy Spirit He showed that He is not an associate of creatures. Thus that, too, which is read in the Gospel, 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him,'⁵ pertains to the exclusion of the Holy Spirit. How has He not seen God who searcheth even the profound things of God? How has He not seen God who knows the things that are of

³ 1 Cor. 2.10.

⁴ John 15.26.

⁵ John 1.18.

God.⁶ How has He not seen God who is of God? So, since it is laid down that 'no man hath seen God at any time,' but the Spirit has seen Him, surely the Spirit is excepted. He, then, is above all things who is excepted from all things.

Chapter 2

(27) Holy Emperor, the reason seems to be full of piety, but it does not seem so to the impious. Notice, then, what they labor to do. For the heretics are accustomed to say that the Holy Spirit is to be numbered among all things for this reason, because it is written of the Son of God: 'All things were made through Him.'¹

(28) How badly is the deliberation confused which does not cling to the truth and is involved in a distorted order of statements! For this, then, would be valid, that they might say that the Holy Spirit is among all things, if they should prove that He was made. For Scripture says that all things that were made were made through the Son, but, since the Holy Spirit is not taught to have been made, surely He cannot be proved to be among all things, who was neither made nor created like all things. To me, then, this testimony is of benefit on two counts: that He is proved to be above all things because he is not made, and that because he is above all things that He is seen not to have been made, and is not to be numbered among those things which have been made.

(29) But if anyone, because the Evangelist stated that all things were made through the Word, does not except the Holy Spirit (although the Spirit of God, saying in John:

⁶ Cf. 1 Cor. 2.10.

¹ John 1.3.

'All things were made by Him,' did not say: 'We were made all things,' when surely the Lord Himself showed that the Spirit of God spoke in the Evangelists, saying: 'For it is not you that will speak, but the spirit of your Father, that speaketh in you'²), nevertheless, if anyone, as I have said, does not except the Holy Spirit in this place, but numbers Him among all things, then neither does he except the Son of God in that place where the Apostle said: 'Yet to us, there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we through him.' But that he may know that the Son is not among all things, let him read what follows; for when he says: 'And one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things,'³ surely he excepts the Son of God from all things, who also excepted the Father.

(30) Moreover, it is of the same impiety to disparage either the Father or the Son or the Holy Spirit. For he does not believe in the Father who does not believe in the Son; nor does he believe in the Son of God who does not believe in the Spirit, nor can faith stand without the rule of truth. For he who has begun to deny the unity of power in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit surely cannot prove a divided faith there where there is no division. So, since the unity of piety is to believe well, the unity of impiety also is to believe badly.

(31) Thus, those who think that the Holy Spirit should be numbered among all things, because they read that all things were made through the Son, surely think also that the Son is to be numbered among all things, because they read: 'All things are of God.'⁴ Consequently, moreover, they do not separate the Father from all things who do not separate the

² Cf. Matt. 10.20.

³ 1 Cor. 8.6.

⁴ 2 Cor. 5.18.

Son from all creatures, because, just as all things are of the Father, so, too, are all things through the Son. The Apostle, foreseeing in the Spirit, said this very thing, lest he should seem to have placed the Son among all things, at least in the eyes of the impious who had heard that the Son had said: 'That which my Father hath given me is greater than all.'⁵

Chapter 3

(32) But perhaps some one may say: 'For what reason, when the Apostle said all things are of the Father, and all things through the Son, was he silent about the Holy Spirit,' and from this he may desire to establish a prejudice. But if he persists in malicious interpretation, in how many places will he find the power of the Holy Spirit declared, where Scripture has expressed nothing about either the Father or the Son, but has left it to be understood!

(40)¹ When, then, the grace of the Spirit is proclaimed, is that of God the Father or of the Only-begotten Son denied? This is not so, because, just as the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father, so also he says: 'The charity of God is poured out into our hearts through the Holy Ghost who is given to us.'² And just as he who is blessed in Christ is blessed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit because there is one name, one power so, too, when some divine operation either of the Father or of the Son or of the Spirit is described, it is referred not only to the Holy

5 John 10.29.

1 The sequence of chapters continues thus in the editions, omitting eight numbers.

2 Rom. 5.5.

Spirit but also to the Father and to the Son, and it is referred not only to the Father but also to the Son and to the Spirit.

(41) Then the Ethiopian eunuch of the Queen Candace, when baptized in Christ,³ obtained the full mystery. And those who denied that they knew the Holy Spirit, although they said that they were baptized in the baptism of John, were baptized afterwards, because John baptized unto the remission of sins in the name of the coming Jesus, not in his own name.⁴ And so they did not know the Spirit, because they had not received baptism in the name of Christ, as John was accustomed to baptize. For John, although he did not baptize in the Spirit, nevertheless preached both Christ and the Spirit. Then when he was asked whether perchance he himself was Christ, he replied: 'I baptize you in water, but He will come stronger than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to carry; He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire.'⁵ These, therefore, because they had not been baptized in the name of Christ nor with the faith of the Holy Spirit, were not able to receive the sacrament of baptism.

(42) And so they were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ,⁶ and baptism was not repeated among these, but was received for the first time; for there is one baptism.⁷ Moreover, where there is not the full sacrament of baptism, there is not considered to be a beginning or any kind of baptism. But baptism is full, if you confess the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. If you deny one, you will ruin the whole. And just as when

³ Cf. Acts 8.27.

⁴ Cf. Acts 19.2-5.

⁵ Cf. John 1.26-27; Matt. 3.11; Luke 4.16.

⁶ Ambrose is here merely referring to the passage in the Acts as implying Christian baptism. He is not to be taken, as some have done, as teaching that baptism is valid when the name of Christ alone is mentioned.

⁷ Cf. Eph. 4.5.

you comprehend one in words, either Father or Son or Holy Spirit, yet do not deny in faith either the Father or the Son or the Holy Spirit, the sacrament of faith is full, so also, although you mention the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and reduce the power of the Father or of the Son or of the Holy Spirit, the entire mystery is void. Then, too, those very ones who had said: 'We have not heard whether there be a Holy Ghost,'⁸ were afterwards baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this abounded unto grace, because they now knew the Holy Spirit by Paul's preaching.

(43) Nor should it seem contradictory that, although even afterwards there was silence regarding the Spirit, yet there was belief in Him, and what had been unmentioned by words was expressed by faith. For when it is said 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,' the mystery is completed by the unity of the name, and the Spirit is not separated from the baptism of Christ; for John baptized in penance, Christ in the Spirit.⁹

(44) Now let us consider whether, just as we read that the sacrament of baptism is full in the name of Christ, so also, when only the Spirit is named, nothing is lacking to the fullness of the mystery. Let us follow through the argument that he who has said One has signified the Trinity. If you say Christ, you have designated also God the Father by whom the Son was anointed, and Him Himself who was anointed, the Son, and the Holy Spirit with whom He was anointed. For it is written: 'This Jesus of Nazareth, whom God anointed with the Holy Spirit.'¹⁰ And if you say the Father, you have indicated alike both His Son and the Spirit of His mouth, if, moreover, you also comprehend this in your heart. And if

8 Acts 19.2.

9 Cf. Acts 19.4.6.

10 Cf. Acts 10.38.

you say the Spirit, you have named also God the Father, from whom the Spirit proceeds, and the Son, because the Spirit is also of the Son.

(45) Whereby authority may be joined with reason, Scripture indicates that we can also rightly be baptized in the Spirit, when the Lord says: 'But you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.'¹¹ And elsewhere the Apostle says: 'For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body.'¹² There is one work, because there is one mystery; there is one baptism, because there was one death for the world; there is a unity of prediction which cannot be separated.

(46) But if in this place the Spirit is separated from the operation of the Father and of the Son, because it is said: 'Of God are all things, and through the Son are all things,'¹³ then, too, when the Apostle says of Christ: 'Who is over all things, God blessed forever,'¹⁴ he set Him not only before all creatures, but (which is wicked to say) before the Father, also. But far from it, for the Father is not among all things, is not among a kind of crowd of His own creatures. Every creature is below; the divinity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is above. The one serves, the other rules; the one is subject, the other governs; the one is the work, the other is the author of the work; the one adores all, the other is adored by all.

(47) Then it is written of the Son: 'And let all the angels of God adore him.'¹⁵ You do not have: 'Let the Holy Spirit adore.' And below: 'But to which of the angels said he at any time: Sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy

¹¹ Acts 1.5.

¹² 1 Cor. 12.13.

¹³ Cf. 1 Cor. 8.6.

¹⁴ Rom. 9.5.

¹⁵ Heb. 1.6.

footstool? Are they not all,' says he, 'ministering spirits sent to minister?'¹⁶ When he says 'all,' he does not include the Holy Spirit, does he? Surely not, because Angels and other powers are destined to serve in the ministering and obedience to the Son of God.

(48) But indeed the Holy Spirit is not a minister, but a witness of the Son, just as the Son said of Him: 'He shall give testimony of me.'¹⁷ So the Spirit is a witness of the Son. He who is a witness knows all things, just as God the Father is a witness. For thus you have it in later passages, for our salvation was confirmed, with God as witness, also by signs and wonders, and by diverse powers, and by divisions of the Holy Spirit.¹⁸ He who divides as He wishes is surely above all things, not among all things; for to divide is the favor of the worker, not the material of the work.¹⁹

(49) If the Son is above all things, through whom our salvation received its beginning, that it might be preached, surely God the Father also, who testifies and gives proof to our salvation by signs and wonders, is excepted from all. Similarly, moreover, the Spirit also, who by His divisions bears testimony to our salvation, is not to be numbered in the crowd of creatures, but is to be considered with the Father and the Son, who Himself is not divided by a cutting of Himself when He divides; for since He is indivisible, He loses nothing when He bestows upon all, just as the Son also loses nothing when the Father receives the kingdom,²⁰ nor does the Father suffer loss when He gives what is His own to the

16 Heb. 1.13,14.

17 John 15.26.

18 Cf. Heb. 2.4.

19 Cf. 1 Cor. 12.11.

20 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.24.

21 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.6.

Son. We know thus that there was no loss in the division of spiritual grace, on the testimony of the Lord,²¹ for He who breaths where He will²² is everywhere without loss. We shall speak about this more fully below.

(50) Meanwhile now, since it has been proposed to state in its order that the Spirit is not to be computed among all things, let us take up the author of this assertion, the Apostle himself, on whose words they raise question. For what all those things were, whether visible or invisible, he himself pointed out, saying: 'For in Him were all things created in heaven and on earth.'²³ You see that 'all things' was said of those things which are either in heaven or on earth, for in heaven there are also invisible things that were made.

(51) Yet lest it might be unknown to anyone, he added about what he said in these words: 'Whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created through him and in him; and he is before all; and by him all things consist.'²⁴ Does he then include here the Holy Spirit among creatures? Or when he says that the Son of God is before all, is he to be thought to have said 'before the Father'? Certainly not, for as he says here that all things were created through the Son, and all things in heaven consist in Him, so, too, it cannot be doubted that all heavenly things have their strength in the Spirit, when it is read: 'By the word of the Lord, the heavens were established; and all the power of them by the spirit of his mouth.'²⁵ Above all things, then, is He from whom is all the power of heavenly and earthly things. He, then, who is above all things, surely does not

22 Cf. John 3.8.

23 Col. 1.16.

24 Col. 1.16,17.

25 Ps. 32.6.

serve; He who does not serve is free; He who is free holds the laws of sovereignty.

(52) If we had said this in the beginning, it would have been denied. But just as they deny the lesser that the greater may not be believed, so let us on our part set forth the lesser, so that they may either bring forth their perfidy even in the lesser, or if they consent to the lesser, we may gather the greater from the lesser.

(53) I think, most kindly Emperor, that they have been very fully refuted who dare to reckon the Holy Spirit among all things. But yet that they may know that they are pressed not only by the testimony of the Apostles, but also by that of the Lord, how do they dare to number the Holy Spirit among all things, when the Lord himself said: 'Whosoever shall blaspheme the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but to him who shall blaspheme the Holy Ghost, it shall be forgiven neither in this world nor in the world to come'²⁶ How, then, does anyone dare to reckon the Spirit among creatures? Or who so binds himself as to think that, if he disparages any creature, this is not to be forgiven him by any pardon. For if the Jews, because they adored the host of heaven,²⁷ were deprived of divine help, but he who adores and confesses the Holy Spirit is acceptable to God, he who does not confess Him is condemned without forgiveness as guilty of a sacrilege, surely from this the Holy Spirit cannot be reckoned among all things, but to be above all things, any injury to Whom is expiated by eternal punishments.

(54) Moreover, observe carefully why the Lord has said: 'Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him, but to him that shall blaspheme against

²⁶ Cf. Luke 12.10.

²⁷ Cf. 4 Kings 17.16.

the Holy Ghost it shall be forgiven neither in this world nor in the world to come.²⁸ Is there one offence against the Son; another against the Holy Spirit? For just as there is one dignity, so there is one injury. But if anyone, deceived by the appearance of the human body, think more remissly than is fitting about the body of Christ (for it ought not to seem paltry to us, since it is the palace of virtue, the fruit of the Virgin), he possesses guilt, but he is not shut off from pardon, which he can receive by faith. If anyone indeed denies the dignity, majesty, and eternal power of the Holy Spirit, and thinks that demons are cast out not in the Spirit of God but in Beelzebub, there can be no entreaty for pardon there where is the fullness of sacrilege, because he who has denied the Spirit has denied God the Father and the Son, for the Spirit of God is the same as is the Spirit of Christ.

Chapter 4

(55) But no one will doubt that the Spirit is one, although many have doubted about the oneness of God. For many heretics have said that the God of the Old Testament is one, and that the God of the New is another. But just as the Father is one, who both spoke of old, as we read, to the Fathers by the Prophets, and in the last days spoke to us by the Son,¹ and as the Son is one, who according to the context of the Old Testament was offended by Adam, seen by Abraham, worshiped by Jacob, so, too, the Holy Spirit is one, who was active in the Prophets, was breathed upon the Apostles, was joined with the Father and the Son in the

²⁸ Cf. Luke 12.10; Matt. 12.32.

¹ Cf. Heb. 1.1,2.

sacrament of baptism.² For of Him David says: 'And take not thy holy spirit from me.' Of Him also he said elsewhere: 'Whither shall I go from thy spirit?'³

(56) That you may know that the Spirit of God is the same as is the Holy Spirit, as we also read in the Apostle: 'No man, speaking by the Spirit of God, saith anathema to Jesus. And no man can say, the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost,'⁴ the Apostle called Him the Spirit of God. He called Him also the Spirit of Christ, as you have it: 'But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' And below: 'And if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you.'⁵ He Himself, then, is the Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of Christ.

(57) He Himself is also the Spirit of life, as the Apostle says: 'For the law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath delivered me from the law of sin and of death.'⁶

(58) Him then whom the Apostle called the Spirit of life, the Lord in the Gospel called the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, as you have it: 'And I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever. The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, nor knoweth him.'⁷ You have, then, also the Paraclete Spirit, the same called both the Spirit of Truth and the invisible Spirit. How, then, do certain men think the Son visible in His divinity, when the world cannot see even the Spirit?

2 Cf. 2 Peter 1.21; John 20.22; Matt. 28.19.

3 Ps. 50.13; 138.7.

4 1 Cor. 12.3.

5 Rom. 8.9,11.

6 Rom. 8.2.

7 John 14.16,17.

(59) Receive now the word of the same Lord, that He is the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Truth; for you have it at the end of this book: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.'⁸ That the same is also the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of the Lord, Peter teaches, saying: 'Ananias, why did you decide to tempt and to lie to the Holy Spirit?' And straight-way he says to the wife of Ananias: 'Why have you [both] decided to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?'⁹ When he says 'you [both],' he shows that his words were spoken of that Spirit of whom he had spoken to Ananias. He Himself, then, is the Spirit of the Lord who is the Holy Spirit.

(60) The Lord declared Him also the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of the Father, saying, according to Matthew, that what we say in persecution should not be considered: 'For it is not you that speak but the spirit of your Father, that speaketh in you.'¹⁰ Likewise He says, according to Luke: 'Be not solicitous how or what you shall answer, or what you shall say. For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what you ought to say.'¹¹ So, although many are called spirits, as it is said: 'Who makest thy Angels spirits,'¹² yet the Spirit of God is one.

(61) Therefore, both the Apostles and the Prophets have followed the one Spirit. Just as the vessel of election, the doctor of the Gentiles, says: 'For in one Spirit we have all been made to drink,'¹³ Him, as it were, who cannot be divided, but is infused in our souls, and flows into our senses, that He may quench the ardor of worldly thirst.

8 John 20.22.

9 Cf. Acts 5.3,9.

10 Matt. 10.20.

11 Luke 12.11,12.

12 Ps. 103.4.

13 1 Cor. 12.13.

Chapter 5

(62) The Holy Spirit, then is not of the substance of corporeal things, for He infuses incorporeal grace into corporeal things, but neither is He of the substance of invisible creatures, for they, too, receive His sanctification, and through Him are superior to the other works of the universe. Whether you speak of Angels or Dominions or Powers, every creature waits for the grace of the Holy Spirit. For just as we are children through the Spirit, because 'God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father. Therefore now he is no more a servant, but a son.'¹ Thus, too every creature awaits the revelation of the sons of God, whom he makes sons of God by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Thus, also, every creature itself shall be changed by the revelation of the grace of the Spirit, 'and shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.'²

(63) Every creature, then, is subject to change, not only that which already has been changed by some sin or condition of the elements, but also that which can be liable to corruption by the imperfection of nature, although it is not yet so because of the zeal of discipline. For as we have taught in earlier books,³ the nature of angels also could have been changed. Surely it is fitting to think that as is the nature of one, so is the nature of others. Then the nature of the rest also is capable of change, but the discipline is better.

(64) Then every creature is capable of change, but the Holy Spirit is good and not capable of change; for He cannot be changed by some imperfection of nature, who does away

1 Gal. 4.6,7.

2 Rom. 8.21.

3 Cf. *Faith* 3.2.

with the imperfections of all, and pardons their sins. How, then, is He subject to change who by sanctifying changes others to grace and is not Himself changed?

(65) How is He subject to change who is always good? For the Holy Spirit is never evil, through Whom the things that are good are ministered to us. Thus the two Evangelists in one and the same place, in words differing from each other, yet designated the same things. For in Matthew you have: 'If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children; how much more will your Father, who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?'⁴ But according to Luke you will find it written thus: 'How much more will your Father from heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?'⁵ We note then that the Holy Spirit is good in the judgment of the Lord, by the testimony of the evangelists, since the one has named good things for the Holy Spirit, the other the Holy Spirit for good things. If, then, the Holy Spirit is that which is good, how is He not good?

(66) Nor does it escape us that some manuscripts also have according to Luke: 'How much more will your Father from heaven give a good gift to them that ask Him?' This good gift is spiritual grace, which the Lord Jesus poured forth from heaven, after He had been transfixed to the gibbet of the cross and, bringing back the triumphal spoils of vanquished death, He arose from the dead as victor over death, as you have it written: 'Ascending on high, He hast led captivity captive; He hast given gifts to men.'⁶ And well does he say 'gifts.' For as the Son was given, of Whom it is written: 'A child is born, a son is given to us,'⁷ spiritual

4 Matt. 7.11.

5 Luke 11.13.

6 Cf. Ps. 67.19.

7 Isa. 9.6.

grace also is given. But why do I hesitate to say that the Holy Spirit also is given to us, when it is written: 'The charity of God is poured out into our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us.'⁸ Surely, since captive breasts could not receive Him, the Lord Jesus first led captivity captive, that He might pour forth the gift of divine grace into our free affections.

(67) Moreover, he said it beautifully: 'led captivity captive.' For Christ's victory is the victory of liberty, which delivered all to grace, bound none to injury. So in the absolving of all, no one is captive. And because at the time of the Lord's passion injury alone was on a holiday, which dismissed all as captives whom it was holding, captivity itself, turning back upon itself, was made captive, not now devoted to Belial, but to Christ, to serve Whom is liberty. 'For he that is called in the Lord, being a bondman, is the freeman of the Lord.'⁹

(68) But to return to our purpose, He says: 'They are all gone aside, they are become unprofitable together; there is none that doeth good, no not one.'¹⁰ If they except the Holy Spirit, even they themselves confess that He is not among all; if they do not except Him, then they also confess that He has gone aside among all.

(69) But let us see whether He has goodness, since He is the source and the principle of goodness. For just as the Father and the Son have goodness, so also the Holy Spirit has goodness. This the Apostle also taught when he said: 'But the fruit of the Spirit is peace, charity, joy, patience, goodness.'¹¹ But who doubts that He is good whose fruit is goodness? For 'a good tree yieldeth good fruit.'¹²

8 Rom. 5.5.

9 1 Cor. 7.22.

10 Ps. 13.3.

11 Cf. Gal. 5.22.

12 Cf. Matt. 7.17.

(70) And so if God is good, how is He not good who is the spirit of His mouth, who searches the deep things of God? Can the infection of evil enter into the deep things of God? From this it is understood how foolish they are who deny that the Son of God is good, when they cannot deny that the Spirit of Christ is good, of Whom the Son of God says: 'Therefore I said that he shall receive of mine.'¹³

(71) Or is the Spirit not good who makes the good of the worst, abolishes sin, destroys evil, shuts out crime, infuses the good gift, makes apostles of persecutors, priests of sinners? He says: 'You were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord.'¹⁴

(72) But why do we put them off? For if they demand words, since they do not deny facts, let them accept the Spirit as described as good, for David said: 'Thy good spirit shall lead me into the right way.'¹⁵ For what is the Spirit if not full of goodness? Although He is inaccessible by nature, yet He can be received by us on account of His goodness, fitting all things by His power, but He is partaken of by the just alone, simple in substance, rich in virtues, present to everyone, dividing of His own with each one, and everywhere whole.

(73) And worthily did the Son of God say: 'Go ye, and baptize the nations in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,'¹⁶ not disdaining association with the Holy Spirit. Why, then, do some now bear it ill that the Spirit, whom the Lord did not disdain in the sacrament of baptism, be joined in our devotion with the Father and the Son?

¹³ John 16.15.

¹⁴ Eph. 5.8.

¹⁵ Cf. Ps. 142.10.

¹⁶ Cf. Matt. 28.19.

(74) Good, then, is the Spirit, good not as acquiring, but as imparting goodness. For the Holy Spirit does not receive from creatures, but is received, just as He is not sanctified but He Himself sanctifies. For the creature is sanctified, but the Holy Spirit sanctifies. In this matter though there is a common use of the word, yet there is a difference of nature. For both the man who receives and God who gives sanctity are called holy, because we read: 'Be ye holy, because I too am holy.'¹⁷ So sanctification and corruption cannot belong to one nature, and therefore the grace of the Holy Spirit and the creature cannot belong to one substance.

(75) Thus, since all invisible remaining nature whose substance some rightly think reasonable and incorporeal outside the Trinity does not impart spiritual grace but acquires it, does not share in it but takes it, surely the common nature of the creature is to be separated from association with the Holy Spirit. Let them believe, then, that the Holy Spirit is not a creature; or if they consider Him a creature, why do they join Him with the Father; or if they consider Him a creature, why do they join Him with the Son of God? But if they do not think that He is to be separated from the Father and the Son, let them not think Him a creature, because where there is one sanctification, there is one nature.

Chapter 6

(76) Yet there are many who, because we are baptized in water and in the Spirit, do not think that there is any difference in the offices of water and the Spirit, and so do not think that there is any difference in nature. Nor do they notice that we are buried in the element of water that renewed

¹⁷ Cf. Lev. 19.2.

through the Spirit we may rise again. For in the water is the representation of death, in the Spirit the pledge of life, that through water the body of sin may die, which as in a kind of tomb envelops the body, and through the power of the Spirit we may be renewed from the death of sin, reborn in God.

(77) And so these three witnesses are one, as John said: 'The water, the blood, and the Spirit.'¹ One in the mystery, not in nature. The water, then, is the witness of burial, the blood is the witness of death, the Spirit is the witness of life. If, then, there is any grace in water, it is not from the nature of water, but from the presence of the Holy Spirit.

(78) Do we live in the water as in the Spirit? Are we signed in the water as in the Spirit? For we live in Him, and He Himself is the pledge of our inheritance, just as also the Apostle said writing to the Ephesians: 'In whom also believing you were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise. Who is the pledge of our inheritance.'² So we were sealed by the Holy Spirit, not by nature but by God, for it is written: 'He that hath anointed us, is God: Who also hath sealed us, and given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts.'³

(79) So we were sealed with the Spirit by God. For just as we die in Christ, that we may be born again, so, too, we are signed with the Spirit, that we may be able to possess His splendor and image and grace, which surely is the sign of the Spirit. For although apparently we are sealed in the body, yet truly we are sealed in the heart, that the Holy Spirit may set forth in us the likeness of the heavenly image.

(80) Who, then, shall dare to say that the Holy Spirit is separated from God the Father and from Christ, when

1 Cf. 1 John 5.8.

2 Eph. 1.13,14.

3 2 Cor. 1.21,22.

through Him we merit to be according to the image and likeness of God, and through Him it is brought about, as the Apostle Peter said, that we are sharers in the divine nature?⁴ In this surely there is no heredity of carnal succession, but the spiritual connection of the grace of adoption. And that we may know that this seal is of our heart rather than of our body, the Prophet teaches, who says: 'The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us; thou hast given gladness in my heart.'⁵

Chapter 7

(81) And so when the Lord appointed His servants the Apostles, that we might know that the creature is one thing, spiritual grace another, He appointed them to different places, because they could not all be everywhere at the same time. But to all He gave the Holy Spirit, who should pour forth the gift of inseparable graces upon the Apostles though separated. There were, then, different persons, but one effect of the operation in all, because one is the Holy Spirit, of whom it is said: 'You will receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you will be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth.'¹

(82) Therefore, the Holy Spirit is uncircumscribed and infinite, who infused Himself into the minds of the disciples through the separated divisions of distant regions and the remote confines of the whole world, whom nothing can pass

⁴ Cf. 2 Peter 1.4.

⁵ Ps. 4.7.

¹ Acts 1.8.

by or deceive. And so holy David says: 'Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy face?'² Of what angel does Scripture say this? Of what Dominion? Of what Power? Of what angel do we find the power diffused over many? For angels were sent to few, but the Holy Spirit was infused upon peoples. Who then will doubt that that is divine which is infused upon many at the same time and is not seen, but that that is corporeal which is both seen and possessed by individuals?

(83) But just as the Spirit, sanctifying the Apostles, is not a sharer in human nature, so, too, He sanctifying Angels, Dominions, and Powers has no participation with creatures. But if some think that there is no spiritual sanctity in angels, but some other kind of grace according to the property of their nature, these will surely judge angels to be inferior to men. For since they themselves confess that they dare not compare angels with the Holy Spirit, and they cannot deny that the Holy Spirit is poured into men; moreover, since the sanctification of the Spirit is a divine gift and favor, surely men who have better sanctification will be found to be preferred to the angels. But since angels descend to the aid of men, it is to be understood that the creation of the angels is higher, since it receives more spiritual grace, yet the gift both to us and to them is of the same author.

(84) But how great is the grace, which makes the lower creation of the human state equal to the gifts of the Angels, as the Lord himself promised saying: 'You will be as the angels in heaven.'³ Nor is it difficult. For He who made the angels in the Spirit, will also make men through the same grace the equal of the angels.⁴

² Ps. 138.7.

³ Cf. Matt. 22.30.

⁴ Cf. Ps. 103.4.

(85) But of what creature can it be said that it has filled the universe, as it is written of the Holy Spirit: 'I shall pour out my spirit upon all flesh.'⁵ This cannot be said of an angel. Finally, Gabriel himself, when sent to Mary, said: 'Hail, full of grace,' surely declaring spiritual grace in her, because the Holy Spirit had come upon her, and was about to have her womb full of grace with the heavenly Word.

(86) For it is of the Lord to fill all things, who says: 'I fill heaven and earth.'⁶ If, then, it is the Lord who fills heaven and earth, who can judge the Holy Spirit to have no share in the dominion and the divine power, who filled the world and what is beyond the whole world, has filled Jesus, the redeemer of the whole world? For it is written: 'And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from the Jordan.'⁷ Who other than He who was of the same fullness could fill Him who fills all things?

(87) But lest they object that this was said according to the flesh, although He alone was more than all, from whose flesh virtue went forth to heal all, nevertheless, as the Lord fills all, so, too, is it read of the Spirit: 'For the spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world.'⁸ You also have it said of all those who came together with the Apostles: 'Being filled with the Holy Ghost, they spoke the word of God with confidence.'⁹ You see that the Holy Spirit gives both fullness and confidence, whose operation the Archangel announces to Mary, saying: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee.'¹⁰

(88) You also have it in the Gospel that the angel at a certain time went down into a pond, and the water was

5 Joel 2.28.

6 Cf. Jer. 23.24.

7 Luke 4.1.

8 Wisd. 1.7.

9 Cf. Acts 4.31.

10 Luke 1.35.

moved. And he that went down first into the pond was made whole.¹¹ What did the angel announce in this type but the descent of the Holy Spirit, which would take place in our time to consecrate the waters when invoked by sacerdotal prayers? That angel, then, was the herald of the Holy Spirit, because through spiritual grace medicine was to be applied to the infirmities of our soul and mind. The Spirit, too, then has the same ministers as God the Father and Christ. So He fills all things, so He possesses all things, so He operates all things and in all things, just as both God the Father and the Son operate.

(89) What, then, is more divine than the operation of the Holy Spirit, since God himself also bears witness to the Spirit as Him who presides over His blessings, when he says: 'I will pour out my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy stock'?¹² For no blessing can be full except through the infusion of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Apostle also found nothing better to wish for us than this, as he himself said: 'We cease not to pray for you, and to beg that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you may walk worthy of God.'¹³ So he taught this to be the will of God, that walking rather in good works and words and affections we be filled with the will of God, who places the Holy Spirit in our hearts. Therefore, if he who possesses the Holy Spirit is filled with the will of God, surely there is no difference of will between the Father and the Spirit.

11 Cf. John 5.4.

12 Isa. 44.3.

13 Col. 1.9.

Chapter 8

(90) At the same time note this, that God gives the Holy Spirit.¹ For this is no human deed, nor is it given by man, but He who is invoked by the priest is given by God, in which is the gift of God and the ministry of the priests. For if Paul the Apostle judged² that he could not grant the Holy Spirit by his own authority, and believed himself so unequal to this office that he desired us to be filled with the Spirit by God, who is so great as to dare to arrogate to himself the granting of this gift? And so the Apostle conveyed the wish in prayer; he did not claim the right by some authority; he wished to obtain, he did not presume to command. Peter also says that he was not sufficient to be able either to force or to prevent the Holy Spirit. For thus he spoke: 'If then God gave to them the same grace as to us also who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ; who was I, that I could oppose God?'³

(91) But perhaps they are not moved by the example of Apostles, and so let us employ divine pronouncements. For it is written: 'Jacob is my servant; I will uphold him; my elect, my soul delighteth in him; I have given my spirit upon him.' The Lord, also through Isaias, said: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me.'⁴

(92) Who, then, shall dare to say that the substance of the Holy Spirit is created, at whose illumination of our hearts we perceive the beauty of divine truth and recognize the difference between the creature and the Godhead, so that the work is separated from the author? Or of what creature had

1 Cf. Rom. 5.5.

2 Cf. Eph. 5.18.

3 Acts 11.17.

4 Cf. Isa. 42.1; 61.1.

God so spoken as to pour out dominions or powers or angels? But He says: 'I will pour out of my spirit.'⁵ He did not say 'my Spirit,' but 'of my Spirit,' for we cannot take the fullness of the Holy Spirit, but we receive so much as our Master divides of His own according to His will. But just as the Son of God 'thought it no robbery Himself to be equal to God; but debased Himself,'⁶ that we might be able to receive Him in our minds, but He debased Himself not because He was empty of His own fullness, but that He might pour Himself in me, who could not sustain His fullness, according to the measure of my capacity, so, too, the Father says that He pours forth of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh, for He did not pour Him forth entirely, but what He poured forth abounded for all.

(93) Therefore, it was poured upon us of the Spirit, but in truth the Spirit abode over the Lord Jesus, since He was in the form of man, as it is written: 'He upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, he it is that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.'⁷ Around us from abundant provision is the liberality of Him who bestows; in him abides forever the fullness of the whole Spirit. Whatever then He has judged as sufficient for us, He has poured forth; and what has been poured forth, is not separated nor is it divided; but He has a unity of fullness, whereby He illumines the sight of our hearts according to the possibility of our strength. Finally, we take as much as the progress of our minds acquires; for the fullness of spiritual grace is indivisible, but is shared by us according to the capability of our nature.

(94) So God pours forth of the Spirit; God's love is also

5 Joel 2.28.

6 Phil. 2.6.

7 John 1.33.

poured forth through the Spirit; by this argument we should recognize the unity of the operation and of the grace. For just as God pours forth of the Holy Spirit, so, too, "The charity of God is poured out into our hearts through the Holy Ghost,"⁸ that we may understand that the Holy Spirit is not a work, who is the arbiter and affluent source of divine love.

(95) Similarly that you may believe that that which is poured forth cannot be common to creatures, but peculiar to the Godhead, the name of the Son also is poured forth: "Thy name is as oil poured out."⁹ Nothing can be superior to the force of this statement. For just as ointment inclosed in a vase keeps in its odor, which odor is held back as long as it is in the narrow confines of the vase, although it cannot reach many, yet it preserves its strength, but when the ointment has been poured forth, it is diffused far and wide; so, too, the name of Christ before His coming among the people of Israel, was inclosed in the minds of the Jews as in a vase. For 'in Judaea God is known; His name is great in Israel';¹⁰ that is, this name which the vases of the Jews contained held back in their narrow confines.

(96) Surely the name was great then, also, when it clung to the confines of the infirm and the few, but it had not yet poured forth its greatness through the hearts of the Gentiles and into the confines of the whole world. But after by His coming He had shone throughout all the world, He spread that divine name of His throughout every creature, not filled up with something added (for fullness recognizes no increase), but filling empty spaces, that His name might be wonderful in the whole land. Therefore, the pouring out of this name

8 Rom. 5.5.

9 Cant. 1.2.

10 Ps. 75.1.

signifies a kind of abundant exuberance of graces, and a plenitude of heavenly blessings, for whatever is poured forth flows forth from abundance.

(97) And so, just as Wisdom, which proceeds from the mouth of God, cannot be said to be created, nor the Word, which is uttered from His heart, nor the power, in which is the eternal fullness of eternal majesty, so also the Spirit, which is poured forth from the mouth of God, cannot be considered to be created, since God Himself has shown such great unity that He says that He pours forth of His Spirit. By this we may understand that the grace of God the Father is the same as that of the Holy Spirit, and that it is divided in the minds of individuals without any severance or loss; therefore, that it is poured forth from the Spirit of God, is neither broken off, nor comprehended within any corporeal parts, nor is it severed.

(98) For how is it credible that the Spirit is divided by some sections? John says of God: 'In this we know that He abideth in us from the Spirit which He hath given us.'¹¹ Moreover, what abides always, surely is not changed; so if it has no change, it has eternity. And on this account the Holy Spirit is eternal, but the creature is subject to fault and on this account is changeable. Moreover, what is changeable, cannot be eternal;¹² and so there can be nothing in common between the Holy Spirit and the creature, because the Spirit is eternal, but every creature is temporal.

(99) But the Apostle also shows that the Holy Spirit is eternal: 'For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of a heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of

¹¹ 1 John 3.24.

¹² Cf. Rom. 8.20.

Christ, who through the Holy Ghost offered Himself without spot to God!¹³ Therefore, the Spirit is eternal.

Chapter 9

(100) Now many have thought that the Holy Spirit is the ointment of Christ. And well is He ointment, because He is called the oil of gladness, the joining together of many graces giving forth a fragrance. But God the Almighty Father anointed Him the chief of the priests, who was anointed not as others in a type under the law, but was both anointed according to the law in the body, and in truth was full of the virtue of the Holy Spirit from the Father above the law.

(101) This is the oil of gladness, of which the Prophet says: 'God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.'¹ Finally, Peter speaks of Jesus as anointed with the Spirit, as you have it: 'You know the word which hath been published through all Judea; for it began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached, Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Ghost.'² So the Holy Spirit is the oil of gladness.

(102) And well did he say oil of gladness, lest you might think Him a creature, for the nature of the oil is such that it by no means mingles with the moisture of another nature. Gladness also does not anoint the body, but illumines the recesses of the heart, as the Prophet has said: 'Thou hast given gladness in my heart.'³ So since he wastes his time

¹³ Heb. 9.13,14.

¹ Ps. 44.8.

² Acts 10.37,38.

³ Ps. 4.7.

who wishes to mingle oil with moister material, because, since the nature of oil is lighter than others, while other materials settle, it rises and is separated, how do those meanest of hucksters think that the oil of gladness can be fraudulently mingled with other creatures, when surely corporeal things cannot be mixed with the incorporeal, nor created things with the uncreated?

(102A) And well is that called the oil of gladness with which Christ was anointed, for no customary and common oil was to be sought for Him with which either wounds are refreshed or fever relieved, since the salvation of the world did not seek the alleviation of His wounds, nor did eternal might demand the refreshment of a tired body.

(103) Nor is it wonderful if He has the oil of gladness who caused those at the point of death to rejoice, relieved the world of sadness, and destroyed the stench of sorrowful death. And thus the Apostle says: 'For we are unto God the good odour of Christ,'⁴ surely indicating that He spoke of spiritual things. But when the Son of God himself says: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, wherefore he hath anointed me,'⁵ He indicates a spiritual ointment. Therefore, the ointment of Christ is the Spirit.

(104) Or since the name of Jesus is as ointment poured out, if here they wish to understand Christ himself as expressed by the name of ointment, not the Spirit of Christ, surely, when Peter the Apostle said that the Lord Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit, it is undoubtedly clear that the Spirit also is called ointment.

(105) But what wonder, since both the Father and the Son are said to be Spirit? Of this indeed we shall speak more

4 2 Cor. 2.15.

5 Luke 4.18.

fully when we begin to speak of the Unity of the Name.⁶ Yet since a most suitable place occurs here, also, that we may not seem to pass it by without a conclusion, let them accept that the Father also is called Spirit, as the Lord said in the Gospel: 'For God is a Spirit';⁷ and Christ is called a Spirit, for Jeremias said: 'The Spirit before our face, Christ the Lord.'⁸

(106) Therefore, both the Father is Spirit and the Son is Spirit; for what is not the body of a creature, this is spirit, but the Holy Spirit is not mingled with the Father and the Son, but is distinct from the Father and from the Son. For the Holy Spirit did not die, who could not die, because He did not take on flesh, nor could the eternal Godhead have been capable of dying, but Christ died according to the flesh.

(107) Indeed He died in that which He took from the Virgin, not in that which He had from the Father, for Christ died in that in which He was crucified. But the Holy Spirit could not have been crucified, who had not flesh and bones. But the Son of God was crucified, who took on flesh and bones, that on that cross the temptations of our flesh might die. For He took on what He was not, that He might conceal what He was; He concealed what He was, that He might be tempted in it, and that that which He was not might be redeemed, that He might call us to that which He was, through that which He was not.

(108) Oh, the divine mystery of that cross, on which weakness hangs, might is free, vices are fixed, trophies are raised! Therefore, a certain saint said: 'Pierce thou my flesh with nails from fear of Thee;'⁹ not with nails of iron, he says,

6 Cf. Chapter 14.

7 John 4.24.

8 Cf. Lam. 4.20.

9 Cf. Ps. 118.120.

but of fear and of faith; for the bonds of virtue are mightier than those of punishment. Finally, when Peter followed the Lord up to the palace of the high priest,¹⁰ him whom no one had bound, faith fettered; and whom faith fettered, punishment did not loose. Again, when he was bound by the Jews, prayer loosed him, punishment did not hold him, because he did not recede from Christ.

(109) Therefore, crucify sin, that you may die to sin, for he who dies to sin lives to God. You should live for Him who did not spare His own son, that in His body He might crucify our passions. For Christ died for us, that we might live in His renewed body. Therefore, not our life but our guilt died in Him, 'who,' it is said, 'bore our sins in His body upon the tree, that we, being separated from our sins, should live with justice, by the wounds of whose stripes we have been healed.'¹¹

(110) Therefore, that wood of the cross is our conveyance, as it were, the ship of our salvation, not a punishment, for there is no other salvation than the conveyance of eternal salvation. While seeking after death, I do not feel it; while contemning punishment, I do not suffer; while disregarding fear, I do not know it.

(111) Who is it, then, by the wounds of whose stripes we have been healed but Christ the Lord, of whom the same Isaias prophesied that His stripes were our remedy,¹² of whom the Apostle Paul in his Epistles wrote: 'He who knew no sin was made sin for us.'¹³ This indeed was divine in Him, that His flesh did no sin, nor did the creature of the body taken on in Him commit sin. For what wonder is it, if the Godhead alone did not sin, since It had no incentives to sin? But if God alone

10 Cf. Matt. 26.58.

11 Cf. 1 Peter 2.24.

12 Cf. Isa. 53.5.

13 Cf. 2 Cor. 5.21.

is without sin, surely every creature by its own nature, as we have said, is subject to sin.

Chapter 10

(112) Tell me, then, whoever denies the divinity of the of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit, moreover, could not have been subject to sin, who rather forgives sin. Does an angel forgive? Does an archangel forgive? Surely not, but the Father alone forgives, the Son alone, the Holy Spirit alone.¹ No one, moreover, cannot avoid what he can forgive.

(113) But perhaps someone has said that the Seraph said to Isaias: 'Behold this hath touched thy lips, and shall take away thy iniquities, and shall cleanse thy sins.'² 'Shall take away,' it says, 'and shall cleanse.' Not I shall take away, but that fire from the altar of God, that is, spiritual grace. What else can we piously understand to be on the altar of God than the grace of the Spirit? Surely not the wood of trees, nor soot and coal. Or what is so pious as for us to believe according to the mystery that it was revealed by the mouth of Isaias that all men are to be cleansed through the passion of Christ, who according to the flesh like coal burned away our sins, as you have it in Zachary: 'Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? And that was Jesus clothed with filthy garments.'³

(114) Finally, that we may know that this mystery of the common Redemption was very clearly revealed by the prophets you have it said also in this place: 'Behold He has taken away your sins,'⁴ not because Christ put aside His sins,

1 Cf. Luke 5.21.

2 Cf. Isa. 6.7.

3 Cf. Zach. 3.2,3.

4 Cf. Zach. 3.4.

who did no sin, but because in the flesh of Christ the whole human race was absolved of its sins.

(115) But even if Seraph had taken away sin, it would have been destined for this mystery surely as one of the ministers of God. For thus did Isaias say: 'For one of the Seraphim was sent to me.'⁵

Chapter 11

(116) The Spirit indeed also is said to have been sent, but the Seraph to one, the Spirit to all.¹ The Seraph is sent to minister; the Spirit works a mystery. The Seraph performs what is ordered; the Spirit divides as he wishes.² The Seraph passes from place to place, for he does not fill all things, but is himself also filled by the Spirit. The Seraph descends with a passing according to his nature, but we cannot indeed think of this with respect to the Holy Spirit, of whom the Son of God said: 'When the Paraclete shall come, whom I shall send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father.'³

(117) For if the Spirit proceeds from a place, and passes to a place, the Father also will be found in a place, and the Son. If He goes out of a place, whom the Father sends, or the Son, surely the Spirit passing and proceeding from a place seems to leave both the Father and the Son as a body, according to impious interpretations.

(118) I declare this with reference to those who say that

5 Cf. Isa. 6.6.

1 Cf. John 16.7.

2 Cf. 1 Cor. 12.11.

3 John 15.26.

the Spirit has motion by descending. But neither is the Father circumscribed in any place, who is over all things not only of a corporeal nature, but also of invisible creation, nor is the Son enclosed by the places and times of His works, who as the Worker of all creation is over every creature, nor is the Spirit of truth, namely the Spirit of God, circumscribed by any corporeal boundaries,⁴ who, since He is incorporeal, is over all rational creation by the ineffable fullness of the Godhead, having the power over all things of breathing where He wishes and of inspiring as He wishes.⁵

(119) The Spirit, then, is not sent as from a place, nor does He proceed as from a place, when He proceeds from the Son, as the Son Himself, when He says: 'I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world,'⁶ puts an end to all opinions, which can be considered as from place to place, as with some bodies. Moreover, similarly when we read that God is either within or without, surely we do not either include God within some body or separate Him from some body, but weighing this with a deep and ineffable estimation we understand the secret of the divine nature.

(120) Finally, Wisdom so says that she proceeded from the mouth⁷ of the Most High not to be outside the Father but with the Father, because 'the Word was with God,'⁸ not only with the Father, but also in the Father. For He says: 'I am in the Father, and the Father in me.'⁹ But neither when He came out of the Father did He withdraw as from a place, nor is He separated as a body from a body; nor when He is

4 Cf. Wisd. 7.23.

5 Cf. John 3.8.

6 John 16.28.

7 Cf. Eccli. 24.5.

8 John 1.1.

9 John 14.10.

in the Father is He included as a body in a body. Also, when the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, He is not separated from the Father, nor is He separated from the Son. For how can He be separated from the Father who is the Spirit of His mouth?¹⁰ This surely both is the proof of His eternity, and expresses the unity of the Godhead.

(121) He exists, then, and abides always, who is the Spirit of His mouth; but He seems to come down, when we receive Him, that He may dwell in us, lest we be alien to His grace. He seems to come down upon us, not because He comes down, but because our spirit goes up to Him. We would speak more fully of this, did we not recall that already in early works¹¹ there is set forth that the Father said: 'Let us go down, and there confound their tongue,'¹² and that the Son said: 'If anyone love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make an abode with him.'¹³

(122) The Spirit, then, so comes as the Father comes, because, where the Father is, there is also the Son, and where the Son is, there is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, therefore, is not to be thought to come separately. Moreover, He does not come from place to place, but from the disposition of the order to the salvation of redemption, from the grace of vivification to the grace of sanctification, to transfer us from earth to heaven, from harm to glory, from servitude to kingdom.

(123) Thus, then, the Spirit comes as the Father comes. For the Son said: 'I and the Father will come, and will make an abode with him.' Does the Father come corporeally? Thus,

10 Ps. 32.6.

11 *De fide* 7.

12 Gen. 11.7.

13 John 14.23.

then, comes the Spirit, in whom, when He comes, is the full presence of the Father and the Son.

(124) For who can separate the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, when indeed we cannot name the Father and the Son without the Spirit? For 'no man can say, the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost.'¹⁴ So if we cannot name the Lord Jesus without the Spirit, surely we cannot proclaim Him without the Spirit. But if the angels also proclaim the Lord Jesus, whom no one can proclaim without the Spirit, then in them also the office of the Holy Spirit functions.

(125) We have proved then that there is one presence, that there is one grace on the part of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, which is so heavenly and divine that the Son gives thanks for this, saying: 'I give thanks to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.'¹⁵

Chapter 12

(126) Therefore, since the calling is one, the grace also is one. Then it is written: 'Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.'¹ Behold we have it that there is one grace on the part of the Father and the Son, and that there is one peace on the part of the Father and the Son, but this grace and peace are the fruit of the Spirit, as the Apostle himself taught when he said: 'But the

¹⁴ 1 Cor. 12.3.

¹⁵ Matt. 11.25.

¹ Rom. 1.7.

fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience.² Peace is both good and necessary, that no one may be disturbed by the uncertainties of disputations, and may be shaken by the storm of bodily passions, but that with simplicity of faith and tranquility of mind, the affections may persevere quietly about the worship of God.

(127) As to peace we have given proof, but as to grace the Prophet Zacharias says that God promised to pour the spirit of grace and mercy upon Jerusalem,³ and the Apostle Peter says: 'Do penance, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins; and you shall receive the grace of the Holy Ghost.'⁴ Therefore, as grace is of the Father and of the Son, so also is it of the Holy Spirit. For how can there be grace without the Spirit when all divine grace is in the Holy Spirit?

(128) Not only do we read of the peace and grace of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, but also of the charity and communion, faithful Augustus. For of charity it is said: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the charity of God.'⁵ We have received the charity of the Father. The same charity which is of the Father, is also of the Son. For He Himself said: 'He that loveth me, shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him.'⁶ For what is the charity of the Son, if not that He offered himself for us, and redeemed us with His blood.⁷ Moreover, the same charity is also in the Father, for it is written: 'For God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son.'⁸

2 Gal. 5.22.

3 Cf. Zach. 12.10.

4 Acts 2.38.

5 2 Cor. 13.13.

6 John 14.21.

7 Cf. Eph. 5.2.

8 John 3.16.

(129) So the Father gave His Son, and the Son Himself gave Himself. Charity is preserved, and devoutness is not harmed, for there can be no harm to devoutness, where there is no hardship in giving. He gave Him who was willing; He gave Him who offered Himself; surely the Father did not give the Son for punishment but for grace. If you enquire into the merit of the deed, question the word 'devoutness.' The vessel of election clearly shows this unity of divine charity, for both Father gave the Son, and the Son Himself gave Himself. The Father gave, who 'spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.'⁹ Of the Son also he says: 'Who delivered Himself for me.'¹⁰ 'Delivered,' he says. If of grace, why do I find fault? If of injury, I owe more.

(130) But as the Father gave the Son, and the Son Himself gave Himself, learn that the Spirit also gave Him. For it is written: 'Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil.'¹¹ So the Spirit, too, loved the Son of God and gave Him. For just as the charity of the Father and of the Son is one, so have we declared that this charity of God is poured forth abroad through the Holy Spirit and is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, for 'the fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience.'¹²

(131) Moreover, it is manifest that there is fellowship with the Father and with the Son, for it is written: 'Our fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ'; and elsewhere: 'The communication of the Holy Ghost with you all.'¹³ If, then, there is one peace, one grace, one charity, one communication on the part of the Father and of the Son

9 Rom. 8.32.

10 Gal. 11.20.

11 Matt. 4.1.

12 Gal. 5.22.

13 1 John 1.3; 2 Cor. 13.13.

and of the Holy Spirit, surely there is one operation, and where there is one operation, certainly the power cannot be divided, and substance separated. For how can the grace of the same operation come together?

Chapter 13

(132) Who then shall dare to deny the unity of the name, when he sees the oneness of the operation? But why do I affirm the unity of the name with arguments when there is the evident proof of the divine voice that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit have one name? For it is written: 'Go baptize the nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.'¹ 'In the name,' he said, not 'in the names.' So there is not one name for the Father, another name for the Son, another name for the Holy Spirit, because there is one God, not several names, because there are not two Gods, not three Gods.²

(133) And that He might disclose that there is one Godhead, one majesty, because there is one name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and that the Son did not come in one name, and the Holy Spirit in another, the Lord Himself said: 'I am come in the name of my Father, and you receive me not. If another shall come in his own name, him you will receive.'³

(133A) Moreover, what the name of the Father is, this same name Scripture declares to be the Son's, for the Lord said in Exodus: 'I will go before thee in my name and I will

1 Cf. Matt. 28.19.

2 Cf. 1 Cor. 8.4.

3 John 5.43.

proclaim in the name of the Lord before thee.⁴ So the Lord said that He would proclaim the Lord in His name. So the Lord is the name both of the Father and of the Son.

(134) But since the name of the Father and of the Son is one, accept that the same name is that of the Holy Spirit also, for the Holy Spirit also came in the name of the Son, as it is written: 'But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things.'⁵ For He who came in the name of the Son, surely also came in the name of the Father, for the name of the Father and of the Son is one. Thus it comes about that the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one. 'For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved.'⁶

(135) At the same time He taught that the unity of the name is to be believed, not the disparity, for Christ came in the oneness of the name, but anti-Christ is to come in his own name, as it is written: 'I am come in the name of my Father; and you receive me not. If another shall come in his own name, him you will receive.'⁷

(136) It is taught, then, from these passages that there is no diversity of names in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Paraclete, and that what is the name of the Father, this also is the name of the Son; similarly, that what is the name of the Son, this also is that of the Holy Spirit, when the Son is also called Paraclete, as is the Holy Spirit. And so the Lord Jesus says in the Gospel: 'And I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide

4 Cf. Exod. 33.19.

5 John 14.26.

6 Acts 4.12.

7 John 5.43.

with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth.'⁸ And well did He say 'another' that you might not understand the Son Himself to be the Spirit Himself, for there is a unity of the name, and no Sabellian⁹ confusion of the Son and of the Spirit.

(137) And so one Paraclete is the Son, another Paraclete the Holy Spirit, for John also called the Son a Paraclete, as you have it: 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate [Paraclete] with the Father, Jesus Christ.'¹⁰ And so just as there is unity of name, so also is there unity of power; for where the Paraclete Spirit is, there also is the Son.

(138) For just as the Lord says here that the Spirit will be with the faithful forever, so too, does He show elsewhere regarding Himself that He will be with the Apostles forever, saying: 'Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.'¹¹ So the Son and the Spirit are one; the name of the Trinity is one; and there is one and indivisible Presence.

(139) Moreover, just as we show that the Son is named the Paraclete, so, too, we show that the Spirit is called the Truth. Christ is the Truth; the Spirit is the Truth; for you have it in John's epistle: 'That the Spirit is Truth.'¹² Not only is the Spirit called the Spirit of Truth, but also Truth, just as the Son is proclaimed Truth, who says: 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life.'¹³

8 John 14.16,17.

9 The Sabellians, anxious to maintain the unity of God, denied the differences in Persons and identified the Father and the Son.

10 1 John 2.1.

11 Matt. 28.20.

12 Cf. 1 John 5.6,7.

13 John 14.6.

Chapter 14

(140) But why should I add that just as the Father is light, so, too, the Son is light, and the Holy Spirit is light? This surely belongs to divine power. For God is light, as John said: 'That God is light; and that in Him there is no darkness.'¹

(141) But the Son also is Light, because 'Life was the Light of men.'² And the Evangelist, that he might show that he spoke of the Son of God, says of John the Baptist: 'He was not the light, but was to bear witness to the light, that he was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world.'³ Therefore, since God is the Light, and the Son of God is the true Light, without doubt the Son of God is true God.

(142) You have it also elsewhere that the Son of God is the Light: 'The people that dwelt in darkness and in the shadow of death have seen a great light.'⁴ But what is more evident than this which says: 'For with thee is the fountain of life; and in thy light we shall see light.'⁵ That is, that with Thee, God Omnipotent Father, who are the Fount of Life, in thy light the Son, we shall see the light of the Holy Spirit. Just as the Lord Himself shows when He says: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost,' and elsewhere: 'Virtue went out from Him.'⁶

(143) Moreover, who will doubt that the Father Himself is light, when it is read of His Son that He is the splendor of eternal light?⁷ For of whom if not of the eternal Father

1 1 John 1.5.

2 John 1.4.

3 John 1.8,9.

4 Cf. Isa. 9.2.

5 Ps. 35.10.

6 John 20.22; Luke 6.19.

7 Cf. Heb. 1.3.

is the Son the splendor, who both is always with the Father and always shines not with a dissimilar but with the same light?

(144) And Isaias points out that the Holy Spirit is not only light but is also fire, when he says: 'And the light of Israel shall be as fire.'⁸ Thus the Prophets called Him a burning fire, because in those three points we notice more readily the majesty of the Godhead, for to sanctify is of the Godhead, and to illuminate is proper to fire and light, and to be expressed and to be seen in the appearance of fire is customary with the Godhead; 'for God is a consuming fire,'⁹ as Moses said.

(145) For he himself saw the fire in the bush, and he had heard God at that time when a voice came from the flame of fire to him saying: 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'¹⁰ The voice was from the flame, and the flame was in the bush, and the flame was not harmful. For the bush was burned, and was not burned up, because in that mystery the Lord represented that He would come to illuminate the thorns of our body; not to consume those beset with miseries but to mitigate the miseries; who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire,¹¹ that He might distribute grace and consume sins. Thus in the appearance of fire God keeps His purpose.

(146) In the Acts of the Apostles also, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the faithful, the likeness of fire was seen, for thus you have it: 'And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as though the Spirit were coming with great might; and it filled the whole house where they were sitting;

⁸ Isa. 10.17.

⁹ Cf. Deut. 4.24.

¹⁰ Cf. Exod. 3.15.

¹¹ Cf. Matt. 3.11.

and there appeared to them cloven tongues as it were of fire.¹²

(147) Therefore, too, did that take place, when Gedeon, about to overcome the Medianites, ordered three hundred men to take pitchers, and to hold lighted lamps in the pitchers, and in their right hands trumpets; thus our ancestors preserved what they had received from the Apostles, that the pitchers are our bodies, which, fashioned out of clay, know not how to fear, if they burn with the fervor of spiritual grace, and bear testimony to the passion of the Lord Jesus with a confession of a melodious voice.

(148) Who, then, will doubt of the Godhead of the Holy Spirit, when, where the grace of the Spirit is, there the likeness of the Godhead appears? By this testimony we gather not the diversity but the unity of the divine power. For how can there be a separation of power, where the effect of the operation in all is one? Neither indeed can there be grace of the sacraments, except where there was remission of sins.

(149) What, then, is that fire? Surely not fire made of common twigs, or roaring by the burning of the stubble of the forests, but that fire which, like gold, improves good deeds, and consumes sins like stubble. This surely is the Holy Spirit, who is called both the fire and the light of the Lord's countenance; the light, as we have said above: 'The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us.'¹³ What then is the light that is sealed, if not the light of that spiritual seal 'in whom believing,' he says, 'you were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise'?¹⁴

(150) And just as there is the light of the divine countenance, so fire flashes forth from the countenance of God,

12 Cf. Acts 2.2,3.

13 Ps. 4.7.

14 Eph. 1.13.

for it is written: 'A fire shall burn in His countenance.'¹⁵ For the grace of the day of judgment shines forth, that absolution may follow, to reward the allegiance of the saints. O the great richness of the Scriptures, which no one can comprehend with human nature! O greatest proof of the divine Unity! For how many things are indicated by these two verses!

Chapter 15

(151) We have said that the Father is Light, the Son is Light, the Holy Spirit is Light. Let us accept also that the Father is Life, the Son is Life, the Holy Spirit is Life. For John said: 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard and which we have seen, and with our eyes have diligently looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the word of life; and life was manifested, and we have seen, and do bear witness, and declare unto you the life, which was with the Father.'¹ And he said both the Word of Life and the Life, that he might signify both the Father and the Son as the Life. For what is the Word of Life, if not the Word of God? And by this both God and the Word of God are the Life. And just as He is called the Word of Life, so is He the Spirit of Life. For it is written: 'For the Spirit of Life was in the wheels.'² Therefore, just as the Word of Life is Life, so the Spirit of Life is Life.

(152) Observe now that just as the Father is the Fountain of Life, so, too, many have declared that the Son also

15 Cf. Ps. 49.3.

1 Cf. 1 John 1.1,2.

2 Ezech. 1.20.

is signified as the Fountain of Life, because, He says, with You, Almighty God, your Son is the Fountain of Life, that is, the Fountain of the Holy Spirit, since the Spirit is the Life, as the Lord says: 'The words that I have spoken to you, are Spirit and Life,'³ because where the Spirit is, Life also is; and where Life is, the Holy Spirit also is.

(153) Yet many wish that the Father alone be indicated in this passage by Fountain, although they see what Scripture has said. It says: 'With thee is the fountain of life,'⁴ that is, with the Father is the Son, for the Word is with God, who was in the beginning and was with God.

154) But whether one understands in this passage the Father or the Son as the Fountain, surely we understand not a fountain of water which is something created, but of that divine grace, that is, of the Holy Spirit, for He is living water. Thus the Lord says: 'If thou didst know the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink; thou, perhaps, wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.'⁵

(155) This water did the soul of David thirst for. The fountain of these waters does the hart pant after,⁶ not thirsting for the poisons of serpents. For the water of spiritual grace is living, that it may purify the internal parts of the mind, and wash away every sin of the soul, and cleanse hidden errors.

3 John 6.64.

4 Ps. 35.10.

5 John 4.10.

6 Cf. Ps. 41.3,2.

Chapter 16

(156) But lest someone should disprove as it were of the littleness of the Spirit, and so wish to make a difference in magnitude, because the water seems to be a small portion of the fountain, although the examples of created things seem least of all suited for comparison with the Godhead, yet lest they have some prejudice also from this comparison with a created thing, let them learn that the Holy Spirit has been called not only water but also a river, according to what is written: 'Out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water. Now this he said of the Spirit which they should receive who believed in Him.'¹

(157) Therefore, the Holy Spirit is a river, and a very large river, which according to the Hebrews flowed from Jesus in the lands, as we have received it in prophecy from the mouth of Isaias.² This river is great, which flows always, and never fails. Not only a river, but also one of profuse stream, and of overflowing greatness, just as David also said: 'The stream of the river maketh the city of God joyful.'³

(158) For that city, the heavenly Jerusalem, is not washed by the course of some earthly river, but the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Fountain of Life, by a short draught of which we are satiated, seems to flow more abundantly among those heavenly Thrones, Dominions and Powers, Angels and Archangels, boiling in the full course of seven spiritual virtues. For if the river spreading over the tops of its banks overflows, how much more does the Spirit, rising above every creature, when He touches the remaining lower fields of the mind, as

¹ John 7.38,39.

² Is. 66.12.

³ Ps. 45.5.

it were, delight that heavenly nature of creatures with a kind of more effusive fertility of His mind!

(159) Let it not cause disturbance that John has said here either 'rivers' or elsewhere 'seven Spirits';⁴ for by these sanctifications of the gifts of the Spirit, as Isaias said, is signified the fullness of the virtues: the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness, the spirit of the fear of God.⁵ So there is one river, but many streams of spiritual gifts. This river, then, goes forth from the Fountain of Life.

(160) Here again do not turn your understanding to the lower things, because there seems to be a kind of difference between a fountain and a river; and yet the sacred Scripture has provided for all things lest the weakness of human nature be caught by the lowliness of the language. Although you picture to yourself any river, it comes from a fountain; yet it is of one nature, of one splendor and grace. Do you also say that the Holy Spirit is of one substance with the Son of God and God the Father, of one brilliance and glory? I shall make a faithful summary of the unity of the power, and shall not fear any question as to the difference in greatness. For even in this Scripture looks out for us; for the Son of God says: 'He that shall drink of the water that I shall give him, there will become in him a fountain of water, springing up unto everlasting life.'⁶ This Fountain indeed, spiritual grace, is a river proceeding from the living Fountain. The Holy Spirit, then, is also the Fountain of Life.

(161) You notice, then, from His words that the unity of the divine greatness is signified, and that Christ also cannot

4 John 7.38; Apoc. 5.6.

5 Cf. Isa. 11.2.

6 Cf. John 4.13,14.

be denied by the heretics as a Fountain, since the Spirit, too, is called a Fountain. And as the Spirit is called a river, so, too, the Father said: 'Behold, I shall come upon you like a river of peace, and as a torrent inundating the glory of the Gentiles.'⁷ But who will doubt that the Son of God is the river of life, from whom the rivers of eternal life flowed forth?

(162) Good, then, is the water, spiritual grace. Who will give this Fountain to my breast? Let it spring up in me; let the bestower of eternal life flow upon me. Let that Fountain flow over upon us; let it now flow from us. For Wisdom says: 'Drink water out of thy own cistern, and the streams of thy own well, and let thy waters flow abroad in thy streets.'⁸ How shall I hold this water from flowing forth, from slipping away? How shall I preserve my vessel, lest any crack of sin penetrating it let the moisture of eternal life trickle forth? Teach us, Lord Jesus, teach us as You taught your Apostles, saying: 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where the rust, and the moth consume, and where thieves dig through, and steal.'⁹

(163) Clearly He indicates that the thief is the unclean spirit, who cannot steal upon those who walk in the light of good works, but if he should catch one midst the joys of earthly pleasures, despoils him of all the flower of eternal virtue. And so the Lord says: 'Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither the rust, nor the moth doth consume, and where thieves do not dig through, nor steal. For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also.'¹⁰

(164) Our rust is lasciviousness; our rust is wantonness;

7 Cf. Isa. 66.12.

8 Prov. 5.15,16.

9 Matt. 6.19.

10 Matt. 16.20,21.

our rust is luxury, which obscure the sharpness of the mind with the filth of vices. Again our moth is Arius, our moth is Photinus, who cut the holy vestment of the Church with their impiety, and desiring to separate the indivisible unity of the divine power, gnaw the precious veil of faith by their sacrilegious bite. Water is spilled, if Arius has implanted his tooth; it flows forth if Photinus has fixed his sting in anyone's vessel. We are a base formation; we speedily feel vices. But no one says to the potter: 'Why hast thou made me thus?' For although our vessel is base, yet one is in honor, another in dishonor.¹¹ So do not open your pit, and do not dig with vices and crimes, lest some one say: 'He hath opened a pit and dug it; and he is fallen into the hole he made.'¹²

(165) If you seek Jesus, abandon broken pits; for Christ was not accustomed to sit near a pit, but near a well. There that Samaritan woman who believed, that woman who wished to draw water, found Him.¹³ Although you ought to have come early in the morning, yet, even you should come later, you will find Jesus at the sixth hour tired from the journey. He is tired, but because of you, because He has sought you for a long time, your unbelief has long tired Him. Yet He is not offended, if only you come. He asks to drink, who is about to give. But He drinks not the water of a passing stream, but your salvation. He drinks your compassion; He drinks the cup, that is, that passion which is the redeemer of your crimes, that you may quench the thirst of this world by the drink of His sacred blood.

(166) Thus Abraham deserved God after he dug a well. Thus, Isaac, when he walked along the way to the well,

¹¹ Rom. 9.20; cf. 9.21.

¹² Ps. 7.16.

¹³ Cf. John 4.6,7.

