Letters (part 1 of 2)

Ambrose of Milan (c. AD 339–397)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

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Letters 1-10 — LETTER OF GRATIAN TO AMBROSE. [A.D.379.]

It is in answer to this that Letter I was written by S. Ambrose. It was written by the Emperor Gratian in his 20th year, four years after his succession to the. Empire in partnership with his Uncle Valens and his younger brother Valentinian the 2nd, on the death of their father Valentinian the first, 375 A. D. Tillemont (Hist. des Emp. vol. v. p. 158.) calls it 'une lettre toute pleine de piete et d'humilite, et d'ailleurs mesme ecrite avec beaucoup d'esprit et d'elegance.' THE EMPEROR GRATIAN TO AMBROSE BISHOP OF ALMIGHTY GOD. 1. GREAT is my desire that as I remember you though far away, and in spirit am present, with you, so I may be with you in bodily presence also. Hasten then, holy Bishop of God ; come and teach me, who am already a sincere believer; not that I am eager for controversy, or seek to apprehend God in words rather than with my mind, but that the revelation of His Godhead may sink more deeply into an enlightened breast.

2. For He will teach me, He Whom I deny not, but confess to be my God and my Lord, not cavilling at that created nature in Him, which I see also in myself. That I can add nothing to Christ I acknowledge, hut I am desirous by declaring the Son to commend |2 myself to the Father also; for in God I can fear no jealousy; nor will I suppose myself such an eulogist as that I can exalt His divinity by my words. Weak and frail, I proclaim Him according to my power, not according to His Majesty. 3. I beg you to bestow upon me the Treatise you gave me before, adding to it an orthodox discussion on the Holy Spirit: prove, I beseech you, both by Scripture and reason, that He is God. God keep you for many years, my father, servant of the eternal God, Whom we worship, even Jesus Christ.

Letters 1-10 — LETTER I. [A.D.379]

IN this letter S. Ambrose replies to the preceding. He apologises for not coming at once to Gratian, and, after praising his humility and faith, promises to come before long, and meanwhile sends him the two books (duos libellos) of the Treatise De Fide, which he had before composed at Gratian's request, begging for time to write on the subject of the Holy Spirit.
AMBROSE BISHOP TO THE BLESSED EMPEROR AND MOST CHRISTIAN PRINCE, GRATIAN. 1. IT was not lack of affection, most Christian Prince, (for I can give you no title more true or more illustrious than this,) it was not, I repeat, lack of affection, but modesty which put a restraint upon that affection, and hindered my coming to meet your Grace. But if I did not meet you on your return in person, I did so in spirit, and with my prayers, wherein the duties of a priest more especially lie. Meet, did I say ? Nay, when was I absent? I who followed you with an entire affection, who clung to you in thought and heart; and surely it is by our souls that we are present to one other most intimately. I studied your route day by day; transported by my solicitude to your camp by night and day, I shielded it with my watchful prayers, prayers, if not of prevailing merit, yet of unremitting affection. |3

2. And in offering these for your safety we benefited ourselves. This I say without flattery, which you require not, and I deem unbefitting my office, but with the greatest regard to the favour you have shewn me. Our Judge Himself, Whom you acknowledge and in Whom you devoutly believe, knoweth that my heart is refreshed by your faith, your safety, your glory, and that not only my public duty but my personal affection leads me to offer these prayers. For you have restored to me quiet in the Church, you have stopped the mouths (would that you had stopped the hearts) of the traitors, and this you have done not less by the authority of your faith than of your power. 3. What shall I say of your late letter? the whole is written with your own hand, so that the very characters tell of your faith and devotion. Thus Abraham of old, when ministering entertainment to his guests, slew a calf with his own hand, and had not, in this sacred service, the assistance of others. But he, a private man, ministered to the Lord and His Angels, or to the Lord in His Angels, you, the Emperor, honour with your royal condescension the lowest of Bishops. And yet the Lord is served when His minister is honoured; for He hath said, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me.

4. But is it only this lofty humility which I praise in the Emperor, and not rather that faith, which you have rightly expressed with a rnind conscious of your desert, or which He Whom you deny not hath taught you? For who but He could have taught you not to cavil at that created nature in Him which you see in yourself? Nothing could have been said more pious or more accurate; for to call Christ a creature savours of a contemptuous cavil, not of a reverent confession. Again, what could be more unworthy, than to suppose Him to be like as we ourselves are? Thus you have instructed me, from whom you profess your wish to learn, for I never read nor heard anything better. 5. Again, how pious, how admirable that expression, that you fear no jealousy in God! From the Father you anticipate a recompense for your love of the Son, yet you acknowledge that your praise of the Son can add nothing to |4 Him, only you wish by praising the Son to commend yourself to the Father also. This He alone hath taught you, Who hath said, He that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father.

6. You go on to say that you, weak and frail as you are, do not suppose yourself such an eulogist as that you can exalt His divinity by your words, but that you preach Him according to your power, not according to His Majesty. This weakness is mighty in Christ, as the Apostle has said, When I am weak, then I am strong. This humility excludes frailty. 7. Certainly I will come, and that speedily, as you command, that I may be present with you and hear and read these things, as they are newly spoken by you. But I have sent two small volumes, for which, approved as they have been by your grace, I shall have no fears; I must plead for time to write on the Spirit, knowing as I do what a judge I shall have of my treatise. 8. Meanwhile however your sentiments and belief concerning our Lord and Saviour, transferred from the Son, form an abundant assertion to express our faith in the everlasting Godhead of the Holy Spirit, in that you cavil not at that created nature in Him which you find in yourself, and suppose not that God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, can be jealous of His own Spirit. For that which is separated from communion with the creature is divine.

9. If the Lord will, I will in this also comply with your Majesty's wishes; that as you have received the grace of the Holy Spirit, so also you may know that He, holding so high a place in the Divine glory, has in His own Name a right to our veneration. 10. May Almighty God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, vouchsafe, my Lord the Emperor, chosen by Divine providence, most glorious Sovereign, may He vouchsafe to keep your majesty in all happiness and prosperity to an advanced age, and establish your kingdom in perfect glory and in perpetual peace. |5

Letters 1-10 — LETTER II. [A.D.379.]

WE gather from the letter itself that Constantius, to whom it is addressed was a newly appointed Bishop, but of what see does not appear. In § 27 S. Ambrose commends to his care the see of Forum Cornelii, which was vacant at the time, as being in his neighbourhood. The grounds on which the Benedictine Editors fix the date seem rather vague. Its interest however is not historical: it is simply hortatory, urging on Constantius the fulfilment of the duties of his new office, and setting before him the chief subjects to which his preaching should be addressed. From S. Ambrose calling him 'my son' (§ 27) it would seem that he was either one of his own clergy, or had been in some way under his guidance. It is interesting as shewing how a great Bishop of that age dwelt upon the relations of the Episcopate, not merely to the Clergy under him as their superior, but to the laity of his diocese as their chief teacher.

AMBROSE TO CONSTANTI US. 1. You have undertaken the office of a Bishop, and now, seated in the stern of the Church, you are steering it in the teeth of the waves. Hold fast the rudder of faith, that you may not be shaken by the heavy storms of this world. The sea indeed is vast and deep, but fear not, for He hath founded it upon the seas, and prepared it upon the floods. Rightly then the Church of the Lord, amid all the seas of the world, stands immoveable, built as it were, upon the Apostolic rock; and her foundation remains unshaken by all the force of the raging surge. The waves lash but do not shake it; and although this world's elements often break against it with a mighty sound, still it offers a secure harbour of safety to receive the distressed. 2. Yet although it is tossed on the sea, it rides upon the floods; and perhaps chiefly on those floods of which it is said, The floods have lift up their voice. For there are rivers, which shall flow out of his belly, who has received to drink from Christ, and partaken of the Spirit of God. These rivers then, when they overflow with spiritual grace, lift up their voice. There is a river too, which runs down upon His saints like a torrent. And there are the rivers of the |6 flood, which make glad the peaceful and tranquil soul. He that receives, as did John the Evangelist, as did Peter and Paul, the fulness of this stream, lifts up his voice; and like as the Apostles loudly heralded forth to the farthest limits of the globe the Evangelic message, so he also begins to preach the Lord Jesus. Receive to drink therefore of Christ, that your sound may also go forth.

3. The Divine Scripture is a sea, containing in it deep meanings, and an abyss of prophetic mysteries; and into this sea enter many rivers. There are Sweet and transparent streams, cool fountains too there are, springing up into life eternal, and pleasant words as an honey-comb. Agreeable sentences too there are, refreshing the minds of the hearers, if I may say so, with spiritual drink, and soothing them with, the sweetness of their moral precepts. Various then are the streams of the sacred Scriptures. There is in them a first draught for you, a second, and a last. 4. Gather the water of Christ, that which praises the Lord. Gather from many sources that water which the prophetic clouds pour forth. He that gathers water from the hills and draws it to himself from the fountains, he also drops down dew like the clouds. Fill then the bosom of your mind, that your ground may be moistened and watered by domestic springs. He who needs and apprehends much is filled, he who hath been filled waters others, and therefore Scripture saith, If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth.

5. Let your discourses then be flowing, let them be clear and lucid; pour the sweetness of your moral arguments into the ears of the people, and sooth them with the charm of your words, that so they may willingly follow your guidance. But if there be any contumacy or transgression in the people or individuals, let your sermons be of such a character as shall move your audience, and prick the evil conscience, for the words of the wise are as goads. The Lord Jesus too pricked Saul, when he was a persecutor. And think how salutary the goad was which from a |7 persecutor made him an Apostle, by simply saying, It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6. There are discourses too like milk, such as Paul fed the Corinthians with; for they who cannot digest stronger food, must have their infant minds nourished with the juice of milk.

7. Let your addresses be full of understanding. As Solomon says, The lips of the wise are the weapons of the understanding, and in another place, Let your lips be bound up with sense, that is, let your discourses be clear and bright, let them flash with intelligence like lightning: let not your address or arguments stand in need of enforcement from without, but let your discourse defend itself, so to speak, with its own weapons, and let no vain or unmeaning word issue out of your mouth. For there is a bandage to bind up the wounds of the soul, and if any one cast it aside, he shews that his recovery is desperate. Wherefore to those who are afflicted with a grievous ulcer administer the oil of your discourse to soften the hardness of their heart, apply an emollient, bind on the ligature of salutary precepts; beware lest by any means you suffer men who are unstable and vacillating in faith or in the observance of discipline, to perish with minds unbraced and vigour relaxed.

8. Wherefore admonish and entreat the people of God that they abound in good works, that they renounce iniquity, that they kindle not the fires of lust, (I say not on the Sabbath only, but never,) lest they set on fire their own bodies; that there be no fornication or uncleanness in the servants of God, for we serve the immaculate Son of God. Let every man know himself, and possess his own vessel, that, having, so to say, broken up the fallow ground of his body, he may expect fruit in due season, and it may not bring forth thorns and thistles, but he too

may say, Our land hath given her increase; and on this once wild thicket of the passions a graft of virtue may flourish. 9. Teach moreover and train the people to do what is |8 good and that no one fail to perform works which shall be approved, whether he be seen of many, or be without witness, for the conscience is a witness abundantly sufficient unto itself.

10. And let them avoid shameful deeds, even though they believe they cannot be detected. For though a man be shut up within walls, and covered with darkness, without witness and without accomplice, still he has a Judge of his acts, Whom nothing ever deceives, and to Whom all things cry aloud. To Him the voice of blood cried from the ground. Every man has in himself and his own conscience a strict judge, an avenger of his wickedness and of his crimes. Cain wandered about in fear and trembling, suffering the punishment of his unnatural deed; so that death was to him a refuge, relieving the wandering outcast from that terror of death which he felt at every moment. Let no man then either alone or in company commit any shameful or wicked act. Though he be alone, let him be abashed before himself more than before others, for to himself is his greatest reverence due.

11. Nor let him covet many things, for even few things are to him as many; for poverty and wealth are words implying want and sufficiency. He is not rich who needs any thing, nor he poor who needs not. And let no man despise a widow, circumvent a ward, defraud his neighbour. Woe unto him, whose substance has been collected by guile, and who buildeth a town, that is his own soul, with blood. For this it is, which is built as a city; and this city avarice builds not but destroys, lust builds not but sets on fire and consumes. Wouldest thou build this city well? Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure without that fear. A man's riches ought to avail to the ransom of his soul, not to its destruction. And a treasure is a ransom, if a man use it well; on the other hand it is a snare, if a man know not how to use it. What is a man's money to him but a provision for his journey? Much is a burthen, a little is useful. We are wayfarers in this life; many walk, but it is needful that we walk aright, for then is the Lord Jesus with us, as we read, When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through |9 the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned.

But if a man take fire in his bosom, the fire of lust, the fire of immoderate desire he walketh not through, but burns this clothing of his soul. A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour than silver and gold! Faith is sufficient for itself, and in its own possession is rich enough. And to the wise man nothing is foreign, but what is contrary to virtue; wherever he goes, he finds all things to be his own. All the world is his possession, for he uses it all as if it were his own.

12. Why then is our brother circumvented, why is our hired servant defrauded? Little it is said, is gained by the wages of an harlot, that is to say, of frailty so delusive. This harlot is not an individual, but something general; not one woman, but every idle lust. All perfidy, all deceit is this harlot; not she alone who offers her body to defilement; but every soul that barters away its hope, and seeks a dishonourable profit, and an unworthy reward. And we are hired servants, in that we labour for hire, and look for the reward of this our work from

our Lord and God. If any one would know how we are hired servants, let him listen to the words, How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger, and again, Make me as one of thy hired servants. All are hired servants, all are labourers; and let him, who looks for the reward of his labour, remember that if he defraud another of the wages due to him, he also will be defrauded of his own. Such conduct offends Him Who has lent to us, and He will repay it hereafter in more abundant measure. He therefore who could not lose what is eternal, let him not deprive others of what is temporal.

13. And let no one speak deceitfully with his neighbour. There is a snare in our mouths, and not seldom is it that a man is entangled rather than cleared by his words. The mouth of the evil-minded is a deep pit: great is the fall of innocence, but greater that of iniquity. The simple, by giving too easy credit, quickly falls, but when fallen he rises again; but the evil-speaker is so cast down by his own acts that he never can recover himself and escape. |10 Therefore let every man weigh his words, not with deceit and guile, for a false balance is abomination to the Lord. I do not mean that balance which weighs the wares of others, (though even in lesser matters deceit often costs dear,) but that balance of words is hateful to the Lord, which wears the mask of the weight of sober gravity, and yet practises the artifices of cunning. Great is God's anger, if a man deceive his neighbour by flattering promises, and by treacherous subtlety oppress his debtor, a craft which will not benefit himself. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the riches of the whole world, and yet defraud his own soul of the wages of eternal life?

14. There is another balance which pious minds ought to consider, wherein the actions of individuals are weighed, and wherein for the most part sin inclines the scale towards judgement, or outweighs good deeds with crimes. Woe unto me, if my offences go before, and with a fatal weight incline to the judgement of death! More terrible will it be if they follow after, though they all be manifest to God, even before judgement; neither can things good be secret, nor things full of scandal be concealed. 15. How blessed is he who can extirpate avarice, the root of all evil! he truly need not fear this balance. For avarice is wont to deaden man's senses, and pervert his judgement, so that he counts godliness a source of gain, and money the reward of prudence. But great is the reward of piety, and the gain of sobriety to have enough for use. For what do superfluous riches profit in this world, when you find in them neither a succour in birth nor a defence against death? For without a covering are we born into the world, without provision we depart hence, and in the grave we have no inheritance.

16. The deserts of each one of us are suspended in the balance, which a little weight either of good works or of degenerate conduct sways this way or that; if the evil preponderate, woe is me! if the good, pardon is at hand. For no man is free from sin; but where good preponderates, the evil flies up, is overshadowed, and covered. Wherefore in the Day of judgement our works will either succour us, or will sink us into the deep, weighed down as |11 with a millstone. For iniquity is heavy, supported as by a talent of lead; avarice is intolerable, and all pride is foul dishonesty. Wherefore exhort the people of God to trust

rather in the Lord, to abound in the riches of simplicity, wherein they may walk without snare and without hindrance. 17. For the sincerity of a pure speech is good, and rich in the sight of God, although it walk among snares; yet, because it is innocent of laying wait or enthralling others, it escapes itself.

18. A great thing too it is if you can persuade them to know how to be abased, to know the true garb and nature of humility. Many possess the shew of humility, but not its power; many possess it abroad, but oppose it at home; colourably they pretend it, but in truth they renounce it, in regard of grace they deny it. For there is one that humbleth himself wickedly and his inward parts are full of deceit. And there is one that submitteth himself exceedingly with a great lowliness. There is no true humility then but such as is without colour and pretence. Such humility is that which hath a pious sincerity of mind. Great is its virtue. Finally by one man's disobedience death entered, and by the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ came the redemption of all.

19. Holy Joseph knew how to be abased, who, when he was sold into bondage by his brethren, and purchased by merchants, whose feet as the Scripture saith, 'they hurt in the stocks' learned the virtue of humility and laid aside all weakness. For when he was bought by the royal servant, officer of the household, the memory of his noble descent as one of the seed of Abraham did not cause him to disdain servile offices or scorn his mean condition. On the contrary he was diligent and faithful in his master's service, knowing in his prudence that it matters not in what station a man renders himself approved, but that the object of good men is to merit approbation in whatever station they are placed; and the point of importance is that their character should dignify their station rather than their station their character. In proportion as the station is low the merit becomes illustrious. And such attention |12 did Joseph exhibit that his lord entrusted to him his whole house, and committed to him all that he had.

20. And so his wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, captivated by the beauty of his form. Now we are not in fault, if either our age or our beauty becomes an object of desire to wanton eyes; let it be artless, and no blame attaches to beauty; if enticement be away, seemliness and grace of form is innocent. But this woman, fired with love, addresses the youth, and at the instigation of lust, overpowered by the force of passion confesses her crime. But he rejects the crime, saying that to defile another man's bed was consonant neither with the customs nor the laws of the Hebrews, whose care it was to protect modesty, and to provide chaste spouses for chaste virgins, avoiding all unlawful intercourse, And that it were an impious deed for him, intoxicated by impure passion, and regardless of his master's kindness, to inflict a deadly injury on one to whom he owed obedience.

21. Nor did he disdain to call the despised Egyptian his master, and to confess himself his servant. And when the woman courted him, urging him by the fear of betrayal, or shedding passionate tears to force his compliance, neither was he moved by compassion to consent to iniquity, nor constrained by fear, but he resisted her entreaties and yielded not to her threats, preferring a perilous virtue to rewards, and chastity to a disgraceful recompense.

Again she assailed him with greater temptations, yet she found him inflexible, yea for the second time immoveable; yet her furious and shameless passion gave her strength, and she caught the youth by his robe and drew him to her couch, offering to embrace him, nay, she would have done so, had not Joseph put off his robe; he put it off, that he might not put off the robe of humility, the covering of modesty.

22. He then knew how to be abased, for he was degraded even to the dungeon; and thus unjustly treated, he chose rather to bear a false accusation than to bring the true one. He knew how to be abased, I say, for he was abased for virtue's sake. He was abased as a type of Him Who was to abase Himself even to death, the death of the cross, |13 Who was to come to raise our life from sleep, and to teach that our human life is but a dream: its vicissitudes reel past us as it were, with nothing in them firm or stable, but like men in a trance seeing we see not, hearing we hear not, eating we are not filled, congratulating we joy not, running we attain not. Vain are men's hopes in this world, idly pursuing the things that are not as though they were; and so, as in a dream, the empty forms of things come and go, appear and vanish; they hover around us, and we seem to grasp yet grasp them not. But when a man has heard Him that saith Awake, thou that sleepest, and rises up from the sleep of this world, then he perceives that all these things are false; he is now awake, and the dream is fled, and with it is fled ambition, and the care of wealth, and beauty of form, and the pursuit of honours. For these things are dreams which affect not those whose hearts wake, but affect only them that slumber.

23. And holy Joseph certifies this my assertion, that the things of this world are not perpetual or lasting, for he, noble by birth and with a rich inheritance, suddenly becomes a despised servant, and (what enhances the bitterness of servitude) a slave bought for a price by an unworthy master. For to serve the free is esteemed less disgraceful, but to be the servant of servants is a double slavery. Thus from being nobly born he became a slave, from having a wealthy father he became poor, from love he fell into hate, from favour into punishment. Again, he is raised from the prison to the court, from the bar to the judgement-seat. But he is neither depressed by adversity nor elated by prosperity. 24. The frequently changing condition of holy David also testifies how fleeting are the vicissitudes of life. He, overlooked by his father, but precious in the sight of God, exalted by his success, thrust down by envy, summoned to the service of the king and chosen to be his son-in-law, then again disguised in face and appearance, banished from the kingdom, flying from death at his own son's hands, weeping for his own offences, atoning for those of others, nobler in winning back the affection of the heir to his throne, than if he had disgraced him. Having thus tried |14 every condition he says well, It is good for me that I have been humbled.

25. This sentence however might well also be referred to Him Who being in the form of God, and able to bow the heavens, yet came down, and taking upon Him the form of a servant, bore our infirmities. He, foreseeing that His saints would not think it a prize to claim the honour that belonged to them, but would give place to their equals and prefer others to themselves, said, It is good for me that I have been humbled; it is good for me that

I have subjected myself, that all things may be subject unto me, and God may be all in all. Instil this humility into the minds of all, and shew yourself an example to all saying, Be ye followers of me, even as I am also of Christ.

26. Let them learn to seek the wealth of good wishes, and to be rich in holiness; the beauty of wealth consists not in the possession of money-bags, but in the maintenance of the poor. It is in the sick and needy that riches shine most. Wherefore let the wealthy learn to seek not their own things, but the things of Jesus Christ, that Christ also may seek them, and recompense to them what is their own. He spent for them His blood, He pours forth on them His Spirit, He offers to them His kingdom. What more shall He give, Who gave Himself, or what shall not the Father give, Who delivered up His Only Son to die for our sakes? Admonish them therefore to serve the Lord soberly and with grace, to lift their eyes with all diligence to heaven, to count nothing gain but what appertains to eternal life; for all this worldly gain is the loss of souls. He who desired to win Christ, suffered the loss of all things, which saying, marvellous as it is, falls short of what he had received, for he speaks of external things only, whereas Christ hath said, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself; let him lose himself so that Christ be gained. Fleeting are all things here, they bring loss and not gain; that only is gain, where enjoyment is perpetual, where eternal rest is our reward.

27. I commend to your care, my son, the Church which is at Forum Cornelii ; Being nigh thereunto, visit it |15 frequently until a Bishop for it be ordained; I myself, engaged with the approaching season of Lent, cannot go to such a distance. 28. There you will find certain Illyrians imbued with the false doctrines of Arius; take heed of their tares, let them not come near the faithful, nor scatter their spurious seed. Let them remember what their perfidy has brought upon them , let them be quiet and follow the true faith. Difficult indeed it is for minds imbued with the poison of unbelief to rid themselves of this impiety, for it cleaves to them; and if the fatal venom has grown inveterate in them, you must not readily give them credence. For the very sinews and strength of wisdom lie in not giving credence too readily, especially in the matter of faith, which in men is seldom perfect.

20. Yet if any one, whose frailty is suspected and inclination dubious, desire nevertheless to clear himself of suspicion; suffer him to believe that he has made satisfaction, show him some indulgence, for if a man be cut off from reconciliation his mind is estranged. Thus skilful physicians, when they observe what they deem to be well-known diseases, do not apply a remedy, but wait their time, attending upon the sick man, and administering to him such soothing appliance as they can, to the intent that the disease may neither be aggravated by neglect or despair, nor may reject the medicine applied too early, for if an inexperienced physician touch it prematurely, it will never come to a head, just as even an apple, if shaken from the tree while yet unripe, soon withers. 30. Enjoin them too (as I have borrowed a figure from agriculture) to preserve inviolate the laws of common boundary, and to guard those paternal landmarks which the law protects. The affection of a neighbour often exceeds the love of a brother, for the one is often afar off, the other nigh at hand; the

witness of your whole life, and judge of your conduct. Allow his cattle to stray at large over the neighbouring bounds, and to rest securely on the green herbage. |16

31. Let the master too temper with moderation his lawful rule over his servants, seeing that in soul they are brethren. For he is called the father of the family, that he may govern them as sons; for he himself also is God's servant, and calls the Lord of heaven, the Source of all power, his Father. Farewell; continue to love me, as I do you.

Letters 1-10 — LETTER III. [A.D.380.]

THIS graceful little letter, written in a tone of playful affectionateness, is addressed to Felix, who was, as the next letter shews, Bishop of Comum. It tells its own story. AMBROSE TO FELIX. 1. I HAVE received your present of mushrooms; they were of an extraordinary size, so large as to excite admiration. I did not like to keep them hidden, as the saying is, in my bosom, but preferred shewing them to others also. Therefore I gave part to my friends, part I reserved for myself. 2. An agreeable present, but not of weight enough to repress my just complaint against you for never visiting one who has so long loved you. And take heed lest you hereafter have to bear yet heavier fungus-growths of sorrow; for such things have a double signification; sent as gifts they are agreeable, in the body or the mind they are irksome. Prevail with yourself to cause me less sorrow by your absence, for my longing for you is the cause of my distress: make yourself, if you can, less necessary to me.

3. I have made my statement, proved my case. I am forced to assail you with that expression; no ordinary weapon, but one which will hit home . You certainly |17 shewed alarm; but see now that I am not so much grieved but that I can be playful about it. Hereafter however you must not excuse yourself, though your present excuse is to be a profitable one to me. Yet it were an ill judgment of you, and of me no better, to suppose that your absence is to be compensated by presents, or that I am to be bought off by them. Farewell: love me, as I do you.

Letters 1-10 — LETTER IV. [A.D. 380.]

FELIX having replied to the preceding letter, S. Ambrose responds in the same affectionate style, rejoicing in the prospect of their meeting, asking meanwhile the prayers of Felix, and promising his own. He ends by praising Felix for 'fighting the good fight of faith,' and assures him of help and blessing. AMBROSE TO FELIX, HEALTH. 1. ALTHOUGH not in a good state of bodily health, I derived no little alleviation from the perusal of words from a heart so congenial to my own, being refreshed by your discourse as by some soothing potion ; and also by your announcement that the day memorable for us both was at hand, that whereon you took on yourself the office of the high-priesthood; of which I was just then speaking with my brother Bassianus . For having begun to speak of the dedication of the Church which he had built in the name of the Apostles, we were led to the subject, for he said that he earnestly desired the company of your Holiness.

2. Wherefore I introduced the mention of your birthday , as being on the first of November, and that it was (if I mistook not) close at hand, and to be celebrated on the following day, so that after that it would yield you no excuse. So I made a promise on your behalf; for you too have liberty to do the same as regards me: I made a promise to him, |18 and exacted one for myself: for I feel assured you will be present, because you ought to be. It will not therefore be so much my promise that will bind you, as your own purpose, having resolved to do that which you ought. You see then it was rather my knowledge of you, than any rash confidence which induced me to give this pledge to my brother. Come then, lest you put two bishops to shame; yourself for not coming, me for having promised unadvisedly.

3. But we will remember your birthday in our prayers, and do you not forget us in yours. Our spirit shall accompany you; do you also, when you enter the second Tabernacle, which is called the Holy of Holies, do as we do, and carry us also in with you. When in spirit you burn incense on the golden censer, forget us not; for it is the one which is in the second Tabernacle, and from which your prayer, full of wisdom, is directed to heaven as incense. 4. There is the Ark of the Covenant overlaid round about with gold; that is, the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of the Wisdom of God. There is the golden pot that had manna, the depository, namely, of spiritual nutriment, and the store-place of divine knowledge. There

is the rod of Aaron, the symbol of priestly grace. Before, it had withered, but it budded again in Christ. There are the Cherubim over the tables of the Covenant, that is, the knowledge of the sacred Lessons. There is the Mercy-seat, over which on high is God the Word, the Image of the invisible God, Who says to thee, I will commune with thee from above the Mercy-seat, between the two Cherubim, for He speaks thus with us, that we may understand His saying, or because He speaks things not earthly but spiritual, as He saith, I will open My mouth in a parable. For where Christ is, there are all things, there is His doctrine, there the remission of sins, there grace, there the separation of the living and the dead.

5. Aaron indeed once stood in the midst, interposing himself to prevent death passing over to the hosts of the living from the carcases of the dead. But He, as the Word, ever stands within each of us, although we see Him not, and separates the faculties of our reason from the carcase of our deadly passions and pestilential thoughts. He standeth as |19 He Who came into the world to blunt the sting of death, to stop its devouring jaws, to give to the living an eternity of grace, to the dead a resurrection. 6. In His service you are warring a good warfare, His deposit you keep, His money you lend out at interest, as it is written, Thou shall lend unto many nations; the good interest of spiritual grace, which the Lord when He comes will exact with usury; and when He finds that you have dispensed it well, He will give you for few things, many things. Then shall I reap most delightful fruit, in that my judgment of you is approved; the ordination which you received by the imposition of my hands and the benediction in the Name of the Lord Jesus will not be blamed. Work therefore a good work, that in that day you may receive a reward, and we may rest together, I in you and you in me.

7. Plenteous is the harvest of Christ, but the labourers few, and helpers are difficult to be found. So it was of old, but the Lord is powerful, Who will send labourers into His harvest. Without doubt among the ranks of the people of Comum very many have already begun to believe by your ministry, and through your teaching have received the word of God. But He Who gave those who believe will also give them that will help: whereby all occasion will be removed for excusing yourself for your postponed visit, and thus also the grace of your presence will be more frequently shed around me. Farewell: continue to love us, as you do.

Letters 1-10 — LETTER V.

AMBROSE TO SYAGRIUS.

Letters 1-10 — LETTER VI.

AMBROSE TO SYAGRIUS. [To complete the character of S. Ambrose as shewn in his Letters, these will be printed at the end of the volume, but, on account of their subject, in the original Latin.] |20

Letters 1-10 — LETTER VII. [before 381 A.D.]

THE Justus to whom this letter and the following are addressed is in all probability S. Justus Bishop of Lyons, who is mentioned below as one of the Bishops who took part in the Council of Aquileia: that he was a Bishop is implied by S. Ambrose addressing him as 'brother.' The letter contains a mystical interpretation of the half-shekel of redemption, (Exodus xxx. 12. sqq.) and of the didrachma and stater of our Lord's miracle of the piece of money in the fish's mouth, and of the penny of the tribute money. The date given in the margin depends on the truth of the hypothesis that Justus is the Bishop of Lyons. Of him it is recorded that he did not return to his See after the Council of Aquileia, but became a monk in the deserts of Egypt. See Newman's Fleury vol. 1 p. 25. AMBROSE TO JUSTUS, HEALTH.

YOUR question, my brother, as to the meaning of that shekel, half of which the Hebrew is commanded to offer for the redemption of the soul, is an excellent admonition to us to direct our intercourse by letter and our converse while at a distance to the interpretation of the heavenly oracles. For what can more unite us than, to converse concerning the things of God? 2. Now the half of the shekel is a piece of silver, and the redemption of the soul is faith; faith therefore is that piece of silver which the woman in the Gospel, as we read, having lost, diligently seeks for, lighting a candle and sweeping the house; and when she finds it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, bidding them rejoice with her for that she has found the piece of silver which, she had lost. For great is the loss of the soul, if a man lose his faith, or that grace which by means of faith he had obtained to himself. Do thou therefore light thy candle. Thy light is thine eye; that is, the inward eye of the mind. Do thou light this candle, which is fed by spiritual oil, and gives light to thy whole house. Seek that piece of silver, the redemption of thy soul, which he that loses is troubled, he that finds rejoices.

3. Mercy too is the redemption of the soul; for the redemption of a man's soul are his riches, by which he shews mercy, and expending them, relieves the poor. Wherefore |21 faith, grace, and mercy, are the redemption of the soul, which is purchased by a piece of silver, that is, by the full price of a larger sum. For thus it is written in the words of the Lord to Moses:

When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the Lord. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, whcn they give an offering unto the Lord to make an atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel and thou shall appoint it for the service of the Tabernacle of the congregation, that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls.

4. Did then both the rich man who offered more, and the poor who had less, fail so much, if this half shekel consisted in money and had not hidden excellencies? Whence we are to understand that this half shekel is not material but spiritual, having to be paid by all and rated equally. 5. Again as to heavenly food (for the food and delight of heavenly nutriment is wisdom, whereon they feed in Paradise, the unfailing food of the soul, called in the Divine Word manna) the distribution of this was, we read, so made to each soul as to be equally divided. For they who gathered most and they who gathered least, all gathered according to the direction of Moses; and they made an omer the measure, and it did not exceed to him who gathered much nor fall short to him who gathered little. For each man, according to the number of souls who were with him in the tent, gathered for each an omer, that is, being interpreted, a measure of wine.

6. Now this is the measure of wisdom, which if it be above measure is hurtful, as it is written, Make not thyself over-wise. And Paul has taught that the division of grace |22 is according to measure, saying, The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal, to one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, [to another the faith of wisdom by the spirit of knowledge] by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, and that this grace is given according to the will of the Spirit. In that He divides, He shews His equity, in that He divides as He will, His power. Or He may will to bestow that upon each which He knows will be profitable. 7. An omer then is a measure, and a measure of wine, which maketh glad the heart of man. For what is the joy of the heart but the draughts of wisdom? This is that wine which Wisdom hath mingled in a cup, and given us to drink, that we may receive to ourselves temperance and prudence, that wine which should be so equally transfused through all the senses and thoughts and all the emotions which are within this our house, that we may know how to abound to all and to be wanting to none.

8. More fully also it may be understood of the Blood of Christ, to Whose grace nothing can be added nor taken away. Whether you take little or drink much, to all the measure of Redemption is perfect. 9. The Passover too of the Lord, that is, the lamb, the fathers are ordered so to eat, that it might be according to the number of their souls, neither more

nor less; that more should not be given to some, and less to others, but that it should be according to the number of their souls, lest the stronger should take more and the weaker less. For the grace, the gift, the redemption is distributed equally to all. And there ought not to be too many, lest any go away defrauded of his hope and redemption. Now there are too many, when any are beyond the number, for the saints are all numbered, and the hairs of their heads; for the Lord knoweth them that are His. Neither can there be too few, lest any be too weak to receive the greatness of the grace.

10. Wherefore He hath commanded all to bring an equal faith and devotion to the Pasch of the Lord, that is, to the Passover. For it is the Pasch, when the mind lays down its senseless passion, and puts on good compassion, that |23 it may suffer together with Christ, and take His Passover into itself, so as that He may dwell in it, and walk in it, and may become its God. Thus grace is equal in all, but virtue is diverse in each. Let each then take that portion which fits his strength, that neither the stronger may lack nor the weaker be burthened. 11. This you have in the Gospel; for the same wages are paid to all the labourers in the vineyard; but few attain to the prize, to the reward; few say, There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. For the gift of bounty and of grace is one thing; another the wages of virtue, the recompense of labour.

12. Therefore a shekel is our ransom, nay half a shekel. He has redeemed us from death, redeemed from slavery, that we may not be subject to the world, which we have renounced. Whence in the Gospel our Lord bids Peter go to the sea, and cast an hook, and take the stater which he will find in the fish's mouth, and give it to them who required of the Lord and of himself a shekel. This then is that shekel which was exacted by the Law, nevertheless it was not due from the King's Son, but from strangers. For why should Christ ransom Himself from this world, when He came to take away the sin of the world? Why should He redeem Himself from sin, Who came down that He might remit to all their sins? Why should He redeem Himself from servitude, Who emptied Himself that He might give liberty to all? Why should He redeem Himself from death, Who took flesh, that by His Death He might obtain for all a resurrection?

13. Truly the Redeemer of all had no need of a redemption; but as He received circumcision that He might fulfil the Law, and came to be baptized that He might fulfil righteousness, so also did He not refuse to pay those who required of Him the shekel, but straightway commanded the stater to be given as the tribute for Himself and Peter. For He chose rather to give beyond the Law than to deny the Law's due. At the same time He shews that the Jews acted contrary to the Law, in exacting a shekel from one person, whereas Moses had ordained that half a shekel should be required. On this account He commanded as |24 it were single pieces to be paid both for Himself and for Peter in the stater. Good is the tribute of Christ, which is paid by the stater, for justice is the balance , and justice is above the Law. Again, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. This stater is found in the fish's mouth, of that fish which the fishers of men take, of that fish who weighs his words that they may be tried by the fire before they are uttered.

14. This stater the Jews knew not, giving Him up to the betrayer. But the Law exacts half a shekel for the redemption of a soul, and devotes it to God, for she cannot claim the whole. For in the Jew scarcely a portion of devotion could be found. But he who is free indeed, a true Hebrew, belongs wholly to God, all that he has savours of liberty. He has nothing in common with him who refuses liberty, saying, I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go out free! Which refers not only to his lord, but to the weakness of that man who shall have subjected himself to the world, in that he loves the world as his own soul, that is, his intelligence, the author of his will. Nor does it refer only to his wife, but also to that delight which cares for household not eternal things. This man's ear therefore his lord nails to his door or threshold, that he may remember these words whereby he chose servitude.

15. This man therefore, O Christian, imitate not; for thou art not commanded to offer half a shekel, but, if thou wouldest be perfect, to sell all thou hast, and give to the poor. Thou art not to reserve a part of thy service for the world, but to deny thyself altogether, and to take up thy Lord's cross and follow Him. 16. Now we have learned that the half-shekel was required by the Law, because the other half was reserved for the generation of this world, that is, for secular life, and domestic use, and for posterity, to whom it was necessary that a portion out of the original inheritance should be transmitted. Wherefore our Lord answered the Pharisees, when they tempted Him by the crafty question whether He would advise that tribute should be paid to Caesar, Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites, shew Me the tribute money. |25 And they brought Him a penny on which was Caesar's image. He saith to them, Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's; shewing that they who thought themselves perfect were imperfect in that they paid to Caesar before God. They with whom the world was their first care would first pay that which appertained to the world; wherefore He says Render, that is, render ye, the things which are Caesar's----ye, among whom the image and likeness of Caesar is found.

17. Wherefore those Hebrew youths, Ananias, Azarias, Misael, and that wiser Daniel, who would not worship the image of the king, who received it not, nor any thing from the king's table, were not bound to pay tribute. For they possessed nothing that was under the power of an earthly king. And so their followers, they whose portion is God, pay no tribute. And so the Lord says, Render, that is, Do ye render, who have brought forth the image of Caesar, with whom it is found, but I owe nothing to Caesar, because I have nothing in this world. The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me. Peter owes nothing, nor the Apostles, because they are not of this world though they are in this world. I have sent them into this world, but now they are not of this world, because with Me they are above the world.

18. So that which belongs to the Divine Law, not to Caesar, is that which is commanded to be paid. Yet even this He that was perfect, that is, the preacher of the Gospel, no longer owed, for He had preached more. The Son of God owed it not, nor did Peter who was by grace an adopted son of the Father. Notwithstanding, says He, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up, and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money, that take, and give unto them for

Me and thee. O great mystery! He gives that half-shekel which the Law commanded, He refuses not what is of the Law, for He was made of a woman, made under the Law. 'Made,' I say, as regards His incarnation; 'of a woman,' as regards the sex; woman is the sex, virgin the species; the sex relates to her nature, the virgin to her integrity. For wherein He came under the |26 Law, therein He was made of a woman, that is, in the body. On this account He commands a shekel to be paid for Him and Peter, for both were born under the Law. He commands it to be paid then according to the Law, that He might redeem those who are under the Law.

19. And yet He commands a stater to be paid that they might have their mouths closed, and so not commit sin by excess of talking. And He bids that to be given which was found in the mouth of the fish, that they might acknowledge the Word. For why was it that they who exacted what was of the Law, knew not what was the Law? For they ought not to have been ignorant of the Word of God; for it is written, The Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart. He therefore paid the whole shekel to God, who reserved no part for the world. For it is to God that righteousness, which is the moderation of the mind, is paid; to God is paid the keeping of the tongue, which is the moderation in speech. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

20. The half-shekel may also be understood of the Old Testament, the whole shekel for the price of both Testaments, for according to the Law every one was redeemed by the Law, but he who is redeemed according to the Gospel, pays the half-shekel according to the Law, he is redeemed by the Blood of Christ according to grace, having a double redemption both of devotion and of Blood. For not even faith alone is sufficient for perfection, unless the redeemed also obtain the grace of Baptism, and receive the Blood of Christ. Good then is that half-shekel which is paid to God. 21. The half-shekel is not a penny, but is different. Again, in the penny is the image of Caesar, in the half-shekel the image of God, for it is of one God, and formed after God Himself. Beginning from One it is infinitely diffused, and again, from the Infinite all things come back to one, as their end, for God is both the beginning and the end of all things. Wherefore arithmeticians have not called 'one' a number, but an element of number. And this we have said because it is written, I am Alpha and |27 Omega, the beginning and the ending; and, Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is One Lord.

22. Be thou then, after the likeness of God, one and the same; not sober to-day, drunken to-morrow; to-day pacific, to-morrow quarrelsome; to-day frugal, to-morrow immoderate; for each person is changed by diversity of manners and becomes another man, in whom that which he was is not recognized, while he begins to be that which he was not, degenerate from himself. It is a grievous thing to be changed for the worse. Be then as the image on the half-shekel, immutable, keeping daily the same deportment. Seeing the half-shekel, observe the image, that is, seeing the Law, observe in the Law Christ the Image of God; for He is the Image of the invisible and incorruptible God; let Him be displayed before thee as in the mirror of the Law. Confess Him in the Law, that thou mayest know Him again in

the Gospel. If thou hast known Him in His precepts, acknowledge Him in works. Farewell, and if you do not think that this shekel has been committed to me unprofitably, doubt not to commit to me a second time whatever you may have to communicate.

Letters 1-10 — LETTER VIII. [A.D.381.]

S. AMBROSE in this letter answers the objections raised against the Scriptures, that they were not written according to the rules of art, and illustrates his argument with various passages. AMBROSE TO JUSTUS. 1. VERY many deny that the Sacred writers wrote according to the rules of art. Nor do we contend for the contrary; for they wrote not according to art, but according to grace, which is above all art; for they wrote that which the Spirit gave them to speak. And yet they who wrote on art made use of their writings from which to frame their art, and to compose its comments and rules. 2. Again, in art there are principally required, a cause, |28 a subject, and an end. When then we read that holy Isaac said to his father, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering, which of these is wanting? For he who asks, doubts, he who answers the query pronounces and solves the doubt. Behold the fire, that is the cause, and the wood, that is u#lh, which in Latin is 'materia,' what third thing remains but the end, which the son asked for, saying, Where is the lamb for a burnt-offering, and the father replied, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering?

3. Let us discuss for a little while the mystery. God shewed a ram hanging by his horns. Now the ram is the Word, full of tranquillity, moderation, and patience; whereby is shewn that Wisdom is a good sacrifice, and that He was well skilled in the mode of meritorious propitiation. Wherefore the Prophet also says, Offer the sacrifice of righteousness. And so it is a sacrifice both of righteousness and of wisdom. 4. Here then is a mind fervent and glowing as fire which worketh; here is the thing to be understood, that is the subject-matter, where is the third, the understanding? Behold the colour, where is the seeing? behold the object of sense, where is the sense itself? For matter is not seen by all, and therefore God gives the gift of understanding, and feeling, and seeing. 5. The Word of God then is the end or completion; that is, the determination and completion of the discussion, which is communicated to the more prudent, and confirms things doubtful. Well do even they who believed not in the Coming of Christ refute themselves, so that they confess what they think to deny. For they say that the ram is the Word of God, and yet believe not the mystery of the Passion, whereas in that mystery is the Word of God, in Whom the Sacrifice was fulfilled.

6. Wherefore let us first kindle within us the fire of the mind, that it may work within us. Let us seek for the subject-matter, what it is that nourishes the mind, as if we were looking for it in darkness. For neither did the Fathers know what manna was: they found manna, it is said, declaring it to be the Discourse and word of God, from Whom |29 all instruction as from a perennial fountain flows and is derived. 7. This is that heavenly food. And it is signified by the Person of the Speaker, Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you. The 'cause' then we have in the operation of God, Who waters our minds with the dew of wisdom; the 'subject-matter' we have in that the minds which see and taste it are delighted, and inquire whence comes this which is brighter than light, sweeter than honey. They have their answer from the text of Scripture: This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat; and this is the Word of God, Which God appointed and ordained, whereby the minds of the prudent are fed and comforted, which is white and sweet, enlightening the minds of the hearers with the splendour of truth, and soothing them with the sweetness of virtue.

8. The Prophet had learned in himself what was the 'cause' of the thing to be completed. For when he was sent to the king of Egypt to deliver the people of God, he says, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and deliver my people from the king's power? the Lord answers, I will be with thee. Moses asked again, What shall I say unto them, if they ask, Who is the Lord that hath sent thee, and what is His Name? The Lord said, I am that I am, thou shalt say, I AM hath sent me unto you. This is the true Name of God----Eternity. Wherefore the Apostle also says of Christ, For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Who was preached among you by us, by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not Yea and Nay, but in Him was Yea. Moses answered, But behold they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice, for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee. Then He gave him power to work miracles, that it might be believed that he was sent by God, A third time Moses says, I am not eloquent, but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue; how shall Pharaoh hear me? the Lord answers, Go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

9. These intermingled questions and answers contain the seeds and science of wisdom. The 'end' or 'completion' too is good, for He says, I will be with thee! And although |30 He had given him power to work miracles, yet as he was still doubtful, that we might know that signs are for them that believe not, but the promise for believers, the weakness of his deserts or of his purpose receives this answer, I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say! Thus a perfect 'end' is preserved. 10. This you have also in the Gospel, Ask, and it shall be given you, seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Ask from the 'cause,' that is, from the Author. You have as your subject-matter things spiritual which cause you to seek; knock, and God the Word opens to you. That which asks is the mind, which works like fire; it is in things spiritual that the glow of the mind works, as fire on wood; God the Word opens unto you, this is the 'end.' We have also in another part of the Gospel these words of our Lord, But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

11. These words too of Isaac you have in Genesis, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the Lord thy God brought it to me. The Lord is the end. He who seeks in the Lord finds. And thus Laban who sought not in the Lord, for he sought idols, found not. 12. And he has well observed the rules and distinctions as they are called. The first is Go and take me some venison, that I may eat. He excites and inflames his mind with the fire, as it were, of his exhortation, that he may labour and seek. The second is, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly? This is in the form of a question; the third is an answer, Because the Lord thy God brought it to me. The 'end' is God, Who concludes and perfects all things, of Whom we are not to doubt.

13. And there is a 'distinction' too as to spontaneous things; If you sow not, you shall not reap ; for although culture calls forth seeds, yet nature by a certain spontaneous impulse, worketh in them that they spring up. |31 14. Wherefore the Apostle says, I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God That giveth the increase! God gives to you in the spirit, and the Lord sows in your heart. Take care then that He breathe life and sow in you, that you may reap; for if you sow not, neither shall you reap. This is a sort of admonition to you to sow. If you sow not you shall not reap, is a proverb. The end agrees with the beginning; the seed is the beginning, the harvest the end. 15. Learn, he says, of me; nature aids the learner, and God is the Author of nature. It is of God too that we learn well, for it is a natural gift to learn well; the hard of heart learn not. Nature, which is preserved by the Divine bounty, gives the increase. The final consummation God giveth, that is, the most excellent and Divine Nature and Essence of the Trinity.

Farewell: love us, as you do, for we love you. THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE COUNCIL OF AQUILEIA AGAINST THE HERETICS PALLADIUS AND SECUNDIANUS. [A.D.381.]

THE official Record of the Proceeding's of this Council seems to be inserted among S. Ambrose's Letters, partly because S. Ambrose took the leading part in them, and partly because they form the subject of the next series of letters, directly of the four first, and more indirectly of the two next, all of which, though written in the name of the Bishops of Italy, we may presume to have been S. Ambrose's composition. The Council was held in the year 381 A.D., the same year in which the Second General Council was held at Constantinople. It will be remembered that that Council, being summoned by Theodosius, then Emperor of the East, consisted of Eastern Bishops only. At this time Arianism, though rife in the East, seems not to have been prevalent in the West. S. Ambrose says, (Letter xi. 1) 'as regards the West, two individuals only have been found to dare to oppose the Council with profane and impious words, men who had previously disturbed a mere corner of Dacia Ripensis.' These two men were Palladius and Secundianus. Palladius appears to have applied to Gratian to call a General Council, on the plea that he was falsely accused of Arianism, in 379 A.D. Gratian granted his request, but afterwards, as we learn from his letter read at the Council, on the representation of S.

Ambrose that such a question as the soundness or heresy of two Bishops might be settled by a Council of the Bishops of the Diocese of Italy, he so far altered his original order |32 as to summon only these, giving permission for others to attend if they pleased. This reconsideration, and perhaps also the troubles that prevailed in the Empire at the time, (Tillemont Vie de S. Ambr. ch. xxiii. caused such delay that it was not till towards the end of 381 A.D. that the Council assembled under the presidency of S. Valerian Bishop of Aquileia. The Bishops of Italy, with deputies from Gaul, Africa, and Illyria, to the number of thirty two or thirty three (see note r) met at Aquileia at the beginning of September. The discussion recorded in the 'Gesta' took place probably on Septr. 3rd (see note a) but S. Ambrose's words in § 2 imply that previous discussions had been held of which no Record had been taken, (diu citra acta tractavimus.)

The proceedings commence by the reading of the Emperor's Mandate. Palladius then raises objections on the ground of the absence of the Bishops from the East, and charges S. Ambrose with having tricked the Emperor into summoning only a small Council, and declines to take part in a Council which is not General. After some discussion on this point S. Ambrose proposes that Arius' letter from Nicomedia to S. Alexander should be read in detail, and Palladius called upon to condemn each heretical proposition. Palladius argues upon each, but eventually returns to his refusal to answer except in a General Council. In the end all the Bishops pronounce their decisions one by one, all agreeing that Palladius' doctrine was heretical and that he should be deposed. Secundianus is then more briefly dealt with in the same way. It would seem that the Record is incomplete, as the number of Bishops who give their decision is only 25, and the account of Secundianus' case ends abruptly without recording any decision. It may he from the same cause that the Record itself is in one or two places seemingly defective, and the sense confused.

Secundianus is not mentioned again in History. Of Palladius it is said by Vigilius, Bishop of Thapsus in Africa, who lived in the latter part of the 5th Century, that after S. Ambrose's death he wrote a reply to his writings against Arianism, which Vigilius himself answered (Tillemont Vie de S. Ambr. xxvi). The genuineness of the Gesta has been disputed by Père Chifflet, who maintained that they were a forgery of the Vigilius mentioned above: his arguments however are satisfactorily refuted by Tillemont in an elaborate note. (Vol. x. p. 738. note 15. on S. Ambr. Life.) 1. IN the consulship of the illustrious SYAGRIUS and EUCHERIUS, on the 3rd day of September , the undermentioned Bishops , sitting in council in the church at |33 Aquileia, namely, VALERIAN, Bishop of Aquileia, AMBROSE, EUSEBIUS, LIMENIUS, ANEMIUS, SABINUS, ABUNDANTIUS, ARTEMIUS, CONSTANTIUS, JUSTUS, PHILASTER, CONSTANTIUS, THEODORUS, ALMACHIUS, DOMNINUS, AMANTIUS, MAXIMUS, FELIX, BASSIANUS, NUMIDIUS, JANUARIUS, PROCULUS, HELIODORUS, JOVINUS, FELIX, EXUPERANTIUS, DIOGENES, MAXIMUS, MACEDONIUS, CASSIANUS, MARCELLUS, and EUSTATHIUS, Bishops: Ambrose, Bishop, said;

2. ' We have long been dealing with the matter without any Records , and now, since our ears are assailed with such sacrilegious words on the part of Palladius and Secundianus, that one can scarce believe that they could have so openly blasphemed, and that they may not attempt hereafter by any subtlety to deny their own words, though the testimony of such eminent Bishops does not admit of doubt, still as it is the pleasure of all the Bishops, let Records be made, that no one may be able to deny his own profession. Do you therefore, holy men, declare what is your pleasure.' All the Bishops said, 'It is our pleasure.' Ambrose, Bishop, said, 'Our discussions must be confirmed by the Emperor's Letter, as the subject requires, so that they may be quoted.' 3. The Letter is read by Sabinianus a Deacon; "Desirous to make our earliest efforts to prevent dissension among Bishops from uncertainty what doctrines they should reverence, we had ordered the Bishops to come together into the city of Aquileia, out of the diocese which |34 has been confided to the merits of your Excellency. For controversies of dubious import could not be better disentangled than by our constituting the Bishops themselves expounders of the dispute that has arisen, so that the same persons from whom come forth the instructions of doctrine may solve the contradictions of discordant teaching.

4. "Nor is our present order different from our last: we do not alter the tenour of our command, but we correct the superfluous numbers that would have assembled. For as Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, eminent both for the merits of his life and the favour of God, suggests that there is no occasion for numbers in a case in which the truth, though in the hands of a few supporters, would not suffer from many antagonists, and that he and the Bishops of the adjoining cities of Italy would be more than sufficient to meet the assertions of the opposite party, we have judged it right to refrain from troubling venerable men by bringing into strange lands any one who was either loaded with years, or disabled with bodily weakness, or in the slender circumstances of honourable poverty; etc." 5. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'This is what a Christian Emperor has ordained. He has not thought fit to do an injury to the Bishops: he has constituted the Bishops themselves Judges. And therefore since we sit together in a Council of Bishops, answer to what is proposed to you. Arius's letter has been read: it shall be recited now again, if you think proper. It contains blasphemies from the beginning; it says that the Father alone is eternal. If you think that the Son of God is not everlasting, support this doctrine in what manner you please: if you think it is a doctrine to be condemned, condemn it. Here is the Gospel, and the Apostle : all the Scriptures are at hand. Support it from what quarter you please, if you think that the Son of God is not everlasting.' |35

6. PALLADIUS said: 'You have contrived, as appears by the sacred document which you have brought forward, that this should not be a full and General Council: in the absence of our Colleagues we cannot answer.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Who are your colleagues?' Palladius said; 'The Eastern Bishops.' 7. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Inasmuch as in former times the usage of Councils has been that the Eastern Bishops should be appointed to hold them in the East, and the Western Bishops in the West, we, having our place in the West, are come together to the city of Aquileia according to the Emperor's command. Moreover,

the Prefect of Italy has issued letters, that if the Eastern Bishops chose to meet, they should be allowed to do so; but inasmuch as they know that the custom is that the Council of the Eastern Bishops should be in the East and of the Western in the West, they have therefore thought fit not to come.'

8. PALLADIUS said; 'Our Emperor Gratian commanded the Eastern Bishops to come: do you deny that he did so? the Emperor himself told us that he had commanded the Eastern Bishops to come.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'He certainly commanded them, in that he did not forbid them to come hither.' Palladius said; 'But your prayer has prevented their coming: under a pretence of benevolence you have obtained this, and so put the Council off.' 9. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'There is no occasion to wander any longer from the subject: answer now. Did Arius say rightly that the Father alone is eternal? and did he say this in agreement with the Scriptures or not?' Palladius said; 'I do not answer you.' Constantius, Bishop, said; ' Do not you answer when you have so long blasphemed?' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'But you are under an obligation to express frankly the faith you claim the right to hold. If a heathen were to ask of you in what way you believe in Christ, you would be bound not to be ashamed to confess.'

10. SABINUS, Bishop, said; 'It was your own request that we would answer: we are come together this day |36 according to your wish, and upon your own solicitation, and we have not waited for our other brethren, who might have come. It is therefore not open to you to wander from the subject. Do you say that Christ was created? or do you say that the Son of God is everlasting?' Palladius said; ' I have told you already: we said we would come and prove that you have not done well to take advantage of the Emperor.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Let Palladius's letter be read to shew whether he sent us this message, and it will appear that even now he is deceiving.' Palladius said; 'Let it be read by all means.' The Bishops said: 'When you saw the Emperor at Sirmium, did you address him, or was it he that pressed you?' And they added: 'What do you answer to this?'

Palladius answered; 'He said to me, "Go." We said: "Are the Eastern Bishops summoned to attend?" He said, "They are." Should we have come if the Eastern Bishops had not been summoned?' 11. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Let the matter of the Eastern Bishops stand over. I enquire at present into your sentiments. Arius's letter has been read to you: you are in the habit of denying that you are an Arian. Either condemn Arius now, or defend him.' Palladius said; 'It is not within the compass of your authority to ask this of me.' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'We do not believe that the religious Emperor said other than he wrote. He has ordered the Bishops to meet: it is impossible that he said to you and no one else contrary to his own letter, that the case was not to be discussed without the presence of the Eastern Bishops.' Palladius said; 'He did, if the Italian Bishops alone were ordered to assemble.'

Evagrius, Presbyter and deputy, said; [It is plain] 'that he promised to appear within four and even within two days. What then were you waiting for? was it, as you say, that you considered the opinion of your colleagues, the |37 Eastern Bishops was to be waited for? Then you ought to have said so in your message, and not to have pledged yourself to dis-

cussion.' Palladius said; 'I had come, believing it to be a General Council, but I saw that my colleagues had not assembled. I decided however to come, in accordance with the summons, to bid you to do nothing to the prejudice of a future Council.' 12. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'You yourself required that we should sit to-day, moreover, even this very day you have said yourself 'we come as Christians to Christians.' You have therefore acknowledged us for Christians. You promised that you would engage in discussion: you promised that you would either assign your own reasons or accept ours. We therefore willingly accepted your opening, we wished that you should come as a Christian. I offered you the letter of Arius, which that Arius wrote, from whose name you say that you often suffer wrong. You say that you do not follow Arius. To-day your sentiments must be made clear; either condemn him, or support him by whatever passage you will.'

He went on; 'Then according to Arius's letter Christ the Son of God is not everlasting?' Palladius said; 'We said that we would prove ourselves Christians, but in a full Council. We do not answer you at all to the prejudice of a future Council.' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'You ought to state your profession of faith straightforwardly.' Palladius said; 'And what do we reserve for the Council?' 13. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'He has been unanimously condemned who denies the Eternity of the Son of God. Arius denied it, Palladius, who will not condemn Arius, follows him. Consider then, whether his opinion is approved of; it is easy to perceive whether he speaks according to the Scriptures, or against the Scriptures. For we read: God's eternal Power and Godhead. Christ is the Power of God. If then the Power of God is everlasting, Christ surely is everlasting; for Christ is the Power of God' |38

Eusebius, Bishop, said; ' This is our faith: this is the Catholic doctrine; who says not this, let him be anathema.' All the Bishops said; 'Anathema.' 14. EUSEBIUS, Bishop, said; 'He says specifically that the Father alone is everlasting, and that the Son at some time began to be.' Palladius said; 'I have neither seen Arius, nor do I know who he is.' Eusebius, Bishop, said; ' The blasphemy of Arius has been produced, in which he denies that the Son of God is everlasting. Do you condemn this wickedness and its author, or do you support it?' Palladius said; 'When there is not the authority of a full Council, I do not speak.' 15. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Do you hesitate after the divine judgements to condemn Arius, when he has burst asunder in the midst?' and he added; 'Let the holy men too, the deputies of the Gauls, speak.'

Constantius, Bishop and deputy of the Gauls, said; 'This impiety of that man we always have condemned, and we now condemn not only Arius, but also whoever does not say that the Son of God is everlasting.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'What says also my Lord Justus?' Justus, Bishop and deputy of the Gauls, said; 'He who does not confess that the Son of God is co-eternal with the Father, let him be accounted Anathema.' All the Bishops said; 'Anathema.' 16. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Let the deputies of the Africans speak too, who have brought hither the sentiments of all their countrymen.' Felix, Bishop and deputy, said; ' If any man denies that the Son of God is everlasting, and that He is co-eternal with the Father, not only do I the deputy of the whole province of Africa condemn him, but also the

whole priestly company, which sent me to this most holy assembly, has itself also already condemned him.'

Anemius, Bishop, said; 'There is no capital of Illyricum |39 but Sirmium: I am its Bishop. The person who does not confess the Son of God to be eternal and co-eternal with the Father, that is, everlasting, I call anathema; and I also say anathema to those who do not make the same confession.' 17. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Hear what follows.' Then it was read; "Alone eternal, alone without beginning, alone true, Who alone has immortality." Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'In this also condemn him who denies that the Son is very God. For since He Himself is the Truth, how is He not very God?' And he added; 'What say you to this?' Palladius said; 'Who denies that He is very Son?' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Arius denied it.' Palladius said; ' When the Apostle says that Christ is God over all, can any one deny that He is the very Son of God?'

18. Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'That you may see with how much simplicity we seek the truth, lo, I say as you say: but I have then only half the truth. For by speaking thus, you appear to deny that He is very God; if however you confess simply that the Son of God is very God, state it in the order in which I propose it to you.' Palladius said; 'I speak to you according to the Scriptures: I call the Lord the very Son of God.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Do you call the Son of God very Lord?' Palladius said; 'When I call Him very Son, what more is wanted?' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'I do not ask only that you |40 should call Him very Son, but that you should call the Son of God very Lord.' 19. EUSEBIUS, Bishop, said; 'Is Christ very God, according to the faith of all and to the Catholic profession?'

Palladius said; 'He is the very Son of God.' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'We also are by adoption sons; He is Son according to the property of His Divine Generation.' And he added; 'Do you confess that the very Son of God is very Lord by His Birth and essentially?' Palladius said; 'I call Him the very Son of God, only-begotten.' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'Do you then think it is against the Scriptures, for Christ to be called very God?' 20. PALLADIUS being silent, Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'He who says only that he is the very Son of God, and will not say that He is very Lord, appears to deny it. Let Palladius then, if he does confess it, confess it in this order, and let him say whether he calls the Son of God very Lord.' Palladius said; 'When the Son says, That they might know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent, is it by way of feeling only, or in truth?'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'John said in his epistle; This is the true God. Deny this.' Palladius said; 'When I tell you that He is true Son, I acknowledge also a true Godhead.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'In this also there is evasion; for you art wont to speak of one only and true Godhead in such manner as to say that it is the divinity of the Father only, and not that of the Son also, which is one only and true. If then you wish to speak plainly, as you refer me to the Scriptures, say what the Evangelist John said; This is the true God, or deny that he hath said it.' Palladius said; 'Besides the Son there is none other that is begotten.' 21. EUSEBIUS, Bishop, said; 'Is Christ very God, according to the faith of all and to the Catholic profession, or in your opinion is He not very God?'

Palladius said; 'He is the Power of our God.' Ambrose, Bishop said; 'You do not speak frankly; and |41 so anathema to him who does not confess that the Son of God is very Lord.' All the Bishops said; ' Let him be accounted anathema, who will not call Christ, the Son of God, very Lord.' 22. The reader continued; "Alone true, Who alone hath immortality." Ambrose, Bishop, said; ' Has the Son of God immortality, or has He it not, in respect of His Godhead?' Palladius said; 'Do you accept or no the words of the Apostle, The King of kings Who alone hath immortality?' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'What say you of Christ the Son of God?' Palladius said; 'Is Christ a divine Name or a human?' 23. EUSEBIUS, Bishop, said; 'He is called Christ indeed according to the mystery of His Incarnation, but He is both God and Man.'

Palladius said; 'Christ is a name of the flesh: Christ is a man's name: do you answer me.' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'Why do you dwell upon useless topics? When Arms' impious words were read, who says of the Father that He alone hath immortality, you cited a testimony in confirmation of Arius' impiety, quoting from the Apostle, Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto. But if you understand it, he has expressed by the Name of God the dignity of the whole Nature, inasmuch as in the Name of God, both Father and Son are signified.' Palladius said; 'You also have not chosen to answer what I have asked.' 24. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'I ask you to give your opinion plainly, has the Son of God immortality according to His divine generation, or has He not?' Palladius said; 'In respect of His divine generation He is incorruptible; and by means of His Incarnation He died.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'His divinity died not, but His flesh died.' Palladius said; 'Do you answer me first.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; ' Has the Son of God immortality in respect of His Godhead or has He it not? But have you not even now betrayed your fraudulent and insidious |42 meaning according to Arms' profession?' and he added; 'He who denies that the Son of God has immortality, what think you of him?' All the Bishops said; 'Let him be accounted anathema.' 25. PALLADIUS said; 'A divine offspring is immortal.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'This also have you said evasively, to avoid expressing anything clearly about the Son of God. I say to you, the Son hath immortality in respect of His Godhead, or do you deny it and say that He has not.' Palladius said; 'Did Christ die or not?' Ambrose, Bishop, said; ' In respect of the flesh He did: our soul does not die: for it is written, Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; seeing then that our soul cannot die, do you think Christ died in respect of His Godhead?'

Palladius said; ' Why do you shrink from the name of death?' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Nay, I do not shrink from it, but I confess it in respect of my flesh: for there is One by Whom I arn released from the chains of death.' Palladius said; 'Death is caused by separation of the spirit (from the flesh), for Christ the Son of God took upon Him flesh, and by means of flesh he died.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'It is written that Christ suffered: He suffered then in respect of His flesh: in respect of His Godhead He has immortality. He who denies this, is a devil.' Palladius said; 'I know not Arius.' 26. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Then Arius

said ill, since the Son of God also has immortality in respect of his Godhead.' And he added, 'Did he then say well or ill?' Palladius said; 'I do not agree.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'With whom do not you agree? Anathema to him, who does not frankly unfold his faith.' All the Bishops said; 'Anathema.' Palladius said; ' Say what you please; His Godhead is immortal.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Whose? the Father's or the Sons?' And he added: 'Arius heaped together many impieties. But let us pass to other points.' |43 27. Then was recited; "Alone wise." Palladius said; 'The Father is wise of himself, but the Son is not wise.' Ambrose, Bishop said; 'Is then the Son not wise, when He Himself is Wisdom? For we also say that the Son is begotten of the Father.' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'Is there anything as impious and profane as this which he said, that the Son of God is not wise?' Palladius said; 'He is called Wisdom, who can deny that he is Wisdom?' Ambrose, Bishop said; 'Is He wise or not?'

Palladius said; 'He is Wisdom.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Then He is wise, if He is Wisdom.' Palladius said; 'We answer you according to the Scriptures.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Palladius, as far as I can see, has attempted to deny also that the Son of God is wise.' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'He who denies that the Son of God is wise, let him be anathema.' All the Bishops said; 'Anathema.' 28. Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'Let Secundianus also answer to this.' Secundianus being silent, Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'He who is silent wishes to reserve his judgement.' And he added, 'When he says that the Father alone is good, did he confess the Son or deny Him?' Palladius said; ' We read, I am the good Shepherd, and do we deny it? Who would not say that the Son of God is good?' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Then is Christ good?' Palladius said; 'He is good.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Arius then was wrong in asserting it of the Father alone, since the Son of God also is a good God.' |44 Palladius said; 'He who says that Christ is not good, says ill.' 29. EUSEBIUS, Bishop, said; 'Do you confess that Christ is a good God? For I also am good. He has said to me; Well done, thou good servant; and, A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good? Palladius said; 'I have already said, I do not answer you until there is a full Council.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'The Jews said He is a good man; and Arius denies that the Son of God is good.' Palladius said; 'Who can deny it?' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'Then the Son of God is a good God.' Palladius said; 'The good Father begat a good Son.' 30. AMBROSE, Bishop said; 'We also are begotten of Him and are good, but not in respect of Godhead. Do you call the Son of God a good God?'

Palladius said; 'The Son of God is good.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'You see then that you call him a good Christ, a good Son, not a good God; which is what is asked of you.' And he added; 'He who does not confess that the Son of God is a good God, Anathema to him.' All the Bishops said; 'Anathema.' 31. The reader likewise continued; "Alone mighty." Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Is the Son of God mighty or not?' Palladius said; 'He Who made all things, is He not mighty? He Who made all things, is He deficient in might?' Ambrose, Bishop, said: 'Then Arius said ill.' And he added; 'Do you even in this condemn Arius?' Palladius said; ' How do I know who he is? I answer you for myself.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Is the Son of

God the mighty God?' Palladius said; 'He is mighty.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Is the Son of God the mighty God?'

Palladius said; 'I have already said that the only-begotten Son of God is mighty.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'The mighty Lord.' |45 Palladius said; 'The mighty Son of God.' 32. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Men also are mighty; for it is written, Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, thou mighty man? and in another place, When I am weak, then am I strong. I ask you to confess that Christ the Son of God is the mighty Lord; or if you deny it, support your denial. For I speak of one Power of the Father and of the Son, and I call the Son of God mighty in the same way as the Father. Do you hesitate then to confess that the Son of God is the mighty Lord?' Palladius said; 'I have already said, we answer you in discussion as we can; for you wish to be sole judges, and at the same time parties to the case. We do not answer you now, but we will answer you in a General and full Council.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Anathema to him who denies that Christ is the mighty Lord.' All the Bishops said; 'Anathema.' 33. It was likewise recited; "Alone mighty, Judge of all." Palladius said; 'the Son of God, the Judge of all. There is Who gives, there is who receives.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Did He give by grace or nature? Men also have judgement given them.' Palladius said; 'Do you call the Father greater or not?' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'I will answer you afterwards.' Palladius said; ' I do not answer you, if you do not answer me.' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'Unless you condemn in order the impiety of Arius, we will give you no power of asking questions.' Palladius said; ' I do not answer you.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Is the Son of God, as has been read, Judge or not?' Palladius said; 'If you do not answer me, I do not answer you, as being an impious person.'

34. AMBROSE, Bishop said; 'You have my profession, whereby I will answer you. In the mean time, let Arius' letter be read through.' And he added: 'In that letter you will find that sacrilegious argument also which you are endeavouring at.' Palladius said; 'When I ask, do you not answer?' |46 Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'We call the Son of God equal God.' Palladius said: 'You are Judge: your note-takers are here.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Let any of yours write, who please.' 35. PALLADIUS said; 'Is the Father greater or not?' Eusebius, Bishop, said; ' In respect of His Godhead the Son is equal to the Father. You have it in the Gospel that the Jews persecuted Him because He not only broke the sabbath, but also called God His Father, making Himself equal with God; what then impious men confessed while they persecuted, we who believe cannot deny.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'And in another place you have: Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and became obedient unto death. You see that in the form of God He is equal to God. And he took, S. Paul says, the form of a servant. In what then is He less? In respect surely of His form of a servant, not of the form of God?'

Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'Just as, being established in the form of a servant, He was not less than a servant; so being established in the form of God, He could not be less than God.' 36. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; ' Or say that in respect of Godhead the Son of God is less.'

Palladius said; 'The Father is greater.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; ' In respect of the flesh.' Palladius said; 'He who sent me, is greater than I. Was the flesh sent by God or was the Son of God sent?' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'We prove this day that the holy Scriptures are falsely cited by you, for thus it is written: Peace I leave unto you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid: If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father, for my Father is greater than I. He did not say, He Who sent me is greater than I.'

Palladius said; 'The Father is greater.' |47 Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Anathema to him, who adds to or takes from the holy Scriptures.' All the Bishops said; 'Anathema.' 37. PALLADIUS said; 'The Father is greater than the Son.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'In respect of the flesh the Son is less than the Father: in respect of Godhead He is equal to the Father: I read therefore that the Son of God is equal to the Father, as also the instances that have been adduced testify. But why should you wonder that He is less in respect of the flesh, when He has called Himself a servant, a stone, a worm, when He has said that He is less than the angels, for it is written: Thou madest him a little lower than the angels? Palladius said; ' I see that you make impious assertions. We do not answer you without arbiters.'

Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'Let no one ask for an opinion from him who has blasphemed in such countless opinions.' Palladius said; 'We do not answer you.' 38. SABINUS Bishop, said; 'Palladius has now been condemned by all. The blasphemies of Arius are much lighter than those of Palladius.' And when Palladius rose, as if he wished to go out, he said; 'Palladius has risen, because he sees that he is to be convicted by manifest testimonies of the Scriptures, as indeed he has been already convicted: for thus it has been read, that in respect of Godhead the Son is equal to the Father. Let him admit that in respect of His Godhead the Son of God has no greater: it is written: When God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, he swear by himself. You see therefore the Scripture, that He could swear by no greater. But it is the Son of Whom this is said, since it was He Who appeared to Abraham, whence also He says, He saw my day and was glad.'

Palladius said; 'The Father is greater.' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'When He spake as God, He had no greater; when He spake as man, He had one greater.' 39. PALLADIUS said; 'The Father begat the Son; the Father sent the Son.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Anathema to him, who denies |48 that in respect of His Godhead the Son is equal to the Father.' All the Bishops said; 'Anathema.' Palladius said; ' The Son is subject to the Father; the Son keeps the commands of the Father.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; ' He is subject in respect of His Incarnation. But even you yourself remember that you have read; No man can come unto me, except the Father draw him.' Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'Let him say whether the Son is subject to the Father in respect of His Godhead, or in respect of His Incarnation.' 40. PALLADIUS said; 'Then the Father is greater.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'In another place also it is written; God is faithful, by Whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son. I say that the Father is greater in respect of the assumption of the flesh, which the Son of God took upon Him, not in respect of the Son's Godhead.

Palladius said; 'What then is the comparison of the Son of God? And can flesh say, God is greater than I? Did the flesh speak or the Godhead because the flesh was there?' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'The flesh does not speak without the soul.' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'God in the flesh spoke according to the flesh, when He said, Why do ye persecute me, a man? Who said this?' Palladius said; 'The Son of God.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Then the Son of God is God in respect of His Godhead and is man in respect of His flesh.' Palladius said; 'He took flesh upon Him.' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'Accordingly He made use of human words.' Palladius said; 'He took man's flesh upon Him.' 41. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Let him say that the Apostle did not call Him subject in respect of His Godhead, but in respect of His flesh; for it is written, He humbled himself and became obedient unto death. In what then did He taste death?'

Palladius said; 'In that He humbled Himself.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Not His Godhead but His flesh |49 was humbled and subject.' And he added; ' Did Arius well or ill in calling him a perfect creature?' Palladius said; 'I do not answer you, for you have no authority.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Profess what you please.' Palladius said; 'I do not answer you.' 42. SABINUS, Bishop, said; 'Do you not answer on behalf of Arius? do you not answer to what has been asked?' Palladius said; 'I have not answered on behalf of Arius.' Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'You have answered so far as to deny that the Son of God is mighty, to deny that He is true God.' Palladius said; 'I do not allow you to be my judge, whom I convict of impiety.' Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'You yourself forced us to sit.' Palladius said; 'I gave in a request that you might sit, in order that I might convict you. Why have you practised upon the Emperor? You have gained by intrigue that the Council should not be a plenary one.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'When Arius' impieties were read, your impiety also, which harmonized with his, was condemned equally. You have thought fit while the letter was in the midst of being read, to bring forward whatever passages you would: you were told in answer in what way the Son has said that the Father is greater, because in respect of His taking flesh upon Him, the Father is greater than He. You have urged also that the Son of God is subject; and on this head you were answered that the Son of God is subject in respect of His flesh, not in respect of His divinity. You have our profession. Now hear the rest. Since you have been answered, do you answer to what is read.' 43. PALLADIUS said; 'I do not answer you, because what I have said has not been recorded; only your words are recorded. I do not answer you.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'You see that every thing is recorded. Moreover, what has been written is abundant for the proof of your impiety.' And he added; 'Do you say that Christ is a creature or do you deny it?' Palladius said; 'I do not answer you.' |50 Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'An hour ago, when it was read that Arius called Christ a creature, you denied it: you had an opportunity offered you of condemning his perfidy; you would not. Say now at last whether Christ was begotten of the Father or created.' Palladius said; 'If you please, let my reporters come and so let the whole be taken down.' Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'Let him send for his reporters.' Palladius said; 'We will answer you in a full Council.' 44. AMBROSE,

Bishop, said; 'Attalus subscribed the formula of the Council of Nicaea. Let him deny it, as he has come to our Council. Let him say to-day, whether he subscribed the formula of the Council of Nicaea or no?'

Attalus remaining silent, Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Though the presbyter Attalus is an Arian, yet we give him permission to speak: let him frankly state whether he subscribed the formula of the Council of Nicaea under his Bishop Agrippinus, or no.' Attalus said; 'You have already said that I have been several times condemned. I do not answer you.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Did you subscribe the formula of the Council of Nicaea or no?' Attalus said; 'I do not answer you.' 45. PALLADIUS said; 'Do you now wish the formula to be regarded as general or no?' Chromatius, presbyter, said; 'You have not denied that He is a creature, you have denied that He is mighty. You have denied every thing which the Catholic Faith professes.' Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'We are witnesses that Attalus subscribed the Council of Niceea, and that he now refuses to answer. What is the opinion of all?'

As Attalus did not speak, Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Let him say whether he subscribed the formula of the Council of Nicaea or no.' 46. PALLADIUS said; 'Let your reporter and ours stand forward and write down every thing.' |51 Valerian, Bishop, said; 'What you have said and what you have denied is already all written.' Palladius said; 'Say what you please.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Since Palladius who has been already many times condemned, wishes to be condemned still oftener, I am reading the letter of Arius which he has not chosen to condemn: do you state whether you approve of my doing so.' All the Bishops said; 'Let it be read.' Then the words were read. "But begotten not putatively," &c. Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'I have answered you on the Father's being greater: I have answered you also on the Son's being subject: do you yourself answer now.' 47. PALLADIUS said; 'I will not answer unless arbiters come after the Lord's day.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'You were come with a view to discussion, but since I have charged you with its doctrines, you have seen the letter of Arius which you have not chosen to condemn and which you cannot support: you now therefore shrink back and cavil. I read it to you fully point by point. Tell me whether you believe Christ to have been created; whether there was a time when he was not; or whether the only begotten Son of God has always existed. When you have heard Arius' letter, either condemn it or approve of it.' 48. PALLADIUS said; 'Since I convict you of impiety, I will not have you for judge. You are a transgressor.' Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'Say, what impieties you object to our brother and fellow-bishop Ambrose.' Palladius said; 'I have already told you, I will answer in a full Council, and with arbiters present.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'I desire to be confuted and convicted in the assembly of my brethren. Say then what I have said impiously; but I appear impious to you because I support piety.' Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'Does then he seem impious to you, who censures the blasphemies of Arius?' 49. PALLADIUS said; 'I have not denied that the Son of God is good.' |52 Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Do you say that Christ is a good God?' Palladius said; 'I do not answer you.' Valerian, Bishop, said; 'Do not press Palladius so much: he cannot confess our truths with

simplicity. For his conscience is confused with a twofold blasphemy: he was ordained by the Photinians and was condemned with them, and now he shall be condemned more fully.' Palladius said; 'Prove it.' Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'He would not have denied that Christ is true if he were not following his own teachers.'

50. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'You have objected to me that I am impious: prove it.' Palladius said; 'We will bring forward our statement, and when we have brought it, then the discussion shall be held.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Condemn the impiety of Arius.' Palladius being silent, Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'He dwells upon useless subjects. There are so many impieties of Arius, which Palladius has not chosen to condemn, nay rather has confessed by supporting. He who does not condemn Arius is like him, and is rightly to be called a heretic.' All the Bishops said; 'On the part of us all let Palladius be anathema.' 51. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Do you consent, Palladius, that the other statements of Arius be read?' Palladius said; 'Give us arbiters: let reporters come on both sides. You cannot be judges unless we have arbitrators and unless persons come on both sides to arbitrate, we do not answer you.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'What arbitrators do you wish for?' Palladius said; 'There are here many men of high rank.' Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'After such a number of blasphemies do you wish for arbitrators?' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Bishops ought to judge of laymen: not laymen of Bishops. But tell me what judges you wish for.' |53 Palladius said; 'Let arbitrators attend.' Chromatius, the Presbyter, said; 'Without prejudice to condemnation by the Bishops, let those also who are of Palladius' party be heard at full length.' 52. PALLADIUS said; 'They are not allowed to speak. Let arbitrators attend and reporters on both sides, and then they will answer you in a General Council.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Though he has been convicted of many impieties, yet we should blush that a person who claims the priesthood for himself should seem to have been condemned by laymen, and on this very ground and in this very point he deserves condemnation because he looks to the sentence of laymen, when priests ought rather to be the judges of laymen. Looking to what we have this day heard Palladius professing and to what he has refused to condemn, I pronounce him unworthy of the priesthood, and I judge that he should be deprived thereof in order that a Catholic may be ordained in his place.'

All the Bishops said; 'Anathema to Palladius.' 53. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'The most gracious and Christian Emperor has committed the cause to the judgement of the Bishops and has constituted them arbitrators of the dispute . Since therefore the decision appears to have been made over to us, so that we are the interpreters of the Scriptures, let us condemn Palladius, who has not chosen to condemn the sentiments of the impious Arius, and because he has himself denied the Son of God to be everlasting, and made the other statements which appear in our proceedings. Let him therefore be accounted Anathema.' All the Bishops said; 'We all condemn him; let him be accounted anathema.' 54. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Since all who are met here |54 are Christian men, brethren approved of God, and our fellow-bishops, let each individual say, what he thinks.' Valerian, Bishop, said; 'My sentence is

that he who defends Arius is an Arian; that he who does not condemn His blasphemies is himself a blasphemer; and therefore I judge that such a man is alien from the fellowship of Bishops.'

Palladius said; 'You have begun to play; play on. Without an Eastern Council we answer you not.' 55. ANEMIUS, Bishop of Sirmium said; 'Whoever does not condemn the heresies of Arius must of necessity be an Arian. Him therefore I judge to be alien from our communion, and to be without place in the assembly of Bishops.' Constantius, Bishop of Orange, said; 'As Palladius is a disciple of Arius, whose impieties have been long since condemned by our Fathers in the Council of Nice, but have this day severally, when recited, been approved of by Palladius, inasmuch as he was not disturbed at his acknowledging that the Son of God was not of the same Nature with God the Father, and at his calling Him a creature, and saying that He began to be in time, and denying Him to be true Lord, on these grounds, I judge that he should be condemned for ever.'

56. JUSTUS, Bishop, said; 'Palladius who has refused to condemn the blasphemies of Arius, and who seems rather to acknowledge them, can in my judgement no longer be called a Priest or be reckoned among Bishops.' Eventius, Bishop of Ticinum, said; 'I think that Palladius who has refused to condemn the impieties of Arius, is removed for ever from the fellowship of Bishops.' 57. ABUNDANTIUS, Bishop of Trent, said; 'Since Palladius maintains evident blasphemies, let him know that he is condemned by the Council of Aquileia.' Eusebius, Bishop of Bologna, said; 'Inasmuch as Palladius has not only refused to condemn the impieties of Arius, impieties written with the pen of the devil, and which it is not lawful so much as to listen to, but has also appeared as the maintainer of them by denying that the Son of God is true Lord, is good Lord, is wise Lord, is everlasting Lord; both by my sentence, and by the |55 judgement of all Catholics I think that he is rightly condemned and excluded from the assembly of Bishops.'

58. SABINUS, Bishop of Placentia, said; 'Since it has been proved to all that Palladius supports the Arian perfidy and maintains its impiety that was counter to the Evangelical and apostolical institutions, a just sentence of the whole Council has been passed upon him, and humble individual as I am, let him by my judgement be deprived once more of the priesthood and banished justly from this most holy assembly.' Felix and Numidius, deputies of Africa said; 'Anathema to the Sect of the Arian heresy to which by the Synod of Aquileia Palladius is pronounced to belong. But we condemn also those, who contradict the truth of the Nicene Synod.' 59. LIMENIUS, Bishop of Vercellae, said; 'It is manifest that the Arian doctrine has been often condemned: and therefore, inasmuch as Palladius having been appealed to in this holy Synod of Aquileia has refused to correct and amend himself, and has rather proved himself worthy of blame and defiled himself with the perfidy which he has publicly professed himself to hold, I too by my judgement declare that he is to be deprived of the fellowship of the Bishops.'

Maximus, Bishop of Emona, said; 'That Palladius, who would not condemn, but has rather himself acknowledged, the blasphemies of Arius, is justly and deservedly condemned God

knows, and the conscience of the faithful has condemned him.' 60. EXUPERANTIUS, Bishop of Dertona, said; 'As the rest of my Colleagues have condemned Palladius who has refused to condemn the sect and doctrine of Arius, and on the contrary has defended them, I also likewise condemn him.' Bassianus, Bishop of Lodi, said; 'I have heard along with the rest of my Colleagues the impieties of Arius, which Palladius not only has not condemned but has confirmed. Let him be anathema and be deprived of the priesthood.' 61. PHILASTER, Bishop of Brescia, said: 'The blasphemies and iniquity of Palladius, who follows and defends the Arian doctrine I in company with all have condemned.' |56 Constantius, Bishop of Sciscia, said; 'As the rest of my brother Bishops, I also think that Palladius is to be condemned, who has refused to condemn the blasphemies and impieties of Arius.'

Heliodorus, Bishop of Altinum, said; 'The man who maintains the perfidy of Arius, and of all the heretics with whom Palladius is partner, whose heart is foolish, and who has not confessed the truth; together with the rest of my brother Bishops I condemn.' 62. FELIX, Bishop of Jadera, said; 'I also in like manner unite with all in condemning Palladius, who speaks blasphemies against the Son of God as Arius did.' Theodoras, Bishop of Octodorum, said; 'We judge Palladius, who has denied Christ to be true God, co-eternal with the Father, to be in no wise either a Christian or a priest.' Domninus, Bishop of Grenoble, said; 'As Palladius adheres to the perfidy of Arius, I also judge that he is to be condemned for ever, as my brethren also have condemned him.' 63. PROCULUS, Bishop of Marseilles, said; 'Palladius, who by a kind of impious succession to the blasphemies of Arius has defended them in that he does not condemn them, as he has been already designated a blasphemer by the sentence of many venerable Bishops, and pronounced alien from the priesthood, so by my sentence also is marked out in the same manner as condemned for ever.'

Diogenes, Bishop of Genoa, said; 'Palladius who while he does not confess has even denied Christ to be true Lord and God, like and equal to the Father, I together with the rest of my brethren and fellow Bishops adjudge to have the lot of condemnation.' 64. AMANTIUS, Bishop of Nice, said; 'Palladius, who has refused to pull down the sect of Arius, according to the judgement of my brother Bishops, I also condemn.' Januarius, Bishop, said; 'As all my brother Bishops have condemned Palladius so also do I think that he ought to be condemned by a similar judgement .' |57 65. SECUNDIANUS having withdrawn for a while, and then returned to the Council , Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'You have heard, Secundianus, what sort of sentence the impious Palladius has received, having been condemned by the Council of Bishops: and though we have been displeased that you have not shrunk from his madness, I nevertheless make some special enquiries of you. Do you say that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is or is not very God?'

Secundianus said; 'He who denies the Father of our Lord and God Jesus Christ to be true God is not a Christian, nor is he who denies that the Lord is the very Son of God.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Do you confess that the Son of God is very God?' Secundianus said; 'I say that He is the very Son of God, the very only begotten Son of God.' 66. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Do you call Him very Lord?' Secundianus said; 'I call Him the very only-begotten

Son of God. Who denies that He is the very Son of God? Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'It is not enough that you confess Him to be the only-begotten Son of God, for all confess this. But what influences us is that Arius said that the Father alone is Lord, alone is true, and denied that the Son of God is very Lord. Do you confess simply that the Son of God is very God?'

Secundianus said; 'Who Arius was, I know not; what he said, I know not. You speak with me, living man with living man. I say what Christ said: The only begotten Son Which is in the bosom of the Father. Therefore He asserts Himself to be the only-begotten Son of the Father: the only-begotten Son is then the very Son of God.' 67. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Is the very Son of God also very God? It is written in the divine books: he that sweareth on the earth, shall swear by the true God, and that this applies to Christ there is no doubt. We |58 therefore profess the true God, and this is our faith and profession, that the only-begotten Son of the Father is very God. Do you then say 'of very God,' and then that the Son is very God.' Secundianus said; 'Of very God.' 68. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Is the Son of God very God?'

Secundianus said; 'Then would he be a liar.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'In this you practise an evasion to avoid saying very God, but instead thereof, God, very only-begotten, and therefore say simply, The only-begotten Son of God is very God.' Secundianus said; 'I called Him the only-begotten Son of God.' 69. EUSEBIUS, Bishop, said; 'This Photinus does not deny, this Sabellus confesses.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'And he who does not confess this is justly condemned, and on this point I appeal to you many times though by cavilling you have denied the truth. I do not ask you to call Him merely the very only-begotten Son of God, but to call Him also very God.' Secundianus said; 'I profess myself the servant of truth. What I say is not taken down and what you say is taken down. I say that Christ is the true Son of God. Who denies that He is the true Son of God?'

70. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'He who denies that the only-begotten Son of God is very God, let him be anathema.' Secundianus said; 'The only-begotten Son of God, very God! why do you state to me what is not written?' Ambrose, Bishop, said: 'It is plain sacrilege, that Arius denied Christ the Son of God to be very God.' Secundianus said; 'Forasmuch as Christ is called the Son of God, I call the Son of God very Son ; but that He is very God is not written.' 71. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Have you not yet recovered your senses?' And he added; 'Lest it should appear that he has been unfairly treated, let him state his opinion. Let him then say that Christ the only-begotten Son of God is very God.' |59 Secundianus said; 'I have already said. What more would you wring from me?' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'What have you said? certainly if you had said so great truths, what is said gloriously, may well be often repeated.'

Secundianus said; 'It is written, Let your conversation be yea, yea, nay, nay.' 72. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'He who says that the Father Himself is the Son, is sacrilegious. This I ask of you that you would say that the Son of God is begotten very God of very God.' Secundianus said; 'I say that the Son is begotten of God, as He says Himself I have begotten Thee, and that He confesses Himself to be begotten.' 73. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Is He very God of

very God?' Secundianus said; 'When you add to the Name and call Him very [God], do you understand what the character of your own faith is, and are you a Christian ?' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'Who has denied that He is very God? Arius and Palladius have denied it. If you believe Him to be very God, you should simply express it.' 74. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'If you will not say that He is very God begotten of very God, you have denied Christ.'

Secundianus said; 'When asked about the Son, I answered you: I have answered as to the manner in which I ought to make my profession. We have your statement: we will bring it forward; let it be read.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'You should have brought it forward today, but you are attempting a subterfuge. You demand a profession of me and I demand a profession of you. Is the Son of God very God ?' Secundianus said; 'The Son of God is God only-begotten. I also ask him : Is He only-begotten ?' 75. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Let reason move us: let us be moved too by your impiety and folly. When you speak of God very only-begotten, you do not apply the 'very' to 'God,' but to 'only-begotten.' And therefore |60 to remove this question answer me this: Is He very God of very God?' Secundianus said; 'Did then God not beget God? He Who is very God begat What He is; He begat one true only-begotten Son.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'You do not confess Him very God but you would call Him very only-begotten. I too call Him only-begotten, but also very God.' Secundianus said; 'I say that he was begotten of the Father, I say to all that he was very begotten .' The Names of the Bishops and Presbyters who were present at the Council. VALERIAN, Bishop of Aquileia . AMBROSE, Bishop of Milan. EUSEBIUS, Bishop of Bologna. LIMENIUS, Bishop of Vercellae. ANEMIUS, Bishop of Sirmium in Illyricum. SABINUS, Bishop of Placentia. ABUNDANTIUS, Bishop of Brescia. CONSTANTIUS, Bishop of Orange, Deputy of the Gauls. THEODORUS, Bishop of Octodurus. DOMNINUS, Bishop of Grenoble. AMANTIUS, Bishop of Nice. MAXIMUS, Bishop of Emona. BASSIANUS, Bishop of Lodi. PROCULUS, Bishop of Marseilles, Deputy of the Gauls. HELIODORUS, Bishop of Altinum. FELIX, Bishop of Jadera. EVENTIUS, Bishop of Ticinum . |61 EXSUPERANTIUS, Bishop of Dertona. DIOGENES, Bishop of Genoa. CONSTANTIUS, Bishop of Sciscia.

JUSTUS, Bishop of Lyons, also Deputy of the Gauls. FELIX, Deputy of Africa. NUMIDIUS, Deputy of Africa. EVAGRIUS, Presbyter and Deputy. ARTEMIUS, ALMACHIUS, JANUARIUS, JOVINUS, MACEDONIUS, CASSIANUS, MARCELLUS, EUSTATHIUS, MAXIMUS, CHROMATIUS a Presbyter.

Letters 1-10 — LETTER IX. [A.D.381.]

A FORMAL letter from the Italian Bishops assembled at Aquileia, thanking the Bishops of the three Provinces for the presence of their deputies, and announcing officially the condemnation of Palladius and Secundianus. THE COUNCIL WHICH IS ASSEMBLED AT AQUILEIA TO OUR MOST BELOVED BRETHREN, THE BISHOPS OF THE VIENNESE AND THE FIRST AND SECOND NARBONESE PROVINCES IN GAUL. 1. WE return thanks to your holy unanimity that in the persons of our Lords and brethren Constantius and Proculus you have given us the presence of you all, and at the same time following the directions of former times, have added not a little weight to our judgement, with which the profession of your holinesses also is in agreement, Lords and brethren most beloved. Therefore, as we received with gladness the above mentioned holy men of your order and ours, so do we also dismiss them with an abundant offering of thanks.

2. But how necessary the meeting was will be plain from the mere facts, since the adversaries and enemies of God, the defenders of the Arian sect and heresy, Palladius and |62 Secundianus, the only two who dared to come to the meeting of the Council, received in person their due sentence, being convicted of impiety. Farewell. May our Almighty God keep you safe and prosperous, Lords and brethren most beloved. Amen.

Letters 1-10 — LETTER X. [A.D.381.]

IN this letter, addressed formally to the three Emperors, but really to Gratian, the Council offer their thanks for the summoning of the Council, and announce its results, requesting that they may be enforced by the imperial authority. They also request the removal of Julius Valens from Italy, and that the Photinians may be forbidden to hold assemblies, which they were doing at Sirmium. THE HOLY COUNCIL WHICH IS ASSEMBLED AT AQUILEIA TO THE MOST GRACIOUS AND CHRISTIAN EMPERORS, AND MOST BLESSED PRINCES, GRATIAN, VALENTINIAN, AND THEODOSIUS. 1. BLESSED be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has given you the Roman empire, and blessed be our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Who guards your reign with His loving-kindness, before Whom we return you thanks, most gracious Princes, that you have both proved the earnestness of your own faith in that you were zealous to assemble the Council of Bishops for the removal of disputes, and that in your condescension you reserved for the Bishops the honourable privilege that no one should be absent who wished to attend, and none should be constrained to attend against his will.

2. Therefore according to the directions of your Graces we have met together without the odium of large numbers and with zeal for discussion, nor were any of the Bishops found to be heretics, except Palladius and Secundianus, names of ancient perfidy, on whose account people from the farthest portions of the Roman world demanded that a Council should be summoned. None however, loaded with the years of a long life, whose gray hairs alone would be entitled to reverence, was compelled to come from the |63 most distant recesses of the Ocean: and yet nothing was lacking to the Council: no one dragging a feeble frame, weighed down by his campaigns of fasting, was forced by the hardships of his journey to lament the inconvenience of his loss of strength; no one finally, being without the means of coming, had to mourn over a poverty honourable to a Bishop. So that what the divine Scripture has praised was fulfilled in you, most merciful of Princes, Gratian, Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy.

3. But what a hardship would it have been that on account of two Bishops only, who are rotten in perfidy, the Churches over the whole world should be left destitute of their Bishops.

But though owing to the distance of the journey they could not come personally, nearly all from all the western provinces were present by the sending of deputies, and proved by manifest attestations that they hold what we assert and that they agree in the formula of the Council of Nicaea, as the documents hereto attached declare. Therefore the prayers of the nations are now in concert every where on behalf of your Empire, and yet assertors of the Faith have not been wanting to your decision. For though the directions of our predecessors, from which it is impious and sacrilegious to deviate, were plain enough, still we gave them the opportunity of discussion.

4. And in the first instance we examined the very beginning of the question which had arisen, and we thought fit to hear recited the letter of Arius, who is found to be the author of the Arian heresy, from whom also the heresy received its name, the arrangement being thus far even favourable to them, that since they had been in the habit of denying that they were Arians they might either by censure condemn the blasphemies of Arius, or by argument maintain them, or at least not refuse the name of the person, whose impiety and perfidy they followed. But inasmuch as they could not condemn and were unwilling to support their Founder, after they had themselves, three days before, challenged us to a discussion, fixing place and time, and gone forth to it without waiting to be summoned, on a sudden the very individuals, who had said that they would easily prove that they were Christians, (which we |64 heard with pleasure, and hoped that they would prove,) began to shrink from the engagement on the spot and to decline the discussion.

5. Yet had we much discourse with them: the divine Scriptures were set forth in the midst; and they had the offer made to them of a patient discussion from sun-rise to the seventh hour of the day. And would that they had said little, or that we could cancel what we heard. For when Arius by saying in sacrilegious words that the Father was alone eternal, alone good, alone true God, alone possessing immortality, alone wise and alone powerful, had intended that the Son by an impious inference should be understood to be without these attributes, these men have preferred following Arius to confessing that the Son of God is everlasting God and very God, and good God and wise and powerful and possessing immortality. We spent several hours to no purpose. Their impiety waxed greater and could in no wise be corrected. 6. At last when they saw that they were pressed by the sacrileges of Arius' letter, (which we have appended in order that even your Graces might shrink from it) they started away in the middle of the reading of the letter, and asked us to answer what they proposed. Though it lay not within either order or reason that we should interrupt the plan laid down, and though we had already answered that they were to condemn the impieties of Arius and then we would answer about whatever proposals of theirs they pleased, preserving order and plan, we notwithstanding acceded to their unreasonable wish: on which, falsifying the scriptures of the Gospel, they stated to us that our Lord said, He that sent Me is greater than I: whereas the course of the Scriptures teaches us that it is written otherwise.

7. They were convicted of the falsehood even to confession: they were not however corrected by reason. For when we said that the Son is called less than the Father in respect to his

taking flesh upon Him, but is proved according to the testimonies of the Scriptures to be like and equal to the Father in respect of His Godhead, and that there could not be degrees of any distinction or greatness, |65 when there was unity of power; they not only would not correct their error; but began to carry their madness further, so as even to say that the Son is subject in respect of His divinity, as if there could be any subjection of God in respect of His Divinity and Majesty. In short they refer His death not to the mystery of our salvation, but to some infirmity of His Godhead. 8. We shudder, most gracious Princes, at such dire sacrileges, and such wicked teachers, and that they might not any longer deceive the people of whom they had a hold, we j udged that they should be degraded from the Priesthood, since they agreed with the impieties of the book put before them. For it is not reasonable that they should claim to themselves the Priesthood of Him Whom they have denied. We appeal to your faith and your glory that you would shew the respect of your government to Him Who is the author of it, and judge that the assertors of impiety and debauchers of the truth be kept away from the threshold of the Church, by an order of your Graces issued to the competent authorities, and that Holy Bishops be put into the place of the condemned ones by deputies of our humble appointment.

9. The Presbyter Attalus too who avows his error and adheres to the sacrilegious doctrines of Palladius is included under a similar sentence. For why should we speak of his master Julianus Valens ? who although he was close at hand shunned coming to the Council of Bishops for fear he should be compelled to account to the Bishops for the ruin of his country, and his treason to his countrymen: a man, who, polluted with the impiety of the Goths, presumed, as is asserted, to go forth in the sight of a Roman army, wearing like a Pagan a collar and bracelet: which is unquestionably a sacrilege not only in a Bishop, but also |66 in any Christian whatever: for it is alien to the Roman customs. It may be that the idolatrous priests of the Goths commonly go forth in such guise. 10. Let your piety be moved by the title of Bishop, which that sacrilegious person dishonours, convicted as he is of atrocious crime even by the voice of his own people, if indeed any of his own people can still survive. Let him at least return to his own home, and cease to contaminate the most flourishing cities of Italy; at present by unlawful ordinations he is associating with himself persons like himself, and he endeavours by help of all abandoned individuals to leave behind him a seed-plot of his own impiety and perfidy: whereas he has not so much as begun to be a Bishop. For, to begin with, at Petavio he was put in the place of the holy Marcus, a Bishop whose memory is highly esteemed: but, having been disgracefully degraded by the people, unable to remain at Petavio, he has been riding in state at Milan, after the overthrow, say rather the betrayal, of his country.

11. Deign then, most pious princes, to deal with all these matters, lest we should appear to have met to no purpose, when we obeyed your Graces' injunctions: for care must be taken that not only our decisions but yours also be saved from dishonour. We must request therefore that your Graces would be pleased to listen indulgently to the deputies of the Council, Holy men, and bid them to return speedily with accomplishment of what we ask for, that you may receive a reward from Christ our Lord and God, Whose Church you have

cleansed from all stain of sacrilegious persons. 12. With respect to the Photinians also, whom by a former law you forbad forming assemblies, revoking at the same time the law which had been passed for the assembling of a Council of Bishops , we request of your Graces, that as we have ascertained that they are attempting to hold assemblies in the town of Sirmium, you would by now again interdicting their meetings, cause respect to be paid, |67 in the first place to the Catholic Church, and next to your own laws, that with God for your Patron you may be triumphant, while you provide for the peace and tranquillity of the Church.

[Footnotes and marginalia moved to the end and numbered] 1. The word in the original is Sacerdos. It is constantly used by S. Ambrose and other writers of his time for Bishops, though they sometimes add a qualifying epithet, 'Summus Sacerdos.' But even alone it is used where the writer is clearly speaking of Bishops, and of Bishops qua Bishops. Thus it occurs frequently in the Proceedings of the Council of Aquileia, which is itself styled 'Sacerdotale Concilium.' See the Article 'Bishop' by Mr. Haddan in Dict. of Chr. Ant. Vol. 1 p. 210 b., who refers also to Bp. Taylor, Episc. Assert. § 27. It has therefore been rendered 'Bishop' throughout this volume, wherever it is plain that the reference is to Bishops, and 'Priest' wherever it is used in a more general way. 2. creaturam. 3. This forms the two first books of the 'De Fide' still extant among the works of S. Ambrose. The other three books were added afterwards, as S. Ambrose explains at the beginning of Bk. iii, to maintain his statements against the attacks of heretical teachers. The Treatise, 'De Spiritu Sancto,' in 3 books, was sent afterwards in 381 A.D.

4. S. Matt. xxv. 40. 5. S. John xiv. 21. 6. Ps. xxiv. 2. 7. Ps. xciii. 4. S. John vii. 38. Isa. lxvi. 12. Ps. xlvi. 4. 8. Nivei. This is the reading all MSS. Ed. Rom. has 'vivi,' which would agree better with the text of S. John. 9. Prov.xvi. 24. 10. Ps. cxlviii. 5. 11. Eccles. xi. 3. 12. Ib. 13. Ib.xii.11. 14. Acts ix. 5. 15. 1 Cor. iii. 2. 16. The Benedictine reference for the first of these texts is Prov. xiv. 3. The lips of the wise shall preserve them, with which the Sept. and Vulg. agree. In the second the English Vers. has The lips of the wise disperse knowledge. Here S. Ambr. agrees with the Sept. 17. Prov. xv. 7. 18. Eph. v. 3. 19. 1 Thess. iv. 4. 20. Gen. iii. 18. 21. Ps.lxxxv. 13. 22. Gen. iv. 10. 23. Hab. ii. 9-12.

24. Ps. cxxii. 3. 25. Prov. xv. 16. 26. Isa. xliii. 2. 27. Prov. vi. 27. 28. Ib. xxii. 1. 29. Prov. vi. 2:5. (not quoted ad verbum). 30. S. Luke xv. 17. 31. v. 19. 32. Prov. vi. 2. 33. Ib. xxii. 14 Sept. Ib. xiv. 15. 34. Prov. xi. 1. 35. S. Matt. xvi. 26. 36. 1 Tim. v. 24. 37. Ib. vi. 10. 38. Zech. v. 7. 39. Ecclus. xix. 23, 24. Vulg. 40. Rom. v. 19. 41. Ps. cv. 18. 42. Eph. v. 14. 43. Ps. cxix. 71. 44. Phil. ii. 6.7. 45. 1 Cor. xv. 28. 46. Ib. xi. 1. 47. Phil. iii. 8. 48. S. Luke ix. 23. 49. Forum Cornelii was on the Via Aemilia, about 23 miles S.E. of Bononia. It was at this time in the Province Aemilia. The modern name is Imola. 50. The Benedictine Fathers refer this to the ravages of the Goths after Valens' defeat at Hadrianople A.D. 375. It is on this that they found the date of the letter, but the reference is somewhat vague.

51. Deut. xix. 14. 52. tubera 53. Amentata illa non manipularis sententia. Ed. Ben. refers to Junius, Adagiorum Centuriae 3, 10, who says 'Amentatam sententiam dixit D.

Am-brosius pro valida et haud vulgari firmisque argumentis roboratit. Est antem amentum lori genus quo hasta praeligata validius certiusque libratur evibraturque: hinc amentata senten-tia ea est quae neutiquam trivialis est et pedanea, cujusmodi manipularis vocatur, velut a gregario milite profecta, sed eximia et artificio vallata.' He quotes two passages from Cicero, De Orat. 1 57, 242. Brut. 78. 271, in both which places he uses 'amentatae hastae' of arguments, and also Tertull. adv. Marc. iv. ,33 where he says that our Lord amentavit [Phariseis] hanc sententiam, non potestis Deo servire et mammonae, where it plainly means, 'gave them this home-thrust.' 54. puleium, lit. the herb penny royal. 55. Bassianus is mentioned among the Bishops who took part in the Council of Aquileia, as Bishop of Laus Pompeia, now Lodi Vecchio, S. E. of Milan. The modern town of Lodi is about 5 miles from the site of the ancient one.

56. He means the day of his consecration as Bishop. So S. Ambr. speaks of his own consecration day as his birthday, Comm. in Luc. vii. 78. 57. Heb. ix. 4. 58. Col. i. 15. Exod. xxv. 22. 59. Ps. lxxviii. 2. 60. Numb. xvi. 48. 61. Deut. xv. 8. 62. S. Luke x. 2. 63. Comum is the modern Como, at the southern extremity of the Lake which takes its name from it. 64. S. Luke xv. 8, 9. 65. S. Matt. vi. 22. 66. Prov. xiii. 8. 67. Exod. xxx. 12 -15. 68. Ib. xvi. 17, 18. 69. E ccles. vii. 16. 70. These words are added by S.Ambrose. 71. 1 Cor.xii. 7-9. 72. Ps. civ. 15. 73. Prov. ix. 2. 74. Exod. xii. 4. 75. S. Matt. x. 30. 76. 2 Cor. vi. 16. 77. S. Matt. xx. 10. 78. 2 Tim.iv. 8. 79. S. Matt. xvii. 27.

80. S. John i. 29. 81. Phil. ii. 7. 82. S. Matt. iii. 15. 83. statera. 84. Rom. x. 4. 85. Ps. xii. 6. 86. Exod. xxi. 5. 87. S. Matt. xix. 21. 88. S. Matt. xxii. 18, 19. 89. Dan. iii. 18. and i. 8. 90. S.John xiv. 30. 91. S.John xvii. 11, 14, 18. 92. S. Matt. xvii. 27. 93. Gal. iv. 4. 94. Deut. xxx.14. 95. Rom. x. 10. 96. denarius. 97. Rev. i. 8. 98. Deut. vi. 4. 99. Acts ii. 4. 100. ai1tion, u#lh, a)pote/lesma. Gen. xxii. 7. 101. Ib. 8. 102. Ps. iv. 5. 103. Exod. xvi. 15, 16. 104. Exod. xvi. 4. 105. Ib. 15. 106. Ib. iii. 11-14. 107. 2 Cor. i. 19. 108. Exod. iv 1. 109. Ib. 10. 110. Ib. 12. 111. Exod. iii. 12, 112. S. Matt. vii. 7. 113. Ib. x. 19, 20. 114. Gen. xxvii. 20. 115. Ib. xxxi. 33.

116. o#roi. 117. Ib. xxvii. 4. 118. There is no text in Holy Scripture exactly corresponding to this. Lev. xxv, 11 which is referred to by Ed. Ben. is hardly to the point. 119. 1 Cor. iii. 6,7. 120. There can be little doubt that the true date is iii. Non. Sept. i. e. the 8rd of Sept., and not Nonis, the 5th. For in 381 A. D. the 5th of Sept. was on a Sunday, and it is hardly likely that a Council would have sat from daybreak till one o' clock (Ep. 10. 5) in the Church on such a day, and moreover it would not have been natural for Palladius to say, as he does in § 47. Non respondebo nisi auditores veniant post Dominicam diem, if he were speaking on a Sunday. 121. The reading of Ed. Rom. has been adopted, which omits the preposition 'cum.' If this were correct, it would imply that the consuls were themselves taking a leading part in the Council; whereas it is clear that they are mentioned solely as the ordinary way of fixing the year; nor had the consuls at this time any other than such ornamental functions. See Gibbon's description, ch. xvii. vol. ii. ed Smith p. 206-208.

122. By 'acta' here are meant formal and official records taken down and published by authority. Thus Jul. Caesar ordered the 'Acta' of the Senate to be regularly published. Suet. Caes. 20. 123. It is to be remembered that 'diocese' was then a civil and not an Ecclesiastical term. A 'diocesis' was an aggregate of provinces, under the charge of a Vicarius, who was subordinate to one of the four Praefecti Praetorio, each Praefectus having under him a number of dioceses. Thus the Vicarius Italiae, who was subordinate to the Praefectus Praetorio Italiae, had in his diocese fourteen provinces, including' both Liguria of which Milan was the capital, and Venetia in which Aquileia was situated. It is to be remembered also that Italia at this time meant only the north of Italy, the rest of Italy being now included in the Diocese of Rome, and under the Vicarius Urbis Romae. See the table given in Smith's Gibbon, vol. ii. p. 315. taken from Marquardt. When the word diocese came into Ecclesiastical use, it was applied, first to "an aggregate not merely of several districts, governed each by its own bishop, but of several provinces (e0parxi/ai) each presided over by a metropolitan. The diocese itself was under an Exarch or Patriarch." Dict. of Chr. Ant. sub voc. 'Credita' is here rend for ' creditam,' as required by the order of the words.

124. It is not certain to whom the Emperor's letter was addressed. Some have thought that it was addressed to the Pretorian Prefect of Italy. Tillemont maintained that it was addressed to Valerian, Bishop of Aquileia, in whose see the Council was held. The language, though not decisive, seems in favour of the former supposition. In § 7. the Prefect of Italy is spoken of as issuing letters in pursuance of it. 125. i. e. a copy of S. Paul's Epistles. 126. i. e. the Emperor's letter. 127. The text here seems defective, nor is there any thing to guide us to supply the lacuna. What is given in the translation is no more than a guess at the meaning of the sentence. The general connection is however clear enough even if it be omitted. 128. The reading of Ed. Rom. is here adopted, as alone furnishing a reasonable sense. The Benedictine text is unintelligible.

129. Rom. i. 20. 130. 1 Cor. i. 8. 131. Acts i. 18. 132. By Illyricum is here meant Illyricum Occidentale, which at this time was under the jurisdiction of the Vicarius Italiae. (See the Table in Smith's Gibbon, referred to in note d. p. 33) Sirmium, which in the following Century was entirely destroyed by the Goths under Attila, was at this time a place of great importance both civil and ecclesiastical. It is spoken of by Justinian as capital of Illyricum both in civil and episcopal matters (Tillemont, note xv on the Life of S. Ambrose vol. x. p. 739). Its ecclesiastical importance is shewn by the contest in which S.Ambrose engaged with Justina, two years before the Council, 379 A.D, to bring about the election of Anemius as Bishop, when the Empress was using all her influence to cause an Arian Bishop to be appointed. Arianism had been rife there for some time, and Germinus a previous Bishop had been one of the leaders of that party. (Tillemont, S. Ambr. ch. xx.) Illyricum had been finally separated into two divisions, Orientale and Occidentale, by Gratian, in 379 A.D, who transferred the Eastern Division to Theodosius when he made him Emperor of the East, from which time it formed part of the Eastern Empire. (Tillemont, Hist. des Emp. vol. v. p. 716.)

133. S. John xvii. 3. 134. 1 S. John v. 20. 135. 1 Tim. vi. 16. 136. S. Matt.x. 28. 137. S. John x. 11. 138. The context requires the reading 'bonus' for 'omnibus,' which is that of one MS. The same MS. also inserts 'Deum' in Eusebius' next speech, which is required by the argument. 139. S. Luke xix. 17. Ib.vi.45. 140. S. John vii. 12. 141. Ps. lii. 1. 142. 2 Cor. xii. 10. 143. S. John v. 18. 144. made Himself of no reputation E.T. 145. Phil. ii. 6-8. 146. S. John xiv. 28. 147. Ib. 27,28. 148. Heb. ii. 7. 149. Ib. vi. 13. 150. S. John viii. 56. 151. S. John vi. 44. 152. 1 Cor. i. 8. 153. But now ye seek to kill me, a man &c. E.V. 154. S. John viii. 40. 155. By 'tractatus concilii Nicaeni' is meant simply the Nicene Creed. This is established by S. Ambr. De Fide iii. 15. 125 (518 Ed. Ben.) where, speaking of the letter of Eusebius of Nicomedia read at the Council, in reference to the word o(moou&sioj, he says, Haec cum lecta esset epistola in Concilio Nicaeno, hoc verbum in tractatu fidei posuerunt Patres, etc.

156. The reading in Ed. Ben. is 'carendum.' If it is genuine, the word must have acquired a sort of transitive sense and have come to mean 'to be deprived.' No traces of such an use is to be found in Facciolati or in Ducange. Ed. Ben. quotes a parallel use of 'abstinendus' but without any instances. Rom. reads 'privandum,' Chifflet 'curandum,' either of which give the required sense, but seem corrections without MS. authority. 157. The text in this passage is defective and confused: but the general sense, as given here, may fairly be made out of it as it stands. 158. It is to be noticed that the sentence of only twenty-five Bishops are here given out of thirty two or thirty three. It is probable therefore that the Record is defective, and that the sentences of the rest have been lost. 159. Ed. Ben. here reads, Et cum Secundianus subripuisset. As subripuisset by itself could have no sense, the reading of Ed. Rom. has been adopted, Et cum Secundianus se paullulum subripuisset et postea convenisset. This is adopted in Tillemont's narrative, Il sortit mesme de l'assemblée, mais il revint quelque temps apres.

160. S. John i.18. 161. Isa. lxv. 16. 162. This is according to the text of Ed. Rom. 163. S. Matt. v. 37. 164. Heb. i. 5. 165. The abrupt termination of the discussion with Secundianus, without any account of a decision in his case, seems to point to the same conclusion as the incomplete list of Bishops who give sentence on Palladius, that the Record is defective. Moreover the unusual number of various reading's is generally a sign of a defective text. The force and cleverness of the evasions of Secundianus seem sometimes to be lost thereby. 166. With regard to the names of the sees, those of which the modern name is as familiar or more familiar than the ancient have been rendered by the modern name, those of which the modern name would be unfamiliar to general readers have been left in their ancient form. It would be affectation to call S. Ambrose Bishop of Mediolanum: on the other hand nothing would be gained by calling Felix Bishop of Jadera, Bishop of Zara.

167. This name is omitted in the list at the beginning, so that there are thirty three in this list, only thirty two in the other. The two presbyters were probably representatives of Bishops, but it is not stated of whom. 168. It is probable that similar letters were addressed to the Bishops of the other Provinces of Gaul, who had sent Justus as their deputy, and

to Africa and lllyricum, though no record of them remains. Possibly they were identical, except the address. Gaul had at this time been so subdivided, that the Vicariate or civil Diocese consisted of no less than seventeen provinces. See Marquardt's Table, as quoted above. 169. Ps. xli. 1. C.P.T. 170. There is no mention of the condemnation of Attalus in the Records, another proof that they are not complete. 171. Julianus Valens was Bishop of Petavio or Pettau on the Drave, into which See he had apparently been introduced in the place of the orthodox Bishop Marcus: for this is, according to Tillemont, the meaning of the word 'superpositus.' When Pannonia and Illyricum were overrun by the Goths after Valens' defeat at Hadrianople, (378 A.D.) he deserted his charge. The ravages of the Barbarians are described by S. Jerome ad cap i. Zephan. vol. iii. p. 1645. See Gibbon ch. 26. (from a note in Newman's Fleury, vol. 1 p. 38.)

172. The reading here is uncertain. Ed. Rom. has 'prout jam et sacerdotum concilio sententia in eos lata est.' Nor is it certain to what laws allusion is made. A long note in Ed. Ben. does not seem to clear up the matter.

Letters 11-20 — LETTER XI. [A.D.381.]

THIS letter, which, like the previous one, is really addressed to Gratian, though in accordance with custom formally superscribed with the names of all the three Emperors, urges him to support Damasus as the orthodox and duly elected Bishop of Rome, and to condemn his rival Ursinus, whose interference with their Council, and intrigues with the Arian party they also inform him of. TO THE MOST GRACIOUS EMPERORS AND CHRISTIAN PRINCES, THE MOST GLORIOUS AND MOST BLESSED, GRATIAN, VALENTINIAN, AND THEODOSIUS, THE COUNCIL WHICH IS ASSEMBLED AT AQUILEIA. 1. YOUR enactments have indeed already provided, most gracious Princes, that the perfidy of the Arians may not any further either be concealed or diffused: for we do not conceive that the decrees of the Council will be without effect; for as regards the West, two individuals only have been found to dare to oppose the Council with profane and impious words, men who had previously disturbed a mere corner of Dacia Ripensis .

2. There is another subject which distresses us more, which, as we were assembled, it was our business to discuss duly, lest it should spread through the whole body of the Church diffused over the whole world, and so trouble all things. For though we were generally agreed that |68 Ursinus could not have overreached your piety (though he allows nothing to be quiet, and amid the many urgencies of war would press upon you with his importunity) still lest your holy tranquillity of mind, which delights in having all persons in its care, should he swayed by the false adulation of that unreasonable person, we think it right, if you condescendingly allow it, to offer you our prayers and entreaties, not only to guard against what may be, but shuddering at past things also which have been brought about by his temerity. For if he found any vent for his audacity, where would he not spread confusion?

3. But if pity for a single person can sway you, much more let the prayer of all the Bishops move you. For which of us will be united to him in fellowship and communion when he has attempted to usurp a place not due to him, and one he could not lawfully have arrived at, and endeavours to regain in a manner most unreasonable what he was most unreasonable in aiming at? Often as he has been found guilty of turbulence, he still goes on, as if his past conduct should inspire no horror. He was often, as we ascertained and saw in the present

Council, in union and combination with the Arians at the time when he endeavoured in company with Valens to disturb the Church of Milan with their detestable assembly: holding private meetings sometimes before the doors of the synagogue and sometimes in the houses of the Arians, and uniting his friends to them; and, as he could not go openly himself to their congregations, teaching and informing them in what way the Church's peace might be disturbed. Their madness gave him fresh courage, so as well to earn the favour of their supporters and allies. |69

4. When therefore it is written; a man that is an heretic after one admonition reject, and when another man who spoke by the Holy Spirit has said that beasts such as these should be spurned and not received with greeting or welcome, how is it possible that we should not judge the person whom we have seen united to their society to be also a maintainer of their perfidy? What even if he were not there? We might still have besought your Graces not to allow the Roman Church, the Head of the whole Roman world, and the sacred faith of the Apostles to be disturbed; for from thence flow all the rights of venerable Communion to all persons. And therefore we pray and beseech you that you would condescend to take from him the means of stealing advantage from you. 5. We know your Graces' holy modesty: let him not press upon you words unbecoming your ears, or give his noisy utterance to what is alien from the office and name of a Bishop, or say to you what is unseemly. When he ought to have a good report even from those who are without, let your Graces condescend to recollect what was the testimony with which the men of his own city have followed him. For it is a shame to say and against modesty to repeat how disgraceful is the rumour, with the reproach of which he is wounded. The shame of this ought to have constrained him to silence, and if he partook in any degree of the feelings and conscience of a Bishop, he would prefer the Church's peace and concord to his own ambition and inclination. But, lost to all shame, he sends letters by Paschasius an excommunicated person, the standard bearer of his madness, and so sows confusion, and attempts to excite even Gentiles and abandoned characters.

6. We therefore entreat you to restore by the degradation of that most troublesome person the security which has been interrupted both to us Bishops and to the Roman people, which is at present in uncertainty and suspense since the memorial of the Prefect of the city. And on obtaining this let us in continuous and unbroken course offer thanksgivings to God the Almighty Father and to Christ our Lord God. |70

Letters 11-20 — LETTER XII. [A.D.381]

THIS letter, referring to the settlement of affairs in the East, is really addressed to Theodosius, the Emperor of the East. After expressing the thanks due to the Emperors for the success which has attended their efforts to establish the true faith throughout the Empire, the Bishops beg that Theodosius will use his influence to settle the questions of disputed succession, which were vexing the Churches of Alexandria and Antioch, and endangering the maintenance of Communion between the East and West. They ask therefore that a general Council may be summoned to Alexandria to settle both questions. TO THE MOST GRACIOUS AND CHRISTIAN EMPERORS, THE GLORIOUS AND MOST BLESSED PRINCES, GRATIAN, VALENTINIAN, AND THEODOSIUS, THE HOLY COUNCIL WHICH IS ASSEMBLED AT AQUILEIA. 1. MOST gracious Emperors and most blessed and most glorious princes, Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius, beloved of God the Father and of His Son our Lord Jesus Christ, we are unable to match the benefits which your piety has conferred upon us, even with the most overflowing return of thanks. For now that, after many times of trial and various persecutions, which the Arians, especially Lucius , who marked his course by the impious murder of monks and virgins, and Demophilus too, an evil source of perfidy, brought on the Catholics, all the Churches of | 71 God, in the East especially, have been restored to the Catholics; while in the West scarce two heretics have been found to oppose the decrees of the Holy Council, who can conceive himself able to make an adequate acknowledgement of your goodness?

2. But though we cannot give full expression to your favours in words, we still desire to recompense them by the prayers of the Council; and though in all the several Churches we celebrate our daily vigils for your Empire before our God, still when assembled in one body, than which service we conceive nothing can be more glorious, we offer thanksgivings to our Almighty God both on behalf of the Empire, and of your own peace and safety, because peace and concord have been so shed over us through you. 3. In the West indeed only in two corners, on the borders of Dacia Ripensis and of Moesia did murmurs appear to have been raised against the faith: and these places after the sentence of the Council should, we conceive, be immediately provided for with your Graces' indulgence. But over all tracts and countries and village departments as far as the Ocean, the communion of the faithful

remains one and unpolluted. And in the East we have had the greatest joy and delight in learning that the Arians, who had violently invaded the Churches, have been ejected, and that the sacred temples of God are frequented by Catholics alone.

4. But still since the envy of the Devil is never wont to rest, we hear that there are among the Catholics themselves frequent dissensions and implacable discord; and all our feelings are disturbed at ascertaining that many things have been innovated upon, and that persons are molested now who should have been relieved, men who continued always in our Communion. In short Timotheus Bishop of the Church of Alexandria, and Paulinus Bishop of the Church of Antioch , who always maintained the concord |72 of Communion with us inviolate, are said to be distressed by the variances of other persons, whose faith in former times was scarcely stedfast. These persons, if it be possible, and they are recommended by a sufficient faith, we would wish to have added to our fellowship: but without prejudice to the rights of those who share with us the ancient Communion. And our care for them is not superfluous, first of all because the fellowship of Communion should be clear of all offence, and secondly, because we have long since received letters from both parties, and particularly from those who were divided in the Church of Antioch.

5. Indeed if the irruption of the enemy had not hindered, we had made arrangements to send thither some of our own number, to take the office of umpires and referees for diffusing peace again, should it be possible. But since our desires could not have accomplishment at that time owing to the troubles of the state, we think it right to offer our prayers to your Goodness, asking that by agreement between the factions, on the death of the one, the rights of the Church should remain with the survivor, and that no additional consecration should be forcibly attempted. And therefore we request you, most gracious and Christian Princes, that you would have a Council of all Catholic Bishops held at Alexandria, that they may more fully discuss and define among themselves to |73 whom Communion is to be imparted and with whom it is to be maintained .

6. For though we have always supported the disposition and order of the Church of Alexandria, and according to the manner and custom of our predecessors we retain Communion with it in indissoluble fellowship to these present times, still lest it should be thought that persons have been neglected who have sought our Communion according to the agreement, which we wish should stand, or that the shortest road to that peace and fellowship of the faithful has not been taken, we pray you that when they have discussed these matters in a full assembly among themselves, the decrees of the Bishops may be furthered by the assistance ministered by your Goodness. And allow us to be made acquainted with this, that our minds may not waver in uncertainty, but that, full of joy and relieved from anxiety, we may return thanks to your goodness before Almighty God, not only that heresy is shut out, but also that faith and concord are restored to the Catholics. The prayer which the African and Gallic Churches offer you through their deputies is this, that you would make the Bishops over the whole world your debtors, though the debt already due to your excellence is not small.

7. To offer however our entreaties to your clemency and to obtain what we ask for, we have sent as deputies our brethren and fellow-presbyters, whom we pray you that you would condescend graciously to listen to, and allow to return speedily. |74

Letters 11-20 — LETTER XIII. [A.D.382]

IN the year following the Council of Aquileia, a Council of the Bishops of the civil Diocese of Italy appears to have been held, over which S. Ambrose presided. It appears to have dealt principally with the questions at issue between the East and West. This letter was written by S. Ambrose in the name of the Council, after the end of its session ('in concilio nuper,' § 3), to Theodosius. The Bishops complain of the election of Flavian to succeed Meletius at Antioch, contrary to the compromise which they urged in the last letter, and maintain Maximus' claim to the see of Constantinople against Nectarius, urging again the necessity of a General Council of both East and West, to settle finally all the questions in dispute between them, and suggest that it should be held at Rome. TO THE MOST BLESSED EMPEROR AND MOST GRACIOUS PRINCE THEODOSIUS, AMBROSE AND THE OTHER BISHOPS OF ITALY.

1. WE knew indeed that your holy mind was devoted to God in pure and sincere faith, but your Majesty has loaded us with fresh benefits in restoring the Catholics to the Churches. And I would that you could have restored the Catholics themselves to their ancient reverence, that they would innovate in nothing against the prescription of our ancestors, and not be hasty either to rescind what what they ought to maintain nor to maintain what they ought to rescind. Therefore we sigh, your Majesty, perhaps with too much grief, but not without sufficient reason, that it has proved easier to get the heretics expelled than to establish concord among the Catholics. For the extent of the confusion that has lately taken place is beyond expression. 2. We wrote to you not long ago, that since the city of Antioch had two Bishops, Paulinus and Meletius, both of whom we regarded as true to the faith, they should either agree with each other in peace and concord, preserving Ecclesiastical order, or at least, if one of them died before the other, no one should be put into the place of the deceased while the other lived. But now on the death of Meletius, while Paulinus is still alive, whom fellowship |75 derived from our predecessors uninterruptedly testifies to have remained in our Communion, another person is said to have been not so much supplied, as super-added, into the place of Meletius, contrary to right and to Ecclesiastical order.

3. And this is alleged to have taken place by the consent and advice of Nectarius , the regularity of whose ordination we are not clearly convinced of. For in a Council lately, when Maximus the Bishop, having read the letter of Peter a man of holy memory, had shewn that the communion of the Church of Alexandria remained with him, and had proved by the clearest testimony, that he was consecrated by three Bishops ordaining by mandate within his private house, because the Arians were at that time in possession of the Basilicas, we had no cause, most blessed of Princes, to doubt of his episcopacy, when he testified that he resisted and was forcibly constrained by a majority of the laity and clergy.

4. Still that we might not appear to have settled any thing over-hastily in the absence of the parties, we thought it fit to inform your Grace by letter, in order that his case might be provided for so as best to serve the interests of public peace and concord, because in truth we perceived that Gregory claimed to himself the priesthood of the Church of Constantinople, by no means in accordance with the tradition of the Fathers. We therefore in that Synod, attendance at which appeared to have been prescribed to the Bishops of the whole world, were of opinion that nothing ought to be decided rashly. So at that particular time the persons who declined a general Council and who are said to have had one at Constantinople, where they had |76 ascertained that Maximus had come hither to plead his cause in the Synod (and this, even if a Council had not been proclaimed it was competent for him to do lawfully and according to the customs of our predecessors, as also Athanasius of holy memory, and since that Peter, brother Bishops of the Church of Alexandria, and several of the Eastern Bishops have done, so as to appear to have sought the decision of the Churches of Rome, of Italy, and of all the West) when, as we said, they saw that he wished to bring the question to a trial with those who denied his episcopate, they were surely bound to wait for our opinion upon it . We do not claim any special privilege of examining such matters, but we ought to have had a share in an united decision.

5. Last of all, it ought to have been decided whether he was to lose his See, before deciding whether another should receive it, especially by persons by whom Maximus complained that he was either deserted or injured. Therefore since Maximus the Bishop has been received into Communion by those of our fellowship on the ground that it was certain that he had been ordained by Catholics, we did not see that he ought to have been excluded from his claim to the Bishopric of Constantinople, and we thought that his allegation ought to be weighed in the presence of the parties. But since we have learned recently that Nectarius has been ordained at Constantinople, we fear that our communion with the Oriental regions is broken, especially since Nectarius is said to have been left immediately without the fellowship of Communion by the very persons by whom he was ordained.

6. There is therefore no slight difficulty here. And it is not any contention about wishes and ambition of our own that makes us anxious, but we are greatly disturbed by the breaking up and interruption of communion. Nor do we see any way in which concord can be established except either by restoring to Constantinople the Bishop who |77 was first ordained, or at least having a Council of ourselves and of the Eastern Bishops at Rome, to consider the

ordination of both of them. 7. Nor does it seem unbecoming, your Majesty, that the persons, who thought the judgement of Acholius, a single Bishop, so well worth waiting for, that they called him to Constantinople from the regions of the West, should be obliged to submit to the discussion of the Bishop of the Church of Rome, and of the Bishops of the neighbourhood and of Italy. If a question was reserved for a single individual, how much more should it be reserved for many?

8. We, however, as it has been suggested to us by the most blessed Prince, your Brother , that we should write to your Grace's Majesty, request that when the communion is one, you would be pleased that the judgement should be joint and the consent concurrent.

Letters 11-20 — LETTER XIV. [A.D.382.]

This letter is a reply to one addressed to the Bishops of Italy by Theodosius, in answer to the last. He seems in it to have "undeceived them by informing them what Maximus was, and how different his ordination was from that of Nectarius. He represented to them that these affairs, and that of Flavian, ought to be judged in the East, where all the parties were present, and that there was no reason to oblige those of the East to come unto the West." (Fleury xviii, 17, vol. 1. p. 41 Newman's Transl). The Bishops in this reply thank the Emperor for his efforts to appease the differences between the East and West, and profess the disinterestedness of their desire for a general Council, and add, as an additional reason for it, the spread of opinions attributed to Apollinaris, which require to be examined into in the presence of the parties concerned.

TO THE MOST BLESSED EMPEROR AND MOST GRACIOUS PRINCE THEODOSIUS, AMBROSE AND THE OTHER BISHOPS OF ITALY. 1. THE knowledge of your faith, which is diffused over the whole world, has soothed the innermost feelings of our minds; and therefore, that your reign might have the additional glory of having restored unity to the Churches |78 both of the West and East, we have thought it right, most serene and faithful Emperor, at once to beseech and inform your Grace on Ecclesiastical subjects by our letter. For we have been grieved that the fellowship of holy Communion between the East and West was interrupted. 2. We say not a word by whose error or by whose fault this was, that we may not be supposed to be spreading fables and idle talk. Nor can we regret having made an attempt, the neglect of which might have turned to our blame. For it was often made matter of blame to us that we appeared to disregard the society of the Eastern brethren, and to reject their kindness.

3. We thought moreover that we ought to take this trouble on ourselves, not for Italy, which now for this long time has been quiet and free from anxiety on the part of the Arians, and which is troubled with no disturbance of the heretics; not for ourselves, for we seek not our own things, but the things of all; not for Gaul and Africa which enjoy the individual fellowship of all their Bishops, but that the circumstances which have disturbed our communion on the side of the East might be enquired into in the Synod, and all scruple be removed from

among us. 4. For not only with regard to the persons about whom your Grace condescended to write, but with regard to others who are attempting to bring into the Church some dogma or other, said to be Apollinaris', there were several things that affected us, to which the knife should have been applied in the presence of the parties, that a person convicted of maintaining a new dogma and proved to be in error should not shelter himself under the general name of the Faith, but at once lay down both the office and name of Bishop, which he was not entitled to by authority of doctrine, and that no threads or artifices of delusion should remain for persons hereafter wishing to deceive. For the person who is convicted, not in the presence of the parties, as your Grace has truly decided in your august and princely answer, will always lay hold of a handle for reviving the enquiry. |79

5. This was why we asked for a Council of Bishops, that no one should be permitted to state what was false against a person in his absence, and that the truth might be cleared up by discussion in the Council. We ought not then to incur any suspicion either of over-zeal or over-leniency, seeing that we made all our observations in the presence of the parties. 6. In truth we drew up what was quoted, not to decide but to give information, and while we asked for a judgement, we offer no prejudgement. Nor ought it to have been regarded as any reproach to them, when Bishops were invited to the Council, who in many cases were more present by their very absence, since it contributed to the common good. For neither did we conceive it to be a reproach to us when a Presbyter of the Church of Constantinople, by name Paulus, demanded that there should be a Synod both of Eastern and Western Bishops in the province of Achaia.

7. Your Grace observes that this demand, which was made by the Greeks also, was not unreasonable. But, because there are disturbances in Illyricum , a neighbourhood near the sea and safer was sought. Nor have we indeed made any innovation in the way of precedent, but preserving the decisions of Athanasius of holy memory, who was as it were a pillar of the Faith, and of our holy fathers of old time in their Councils, we do not tear up the boundaries that our Fathers placed, or violate the rights of hereditary Communion, but reserving the honour due to your authority, we shew ourselves studious of peace and quietness . |80

Letters 11-20 — LETTER XV.[A.D.383.]

THIS letter is addressed to the Bishops of Macedonia, in reply to their announcement of the death of Acholius , Bishop of Thessalonica. S. Ambrose pronounces a warm eulogium on the departed Bishop, whom he compares to Elijah, especially in leaving in Anysius a successor, like Elisha, endowed with a double portion of his spirit. He recounts the pleasure which he had felt in his intercourse with Acholius at Rome, when they had wept together over the evils of the times, and invokes the Blessing of God upon his successor. AMBROSE TO ANATOLIUS, NUMERIUS, SEVERUS, PHILIP, MACEDONIUS, AMMIANUS, THEODOSIUS, EUTROPIUS, CLARUS, EUSEBIUS, AND TIMOTHEUS, PRIESTS OF THE LORD, AND TO ALL THE BELOVED CLERGY AND PEOPLE OF THESSALONICA, HEALTH.
1. WHILE longing to keep ever imprinted on my mind the holy man, and while I survey all his acts like one set on a watch-tower, my restless anxiety caused me to drink only too swiftly these bitter tidings, and I learned what I had rather still he ignorant of, that the man whom we were seeking on earth was already at rest in heaven.

2. You will ask who announced this to me, seeing that the letter of your Holinesses had not then arrived. I know not who was the hearer of the tidings: it is, you know, |81 men's wont not willingly to remember the bearer of tidings of sorrow: however, though the sea was then closed, and the land blocked by a barbarian invasion, there was no lack of a messenger, though it was impossible for any one to arrive from abroad; so that it appears to me the saint himself announced his own death to us, for now that he enjoyed the eternal recompense of his labours, and freed from the bands of the body, had been carried by the ministry of Angels to the intimate presence of Christ, he was desirous of removing the error of one who loved him, that we might not be asking for him length of mortal life, while he was already receiving eternal rewards.

3. This veteran then of Christ Jesus is not dead, but has departed and left us, he has changed for heaven this earth below, and clapping the pinions and wings of his spirit he exclaims, Lo, I have got me away far off! For in the spirit of the Apostle he desired long ago to leave the earth, but he was detained by the prayers of all, as we read of the Apostle, because it was needful for the Church that he should abide longer in the flesh. For he lived

not for himself but for all, and was to the people the minister of eternal life, so that he gained the fruit thereof in others, before he experienced it in himself. 4. Now therefore he is a citizen of heaven, a possessor of that eternal city Jerusalem, which is in heaven. There he sees the boundless circuit of this city, its pure gold, its precious stones, its perpetual light though without the sun. And seeing all these things whereof he before had knowledge, but which are now manifested to him face to face, he says, Like as we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God. Standing there he appeals to the people of God saying, O Israel, how great is the house of God, and how large is the place of His possession! Great is He, and hath none end.

5. But what is this? While I consider his merits, and follow as it were in spirit his departure, and mingle with the choirs of saints that escort him, not indeed by my desert but by my affection, meanwhile I have almost forgotten myself. Is then this wall of faith and grace and sanctity taken from us, that wall which, though frequently assaulted |82 by the Goths , their barbarian darts could never penetrate, nor the warlike fury of many nations overpower? They who in other places were spoilers there prayed for peace, and while they marvelled what was this unarmed force which opposed them, the wiser hinted that one like Elisha dwelt within, one who was nearly his equal in age, in spirit quite his equal, and bade them beware lest after the manner of the Syrian army, blindness should fall on them also. 6. However the gifts of Christ to His disciples are various. Elisha led captive into Samaria the army of the Syrians, holy Acholius by his prayers caused the victors to retreat from Macedonia. Do we not see in this a proof of supernatural forces, that though no soldiers were at hand, the victors should thus fly without a foe; is not this too a proof of blindness that they should fly when no man pursued? Though in truth holy Acholius pursued and fought them, not with swords but prayers, not with weapons but good works.

7. Do we not know that the saints fight even when they keep holiday? Was not Elisha at rest? Yes, at rest in body, but in spirit he was active, and by his prayers he fought when the noise of horses and the noise of a great host were heard in the camp of the Syrians, so that they thought that the forces of other princes were marching against them, to succour the people of Israel. So they were seized with great panic and fled, and four lepers, who had gone out to seek for death, spoiled their camp. And did not the Lord work like, or, I might almost say, greater wisdom in Macedonia, by the prayers of Acholius? For it was not by an idle panic nor a vague suspicion, but by a raging plague and burning pestilence that the Goths were troubled and alarmed. In short they then fled that they might escape; afterwards they returned and sued for peace to save their lives.

8. Wherefore in the great deeds of this eminent man we |83 have seen former ages revived, and have witnessed those works of the prophet which we read of. Like Elisha he was all his life in the midst of arms and battles, and by his good works made wars to cease. And when tranquillity was restored to his countrymen, he breathed out his holy soul, a misfortune heavier than war itself. Like Elijah he was carried up to heaven, not in a chariot of fire, nor by horses of fire, (unless haply it was but that we saw them not) nor in any whirlwind

in the sky, but by the will and in the calm of our God, and with the jubilation of the holy Angels who rejoiced that such a man had come among them. 9. Surely we cannot doubt this, when all other particulars agree so well. For at the very moment when he was being taken up, he let fall so to speak the vestment which he wore, and invested with it holy Anysius his disciple, and clothed him with the robes of his own priesthood. His merits and graces I do not now hear for the first time, nor have I first learnt them from your letters, but I recognised them in what you wrote. For as if foreknowing that he would be his successor, Acholius designated him as such by tokens, though in open speech he concealed it; saying that he had been aided by his care, labour, and ministry, thus seeming to declare him his coadjutor, one who would not come as a novice to the chief office of the priesthood, but as a tried performer of its duties. Well does that saying in the Gospel befit him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.

10. So far both you and I participate in holy Acholius, but there is this special bond between him and me, that the man of blessed memory suffered me to become his friend. For on his arrival in Italy, when I was prevented by illness from going to meet him, he himself came and visited me. With what ardour, with what affection did we embrace each other! With what groans did we lament the evil of the times, and all that was happening here! Our garments were bedewed with a flood of tears, while in the enjoyment of our meeting long and mutually desired, we remained locked in each others embrace. Thus what |84 I had long yearned for he bestowed, the opportunity of seeing him. For although it is in the spirit, the seat of love, that the greater portion and more perfect knowledge lies, yet we desire to behold our friends in bodily form also. Thus formerly the kings of the earth sought to behold the face of Solomon, and to hear his wisdom.

11. He is gone then from us, and has left us tossed on this sea; what is a benefit to him is to the many a heavier calamity than even the rage of the barbarians; for this he repelled, and now who shall bring back his presence to us? Nay, the Lord brings it back, and he himself gives himself back in his disciple. Your judgements give him back, by which you say, Give to Levi his manifest one, and his truths to Thy holy one. You have given his manifest one inasmuch as he is established by his appointment; you have given a follower of that man, who said unto his father and to his mother I have not seen thee; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children. He observed the word of the Lord, and kept His covenant. The people will tell of his wisdom.

12. Such was the man's life, such his heritage, such his conversation, such his succession. While yet a boy he entered a monastery, and though shut up in a narrow cell in Achaia, yet by grace he traversed the spaces of many countries. The people of Macedonia besought that he might be their Bishop, the priesthood elected him to that office, that where the faith had before been maimed by the Bishop, there afterwards the solid foundations of the faith might be established by the Bishop. 13. None other did his disciple imitate, who also himself said unto his father and to his mother I have not seen thee. He saw them not with

affection, he saw them not with desire, and he knew not his brethren, because he desired to know the Lord. He observed also the word of the Lord and kept His covenant, and will ever offer |85 sacrifice upon His altar. Bless, O Lord, his faith, his holiness, his assiduity. Let Thy blessing descend upon his head and upon his neck. Let him be honourable among his brethren, let him be as the leader of the herd. Let him sift the hearts of his enemies, let him soothe the minds of the saints, and let the judgement of Thy priests flourish in him as a lily. Brethren, farewell, and love me, as I love you.

Letters 11-20 — LETTER XVI. [A.D.383.]

This letter is addressed to Anysius, immediately on his election as successor to Acholius, in answer apparently to one from Anysius, which accompanied that from the Bishops of Macedonia, and announced his appointment. He speaks of the responsibility of succeeding so zealous a Bishop as Acholius, whom he praises in enthusiastic terms, and prays that (iod may make him a worthy successor in every way. BISHOP AMBROSE TO HIS BROTHER ANYSIUS. 1. I HAVE been for some time sure of what I now read for the first time, and I know well by his merits him whom my eyes have not seen. I grieve that the one event should have happened, I rejoice that the other has ensued; I should have wished that the one had not happened in my lifetime, but it was my hope that after the death of that holy man this alone would ensue, as it ought. So now we have you, once the disciple, now the successor of Acholius of blessed memory, the inheritor alike of his rank and of his grace. This is a great merit, my brother. I congratulate you that there was not a moment's doubt who should be the successor of so great a man. It is a great task too, my brother, to have taken upon you the burden of so great a name, a name of such weight, of such a scale. In you we look for Acholius, and as he was in your affections, so in your ministry is required a copy of his virtue, of his holy life, his vigorous mind in that decrepit body.

2. I have seen him, I confess: my seeing him is due to his merits: I saw him in such sort in the body as to believe |86 him to be out of the body: I saw the image of him who, knowing not whether it was in the body or out of the body, saw himself transported to Paradise. With such rapid speed had he traversed every region, Constantinople, Achaia, Epirus, and Italy, that younger men could not keep pace with him. Men of stronger bodies yielded to him, knowing that he was free from the shackles of the body, so that he used it more as a covering than as an instrument, at all events that it was his slave not his helpmate, for he had so trained his body that he crucified the world in it, and himself to the world. 3. Blessed is the Lord, and blessed was His youth which He passed in the tabernacle of the God of Jacob, abiding in a monastery, in which, when sought after by His parents and relations He said, Who is My mother, and who are My brethren? I know not father, nor mother, nor brethren, save those who hear the Word of God, and do it. Blessed also were his maturer years, wherein he was elected to the chief priesthood, having given proof of his virtue by a long service. He

came like David to restore peace to the people. He came like that ship bringing with him spiritual treasure, and cedar wood, and precious stones, and those silver wings of a dove, with which, lying in the midst of the lots, she slept the sleep of tranquillity and peace.

4. For even the sleep of the saints is operative, as it is written, I sleep, but my heart waketh, and as holy Jacob saw in sleep divine mysteries, which waking he saw not, even a passage opened for the saints between earth and heaven, and the Lord regarding him and promising to him the possession of that land. Thus by a brief sleep he attained that which his successors afterwards won by great toil. The sleep of the saints is free from all bodily pleasures, from all perturbation of mind, it brings tranquillity to the mind and peace to the soul, so that, freed from the fetters of the body, it raises itself aloft, and is united to Christ. 5. This sleep is the life of the saints, the life which holy Acholius lived, whose old age was also blest. That old age is truly venerable which is hoary not with gray hairs |87 but in good deeds; for those hoar hairs are reverent which belong to the soul, whose works and thoughts are, as it were, white and shining. For what is true old age, but that unspotted life, which lasts not for days or months but for ages, whose continuance is without end, whose length of years is without weakness? For the longer it lives the stronger it waxes; the longer its life lasts the more vigorously does it grow unto a perfect man.

6. May God then approve you his successor not only in honor but also in conversation, and may He deign to establish you in His highest grace, that the people may flock to you also, and you may say often, Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves with their young? Let them come also as the ships of Tarshish, and take in corn which the true Solomon gives, even twenty measures of wheat. Let them receive the oil and wisdom of Solomon, and let there be peace between thee and thy people, and keep thou the covenant of peace. Brother, farewell: love me, for I too love you.

Letters 11-20 — LETTER XVII. [A.D.384.]

This letter was addressed to the Emperor Valentinian the 2nd at the time when a deputation from the Senate at Rome, headed by Symmachus, were seeking to obtain from him the restoration of the statue and altar of Victory. The facts relating to this statue form so important a page in the history of the gradual suppression of paganism in the Empire, that it may be well to give a brief outline of them, especially as this and the following letter, and the 'Memorial of Symmachus' which accompanies them, contain several allusions to them. Constantius 2nd, son of Constantine, when at Rome in 356 A.D., ordered the statue of Victory which stood in the senate-house, 'a majestic female standing on a globe, with flowing garments, expanded wings, and a crown of laurel in her outstretched hand' (Gibbon, ch. xxviii. and the altar which stood before it, at which the senators were sworn, to he removed, as an offence to the Christians. The altar was restored by Julian, along with the other disused symbols and rites of paganism. It was tolerated by Valentinian 1st, who probably did not venture at once to overthrow Julian's work, (see Memorial of Symmachus § 7, 8) though S. Ambrose (Lett. xvii. § 16) rhetorically represents him as pleading that he was not aware of its being there, and that no one had complained to him of its presence. It was once more removed by Gratian, (sec Lett. |88 xvii. § 16. The pagan party in the Senate then made great efforts to procure its restoration.

Gibbon (ch. xxviii. note 13. enumerates four successive deputations sent by them with this object, 'the first, A. D. 382, to Gratian, who refused them audience, the second, A.D. 384, to Valentinian, the third, A.D. 388, to Theodosius, the fourth, A. D. 392, to Valentinian.' The two letters of S. Ambrose and the Memorial of Symmachus refer to the second of these deputations. In this first one he presses on the Emperor his duty and responsibility as a Christian Emperor, urges that the heathens have deprived themselves of any equitable claim by their persecution of the Christians in former times; asserts that the petition is only that of a minority of the Senate, just as had been the case years before, when they applied to Gratian. He then asks for a copy of the Memorial, in order to answer it in full, and warns Valentinian that he will find no Bishop to admit him to any share in Christian worship if he inflicts this insult on their faith, and reminds him of his brother and father, who would rise from the grave to reproach him.

Though called Letters, these two documents are rather state-papers. S.Ambrose himself in the latter speaks of the former as a 'libellus,' the term usually applied to petitions or memorials. BISHOP AMBROSE TO THE MOST BLESSED PRINCE AND CHRISTIAN EMPEROR VALENTINIAN. 1. As all who are under the dominion of Rome are enlisted to serve you, the emperors and kings of the earth, so you yourselves are enlisted to serve Almighty God and our holy Faith. For safety cannot he imperilled, save when every man is a sincere worshipper of the true God, the God of the Christians, who governs all things; for He is the only true God, and is to he worshipped by the inmost spirit. As for all the gods of the heathen, they are but idols, as the Scripture saith. 2. Now he that is the soldier of this, the true God, and worships Him in his inmost spirit, offers to Him no insincere or lukewarm service, but a zealous faith and devotion. At any rate no one ought to give his consent to the worship of idols and the observance of profane ceremonies. For no man can deceive God, before Whom all the secrets of the heart are manifest.

3. Seeing then, most Christian Emperor, that not only faith, but the very zeal and care and devotion of faith, is due from you to God, I wonder how some men can have conceived the thought that it was your duty to command the restoration of altars to the gods of the Gentiles, and to |89 bestow money for the purposes of profane sacrifices. For if you give what has long been appropriated to the emperor's privy purse or the city treasury , you will seem to be giving out of what is your own rather than refunding to others what belongs to them. 4. The men who now complain of their losses are those who never spared our blood, and have even laid in ruins the very structures of our Churches. The men who ask for privileges are they who denied to us by the late law of Julian the common right of speaking and teaching, privileges too whereby even Christians have often been deceived, for by these means they sought to entrap some persons, either unawares or else by the desire to avoid the burthen of public duties. And since all men have not courage, many even under Christian Emperors have lapsed.

5. Even had these things never been repeated, I could have proved that your authority ought to have abolished them, but now that they have been severally forbidden by many previous Emperors and abolished at Rome in the interests of the true Faith by your Majesty's brother Gratian of illustrious memory, and abolished by a formal rescript, do not, I beseech you, pluck up again these Christian ordinances, nor rescind your brother's injunctions. In civil matters, if ought is decreed, no man considers that it should be overthrown, and shall a religious precept be trampled on? 6. Let no man beguile your youth; if he be a heathen who asks this of you, let him not ensnare your mind in the bonds of his own superstition, rather his very zeal ought to admonish you with what ardour you ought to defend the true Faith, when he with all the warmth of truth defends falsehood. I myself urge you to shew deference to the merits of illustrious men; but it is certain that God ought to be obeyed above all. |90

7. When we have to consult on military matters we should look for the opinion of one who is versed in war, and follow his counsel; when we treat of religion God is to be considered. No man is injured by Almighty God being preferred before him. He may keep his own opinion,

you do not constrain any man to worship against his will, and your Majesty ought to have the same liberty, and every one should be content to be unable to extort from the Emperor, what it would be a hardship for the Emperor to desire to extort from him. The very heathen are wont to be displeased by a double-minded man, for every man ought boldly to defend the faith of his own heart, and to maintain his purpose. 8. But if any who call themselves Christians conceive that you should make such a decree, let not bare words affect your mind, let not idle names deceive you. Whoever persuades to this, or decrees it, offers sacrifice to the gods. Yet it is more tolerable that one should sacrifice than that all should fall. Here the whole Senate of Christians is in danger.

9. If at the present day, (which God forbid) an heathen Emperor were to erect an altar to false gods, and compel the Christians to assemble there, in order for them to be present at the sacrifice, so that the breath and mouth of the faithful might be tainted with ashes from the altar, with sparks from the sacrilege, with smoke from the pile, and should force them to vote in a house in which the members were sworn at the altar of an idol, (for on this account it is that they maintain that an altar should be set up, namely, that every one should consult for the public weal, under the obligation of what they consider its sanctity, although the majority of the Senate now consists of Christians,) if this, I say, were the case, Christians would consider themselves persecuted, if they were compelled by such an alternative to come to the assembly, and indeed it is often by violence that they are compelled to come: shall Christians then in your reign be compelled to swear on the altar? What is an oath, but an acknowledgement of the divine power of him whom you call upon to attest your truthfulness? Is it in your reign that the request and demand is |91 made, that you bid an altar to be erected, and money expended on profane sacrifices?

10. But this cannot be decreed without sacrilege, and so I beg you not to decree or order it, nor to subscribe any such decree. I appeal to your faith as a minister of Christ; all the Bishops would have appealed with me, had not this report which has reached men's ears that such a thing was either propounded in your Council or petitioned for by the Senate, been so sudden and incredible. But let it not be said that the Senate have petitioned for this; a few heathen have usurped the name of all. For nearly two years ago on an attempt of this kind, holy Damasus the Bishop of the Roman Church, chosen by the judgment of God, sent me a document which the Christian senators in large numbers had presented, declaring that they gave no commission of the sort, that they did not agree or consent to such petitions of the heathen, and they threatened that they would not come either publicly or privately to the Senate if such a decree was made. Is it worthy of your reign, that is of a Christian reign, that Christian senators should be deprived of their dignity, that the profane wishes of the heathen may be carried into effect? This document I sent to your Majesty's brother , and it proves that the Senate gave no commission to the deputies about the expenses of superstition.

11. But perhaps it may be said, Why then were they not present in the Senate, when these things were brought forward? They say plainly enough what they wish, by not being present;

they have said enough in addressing your Majesty. And yet we need not wonder if they who will not concede to your Majesty the liberty of refusing to command that which you do not approve, or of maintaining your own opinion, should deprive private men at Rome of the right of resistance. 12. Remembering then the commission so lately laid upon me, I again appeal your own faith, I appeal to your own sentiments, not to give your answer in accordance with this heathen petition, or sign your name to such an answer, for it would be sacrilegious. Consult him who |92 is your Excellency's father, the Emperor Theodosius, to whom you have been wont to refer in all causes of importance; and nothing can be graver than religion, more exalted than faith.

13. Were this a civil matter, the right of reply would be reserved for the opposing party: it is a matter of religion, and I, as Bishop, appeal to you, I request to be furnished with a copy of the Memorial which has been sent, that I may answer more at large; and so let your Majesty's father be consulted on the whole matter and vouchsafe a gracious answer. Assuredly should the decree be different, we as Bishops cannot quietly permit and connive at it; it will indeed be in your power to come to the Church, but there you will either not find a priest, or you will find one purposed to resist. 14. What answer will you give to the priest when he says to you, 'the Church seeks not your gifts, because you have adorned the heathen temples with gifts; the Altar of Christ rejects your gifts, because you have erected altars to idols, for it was your word, your hand, your signature, your act: the Lord Jesus refuses and repels your service, because you have served idols, for He has said to you, Ye cannot serve two masters? The Virgins dedicated to God enjoy no privileges from you, and do the vestal Virgins claim them? What do you want of the priests of God, when you have preferred to them the profane petitions of the heathen? We cannot enter into fellowship with the errors of others.'

15. What will you answer to this charge? That it is a boyish error? Every age is perfect in Christ, and fulfilled with God. No childhood in faith can be admitted; for children confronted with their persecutors have boldly confessed Christ. 16. What answer will you make to your brother? Will he not say to you, 'I would not believe myself conquered, for I left you Emperor, I regretted not to die, because you were my successor, I grieved not that I was withdrawn from power, because I believed that my edicts, specially those concerning religion, would continue for ever. These were the memorials of piety and virtue which I had erected, |93 these trophies of victory over the world, these the spoils of the devil, of the adversary of all, which I had offered up, and in which lies eternal victory. What more could an enemy have deprived me of? You have abrogated my decrees; an act which even he who took up arms against me has not yet committed. Now am I pierced with a more deadly weapon, in that my brother has annulled my ordinances. Your acts tend to the injury of my better part, for while the one destroys my body the other destroys my good name. Now are my laws repealed, repealed too (which makes it more painful) by your adherents and by mine; that very thing which even my enemies had praised in me is repealed. If you have willingly acquiesced, you have condemned the Faith which I held, if you have yielded reluctantly, you have betrayed your own. And so, what is a still heavier calamity, I incur danger in your person also.'

17. What answer will you make to your father , who with still greater grief will address you, saying: 'You have judged very wrongly of me, my son, in supposing that I could have winked at the heathen. No man ever informed me that there was an altar in the Roman Senate house ; never could I have believed such a crime as that heathen sacrifices should be performed in that common council of Christians and heathens, that is to say, that the heathen should triumph in the presence of Christians, and Christians should be compelled against their wills to be present at sacrifices. Many and various were the crimes committed during my reign, those that were discovered I punished, and if any man escaped unnoticed, is it just to say that I approved that which no one informed me of? You have judged most wrongly of me, if you suppose that a foreign superstition and not my own faith preserved to me the empire.'

18. Wherefore, your Majesty, seeing that if you make |94 any such decree, you will injure, first God, and next your father and brother, I beseech you to do that which you know will be profitable to your salvation in the sight of God. THE MEMORIAL OF SYMMACHUS, PREFECT OF THE CITY. THE occasion on which this Memorial was presented is stated in the introduction to the last letter. It is addressed formally to the three Emperors Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius, but really to Valentinian only, who was at that time sole Emperor of the West. Symmachus was the leading orator and scholar of his day, and his plea is composed with much skill and vigour. Gibbon (ch. xxviii.) expresses hearty admiration of the caution with which he 'avoids every topic which might appear to reflect on the religion of his sovereign, and artfully draws his arguments from the schools of rhetoric rather than from those of philosophy,' and gives a summary of its contents in a tone of keen appreciation, as might be expected. We may allow, with Cave (Life of S. Ambrose 3, 3.) that 'it was the best plea the cause would bear.'

1. As soon as the honourable Senate, ever faithful to your Majesty, learnt that offences were made amenable to law, and that the character of past times was being redeemed by pious governors, it hastened to follow the precedent of better times, and give utterance to its long repressed grief, and commissioned me once more to be the spokesman of its complaints, for I was before refused access to the deceased Emperor by evil men, because otherwise justice could never have failed me, most noble Emperors Valentinian, Theodosius and Arcadius, victorious and triumphant, ever illustrious. 2. Filling then a twofold office, as your Prefect I report the proceedings of the Senate , as the envoy of the citizens I offer to your favourable notice their requests. Here is no opposition of wills. Men have ceased to believe that disagreement proves their superiority in courtly zeal. To be loved, to be the object of respect and affection is more than sovereignty. Who could suffer private contests to injure the commonwealth? Justly does the |95 Senate assail those who prefer their own power to the honour of the prince.

3. It is our duty to be watchful for your Majesties. The very glory of this present time makes it the more fitting that we should maintain the customs of our ancestors, the laws and destinies of our country; for it conduces to this glory that you should know it is not in

your power to do anything contrary to the practice of your parents. We ask the restoration of that state of religion under which the Republic has so long prospered. Let the Emperors of either sect and either opinion be counted up; a late Emperor observed the rites of his ancestors, his successor did not abolish them. If the religion of older times is no precedent, let the connivance of the last Emperors be so. 4. Who is so friendly with the barbarians as not to require an altar of Victory? Hereafter we must be cautious, and avoid a display of such things. But let at least that honour be paid to the name which is denied to the Divinity . Your fame owes much, and will owe still more, to Victory. Let those detest this power, who were never aided by it, but do you not desert a patronage which favours your triumphs. Vows are due to this power from every man, let no one deny that a power is to be venerated which he owns is to be desired.

5. But even if it were wrong to avoid this omen, at least the ornaments of the Senate-house ought to have been spared. Permit us, I beseech you, to transmit in our old age to our posterity what we ourselves received when boys. Great is the love of custom. And deservedly was the act of the deified Constantius of short duration. You ought to avoid all precedents which you know to have thus been reversed. We are solicitous for the endurance of your name and glory, and that a future age may find nothing to amend. 6. Where shall we swear to observe your laws and statutes? by what sanction shall the deceitful mind be deterred from bearing false witness? All places indeed are full of God, nor is there any spot where the perjured can |96 be safe, but it is of great efficacy in restraining crime to feel that we are in the presence of sacred things. That altar binds together the concord of all, that altar appeals to the faith of each man, nor does any thing give more weight to our decrees than that all our decisions are sanctioned, so to speak, by an oath. A door will thus be opened to perjury, and this is to be approved of by the illustrious Emperors, allegiance to whom is guarded by a public oath!

7. But Constantius, of sacred memory, is said to have done the same thing. Be it so, let us then imitate his other actions, feeling sure that had any one committed this error before his time, he would never have fallen into it. For the fall of one is a warning to his successor, and the censure of a previous example causes amendment. It was allowable for this predecessor of your Majesties to incur offence in a novel matter, but how can the same excuse avail us, if we imitate that which we know was disapproved? 8. Will your Majesties listen to other acts of this same Emperor more worthy of your imitation? He left uncurtailed the privileges of the sacred virgins, he filled the priestly office with men of noble birth, he allowed the cost of the Roman ceremonies, and following the joyful Senate through all the streets of the eternal city, he beheld with serene countenance the temples, reading the names of the gods inscribed on their pediments, he enquired after the origin of the sacred edifices, and admired their founders. Although he himself professed another religion he maintained the ancient one for the Empire; for every man has his own customs, his own rites. The Divine mind has distributed to cities various guardians and various ceremonies. As each man that is born receives a soul, so do nations receive a genius who guards their destiny. Here the proof from utility comes in, which is our best voucher with regard to the Deity. For since our

reason is in the dark, what better knowledge of the gods can we have than from the record and evidence of prosperity? And if a long course of years give their sanction to a religion, we ought to keep faith with so many centuries, and to follow our |97 parents, as they followed with success those who founded them.

9. Let us suppose Rome herself to approach, and address you in these terms: ' Excellent Emperors, Fathers of your country, respect these years to which pious rites have conducted me. Let me use the ancient ceremonies, for I do not repent of them. Let me live in my own way, for I am free. This worship reduced the world under my laws; these sacred rites repulsed Hannibal from the walls, and the Gauls from the Capitol. Am I reserved for this, to be censured in my old age? I am not unwilling to consider the proposed decree, and yet late and ignominious is the reformation of old age.' 10. We pray therefore for a respite for the gods of our fathers and our native gods . That which all venerate should in fairness be accounted as one. We look on the same stars, the heaven is common to us all, the same world surrounds us. What matters it by what arts each of us seeks for truth? We cannot arrive by one and the same path at so great a secret; but this discussion belongs rather to persons at their ease, it is prayers not arguments which we now offer.

11. What advantage accrues to your treasury from the abolition of the privilege of the Vestal virgins? Shall that be denied under princes the most munificent which the most parsimonious have granted? Their sole honour consists in their wages, so to speak, of chastity. As their fillets adorn their heads, so is it esteemed by them an honour to be free to devote themselves to the ministry of sacrifices. It is but the bare name of exemption which they ask, for their poverty exonerates them from any payment. So that he who reduces their means, contributes to their praise, for virginity dedicated to the public welfare is meritorious in proportion as it is without reward. 12. Far be such gains from the purity of your treasury. The exchequer of good princes should be replenished by |98 the spoils of enemies, not by the losses of ministers of religion. And is the gain any compensation for the odium? Those whose ancient resources are cut off only feel it the more acutely in that you are free from the charge of avarice. For under Emperors who keep their hands from other men's goods and check desire what does not excite the cupidity of the spoiler must be taken solely with a view of injuring the person robbed.

13. The Imperial Exchequer retains also lands bequeathed by the will of dying persons to the sacred virgins and priests. I implore you, as Priests of justice, to restore to the sacred functionaries of your city the right of inheritance. Let men dictate their wills in peace, knowing that under equitable princes their bequests will be undisturbed. Men are wont to take pleasure in this security, and I would have you sympathise with them, for the precedent lately set has begun to harass them on their death-beds. Shall it be said that the religion of Rome appertains not to Roman laws? What name shall we give to the taking away of legacies which no law no casualty has made void? Freedmen may take legacies, slaves are allowed a due latitude of bequeathing by will, only the noble virgins and ministers of sacred rites are excluded from inheriting lands devised to them. What advantage is it to dedicate one's

virginity to the public safety, and to support the immortality of the empire with heavenly protection, to conciliate friendly powers to your arms and eagles, to take upon oneself vows salutary for all, and to refrain from commerce with mankind in general? Slavery then is a happier condition, whose service is given to men. It is the state which is wronged, whose interest it never is to be ungrateful.

14. Let me not be supposed to be defending the cause of the ancient religions only; from acts of this kind all the calamities of the Roman nation have arisen. The laws of our ancestors provided for the Vestal virgins and the ministers of the gods a moderate maintenance and just privileges. This gift was preserved inviolate till the time of the degenerate moneychangers, who diverted the |99 maintenance of sacred chastity into a fund for the payment of base porters. A public famine ensued on this act, and a bad harvest disappointed the hopes of all the provinces. The soil was not here in fault, we ascribe no influence to the stars, no mildew blighted the crops, nor did tares choke the corn, it was sacrilege which rendered the year barren, for it was necessary that all should lose that which they had denied to religion. 15. By all means, if there is any instance of such an evil, let us attribute this famine to the effect of the seasons. An unhealthy wind has caused this blight, and so life is supported by means of shrubs and leaves, and the peasants in their want have had resource once more to the oaks of Dodona . When did the provinces suffer such a calamity, so long as the ministers of religion were supported by the public bounty? When were oaks shaken for the food of man, when were roots dug up, when were opposite regions of the earth cursed with sterility, so long as provisions were furnished in common to the people and to the sacred virgins? The produce of the earth was blessed by its support of the priests, and thus the gift was rather in the nature of a safeguard than of a largess. Can it be doubted that the gift was for the common benefit, now that a general scarcity has attended its discontinuance?

16. But it may be said that public aid is rightly refused to the cost of an alien religion. Far be it from good rulers to suppose that what has been bestowed from the common stock on certain individuals is within the disposal of the Imperial treasury. For as the commonwealth consists of individuals, so that which comes from it becomes again the property of individuals. You govern all, but you preserve for each his own, and justice has more power with you than arbitrary will. Consult your own generous feelings, whether that ought still to be deemed public property which has been conferred on others. Gifts once devoted to the honour of the city are placed out of the power of the donors, and that which originally was a free-gift becomes by usage and length of time a debt. Vain therefore is the fear which |100 they would impress upon your minds who assert that unless you incur the odium of withdrawing the gift you share the responsibility of the donors of it.

17. May the unseen patrons of all sects be propitious to your Majesties, and may those in particular who of old assisted your ancestors, aid you and be worshipped by us. We ask for that religious condition which preserved the empire to your Majesties' father , and blessed him with lawful heirs. That venerable sire beholds from his starry seat the tears of the priests, and feels himself censured by the infraction of that custom which he readily

observed. 18. I beg you also to amend for your departed brother what he did by the advice of others, to cover the act by which he unknowingly offended the Senate. For it is certain that the reason why the embassage was refused admittance was, to prevent the decision of the state from reaching him. It is due to the credit of past times to abolish without hesitation that which has been found not to have been the doing of the Emperor.

Letters 11-20 — LETTER XVIII. [A.D.384.]

THIS is S. Ambrose's answer to the Memorial of Symmachus which precedes it. In it he replies in detail to the arguments which Symmachus had advanced, and meets him on his own ground. It is to be remembered in forming an estimate of it, that it is simply a state paper, adopting both the style and method natural to such a document. That it is over rhetorical for our taste may at once be allowed, for that is the character of the literature of the time generally; that it is not so perfect a specimen of the style, regarded merely as a piece of argument, as the document to which it replies, may be granted without disparagement to S. Ambrose, for Symmachus "stood foremost among his contemporaries as a scholar, a statesman, and an orator." (Dict. of Biog. sub voc.) But he fairly meets and refutes Symmachus' arguments, and his retort of his adversary's personification of Rome is happy and telling. The earlier portion is more vigorous than the latter, which is overwrought, especially in the argument against maintaining things as they were. The abundance of allusions to, and quotations of, Virgil are characteristic of the age, and evidences of S. Ambrose's early training in the education of a Roman of high birth and rank. | 101

BISHOP AMBROSE TO THE MOST BLESSED PRINCE AND GRACIOUS EMPEROR, HIS MAJESTY VALENTINIAN. THE honourable Symmachus, Prefect of the city, having memorialised your Majesty that the altar, which had been removed from the Senate-house at Rome, ought to be restored to its place, and your Majesty, whose years of nonage and inexperience are yet unfulfilled, though a veteran in the power of faith, not having sanctioned the prayer of the heathen, I also as soon as I heard of it presented a petition, in which, though it embraced all that seemed necessary to be said, I requested that a copy of the Memorial might be furnished to me. 2. Now therefore, not as doubting your faith, but as providing for the future, and assured of a righteous judgement, I will reply to the allegations of the Memorial, making this one request, that you will not look for elegance of phrases but force of facts. For as Holy Scripture teaches us, the tongue of learned and wise men is golden, and endowed with highly-decked words, and glittering with splendid elegance as with the brightness of some rich colour, and so captivates and dazzles the eyes of the mind with a shew of beauty. But this gold, if closely handled, may pass current outwardly, but within is base metal. Consider well, I beseech you, and sift the sect of the Heathens; their

professions are grand and lofty, but what they espouse is degenerate and effete, they talk of God but worship idols.

3. The propositions of the honourable Prefect of the city, to which he attaches weight, are these, that Rome (as he asserts) seeks the restoration of her ancient rites, and that stipends are to be assigned to her priests and Vestal virgins, and that it was owing to these being withheld that a general famine has ensued. 4. According to his first proposition, Rome utters a mournful complaint, wanting back (as he asserts) her ancient ceremonies. These sacred rites, he says, repelled |102 Hannibal from the walls, the Gauls from the Capitol. But even here, in blazoning the efficacy of these rites, he betrays their weakness. According to this, Hannibal long insulted the Roman religion, and pushed his conquest to the very walls of the city, though the gods fought against him. Why did they for whom their gods fought, allow themselves to be besieged? 5. For why speak of the Gauls, whom the remnant of the Romans could not have prevented from entering the sanctuary of the Capitol, if the timid cackling of a goose had not betrayed them. These are the guardians of the Roman temples! Where was Jupiter then? Did he speak in a goose?

6. But why should I deny that their sacred rites fought for the Romans? Yet Hannibal also worshipped the same gods. Let them choose therefore which they will. If these rites conquered in the Romans, they were vanquished in the Carthaginians, but if they were thus overcome in the case of the Carthaginians, neither did they profit the Romans.

7. Away then with this invidious complaint of the Roman people; Rome never dictated it. It is with other words that she addresses them: 'Why do you daily deluge me with the useless gore of the innocent flocks? The trophies of victory depend not on the limbs of cattle, but on the strength of warriors. It was by other powers that I subdued the world. Camillus was my soldier, who recovered the standards which had been taken from the Capitol, and slew those who had captured the Tarpeian rock; valour overthrew those against whom religion had not prevailed. Why should I name Regulus, who gave me even the services of his death? Africanus gained his triumph not among the altars of the Capitol, but among Hannibal's ranks. Why do you produce to me the rites of our ancestors? I abhor the rites of the Neros. What shall I say of the two-month Emperors , and the ends of princes knit on to their accession? Or is it a thing unheard of, that |103 the barbarians should cross their frontiers? Were those men Christians, in whose miserable and unprecedented fate, in the one case a captive Emperor, in the other a captive world proved the falsehood of the rites which promised victory? Was there then no altar of Victory? I am ashamed of my downfall, the pale cheeks of age gather redness from that disgraceful bloodshed. I do not blush to be converted in my old age along with the whole world.

It is surely true that no age is too late to learn. Let that old age blush which cannot improve itself. It is not the hoary head of years but of virtue which is venerable. It is no disgrace to pass to better things. This alone had I in common with the barbarians that of old I knew not God. Your sacrifice is a rite of sprinkling yourselves with the blood of beasts. Why do you look for the voice of God in dead beasts? Come and learn here on earth a heavenly warfare;

we live here, but our warfare is above. Let God Himself, the Creator, teach me the mystery of heaven, not man who knew not himself. Whom should I believe about God, sooner than God Himself? How can I believe you, who confess that you know not what you worship?'

8. By a single path, he says, we cannot arrive at so great a secret. What you are ignorant of, that we have learnt by the voice of God; what you seek after by faint surmises, that we are assured of by the very Wisdom and Truth of God. Our customs therefore and yours do not agree. You ask the Emperors to grant peace to your gods, we pray for peace for the Emperors themselves from Christ. You worship the works of your own hands, we think it sacrilege that any thing which can be made should be called God. God wills not to be worshipped under the form of stones. Nay, your very philosophers have ridiculed this. 9. But if you are led to deny that Christ is God, because you cannot believe that He died, (for you are ignorant how that this was the death not of His Godhead but of His |104 flesh, whereby it comes to pass that none of the faithful shall die,) how inconsistent are you, who insult by way of worship, and disparage by way of honour. You consider your god to be a block of wood; what an insulting kind of reverence! You believe not that Christ could die; what a respectful kind of unbelief!

10. But, he says, the ancient altars and images ought to be restored, and the temples adorned as of old. This request ought to be made to one who shares the superstition; a Christian Emperor has learned to honour the altar of Christ alone. Why do they compel pious hands and faithful lips to minister to their sacrilege? Let the voice of our Emperor speak of Christ alone, let him declare Him only Whom in heart he believes, for the king's heart is in the Hand of God. Did ever heathen Emperor raise an altar to God? In demanding a restoration of ancient things they remind us what reverence Christian Emperors ought to pay to the Religion which they profess, since heathen ones paid the utmost to their own superstitions. 11. Long since was our beginning, and now they follow us whom they shut out. We glory in shedding our blood, a trifling expense disturbs them. We consider such things a victory, they esteem them an injury. Never did they confer a greater favour on us than when they commanded Christians to be scourged, and proscribed and slain. Religion made into a reward what unbelief intended for a punishment. Behold their magnanimity! We have grown by wrongs, by want, by punishment; they find that without money their ceremonies cannot be maintained.

12. Let the Vestal virgins, he says, enjoy their privileges. It is for those to say this, who cannot believe in gratuitous virginity, it is for them to allure by profit who distrust virtue. But how many virgins have their promised rewards obtained them? They have barely seven Vestals. Such is the whole number whom the veiled and filleted head, the dye of the purple vest, the pompous litter surrounded by attendants, high privileges, great gains, and a prescribed period of virginity, have collected. 13. Let them turn their mental and bodily eye to us, let them behold a people of chastity, an undefiled multitude, a |105 virgin assembly. No fillets to adorn their heads, but a veil of common use though dignified by chastity; the blandishments of beauty not curiously sought out, but cast aside; no purple trappings, no

luxurious delicacies, but frequent fastings; no privileges, no gains; all things in short so ordered as to repress any affection in the very exercise of their functions. But in fact by this very exercise their affection to it is conciliated. Chastity is perfected by its own sacrifices. That is not virginity which is bought for money, not preserved for love of holiness; that is not integrity which is bid for at an auction by a pecuniary equivalent, to last but for a time. The first triumph of chastity is to overcome the desire of wealth, for this desire is a temptation to modesty. But let us suppose that virginity ought to be supported by pecuniary bounty. In this case, what an abundance of gifts will overflow upon the Christians; what treasury will contain riches so great? Or do they consider that it ought to be bestowed exclusively on the Vestal virgins? Do not they, who claimed the whole under heathen Emperors, feel some shame in denying that under Christian Princes we ought to participate in the bounty?

11. They complain also that public support is not given to their priests and ministers. What a storm of words is here! To us on the other hand the privileges of inheriting private property is denied by recent laws, and no one complains; we do not feel it to be an injury, for we grieve not at the loss. If a priest would claim the privilege of being exempt from the municipal burthens, he must |106 relinquish his paternal estate and all other property. How would the heathens press this ground of complaint, if they had it, that a priest must purchase the liberty of performing his functions by the loss of his whole patrimony, and at the expense of all his private advantages must buy the right of ministering to the public, and while he claims to hold vigils for the public safety must console himself with the wages of domestic poverty; for he does not sell service but purchase a favour.

15. Compare the two cases. You wish to exempt a Decurio, when the Church may not exempt a priest. Wills are made in favour of ministers of temples; not even profane persons, even of the lowest rank, nor of abandoned character, are excepted; the clergy alone are excluded from the common privilege, by whom alone the general prayer for all men is offered, and the common office performed; no legacy, even of grave widows, no donation is allowed. When no blame can attach to character, a fine is imposed on the office. The legacy which a Christian widow bequeaths to the minister of a temple is valid, that which she bequeaths to the ministers of God is invalid. This I have stated not by way of complaint, but that they may know how much I abstain from complaining of, for I would rather we were losers in money than in grace.

16. But they report that gifts or legacies to the Church have not been taken away. Let them state who has snatched gifts from the temples, a loss which Christians have suffered. Had this been done to the Gentiles, it would rather have been the requital than the infliction of a wrong. Is it now only that they make a plea of justice, put in a claim for equity? Where was this sentiment, when, having despoiled all Christians of their goods, they grudged them the very breath of life, and debarred them from that last burial-rite which was never before denied to any of, the dead? Those whom the heathen flung into it, the sea restored. This is a victory of faith, that they |107 themselves impugn the acts of their ancestors, in that

they condemn their proceedings. But what consistency is there in condemning the acts of those whose gifts they solicit?

17. Yet no man has forbidden gifts to the temples, or legacies to the soothsayers; their lands alone are taken away, because they did not use that religiously which they claimed on the plea of religion. If they avail themselves of our example why did they not copy our practice? The Church possesses nothing but her faith. There are her rents, her revenues. The wealth of the Church is the support of the poor. Let them count up how many prisoners the temples have ransomed, what support they have afforded to the poor, to how many exiles they have ministered the means of life. Hence it is that they have been deprived of their lands, but not of their rights. 18. This is what has been done, and a public famine, as they assert, has avenged this grave impiety, that the private emoluments of the priests have been converted to the public service. For this cause they say it was that men stripped branches of their bark, and moistened their fainting life with this wretched juice. For this cause they were obliged to substitute for corn the Chaonian acorn, and thrust back again to this wretched fare, the food of beasts, they shook the oaks and thus appeased their sore hunger in the woods. As if forsooth these were new prodigies on earth, which never occurred so long as heathen superstition prevailed over the world! But in truth how often before this were the hopes of the greedy husbandmen frustrated by empty oat-stalks, while the blade of corn sought for in the furrows disappointed the race of peasants.

19. Why did the Greeks attribute oracles to their oaks, but that they fancied their sylvan fare was the gift of their heavenly religion? Such are the gifts which they suppose to come from their gods. Who but heathen ever worshipped the trees of Dodona, bestowing honour on the sorry sustenance of the sacred grove ? It is not probable that their gods in their anger gave them for a punishment what they were wont when appeased to confer as a gift. |108 20. But what equity were it, that because they are annoyed at the refusal of sustenance to a few priests they should themselves refuse it to every one? in that case their vengeance is more severe than was the fault. But in truth the cause they assign is not adequate to produce so great infirmity of a failing world, as that, when the crops were green, the full grown hopes of the season should all at once perish.

21. Certain it is that many years ago the rights of the temples were abolished throughout the world, is it only now that it has occurred to the gods of the Gentiles to avenge their injuries? Can it be said that the Nile failed to overflow his banks as usual, to avenge the losses of the priests of the City, when he did not do so to avenge his own priests? 22. But supposing that in the past year it was the wrongs of their gods that were avenged, why are the same wrongs neglected in the present year? Now the country people do not pluck up and eat the roots of herbs, nor seek solace from the sylvan berry, nor gather their food from thorns; but rejoicing in their successful labours they wonder at their own harvest, and their hopes fulfilled compensate for their fast, the earth having yielded us her produce with interest.

23. Who then is so inexperienced on human affairs as to be amazed at the vicissitudes of the seasons? And yet even last year we know that most provinces had an abundant harvest. What shall I say of Gaul which was more fertile than usual? The Pannonias sold corn which they had not sown, and the second Rhaetia learnt the danger of her own fertility, for being used to security from her sterility, she drew down an enemy on herself by her abundance. Liguria and Venice are replenished by the fruits of autumn. So then the former year was not withered by sacrilege, while the present has overflowed with the fruits of faith. Nor can they deny that the vineyards |109 produced an overflowing crop. Thus our harvest yielded its produce with interest, and we enjoyed the benefits of a more abundant vintage. 24. The last and most weighty topic remains; as to whether your Majesties should restore those aids which have been profitable to yourselves, for he says, 'Let them defend you, and be worshipped by us.' This, most faithful Princes, we cannot endure; that they should make it a taunt to us that they supplicate their gods in your name, and without your command commit an atrocious sacrilege, taking your connivance as consent. Let them keep their guardians to themselves, let these guardians, if they can, protect their own. But if they cannot protect those who worship them, how can they protect you who worship them not?

25. Our ancestral rites, he says, should be preserved. But what if all things have become better? The world itself, which at first was compacted by the gathering together of the elemental seeds through the vast void, an unconsolidated sphere, or was obscured by the thick darkness of the yet unordered work, was it not afterwards endowed with the forms of things which constitute its beauty, and were not the heaven sea and earth distinguished from each other? The earth rescued from dripping darkness was amazed at its new sun. In the beginning too the day shines not, but as time goes on it is bright and warm with the increase of light and heat. 26. The moon herself, which in the prophetic oracles represents the Church, when first she rises again, and repairs her monthly wanings, is hidden from us by darkness, but gradually she fills her horns, or completes them as she comes opposite to the sun, and gleams with a bright and glorious splendour.

27. In former days, the earth knew not how to be wrought into fruitfulness; but afterwards when the careful husbandman began to till the fields, and to clothe the bare soil with vineyards, it was softened by this domestic culture, and put off its rugged nature. 28. So too the first season of the year itself, which has imparted a like habit to ourselves, is bare of produce, then, |110 as time goes on, it blossoms out in flowers soon to fade, and in the end finds its maturity in fruits . 29. So we, while young in age, experience an infancy of understanding, but as we grow in years lay aside the rudeness of our faculties. 30. Let them say then that all things ought to have continued as at first; that the world once covered with darkness is now displeasing because it shines with the beams of the sun. And how much better is it to have dispelled the darkness of the mind than that of the body, and that the beam of faith has shone forth than that of the sun. So then the early stages of the world as of all else have been unsettled, that the venerable age of hoary faith might follow. Let those who are affected by this find fault with the harvest too, because it ripens late; or with

the vintage, because it is in the fall of the year; or with the olive, because it is the latest of fruits.

31. So then our harvest too is the faith of the soul; the grace of the Church is the vintage of good works, which from the beginning of the world flourished in the saints, but in these last days is spread over the people; to the intent that all might perceive that it is not into rude minds that the faith of Christ has insinuated itself, but these opinions which before prevailed being shaken off (for without a contest there is no crown of victory) the truth was preferred according as is just. 32. If the old rites pleased, why did Rome adopt alien ones? I pass over the covering of the ground with costly buildings, and shepherds' huts glittering with the gold of a degenerate age . Why, to speak of the very subject of their complaint, have they admitted in their rivalry the images of captured cities, and of conquered gods, and the foreign rites of an alien superstition? Whence do they derive their precedent for Cybele washing her chariot in a |111 stream to counterfeit the Almo ? Whence came the Phrygian seers, and the deities of faithless Carthage ever hateful to Rome, her for instance, whom the Africans worship as Caelestis , and the Persians as Mitra, the greater part of the world as Venus, the same deity under different names. So also they have believed Victory to be a goddess, which is in truth a gift not a power, is bestowed and does not rule, comes by the aid of legions not by the power of religion. Great forsooth is the goddess whom the number of soldiers claims, or the issue of the battle confers!

33. And her altar they now ask to have set up in the Senate-house at Rome, that is to say, where a majority of Christians assemble. There are altars in all temples, an altar also in the temple of victories. Being pleased with numbers, they celebrate their sacrifices every where. But to insist on a sacrifice on this one altar, what is it but to insult over the Faith? Is it to be borne that while a Gentile sacrifices Christians must attend? Let their eyes, he says, drink in the smoke whether they will or no; their ears the music; their mouth the ashes; their nostrils the incense; and though they loathe it, let the embers of our |112 hearths besprinkle their faces. Is it not enough for him that the baths, the colonnades, the streets are filled with images? Even in that general assembly, are we not to meet upon equal terms? The believing portion of the Senate will be bound by the voices of them that call the gods to witness, by the oaths of them that swear by them. If they refuse, they will seem to prove their falsehood, if they acquiesce, to acquiesce in a sacrilege.

34. Where, he asks, shall we swear allegiance to your Majesties' laws and commands? Your minds then, of which your laws are the outward expression, gather support and secure fidelity by heathen rites. Moreover your Majesties' faith is assailed not only when you are present, but also, which is more, when you are absent, for you constrain when you command. Constantius, of illustrious memory, though not yet initiated into the sacred Mysteries, thought himself polluted by the sight of that altar; he commanded it to be removed, he did not command it to be replaced. His order bears all the authority of an Act, his silence does not bear the authority of a precept. 35. And let no one rest satisfied because he is absent. He is more to be considered present who unites himself to the minds of others than

he who gives the testimony of his visible presence. It is a greater matter to be united in mind than to be joined in body. The Senate regards you as its presidents who summon its meetings; at your bidding it assembles; to you, not to the gods of the heathen, does she resign her conscience; you she prefers to her children though not to her faith. This is the affection worth seeking, an affection more powerful than dominion, if faith, which preserves dominion, be secured.

36. But perhaps some one may be influenced by the thought that if so, a most orthodox Emperor has been left without his reward; as if the reward of good actions was to be estimated by the frail tenure of things present. And what wise man is there who knows not that human affairs move in a certain cycle and order, and meet not always |113 with the same success, but their state is subject to vicissitudes? 37. Who more fortunate than Cneius Pompeius was ever sent forth by the temples of Rome? But he, after compassing the circuit of the globe in three triumphs, vanquished in battle, and driven into exile beyond the bounds of the empire he had saved, perished by the hand of an Eunuch of Canopus. 38. What nobler king than Cyrus king of the Persians has the whole Eastern world produced? He too, after he had conquered the most powerful princes in battle, and detained them as his prisoners, was worsted and slain by the arms of a woman . That king who had conferred on the vanquished the honour of sitting at meat with him, had his head cut off and enclosed in a vessel full of blood, and so was bid to satiate himself, exposed to the mockery of a woman. So in the course of his life like is not matched with like, but things most unlike.

39. Again who was more assiduous in sacrificing than Hamilcar general of the Carthaginians? During the whole time of the battle he took his station between the ranks of the combatants, and there offered sacrifice: then, when he found himself vanquished, he threw himself upon the fire on which he was burning his victims, that he might extinguish even with his own body those flames which he had learnt availed him nothing. 40. And what shall I say of Julian? who blindly believing the answers of the diviners, deprived himself of the means of retreat . Thus even when the circumstances are |114 common there is not a common cause of offence, for our promises have deluded no one.

41. I have replied to those who harass me as though I had not been harassed: for my object has been to refute their Memorial, not to expose their superstitions. But let this very Memorial make your Majesty more cautious. For by pointing out that of a series of former Emperors, those who reigned first followed the rites of their ancestors, and their successors did not remove them, and by observing upon this, that if the religion of older ones was not an example, the connivance of the more recent ones was, they have plainly shewn that you owe it to the faith which you profess not to follow the precedent of heathen rites, and to brotherly love not to violate your brothers' ordinances. For if they for the sake of their own cause have praised the connivance of those Emperors, who being Christians, have not abrogated heathen decrees, how much more are you bound to shew deference to brotherly affection, and, whereas you would be bound to wink at what perhaps you did not approve,

for fear of detracting from your brothers' decrees, now to maintain what you judge to be in accordance both with your own faith and the tie of brotherhood.

Letters 11-20 — LETTER XIX. [A.D.385.]

VIGILIUS, to whom this letter is addressed, is supposed by the Benedictine Editors to have been the Bishop of Trent, (Tridentum,) who is commemorated in the Roman Martyrology. He had written to S. Ambrose, on his consecration as Bishop, to ask his guidance and instruction, and S. Ambrose replies, first with brief general directions, somewhat resembling those of Letter 11, and then dwells at length on the duty of preventing intermarriage between Christians and heathens, and recounts at full length, in support of this, the history of Samson. At the time when heathenism was rapidly dying out, it is clear how important a point this would seem, and we do not wonder at the stress which S. Ambrose lays on it. AMBROSE TO VIGILIUS. 1. BEING newly consecrated to the sacred office, you |115 have requested me to furnish you with the outlines of your teaching. Having built up yourself as was fitting, seeing you have been thought worthy of so high an office, you have now to be informed how to build up others also.

2. And in the first place remember that it is the Church of God that is committed to you, and be therefore always on your guard against the intrusion of any scandal, lest the body thereof become as it were common by any admixture of heathen. It is on this account that Scripture says to you Thou shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, but go to Mesopotamia, to the house of Bethuel (that is the house of Wisdom) and take thee a wife from thence. Mesopotamia is a country in the East, surrounded by the two greatest rivers in those parts, the Tigris and Euphrates, which take their rise in Armenia, falling, each by a different channel, into the Red sea; and so the Church is signified under the name of Mesopotamia, for she fertilizes the minds of the faithful by the mighty streams of wisdom and justice, pouring into them the grace of Baptism, the type of which was foreshewn in the Red sea, and washing away sin. Wherefore you must instruct the people that they should contract marriage not with strange-born but with Christian families.

3. Let no man defraud his hired servant of his due wages, for we too are the servants of our God, and look for the reward of our labour from Him. You then, (you must say) O merchant, whoever you be, refuse your servant his wages of money, that is, of what is vile and worthless, but to you will be denied the reward of heavenly promises: therefore thou shalt not defraud

thy hired servant of his reward, as the Law saith. 4. Thou shalt not give thy money upon usury, for it is written that he who hath not given his money upon usury shall dwell in the tabernacle of God, for he is cast down, who seeks for usurious gains. Therefore let the Christian, if he have it, give money as though he were not to receive it again, or at all events only the principal which he has given. By so doing he receives no small increase of grace. Otherwise to lend would be to deceive not to succour. For what can be more cruel than to give money to one |116 that hath not, and then to exact double? He that can not pay the simple sum how can he pay double the amount?

5. Let Tobit be an example to us, who never required again the money he had lent, till the end of his life; and that rather that he might not defraud his heir, than in order to levy and recover the money he had lent out. Nations have often been ruined by usury, and this has been the cause of public destruction. Wherefore it must be the principal care of us Bishops, to extirpate those vices which we find to prevail most extensively. 6. Teach them that they ought to exercise hospitality willingly rather than of necessity, so that in shewing this favour they may not betray a churlish disposition of mind, and thus in the very reception of their guest the kindness be spoilt by wrong, but rather let it be fostered by the practice of social duties, and by the offices of kindness. It is not rich gifts that are required of thee, but willing services, full of peace and accordant harmony. Better is a dinner of herbs with grace and friendship than that the banquet should be adorned with exquisite viands, while the sentiment of kindness is lacking. We read of a people perishing by a grievous destruction on account of the violation of the laws of hospitality. Through lust also fierce wars have been kindled.

7. But there is scarce any thing more pernicious than marriage with a foreigner; already the passions both of lust and disorder, and the evils of sacrilege are inflamed. For seeing that the marriage ceremony itself ought to be sanctified by the priestly veil and benediction, how can that be called a marriage when there is not agreement in faith? Since their prayers ought to be in common, how can there be the love of a common wedlock between those whose religion it different. Often have men ensnared by the love of women betrayed their faith, as did the Jews at Baal-phegor. For which cause Phineas took a sword, and slew the Hebrew and the Midianitish woman, and appeased the Divine vengeance, that the whole people might not be destroyed. 8. And why should I bring forward more examples? I will produce one out of many, from the mention of which |117 will appear what an evil thing it is to marry a strange woman. Who ever was mightier or more richly endowed from his very cradle with God's Spirit than Samson the Nazarite? Yet was he betrayed by a woman, and by her means failed to retain God's favour. We will now narrate his birth and the course of his whole life arranged in the style of history, following the contents of the sacred Book, which in substance not in form is as follows.

9. The Philistines for many years kept the Hebrew people in subjection; for they had lost the prerogative of faith, whereby their fathers had gained victories. Yet had not their Maker wholly blotted out the mark of their election nor the lot of their inheritance; but as they

were often puffed up by success, He for the most part delivered them into the hand of their enemies, that thus, after the manner of men, they might be led to seek for themselves the remedy of their evils from heaven. For it is when any adversity oppresses us, that we submit ourselves to God; good fortune is wont to puff up the mind. This is proved by experience, as in other instances, so particularly in that change of fortune whereby success returned again from the Philistines to the Hebrews.

10. After the spirit of the Hebrews had been so subdued by the pressure of a long subjection that no one dared with a manly spirit to rouse them to liberty, Samson, fore-ordained by the Divine oracle, was raised up to them. A great man he was, not one of the multitude, but first among the few, and beyond controversy far excelling all in bodily strength. And he is to be regarded by us with great admiration from the beginning, not because in his early abstinence from vice he gave signal proofs of temperance and sobriety, nor on account of his long preserving as a Nazarite his locks unshorn, but because from his very youth, which in others is an age of softness, he achieved illustrious deeds of virtue, perfect beyond the measure of human nature. By these he gained credence to the Divine prophecy, that it was not for nothing that such grace had gone before upon him, that an Angel came down by whom his birth beyond their hopes was announced to his parents, to be the leader and protector of his countrymen, |118 now for a length of years harassed by the tyranny of the Philistines.

11. His father was of the tribe of Dan, a man fearing God, born of no mean rank, and eminent above others, his mother was barren of body, but in virtues of the mind not unfruitful; seeing that in the sanctuary of her soul she was counted worthy to receive the visit of an Angel, obeyed his command and fulfilled his prophecy. Not enduring however to know the secrets even of God apart from her husband she mentioned to him that she had seen a man of God, of beautiful form, bringing her the Divine promise of future offspring, and that she, confiding in this promise, was led to share with her husband her faith in the heavenly promises. But he, informed of this, devoutly offered his prayers to God, that the grace of this vision might be conferred on him also, saying, To me, Lord, let Thine Angel come.

12. I am of opinion therefore that it was not from jealousy of his wife, because she was remarkable for her beauty that he acted thus, as one writer has supposed, but rather that he was filled with desire of the Divine grace, and sought to participate in the benefit of the heavenly vision. For one whose mind was depraved could not have found such favour with the Lord, as that an Angel should return to his house, who, having given those monitions which the Divine announcement made requisite, was suddenly carried away in the form of a smoking flame. This sight, which terrified the man, the woman interpreted more auspiciously, and so removed his solicitude, in that to see God is a sign of good not evil.

13. Now Samson, approved by such signal tokens from above, turned his thoughts as soon as he grew up, to marriage; whether this was that he abhorred those vague and licentious desires in which young men are wont to indulge, or that he was seeking an occasion of releasing the necks of his countrymen from the power of the hard yoke of the Philistines.

Wherefore going down to Timnath, (this is the name of a city situated in those parts where the Philistines then dwelt,) he beheld a maiden of a pleasing form and beautiful countenance, and he besought his parents, by whoso company he was supported in his journey, to ask |119 her for him in marriage. But they, not knowing that his intention, either, if the Philistine refused her to him, to be more fierce against them, or, if they assented, to remove their disposition to injure their subjects; and since from such a connexion a certain equality and kindliness of intercourse would naturally grow, or, on the other hand, if any offence were given, this desire of revenge would be more vehement, deemed that this maiden ought to be avoided as a foreigner. But after they had vainly attempted to change the purpose of their son by urging upon him these lawful objections, they of their own accord acquiesced in his desire.

14. This request was granted; and Samson on his return to visit his promised bride, turned a little way out of the road, and straightway there met him a lion from the wood, fierce in its savage freedom. Samson had no companion, nor any weapon in his hand; but he felt ashamed to fly, and conscious power gave him courage. He caught the lion as it rushed upon him in his arms, and strangled it by the tightness of his embrace, leaving it near the wayside lying upon the underwood, for the spot was clothed with luxuriant herbage, and planted with vineyards. The skin of the beast he thought would be little esteemed by his beloved bride, for seasons such as these derive their grace not from savage trophies, but rather from gentle joys and festal garlands. On his returning by the same road he found an honeycomb in the belly of the lion, and carried it off as a gift to the maiden and her parents; for such gifts befit a bride. And having first tasted the honey, he gave them the comb to eat, but was silent as to whence it came.

15. But it happened on a certain day that a nuptial feast was held, and that the young men inspirited by the banquet provoked each other to sport by question and answer, and as they assailed each other with wanton jests, as is the wont on such occasions, the contest of pleasure waxed hot. And then Samson put forth this riddle to his comrades, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness, promising them as a reward of their sagacity if they guessed it, thirty sheets and as many changes |120 of garments according to the number of the company, while they on their part, if they could not solve the riddle, were to pay a like penalty. 16. But they, unable to untie the knot and to expound the riddle, induced his wife, partly by intimidation, partly by importunate entreaties, to require from her husband the solution of the riddle to be a token of conjugal affection in return for her love. And she, either terrified, and won over as women are wont to be, as if complaining tenderly of her husband's aversion, began to profess grief that she, the consort and intimate of his whole life, had not learnt this, but that she was treated like the others as one to whom her own husband's secret should not be confided. Thou dost but hate me, she said, and lovest me not, thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people and hast not told it me.

17. Samson's mind, otherwise inflexible, was softened by these and the like blandishments of his wife, and discovered to her his riddle, and she told it to her countrymen. And they, having thus but just learned it on the seventh day, which was the term prescribed for its solution, answered after this manner, What is sweeter than honey, or what is stronger than a lion? To which he replied. Nor is ought more treacherous than a woman; If ye had not ploughed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle, and he straightway went down to Ascalon, and slew thirty men, and taking their spoils, bestowed on the men who had expounded the riddle their promised reward.

18. But the perfidy of the maiden being thus discovered, he abstained from intercourse with her, and returned to his father's house. The damsel, disturbed in mind, and justly dreading that the wrath of this mighty man would be kindled into fury by this wrong, gave her hand to another man, one whom Samson, relying on his fidelity, had brought with him as his bridesman to his marriage. But neither by this expedient of a marriage did she avoid offence. For when the affair was disclosed, and he was forbidden to return to his wife, and her father said that she was married to another man, but that he might, if he chose, marry her sister, he was exasperated by the affront, and determined to take a |121 public revenge for his domestic injury. Wherefore he took three hundred foxes, and in the heat of summer, when the corn was now ripe in the fields, he tied them together two and two by the tails, and fastened a burning firebrand between them, binding it with a firm knot, and by way of avenging his wrong turned them loose among the sheaves which the Philistines had cut. But the foxes, terrified by the fire, scattered flames whichever way they turned, and burnt the harvest. And the Philistines, incensed by the loss of all their corn in that region, told it to the princes of their land. And they sent men to Timnath, and burnt in the fire the woman who had been faithless to her husband, and her parents and all her house; saying that she had been the cause of this injury and devastation, and ought not to have provoked a man who could avenge himself by a public calamity.

19. But Samson did not forgive the Philistines their wrong, nor rest content with this measure of vengeance, but he slew them with a great slaughter, and many of them fell by the sword. And he retired to Etam, a torrent in the wilderness, where was a rock, a stronghold of the tribe of Judah. Now the Philistines, not daring to attack him, nor scale the steep heights on which this fortress stood, began to assail with threats of war the tribe of Judah: but when they saw that the plea of the men of Judah was a good one, that it was neither just nor fair nor expedient for them to destroy their own subjects and tributaries, especially for another man's fault, they took counsel, and required that the author of the outrage should be delivered up to them, in order that his countrymen might be exonerated from the consequences of it.

20. These terms being imposed upon them, the men of Judah gathered together three thousand of their tribe and went up to him, and premising that they were subject to the Philistines, and obliged to obey them, not willingly but by terror, they thus sought to turn away from themselves the odium of their act, throwing it upon those by whom they were

constrained. Wherefore he thus replied, What kind of Justice is it, O children of Abraham, that the satisfaction 1 have taken for my bride first over-reached and |122 then torn from me should be injurious to me, and that I may not safely avenge this private injury? Have ye so turned your minds to the low offices of slaves, as to become the ministers of the insolence of others, and to turn your arms against yourselves? If I must perish, because I gave free vent to my grief, I had rather perish by the hand of the Philistines. My home has been attempted, my wife tampered with, if I have not been allowed to live without harm from them, at least let my own countrymen be free from the guilt of my death. I did but requite the injury I had received, I did not inflict one. Judge ye whether it was an equal return. They complain of the loss of their home, I of the loss of my wife; compare the sheaves of corn, with a companion of the marriage bed. They have sanctioned my grief by avenging my injuries.

Consider to what an office they have appointed you. They desire you to put to death that man, whom they themselves have judged worthy to be avenged on those who wronged him, and to whose vengeance they ministered. But if your necks are thus bowed down to these proud men, deliver me into the hand of the enemy, slay me not yourselves; I refuse not to die, but I shrink from implicating you in my death. If from fear ye comply with their insolence, bind my hands with chains: though unarmed they will break their bonds and find a weapon for themselves. They will assuredly consider that you have satisfied the imposed condition, if you deliver me alive into their hands.

21. When they heard this, though three thousand men had come up, they swore to him that they would make no attempt on his life, only he must submit to be bound, in order that they might formally surrender him, and so keep clear of the crime of which they were accused. 22. Their word being pledged he came out of the cave, and left his fastness on the rock, and was bound with two ropes. When he saw the mighty men of the Philistines drawing near to seize him, his spirit rose within him, and he brake all his bands, and taking up a jaw bone of an ass that lay near he slew a thousand men, and put to flight the rest by this exploit of valour, whole hosts of armed soldiers giving way to one unarmed man. Thus those who |123 ventured to close with him hand to hand he slew without effort; the others saved themselves by flight. Wherefore to this day the place is called Agon , because there Samson by his great valour achieved a glorious contest.

23. And I would that his moderation in victory had been equal to his courage against the enemy. But as is frequently the case, with mind unused to prosperity, he ascribed to himself the issue of the battle, which was due to the Divine favour and protection, saying, With the jaw bone of an ass have I slain a thousand men. Nor did he build an altar to God, nor offer a victim, but neglecting sacrifice and assuming to himself the glory, to immortalize his triumph by a memorial name he called the place, The slaying of the jaw bone. 21. And now he began to burn with thirst, and there was no water, and yet he had great need of it. Wherefore perceiving that there is nothing so easy for human strength, as not to be rendered difficult by the absence of Divine aid, he besought God not to lay to his charge that he had ascribed ought to himself, giving Him all the glory of the victory, by the words, Thou

hast given this great deliverance into the hand of Thy servant, and now help me, for lo, I die of thirst, and thirst gives me over into the hand of those over whom Thou hast given me so great a triumph. Wherefore God in His mercy clave a hollow place in the jaw bone which Samson had cast aside, and a stream of water flowed from it, and Samson drank, and his spirit revived, and he called the place 'the invoking of the spring,' because by his suppliant prayers he made amends for his boast of victory, and thus two judgements were opportunely declared, the one that arrogance soon incurs offence, the other that without any offence humility gains reconciliation.

25. Having, in the course of events closed his war with the Philistines, and shunning the sloth of his countrymen, Samson now betook himself to Gaza, which was in the |124 region of the Philistines, and lodged there. When the men of Gaza knew this they did not dissemble or pass it over, but beset his lodging in haste, and guarded all the doors of the house that he might not escape by night. But Samson knowing their design, in the middle of the night forestalling the snare which had been laid for him, took the pillars of the house in his arms, and carried the whole structure and the weight of the roof on his back, up to a high hill above Hebron, a city inhabited by the Hebrews. 26. But now his licence transgressed the limits not only of his paternal territory, but of good morals, such as ancient discipline had prescribed, and this brought upon him destruction in the end. For although he had experienced in his first marriage the treachery of a foreign wife, and ought to have avoided it in future, he did not shun connecting himself with the harlot Delilah, and by his passionate love of her opened a way for the craft of his enemies to assail him. For the Philistines came up to her, and promised each of them to give her eleven hundred pieces of silver if she would disclose to them wherein his assurance of strength lay, that by means of this knowledge they might entrap and take him.

27. But she having once prostituted herself for money, began during the banquet and the blandishments of love, cunningly and craftily to inquire of him in what respect his strength excelled that of others, and at the same time, as if solicitous and fearful for his safety, to entreat him to confide to his beloved by what means he could be bound and subdued into the power of others. But he, still self-possessed and unshaken, opposed craft to the allurements of the harlot, and told her that if he were bound with withs yet green and not dried, his strength would be like that of other men. When the Philistines learnt this from Delilah, they bound him while asleep with green withs, and then awoke him as though on a sudden, but found that he had not fallen off from his accustomed fortitude, but bursting its bonds his freed strength was able to resist and drive back a host of assailants.

28. This having failed, Delilah, as if she had been |125 mocked began with complaints to renew her arts and to require a pledge of his love. Samson, still firm of purpose, intimated to her that, if he were bound by seven ropes which had never been used, he would fall into the hands of the enemy, but this also was in vain. The third time he disclosed part of the secret, and now drawing nearer to his fall, told her that, if the seven locks of his head were unfastened and woven to about a cubit's length, his strength would depart from him.

But herein also he deluded those who were plotting against his life. 29. But last of all the wanton woman complaining that she had been so often deceived, and grieving that her lover deemed her unworthy to be entrusted with his secret, and that under her pretext of succour her treacherous purpose was suspected, won his confidence by her tears. By this means, and because also it was ordained that this man of hitherto unshaken fortitude should fall into calamity, Samson was touched and opened to her his heart. He told her that he possessed within him the power of God, that he was sanctified to the Lord, and that by His command he let his hair grow, and that if it were shorn, he would cease to be a Nazarite, and lose the use of his strength. The Philistines having discoverd through her means the man's weakness, bring her the reward of her perfidy, thus binding her to the commission of the crime.

30. And she, having wearied him by the wanton blandishments of love, threw him into slumber, and then caused the seven locks of his hair to be cut by a razor, whereupon by his transgression of the commandment his strength was immediately lost. When he woke out of sleep, he said, I will go out as at other times, and shake myself against mine adversaries, but he was no longer sensible of activity and strength, his vigour was gone, his grace was departed. Wherefore, considering within himself that he had incautiously trusted to women, and that, convicted of infirmity, it would be sheer folly for him to contend any longer, he | 126 gave up his eyes to blindness, and his hands to the fetters, and being bound with chains he entered the confinement from which he had been for a long season free.

31. But in process of time his hair began to grow again; and on the occasion of a great feast Samson is brought out of prison to the assembly of the Philistines, and set in sight of the people. There were nearly three thousand in number, men and women; and they insulted him with bitter reproaches, and carried him about in mockery, a trial harder to be borne than the very reality of captivity by a man conscious of innate power. For to live and die is natural, to be a laughing stock is counted a disgrace. Desirous therefore either of consoling himself by avenging so great an indignity, or of forestalling it for the future by death, he pretended that from the weakness of his limbs and the weight of his fetters he could not support himself, and desired the boy who guided his steps to bring him to the nearest pillars by which the whole house was supported. Being brought near, he grasped with both hands the props of the building, and while the Philistines were intent on the sacrificial feast which they were offering to Dagon their god, by whose help they deemed their adversary had been delivered into their power, reckoning a woman's perfidy as a gift from above, he called unto the Lord, and said,'O Lord God, remember me I pray Thee this once, that I may be avenged of the heathen for my two eyes, and that they give not glory to their gods as if by their help they had gotten me into their power. Let me die with the Philistines, that they may find my weakness to have been no less fatal to them than my strength.'

32. Then he shook the columns with great force, and broke them in pieces, whereon followed the downfall of the upper roof, crushing Samson himself and casting down all those

who were looking on from above. Thus were a great number of men and women slain together, and by an end not unworthy or disgraceful, but excelling all his former victories, the dying Samson obtained a triumph. For although to that point and thenceforward he was invincible, and incomparable during life among men versed in war, yet in death he conquered himself, and shewed an |127 unconquerable soul, so as to despise and count for nothing that end of life which all men fear. 33. Thus it was through his valour that the last day of his life was also the sum of his victories, and that he met not a captive but a triumphant end. But to have been entrapped by a woman is to be ascribed to nature rather than to the man, because it was by the condition of his humanity more than through his own fault that he fell; for this is wont to be overcome, and yield to the allurements of wickedness. Wherefore, since Scripture bears witness that he slew more in his death than while in the light of life, it would seem that his captivity happened rather for the destruction of his adversaries than for his own fall and humiliation. For he whose burial was more efficacious than his living strength cannot be said to have found himself inferior. Lastly, he was overwhelmed and buried not by the weapons but by the bodies of his enemies, and thus, covered by his own triumph, he left a glorious memorial to posterity. For he judged his countrymen, whom he found enslaved, twenty years, and buried in his native soil, left them inheritors of liberty.

34. By this example then it is plain that alliances with strangers should be avoided, lest through love for our wife the snares of treachery should be successful. Farewell and love us, as we love you.

Letters 11-20 — LETTER XX. [A.D. 385.]

AFTER the death of Gratian the empire of the West was nominally in the hands of Valentinian the 2nd, but, as he was a mere boy, the real power was exercised by his mother Justina, who was an Arian. S. Ambrose had already resisted her successfully in the question of the election of a Bishop at Sirmium (see note in p. 39), and although he had performed a difficult and dangerous service for them two years before this, in going on an embassy to Maxirnus after the death of Gratian, Justina and Valentinian were bitterly hostile to him, and supported the Arian faction against him. In March, A.D. 385, S. Ambrose was summoned to the Palace, as he himself relates in the Sermon of which he gives an account in this letter (§ 15 sqq.) and called upon to give up one of the Churches, the Portian Basilica, outside the walls, for the use of the Arians. This he refused, and was so |128 energetically supported by the people of Milan, that the demand was for the time withdrawn. Various other efforts were then made either to induce him to yield or to get him out of the way, (one of the latter is recounted in a note on the Sermon against Auxentius § 15) but they all failed. At last on the Friday before Palm Sunday a fresh demand is made, not for the Portian Basilica, as a promise had been given that no further claim should be made upon it, but for the New Basilica which was within the walls. It is at this point that the narrative which S. Ambrose gives in this letter to his sister Marcellina begins. It recounts the occurrences from the Friday to the Wednesday in Holy Week, when the persecution was again for the time abandoned.

TO MARCELLINA. 1. IN nearly all your letters you inquire anxiously about the Church; hear then what is going on. The day after I received the letter in which you told me how you had been troubled in your dreams, a heavy weight of troubles began to assail me. It was not now the Portian Basilica, that is the one without the walls, which was demanded, but the new Basilica, that is, one within the walls, which is larger in size. 2. In the first place some chief men , counsellors of state, appealed to me to give up the Basilica, and restrain the people from raising any commotion. I replied as a matter of course, that a Bishop could not give up God's house. 3. On the following day the people expressed their approval in the Church, and the Prefect also came thither, and began to urge us to yield up at least the

Portian Basilica. The people were clamorous against this, whereupon he departed, saying, that he would report matters to the Emperor.

4. On the following day, which was the Lord's day, |129 having dismissed the catechumens after the lessons and sermon, I was explaining the Creed to some candidates for Baptism in the Baptistery of the Church. There the news was reported to me that, on learning that officials had been sent from the palace to the Portian Basilica, and were putting up the Imperial hangings , many of the people were proceeding thither. I however continued my ministrations, and began to celebrate the Eucharist . 5. While I was offering, tidings were brought me that the populace had seized upon one Castulus, whom the Arians called a priest. While making the oblation I began to weep bitterly and to beseech God's aid that no blood might be shed in the Church's quarrel; or if so, that it might be my own, and that not for my people only, but even for the ungodly themselves. But, to be brief, I sent some presbyters and deacons, and rescued the man.

6. The severest penalties were immediately decreed; first upon the whole body of merchants. And thus, during the sacred period of the last Week, wherein the debtor was wont to be loosed from his bonds, chains are placed on innocent men's necks, and two hundred pounds' weight of gold is demanded within three days. They reply they Mall willingly give as much, or twice as much again, so that they may not violate their faith. The prisons too were filled with tradesmen. 7. All the Officials of the palace, the Recorders, the Proctors, the Apparitors of the several Courts, on the pretext of its being unlawful for them to be present at seditious assemblies, were commanded to keep at home, severe threats were held out against men of high rank in case the Basilica was not delivered up. The persecution |130 raged, and had an opening been afforded, they seemed likely to break out into every kind of outrage.

8. I myself had an interview with the Counts and Tribunes, who urged me to give up the Basilica without delay, declaring that the Emperor was acting on his rights, inasmuch as he had supreme power over all things. I replied that if he required of me what was my own, my estate, my money, or the like, I would not refuse it, although all my property really belonged to the poor, but that sacred things were not subject to the power of the Emperor. 'If my patrimony be required,' I said, 'take it; if my person, here it is. Will you drag me away to prison, or to death? I will go with pleasure. I will not entrench myself by gathering a multitude round me, I will not lay hold of the Altar and beg for my life; rather will I offer myself to death for the Altar.' 9. In fact my mind was shaken with fear when I found that armed men had been sent to occupy the Basilica, I was seized with dread lest in protecting the Church, blood might be shed which would tend to bring destruction on the whole city. I prayed that if so great a city or even all Italy were to perish I might not survive. I shrank from the odium of shedding blood, and I offered my own throat to the knife. Some officers of the Goths were present; I addressed them, saying, 'Is it for this that you have become citizens of Rome, to shew yourselves disturbers of the public peace? Whither will you go, if everything here is destroyed?'

10. I was called upon to calm the people. I replied that it was in my power not to excite them, that it was in God's Hand to pacify them. That if I was considered the instigator, I ought to be punished, that I ought to be banished into whatever desert places of the earth they chose. Having said this, they departed, and I spent the |131 whole day in the old Church. Thence I returned home to sleep; that if any man wished to arrest me, he might find me prepared. 11. When, before dawn, I passed out over the threshold, I found the Basilica surrounded and occupied by soldiers. And it was said that they had intimated to the Emperor that he was at liberty to go to Church if he wished it, that they would be ready to attend him if he were going to the assembly of the Catholics; otherwise that they would go to the assembly which Ambrose had convened.

12. Not a single Arian dared come out, for there were none among the citizens, only a few of the royal household, and some of the Goths, who, as of old they made their waggon their home, so now make the Church their waggon. Wherever that woman goes, she carries with her all those of her own communion. The groans of the people gave me notice that the Basilica was surrounded; but while the lessons are being read word is brought me that the New Basilica also is full of people, that the crowd seemed greater than when all were at liberty, that they were calling for a Reader. To be brief, the soldiers themselves, who were found to have occupied the Basilica, being informed of my directions that the people should abstain from communion with them, began to come to our assembly. At the sight of them the minds of the women are agitated, one of them rushes forth. But the soldiers themselves exclaimed that they had come to pray not to fight. The people raised a cry. In the most modest, most resolute, most faithful manner they entreated that I would go to that Basilica. In that Basilica also the people were reported to desire my presence.

14. Then I began the following discourse: Ye have heard, my sons, the lesson from the book of Job, which according to the usual service of the season, is now in course. By use the devil knew that this book was to be declared, already all the power of his temptations is laid open and betrayed, and therefore he exerted himself to-day with greater violence. But thanks be to our God Who hath so confirmed you in faith and patience. I went up into the pulpit to admire Job, I found I had all of you to admire |132 as Jobs. Job lives again in each of you, in each the patience and virtue of that saint is reflected. For what more opportune could be said by Christian men than that which the Holy Spirit hath spoken in you this day? 'We petition your Majesty, we use no force, we feel no fear, but we petition.' This is what becomes Christians, to desire peace and quiet fear, and still not to let the steadfastness of faith and truth be shaken even by peril of death. For the Lord is our Guide, Who will save those who hope in Him.

15. But let us come to the lessons set before us. Ye see that power of temptation is given to the devil to prove the good. The wicked one envies our progress in good, he tempts us in various ways. He tempted holy Job in his patrimony, he tempted him in his sons, he tempted him by bodily pains. The stronger is tempted in his own person, the weaker in that of others. Me too he would fain have despoiled of the riches which I possess in you, and he

desired to waste this patrimony of your tranquillity. Yourselves also he desired to snatch from me, my good children for whom I daily offer sacrifice; you he endeavoured to involve in the ruins of the public confusion. Already then I have incurred two kinds of temptation. And perhaps the Lord, knowing my weakness, hath not yet given him power over my body: though I myself desire it, though I offer it, He perhaps still judges me unequal to this contest, and exercises me by diverse labours. Even Job himself did not begin with this contest, but was perfected by it.

16. But Job was tempted by the accumulated tidings of evil, he was tempted by his wife who said, Curse God, and die. Ye behold how many things are suddenly stirred up against us, the Goths, the troops, the heathen, the fine of the tradesmen, the punishment of the saints. Ye observe what is commanded, when it is said 'Deliver up the Basilica;' Curse God, and die. But here it is not only 'Speak against God,' but also 'Act against God.' The command is, 'Betray the altars of God.' 17. So then we are pressed by the Imperial mandates, but we are strengthened by the words of Scripture, which answered, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women |133 speaketh. Not slight therefore is that temptation, for temptations which come through the agency of women we know to be more severe. Lastly, Adam also was betrayed by Eve, and thereby it came to pass that he betrayed the Divine commandments. Becoming aware of this error, and his guilty conscience accusing him, he desired to hide himself, but could not; wherefore God says to him, Adam where art thou? that is, what wert thou before? where hast thou now begun to be? where did I place thee? whither hast thou fallen? thou ownest thyself naked, because thou hast lost the garments of a good faith. The things wherewith thou desirest to clothe thyself are leaves. Thou hast cast aside the fruit, thou desirest to lie hid under the leaves of the tree, but thou art betrayed. For one woman's sake thou hast chosen to depart from thy God, therefore thou fliest from Him when thou soughtest to see. Thou hast chosen to hide thyself with one woman, to leave the mirror of the world, the abode of Paradise, the Grace of Christ.

18. Why need I add that Elijah also was cruelly persecuted by Jezebel? that Herodias caused John the Baptist to be put to death? Each man seems to suffer from this or that woman; for me, in proportion as my merits are less, my trials are heavier. My strength is weaker, but I have more danger. Women succeed each other, their hatreds are interchanged, their falsehoods are varied, the elders are gathered together, the plea of wrong to the Emperor is put forward. What explanation is there then of such grievous temptation to such a worm as I am, but that it is not me but the Church that they persecute. 19. At length came the command, 'Deliver up the Basilica;' I reply, 'It is not lawful for us to deliver it up, nor for your Majesty to receive it. By no law can you violate the house of a private man, and do you think that the house of God may be taken away? It is asserted that all things are lawful to the Emperor, that all things are his. But do not burden your conscience with the thought that you have any right as Emperor over sacred things. Exalt not yourself, but if you would reign the longer, be subject to God. It is written, God's to God and Caesar's to Caesar. The palace is the Emperor's, the Churches are the Bishop's. |134 To you is committed jurisdiction over public not over sacred buildings.' Again the Emperor is said to have issued his command,

' I also ought to have one Basilica;' I answered 'It is not lawful for thee to have her. What hast thou to do with an adultress who is not bound with Christ in lawful wedlock?'

20. While I was engaged with this subject, it was reported to me that the Imperial hangings were taken down, the Church filled with people, and that my presence was required; straightway I turned my discourse to this, saying, How deep and profound are the oracles of the Holy Spirit! Remember, brethren, what was read at matins and how we responded with deep grief of mind, O God the heathen are come into Thine inheritance. And truly the heathen came, nay, even more than the heathen, for the Goths came and men of divers nations, they came armed with weapons, and surrounded and seized the Basilica. Ignorant of Thy Greatness we grieved for this, but our ignorance was mistaken.

21. The heathen came, but truly into Thine inheritance they came, for they who came as heathen were made Christians. They who came to invade Thine inheritance, were made coheirs of God; those whom I accounted enemies are become my defenders; I have as comrades those whom I esteemed adversaries. Thus has that been fulfilled which the prophet David spake of the Lord Jesus, that His Dwelling is in peace , there brake He the horns of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle. For whose office, whose work is this but Thine, Lord Jesus? Thou sawest armed men coming to Thy temple, on the one hand the people groaning and collecting in a crowd that they might not seem to give up the Basilica, on the other hand the soldiers commanded to use force. Death was before my eyes, lest in the midst of all this madness should break out into licence. But Thou, O Lord plantedst Thyself in the midst, and madcst the twain one. Thou restrainedst the soldiers, saying, If ye run to arms, if they who are within My temple are disturbed, What profit is there in My blood? All thanks therefore be to Thee, O Christ. It |135 was not an enemy, not a messenger but Thou 0 Lord hast delivered Thy people, Thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness.

22. Thus I spoke, wondering that the Emperor's mind could be softened by the zeal of the soldiers, by the entreaties of the Counts, by the prayers of the people. Meanwhile I am informed that a Secretary was come with the mandate. I retired a little, and he notified to me the mandate. 'What has been your design,' says he, 'in acting against the Emperor's orders?' I replied, 'What has been ordered I know not, nor am I aware what is alleged to have been wrongly done.' He says, 'Why have you sent presbyters to the Basilica? If you are a tyrant I would fain know it, that I may know how to arm myself against you.' I replied by saying that I had done nothing which assumed too much for the Church, but when I heard it was filled with soldiers, I only uttered deeper groans, and though many exhorted me to proceed thither, I replied, 'I cannot give up the Basilica, yet I must not fight.' That afterwards, when I was told that the Imperial hangings were removed, and that the people required me to go thither, I had directed the presbyters to do so, but that I was unwilling to go myself, saying, 'I trust in Christ that the Emperor himself will espouse our cause.'

23. If this seems like domineering, I grant indeed that I have arms, but only in the name of Christ; I have the power of offering up my body. Why, I asked, did he delay to strike if he

considered my power unlawful? By ancient right Priests have conferred sovereignty, never assumed it, and it is a common saying that Emperors have coveted the Priesthood more often than Priests sovereignty. Christ fled that He might not be made a king. We have a power of our own. The power of a Priest is his weakness; When I am weak, it is said, then am I strong. But let him against whom God has raised up no adversary:beware lest he raise up a tyrant for himself. Maximus did not say that I domineered over Valentinian, though he complains that my embassage prevented his passing over into Italy. I added, that priests were never usurpers, but that they had often suffered from usurpers. |136

24. The whole of that day was past in this affliction; meanwhile the boys tore in derision the Imperial hangings. I could not return home, because the Church was surrounded by a guard of soldiers. We recited the Psalms with our brethren in the little Basilica belonging to the Church. 25. On the following day, the book of Jonah was read in due course, after which, I began this discourse; We have read a book, my brethren, wherein it is foretold that sinners shall return again to repentance. They are accepted on this footing, that their present state is considered an earnest of the future. I added that this just man was even willing to incur blame, rather than behold or denounce destruction on the city; and, since that prophecy was mournful, that he was also grieved because the gourd had withered; that God had said to the prophet, Art thou greatly angry for the gourd? and Jonah had answered, I am greatly angry. Then the Lord said, if the withering of the gourd was a grief to him, how much more ought he to care for the salvation of so many souls; and therefore that He had suspended the destruction which had been prepared for the whole city.

26. Immediate tidings are brought to me that the Emperor had commanded the soldiers to retire from the Church; and that the fine which had been imposed on the merchants on their condemnation should be restored. What joy then prevailed among the whole people, what applause, what congratulations! Now it was the day whereon the Lord delivered Himself up for us, the day whereon there is a relaxation of penance in the Church. The soldiers eagerly brought the tidings, running in to the altars, and giving the kiss, the emblem of peace. Then I perceived that God had smitten the worm which came when the morning rose, that the whole city might be preserved. 27. These are the past events, and would that they were terminated, but the excited words of the Emperor show that heavier trials are awaiting us. I am called a tyrant, and even more than tyrant. For when the Counts besought the Emperor to go to the Church, and said that they did so at the request of the soldiers, he replied, 'You would |137 deliver me up to chains, if Ambrose bade you.' I leave you to judge what awaits us after these words; all shuddered at hearing them, but there are those about him who exasperate him.

28. Lastly Calligonus the Grand Chamberlain ventured to address himself specially to me. 'Do you, while I live, despise Valentinian? I will have your head.' I replied, 'May God grant you to fulfil your threat: I shall suffer as becomes a Bishop, you will act as befits an enunch.' May God indeed turn them aside from the Church; may all their weapons be directed against me, may they satiate their thirst in my blood! [Footnotes and marginalia moved to end

and numbered] 1. Dacia Ripensis. The original Province of Dacia was beyond the Danube. It was conquered and included in the Empire by Trajan. In the time of Aurelian it was abandoned again, and the Danube re-established as the frontier. Then the Roman colonists were removed to the South of the Danube, into the central district of Moesia, which was then called Dacia Aureliani. This was afterwards divided into two Provinces, called Dacia Ripensis and Dacia Mediterranea, Ripensis being the northern part, extending along the bank of the Danube, whence the name.

2. "Damasus was made Pope on the death of Liberius A.D. 366. Ursinus, called by some Ursicinus, was, as Damasus had been, Deacon at Rome, and could not endure the exaltation of his former colleague who is suspected of having taken part with Felix, the successor to the power of Liberius, when exiled by the Arians. Ursinus was factiously consecrated by one Bishop, and a contest ensued in which even much blood was shed. Ursinus was banished, and being recalled the next year, was banished again after two months. In 371 he was allowed to leave his place of exile, and only excluded from Rome and the suburbicarian provinces. In 378 he held the factious meetings mentioned in the letter, and was exiled to Cologne. He continued to petition Gratian to restore him, and hence the request of the Bishops at Aquileia." Note in Newman's Fleury vol. 1 p. 38.

3. i.e. Julianus Valens, Bp. of Petavio, mentioned in the preceding letter. 4. after the first and second admonition E.V. 5. Titus iii. 10. 6. 2 S. John 10. 7. 1 Tim. iii. 3-7. 8. This Lucius was the person who, after the death of S. Athanasius, was forced upon the Church of Alexandria as Bishop, in the place of Peter who had been duly elected, by the Governor of the Province. His crimes and cruelties are recorded at length by Theodoret. Eccl. Hist. iv. 21, 22. He was eventually expelled from the see he had usurped, and is mentioned by Socrates, Hist. Eccl. v. 7, as afterwards dwelling at Constantinople and sharing the fate of Demophilus. 9. Demophilus was originally Bishop of Beroea, (probably Beroea in Thrace,) and was deposed from his office for Arianism. In A.D. 370, on the death of Eudoxius, he was elected by the Arian party Bishop of Constantinople, in opposition to Evagrius. He was supported by Valens who was then Emperor, and Evagrius banished. In 380 A.D. after the accession of Theodosius, matters were changed. Theodosius offered to maintain him in his see, if he subscribed the Nicene Confession, but he refused, and withdrew, and maintained, in conjunction with Lucius and others, Arian worship outside the walls of Constantinople. He died A.D. 386. He is mentioned by S. Ambrose (De Fide 1. 6. 45.) as a leader of one of the various forms of Arianism.

10. This refers to the long schism which had existed in the Church at Antioch, ever since 331 A.D. when Eustathius was deposed by the Arian party: in 361 A.D. Meletius was elected as successor to Eudoxius, having previously subscribed the Creed of Acacius (Socr. ii. 44.); but on his accepting the Nicene Creed, and acknowledging the Homoousion, he was deposed, and banished by the Emperor Constantius, and Euzoius, an Arian, appointed in his stead, who was afterwards succeeded by Dorotheus, (who was afterwards transferred to Constantinople, 385 A. D.) Meanwhile Meletius had returned from exile, but the extreme

orthodox party refused to recognise him, because he had at first been appointed as a Semi-Arian, and elected Paulinus, though the Council of Alexandria had urged them to submit to Meletius, so that, as Socrates says, when recounting the Bishops of the chief sees in the year 379, the the Church at Antioch trixh~ dih&|rhto. Paulinus was supported by the Church of Alexandria and by the Bishops of the West, and, as appears from the statements of this letter, a compromise had been proposed, that when either Meletius or Paulinus died, both parties would acknowledge the survivor. The Bishops at Aquileia urge the Emperor to enforce this, not aware that Flavian had already been elected as Meletius' successor at the Council of Constantinople. The schism was thus perpetuated, and continued till 415 A.D.

What the difficulty about Timotheus was, is not certain. He had been consecrated Bishop of Alexandria that same year, after the death of Peter, the successor of S. Athanasius. Tillemont (vol. x. p. 139) suggests that it was probably connected with the question of the succession at Antioch. 11. The enemy are the Goths under Fritigern. See Gibbon ch. 26. 12. The reading 'pactum' which is suggested by Valerius is here adopted instead of 'factum', which seems to give no satisfactory sense. 13. Fleury remarks on this 'This letter plainly shews that the Bishops who were there present (i.e. at the Council of Aquileia) either did not acknowledge the Council which had been lately held at Constantinople to be an Oecumenical Council, or that they were not yet informed of what had been transacted in it. 14. In the regard of the question between Nectarius and Maximus, the Western Bishops had been deceived by the latter. Maximus, called the Cynic because he retained the outward garb of a Cynic philosopher after he professed to have become a Christian, was irregularly consecrated at Constantinople, but was never recognised, and was formally pronounced by the Council not to be a true Bishop. He then went about trying to stir up other Churches in his favour. See Prof. Bright's Hist, of the Church pp. 160— 166.

Nectarius was elected after the resignation of Gregory Nazianzen, during the Council of Constantinople. He, like S. Ambrose, was unbaptized and held a high civil office at the time of his election. 15. This is translated from an ingenious and probable conjecture of Valesius. 16. The text through this long sentence is confused and ungrammatical, but it conveys the general sense expressed in the translation with tolerable clearness. 17. i. e. Gratian. 18. The sense is here to be elicited probably by repeating the word 'quod,' so that the sentence should run, 'dogma nescio quod, quod Apollinaris asseritur.' 19. There seems to be something corrupt in the text. Perhaps we should read 'moventur,' 'the dangerous parts of Illyricum are in commotion;' or 'suspecta' has taken the place of some word, such as 'superiora,' which would stand in antithesis to 'maritima.'

20. It may complete the subject of this series of letters to remind the reader that about the same time that the Council of the Italian Bishops was held, Theodosius convened a second Council at Constantinople to deal with the questions raised by the Westerns, where most of the Bishops who had formed the previous General Council re-assembled. They replied to the invitation to another General Council at Rome by a Synodical letter, which is given at full length by Theodoret (Eccles. Hist. v. 9). In it they excuse themselves from attending,

on the ground of their presence being required in their own Dioceses, especially after the long exile of many of them, and the prevalence of Arian usurpation, wishing that they 'had the wings of a dove,' to fly to their Western brethren. They then give a summary of the doctrinal decisions of the two Councils, and announce that they have sent three Bishops as deputies to explain all things more fully to them, and, with reference to the disputed successions at Constantinople and Antioch, give their assurance to their brethren that both Nectarius and Flavian were canonically elected, and the elections ratified both by the clergy and the faithful of each diocese, and by the Council, reminding them of the ancient Canon re-affirmed at Nicaea that each province should settle all such questions for themselves.

21. Acholius, or Ascholius, as he is called by Socrates, was the Bishop who baptised Theodosius, during an illness which seized him on a campaign against the Goths. He was present at the Council of Constantinople, and afterwards at that of Rome, not as one of the deputies from the East, but probably because his see had been so recently transferred to the Eastern Empire, that he might seem to belong to both East and West. (Tillemont Ambr. ch. xxxi.) It was there that he met S. Ambrose, who had gone to Rome to attend the Council, and had fallen ill. His death must have occurred in A.D. 383, for his successor Anysius was Bishop before the death of Damasus, Bishop of Rome, who died in A.D. 384. Theodoret therefore (B. v. ch. 18.) must be wrong in making him the Bishop who wrote to S. Ambrose an account of the massacre at Thessalonica, which occurred in A.D. 390. But the passage of Theodoret occurs in only one MS., and is perhaps not genuine.

22. Ps. lv. 7. 23. Phil. i. 24. 24. Ps. xlviii. 7. 25. Baruch iii. 24,25. 26. The Goths had been settled within the boundaries of the Empire by Valens in A. D. 376, when they implored his protection against the Huns. He established them in Moesia, when; they soon revolted, and ravaged Thrace, uniting with their former enemies, the Huns, and other barbarians. Valens was defeated and slain by them in A. D. 378, and then they overran all the neighbouring provinces. There is a graphic account in Gibbon. ch. xxvi. 27. 2 Kings. vi. 18. 28. Ib. vii. 6. 29. 2 Kings ii. 4. 30. S. Matt. xxv. 21. 31. 1 Kings x. 24. 32. Deut. xxxiii. 8. 33. Ib. 9. 34. Ecclus. xliv. 15. 35. The Benedictine text here reads 'claudebatur.' Several MSS, as the editors mention in a note, have 'claudebat.' They themselves suggest 'claudieabat.' But 'claudebat' really gives the same meaning, and there seems little doubt that it is the true reading. It comes from claudeo or claudo, (for both forms are to be found,) meaning 'to be lame,' 'to halt.' It occurs three times in Cicero.

36. Deut. xxxiii. 9. 37. Deut. xxxiii.16. 38. 2 Cor. xii. 2. 39. S. Matt. xii. 48. 40. 2 Chron. ix. 21. 41. Ps. lxviii. 14. 42. Cant. v. 2. 43. Gen. xxviii.13. 44. Wisd. iv. 9. 45. Isa. lx. 8. 46. 2 Chron. ix. 21. 47. Ps. xcvi. 5. 48. 'fisco vel arcae.' The 'fiscus,' or imperial treasury, received whatever was assigned to the Emperor individually, distinguished from the 'acrarium,' which received what belonged to the senate, as representing the old respublica: 'area' is sometimes used in late writers as equivalent to 'fiscus,' sometimes, when distinguished from it, as here, it signifies the city funds, which were distinct from both. 49. Julian's edict, forbidding the Christians to teach in the schools of grammar and rhetoric, is mentioned

with disapproval by Gibbon ch. xxiii. 50. i. e. his half brother Gratian. 51. S. Luke xvi. 13. 52. i. e. Maximus.

53. Valentinian the 1st. 54. This is sometimes represented as an exaggerated piece of rhetoric on S. Ambrose's part, not to be regarded as representing a real truth: but it may very well do so, for Valentinian was almost constantly occupied with wars on the frontiers of the empire, and it does not appear from his life that be was ever at Rome during his reign. Milan, not Rome, was the chief seat of the Western Emperors at this time, when they were not with their armies. 55. The Praefectus Urbi at this time 'was regarded as the direct representative of the Emperor,' and, among other duties, ' he had every month to make a report to the Emperor of the transactions of the Senate,' and also was 'the medium through which the Emperors received the petitions and presents from their capital.' Dict. of Ant. sub voc. 56. By the 'late emperor' is meant Julian; 'his successor' is Valentinian the 1st, and the 'last Emperors' are Valentinian the 1st and Valens.

57. There is a play here on the words 'nomen' and 'numen.' 58. Symmachus is thinking of Virgil's invocation, Di patrii, Indigetes,et Romule, Vestaque Mater, &c. Georg. i. 498. The Di patrii are explained as being those brought by Aeneas into Italy, Indigetes those native to the soil of Italy. 59. In strict law a slave's peculium was the property of his owner, but custom had allowed it to be regarded as his own property. 60. Another trace of Virgil: Cum jam glandes atque arbuta sacrae Deficerent silvae et victum Dodona negaret. Georg.i. 158. 61. Valentinian the 1st, as Symmachus mentions above, had tolerated the heathen rites, and this he here represents as having availed to win the special favour of the gods. 62. This is an official title of honour. There were three ranks among those who held office under the Emperors, 1 Illustres. 2 Spectabiles, 3 Clarissimi, which is the one here applied to Symmachus. The latter was applied to all senators: the other two were reserved for the higher offices of state. See Gibbon, ch. xvii.

63. He is referring apparently to Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, but somewhat exaggerates the brevity of their reigns. Galba reigned nearly seven months, Otho three months, Vitellius nearly eight months. 64. The captive Emperor is Valerian, who, A.D. 260, was taken prisoner by Sapor king of Persia, and treated with the utmost indignity. The other is his son Gallienus, and S. Ambrose's expression with regard to him may be explained by a sentence of Gibbon, (ch. xi. init.) 'Under the deplorable reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, the empire was oppressed and almost destroyed by the soldiers, the tyrants, and the barbarians.' 65. Wisd. iv. 9. 66. Prov. xxi. 1. 67. S. Ambrose refers here to a law of Valentinian's, forbidding the Clergy from receiving bequests from widows and unmarried females. It was addressed to Damasus, Bishop of Rome. S. Ambrose's caution in de Off. Min. 1, 20, 87, shews that control was needed. S. Jerome, speaking of this law says, 'I do not complain of the law, but grieve that we have deserved it.'

68. In the provincial towns the political power in the times of the Emperors had passed into the hands of the curia or provincial Senate; and, with the power, many burdensome and extensive duties, were laid upon the curiales or decurions, as they were called. (See § 15.)

Exemption from these had been granted first by Constantine; afterwards, as it was found that persons sought Holy Orders in order to evade civil duties, the privilege was restrained: and various changes were introduced by different Emperors. A full outline of the various laws is given in a learned note in Newman's Fleury, vol. i. p. 162. where the text is speaking of S. Ambrose's Letter to Theodosius, (infr. Lett, xl.) where he again complains of the same hardship. The subject is also more fully dealt with by Bingham Antiq. B.V. ch. iii. § 14-16. 69. 'Conferte' is here adopted as a manifest emendation of 'conferet.' The transfer of two letters is a common mistake of copyists.

70. This was the case in Julian's reign, as may be seen in Theod. iii. 12. 71. The reading of all the other Edd. 'sacri nemoris' for 'agri nemorum' is here adopted, as yielding a clearer sense. 72. Pannonia was at this time divided into three provinces, viz. Pannonia Prima and Secunda, and Valeria Ripensis. 73. Rhaetia Secunda was the name given to Vindelicia when separated again from Rhaetia proper, shortly before the time of Constantine: it had been united to it about the end of the first century. 74. The Reading 'nuda gignentium' is adopted from Ed. Rom. The phrase occurs in Sallust Jug. 79, 6. 'Gignentia' is used for plants, trees &c. The clause 'quae nos' &c. is strange, but probably refers to the torpidity of winter, which is felt by man as well as by the lower creation. 75. This passage seems suggested by reminiscences of Virgil, the phrase 'absconditam pretio humum' possibly from Aen. iv, 211. urbem Exiguam pretio posuit, while in the latter part S. Ambrose perhaps had in his mind the description of Evander's town in Aen. viii. Sec especially ll. 347-366.

76. The story of Cybele being brought to Rome, and landing outside; the city, where the little stream of tbe Almo joins the Tiber, is told at length by Ovid, Fast. iv. 250-348. In commemoration of tbe washing of the Statue and sacred implements at the landing, an annual ceremony was maintained, which seems to have been popular, from the numerous allusions to it in later writers. See Lucan 1. 600, Martial iii. 47. 2, Stat. Silv. v. 1. 222, Sil. Ital. viii. 305, all quoted in Dict. of Geogr. When the rites were performed away from Rome, the nearest river was conventionally made the Almo for the time. It is remarkable that Ammianus Marcellinus xxiii, 3,7. mentions as one of the Emperor Julian's last acts, his keeping the day of this rite, when on his last campaign against the Persians, and performing all the ceremonies at Callinicum or Nicephorium on the Euphrates.

77. Venus Caelestis is a Latin equivalent of 'Afrodi/th ou)rani/a, and this name was transferred, according to Herodotus (Bk. i. ch. 105.) to the Phoenician goddess Astarte, or Ashtaroth. The same author also (B. i. ch. 131.) identifies Aphrodite with the Persian goddess Mitra, which however is shewn by Prof. Rawlinson, ad loc., to be an error, as Mithras is the sun-god of the Persians. The Temple of Venus Caelestis, or Astarte, at Carthage was very shortly after this time converted into a Christian Church, as recorded by Gibbon on the authority of Prosper. Aquitan. (ch. xxviii). 78. S. Ambrose's repeated assertions, that the Christians formed a majority in the Senate, are characterised by writers unfavourable to Christianity as unfounded, but they produce no proof. Gibbon (ch. xxviii. note 12.) simply says that it is an assertion 'in contradiction to common sense.' But as a large majority of

the Senate voted for the abolition of the worship of Jupiter about the same time, as Gibbon himself records, common sense would seem rather to agree with S. Ambrose.

79. Referring to the unhappy end of Gratian whom the previous year(A.D. 383.) had been overpowered by Maximus, who revolted in Britain, and attacked him in Gaul. His troops deserted him and he was put to death by Maximus' orders. 80. Pompeius was murdered, as he landed in Egypt, after escaping from Pharsalia, by Achillas an Eunuch and one of the guardians of king Ptolemy. 81. Tomyris queen of the Massagetae. See the story in Herod. i. 214. 82. This is the first of the famous Hamilcars, the one who led the great invasion of Sicily in B. C. 480, and was totally defeated by Gelon. Herodotus, 15 vii. ch. 167, tolls the story to which S. Ambrose alludes as the account given by the Carthaginians of his end. 83. S. Ambrose is alluding to the famous story of Julian burning his fleet, after crossing the Tigris to attack Sapor, king of Persia, in his own dominions. This was regarded afterwards by the Christians as an act of judicial blindness. See Augustine de Civ. Dei iv. 29, v. 21. Ammianus, xxiv. 7. asserts that he repented of the order as soon as it was issued, but was too late to stop the flames. Gibbon endeavours to justify the act, and says, 'had he been victorious we should now admire his conduct.' See his narrative in ch. xxiv. The author of his life in the Dict. of Ant. styles it 'the best thing he could have done, if his march into the interior of Persia, had been dictated by absolute necessity.' Setting these hypotheses aside, and looking only at the actual result, we may fairly think that the Christian interpretation of the facts, even if over-strongly expressed, is the truer.

84. Gen. xxviii. 1, 2. 85. Deut. xxiv. 14. 86. Ps. xv. 1. 6. 87. Ps. xvii. 13. 88. Tobit iv. 21. 89. Prov. xv 17. 90. Judges xx. 44. Gen. xxxiv. 25. 91. Num. xxv. 8. 92. Judges xiii. 8. 93. He here refers to Josephus Antiq. v. ch. iv. 94. Judg.xiv, 14. 95. Judg.xiv. 16. 96. ib. 18. 97. The name given in the Hebrew is Ramath Lehi, which means, 'the hill or lifting up of the jaw-bone.' S. Ambrose interprets it below 'maxillae interfectionem.' He would seem to be here suggesting a Greek etymology. The Benedictine note suggests that the name Agon is a confusion on his part from the word siagw_n in Josephus. 98. Judges xv. 16. 99. Ib. 18. 100. The, words 'quasi in cubitum intexti' are probably from the Old Latin Version of the Bible. Field, on Origen's Hexapla in Ioe. (Judg. xvi. 13.) mentions that some MSS of LXX read e0an u(fa&nhj w(sei ph~xun or w(j e0pi\ ph~xun, which may very well have been translated by some such words as the above, in the Old Latin Version which S. Ambrose used.

101. Judges xvi. 20. 102. Judges xvi. 28. 103. The expression 'principes virtutum' seems to be a phrase from the Old Testament. In the Vulgate we find 'rex virtutum' Ps. lxvii, (lxviii. E.V.) 13, whore the E.V. has 'kings of armies,' and in Judith xiv. 17 (19 K.V.) 'Quod quum audissent, principes virtutis Assyriorum,' and in 1 Macc. v. 56. 'Azarias princeps virtutis.' The 'comites consistoriani' formed a sort of cabinet (consistorium) or privy council to the Emperor. The Benedictine Editors take 'principes virtutum' as meaning the Magistri militum, but the absence of any conjunction is against this. 104. This must mean the Praefectus praetorio Italiae, one of the four great Viceroys, under whom the Dioceses of

the Empire were placed. He was supreme overall Italy, and the countries north of it to the Danube, and the western part of the north of Africa. He had under him three Dioceses, containing thirty Provinces.

105. The title given them is 'Decani.' They seem to have, been something like the lictors of the great officers of state, under the republic. 106. These 'vela' or hangings were a token that the building was claimed for the 'fiscus,' or private property of the Emperor, Gibbon in his grand way says, 'the splendid canopy and hangings of the royal scat were arranged in the customary manner,' but, as is noticed by the writer of the Life of S. Ambrose in Dict. of Christian Biog. it is clear from the sequel of the narrative (see § 20) that they were outside, not inside the Church. 107. The words in the original are 'missam facere.' Prof. Bright in his History notes that this is 'the earliest instance, apparently, of this term being used for the Eucharistic service.' 108. 'The introduction of barbarians into the Roman armies became every day more universal, more necessary, and more fatal. The most daring of the Scythians, of the Goths, and of the Germans, were enrolled not only in the auxiliaries of their respective nations, but in the legions themselves, and among the most distinguished of the Palatine troops.' (Gibbon, ch. xvii.) The Goths were Arians. It was much about this time that Ulfilas, the apostle of the Goths, made his famous translation of the Bible into Gothic. See Bright's Hist. of the Church p. 157.

109. Ps. xvii. 7. 110. Job ii. 9. 111. ib. 10. 112. Gen. iii. 9. 113. S. Matt. xxii. 21. 114. S. Matt. xiv. 4. 115. Ps. lxxix. 1. 116. This is the Vulgate rendering of 'At Salem is His Tabernacle.' 117. Ps. lxxvi. 2,3. 118. Ps. xxx. 9. 119. 2 Cor. xii. 10. 120. Jonah iv. 9. 121. Ib. 7. 122. On the high rank and great influence of the Praepositus cubiculi, or Grand Chamberlain, see Gibbon ch. xvii. They ranked with the Praefecti praetorio and other highest officers of state as Illustres. See note on Lett. xvii. § 1.

Letters 21-30 — LETTER XXI. [A.D.386.]

S. AMBROSE ends his letter to his sister with foreboding's of more troubles, Nor was he wrong. One of the next steps taken was a challenge to dispute publicly before the Emperor with Auxentius the Arian (so-called) Bishop, with regular umpires (judices) appointed on both sides. This letter is his reply to the Emperor, setting forth his ground for refusing, as he had before done at the time of the Council of Aquileia, to allow laymen to be judges of questions of Faith. (See above. Council of Aquil. § 51, 52, 53.) TO THE MOST CLEMENT EMPEROR, HIS BLESSED MAJESTY VALENTINIAN, AMBROSE, BISHOP, SENDS GREETING. 1. DALMATIUS the tribune and notary cited me at your Clemency's bidding, as he alleged, requiring that I also should choose umpires as Auxentius had done. He did not mention the names of those who had been called for, but he added that the trial would take place in the Consistory, and that your pious judgment would decide between us.

2. To this I make, as I consider, a sufficient answer. |138 No one ought to deem me contumacious for asserting what your father of illustrious memory not only declared by word of mouth but sanctioned by his laws; that in a matter of the Faith or of any ecclesiastical ordinance, the judges ought to be qualified for it, both competent by office and qualified by profession: (these are the words of the Rescript), that is to say, he would have Bishops judge Bishops. Moreover if a bishop were accused elsewhere also, and a charge of a moral nature to be examined, this too he willed should be referred to the judgment of Bishops. 3. Who then is it who makes a contumacious answer to your Clemency? He who would have you like your Father, or he who would have you unlike? Unless perhaps some persons count cheaply the opinion of that great Emperor, whose faith has been approved by the constancy of his confession , and his wisdom proclaimed by the improved condition of the State.

4. When have you ever heard, most gracious Emperor, that laymen had judged a Bishop in a matter pertaining to the Faith? Does their flattery make us cringe so low as to forget the rights of the priesthood, and suppose that what God has committed to me I should entrust to others? If a layman may teach a Bishop, what will follow? a layman, will dispute, and a Bishop listen, a Bishop learn of a |139 layman. Assuredly, if we revert to the volume of Holy Scripture or to the time of old, who is there who will deny that in a cause of the

Faith, in a cause, I say, of the Faith, Bishops are wont to judge Christian Emperors, not Emperors to judge Bishops. 5. Hereafter, you will, by God's favour, reach a more mature age, and then you will judge what kind of Bishop he must be who submits the rights of the priesthood to laymen. Your father, who by God's favour attained a riper age, used to say: 'It is not for me to judge between Bishops:' your Majesty now says, 'I ought to judge.' He, although baptized into Christ, considered himself unequal to the weight of so important a judgment; does your Majesty, who have yet to earn for yourself the Sacrament of Baptism, claim to decide concerning the Faith, although still ignorant of the Sacrament of this Faith?

6. But what sort of judges he will have selected we may leave to be guessed, seeing that he fears to disclose their names. Let them come openly, if indeed there be any, to the Church; let them attend together with the people, not to sit as judges, but for every one to prove his own feelings and choose whom he will follow. The cause is concerning the Bishop of that Church; if the people hear him and suppose he has the better of the argument, let them follow his Faith; I shall not be jealous. 7. I forbear to mention that the people themselves have already decided; I do not urge that the Bishop whom they have they demanded from your Majesty's father; I urge not that your father promised tranquillity for the future if he, having been elected, took upon him the Bishopric. It was in reliance on these promises that I acted.

8. But if he prides himself on the support of any foreigners let him be Bishop in the place whence those come who hold that he should be invested with the name of a Bishop. For I neither acknowledge him as Bishop, nor know whence he comes. 9. How, your Majesty, can we be said to settle a matter in which you have already declared your judgment; nay, have yourself published laws precluding others from | 140 deciding otherwise. And when you laid down this rule for others you laid it down also for yourself; for the laws which the Emperor makes he ought to be the first to keep. Would you then have me make trial whether those who are chosen judges will meet, contrary to your decree, or whether they will allege that they have not been able to contravene so rigid and peremptory a command of the Emperor?

10. But this is the part of a contumacious not of a respectful Bishop. See, your Majesty, how you yourself partially rescind your own law; but I would that you would do so not partially but universally, for I would not wish your law to be above the law of God. The law of God has taught us what we should follow, human laws cannot teach us this. They can compel a change in the timid, but they cannot inspire faith. 11. Who therefore when he learns that in one moment it has been published through so many provinces that whoever shall resist the Emperor shall be put to death, whoever shall not give up the temple of God shall immediately be slain; who is there, I say, who either alone or with a few others can say to the Emperor; 'I do not approve your law?' The priesthood are not allowed to say this; are then the laity allowed? And shall he judge concerning the faith, who either hopes for favour or fears giving offence?

12. Lastly, shall I venture to nominate laymen for umpires, who if they keep true to their Faith must be proscribed or put to death, as that law passed concerning the Faith prescribes.

Shall I then expose them to the hazard either of prevarication or of punishment? 13. Ambrose is not of such importance as to degrade the priesthood on his account. One man's life is not of us much value as the dignity of the whole priesthood, by whose advice I gave my direction when they suggested that there might be some heathen or Jew, chosen by Auxentius, to whom we might give a triumph over Christ if we committed to him judgment concerning Christ. What else pleases them but to hear of wrong done to Christ? What else can please them but the denial (which God |141 forbid) of the Divinity of Christ? Clearly they agree entirely with the Arian, who calls Christ a creature, which heathens and Jews too are willing enough to confess.

14. This was decreed at the synod of Ariminum, and with good reason do I abhor that Council; following as I do the doctrine of the Nicene Council, from which neither death nor the sword can ever separate me. This Faith your Majesty's father, the blessed Emperor Theodosius, both followed and approved. This Faith the provinces of Gaul and of Spain hold, and this they keep with the pious confession of the Divine Spirit. 15. If I have to preach, I have learnt to preach in the Church, as my predecessors did. If a conference is to be held on a matter of Faith, it ought to be a conference of Bishops, as was the case under Constantine of august memory, who laid down no laws beforehand, but left to the Bishops the liberty of judging. The same was the case also under Constantius of illustrious memory, who inherited his father's dignity, but what began well ended badly. For the Bishops had at first subscribed an orthodox confession, but, through the wish of certain persons to judge of the Faith in agreement with the palace, the result was that these judgments of the Bishops were fraudulently changed; they however immediately recalled this perverted decision. And there is no doubt that the majority at Ariminum approved the creed of the Nicene Council and condemned the Arian decrees.

16. If Auxentius appeals to a Synod to discuss questions concerning the Faith, though it would be needless to disturb so many Bishops on one person's account, who, were he an Angel from heaven, ought not to be preferred to the Church's peace, I too will not be absent when I hear that the Synod is assembled. Let the law then be repealed, if you would have the contest entered upon. 17. I would have come to your Majesty's Consistory, to offer this plea in your presence, could I have obtained leave from the Bishops or the people; but they said that |142 an argument concerning the Faith ought to be held in the Church in the presence of the people. 18. I could have wished that your Majesty had not declared that I might go into exile, whither I chose. I went abroad daily, no man guarded me. You should then have sent me wherever you thought fit, for I was ready to submit to any thing; now the Bishops say to me, 'There is little difference between voluntarily leaving Christ's altar and betraying it, for if you leave you will betray it.'

19. And I would I were certain that the Church would not be given up to the Arians, I would then willingly surrender myself to your Majesty's disposal. But if it is I only who am an intruder, why has the command been given to invade all other Churches also? I would it were certain, that no one would disturb the Churches, I would gladly then have

any sentence which seems good passed concerning myself. 20. Let your Majesty then be pleased graciously to accept my reasons for not coming to the Church. I have not learned how to stand up in the Consistory except in your behalf ; and within the palace I cannot contend, for I neither seek after nor know the secrets of the palace. 21. I, Bishop Ambrose, offer this remonstrance to the most clement Emperor, his blessed Majesty Valentinian.

Letters 21-30 — SERMON: AGAINST AUXENTIUS ON THE GIVING UP THE BASILICAS. [A.D. 386.]

THE persecution against S.Ambrose still continued. The Court party endeavoured to induce him to leave Milan, in order, they said, to prevent more serious troubles. This he refused to do, and at last he remained for several days and nights continuously within the Basilica , attended by a |143 crowded congregation, all determined to protect him from the violence of the court, while a guard of soldiers was at the same time blockading the Church, and preventing any from leaving it. It was during this time that this Sermon was preached. In it S. Ambrose first calms the fears of the people lest he should be induced to leave them, assuring them that he will only yield to force; and proceeds to apply the Lessons of the day, the story of Naboth and the Entry into Jerusalem, to the circumstances of the time, giving incidentally several interesting details of the contest between himself and the Court, and alluding to the hymns which he then taught the people to sing.

1. I SEE that you are in an unusual state of excitement, and that your eyes are fixed upon me. I am at a loss to know the cause of this. Is it that you saw or heard that an Imperial message has been brought to me by the Tribunes, commanding me to depart hence whither I would, and that all who would were permitted to follow me. Were you then alarmed lest I should desert the Church, and in fear for my own life abandon you? But you heard my answer. I said that the thought of deserting the Church could not for an instant enter my mind, for I feared the Lord of the Universe more than the Ruler of the Empire; that if I were to be forcibly removed from the Church, it would be my body not my mind which would be driven by violence from thence, that if the Emperor were to act as royal power is wont, I was prepared for that which is the part of a priest to suffer.

2. Why then are you thus disturbed? I will never desert you of my own will, but I may not repel force by force. I shall still be able to mourn, to weep, and to groan; when weapons, soldiers, Goths assail me, my tears are my weapons, for these are the defence of a priest. By

any other means I neither can nor ought to resist; but to fly and desert the Church is not my wont, lest any one should impute it to fear of heavier punishment. You yourselves know that I am wont to pay deference to our Rulers, but not to give way to them, and willingly to offer myself to punishment, not fearing what is prepared for me. 3. Would that I could be satisfied that the Church would not be delivered to heretics! I would willingly go to the Emperor's palace, were this accordant with the priest's office, so as to hold our contest rather in the palace |144 than in the Church. But in the Consistory Christ is not wont to be the accused, but the Judge. Who will deny that a matter of faith should be pleaded in the Church? If any one has confidence in his cause let him come hither; let him not look for the judgment of the Emperor, which already shews its leaning, which has declared plainly by the law he has enacted that he is adverse to the Faith, nor for the expected support of certain intriguers. I will not give occasion to any one to barter for gain a wrong to Christ.

4. The guard of soldiers and the din of the arms which beset the Church, alarm not my faith, but they make me fear that in keeping me here you may incur danger to yourselves. For I have learned ere this not to fear for myself, but I begin now to fear more for you. Permit, I beg, your Bishop to enter the lists; we have an adversary who challenges us; for our adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour, as the Apostle saith. Doubtless he has obtained, he has obtained (not to deceive us, but to warn us, is it recorded) this power of temptation, lest haply I should be removed from the stedfastness of my faith by the wounds of my body. You also have read that the devil thus tempted holy Job in many ways; and last of all he begged and obtained the power of afflicting his body which he covered with sores.

5. When it was proposed to me to give up at once the Church plate, I made this reply; That if my own property was required of me, farm or house, gold or silver, anything that lies in my power, I would willingly give it; but that I would withdraw nothing from God's temple, nor surrender what had been committed to me to keep, not to surrender. And further, that I was studying also for the Emperor's good, for it was expedient neither for me to surrender nor for him to receive these things; let him then listen to the words of an independent Bishop: if he regard his own interest, let him abstain from doing wrong to Christ. 6. These are words full of humility, and, I believe, of that affection which a Bishop owes to his Emperor. But since our contest is not only against flesh and blood, but also |145 (which is more trouble) against spiritual wickedness in high places, that tempter, the Devil, sharpens the contest by his ministers, and deems that by the wounds of my body the trial must be made. I know, brethren, that these wounds which we receive for Christ, are no wounds: life is not lost by them, but its seed propagated. Permit, I beseech you. the contest to take place, it is for you to be spectators only. Consider that if there is in a city an athlete or one skilled in some other science, it wishes to present him for the combat. Why do ye reject in greater things what ye are wont to wish for even in smaller ones? He fears neither arms nor barbarians, who dreads not death, who is entangled in no fleshly pleasure.

7. Without doubt if the Lord hath appointed me to this combat, it is in vain that you have kept sleepless watch and ward through so many nights and days; the will of Christ will be performed. For our Lord Jesus Christ is Almighty, this is our Faith; and therefore what He bids to be done will be fulfilled, nor does it become us to run counter to the Divine Will.

8. Ye have heard what has been read to-day: the Saviour commanded an ass's colt to be brought to Him by the Apostles and commanded that if any one sought to hinder them they should say, The Lord hath need of him. What if now also He hath commanded this ass's colt, that is the colt of that animal which is wont to bear a heavy burthen, such as is the condition of man, to whom it is said, Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest: take My yoke upon you, for My yoke is easy: what, I say, if He hath now commanded this colt to be brought to Him, sending forth those Apostles who now having put off the body, wear, invisibly to our eyes, the guise of Angels? Will they not say, should any one seek to hinder them, The Lord hath need of him, if either the desire of this life, or flesh and blood, or the conversation of the world, for perhaps we are acceptable to some persons, should seek to hinder them? But he who loves me here, cannot give a better testimony of his affection than by suffering me to become a sacrifice for Christ; because to be dissolved and to be with Christ is much better; |146 howbeit, to remain in the flesh is more needful for your sakes. Ye have therefore, my beloved brethren, no cause for fear, for I know that whatever I shall suffer, I shall suffer for Christ. And I have read that I ought not to fear those who can kill the flesh, and I have heard One say, He who loses his life for My sake, shall find it.

9. Wherefore, if the Lord wills it, I am sure that no resistance will be made. But if He still delay our contest, why should we fear? It is not bodily protection but the Lord's providence which is wont to protect the servant of Christ. 10. You are disturbed at finding some folding doors unclosed which a blind man in returning home is said to have opened. Acknowledge then that human guards are no support. Lo! one who had lost the gift of sight has broken through all your barriers and baffled your guards: but the Lord hath not lost the guard of His mercy. Do you not remember that two days ago there was found open an entrance on the left side of the Basilica which you thought to be closed and guarded? The Basilica was surrounded by armed men who inspected every entrance, but their eyes were blinded so that they could not discover the one which was open; and so it remained open, as you know, for many nights. Cease then all anxiety, for what Christ commands, and what is expedient, shall come to pass.

11. In the next place I will produce to you instances from the Old Testament. Elisha was sought after by the king of Syria, an army was sent to take him, he was surrounded on every side, his servant began to fear, because he was a servant, that is, his mind was not free, nor had he freedom of action. The holy prophet prayed that his eyes might be opened, and said, Look and see how many more are on our side than against us. And he looked up and saw thousands of Angels. You see then that the servants of Christ are protected rather by invisible than by visible beings. But when they keep guard around you, they have been

called to do so by your prayers; for you have |147 read that those very men who sought for Elisha on entering Samaria came upon the very man whom they wished to capture, yet they were not able to injure him, but were saved by the intercession of the very man against whom they came.

12. Take the Apostle Peter too as an example of both these things. When Herod sought after and took him, he was put in prison; for the servant of God had not fled but stood firm and without fear. The Church prayed for him, but the Apostle was asleep in the prison, a proof that he feared not. An Angel was sent to rouse him from his sleep, and by him Peter was brought out of prison and for the time escaped death. 13. The same Peter, afterwards, after overcoming Simon, by spreading the precepts of God among the people and preaching chastity, stirred up the minds of the heathen against him: and when they sought to put him to death the Christians besought him to retire for a little while. And although he was desirous of suffering, yet he was moved by the sight of the people praying, for they besought him to reserve himself for the instruction and confirmation of the people. To be brief: as he set out from the walls by night, he saw Christ meeting him in the gate and entering the city, whereupon he said, 'Lord, whither goest Thou?' Christ answered, 'I am coming to be crucified again.' This Divine response Peter understood to refer to his own cross, for Christ, Who had put off the flesh by undergoing the suffering of death could not again be crucified, For in that He died, He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Wherefore Peter understood that Christ was again to be crucified in His servant; and so he turned back of his own accord, and when the Christians asked him why, he told them what he had seen, and was immediately seized, and honoured the Lord Jesus by his cross.

14. Ye see then that Christ wills to suffer in His servants. What if He saith to this servant also, I will that he tarry, but follow thou Me? what if He wills to taste of the fruit from this tree? For if it was His meat to do His Father's Will, it is His meat also to feed upon the suffer |148 ings of His servants. To take an example from our Lord Himself, did He not suffer when He willed, and was He not found when they sought for Him? But when the hour of His passion had not arrived, He passed through the midst of them who sought for Him, and they who saw Him could not detain Him. Which evidently shews that when the Lord wills, each man is found and taken, while he whose time is not come although he meet the eyes, is not captured.

15. And did I not go out daily to make visits, or go to the tomb of the Martyrs? Did I not in going and returning pass close by the Royal palace? And yet no man arrested me, though they wished to drive me from the city, us they shewed afterwards by saying, 'Leave this city, and go where thou wilt.' I expected, I confess, something great, to be burned or slain with the sword for the name of Christ, but they offered me delights in the place of sufferings; and yet the soldiers of Christ seeks not for delights but for sufferings. Wherefore let no man trouble you by the intelligence that they have prepared a carriage , or that Auxentius, who calls himself Bishop, has uttered what he thinks terrible words. 16. Many said that executioners had been sent, that the punishment of death had been decreed; I fear them not,

nor will I desert my post. For whither should I go to find a place that is not full of nothing but tears and groans? For in every Church the Catholic clergy are ordered to be cast forth; if they resist, to be put to death; all the senators who do not obey this mandate, to be proscribed. |149 And it is a Bishop who writes these orders with his own hand and dictates them with his own mouth, who to prove his learning omitted not an ancient precedent; for we read in the prophet that he saw a flying sickle , and in imitation of this Auxentius sent a winged sword through all the cities. And thus Satan transforms himself into an Angel of light, and imitates his power for evil purposes.

17. Thou, Lord Jesus, hast in one moment redeemed the world; shall Auxentius in one moment, so far as in him lies, slay so many people, some with the sword, others by sacrilege? My Basilica he sought with a mouth and hands of blood, and to him our present Lesson may be well applied, Unto the ungodly, saith God, why dost thou preach my laws? that is, There is no concord between peace and wrath, between Christ and Belial. You remember also how in the Lesson of to-day that holy man Naboth, the owner of a vineyard, was requested by the king to surrender it to him, that he might root up the vines and plant it with common herbs, and that he answered, God forbid that I should give thee the inheritance of my fathers; and that king was grieved that what belonged of right to another was refused him when he claimed it as his right, and only gained by the deceit of a woman's artifice. Naboth then defended his vineyard even with his own blood; if he would not surrender his vineyard, shall we surrender the Church of Christ?

18. How then did I reply contumaciously? When summoned, I said, 'God forbid that I should surrender Christ's heritage. If Naboth would not surrender the heritage of his fathers, shall I surrender Christ's heritage?' I added moreover, 'God forbid that I should surrender the heritage of my fathers, the heritage of Dionysius, who died in exile for the Faith, of the Confessor Eustorgius, of Myrocles, and of all the faithful Bishops of old time.' I answered as becomes a Bishop, let the Emperor act as becomes an Emperor. He shall deprive me of my life sooner than my Faith. 19. But to whom am I to surrender it? The Lesson just read from the Gospel ought to teach us what it is that is demanded, and by whom. Ye heard it read that, when |150 Christ was sitting on the ass's colt, the children cried out, and the Jews were indignant, appealing to the Lord Jesus, and saying that He should bid them hold their peace, but He replied, If these were to hold their peace, the very stones would cry out. Then He entered the Temple, and cast out the moneychangers, and their tables, and those that sold doves in the Temple of God. This Lesson was read by no direction of ours, but by chance; but it suits well with the present time. For the praises of Christ are always as it were scourges to misbelievers. And now when Christ is praised the heretics say that we are exciting sedition, the heretics say that they were thereby threatened with death; and truly the praises of Christ are death to them. For how can they bear His praises Whose weakness they are proclaiming! Wherefore to this day the praises of Christ are a scourge to the madness of the Arians.

20. The Gerasenes could not bear the presence of Christ, these men, worse than the Gerasenes, cannot even bear the praises of Christ. They see children singing the glory of Christ; for it is written, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise. They deride their tender years so full of faith, and ask, Why do they cry out? But Christ answers them, If these should hold their peace the very stones would cry out, that is, the stranger will cry out, the young men too will cry out, the more mature will cry out, the old men also: stones built into that Stone of Whom it is written, The stone which the builders disallowed is become the head-stone of the corner. 21. Christ then, invited by these praises, enters His Tern-pie, and takes His scuorge and drives out the moneychangers. For He will not permit those who are slaves of money to be in His Temple, He will not suffer those to be there who sell seats. What are seats, but honours? What are doves, but simple minds, or souls which embrace a sincere and pure faith? Shall I then introduce into the Temple him whom Christ excludes? For he is commanded to go forth who sells dignities and honours, he is commanded to go forth who would sell the simple minds of the faithful. |151

22. Wherefore Auxentius is cast forth, Mercurianus is excluded. This is one portent under two names. That it might not be known who he was, he changed his name, and, as there had been here Auxentius the Arian Bishop, so he, to deceive the people whom the other had influenced, called himself Auxentius. Thus he changed his name, but his perfidy he could not change; he put off wolf, and yet put on wolf. It avails him not to have changed his name, what he really is is known. He was known by one name in the regions of Scythia. he is called by another here, he has names differing according to his country. Now therefore he has two names, and if from hence he goes elsewhere he will have a third also. For how will he endure to keep a name which betrays the greatness of his crime? In Scythia he did less wickedly, and yet he was so ashamed as to change his name; here he has dared to do more heinous things, and will he be willing wherever he goes to be betrayed by his name? After writing with his own hand the death warrant of so many people, will he be able to retain his senses unshaken?

23. The Lord Jesus drove out n few from His temple, Auxentius left no one. Jesus casts men out of His temple with a scourge, Auxentius with u sword; Jesus with a rod, Mercurianus with an axe. Our holy Lord drives out the sacrilegious with a scourge, this wicked man persecutes the godly with the sword. Of him ye have to-day said well; 'let him carry his laws away with him.' He shall carry them though he desire it not, lie shall carry with him his conscience, though he carry not the writing, he shall carry his own soul inscribed in blood, although he carry not a letter inscribed with ink. Thy sin, O Judah, is written with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond, and it is graven in thy heart, graven that is in the place from whence it came forth.

24. Does he moreover, stained as he is with blood and slaughter, dare to mention discussion to me? Those whom he fails to deceive by his arguments he sentences to be smitten with the sword, and he dictates bloody laws with his mouth, writing them with his hand, and thinking that the law can impose a Creed on men. He has never heard |152 what was read

to-day, A man is not justified by the works of the law, or, I by the law am dead to the law that I might live to God, that is, by the spiritual law he is dead to the carnal interpretation of the law. Let us too by the law of our Lord Jesus Christ die to this law which sanctions the decrees of perfidy. It is not the law which has gathered together the Church, but the faith of Christ. For the law is not of faith: But the just shall live by faith. It is faith then, not the law, which makes a man just, because righteousness is not by the law, but by the faith of Christ. But he who rejects faith, and takes law for his rule, bears witness to his own unrighteousness, for the just shall live by faith.

25. Shall any then follow this law confirming the Council of Arianism wherein Christ is called a creature? But they say, God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law. So then He is made they say, that is, created. Will they not consider this very text which they have produced; that Christ is said to be made, but made of a woman, that is, He according to His birth from the Virgin was made, Who was according to His Divine generation born of the Father? They read too to-day that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us. Was Christ a curse according to His Divinity? But why He should be called a curse the Apostle teaches thee, alleging the text, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree, that is, He Who in His flesh took upon Him our flesh, in His body carried our griefs and our curses that He might crucify them, for He is cursed, not in Himself, but in thee. Lastly, you have in another place, Who knew no sin, but was made sin for us, for He took upon Him our sins, to do away with them by the Sacrament of His Passion.

26. These points, my brethren, I would have discussed more fully with you in his presence, but he, being aware that you were not ignorant of the Faith, fled from your scrutiny, and chose as his advocates, if indeed he chose any, four or live heathens, whom I would willingly have now present in our general assembly, not for them to judge of Christ, but that they might hear the majesty of Christ. They however have already pronounced concerning |153 Auxentius, for when he daily argued before them they gave him no credit. What can be a greater condemnation of him than that he was defeated without an adversary before his own judges? Thus we now have their own sentence against Auxentius. 27. And justly is he to be condemned for choosing heathen judges, for he disregarded the Apostle's precept who says Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? And below he says, Is it so that there is not a wise man among you, no not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? but brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers? Ye see that what he offered is contrary to the Apostle's authority. Choose whether we should follow Auxentius or Paul as our master?

28. But why should I speak of the Apostle, when our Lord Himself cries by the Prophet, hearken unto Me My people, ye that know righteousness, in whose heart is My law. God says, hearken unto Me My people, ye that know righteousness. Auxentius says, Ye know not righteousness. Do ye not see that he now, who rejects the declaration of the heavenly oracles, despises God in you? Hearken unto Me My people; saith the Lord. He says not,

Hearken ye Gentiles; He says not, Hearken ye Jews. For now they that were the people of God are become the people of error, and they who were the people of error have become the people of God, because they have believed in Christ. Wherefore that people are judges, in whose heart is the Divine, not human, law; the law written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not inscribed on paper but stampt upon the heart; the law of grace not of blood. Who is it then who wrongs you, he who refuses or he who chooses to be heard by you?

29. Hemmed in on all sides, he has recourse to the wiles of his fathers. He wishes to excite odium against me in regard to the Emperor, saying, that a youth yet a catechumen and ignorant of the sacred Scriptures, ought to judge, and to judge in the Consistory. As if last year, when I was summoned to the palace, when in the presence of the |154 nobles the matter was argued before the Consistory, when the Emperor wished to take away the Basilica, I was then cowed by the sight of the Imperial court, and had not maintained the constancy of a priest, or had suffered our rights to be infringed there. Do they not remember that when the people knew I had gone to the palace they rushed in with an onset that nothing could withstand; and when a Military Count came forth with some light troops to disperse the multitude they all offered themselves to death for the Faith of Christ? Was I not then requested to make a long speech to soothe the people? Did I not pledge my faith that no one should invade the Church's Basilica? And although my good offices were requested as a kindness, yet the coming of the populace to the palace was made a ground of charge against me; into the same odium then they wish me again to fall.

30. I recalled the people, and yet I did not escape odium, and this odium ought, I conceive, to be controuled rather than feared. For what should we fear for the name of Christ? Unless perhaps this which they say ought to move me; 'And ought not the Emperor then to have one Basilica to go to; and does Ambrose desire to be more powerful than the Emperor, so as to exclude him from the liberty of attending Church?' When they say this, they wish to lay hold of my words, like the Jews who tempted Christ with empty words, saying, Master, is it lawful to give, tribute to Caesar or not? Must the servants of God always be exposed to odium on Caesar's account? And does impiety, with a view to calumny, seek to use the Imperial name as a cloak? And can they protest that they do not partake of the sacrilege of these men, whose guidance they follow?

31. Yet see how much worse the Arians are than the Jews. The latter enquired of Christ whether He thought that the right of tribute should be rendered to Caesar; the former are willing to surrender to the Emperor the rights of the Church. But like traitors, they follow their master, and so let us answer what our Lord and Master hath taught us. For Jesus perceiving the treachery of the Jews, said unto them, Why tempt ye Me, shew Me a penny. And when they gave it to Him, He said, Whose image and whose |155 superscription is this? They answered, Caesar's. Jesus replied, Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. Thus I also say to them who find fault with me, Shew Me a penny. Jesus saw the penny was Caesar's, and said, Render unto

Caesar the the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. Can they from the seizure of the Basilicas of the Church offer the penny of Caesar?

32. But in the Church I know one image, that is, the image of the invisible God, of which God said, Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness, that image of which it is written, that Christ is the brightness of His glory, the express image of His substance. In this image I behold the Father, as the Lord Jesus Himself said, He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also. For this Image is not divided from the Father, for He hath taught me the unity of the Trinity, saying, I and the Father are One, and below, All things that the Father hath are Mine. And of the Holy Spirit, saying, that He is the Spirit of Christ, and hath received from Christ, as it is written, He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you.

33. In what respect then have we not answered with humility? If he ask for tribute we deny it not. The Church lands pay tribute; if the Emperor desire to possess these lands he has the power to claim them; none of us will interfere. The contributions of the people will more than suffice for the poor; let them excite no ill-will on account of the lands, let them take them if it please the Emperor; I give them not, but I do not refuse them. They ask for gold, but I can say, Silver and gold I seek not. But this disbursement of gold they make a cause of offence: this offence I dread not. I have stipendiaries, it is true: my stipendiaries are the poor of Christ, this is a treasure which I am well used to collect. May this offence of bestowing gold on the poor ever be charged upon me! And if they accuse me of defending myself by their means, I deny not, nay I even court the charge; a defence I have, |156 but it is in the prayers of the poor. Blind they are and and lame, weak and old, yet are they stronger than the stoutest warriors. Lastly, gifts to the poor make God our debtor, for it is written, He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord. The guards of warriors often gain not Divine grace.

34. Moreover they assert that the people have been beguiled by the strains of my hymns . I deny not this either. It is a lofty strain, than which nothing is more powerful. For what can be more powerful than the confession of the Trinity, which is daily celebrated by the mouth of the whole people? All zealously desire to make profession of their faith, they know how to confess in verse the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus all are become teachers who were scarcely able to be disciples. 35. But what can be more lowly than for us to follow the example of Christ, Who being found in fashion as a man humbled himself being made obedient unto death. And again, by obedience He delivered all: For as by the disobedience of one man many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one Man shall many be made righteous. If then He was obedient let them learn from Him the lesson of obedience, to which we adhere, saying to them who raise odium against us, on the Emperor's account, We render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. To Caesar tribute is due, we deny it not; the Church is God's, and must not be given up to Caesar, because the Temple of God cannot by right be Caesar's. |157

36. That this is said with due honour to the Emperor no one can deny. For what can be more honourable for the Emperor than to be styled a son of the Church? In saying this we are loyal to him without sinning against God. For the Emperor is within the Church, not over the Church; a good Emperor seeks the aid of the Church, he does not reject it, we say this humbly, but we assert it firmly. Some men threaten us with fire, sword and banishment. We, the servants of Christ, have learned not to fear. To them that fear not nothing is a cause of alarm. And it is thus written, arrows of infants are their blows become. 37. It would seem now that we have made a sufficient answer to what was proposed to us. Now I ask them the same question as did the Saviour, The baptism of John was it from heaven or of men? And the Jews could not answer Him. If the Jews did not annul the baptism of John, shall Auxentius annul the Baptism of Christ? For that Baptism is not from men but from Christ which the Angel of mighty Counsel brought down to us, that we might be justified before God. Why then does Auxentius hold that the faithful, those baptized in the name of the Trinity are to be re-baptized, when the Apostle says, One faith, one baptism; why does he say that he is the adversary of men, not of Christ, seeing that he spurns the counsel of God, and contemns that Baptism which Christ gave us for the redemption of our sins.

Letters 21-30 — LETTER XXII.[A.D.386.]

S. AMBROSE here recounts to his sister the discovery of the relics of S. S. Gervasius and Protasius, which occurred during the time of trial referred to in the last letter, and seems, by the pitch of excitement to which it raised the people of Milan, to have alarmed the court-party, and so to have caused the persecution to be dropped. The simple narrative needs no further introduction. It is strikingly told, and the question of the miracles discussed, in the 'Church of the Fathers' ch. iii. S. Augustine gives a brief account of the event in his Confessions, (ix. 7.) fully corroborating S.Ambrose's statements, and also speaks of it in De Civ. Dei xxii. 8, 2, and in Serm. de Divers. cclxxvi. 5. |158 TO THE LADY HIS SISTER WHOM HE LOVES MORE THAN HIS LIFE AND EYES AMBROSE HER BROTHER SENDS GREETING. As I am wont to keep your holiness informed of all that goes on here in your absence, I would have you know that we have found the bodies of some holy martyrs. After the consecration of a Church , many began to interrupt me crying with one voice; Consecrate this as you did the Roman Basilica. 'I will do so,' I replied, 'if I find any relics of Martyrs:' and immediately my heart burned within me as if prophetically.

2. In short the Lord lent us aid , though even the very clergy were alarmed. I caused the ground to be opened before the rails of the Church of S.S. Felix and Nabor. I found the suitable tokens; and when some persons were brought for us to lay our hands upon, the power of the holy martyrs became so manifest that before I began to speak, one of them, a woman , was seized by an evil spirit and thrown down upon the ground in the place where the martyrs lay. We found two men of stupendous size, such as belonged to ancient days. All their bones were entire, and there was much blood. The people flocked thither in crowds throughout the whole of those two days. We arranged all the bones in order, and carried them when evening set in, to the Basilica of Fausta ; where we kept vigils throughout the night, and some possessed persons received imposition of hands. The following day we transferred them to the Basilica which they call Ambrosian. During their transportation a blind man was healed . My |159 discourse to the people was as follows. When I considered in what overflowing and unprecedented numbers you were met together, and thought on the gifts of Divine Grace which shone forth in the holy Martyrs, I felt myself, I confess, unequal to this task, and thought it impossible that I could find language to express that which we

can hardly conceive in mind or endure with our eyes. But when the reading of the regular Lessons of Holy Scripture began, the Holy Spirit, Who spoke by the Prophets, granted us grace to speak somewhat worthy of this great and expectant concourse, and of the merits of the holy Martyrs.

4. The heavens, the Psalmist says, declare the glory of God. On reading this Psalm the thought arises that it is not so much the material elements as the heavenly merits that seem to offer praise worthy of God. But by the coincidence of the Lesson being read to-day it is made plain what are the heavens which tell of the glory of God. Behold on my right hand and on my left the holy relics, behold men of heavenly conversation, behold the trophies of a lofty mind. These are the heavens which declare the glory of God; these are the works of His hands which are told by the firmament. For it was not worldly snares, but the favour of the Divine operation, which raised them to the firmament of the most sacred Passion, and long beforehand by the evidence of their conversation and virtues bore this testimony of them, that they remained stedfast against the slippery wiles of this world.

5. Paul was an heaven, when he says, Our conversation is in heaven. James and John were heavens; they are called sons of thunder; and therefore being as it were, an heaven, John saw the Word with God. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself was an heaven of perpetual light, when He told forth the glory of God, that glory which no man had before beheld. And therefore He said, No man hath seen God at any time, but the Only-Begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. Moreover, if you look for the handiwork of God, hear what Job says, The Spirit of God hath made me. And so, strengthened against the temptations of the devil, he preserved his steps stedfast and without stumbling. But let us proceed to what follows. |160 6. Day unto day, the Psalm says, uttereth speech. These are the true days, which no shades of night obscure; these are the true days, full of light and eternal radiance, who have uttered the word of God not by any mere transient utterance but from their inmost heart, continuing constant in their confession, persevering in their testimony.

7. Another Psalm we read saith, Who is like unto the Lord our God, that hath His dwelling so high, and yet regardeth the lowly things that are in heaven and earth. Truly God hath regarded the lowly, Who hath discovered the relics of the martyrs of His Church as they lay hid under the unnoted sod, of those whose souls are in heaven, while their bodies are in the earth, taking up the simple out of the dust and lifting the poor out of the mire, even those whom ye see, to set them with the princes of His people. For whom but the holy martyrs shall we deem to be princes of the people? In their number Protasius and Gervasius heretofore long unknown are enrolled, they who have caused the Church of Milan, once barren of martyrs, but now the mother of many children, to exult both in the honors and examples of her own sufferings?

8. Nor let this be considered alien from the true Faith: Day unto day uttereth speech, soul to soul, life to life, resurrection to resurrection. And night unto night uttereth knowledge, that is, flesh to flesh, the flesh whose sufferings have declared to all the true knowledge

of faith. Bright and fair nights, full of stars: For one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead. 9. But many not improperly call this the resurrection of the martyrs; whether they have risen for themselves is another question, for us beyond a doubt they are risen. Ye have heard, nay, yourselves have seen, many cleansed from evil spirits; many also, after touching with their hands the garments of the saints, delivered from the infirmities under which they suffered: ye have seen the miracles of old time renewed, when through the coming of the Lord Jesus, a fuller Grace descended upon the earth; ye see many healed by the shadow, as it were, of the holy bodies. How many napkins are passed to and fro? How |161 many garments placed on these holy relics, and endowed by the mere contact with the power of healing are reclaimed by their owners. All think themselves happy in touching even the outer-most thread, and whoever touches them will be made whole.

10. Thanks be to Thee, Lord Jesus, that at this time, when Thy Church requires greater guardianship, Thou hast raised up for us the spirits of the holy martyrs. Let all be well aware what kind of champions I desire, such as are wont to be protectors not assailants. Such are they, O holy people, whom I have obtained for you, a benefit to all, and a hurt to none. These are the defenders whom I desire, these are my soldiers, not the world's soldiers, but Christ's. I fear no odium on account of these; their patronage is safe in proportion to its power. Nay, I desire their protection for the very men who grudge them to me. Let them come then and see my body-guard: I deny not that I am surrounded by such weapons as these; Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will magnify ourselves in the Name of the Lord our God.

11. The Lesson from Holy Scripture relates how Elisha, when surrounded by the army of the Syrians, told his trembling servant not to fear, for they, said he, that are for us are more than they which are against us; and in order to convince Gehazi of this, he prayed that his eyes might be opened, and when this was done he saw a countless host of Angels present with the prophet. And we, though we see them not, yet are conscious of their presence. Our eyes were held, as long as the bodies of the saints lay hid in their graves. Now God has opened our eyes, and we have seen the aids which had so often succoured us. Before, we saw them not, although we possessed them. And so, as though the Lord said to our trembling hearts, 'Behold what great martyrs I have given you;' even so with opened eyes we behold the glory of the Lord, which as to the passion of the martyrs is past, as to their operation is present. We have escaped, my brethren, no light load of shame; we had patrons and we knew it not. This one thing we have found, wherein we seem to excel our |162 ancestors; they lost the knowledge of the holy martyrs, and we have gained it.

12. These noble relics are dug out of an ignoble sepulchre; these trophies are displayed in the face of day. The tomb is moist with blood, the tokens of a triumphant death are displayed, the uninjured relics are found in their proper place and order, the head separated from the body. Old men now relate that they have formerly heard the names of these martyrs, and read their titles. The city which had seized on the martyrs of other places had lost her own.

This is the gift of God, and yet the favour which the Lord Jesus has conferred in the time of my episcopate I cannot deny, and since I myself am not counted worthy to be a martyr, I have gained these martyrs for you. 13. Bring these victorious victims to the spot where Christ is the sacrifice. But He, Who suffered for all, upon the Altar, they, who have been redeemed by His passion, under the Altar. This spot I had destined for myself, for it is fitting that the priest should rest where he hath been wont to offer, but I give up the right side to the sacred victims: that spot was due to the martyrs. Wherefore let us bury the hallowed relics, placing them in a worthy home, and let us employ the whole day in faithful devotion.

14. The people loudly requested that the deposition of the martyrs should be deferred until the Lord's Day; but at length I prevailed that it should take place on the following day. On that day I delivered a second sermon to the people to the following effect. 15. Yesterday I discoursed upon the verse, Day unto day uttereth speech, speaking according to my capacity: to-day Holy Scripture seems to me to have prophecied, not only before, but now. For seeing that this your devout celebration has continued night and day, the oracles of prophetic song have declared that these, even yesterday and to-day, are the days of which it is most opportunely said day unto day uttereth speech, and these the nights to which the saying is appropriate that night unto night uttereth knowledge. For what else have ye done during these two days but utter the word of God with deep emotion, and prove yourselves to have the knowledge of faith? |163

16. This your celebration some, as is their wont, are envious of. And since their envious minds cannot endure it, they also hate its cause, and proceed to such a pitch of folly as to deny the merits of the martyrs, whose power the very devils confess. But this is not strange; for such is the faithlessness of unbelievers that the confession of the devil himself is often less intolerable. For the devil said, Jesus, Thou Son of the living God, art Thou come to torment us before the time? And yet when the Jews heard this they even then denied the Son of God. And now ye have heard the devils crying out, and owning to the martyrs that they cannot bear their tortures, and saying ' Why are ye come to torment us so grievously?' And the Arians say, 'These are not martyrs, nor can they torment the devil nor dispossess any one:' while yet their own words are evidence of the torments of the evil spirits, and the benefits of the martyrs are shewn by the recovery of the healed, and the manifest proof of those that were dispossessed.

17. They deny that the blind man received his sight, but he denies not his own cure. He says, 'I who was blind now see.' He says, 'My blindness has left me;' he evidences it by the fact. They deny the benefit, though they cannot deny the fact. The man is well known: when in health he was employed in public trade, his name is Severus, a butcher by business. When his affliction befell him he laid down his employment. He calls as his witnesses those men by whose charities he was supported; he summons as witnesses of his present visitation the very men who bore testimony to his blindness. He declares that when he touched the border of the garment with which the martyrs' bodies were clothed, his sight was restored to him.

18. Is not this like what we read in the Gospel? For the power which we admire proceeds from one and the same Author; nor does it signify whether it is a work or a gift, seeing that He confers gifts in His works and works by His gifts. For what He has enabled some themselves to perform, this in the work of others His Name effects. Thus we read in the Gospel that the Jews, when they saw that the blind man had received his sight, required the testimony of his parents. They asked,' How has your son |164 received his sight?' That blind man said, Whereas I was blind now I see, and so too our blind man says, 'I was blind, and now I see.' Enquire of others, if ye believe me not; question strangers, if you suspect his parents of being in collusion with me. The obstinacy of these men is more detestable than that of the Jews, for the latter inquired of the man's parents to solve their doubts; they secretly inquire but openly deny, no longer refusing credit to the miracle but to its Author.

19 and 20. But I would fain ask, what it is they will not believe; is it that any one can be relieved by the martyrs? But this is not to believe in Christ, for He hath said, And greater things than these shall ye do. Or only by those martyrs, whose merits have long been efficacious, and whose bodies have long been discovered? Here I ask whether it is of myself or of the holy martyrs that they are jealous? If of me, have I wrought any miracles by my own means, in my own name? Why then do they envy me that which is not mine? But if of the martyrs (for if not of me it must be of them they are envious) they show that their Creed is different from that of the martyrs. For they would not envy their works unless they deemed the faith which was in them to be that which they themselves have not. This is that Faith sealed by the tradition of our ancestors, which the devils themselves cannot deny, though the Arians do.

21. We have heard to-day those on whom hands were laid, profess that no man can be saved who does not believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: that he was dead and buried who denied the Holy Ghost, who believed not the Almighty power of the Trinity. This the devil confesses, but the Arians will not own it. The devil says, Let him who denies the divinity of the Holy Spirit be tormented as he himself was tormented by the Martyrs. 22. What I accept from the devil is not his testimony, but his confession. He spoke unwillingly, compelled and tortured. That which wickedness suppressed, force extorted. The devil yields to blows, but as yet the Arians have not learned to yield. How much have they suffered, and like Pharoah, they are hardened by their calamities! |165 The devil said, as we find it written, I know Thee Who Thou art, the Son of the Living God. The Jews said, We know not who He is. Yesterday, and the preceding night and day the devils said, 'We know that ye are martyrs,' while the Arians said, 'We know not, we will not understand nor believe.' The devils say to the martyrs, 'Ye are come to destroy us,' the Arians say, 'These torments of the devil are not true torments but pretended and counterfeit.' I have heard of many counterfeits, but no man could ever feign himself a devil. Again, what is the meaning of the agony we see in them, when the hand is laid on them? What room is here for fraud and what suspicion of imposture?

23. But I will not call the words of devils as a testimony to the martyrs: let the sacred sufferings of the martyrs be established by their own supernatural acts; judges indeed they have, namely, those that have been cleansed, witnesses, namely those that have been dispossessed. Better than that of devils is their voice who came diseased and are now healed, better is that voice which the martyrs blood sends forth, for blood has a loud voice which reaches from earth to heaven. Ye have read those words of God, Thy brother's blood crieth unto Me! This blood cries by its purple stains, it cries by its signal efficacy, it cries by its triumphant suffering. We have granted your request and have put off till today the burial of the relics which should have taken place yesterday.

Letters 21-30 — LETTER XXIII.[A.D.386.]

This letter is addressed to the Bishops of the Province of Aemilia, which, as forming part of the political diocese of Italy, was under the ecclesiastical superintendence of the Bishop of Milan, who exercised the powers, if he had not the title, of Exarch. (See Bingham Antiq. ix. 1, § 6, 8.) The Bishops apply to him for his decision as to the proper day for observing Easter in the following year, A.D. ,387, in which the first day of the week fell on the fourteenth day of the moon, or, as it is called here, the 'fourteenth moon.' This was a question which for long troubled the Church, and divided the East and West, and much importance was attached to it. The whole question is fully discussed in Dict. of Christ. Antiq. under 'Easter,' in |166 a learned article by the Rev. L. Hensley. Some interesting remarks on it, in connection with disputes in England, may he seen in Prof. Bright's Early English Ch. Hist. pp. 76-79, and 193-200.

Mr. Hensley has kindly drawn up the following table, which exhibits at a glance the points on which S. Ambrose enters in this letter. TABLE OF EASTER FROM A.D. 373 TO A.D. 387. A.D. GOLDEN NUMBER. SUNDAY LETTER. EASTER TERM. EASTER DAY. F March 24 F March 31 E April 12 D April 13 D April 1 G April 5 CB April 21 C April 27 A April 9 A April 16 G March 29 D April 1 F April 17 B April 21 ED April 5 D April 12 C March 25 G March 28 B April 13 E April 17 A April 2 A April 9 GF March 22 D March 24 E April 10 B April 13 D March 30 E April 5 C April 18 G April 25 * The asterisks mark the year in which the full moon falls on the Sunday, and which are referred to in the Letter.

TO THE LORDS, HIS BRETHREN MOST BELOVED, THE BISHOPS ESTABLISHED THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE OF AEMILIA, AMBROSE, BISHOP. 1. THAT to settle the day of the celebration of the Passover requires more than ordinary wisdom, we are taught both by the Holy Scripture and by the tradition of the Fathers, who, when assembled at the Nicene Synod, in addition to their true and admirable decrees concerning the Faith, formed also for the above-mentioned celebration a plan for nineteen years with the aid of the most skilful calculators, and constituted a sort of cycle to serve as a pattern for subsequent years. This cycle they called the nineteen years' cycle, their aim being that we should not waver in uncertain and ungrounded opinions on such a |167 celebration, but ascertain the

true method and so ensure such concurrence of the affections of all, that the sacrifice for the Lord's Resurrection should be offered every where on the same night.

2. My Lords and brethren most beloved, we ought not so far to deviate from truth, or to be of such varying and wandering minds, as to the obligation of this celebration having been imposed upon all Christians: since our Lord Himself selected the day to celebrate it upon, which agreed with the method of the true observance. For it is written: Then came the day when the Passover must be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover that we may eat. And they said unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we prepare? And He said unto them, Behold when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water: follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, the Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room, there make ready.

3. We observe then that we ought not to go down to places in the earth, but to seek a large upper room furnished, for us to celebrate the Lord's Passover. For we ought to wash our senses, so to speak, with the spiritual water of the everlasting fountain, and maintain the rule of the devout celebration, and not follow common notions and go in quest of days according to the moon, whereas the Apostle says, Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. For it is sure to be injurious . 4. But it is one thing to observe them after the heathen fashion, so as to decide on what day of the moon you are to attempt anything, for instance, that you should avoid the fifth and begin no work upon it, and to recommend different points in the moon's course for commencing |168 employments, or to avoid certain days, as many are in the habit of avoiding days called 'following ' or the Egyptian days: it is another thing to turn the observance of a religious mind to the day of which it is written, This is the day which the Lord hath made. For although it is written that the Lord's Passover ought to be celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month, and we ought to look for what is truly the fourteenth moon for celebrating the course of our Lord's Passion, still we can understand from this that to fix such a solemnity there is required either the perfection of the Church, or the fulness of clear faith, as the Prophet said when he spoke of the Son of God, that his throne is as the sun before me, and as the perfect moon, it shall remain for ever.

5. Hence it is that our Lord Himself also, when He had performed His wonderful works upon the earth, as if the faith of human minds were now established, observed that it was the time of His Passion, saying, Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee. For He teaches elsewhere that He sought this glory of celebrating His Passion, where He says, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected. In them indeed is Jesus perfected, who begin to be perfect, that with their faith they may believe on the fulness of His Divinity and His Redemption. 6. Therefore we seek out both the day and the hour, as the Scripture teaches us. The prophet David also says, It is time for thee, Lord, to work,

when he sought understanding to know the testimonies of the Lord. The Preacher also saith, To every thing there is a season; Jeremy exclaims, The turtle and the swallow and the sparrows of the ground observe the time of their coming. But what can appear more evident than that it is of the Passion of our Lord that it is said, The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib? Let us then acknowledge this crib of our Master, wherein we are nourished, fed, and refreshed. |169

7. We ought therefore especially to know this time, at which over the universal world the accordant prayers of the sacred night are to he poured forth; for prayers are commended by season also, as it is written, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee. This is the time of which the Apostle said, Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation. 8. Accordingly, since, even after the calculations of the Egyptians, and the definitions of the church of Alexandria, and also of the Bishop of the church of Rome, several persons are still waiting my judgement by letter, it is needful that I should write what my opinion is about the day of the Passover. For though the question which has arisen is about the approaching Paschal day, yet we state what we think should be maintained for all subsequent time, in case any question of the kind should corne up.

9. But there are two things to be observed in the solemnity of the passover, the fourteenth moon, and the first month, which is called the month of the new fruits . Therefore that we may not appear to be departing from the Old Testament, let us recite the words of the section concerning the day of celebrating the Passover. Moses warns the people, saying that they must keep the month of the new fruits, proclaiming that it is the first month, for he says, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you, and thou shalt offer the Passover of the Lord thy God on the fourteenth day of the first month. 10. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. He therefore, Who spake the law, afterwards coming by the Virgin in the last times, accomplished the fulness of the Law, for He came not to destroy the Law but to fulfil it, and He celebrated the Passover in the week in which the fourteenth moon was the fifth clay of the week, and then on that very day, as what is said before teaches us, He ate the Passover with his disciples: but on the following day, on the sixth day of the week, He |170 was crucified on the fifteenth moon. But the sixteenth moon was the Sabbath which was an high day, and so on. the seventeenth moon He rose again from the dead.

11. We must then keep this law of Easter, not to keep the fourteenth day as the day of the Resurrection, hut rather as the day of the Passion, or at least one of the next preceding days, because the feast of the Resurrection is kept on the Lord's day; and on the Lord's day we cannot fast; for we rightly condemn the Manichaeans for their fast upon this day. For it is unbelief in Christ's Resurrection, to appoint a rule of fasting for the day of the Resurrection, since the Law says that the Passion is to he eaten with bitterness, that is, with grief, because the Author of Salvation was slain by so great a sacrilege on the part of

men; but on the Lord's day the Prophet teaches us that we should rejoice, saying, This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us rejoice and be glad in it.

12. Therefore it is fit that not only the day of the Passion, but also that of the Resurrection be observed by us, that we may have a day both of bitterness and of joy; fast on the one, on the other be refreshed. Consequently, if the fourteenth moon of the first month fall, as will be the case next time, on the Lord's day, inasmuch as we ought neither to fast on the Lord's day, nor on the thirteenth moon which falls on the Sabbath-day to break the fast, which must especially be observed on the day of the Passion, the celebration of Easter must be postponed to the next week. For the fifteenth day of the month follows, on which Christ suffered, and it will be the second day of the week. The third day of the week will be the sixteenth moon, on which our Lord's Flesh rested in the tomb; and the fourth day of the week will be the seventeenth moon on which our Lord rose again.

13. When therefore these three sacred days run as they do next time into the further week, within which three days He both suffered and rested and rose again, of which three days He says, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up, what can bring us trouble or doubt? For if it raises a scruple that we do not on the fourteenth moon celebrate the particular day either of His Passion or |171 Resurrection, we may remember that our Lord Himself did not suffer on the fourteenth moon, but on the fifteenth, and on the seventeenth He rose again. But if any are troubled at our passing over the fourteenth moon, which falls upon the Lord's day, that is the 18th of April, and recommending its celebration on the following Lord's day, there is this authority for doing so.

14. In times lately past, when the fourteenth moon of the first month fell on the Lord's day, the solemnity was celebrated on the Lord's day next ensuing. But in the eighty-ninth year of the Era of Diocletian , when the fourteenth moon was on the 21th of March, Easter was kept by us on the last day of March. The Alexandrians and Egyptians also, as they wrote themselves, when the fourteenth day of the moon fell on the 28th day of the month Phamenoth, kept Easter on the fifth day of the month Pharmuthi, which is the last day of March, and so agreed with us. Again in the ninety-third year of the Era of Diocletian, when the fourteenth moon fell on the fourteenth day of the month Pharmuthi, which is the 9th of April, and was the Lord's day, Easter was kept on the Lord's day, the 21st day of Pharmuthi, or according to us on the 16th of April. Wherefore since we have both reason and precedent, nothing should disturb us upon this head.

15. There is yet this further point that seems to require explanation, that several persons think that we shall be keeping Easter in the second month, whereas it is written, Keep the first month, the month of new fruits. The case however cannot occur that any should keep Easter out of the month of the new fruits, except those who keep the fourteenth moon so strictly to the letter, that they will not celebrate their Easter on any day but that. Moreover the Jews are going to celebrate the approaching Passover in |172 the twelfth and not in the first month, viz. on the 20th of March according to us, hut according to the Egyptians on the twenty-fourth day of the month Phamenoth, which is not the first month hut the twelfth,

for the first month of the Egyptians is called Pharmuthi, and begins on the 27th of March and ends on the 25th of April. Therefore according to the Egyptians we shall keep Easter Sunday in the first month, that is, on the 25th of April, which is the thirtieth day of the month Pharmuthi.

16. Nor do I consider it unreasonable to borrow a precedent for observing the month from the country in which the first Passover was celebrated. For which reason also our predecessors in the ordinance of the Nicene Council thought fit to decide that their cycle of nineteen years should belong to the same month, if one observes it diligently; and they rightly kept the very month of the new fruits, for in Egypt it is in this the first month that the new corn is cut: and this month is the first in respect of the crops of the Egyptians and first according to the Law, but the eighth according to our custom, for the in-diction begins in the month of September. The first of April therefore is in the eighth month. But the month begins not according to vulgar usage, but according to the custom of learned men, from the day of the equinox, which is the 21st of March, and ends on the 21st of April. Therefore the days of Easter have been generally kept as much as possible within these thirty-one days.

17. But after keeping Easter Sunday six years ago on the 21st of April, that is on the thirtieth day of the month according to our reckoning, we have no reason to be distressed if this next time also we are to keep it on the thirtieth day of the month Pharmuthi. If any one think that it is the second month, because Easter Sunday will be on the third day from the completion of the month (but this appears to he completed on the 21st of April) he should |173 consider that the fourteenth rnoon, which is our object, will fall on the 18th of April and thus within the regular count-ing of the month. But what the law requires is that the day of the Passion should be kept within the first month, the month of new fruits.

18. The method then is satisfactory as far as the complete course of the moon is concerned, inasmuch as three more days remain to complete the month. Easter then does not pass on into another month, since it will be kept within the same month, that is, the first. But that it is not fit that we should be tied to the letter, not only does the customary method of keeping Easter of itself instruct us, but the Apostle too teaches us, when he says, Christ our Passover is sacrificed. The passage also which has been cited teaches us that we are not to follow the letter, for thus it runs: And thou shalt sacrifice the Passover to the Lord thy God on the fourteenth day of the first month . He uses the word 'day' in the place of 'moon;' and so the most skilful according to the law calculate the month by the moon's course, and since the moon's course, that is the first day, may begin with more than one of the nones, you perceive that the nones of May do still admit of being reckoned in the first month of the new fruits. Therefore even according to the judgement of the law this is the first mouth. To conclude, the Greeks call the moon mh&nh, owing to which they call the months in Greek mh~nej, and the ordinary usage of foreign nation employs moon in the sense of day.

19. But even the Lessons of the old Testament shew that different days are to be observed for the Passion and Resurrection: for there it runs, Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats; and ye shall keep it

up until the fourteenth day of the same month, and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper door post of the house wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and further on, And ye shall eat |174 it with anxiety: it is the Lord's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and in all the land of Egypt will I execute vengeance: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token in the houses where ye are; and I will see the blood and I will protect you and the plague of extermination shall not be on you. And I will smite the land of Egypt, And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations: ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.

20. We observe that the day of the Passion is marked out as a fast, for the lamb is to be slain at the evening: though we might understand by evening the last time, according to John who says, Children, it is the last time. But even according to the mystery, it is plain that it was killed in the evening, when darkness immediately took place, and true fasting is to be observed on that day, for thus shall ye eat it with anxiety: but anxiety belongs to those who fast. But on the day of the Resurrection there is the exultation of refreshment and joy, on which day the people appears to have gone out of Egypt, when the first-born of the Egyptians had been killed. And this is shewn more evidently by what follows, wherein the Scripture says, that after the Jews kept the Passover as Moses ordered, It came to pass that at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt from the first-born of Pharaoh. And Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel, and go serve the Lord. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. Eventually the Israelites went in such manner, that they had not opportunity to leaven their dough, for the Egyptians thrust them out, and would not wait for them to take the preparation they had made for themselves for the way.

21. We have made it clear then that the day of the Resurrection ought to be observed after the day of the Passion, and that this day of the Resurrection ought not to be on the fourteenth moon, but later, as the Old Testament says, |175 because the day of the Resurrection is that on which the people going out of Egypt, after being baptized, as the Apostle says, in the sea and in the cloud, overcame death, receiving spiritual bread, and drinking spiritual drink from the rock: and further that the Lord's Passion cannot be celebrated on the Lord's day, and that if the fourteenth moon should fall upon the Lord's day, that another week ought to be added, as was done in the seventy sixth yearof the era of Diocletian. For then without any doubt or hesitation on the part of our fathers we celebrated Easter Sunday on the twenty-eighth day of the month Pharmuthi, which is the 23rd of April. And both the course of the moon and the reason of the case concur in recommending this, for next Easter is to be kept on the twenty first moon, for to that day its range has commonly extended.

22. Since therefore so many indications of truth are combined, let us after the example of our fathers celebrate the festival of our general Salvation with joy and exultation, colouring our side posts, between which is the door of the word which the Apostle wishes to be opened unto him, with faith in the Lord's Passion. Of this door David also says, Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips, that we may speak of nothing but the Blood of Christ, whereby we have conquered death, whereby we are redeemed. Let the sweet odour of Christ burn in us. To Him let us listen, on Him let us turn the eyes both of mind and body, admiring His works, proclaiming His blessings; over the threshold of our door let the confession of holy Redemption shine resplendent. Let us with fervent spirit keep the holy Feast, in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, and singing in pious doctrine with one accord the Glory of the Father and of the Son and the undivided Majesty of the Holy Spirit. |176

Letters 21-30 — LETTER XXIV. [A.D.387.]

S. AMBROSE here reports the result of his second mission to Maximus in behalf of Justina and her son Valentinian the 2nd. He had before gone, as he mentions in this Letter, immediately after the murder of Gratian, A.D. 383, and had then, at much risk to himself, done them good service, and been mainly instrumental in securing peace, and inducing Maximus to abstain from invading Italy, and to leave Valentinian in possession of a share of the Empire. Now it seemed certain that Maximus was preparing to cross the Alps and deprive Valentinian of his dominions and probably of his life, and once more Justina and her son seek the aid of the great Bishop, whom they had so cruelly persecuted during the peace he had procured for them. It is very striking to see the persecutors thus reduced to be suppliants of their victim, and the good Bishop at once rendering them the service which they sought. He writes this report while on his way back, and sends it before him, that Valentinian and his mother might learn the truth at once, and lose no time in making preparation to meet their danger. He was commissioned to induce Maximus to maintain peace, and to restore the body of Gratian for burial at Milan. S. Ambrose was less successful in this embassy than in the former one, and Justina and Valentinian had to escape to the East and put themselves under the protection of Theodosius, who took up arms in their behalf, and marched to the West, defeated and captured Maximus at Aquileia, and had him put to death, and so restored Valentinian to the Empire of all the West, A.D. 388.

S. Ambrose cannot have started on his mission till after Easter, as this was the year in which he baptized S. Augustine. AMBROSE TO THE EMPEROR VALENTINIAN. 1. OF my fidelity in my former mission you were so well assured as to require from me no account of it. Indeed the very fact that I was detained some days in Gaul sufficiently proved that I had made no promises acceptable to Maximus, nor agreed to any measures which inclined to what was pleasing to him rather than to the establishment of peace. And again, had you not approved of my first mission you would not have committed to me a second. But since as I was on the point of retiring he laid upon me the necessity of a discussion with him, I have thought it best to address to you in this letter an account of my mission, for fear any one should give you an account which mingled truth with falsehood, before my return could declare to you the truth in its perfect and sincere characters. |177

2. The day after I reached Treves I presented myself at the palace; a Gaul came out to receive me, who was the Emperor's Chamberlain, and one of the royal eunuchs. I requested an audience; he enquired whether I had your Majesty's commission: I replied that I had. He said that I could only be heard in the Consistory. I answered that this was not usual for Bishops, and at all events that there were matters whereon I required serious conference with his master. To be brief; he consulted his master, and brought back the same answer, so that it was plain that the former had originated with his will. I said that such a course was inconsistent with the office I bore, but that I would not shrink from the duty I had undertaken, and that more especially in your service, and as it really was to support your brotherly affection, I was glad to humble myself.

3. As soon as he had taken his seat in the Consistory I entered; he rose to give me the kiss of peace. I stood among the members of the Consistory; some of them urged me to go up the steps, and he himself invited me. I replied, 'Why do you offer a kiss to one whom you do not acknowledge ? for had you acknowledged me you would not have seen me here.' ' You are excited, Bishop,' said he. ' It is not anger,' I said, 'that I feel, but shame at appearing in a place unsuited to me.' 'Yet on your first mission,' he said, 'you entered the Consistory.' 'True,' I replied, 'but the blame rests on him who summoned, not on me who entered.' 'Why,' said he, 'did you then enter?' 'Because,' I replied,' I was then suing for peace on behalf of one who was inferior to you, but I now appear for your equal.' 'By whose favour ' said he, ' is he my equal?' 'By that of Almighty God, who has maintained Valentinian in the empire He bestowed on him.'

4. At length he broke out, ' It is you who have cajoled me, you and the wretch Bauto, who wished by setting up a boy to acquire sovereignty for himself, who also brought barbarians upon me; as if I also had not those whom I could bring, seeing I have so many barbarians in my service and pay. But had I not been withheld at the time of your arrival, who could have resisted me and my power?' |178 5. I answered mildly, 'You need not be excited, for there is no occasion for excitement; listen rather with patience to the reply which I have to make. My reason for coming is, that you have declared that on my first mission you trusted me and were deceived by me. It is a glory to rne to have done this for the safety of an orphan Emperor, for whom rather than orphans ought we bishops to protect? For it is written, Relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow; and in another place, father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows.

6. But I will not make a boast of my services to Valentinian. To speak the truth, when did I oppose your legions, and resist your descent upon Italy? By what works, by what armies, with what forces? Did I block up against you the passes of the Alps with my body? Would that this were in my power, then I should not fear this allegation, nor your charges. By what promises did I beguile you into a consent to peace? Did not Count Victor, whom you had sent to request peace, meet me within the frontier of the provinces of Gaul, near the city of Mayence? Wherein then did Valentinian deceive you, whom you asked to grant you peace

before he himself asked for it? Wherein did Bauto deceive you, who shewed fidelity to his Emperor? Did he do so by not betraying his own master?

7. Wherein have I circumvented you? Was it when, on my first arrival, on your saying that Valentinian ought to have come to you as a son to a father, I answered that it was not reasonable for a boy with his widowed mother to cross the Alps in severe winter weather, or without his mother be exposed under critical circumstances to such a journey? My business was to bring a message concerning peace, not to make any promise of his coming: it is certain that I have given no pledge of that, concerning which I had received no commands, and that I did not make any promise whatever, for you said, 'Let us wait to see what answer Victor will bring back.' But it is well known that he arrived at Milan while I was detained here, and that his request was refused. It was only about peace that we felt a common zeal, not about the Emperor's arrival; whose |179 coming ought not to have been required. I was present when Victor returned. How then did I meet Valentinian? The emissaries who were sent a second time into Gaul to say that he would not come, found me at Valence in Gaul. The soldiers of either party, sent to guard tne mountain passes, I met on my return. What armies of yours did I then recall? what eagles did I turn back from Italy? what barbarians did Count Bauto send against you?

8. And what wonder if Bauto, whose native country lies beyond the Rhine, had done so, when you yourself threaten the Roman Empire with barbarian allies, and with troops from beyond the military frontier, whose commissariat was supplied by the taxes of the provinces? But consider what a difference there is between your threats and the mildness of the young Emperor Valentinian. You insisted on making an incursion into Italy accompanied by armies of barbarians, Valentinian turned back the Huns and Alans on their approach to Italy through the territory of the Germans. What need for displeasure is there if Bauto set the barbarians at variance with each other? While you were employing the Roman forces, while he was presenting himself to oppose you on both sides, the Juthungi in the very heart of the Roman Empire were laying Rhsetia waste, and so the Huns were called in against the Juthungi. And yet when he was attacking the country of the Alemanni on your frontier, and was already threatening the provinces of Gaul with the near approach of danger, he was obliged to |180 relinquish his triumphs, lest you should be alarmed. Compare the acts of the two; you caused the invasion of Rhaetia, Valentinian by his gold has regained peace for you.

9. Look too at the man who now stands at your right hand, whom Valentinian, when he had the opportunity of avenging his grief, sent back to you loaded with honours. He had him in his own territory, and yet restrained his hand: even when he received the tidings of his brother's death, he restrained his natural feelings, and abstained from retaliation, where the relationship was the same, though the rank was not. Compare therefore, yourself being judge, the two actions. He sent back your brother alive; do you restore to him his brother at least now that he is dead. Why do you refuse to him his relation's remains, when he refused not to you those who would assist you against him?

10. But you allege that you are alarmed lest the grief of the troops should be renewed by the return of these remains. Will they then defend after death one whom they deserted in life? Why do you fear him now he is dead, whom, when you might have saved him, you slew? 'It was my enemy' you say, 'that I have slain.' It was not he that was your enemy, but you that were his. He is no longer conscious of my advocacy, do you consider the case yourself . If any one were to think of setting up a claim to the empire in these parts against you, I ask whether you would deem yourself to be his enemy, or him to be yours? If I mistake not, it is the part of an usurper to excite war, of an Emperor to defend his rights. Will you then withhold even the body of him whom you ought not to have slain? Let Valentinian have at least the remains of his brother as a pledge of your peaceful intentions. How moreover will you assert that you did not command him to be slain, when you forbid him to be buried? Will it be believed that you did not grudge him life, when you even grudge him burial?

11. But to return to myself. I find that you complain |181 of the followers of Valentinian betaking themselves to the Emperor Theodosius rather than to yourself. But what could you expect, when you called for punishment on the fugitives, and put to death those who were taken, Theodosius on the other hand loaded them with gifts and honours. 'Whom,' said he, 'have I slain?' 'Vallio,' I replied. 'And what a man, what a soldier! Was it then a just cause of death, that he maintained his fidelity to his Emperor?' 'I gave no orders,' said he, 'for his death.' 'We have heard,' I replied, ' that the order was given for him to be put to death.' 'Nay,' said he, 'had he not laid violent hands on himself I had ordered him to be taken to Cabillonum and there burnt alive.' 'Yes,' I replied, 'and that was why it was believed that you had put him to death. And who could suppose that he would himself be spared, when a valiant warrior, a faithful soldier, a valuable comrade was thus slain?' At that time, on taking my leave, he said he was willing to treat.

12. But afterwards on finding that I would not communicate with the Bishops who communicated with him, or who sought the death of any one, even though they were heretics , he grew angry and bade me depart without delay. And I, although many thought I should be waylaid, set forth gladly, grieving only that the aged Bishop Hyginus, now almost at his last gasp, was being carried into exile. And when I appealed to his guards against their suffering the old man to be driven out without a curtain or a pillow to rest upon, I was driven forth myself. 13. Such is the account of my mission. Farewell, your Majesty, and be well on your guard against a man who conceals war under the cloak of peace. |182

Letters 21-30 — LETTER XXV.

THAT this and the following letter were addressed to the same person is clear from their contents, especially from the commencement of Letter xxvi. Whether Studius and Irenaeus were two names of the same person, as the Benedictines suggest, or whether there is any error in either title, cannot be ascertained for certain. Is it not most probable that the name of Irenaeus, to whom a long series of letters follows, has been affixed to one immediately preceding them by mistake, and that we should put 'Studio' for 'Irenaeo' at the head of xxvi? The letter deals briefly with the question which Studius, a layman apparently and a judge, puts to S. Ambrose, whether he did violence to his duty as a Christian in sentencing criminals to death. S. Ambrose replies that it is lawful, but recommends merciful dealing wherever possible, in hope of amendment of life. AMBROSE TO STUDIUS.

I RECOGNIZE in your application to me a pure intention of mind, zeal for the faith, and fear of our Lord Jesus Christ. And indeed I should fear to reply to it, being checked on the one hand by the obligation of the trust committed to you for the maintenance of the laws, and on the other by claims of mercy and clemency, had you not in this matter the Apostle's authority that he who judgeth beareth not the sword in vain, for he is the avenger of God, upon him that doeth evil. 2. But although you knew this, it was not without reason that you have thought fit to make the enquiry. For some there are, although out of the pale of the Church , who will not admit to the divine Mysteries those who have deemed it right to pass sentence of death on any man. Many too abstain of their own accord, and are commended, nor can we ourselves but praise them, although we so far observe the Apostle's rule as not to dare to refuse them Communion.

3. You see therefore both what power your commission gives you, and also whither mercy would lead you; you will be excused if you do it, and praised if you do it not. Should you feel unable to do it, and are unwilling to afflict |183 the criminal by the horrors of a dungeon, I shall, as a priest, the more commend you. For it may well be that when the cause is heard, the criminal may be reserved for judgment, who afterwards may ask for pardon for himself, or at any rate may suffer what is called mild confinement in prison. Even heathen are, I know, wont to boast that they have borne back their axes from their provincial government unrestored by blood. And if heathen do this what ought Christians to do? 4. But in all these matters let our Saviour's answer suffice for you. The Jews apprehended an adultress and

brought her to the Saviour, with the insidious intent that if He were to acquit her He might seem to destroy the law, though He had said, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil the law, and on the other hand, were He to condemn her, He might seern to be acting against the purpose of His coming. Wherefore the Lord Jesus, foreseeing this, stooped down and wrote upon the earth. And what did He write but that word of the prophet, O Earth, Earth, Write these men deposed , which is spoken of Jeconiah in the prophet Jeremiah.

5. When the Jews interrupt Him, their names are written in the earth, when the Christians draw near, the names of the faithful are written not on the earth but in heaven. For they who tempt their Father, and heap insult on the Author of salvation, are written on the earth as cast off by their Father. When the Jews interrupt Him, Jesus stoops His head, but not having where to lay His head, He raises it again, is about to give sentence, and says, Let him that is without sin cast the first stone at her. And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. 6. When they heard this they began to go out one by one beginning at the eldest, and this either because they who had lived longest had committed most sins, or because, as being most sagacious, they were the first to comprehend the force of His sentence, and though they had come as the accusers of another's sins, began rather to lament their own. |184

7. So when they departed Jesus was left alone, and lifting up His head, He said to the woman, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee, go, and sin no more. Being the Redemption, He refuses to condemn her, being the Life He restores her, being the Fountain He washes her. And since Jesus, when He stoops down stoops that He may raise up the fallen, He says, as the Absolver of sins, Neither do I condemn thee. 8. Here is an example for you to follow, for it may be that there is hope of amendment for this guilty person; if he be yet unbaptized, that he may receive remission, if baptized that he may do penance, and offer up his body for Christ. See how many roads there are to salvation!

9. This is why our ancestors thought it better to be indulgent towards Judges; that by the terror of their sword the madness of crime should be repressed, and no encouragement given to it. For if Communion were denied to Judges, it would seem like a retribution on their punishment of the wicked. Our ancestors wished then that their clemency should proceed from their own free-will and forbearance, rather than from any legal necessity. Farewell, and love us, as we on our part love you.

Letters 21-30 — LETTER XXVI.

THAT this letter is addressed to the same person as the preceding, in spite of the discrepancy in the address, is clear from the first sentence (See Introd. to xxv.). It resumes the subject, and dwells in detail on the example of our Lord's dealing with the woman taken in adultery. AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS. [STUDIUS?] 1. ALTHOUGH in my previous letter I have resolved the question which you proposed to me, I will not refuse your |185 request, my son, that I would somewhat more fully state and express my meaning. 2. Much agitated has ever been the question, and very famous this acquittal of that woman who in the Gospel according to John was brought to Christ accused of adultery. The stratagem which the equivocating Jews devised was this, that in case of the Lord Jesus acquitting her contrary to the Law, His sentence might be convicted of being at variance with the Law, but if she were to be condemned according to the Law, the Grace of Christ might seem to be made void.

3. And still more warm has the discussion become, since the time that bishops have begun to accuse those guilty of the most heinous crimes before the public tribunals, and some even to urge them to the use of the sword and of capital punishment, while others again approve of such kind of accusations and of blood-stained triumphs of the priesthood. For those men say just the same as did the Jews, that the guilty ought to be punished by the public laws, and therefore that they ought also to be accused by the priests before the public tribunals, who, they assert, ought to be punished according to the laws. The case is the same, though the number is less, that is to say, the question as to judgment is similar, the odium of the punishment is dissimilar. Christ would not permit one woman to be punished according to the Law; they assert that too small a number has been punished.

4. But in what place does Christ give this decision? For He generally vouchsafed to adapt His discourses to the character of the place wherein He was teaching His disciples . For instance while walking in the porch of Solomon, that is, of the Wise man, He said, I and My Father are One; and in God's Temple He said, My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. It was in the Temple also that He gave the sentence of which we now speak, for in the verse following it is thus written, These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as He taught in the |186 Temple, and no man laid hands on Him. What is the Treasury? It is the place of offering for the faithful, the bank of the poor, the refuge of the needy, near which Christ

sat, when, according to Luke, He declared that the widow's two mites were to be preferred to the gifts of the rich, thus bearing Divine testimony to a zealous and cordial charity as preferable to the offerings of an affluent munificence.

5. Now let us consider what He Who passed such a judgment as this contributed when sitting near the Treasury, for not without a purpose did He prefer the woman who threw in two mites. Precious was her poverty, and rich in the mystery of faith. These are the same two pieces of money which the Samaritan in the Gospel left with the host in order to cure the wounds of the man who had fallen among thieves. So too this woman, outwardly a widow, but mystically representing the Church, thought it right to cast into the sacred Treasury this gift whereby the wounds of the poor might be healed and the hunger of the strangers satisfied. 6. Now then it behoves you spiritually to consider what Christ bestows; for He distributed among the people silver tried by the fire of the heavenly oracles, and to the desires of the people He told out money stamped with the Royal image. No one could give more than He Who gave all. He satisfied the hungry, He replenished the needy, He enlightened the blind, He redeemed the captives, He raised the palsied, He restored the dead, nay, what is more, He gave absolution to the guilty and forgave their sins. These are the two pence which the Church cast in, after having received them from Christ. And what are the two pence but the price of the New and Old Testament? The price of the Scripture is our faith, for it is according to the intelligence and will of each that what we read therein is valued. So then the remission of sins is the price of both Testaments, and is announced in type by the Lamb, and accomplished in verity by Christ.

7. You understand therefore that the purification of seven days brought with it also the purification of three days. The purification of seven days is according to the |187 Law, which, under the semblance of the sabbath that now is, announced a spiritual sabbath; the purification of three days is according to Grace, and is sealed by the witness of the Gospel, for the Lord rose on the third day. Where a penalty for sin is prescribed there also must penitence be, where remission of sins is accorded there follows Grace. Penitence precedes, Grace follows. So that there can neither be penitence without Grace, nor Grace without penitence, for penitence must first condemn sin, that Grace may abolish it. Wherefore John, fulfilling the type of the Law, baptized unto repentance, Christ unto Grace. 8. Now the seventh day denotes the mystery of the Law, the eighth that of the Resurrection, as you have in Ecclesiastes, Give a portion to seven and also to eight. In the prophet Hosea also you have read that it was said to him, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms for fifteen pieces of silver, seeing that by the double price of the Old and New Testament, that is, by the full price of faith, that woman is hired who was attended by a vagrant and licentious train of sojouners.

9. And I bought her to me, saith the prophet, for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley and a measure of wine . By barley is signified that the imperfect are called to the Faith that they may be made perfect, by the homer is understood a full measure, by the half homer a half measure. The full measure is the Gospel, the half

measure is the Law, the fulfilment of which is the New Testament. Thus the Lord Himself saith, I am not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfil. 10. Nor is it without meaning that we read in the Psalms of David of fifteen degrees, and that the sun had risen fifteen degrees, when Hezekiah the righteous king received a new supply of life. Hereby was signified the coming of the Sun of Righteousness, Who was about to enlighten by His presence these fifteen steps of the Old and New Testament whereby our faith mounts up to life eternal. And |188 this leads me to believe that what was read this day from the Apostle of his remaining fifteen days with Peter has a mystical meaning; for it appears that while the holy Apostles held various discourses among themselves upon the interpretation of the Divine Scriptures a full and bright light fell upon them, and the shades of ignorance were dispersed. But now let us come to the absolution of the woman taken in adultery.

11. A woman accused of adultery was brought by the Scribes and Pharisees to the Lord Jesus with the malicious intent, that, if He was to acquit her, He might seem to annul the Law, if He condemned her, that He might seem to have changed the purpose of His coming, since He came to remit the sins of all men. To the same purport He said above, I judge no man. So when they brought her they said, This woman was taken in adultery, in the very act; now Moses in the Law commanded us that such should be stoned, but what sayest Thou? 12. While they were saying this, Jesus stooped down and wrote with His finger on the ground. And as they waited for His answer, He lifted up His head and said, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. What can be more Divine than this sentence, that he should punish sins who is himself free from sin? For how can we endure one who takes vengeance on guilt in another and excuses it in himself? When a man condems in another what he commits himself, does he not rather pronounce his own condemnation?

13. Thus He spake, and wrote upon the ground. What then did He write? This, Thou beholdest the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye. For lust is like a mote, it is quickly kindled, quickly consumed; the sacrilegious perfidy which led the Jews to deny the Author of their salvation declared the magnitude of their crime. 14. He wrote upon the ground with the finger with which He had written the Law. Sinners' names are written in the earth, those of the just in heaven, as He said to |189 His disciples, Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. And He wrote a second time, that you may know that the Jews were condemned by both Testaments. 15. When they heard these words they went out one after another, beginning at the eldest, and sat down thinking upon themselves. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. It is well said that they went out who chose not to be with Christ. Without is the letter, within are the mysteries. For in the Divine lessons they sought, as it were, after the leaves of trees, and not after the fruit; they lived in the shadow of the Law, and could not discern the Sun of Righteousness.

16. Finally, when they departed Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. Jesus about to remit sin remains alone, as He says Himself, Behold the hour cometh, yea

is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone; for it was no messenger, no herald, but the Lord Himself Who saved His people. He remains alone, because in the remission of sins no man can participate with Christ. This is the gift of Christ alone, Who took away the sins of the world. The woman too was counted worthy to be absolved, seeing that, on the departure of the Jews, she remained alone with Jesus. 17. Then Jesus lifted up His head, and said to the woman, Where are those thine accusers, hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee, go, and sin no more. See, O reader, these Divine mysteries, and the mercy of Christ. When the woman is accused, Christ stoops His head, but when the accusers retire He lifts it up again; thus we see that He would have no man condemned, but all absolved.

18. By the words, Hath no man condemned thee? He briefly overthrows all the quibbles of heretics, who say that Christ knows not the day of judgment. He Who says, But to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, says also in this place, Hath no man condemned thee? How is it that He asks concerning that which He saw? It is for our sakes that He asks, that we might know the |190 woman was not condemned. And such is the wont of the human mind, often to enquire concerning that which we know. The woman too answered, No man, Lord, that is to say, Who can condemn when Thou dost not condemn? Who can punish another under such a condition as Thou hast attached to his sentence? 19. The Lord answered her, Neither do I condemn thee. Observe how He has modified His own sentence; that the Jews might have no ground of allegation against Him for the absolution of the woman, but by complaining only draw down a charge upon themselves; for the woman is dismissed not absolved; and this because there was no accuser, not because her innocence was established. How then could they complain, who were the first to abandon the prosecution of the crime, and the execution of the punishment?

20. Then He said to her who had gone astray, Go, and sin no more. He reformed the criminal, He did not absolve the sin. Faults are condemned by a severer sentence, whenever a man hates his own sin, and begins the condemnation of it in himself. When the criminal is put to death, it is the person rather than the trangression which is punished, but when the transgression is forsaken, the absolution of the person becomes the punishment of the sin. What is the meaning then of, Go, and sin no more? It is this; Since Christ hath redeemed thee, suffer thyself to be corrected by Grace; punishment would not reform but only afflict thee. Farewell, my son, and love me as a son, for I on my part love you as a parent.

Letters 21-30 — LETTER XXVII. [A.D.387.]

WHO Irenaeus was to whom the series of letters from xxvii. to xxxiii. are addressed is not ascertained. From the affectionate and parental way in which S. Ambrose addresses him, and from Irenaeus' applying to him for elucidation of his difficulties in the study of Holy Scripture, it is probable that he was one who had been trained, perhaps converted by him. The Benedictine Editors think that he must have been one of his Milan Clergy. All the letters are occupied in expounding passages of the Old Testament, or in |191 solving questions connected with it; they are specimens of his method of mystical interpretation, in which he took great delight. In this Letter he begins a reply to a question on Exodus viii. 26. and then goes off into a mystical interpretation of Rachel and Leah, making them an allegory, as S. Paul does Hagar and Sarah. AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS, GREETING.

1. You tell me that you have felt a difficulty in the text We shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God, But you had the means of solving it, for it is written in the book of Genesis, that a shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians, and this not on account of the shepherd himself, but of his flocks. For the Egyptians were tillers of the ground, but Abraham and Jacob, and afterwards Moses and David, were shepherds, and in this function exercised a certain kingly discipline. 2. The Egyptians then hated sacrifices which were duly offered; the pursuit of virtue, that is, which is perfect and replete with discipline. But that which these evil men hated is in the sight of the good sincere and pious. The licentious man hates the works of virtue, the glutton shrinks from them. And so the Egyptian's body, loving the charms of pleasure, has an aversion to the virtues of the soul, hates its rule, and shrinks from the discipline of virtue, and all such like works.

3. But what the Egyptian shrinks from----he who is an Egyptian rather than a man,----that do thou, who hast the knowledge of what befits man, embrace and follow: and shun those things which they pursue and choose; for these two things cannot agree together, wisdom and folly. Thus as wisdom and continence remove themselves from those who are, as it were, in the ranks of unwisdom and intemperance, so no foolish and incontient man has any part in what belongs to the goods and heritage of the wise and continent man. 4. Again, those women who were sanctified by their marriage, Leah and Rachel, (the one meaning 'wearied,'

the other 'strong breath') from aversion not to the ties of |192 kindred but to their differing manners, and informed by the much tried Jacob, that he desired to depart in order to shun the envy and sloth of Laban and his sons, made answer thus: Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also all our money? Observe first that the slothful and envious man alienates from himself one who labours and keeps strict discipline; he flies from her and seeks to separate himself. Finding that they will be burthensome to him he thinks he has gained by their removal, and esteems this to be his reward, and this the point of his pleasure.

5. Now let us hear how what virtue has, sloth has not: for they say, For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children's. Rightly do they say that they were taken away by God's appointment, for it is He Who created the good, for whose sake the slothful are despoiled; for weak and evil men cannot apprehend the beauty of the Divine inheritance; and thus the resolute, and he who hath in him the spirit of a brave man, succeeds to it. But who is strong but God alone Who regulates and governs all things? 6. To these therefore the heritage of God is justly due. Wherefore Isaiah also says, There is an heritage for them that believe in the Lord. Well saith he, There is an heritage, for this is the sole heritage, there is no other. For neither is blind treasure an heritage, nor have any transitory things the advantage of an heritage; that alone is an heritage wherein God is the portion. Wherefore the Saint of the Lord saith, Thou art my portion, O Lord, and again, Thy testimonies have I claimed as mine heritage for ever. You see what are the possessions of the just, the commandments of God, His oracles, His precepts, hereby he is enriched, hereby he is fed, hereby he is delighted as by all manner of riches.

7. Now Leah and Rachel, possessing these, required not their father's riches, for therein there was base coin, a senseless outward show, destitute of spiritual vigour. Again, being rich and liberal themselves they accounted their father rather indigent than rich. For no one who |193 participates in good and liberal discipline deems any foolish man to be rich, but poor and needy, and even abject; and this although he overflow with royal riches, and in the pride of his gold boasts of his own power. 8. The society of such we must shun then, even though they be united to us by the ties of kindred: the conversation of the foolish is to be avoided, for it infects and discolors the mind, for as with the clean thou shalt be clean, so with the froward thou shalt be froward. For it frequently happens that one who listens to an intemperate man against his own resolution, much as he himself desires to maintain the rule of continence, is yet stained by the hue of folly, and thus discipline and insolence truly prove themselves contrary and repugnant to each other.

9. Hence when much-tried Jacob inquired their opinion, they utter the words of virtue now proved by long exercise, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? that is, 'Do you ask us whether we wish to depart from him? As if you knew not that we have no desire of his society, nor are we possessed with that thirst for riches and delight in luxury which is so sweet to most worldlings. These are the things which we deem miserable

and alien to our feelings, these are the things which we deem to be full of poverty and want.' 10. They add also the cause of their departure, that Laban had lost the true glory and those stores of good treasure in which we are born. Vigour of mind has been given us, and the good coinage of God's image and likeness, which is a spiritual coinage. He lost these because he preferred the splendour of this world to things true and profitable for his true life; for the beauty of these things escapes one who is ignorant of the good things of God, while in his judgment of what is beautiful he deludes and deceives himself. Hear then his words and judge.

11. He pursued holy Jacob and his daughters, thinking haply to find upon them some of his own vices, and thus to have a plea for reclaiming them to himself, censuring the righteous, whereas he himself was refuted by reason, and could give no answer or reply why he had any right |194 to detain him. Wherefore, says he, didst thou not tell me, that I might have sent thee away? Wherein he discloses what it was the just man feared, namely, such attendance, such a convoy, lest he should go forth escorted by such a company; in the first place because it behoved him not to submit himself to the service of many masters, so as to be dismissed by Laban as a servant: and next because this man, intent upon good discipline and desirous of following the true path of virtue, sought no man to guide him but the heavenly oracles. These, said he, have commanded me to depart from hence and now accompany me on my journey.

12. But how wouldst thou have dismissed me, he would say? Would it have been with such joy as thine which is full of sadness, with cymbals namely and instruments of ill-modulated harmony, and with the sweet notes of flutes sounding forth unpleasing strains, dissonant sounds, discordant noises, mute voices, cymbals jarring upon the sense? Didst thou believe that I could be delighted, that I could be recalled by such things? It is from them that I fled, nor do I fear thy reproachful words. I fled that such things might not follow me, that I might receive no present from thee on my departure. 13. It is not by such guides as these that we arrive at the Church of Christ, to which Jacob was bending his steps, to carry down thither the wealth of the nations and the riches of the Gentiles, that he might transplant thither his posterity, flying from the shadows of empty things? preferring to senseless images of virtues their breathing beauty, and serious things to outward show. You see how the Gentiles deck out their banquets, and proclaim their feasts; but such things are hateful to pious minds, for by their means many are deceived, they are captivated by pleasant food, by the bands of dancers, while they fly from our fasts, deeming them irksome to them, and noxious and troublesome to the body.

14. Or didst thou think that I should desire thy gold? But thou hast not gold tried by that fire wherein the just are proved. Or was it silver that I desired? But thou hast not silver, for thou possessest not the brightness of |195 the heavenly words. But perhaps I hoped that thou wouldst give me some of thy slaves to serve me? Nay, I seek for free men, and not the slaves of sin. But perhaps companions of my journey and guides of my path were necessary? Would that they had power to follow me! for I would have shewn them the ways of the Lord.

But ye who know not God, how can ye know His ways? The elect of the Lord walk in His ways, not every one who enters them, and yet no man is excluded. 15. Let him who is prepared follow, let him enter upon the way which leads to Mesopotamia; so that he who seeks that country may pass through the waters, the waters of Tigris and Euphrates, the waters of courage and righteousness, through the tears of penitence, the baptism of grace. Here is the path of the army of God, for all who are in the Church are God's soldiers. There is that flock marked with divers virtues, which Jacob chose for himself; for every soul which is not so marked is unlearned and uninstructed, ignorant of discipline: but that which is marked is rich in works and fertile in grace.

16. Let him who comes to it first be reconciled to his angry brother. Let him who comes to it inhabit Shechem, that precious and active laboratory of virtue, where injured chastity is so deeply avenged. Let him who comes to it wrestle with God, that he may inure himself to imitate Him, that he may come in contact with the humility of Christ and His sufferings. Let him take up his cross and follow Christ. Lastly, a good combatant envieth not, is not puffed up, nay, he even blesses his antagonist with a like gift. 17. Let us then follow holy Jacob and his ways, that we may reach these sufferings, these combats, that we may reach the shoulder , that we may attain to patience, the mother of the faithful, and to their father Isaac, that is, one capable of delight , abounding in joy. For where patience is, there also is joy, for after tribulation comes patience, and patience worketh experience, wherein is hope, whereby we are not ashamed, for whoso is not ashamed |196 the cross of Christ, neither will Christ be ashamed of him.

Farewell, my son; blush not to ask questions of your father, as you blush not to glory in the sufferings of Christ.

Letters 21-30 — LETTER XXVIII. [A.D.387]

S. AMBROSE in this Letter maintains that Pythagoras derived much of his wisdom from a knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, and dwells on his maxim, 'not to follow the beaten track,' as one specially addressed to the priesthood. AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS, GREETING. 1. IN the writings of certain authors we find a precept of Pythagoras forbidding his disciples to enter upon the common path trodden by the people. Now the source from whence he drew this is not unknown. For as he derived (according to the general opinion) his descent from the Jews, from their learning he derived also the precepts of his school. This rendered him highly esteemed among philosophers, so that he hardly met, it is said, with his equal. Now he had read in the book of Exodus that by the Divine command Moses was bid put off his shoes from off his feet. This command was also given to Joshua the son of Nun, namely that they, when desired to walk along the Lord's path, should shake off the dust of the beaten and vulgar tracks. He had also read the command to Moses to go up to the mount with the priests, while the people stood apart. So God separated the priests from the people, and subsequently commanded Moses himself to enter into the cloud.

2. You see then the separation. Nothing vulgar, nothing popular, nothing in common with the desires and usages and manners of the rude multitude is looked for in priests. The dignity of the priesthood claims for itself a sober and unruffled calmness, a serious life, an especial gravity. How can he be respected by the people, who is in nothing distinct from the people, or different from the |197 multitude? And what can a man look up to in you who recognizes himself in you, who sees nothing in you which is beyond himself, and who finds in you, to whom he deems respect to be due, the things which he blushes at in himself?

3. Wherefore let us pass over the opinions of the people, and the resorts of the common herd, and the line of the beaten track, the ground also of that common path along which he runs, whose days are swifter than a post, of whom it is said, they flee away, they see no good. But let us find for ourselves a path secluded from the conversation of the proud, inaccessible to the works of the unlearned, trodden by no polluted person, polluted that is by the stains of his own sloth, and smeared by the smoke of iniquity, his soul darkened and ruinous, "one who has never tasted the sweetness of virtue, or at any rate has thought that she should be

looked upon askance rather than met with direct regard and with open arms, who moreover (as is the wont of many who seem to themselves witty and polite, and transform the beauty of wisdom into dishonourable guile,) regards not true Grace, but shrouded as it were in darkness, gives no credence to those who live in the light of day, being of the number of the men of Tema and Sheba, who fall off and turn away from the truth; of whom Job says, Behold ye the ways of them of Tema, the paths of the Sabaeans, for they shall be confounded who put their hopes in cities and in riches. So ye also have risen against me without pity, therefore when ye see my wound, be afraid.

4. Let us then abandon these devious paths of them that turn aside, and this dust of those who fail, who through their lust fall oftentimes in the desert, and let us be converted and follow the way of wisdom, that way which the children of those who boast and glorify themselves have not trodden, that way which destruction knows not, and death is ignorant of; for God hath marked it out; the depth saith, It is not in me, and the sea saith, It is not with me. But if you seek for the way of wisdom and discipline, to worship God, and to be subject to Him is wisdom, and to abstain from sin is discipline. |198 5. What then have we to do with the way of this world, wherein is temptation; yea the life itself of men is temptation, and more empty even than vain fables, living in houses of clay, spending nights and days in quest of gain, with their thoughts ever upon it, seeking like hired servants their daily wages, and as they say grasshoppers do , feeding on the empty breath of desires. Truly, like grasshoppers, living from day to day, they burst with their own complainings . For what is the semblance of men without gravity or discipline, but that of grasshoppers, born to a daily death, chirping rather than speaking? These beneath the heat of burning desires soothe themselves with a song hurtful to themselves, and quickly die bearing no fruit, and possessed of no grace. Noxious and crooked are their ways as those of serpents, whose bodies are drawn along in poisoned folds, who gather themselves up into a coil of wickedness , and cannot raise themselves to heavenly things.

6. But let us enter the gates of the Lord, the gates of righteousness, which the righteous entereth and giveth praise unto the Lord. But few enter in here, wherefore the Lord saith, Straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. But the wide gate and broad way, wherein the many walk, leads to death, and carries thither them that travel on it. 7. Let our way then be narrow, our virtue abundant, our steps more careful, our faith more lofty, our path narrow, our energy of mind overflowing, our paths straight, for the steps of virtue cannot be turned aside; wherefore Solomon saith, Who leave the paths of uprightness. 8. Let our steps tend upward, for it is better to ascend. Lastly, as we read to-day, Woe to them that go down to Egypt! Not that to pass over into Egypt is blameable, but to pass into their habits, to pass into their cruel perfidy and hideous lusts. He that passes over thither descends, he that descends falls. Wherefore let us avoid the |199 Egyptian, who is man, not God. For the king of Egypt himself was given over to the dominion of his vices, and compared with him Moses was accounted a god, ruling over kingdoms and subjecting to himself powers. Hence we read that he was addressed thus,

See I have made thee a god to Pharoah. Farewell, and love me, as indeed you do, with the affection of a son.

Letters 21-30 — LETTER XXIX. [A.D.389.]

AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS, GREETING. THIS letter is in fact a meditation on Christ as the true Chief good of man, the true Source of happiness, and Food of the soul, and Fountain of life, to be sought therefore with eagerness, and clung to with all the affection of the soul, which must therefore scorn all meaner delights. 1. WHILE engaged in reading, after resting my mind for a while and desisting from study, I began to meditate on that versicle which in the evening we had sung at Vigils, Thou art fairer than the children of men, and, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring good tidings of Him. And truly nothing is more beautiful than that chief good, the very preaching of which is beyond measure lovely, and specially the progress of continuous discourse, and the foot-steps, so to speak, of Apostolic preaching. But who is equal to these things? They to whom God gave not only to preach Christ, but also to suffer for Him.

2. Let us, as far as we can, direct our minds to that which is beautiful seemly and good, let us be occupied therein, let us keep it in mind, that by its illumination and brightness our souls may become beautiful and our minds transparent. For if our eyes, when obscured by dimness, are refreshed by the verdure of the fields and are able by the beauty of a grove or grassy hill to remedy every defect of the failing vision, while the very pupils and balls of the eye seem to be coloured with the hue of health: how much more does this eye of the mind, beholding that chief good, and dwelling and feeding thereupon, brighten and shine |200 forth, so as to fulfil that which is written, My soul shall be satisfied even as it were with marrow and fatness. Moreover, he who has a skilful knowledge of the souls of his flock, pays attention to wild grasses, that he may obtain much pasturage: for by the sweeter kind of herbage lambs are made fatter, and the milky juice more healthful. On these pastures those fat ones have fed, who have eaten and worshipped, for good indeed are those pastures wherein is placed the saint of God.

3. There is grass also, whereby the flocks of sheep are nourished, for whence come the fleeces of wisdom, and the clothing of prudence. And perchance this is the grass of the mountain, upon which the words of the prophet distil as the showers upon the grass, and which the wise man carefully gathers, that he may have a fleece for a covering, that is, for a spiritual

garment. And thus proper food and clothing are provided for that soul which cleaves to the chief Good, that Good Which is Divine, and which the Apostle Peter exhorts us to seek for, that by the acquisition of such knowledge we may become partakers of the Divine nature. 4. The knowledge hereof the good God opens to His saints, and grants it out of His good treasury, even as the sacred Law testifies, saying, The Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee and open unto thee His good treasure. From this heavenly treasure He gives rain to His lands, to bless all the works of thy hands. By this rain is signified the utterance of the Law, which moistens the soul fruitful and fertile in good works, that it may receive the dew of Grace.

5. The knowledge of this good David sought; as he himself declaims, saying, One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require, even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit His temple. And that this is the chief Good he straightway added in the same Psalm, I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. He must be sought after, there He will be clearly seen face to face. This good is in the house of God, in His secret and hidden place. Wherefore he says again, He |201 shall be satisfied with the pleasures of thy house. In another place too he has shown this to be the highest blessing, saying, The Lord shall bless thee out of Sion, and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem. Wherefore blessed is he who dwells then in the vestibule of faith and in the spiritual abode, the dwelling place of devotion and the life of virtue.

6. In Him therefore let us be and in Him abide, of Whom Isaiah says, How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace. Who are they that preach but Peter, Paul, and all the Apostles? What do they preach to us but the Lord Jesus? He is our Peace, He is our chief Good, for He is Good from Good, and from a good tree is gathered good fruit. And good also is His Spirit, Who takes of Him and leads His servants forth into the land of righteousness. For who that hath the Spirit of God within him will deny that He is good, since He says Himself, Is thine eye evil because I am good? May this Good which the merciful God gives to them that seek Him come into our soul, and into our inmost heart. He is our Treasure, He is our Way, He is our Wisdom, He is our Righteousness, our Shepherd, the good Shepherd, He is our Life. Thou seest how many goods are in this one Good! These goods the Evangelists preach to us. David seeking for these goods saith, Who will shew us any good? And he shews that the Lord Himself is our Good by adding, Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy Countenance upon us. But Who is the Light of the Father's Countenance, but the Brightness of His Glory, and the Image of the invisible God, in Whom the Father is both seen and glorified, as He also glorifies His Son?

8. Wherefore the Lord Jesus Himself is that chief Good which was announced to us by Prophets, declared by Angels, promised by the Father, preached by Apostles. He hath come to us as ripeness; nor as ripeness only, but as ripeness in the mountains; to the intent that in our counsels there should be nothing sour, or unripe, nothing harsh or bitter in our actions or manners, the first Preacher of good tidings hath come among us. Wherefore also

He saith, I, Who spoke, am present with you, that is, I |202 Who spoke in the Prophets, am present in that Body which I took of the Virgin; I am present as the inward Likeness of God, and the express Image of His person, I am present too as Man. But who knows Me? For they saw the Man, but His Works made them believe He was above man. Was He not as man when weeping over Lazarus? again, was He not above man, when He raised him to life? Was He not as man when scourged? and again, above man when He took away the sin of the world?

9. To Him therefore let us hasten in Whom is the chief Good: for He is the bounty and patience of Israel, Who calls thee to repentance, that thou come not into condemnation but mayest receive the remission of thy sins. He saith, Repent. This is He of Whom the Prophet Amos cries, Seek good. He is the chief Good, Who is in need of nothing, but abounds in all things. And well may He abound, in Whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; of Whose fulness we have all received, and in Whom we are filled, as saith the Evangelist. 10. If then the mind with its capacities of desire and pleasure hath tasted the chief Good, and by means of these two affections hath drank It in, unalloyed by sorrow and fear, it is wonderfully inflamed. For having embraced the Word of God, she knows no measure and yet feels no satiety, as it is written, Thou art good and gracious, O teach me Thy statutes: having embraced the Word of God, she desires Him above all beauty, she loves Him above all joy, she is delighted with Him above all perfumes, she desires often to see, often to look upon Him, often to be drawn to Him that she may follow. Thy Name, it is said, is as ointment poured forth; therefore we maidens love Thee, therefore we strive but cannot attain to Thee. Draw us that we may run after Thee, that by the fragrance of Thy ointments we may gain power to follow Thee.

11. And the mind presses forward to the sight of internal mysteries, to the place of rest of the Word, to the very dwelling of that chief Good, His light and brightness. In that haven and home-retreat she hastens to hear His words, and having heard, finds them sweeter than all other things. Learn of the Prophet who had tasted and saith, O how |203 sweet are Thy words unto my throat, yea sweeter than honey unto my mouth. For what can that soul desire which hath once tasted the sweetness of the Word, and seen His brightness? When Moses received the Law he remained forty days on the mount and required no bodily food; Elijah, hastening to this rest, prayed that his life might be taken away; Peter, himself also beholding on the Mount the glory of the Lord's Resurrection, would fain not have come down, saying, It is good for us to be here. How great then is the glory of the Divine Essence and the graces of the Word, which things the Angels desire to look into.

12. The soul then which beholds this chief Good, requires not the body, and understands that it ought to have as little connexion with it as possible; it renounces the world, withdraws itself from the chains of the flesh, and extricates itself from all the bonds of earthly pleasures. Thus Stephen beheld Jesus, and feared not being stoned, nay, while he was being stoned, prayed not for himself but for his murderers. Paul also, when caught up to the third heaven, knew not whether he was in the body or out of the body: caught up, I say, into Paradise,

he became invisible to the presence of his own body, and having heard the words of God he blushed to descend again to the infirmities of the body. 13. Thus, knowing what he had seen and heard in Paradise, he cried saying, Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances? Touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using. For he would have us of this world in figure and semblance, not in use or possession, using as though we used it not, as our place of sojourn, not of rest, walking through it as in a vision, not with desire, so as to pass as lightly as possible over the mere shadow of this world. In this way S. Paul, who walked by faith not by sight, was absent from the body and present with the Lord, and although upon earth conversed not with earthly but with heavenly things.

11. Wherefore let our soul, wishing to draw near to God, raise herself from, the body, and ever adhere to that chief End which is divine, Which is everlasting, Which was from the beginning, and Which was with God, that is, the Word |204 of God. This is that Divine Being, in Whom we live and move and have our being. This is That which was in the beginning, the true I AM. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, was not yea nor nay but in Him was yea. He bid Moses say, I AM hath sent me. 15. With this Good therefore let our soul be, and if possible, be continually, that each of us may say, My soul is continually in my hand. And such will be the case, if it be not in the flesh, but in the spirit, and does not entangle itself in earthly things. For when it turns back to carnal things, then the allurements of the body creep over it, then it swells with rage and anger, then it is pierced with sorrow, then it is lifted up with arrogance, then it is bowed down with grief.

16. These are the heavy griefs of the soul by which it is often brought down to death, while its eyes are blinded so that they see not the light of true glory, and the riches of its eternal heritage. But by keeping them always fixed on God, it will receive from Christ the brightness of wisdom, so as to have its vision enlightened by the knowledge of God, and to behold that hope of our calling, and see that which is good and well-pleasing and perfect. For that which is good is well-pleasing to the Father, and that which is well-pleasing is perfect, as it is written in the Gospel, Love your enemies, that ye may be the children of your Father Which is in heaven, for, He sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, which is surely a proof of goodness. Afterwards He concludes by saying, Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father Which is in heaven is perfect. For charity is perfect; in short it is the fulfilling of the Law; for what can be so good as charity which thinketh no evil?

17. Fly then those regions where dwell envy, ambition, and contention. Therefore let thy mind open itself to receive this Good, that it may mount above the clouds, that it may be renewed as the eagle, and like the eagle spread abroad its wings, that with new vigour in its pinions it may fearlessly soar aloft and leave its earthly dwelling-place behind it, for the earthly habitation weigheth down the mind. Let it put off old things, let it cast off wandering desires, let it purge its eyes that it may see that Fountain of true wisdom, |205 that Source of eternal life Which flows and abounds with all things and is in want of nothing. For who hath given to Him, seeing that of Him and through Him and to Him are all things? 18. The

Fountain of life then is that chief Good from Which the means of life are dispensed to all, but It hath life abiding in Itself. It receiveth from none as though It were in need, It confers good on others rather than borrows from others for Itself, for It hath no need of us. Thus in the person of man it is said, my goods are nothing unto Thee. What then can be more lovely than to approach to Him, to cleave to Him; what pleasure can be greater? He who has seen and tasted freely of the Fountain of living water, what else can he desire? what kingdoms? what powers? what riches? perceiving how miserable even in this world is the condition of kings, how mutable the state of empires, how short the space of this life, in what bondage sovereigns themselves must live, seeing that their life is according to the will of others, not their own.

19. But what rich man passes to eternal life unless he be supported by the riches of virtue, that gift which is the portion of all, and declared to be impossible for the rich alone? Happiness then does not consist in using these things but in perceiving that whereby you may despise them, may regard them as void of truth , may judge them to be empty and fruitless, and may love the true beauty of naked truth which confesses the cheating vanities of this world. 20. Lift up therefore your eyes, O my soul; those eyes of which the Word of God saith, Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes. Go up then to the palm tree, overcome the world, that thou mayest reach the height of the Word. Leave out of doors the vain shows of this world, leave its malice, but bring in with you that goodness of mind which has grace in the tree of life, that is, if she wash her robes and enter into the city which is the true grace of the saints, wherein is the Tabernacle of God, |206 around which the scribes of the Lord encamp, where neither day nor sun nor moon afford light, but the Lord Himself is the light thereof, and enlightens all that city. For He is the Light of the world, not indeed the visible light, but the intellectual brightness of the souls which are in this world, upon which He pours the bright beams of reason and of prudence, and in the Gospel is said to inspire with the breath of His spiritual influences the inmost soul, and the recesses of the mind.

21. If then any man hath begun to be an inhabitant of that heavenly city, an inhabitant, that is, by his life and manners, let him not depart from it, let him not go out again, or retrace his steps, the steps, that is, not of his body but of his mind; let him not turn back. Behind is luxury, behind is impurity. When Lot went up into the mountain he left behind him the crimes of Sodom, but she who looked back, could not reach the higher ground. It is not your feet but your manners which are never to turn back. Let not your hands hang down, or the knees of your faith and devotion become feeble. Let not the weakness of your will be backsliding, let there be no recurrence of crime. Thou hast entered in, remain therefore; thou hast arrived, stay still; escape for thy life.

22. In your ascent your steps must tend directly upwards, no man can safely turn back. Here is the way, there, downfall; here ascent, there a precipice. In ascending there is labour, in descending danger; but the Lord is mighty, Who, when thou art founded there will guard and hedge thee round with prophetic walls and apostolic bulwarks. Therefore the Lord

says to thee, Come, get you down, for the press is full. Let us be found within, not out of doors. In the Gospel too the Son of God saith, He which shall be upon the house-top let him not come down to take away his vessels. And this He says not of this house-top, but of that of which it is said, He spreadeth out the heavens like a vault. 23. Remain within therefore, within Jerusalem, within thine own soul, peaceful, meek, and tranquil. Leave her not, nor descend in order to raise up this vessel of thine, either with honour, or wealth, or pride. Remain within, |207 that aliens may not pass through thee, that sins may not pass through thy mind, vain acts., and idle thoughts: and they will not pass, if thou wilt wage a holy war in the cause of faith and devotion, for the love of truth against the snares of passion, and wilt take up the arms of God against spiritual wickedness and the craft of the devil, who tempts our senses by fraud and stratagem, but who is easily crushed by the gentle warrior, who sees no strife, but, as becomes the servant of God, teaches the faith with modesty, and convinces those who oppose themselves. Of him the Scripture says, Let the warrior who is gentle arise , and let him that is weak say, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

24. Supported by this faith, even he who is weak shall prevail, and his soul will be holy, and the prophetic or apostolic mountains shall drop down new wine for him, and the hills shall flow with milk, like that hill which gave milk to the Corinthians to drink, and water shall flow for him from their vessels, and from their well-heads. From his belly shall flow living water, that spiritual water which the Holy Spirit supplies to His faithful; may He vouchsafe to water thy soul also, that in thee may be a fountain springing up into life eternal. Farewell; love me as a son, for I love you as a father,

Letters 21-30 — LETTER XXX. [A.D.389.]

S. AMBROSE here continues the subject of the last Letter, dwelling- especially on the duty of rising above the level of earthly things, and bringing together various passages of the Old Testament which he interprets spiritually as setting forth this Lesson. The true follower of Christ will build Him a Temple in his heart, which his Lord will fill with the adornment of spiritual graces. AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS, GREETING. 1. AFTER I had finished my last letter and directed it to be conveyed to you, the words which the Lord spake |208 by the prophet Haggai came into my mind, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses? What is the meaning of this but that we ought to dwell on high, not in low and subterranean abodes? For they who dwell beneath the earth, cannot build the temple of God, but say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built, because it is the mark of sensual persons to seek underground dwellings, courting the cool of summer, being enervated by indulgence and requiring shady retreats to enable them to bear the heat, or because the slothful live at ease beneath the earth, or lastly because dark and shady places suit them best, concealing, (as they believe,) their crimes. I am compassed about with darkness, the walls cover me, what need I to fear? But in vain do they hope for this, when God beholds the hidden depths of the abyss, and discovers all things before they take place.

2. But neither Elijah nor Eiisha dwelt in underground dwellings. Moreover the former carried the dead son of the widow up into the loft where he abode, and there raised him to life; and for the latter, that great woman, the Shunamite, prepared a chamber on the wall, and there she obtained the privilege of conceiving a son, for she was barren, and there also she saw the miracle of his restoration to life. And what shall I say of Peter who at the sixth hour went up upon the house-top, and there learnt the mystery of the baptism of the Gentiles. But the homicide Absalom had reared for himself a pillar in the King's dale, and then, after his death, he was cast into a great pit. So then the saints ascend unto the Lord, the wicked descend to crime; the saints are on the mountains, the wicked in the valleys; For God is the God of the hills, not of the plains.

3. Those therefore who dwelt in the plain, where God dwells not, could not have the house of God in themselves; for this is the house which God required of them, that they should build up themselves, and should erect within them the temple of God with the living stones of faith. For it was not the erection of earthly walls nor of wooden roofs that He required, for these, had they existed, would have been destroyed by the enemies' hand; but He sought for that temple which should be raised in men's minds, to |209 whom it might be said, Ye are the Temple of God, wherein the Lord Jesus was to dwell, and from whence He was to proceed for the redemption of the world. Thus in the womb of a Virgin a sacred chamber was to be prepared, wherein the King of heaven might dwell, and the human Body might become the temple of God, Which also when It was destroyed, was to be raised again in three days.

4. But such a house as this sensual persons, they who dwell in cieled houses and delight in chased silver, do not build. For as they despise pure silver, so also they despise simple dwellings. They enlarge the site of their houses, they add more and more, joining house to house and farm to farm, they dig up the ground; so that the very earth itself gives way to their habitations, and like sons of the earth they are laid up within her womb, and hidden in her bowels. They surely are those of whom Jeremiah says, Woe unto him that buildeth his house in unrighteousness. For he who builds in righteousness, builds not on earth but in heaven. 5. Thou hast built, saith the Prophet, a house, measure the upper chambers of it, even airy chambers, furnished with windows, deled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Now he measureth the upper chambers, who, having contemplated the judgment of God, judgeth the judgment of the humble and the judgment of the poor. But he who seeks after gain and the blood of the innocent builds not his chambers with judgment, nor keeps the due measure, because he has not Christ, nor looks for the breath of Divine grace upon him, nor does he desire the brightness of full light, nor has he chambers painted with vermilion, for it cannot be said to him, Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet.

6. A man of this sort, it is said, shall not be buried, for he who has burrowed in the earth, and buried himself alive, so to speak, in a tomb, has deprived himself when dead of the rest of burial. And thus, laid in the pit of carnal pleasures, he has found no grave from whence to rise. Such a man therefore builds no temple to God, because he hath not known the time of his correction. How then can such men build a temple, who like wild beasts betake themselves |210 to dens and hiding places, who like serpents bury themselves in ditches, and burrow in the earth like crafty foxes? 7. Neither does he build a sepulchre for himself who dies before the time, for he is dead while he liveth; and he hears not the voice of Haggai, that is being interpreted, of the Feaster, for he enters not the Tabernacle of God, in the voice of praise and thanksgiving, the sound of one feasting. For how can he hear His voice, who sees not

His works? If he saw them, he would have heard the Word which has been put in His Hand, rejoicing in His acts, whereby He knocked and it was opened to Him, and He descended into his soul that He might feed therein upon the food of sincerity and truth. 8. Now because he

has not heard, the word of Haggai comes again to hand, and says, Rise up from your cieled houses that are weighed down by wickedness, and go up to the mountain of the heavenly Scriptures, and hew wood, the wood of wisdom, the wood of life, the wood of knowledge; and make straight your ways, direct your acts that they may keep their due order which is useful and necessary for building the house of God. 9. For if ye do it not, the heaven over you shall be stayed of her dew, that is, the heavenly Word, Which descends as the dew upon the grass, shall not temper the fevered motions of your bodily passions, nor extinguish the fiery darts of your various desires; and the earth, that is, your soul, shall be stayed from her fruit, so that it shall be dried up, unless fully watered by the Word of God, and sprinkled with heavenly dew, even the fulness of spiritual Grace.

10. And as He knew how slothful they are who dwelt beneath the earth, and in the dark abodes of pleasure, I will stir up, it is said, the spirit of Jerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, Governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, that they may be stirred up to build the Divine house. For except the Lord build the house, their labour is lost that build it. Now Zerubbabel means, 'constant overflowing,' like the Fountain of life, and the Word of God, by Whom and from Whom are all things and in Whom all things consist. Thus saith the overflowing Fountain, If any man thirst, let him come unto |211 Me, and drink; drink, that is, from the stream of the unfailing flood. We read also of Zabulon, a nocturnal flood, that is to say prophetic, but it also is now brightened by the intermixture of this stream, whereby was swallowed up that flood of vanity typified by Jezabel, which was opposed to truth and to the utterances of prophets, and was so torn in pieces by dogs that not a trace of it remained, but all its frame with every mark of its posterity was destroyed. Zerubbabel therefore of the tribe of Judah, and Jesus the High Priest, thus designated both by tribe and name seem to represent two persons, though one only is meant; for He Who as Almighty, is born from the Almighty, as Redeemer is born of the Virgin, being the Same in the diversity of His two divisible natures, hath fulfilled as the Giant of salvation the verity of the one Son of God.

11. Now being about to raise from the dead holy Zerubbabel He says, Yet once, it is a little while, I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. Once before he had shaken these things when He delivered his people from Egypt, when there was in heaven a pillar of fire, dry land among the waves, a wall in the sea, a path in the waters, when in the desert a daily supply of heavenly food was produced, and the rock was melted into streams of water. But He shook them also afterwards in the Passion of the Lord Jesus, when the heaven was covered with darkness, the sun withdrew his light, the rocks were rent, the tombs opened, the dead raised, the Dragon, vanquished on his own waves, saw the fishers of men not only sailing, but even walking on the sea without danger.

12. The dry land was also shaken when the barren Gentile nations began to ripen with the harvest of devotion and |212 faith, and the desert and the Gentiles were so much shaken, that the preaching of the Apostles, whom He sent to call the Gentiles, was so loud and vehement, that their sound went out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the

world. So greatly, indeed, was the desert shaken that more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, and the desert blossomed as a rose, the elect of the Gentiles entered in to the remnant of the people, that the remnant might be saved according to the election of grace. 13. And I will fill, it is said, this house with My silver and gold, with the heavenly oracles, which are as silver tried in the fire, and in the brightness of the true light, glistening like spiritual gold in the secret hearts of the saints. These riches He confers on His Church, riches whereby spiritual treasures are increased, and the glory of the house is exalted above the former glory which the elect people enjoyed.

14. For peace and tranquillity of the soul is above all glory of any house; for peace passeth all understanding. This is that peace above all peace which shall be granted after the third shaking of the heaven, the sea, the earth and the dry land, when He shall destroy all Principalities and Powers. For heaven and earth shall pass away, and all the fashion of this world; and every man shall rise up against his brother with the sword, that is, with the word piercing the marrow of the soul, that whatever opposes itself, the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem may be cut off, as Zechariah says. And thus there will be peace over all, the passions of the body offering no resistance, and the unbelieving mind no obstacle, that Christ may be all in all, offering in subjection to the Father the hearts of all men.

15. Wherefore to Him alone is it mystically said, I will take thee, O Zerubbabel, and will make thee as a signet, for I have chosen thee. When our mind shall have become peaceful so that it may be said to her, Return, return, O Shulamite, which signifies 'peaceful,' or, to use your own |213 name, Irenice, then shall she receive Christ like a signet on herself, that is, the Image of God, that she may be according to that Image, for as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And it behoves us to bear the image of the heavenly, that is, peace. 16. And that we may know the truth of this, it is said in the Canticles to the soul now fully perfect, that which may the Lord Jesus say to you also, Set me as a seal upon thine arm; that peace may shine in your heart and Christ in your works, and that wisdom and righteousness and redemption may be formed in you. Farewell, my son: love me for I love you.

1. A reply of Valentinian the 1st to some Bishops of the Hellespont and Bithynia, who demanded permission to meet 'to amend the doctrine of the faith,' is given by Sozomen. (vi. 7.) His words are, 'It is not lawful for me, as a layman, to busy myself about such matters as these: let the Bishops, whose business it is, meet by themselves wherever they will.' To the same effect are the words of his which Theodoret reports, (iv. (5.) when bidding the Bishops of the province elect a successor to Auxentius. He bids them choose a fit person, 'that we also, who rule. the. empire, may sincerely bow our heads to him, and welcome his reproofs, (for, being men, we cannot but stumble,) as a remedial discipline.' What law is referred to is uncertain. The Benedictine Editors, after mentioning some which had been suggested 'think it more probable that the law referred to is not extant.'

2. Gibbon (ch. xxv.) in his character of Valentinian says, 'In the time of Julian he provoked the danger of disgrace by the contempt which he publicly expressed for the reigning religion.'

The story is told by Theod. Eccles. Hist. iii. 16. Valentian was in official attendance on the Emperor Julian on one occasion when he went to the temple of Fortune to perform rites. 'On either side of the door were stationed attendants, who sprinkled all who came in with lustral water to purify them, as they believed. When some of the, drops fell on his cloak, Valentinian struck the attendants with his fist, saying that he was defiled not purified by them.' For this he was dismissed from the court, and sent to a solitary garrison. The same story is told with slight variations by Sozomen. Hist. vi. 6. 3. He is alluding to his own election. 4. This is true of the first decision of the Council, but as S. Ambrose says, 'it ended badly,' for the Bishops were inveigled into accepting a less orthodox formula. See Prof. Bright's Hist. p. 94, 98.

5. S. Ambrose here delicately alludes to the service; he had rendered to Valentinian in going on his behalf to the court of the usurper Maximus after the death of Gratian, which is referred to in Letter xxiv. 6. 'This was not so great an inconvenience to them as might appear at first sight, for the early Basilicas were not unlike the heathen temples, or our own collegiate chapels, that is, part of a range of buildings, which contained the lodgings of the ecclesiastics, and formed a fortress in themselves, which could easily be blockaded either from within or without.' Newman. Ch. of the Fathers, p. 22. 7. 1 S. Pet. v. 8 8. Eph. vi. 12. 9. S. Luke xix. 35. 10. S. Matt. xi. 28. etc. 11. Phil. i. 23. 12. S. Matt. x. 39. 13. The words 'custodiam' and 'amisit,' are repeated by S. Ambrose from the former part of the sentence. 'Amisit ' as applied here vocal Is the Psalmist's expression, 'Hath God forgotten to be gracious?' Ps. lxxvii. 9.

14. 2 Kings vi. 16. (the sense, not the words.) 15. Rom. vi. 10. 16. S. John xxi. 22. 17. This refers to a story thus recounted in Paulinus' Life of S. Ambrose ch. 12, 'Among' many who tried to force S. Ambrose into exile, but through God's protection failed of their purpose, one Euthymius more hapless than the rest, was stirred to such a pitch of frenzy that he hired a house close to the Church, and there kept a carriage, that he might the more readily carry off Ambrose into exile, by seizing him and putting him in the carriage. But his wickedness fell upon his own pate, (Ps. vii. 7.) for that very day year, he was himself put into the carriage and from the same house was carried into exile, confessing that it was by the just judgment of God that his wickedness had recoiled on himself, and he was carried into exile in the very chariot which he had prepared for the Bishop. And the Bishop did much to comfort him, by giving him money, and other necessaries.'

18. The word is 'curiales.' see note e on Lett, xviii. To the authorities there referred to add Bingh. Antiq. iv, 4, 4, where Gothofred's enumeration of their duties is given in full in the notes. 19. Zech. v. 1 [E.V. a flying roll. Vulg. volumen volans.] 20. 2 Cor. xi. 14. 21. i.e. by causing them to commit sacrilege. 22. Ps. 1. 16. 23. 2 Cor. vi. 15 24. 1 Kings xxi. 3. 25. S. Luke xix. 40. 26. Ps. viii. 2. 27. Ps.cxviii, 22. 28. Jer. xvii. 1. 29. Gal. ii. 19. 30. Gal. iii. 11. 31. Gal. iv. 4. 32. Gal. iii. 13. 33. Ib. 34. 2 Cor. v. 21. 35. 1 Cor. vi. 1, 2. 36. Ib. vi. 5. 37. Isa. li. 7. 38. 2 Cor. iii. 3. 39. S. Matt, xxii. 17. 40. Ib. 18. sqq. 41. Gen. i. 26. 42. Heb. i. 3. 43. S. John xiv. 9.

44. Ib. x. 30. 45. Ib. xvi. 15. 46. Ib. 16. 47. There is a play here on the word 'aerarios,' as connected with ' aerarium' the treasury. The aerarii were the lowest class of people at Rome, and so S. Ambrose calls the 'pauperes Christi' his aerarii, while at the same time they are the treasures of the Church. 48. Prov. xix. 17. 49. S. Augustine mentions in his Confessions (ix. 7.) S. Ambrose's introduction both of Hymns and chanting during this period of trial. 'Then was it first instituted that, after the manner of the Eastern Churches, Hymns and Psalms should be sung, lest the people should wax faint through the tediousness of sorrow; and from that day to this the custom is retained, divers, yea, almost all Thy Congregations throughout other parts of the world following herein.' Oxf. Transl. He speaks in the same passage of the behaviour of the people: 'The devout people kept watch in the Church, ready to die with their Bishop Thy servant.' He also dwells on the effect produced on himself, these events happening shortly before his conversion. 'How did I weep in Thy Hymns and Canticles, touched to the quick by the voice of Thy sweet-attuned Church! The voices flowed into mine ears, and the Truth distilled into mine heart, whence the affections of my devotion overflowed, and tears ran down, and happy was I therein.' Ib. ix. 6. It is quite possible that some of the twelve Hymns, acknowledged by the Benedictine Editors as genuine, were then first sung. Among them are the well-known 'Aeterna Christi munera,' 'Aeterne rernm Conditor,' 'Deus Creator omnium,' and others, whose strains are now familiar in English versions.

50. Phil. iii. 7. 51. Rom. v. 19. 52. Ps. lxiv. 7. vulg. 53. S. Luke xx. 4. 54. Is. ix. 6. 55. Eph. iv. 5. 56. This is said to be the Church now called 'S. Ambrose the greater.' The Roman Church is the one called in the previous letter the ' New Basilica,' and also the Church of the Apostles. It was probably called 'Romana' from being near the Porta Romana. 57. S. Augustine says that it was revealed to him in a dream. 58. These were e0nergou&menoi, or persons possessed by evil spirits. On them see Bingh. Antiq. iii. 4, 6. The laying on of hands was part of the rite of exorcism. 59. The text stands 'arriperetur urna,' nor is there any variation of MSS. noted. But it seems absolutely necessary to read 'una.' An 'urna' could have nothing to do with the matter. It might hold ashes, but surely not the bones of two men of marvellous size. The histories founded on the letter all tacitly adopt the emendation, and speak of 'a woman among the possessed.' See Fleury. B. xviii. 46. Tillemont in Vit.

60. now of S. Vitalis and S. Agricola Fleury p. 104. Eng. Tr. 61. This is distinctly asserted by S. Augustine in all the three passages referred to in the Introduction. 62. Ps. xix. 1, 63. Phil. iii. 20. 64. S. Mark iii. 17. 65. S. John i. 1. 66. Ib. 18. 67. Job. xxxiii. 1. 68. Ps. xix. 2. 69. Ps. cxiii. 5,6. 70. Ps. cxiii. 7,8. 71. Ib. 9. 72. 1 Cor. xv. 41. 73. Ps. xx. 7. 74. 2 Kings vi. 16 sqq. 75. 2 Cor. iii. 18. 76. Ps.xix.2. 77. S. Matt. viii. 29. 78. S. John ix. 25. 79. S. John xiv. 12. 80. S.Mark i. 24. 81. S. John ix. 29. 82. Gen. iv. 10. 83. The word is 'Enneacaidecateris.' Mr. Hensley remarks in his article on Easter, ' It has been often stated that the Council established a particular cycle, that of nineteen years, but this is a mistake.'

84. S. Luke xxii. 7-12. 85. Gal. iv. 10, 11. 86. 'Nam iriripit espe contrarium.' According to Ducange 'incipio' is used in late Latin in the sense of the Greek verb me/llw, and here, as it would seem, with the force with which that verb is so often used as equivalent to 'it is likely' or 'it is sure' that such and such is the case: see Lidd. and Scott. me/llw, ii. 3, 4. 87. An allusion to Virg. Georg.,1, 276. Ipsa dies alios alio dedit ordine luna Felices operum; quintam fuge, etc. 88. Days immediately following the Kalends, Nones or Ides, considered unlucky by the Romans. See, A. Gellius. v. 17. What the 'Egyptian days' were is not ascertained. 89. Ps. cxviii. 24. 90. This is the ordinary phrase for the day of the lunar month. See Bright Early Engl. Ch. Hist. p. 195. 91. Ib. [Ps.] lxxxix. 36, 37.

92. S. John xvii. 1. 93. S. Luke xiii. 32. 94. Ps. cxix. 126. 95. Eccl. iii. 1. 96. Jerem. viii. 7. 97. Isaiah i. 3. 98. Isa. xlix. 8. 99. 2 Cor.vi. 2. 100. S. Ambrose's Latin is 'mensis novorum.' The Vulgate ' in mense novarum frugum.' The LXX has e1n mhni\ tw~n ne/wn. 101. Exod. xiii. 4. 102. Exod.xii. 2. 103. Lev. xxiii. 5. 104. S. John i. 17. 105. S. Matt. v. 17. 106. bitter herbs E. T. Ex. xii. 8. 107. Ps. cxviii. 24. 108. S. John ii. 19. 109. The Era of Diocletian was the prevalent one at this time, and till the, general adoption of the Christian Era, which did not become established until the 8th Century. See Mr. Hensley's article 'Era' in Dict. of Christ. Antiq. He gives there the rule, for reducing the Era of Diocletian, the epoch of which is Aug. 29th A.D.284, to the Christian Era, viz, to add 283 years and 240 days to the given date of Diocletian's Era. According to this the Easter of the 89th year of Diocletian would be A.D. 373, and that of the 93rd would be A.D. 377. The 'times lately past' would probably refer to A.D. 383, when, as may be seen by the Table, the 'fourteenth moon' fell on a Sunday.

110. Deut. xvi. 1. 111. There is a slight error here. The interval is 32 days, not 31. 112. There is some uncertainty about the reading here. The original reading in the text was 'biennium,' and, as this clearly did not agree with the facts the Benedictine Editors adopted a suggestion that 'biennium' was a mistaken rendering of a MS. which had 'vi-ennium.' But the period of 6 years would not be precise, as the year referred to must be A.D. 379, (see table,) which would be seven years before. 113. 1 Cor. v. 7. 114. The precise words are not found in either of these passages. 115. Exod. xii. 18. Lev. xxiii. 5. Num. xxviii. 16. 116. Exod. xii. 5-8. 117. in haste E.T 118. against all the gods of Egypt E. T. 119. Exod. xii. 11-14. 120. 1 S.John ii. 18. 121. Exod. xii. 29. 122. Ib. 31.

123. Ib. 33. 124. 1 Cor. x. 2 125. This would seem to be not quite correct. Mr. Hensley remarks that in A.D. 360, Easter day was on April 23rd but that the 'fourteenth moon' of that year was a Monday and not on a Sunday. The question is discussed in Ideler Chronol. vol. 11 p. 254-257. 126. Col. iv.3. 127. Ps. cxli. 3. 128. 1 Cor. v. 8. 129. i. e. as Bishop. 130. Isa. i. 17. 131. Ps. lxviii. 5. 132. The Juthungi were a German tribe settled on the north bank of the Danube, in what is now Austria Proper and Moravia. It is uncertain whether they were, as Ammianus Marcellinus describes them, a sept of the Alemanni, or whether they were Goths. It has been suggested that the name is only another form of Gothi or Gothones, (Dict. of Antiq.) The want of a detailed and accurate history of these

times, which are just beyond the range of Ammianus, makes it difficult to make out clearly the allusions which S. Ambrose here makes. Tillemont explains them thus, 'Bauton seeing the Juthungan Alemanni ravaging Rhaetia, while, the Roman soldiers were engaged in guarding the passes of the Alps against Maximus, summoned the Huns and Alans to make war on them. These tribes accordingly pillaged the territories of the Alemanni up to the frontiers of Gaul. But on Maximus complaining that they had been brought against him, Valentinian, to deprive him of any pretext for breaking off the peace, induced them to retire in the midst of their victories by presents of money.' He also considers that the reason why the Juthungi came to pillage Rhaetia that year was the extraordinary fertility, and that it is this invasion to which allusion is made in Letter xxiv, 21, where S. Ambrose says that Rhaetia Secunda 'drew down an enemy on herself by her abundance.'

133. S. Ambrose means Maximus' brother. 134. He scorns to mean that pity for the dead should move him to less harsh treatment. But perhaps the word 'tuam' may have dropped out, and we should read 'tu tuam causam considera,' ' do you consider your own case.' 135. It seems necessary here to read 'allegabis' for 'allegabas,' as the past tense would be unmeaning. 136. Cabillonum is the ancient name of Chalons-sur-Saone. 137. He refers to the Bishops Idacius and Ithacius, who had induced Maximus to put Priscillian and others of his party to death, in spite of the remonstrances of S. Martin, who urged Maximus to be content with their having been condemned by ecclesiastical sentence. Priscillian 'had adopted a strange compound of various errors,' (Prof. Bright Hist. p. 160.) chiefly Manichean. There is a full account of Maximus' dealings with them in Fleury, xviii. 29, 30. Newman's Transl. vol. 1 p. 66-69. S. Ambrose in Letter xxvi. condemns the conduct of these Bishops, and the appeal to the civil sword in Ecclesiastical cases, in still stronger terms.

138. Rom.xiii. 4. 139. The Benedictine Editors consider him to be referring to the Novatians. 140. S. Matt. v. 27. 141. Jer. xxii. 29, 30. 142. S. Ambrose's Latin is 'scribe hoc viros abdicates.' The Vulg. has 'scribe virum istum sterilem.' The LXX. gra&yon to_n a!ndra tou~ton e0kkh&rukton. 143. abdicati 144. S. John viii. 8. 145. ib. 9. 146. S. John viii. 10, 11. 147. Fleury remarks on this, 'We must remember that the canonical penances inflicted for great crimes were at that time so very severe, that they were equal to a rigorous punishment.' 148. See note g on Letter xxiv. 149. S. Ambrose makes the same statement again, De Spirit, in. 17. 'It is important then to notice where the Lord maintained this argument, for oft-times His oracles derive their value from the quality of the place where He was.' 150. S. John x. 30. ib. vii. 16.

151. Ib. viii. 20. 152. S. Luke xxi. 2. 153. ib. x. 35. 154. Ps. xi. 7. 155. Exod. xii. 3. 156. Lev. xii. 2. 157. S.Luke xxiv. 7. 158. S. Matt. iii. 11. 159. Eccles. xi. 2. 160. Hosea i. 2. 161. Ib. iii. 2. 162. nevel. 163. These words are not in the Heb. In LXX they take the place of the half-homer of barley, gomo_r kriqw~n kai\ ne/bel oi1nou. S. Ambrose combines both. 164. S. Matt. v. 17. 165. Isa. xxxviii. 8. 166. Mal. iv. 2. 167. Gal. i. 18. 168. It was said just afterwards, if this story of the woman taken in adultery be in its right place, which is

doubtful. 169. S. John viii. 15. Ib. 4, 5. Lev. xx. 8. 170. v. 7. 171. S. Matt. vii. 3. 172. Jer. xvii. 13. 173. S. Luke x. 20. 174. S. John xvi. 32. 175. Ib. i. 29.

176. Ib. viii. 10. 177. S. Matt. xx. 23. 178. Exod. viii. 26. 179. Gen. xlvi. 34. 180. Leah means 'wearied,' and the name is supposed to refer to her 'tenderness' or weakness of eyes. (Gen. xxix. 16). S.Ambrose gives a mistaken meaning to the name Rachel, which really means 'ewe.' 181. Gen. xxxi. 14, 15. 182. Ib. v. 16. 183. Isa. liv. 17. 184. Ps. cxix. 57. Ib. 111. 185. Ps. xviii. 26. 186. Gen. xxxi. 14. 187. Gen. xxxi, 27. 188. Ps. xii. 7. 189. Gen. xxx. 32. 190. Ib.xxxiv. 25. sqq. Ib. xxxii. 24. 191. 1 Cor. xiii. 4. 192. S. Ambrose often gives this exposition of the name 'Shechem.' 193. Isaac means 'laughter.' Gen. xxi. 6. 194. Rom. v. 3,4, 5 195. Exod. iii. 5. Josh. v. 15. Exod. xxiv. 1314. 196. Job ix. 25. 197. Ib. vi. 19-21. 198. Ib. xxviii. 14. 199. He is here referring to Virg. Ecl. 5, 77. Dumque thymo pascuntur apes, dum rore cicadae.

200. Here again he is thinking of Virg. Georg. 3, 328. Et cantu querulae rampent arbusta cicadae. 201. Here again S. Ambrose is thinking of Virg. Georg. 2, 154. Squameus in spiram tractu se colligit anguis. 202. Ps.cxviii. 19. 203. S. Matt. vii. 14. 204. Prov. ii. 13. 205. Is. xxxi. 1. 206. Exod.vii. 1. 207. Ps. xlv.3. Rom. x. 15, Is. lii. 7. 208. Ps. lxiii. 6. 209. Ib. xxii. 29. 210. Prov. xxvii. 25. 211. Deut. xxxii. 2. 212. 2 S. Pet. i. 4. 213. Deut. xxviii. 11, 12. 214. Ib. xxxii. 2. 215. Ps. xxvii. 4. 216. v. 13. 217. Ps. lxv. 4. 218. Ps. cxxviii.5. 219. Isa. iii. 7. 220. 1 Cor. i. 1. 221. S. Matt. vii. 17. Ps. cxliii. 10. 222. S. Matt. xx. 15. 223. Ps. iv. 6. 224. Heb. i. 3. 225. 1 Tim. iii. 16. 226. Perhaps quoted from memory from S. John iv. 26.

227. Heb. i. 3. 228. S. John xi. 35. 229. Ib. i. 29. 230. S. Matt. iv. 17. Amos v. 14. 231. Col. ii. 9. 232. S John i. 16. 233. Ps. cxix. 68. 234. Cant. i. 3. 235. Ps. cxix. 103. 236. Exod. xxxiv.28. 1 Kings xix. 4. 237. S. Matt. xvii. 4. 238. 1 Pet. i. 12. 239. Acts vii. 55. 240. 2 Cor. xii. 2. 241. Col. ii. 20-22. 242. 2 Cor. v. 8. 243. S.John i. 1. 244. Acts xvii. 28. 245. 2 Cor. i. 19. 246. Exod. iii. 14. 247. Ps. cxix. 109. 248. S. Matt. v. 44, 45. 249. Ib. 48. 250. Rom. xiii. 10. 251. Isa. xl. 31. 252. Wisd. ix. 15. 253. Rom. xi. 36. 254. Ps. xvi. 2. 255. S. Matt. xix. 26. 256. 'Veri vana.' This is simply one of the Virgilian expressions of which S. Ambrose is so full. It is taken from Aen x. 630, Nunc manet insontem gravis exitus, aut ego veri Vana feror.

257. Cant. iv. 9. 258. Ib. vii. 8. 259. Rev. xxi. 23. 260. S. John viii. 12. 261. S. Luke xxiv. 32. 262. Gen. xix. 30. 263. Ib. 17. 264. Joel iii. 13. 265. S. Luke xvii. 31. 266. Ps. civ. 2. 267. Joel iii. 9. The Engl. Vers. is 'Prepare war, wake up the mighty men.' The Vulg. 'Sanctificate bellum, suscitate robustos.' 268. Phil. iv. 13. 269. Joel iii. 18, 270. 1 Cor. iii. 2. 271. S. John iv. 14. 272. Hag.i. 4. Ib. 2. 273. Ecclus. xxiii. 18. 274. 1 Kings xvii. 19, 275. 2 Kings iv. 8, 10. 276. Ib. 16 et seq. 277. Acts x. 9. 278. 2 Sam. xviii. 17, 18. 279. 1 Kings xx. 23. 280. Hag. i. 4. 281. Jer. xxii. 13. 282. Ib. 14. 283. Cant. iv. 3. 284. Jer. xxii. 19. He shall be buried with the burial of an ass. Engl. Vers.

285. 1 Tim. v. 6. 286. Ps. xlii.5. 287. S. Matt. vii. 7. 288. Hag. i. 8. 289. Ib. 10. 290. Hag. i. 14. 291. Ps. cx x vii. 1. 292. Col.i. 16, 17. 293. S. John vii. 37. 294. This refers to Ps. xix. 5. where the sun, that rejoiceth as a giant to run his course, is usually interpreted by the Fathers of the Messiah. It was a very favourite thought with S. Ambrose. In his Hymn 'De Adventu Domini' he adapts the language of the Psalm to it in words of beautiful simplicity, Procedit e thalamo suo, Pudoris aula regia Geminae Gigas substantiae Alacris ut currat viam. Egressus Ejus a Patre, Regressus Ejus ad Patrem, Excursus usque ad Inferos, Recursus ad sedem Dei. In the De Incarn. ch. v. he gives a fuller explanation. 'Him the Prophet Daniel describes as a Giant, because being of a twofold nature, He partaketh in one Person both of the Godhead and of a human Body, and exulted in going forth as a Bridegroom from His chamber, like a Giant, to run His course. He is Bridegroom of the soul as being the Word, He is a Giant of earth because He fulfilled all the duties of our daily life, and, though He was ever the eternal God, took upon Him the Mystery of the Incarnation.

295. Hag. ii. 6. 296. Exod.xiii. 21. 297. Ib. xiv. 22. . 298. S. Luke xxiii. 44. 299. Ps. xix. 4. 300. Is. liv. 1. 301. Ib. xxxv. 1. 302. Rom. xi. 5. 303. Hag. ii. 7,8. 304. Ps. xii. 7. 305. Phil. iv. 7. 306. S. Matt. xxiv. 35. 307. Heb. iv. 12. 308. Zech. ix. 10. 309. Hagg. ii. 23. 310. Cant. vi. 13. 311. 1 Cor. xv. 48. Ib. 49. 312. Cant, viii. 6.

Letters 31-40 — LETTER XXXI.

Irenaeus had asked S. Ambrose whether God had greater love for those who had believed from their early years than for those, who had been converted later in life. In answering this question, S. Ambrose enters into the history of the Jewish and Christian Churches, which he considers as set forth under the figures of David's two wives. AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS, GREETING. 1. You have wisely thought it a subject of inquiry, whether there be any difference in God's love towards those who have believed from their childhood, and those who have believed in the course of their youth or more advanced age; for this also has not been past over nor left unnoticed in the sacred Scriptures. For it is not without meaning that the Lord our God says to the Prophet Joel, Lament to me for the spouse girded with sackcloth and for the husband of her youth, expressing his grief for the Synagogue, who, before, in her virginity, had been espoused to the Word of God, or, it may be, for a soul which had fallen from her good deeds, that by the heinousness of her sins she had incurred hatred, and through the defilement of impiety and the stains of unbelief had become miserable and despised, and far removed from the grace of that Spouse which had before been counted worthy to be told, I will |214 betroth thee unto Me in righteousness and in judgment and in loving kindness and in mercies.

2. Not without reason is she considered miserable, who has lost gifts of so great a price, and suffered so grievous a loss of her dowry of virtues as to be deprived of the Spouse of her virginity. For according to our merits the Word of God either lives or dies in us; for if our desires and works are good, the Word of God lives and acts in us: if our thoughts and actions are darksome, the Sun of righteousness sets within us. And therefore He bids lamentation to be made for such a soul. For as they have cause of congratulation and feasting with whom the Bridegroom dwells, so that soul is to be mourned for, from whom the Spouse has been taken, as it is written of the Apostles in the Gospel; for when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then shall they fast in those days.

3. Thus too this soul, in former times when she possessed the Virgin Word, had joy and gladness. And therefore she fasted not, because it was the season of feasting and refreshment; the Bridegroom was present bestowing by His presence the riches of plenty, stores of heavenly food, and dropping wine, whereby the hearts of men are made glad. But after she lost the Bridegroom by her acts, she is commanded to do penance in sackcloth for her sins,

and to bewail herself, because Christ, Who is the Virgin Word, died and was crucified for her. 4. If this soul was espoused from early age, and never bore any other yoke, but from the beginning dedicated the maiden flower of her faith to Christ and as a virgin was united to Him in early days in the mysteries of piety, received a training in holiness as a heifer does the yoke; she is the very soul of the ancient Jewish stock from the family of the patriarchs, who, had she kept her course of faith without stumbling, would have been counted worthy of great things, the Spouse of the Virginal Word, as she who lays hold of Wisdom, and as a mother shall she meet him, and receive him as a wife married of a virgin.

5. The other likewise is procured from the Gentiles, and both are the Spouse of the One Word, which is a great mystery. And this is set forth to you in the book of |215 Kings; since David had two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreeli-tess and Abigail whom he obtained afterwards; the first more severe, the latter full of mercy and grace, an hospitable and liberal soul, who saw the Father with open face, having beheld His glory; she who received the divine dew of paternal Grace, as the interpretation of the name signifies. Now what is the dew of the Father, but the Word of God, Who has filled the hearts of all with the moisture of faith and justice? 6. Well therefore does the true David say to this soul what was said to Abigail, Blessed is the Lord God of Israel which sent thee this day to meet me. And again he says to her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person. Lastly in the Song of Solomon these are the words of the Bridegroom to the Bride, Let me see thy countenance; let me hear thy voice.

7. And at the time she was dismissed, for she had another husband who in Hebrew was called Nabal, which in Latin means foolish, a man harsh, inhospitable, uncourteous, ungrateful, who knew not how to repay good offices; but after his death, she was set free from the law of her husband, and the prophet David took her to wife. By this marriage the mystery of the Church which was to be called from among the Gentiles is signified, for she, having lost the husband to whom she had been married, became converted to Christ, bringing with her a dowry of piety, of humility and faith, enriched also with the patrimony of mercy. 8. But in this place it is not this wife, but that Ahinoam, who was evilly disposed towards her brother, wherefore her brother was made a trouble to her, and in their person it is said, thou makest us to be a bye-word among the heathen, and that the people shake their heads at us. The devil, finding her off her guard, fell upon her as a lion, and deprived her of her charms, rooted up her vine and fig-tree under which she used to repose, and caused her fruit to wither.

9. But now God, having compassion on them, thus dried up and withered by drought, saith to the prophet, Lament |216 to Me for virgin girded with sackcloth and for the husband of her youth, that is to say, over the dead husband of this soul or of the Synagogue. And with her He expostulates in another place, forasmuch as she had forgotten her resolution, forgotten His grace, had wandered from discipline, and had lost her former affections as a wife. Lastly therefore He reproves her with His words, calling to mind and repeating her

tenderness and her expressions of affection: 'Didst Thou not call me one of Thy household, the parent and guide of Thy virginity.'

10. Wherefore for this soul, to whom through her infidelity the Word of God is dead, and this Virgin Word is dead also, He appoints grief and brings in an Intercessor, that so she may be called to penitence, and may thereby earn compassion. But she who is of prudent understanding and very beautiful to look upon, was gained for him, like Abigail, in battle; her adversaries were conquered, and her husband, he who, surrounded by spiritual wickedness, struggled and fought not to lose his beautiful wife, being dead. On her her victorious and loving Spouse confers sweetness and grace, cleansing her from all that might obscure her beauty, and taking off from her the garments of her captivity, that so, laying aside all the hairs of her head, that is, the curls of sins, which seem to be superfluous parts of our person (for if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him), she may strive to come in the unity of the faith, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, that she may lay aside all trouble of mind, and founded in love may grow up in the Lord Jesus, and make increase of the whole body.

11. This is that soul whom the Law shews to thee under the figure of a beautiful woman, and if thou seest her among the captives, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife, it says to thee, thou shalt bring her home to thine house, that thou mayest commit to her the whole interior of thy house, the possession of all thy secrets, that thou mayest take away her superfluities, and cut off her transgressions; and with a razor not too sharp, lest it come to evil, may cut off the slough of thy passions, and thy idle senses. Wherefore it is said, she shall shave |217 her head, that so the wise man's eyes that are in his head may meet with no hindrance. And she shall remain, it is said, in thine house a full month, bewailing the sins of her nativity, and the lies of her wicked father the devil, who would fain gather what he hath not laid, that so, cleansed by the purification of this mystic number, she may obtain the keys of marriage.

12. And it is well said, After that thou shalt go in unto her, bidding thee to enter wholly into thy soul, and collect thyself within her, and so dwell in her that thou mayest be not in the flesh but in the spirit, and purpose to associate her to thyself in the commerce of life, knowing that she will communicate to thee of her goods, and that filled with her grace thou mayest say, I was a witty child, and had a good spirit; and she may answer thee, I will take thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, and unto the chamber of her that conceived me. 13. She then shall be thy life, she shall find thee and kiss thee. And it shall be, if thou hast no delight in her, because she chastiseth her body, and bringeth it into slavery, thou shalt not suffer her to be a slave, that is, to the lusts of the body, nor subject her to the flesh, but suffer her to remain free; thou shalt not alienate her, for this were to sell her, nor shalt thou despise her, but shalt allow her to serve God in the chastity of faith and sobriety of good works. Farewell: love me, for I love you.

Letters 31-40 — LETTER XXXII. [A.D.387.]

S. Ambrose in this Letter applies the words of Jeremiah about the partridge (Jer. xvii. 11.) to Satan, and from it sets forth the way in which Jesus Christ has overcome him, and rescued man from his power. AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS, GREETING. 1. The partridge hath cried, she hath gathered what she hath not hatched . From the conclusion of my last letter |218 I may borrow the opening of the ensuing. The question has been much mooted: with a view therefore of solving it, let us consider what natural history tells us of the nature of this bird. For it is the part of no little sagacity to consider even this, for Solomon knew the nature of beasts and of fowl, and of creeping things and of fishes! 2. Now this bird is said to be full of craft, fraud, and guile, skilled in the ways of deceiving the fowler, and experienced in the arts of turning him aside from her young ones; omitting no artful stratagem which may draw off the pursuer from her nest and lurking place. And we know that on observing his approach, she beguiles him until she has given her offspring the signal and opportunity for flight. As soon as she perceives they have escaped, she also withdraws herself, leaving her enemy deluded by her treacherous wiles.

3. It is said also to be a bird which copulates indiscriminately, and that the male bird rushes eagerly on the female, and burns with unrestrained desires. Wherefore it has been thought suitable to compare this impure malicious and deceitful creature with the adversary and circumventor of the human race, with him who is the arch-deceiver and author of impurity. 4. The partridge then cried, he that is, who derives his name from destroying: even Satan, which in Latin means the adversary. He cried first in Eve, he cried in Cain, he cried in Pharoah, in Dathan, Abiram, Corah. He cried in the Jews, when they demanded gods to be made for them, while the law was being given to Moses. He cried again, when they said of the Saviour, Let Him be crucified, let Him be crucified, and, His blood be on us and on our children. He cried, when they required that a king should be given them, that they might revolt from the Lord God their King. He cried in every one who was vain and faithless.

5. And by these cries he gathered to himself a people whom he had not created; for God made man after His own likeness and image, and the Devil drew man to himself by the allurements of his voice: He gathered to himself the nations of the Gentiles, getting riches

not by right. |219 Wherefore it is a common saying concerning the rich and covetous man, that he is a partridge gathering riches not by right. But my Jesus, as a good Judge, does all things with righteousness , for He came saying, as it is written, I speak righteousness and judgement of salvation.

6. By that grace then He despoiled that partridge the Devil, took from him the ill-gotten riches, even the multitude that followed Him, recalled from error the souls of the Gentiles, and the minds of the nations that wandered from the way. And since He knew that they were beguiled by the voice of the Devil, and in order that He might Himself loose the bonds and chains of ancient error, He cried first in Abel, the voice of whose blood cried out. He cried in Moses, to whom He said, Wherefore criest thou unto Me? He cried in Joshua, He cried in David, who says, Unto Thee do I call, help me. He cried too in all the Prophets. Wherefore He says also to Isaiah, Cry, and Isaiah answers, What shall I cry? He cried in Solomon, calling to all with a very loud voice in the power of of Wisdom, Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. He cried also in His Body, as the Beam out of the timber. He cried that He might deceive and circumvent the lurking Enemy, saying, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me. He cried that He might spoil him of his prey, replying to the thief, Verily I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise. Wherefore when Jesus cried, straightway that partridge was left by those whom he had gathered in the midst of his days.

7. Wherefore some have thought that this also agrees with the nature of the partridge, forasmuch as it steals the eggs of others, and hatches them with its own body, seeking by this treachery to gain for itself the offspring of others. But when she whose eggs have been stolen, or nest invaded, or her young have been tempted by a fraudulent resemblance, and deceived by the appearance of beauty, when she, I say, perceives this, she 'picks out the crow's eyes ' as the saying is, and, being inferior in strength, puts |220 on and arms herself with cunning. And when all the labour she has bestowed on their nurture has exhausted her store of food, and her young ones have begun to grow up, she utters her cries, and calls to her offspring with the trumpet (as it were) of affection. And they, roused by this natural sound, recognise their mother, and desert their pretended parent. And thus, seeking to gather what he has not hatched, he loses those whom he thought to bring up.

8. Not without need therefore was it that Jesus also cried; it was in order that the whole universe which had been deceived by the voice, the allurements, the art, the specious beauty of the partridge, and enticed by his treacherous wiles, and had wandered from the true Author of their being, might be recalled by the voice of her true Parent, might abandon this deceiver, and desert him in the midst of his days, that is, before the end of this world. From him the Lord Jesus has rescued us, and called us to eternal life. Wherefore now, being dead to the world we live to God. 9. When then this partridge shall have been completely forsaken by his false children, then that foolish one whom God has chosen and who has confounded the wise man, will be saved. Wherefore if any man seemeth to be wise in this world let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

Farewell my son, and love me, as indeed you do, for I love you.

Letters 31-40 — LETTER XXXIII.

S. Ambrose in this Letter explains more fully the text of Deut. (xxi. 15 &c) which he had alluded to in Letter xxi, and makes the two wives represent qualities. AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS, GREETING. 1. In a previous letter I said that the soul ought to be delivered from its adversaries, and a bond of life which shall be inseparable entered into with it. And inasmuch as my discourse took as a proof of its assertion that passage|221 in the Book of Deuteronomy which speaks of the man who had two wives, one beloved and the other hated, you seem to have felt much concern lest any one should suppose this man had taken to himself two souls, which is impossible. 2. But you yourself know that sometimes, when Scripture uses allegory, it refers some things to the figure of the Synagogue, some to that of the Church; some things to the soul, others to the mystery of the Word, others to souls of different kinds and qualities, which he who has spiritual discernment can distinguish. And so I conceive that it is not two souls, but different qualities of the same soul, which are treated of in the following chapter of the Law. For there is an amiable kind of soul, which desires pleasure, which shuns labour, shrinks from compunction, slights the judgments of God. It is amiable because it seems gentle and sweet for the time, and one that soothes rather than distresses the mind. But there is another severer kind, which is consumed with zeal for God, which, like a strict wife, will not permit or suffer her consort to commit whoredoms, allows no indulgence to the body, gives no licence to delight or pleasure, renounces the hidden deeds of shame, devotes herself to arduous labours and to severe perils.

3. If therefore both have borne children, he may not, it is said, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, make the son of the beloved first before the son of the hated, which is indeed the first. The meaning of which I conceive not to be so much a simple preference as between two first ones, but rather a declaration that the son of the hated wife alone has the prerogative of being first. Now the word 'primitives' means as first-born , and the firstborn are holy, for every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord. Nevertheless all first-born are not holy, for Esau who was the first-born was not holy. 4. But the holy are the first-born, for it is written in Numbers; Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the first-born that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel. For on the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, I |222 hallowed unto Me all the first-born in Israel. Wherefore He took the Levites for the first-born, as being holy, for we know that the holy are first-born from the Epistle

to the Hebrews, where it is written, But ye are come to Mount Sion, and unto the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels and to the Church of the first-born. Wherefore as the first-born of the Church are holy, so also are the Levites, for they also are the first-born. For it is not by the order of their birth but by the gift of sanctification that they are holy; Levi being the third son of Leah and not the first.

5. But he who is sanctified himself opens the womb. What womb? Hear the words, As soon as they are born they go astray. As you have understood the first-born who opens the womb, so understand here the womb of the good mother, from which it is not saints, but sinners who go astray. But the Levites are taken away from the midst of Israel, because they have nothing in common with the people, whose earthly first-born are destroyed. The first-born of the world are of another mother, from whose womb Paul was separated when he was called to the grace of God. He received the Word Who is in the midst of our hearts. Whence it is said also, There standeth One among you. Whom ye know not.

6. This digression then of ours from one part of the Law to the other, for the purpose of shewing that the firstborn is not the son of the beloved, that is of the more remiss and voluptuous wife, has not been needless, although the words of the chapter before us express the same truth: He may not make the son of the beloved first-born before the son of the hated, which is indeed the first-born. He is indeed the first-born who is the holy son of a holy mother; just as she is indeed the mother, from whose womb not her true sons but sinners go astray. Wherefore the former is not the son of the true mother, nor the true first-born, but as though he were so, subsistence is indeed provided for him that he may not want, but he is not honoured, that he may become rich. But the other has received double from all, that he may abound; just as in Genesis each of the patriarchs had two changes of raiment given to them by |223 their brother Joseph, when they were sent back to their father to tell him that he whom he had believed to be dead was found.

7. Thus the first-born has received the prerogative of inheritance, as the Scripture says, He is the beginning of his strength, the right of the first-born is his. Thus from the first-born Son of God the first-born are holy, and from that beginning, (for He is the Beginning and the Ending,) the beginning is called holy, the beginning is the son to whom the prerogative of the first-fruits is due, according to that which was said to Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. 8. Now the Divine Oracle teaches us that this relates to the inheritance of virtues rather than that of mercy, for the Lord says, In all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. What other inheritance was there in Isaac which could ennoble his father, but that of sanctity? The son of the handmaid indeed he set over the Gentiles, as bestowing upon him a simple portion of his patrimony, but to the son of Sarah he gave a double portion, for on him he bestowed not only temporal but also heavenly and eternal things.

Farewell: love me, for I love you.

Letters 31-40 — LETTER XXXIV.

Horontianus asks whether the soul is from heaven. S.Ambrose first refers him to the Book of Esdras, and then dwells upon S. Paul's statement in Rom. viii. AMBROSE TO HORONTIANUS , GREETING. 1. You have enquired of me whether the soul is formed of a heavenly substance; for you are too well instructed |224 to suppose that the soul is made of blood or fire or any harmony of nerves, as the common herd of philosophers believe, nor as that patrician sect of them, the descendants of Plato assert, does that which moves of itself and is not moved by others appear to you to be the soul, nor indeed have you approved that fifth kind of element which the keen genius of Aristotle has introduced, namely a kind of perfection of which the essence of the soul might be (as it were) framed and compounded. 2. On this subject I advise you to read the book of Esdras, who despised these trifles of the philosophers, and with a deeper wisdom which he had gathered from Revelation, pointed out that the soul is of a nobler substance.

3. The Apostle also, though he has not said it in so many words, has yet given us to understand, like a good master and spiritual husbandman calling forth the faculties of his disciples by the hidden seeds of doctrine, that our souls are of a better creation and a more excellent nature. For when he says that the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly but by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, he shews that the grace of souls is not small, seeing that by their strength and excellence mankind rises to the adoption of the sons of God, having within itself that which is given to it to make it in the likeness and image of God. For souls are not perceived by truth, nor are they seen by the bodily eye, wherefore they bear upon them the likeness of this incorporeal and invisible nature, and excel in their substance corporeal and sensible qualities. For the things that are seen are temporal, they represent and are united to things that are temporal, but the things that are not seen are united to the Eternal and Chief Good, in Him they live and move and have their being, and suffer not themselves, if they are wise, to be separated or divided from Him.

4. Every soul therefore, seeing herself shut up in the prison-house of the body, if it be not debased by her connexion with this earthly habitation, groans under the burthen of the body to which she is joined; for the |225 corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy

tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things, knowing also that she walks by faith not by sight, she is willing to be absent from the body to be present with the Lord. 5. Let us consider then how the creature hath been made subject to vanity, not indeed willingly, but by the Divine ordinance, which has appointed that our souls should be united to our bodies on account of their hopes, in order that, hoping for good, they should make themselves worthy of a heavenly recompense. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things belonging to the body. Every man's soul must therefore consider that she will be rewarded according to deserts of life. And he says well the things belonging to the body, that is to say, the body which was assigned to her to govern, that if she have governed it well she may receive the reward for the sake of which she was subjected in hope, but if ill, she may be punished, forasmuch as she did not trust in God, nor aspire to that adoption of sons, and to the liberty of true glory.

6. So then the Apostle has taught that man is a creature subject to vanity. For what is so truly the man as his soul? of its companions he says, For we that are in this tabernacle do groan being burthened. David also says, Man is like a thing of nought, and, livery man living is altogether vanity. Wherefore the life of man in this world is vanity, to which vanity the soul is subject. And when a holy man doeth the things of the body, he doeth them not willingly but by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same in hope, he does them for obedience sake. From this example of the soul then let us proceed to the other creatures. 7. Consider the sun the moon and the stars; these heavenly luminaries, although they shine with an excellent brightness, are yet but creatures, and rise and set in performance of their daily task, obeying the ordinance of the eternal Creator, dispensing the radiance wherewith they are clothed, and giving light by night and by day. As often as the sun is obscured by clouds, as often as is it hidden |226 by the interposition of the earth, or when the rays of its light are intercepted, eclipses occur, and, as the Scripture saith, The moon knoweth her going down. She knows when she shines with a full, and when with a diminished orb. The stars also are overclouded and disappear, while going through the service of this earthly ministry, not willingly indeed but in hope; for they hope for the reward of this their toil from Him Who subjected them. Wherefore they go through it for His sake, that is, to do His will.

8. Nor is it surprising that they bear it with patience, knowing that their Lord, the Creator of all things in heaven and in earth, took upon Him our frail body and our servile state. Should not they then patiently bear the bondage of their corruption, seeing that the Lord of all humbled Himself even to death for the whole world, took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made the sin of the world, nay even a curse for us? Wherefore the heavenly bodies although they groan in that they are subject to the vanity of this world, yet follow the example of His goodness, and console themselves with the expectation of being delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of glory, when the adoption of the sons of God, that is, the redemption of all men, shall have arrived. For when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be come in, then all Israel shall be saved. For what people will He not pardon when He even pardons that persecuting people, who said, Crucify Him, crucify Him, and,

His blood be on us and on our children. But since even the heavenly creation is subject to vanity, albeit in hope, will not He Who is ' truly Mercy itself and the Redeemer of the world, suffer even the perfidy and insolence into which these men through the vanity of the world have fallen to obtain pardon?

9. To conclude then, both this great and glorious sun, and this moon which is not obscured by the shades of night, and these stars which are the garniture of the heaven, all these now suffer the bondage of corruption, for all creatures are corruptible, and the heavens shall perish and the heaven and earth pass away. But hereafter the sun and moon and the stars of heaven shall rest in the glory of |227 the sons of God, when God shall be all in all, He Who now in His immensity and mercy is in thee and in us. 10. And shall we not believe that the Angels themselves, who in the toils of this world fulfil divers ministeries, as we read in the Revelation of S. John, do not also groan when made the ministers of vengeance and destruction? Seeing that their life is blessed, would they not rather pass it in* their ancient state of tranquillity than be interrupted by the infliction of vengeance on our sins? They who rejoice in the salvation of one sinner must surely groan over the miseries of so grievous sins.

11. If therefore the creatures and powers of heaven suffer the bondage of corruption, but still in hope, that hereafter they may rejoice on our behalf and together with us, let us also alleviate the sufferings of this present time by the hope and expectation of future glory. Farewell, my son; love me, for I love you.

Letters 31-40 — LETTER XXXV.

In this Letter S. Ambrose continues his comment on the passage of S. Paul, especially on the 'groans of creation.' AMBROSE TO HORONTIANUS. 1. My former Letter was a reply to your inquiry; this is a part of my answer, supplemental not contradictory to the former. In reviewing the latter part of the passage I was struck, I confess, with his adding, we know that every creature groaneth, seeing that previously he had said without any addition, The creature was made subject to vanity. For he said not every creature, but, the creature was made subject. And again he says, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. But in the third place he adds that every creature groaneth together. 2. Now what does this addition mean? It means haply |228 that every creature is not subject to vanity, and therefore every creature will not be delivered from the bondage of corruption. For why should that be delivered which is free and secure from the subjection of vanity and the bondage of that corruption? But they all groan together not in their own but in our pangs, and haply are in travail together of the Spirit of Salvation, the Spirit of sweetness, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, that in the redemption of the human race they may attain to a common joy and gladness. So then either because of their charity they all groan for our labour, or for us as a member of their body, whose head is Christ. But you may understand this as you please, either as we have said, or simply that every creature groans and travails together.

3. And now let us consider what follows. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of the body. We are taught in the previous passage what the adoption of sons is; therefore, in order to explain its meaning, to that passage we must recur. 4. He who through the Spirit, says S. Paul, mortifies the deeds of the body shall live. Nor is it surprising that he should live, since he who has the Spirit of God, becomes the son of God. Wherefore he is the son of God that he may receive not the spirit of bondage, but the spirit of adoption of sons; to the intent that the Holy Spirit may bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. But this is the testimony of the Holy Spirit, that He it is Who cries in our hearts, Abba Father, as it is written to the Galatians. There is also the great testimony that we are the sons of God; namely that we are heirs of God and

joint heirs with Christ. Now he is joint heir with Him, who is glorified together with Him, and he is glorified together with Him who by suffering for Him suffers together with Him. 5. And in order to encourage us to suffer, he adds that all things which we suffer fall far below and are not worthy to be compared with the recompense of our labours, the reward of future good, which shall be revealed in us, when |229 we shall be formed anew after the Image of God, and shall be worthy to behold His Glory face to face. 6. And to exalt the greatness of this future revelation, he adds that the creation also waits for this revelation of the sons of God, which now is made subject to vanity, not willingly, but in hope, because it hopes for the reward of its ministry from Christ, or else because it also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and received into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, that there may be one liberty of the creation and of the sons of God, when their glory shall have been revealed. But now, so long as this revelation is delayed, the whole creation groans together, looking for the glory of our adoption and redemption, already travailing with that Spirit of salvation, and willing to be delivered from the servitude of vanity.

7. And to this the Apostle has conjoined the groans of the saints, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, for they groan also. Of their own merits they are indeed secure, but since the redemption of the whole body of the Church is still future, they suffer together with it. For seeing that the members of this our body still suffer, shall not the other members, although higher, sympathize with the suffering members of one and the same body? 8. And this, I suppose, is why the Apostle has said that the Son Himself shall be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, for they who still labour are not yet subject, and in these perhaps Christ still thirsts, in these is still hungry, in these is still naked, in that they do not fulfil the word of God, nor put on Christ, Who is the Garment of believers, and the Robe of the faithful. They also in whom He is sick still need medicine, and therefore are not yet subdued, for this subjection is of strength not of weakness : again, in those who are strong and obey the commands of God, the Son of God is subject. But now His travail is greater in those who do not succour those who are toiling, than in those who still require aid themselves. And this is the pious and true meaning of the subjection of the Lord Jesus, Who will subject Himself, to the intent that God might be all in all.

9. We have received the Apostle's meaning, let us now |230 consider who are they that have the first-fruits of the Spirit. With this view let us inquire what is intended under the name of first-fruits or of beginning, Thou shalt not delay, it is said, to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors; further on, The first of the first-fruits of thy lands thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God. First-fruits and tenths are different, first-fruits are of greater merit, an act of pious consecration. And on this account Abel pleased God, for he delayed not to offer his gift, but offered of the first-fruits of his flock. Although some suppose that there is a difference between first-fruits and first-born, in that on gathering in the crops, the beginning, so to speak, of all kinds in the threshing floor are offered, while the first reaping of the harvest is offered to the Lord; but of this we will speak in another place. But by the offering of the first-fruits, the whole harvest appears to be sanctified, but the first-fruits themselves are the most holy.

10. In like manner the saints are the first-fruits of the Lord, and the chief are the Apostles, for God hath set in the Church first Apostles, who have prophesied many things and preached the Lord Jesus, for they first received Him. Simeon too received Him, and the prophet Zacharias, John his son, Nathanael, in whom there was no guile, who rested under the fig tree, Joseph also who was called just, who buried Him. These are the first-fruits of our faith, nevertheless the nature of other seeds is the same as that of the first-fruits, although in some there is less grace, for God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 11. You have an example in the Lord Jesus Himself. In the resurrection of the dead He is called the first-born from the dead. The Apostle also has called Him the first-fruits; In Christ shall all be made alive, but every man in his own order, Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's, who have believed in His coming. His body is as truly a body as our own, nevertheless He is called the first-born from the dead, because He rose first; and He is called the first-fruits because He is holier than all the other fruits, and they by union with Him are hallowed , also. He also as the Image of the invisible God is the |231 Head of those found after that Image; in Him according to His Divinity there is nothing corporeal, nothing temporary; for He is the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express Image of His Person. But in our desire to explain the meaning of first-fruits we have greatly extended the length of our letter.

12. Now the Apostles are our first-fruits, chosen from all the first-fruits of that time; to them it is said, And greater things than these shall ye do, for the Grace of God hath poured itself into them. These, I say, groaned, waiting for the redemption of the whole body, and they still groan, because many are still toiling, who are yet tossing on the sea. Just as, if a man is reaching the higher shore, but the waves still dash up to his middle, he groans and is in travail until he be wholly out of danger. Verily he groans, who still says to us, Who is weak, and I am not weak? 13. We need not then to be perplexed by the words, We, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body, for the sense is plain, forasmuch as they, having the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan, waiting for the adoption of sons. This adoption of sons is the redemption of the whole body, when he who is to be the son of God by adoption shall see face to face that Divine and Eternal Good; for there is the adoption of sons in the Church of God, when the Spirit cries, Abba, Father, as it is written to the Galatians. But this will be perfected when all shall rise again in incorruption power and glory who are counted worthy to see the Face of God, for then the human race will judge itself to be truly redeemed. And so the Apostle boasts, saying, For we are saved by hope. For hope saves, as also faith, whereof it is said, Thy faith hath saved thee.

14. Therefore the creature which is made subject to vanity not willingly but in hope, is saved by hope; just as Paul too, knowing that to die was gain to him, that he might be freed from the body and be with Christ, remained in the flesh for their sakes whom he wished to win to Christ. Now what is hope but the expectation of things future? Wherefore he says, But the hope that is seen is not hope. |232 For it is not what is seen but what is unseen that is eternal, for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? The things that we see we seem

to possess, how then can we hope for that which we already possess? Thus none of those things which we hope for can we see; eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him.

15. Wherefore, if that which is seen cannot be hoped for, it is not well to read as some do, 'for because any one sees a thing he also hopes for it;' unless it may be understood thus, 'for that which any one sees, why does he also hope for or expect it?' For most true it is that we hope for that which we see not, and therefore, although it seem to be absent from us, we still look for it in patience; I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me. And we wait patiently, because the Lord is good unto them that wait for Him. And it seems to agree with this, that through patience He has given it back to us. We wait for the things which we hope for, but see not. For he does much who hopes and looks for those things which are not seen, and endures because he directs his mind to that which is.

16. Now it is well said that hope that is seen is not hope, referring to the power and honour and riches of this world. You may see a man distinguished by his retinue and equipages, but he has not hope in his equipages which are seen. Nor is hope in the firmament of heaven, but in the Lord of heaven. The Chaldaean has not hope in the stars which he watches; nor the rich man in his possessions or the avaricious man in usury; but he hath hope who places his hope in Him Whom he sees not, that is, in the Lord Jesus, Who stands in the midst of us, yet is not seen. Finally, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. |233

Letters 31-40 — LETTER XXXVI.

S.Ambrose continues, in reply to a question of Horontianus, his discussion of the passage of S. Paul, and explains what are his ' groanings unutterable.' AMBROSE TO HORONTIANUS. 1. Our letters are so linked together that we seem to be holding actual conversation with one another, so well do you with your question and I with my explanations supply subject matter for our correspondence. 2. You have intimated your doubt of what spirit it is said that he maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. Let us then refer to what has gone before, that the passage may make plain what we are seeking. Likewise, it is said, the Spirit helpeth our infirmities. Does it not seem to you that this is the Holy Spirit, for He is our Helper, as He to Whom it is said, Thou hast been my succour, leave me not neither forsake me, O God of my salvation?

3. For what other Spirit could teach Paul how to pray? The Spirit of Christ, like Christ Himself, teaches His disciples to pray, for who could teach us, after Christ, but His Spirit, Whom He sent to teach us, and to direct our prayers, for we pray with the Spirit and we pray with the understanding also. That the understanding may pray well, the Spirit goes before and leads it forth into the right way, so as to prevent carnal things, or what either falls below or exceeds its strength, from secretly stealing over it. For the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. It is written also, Seek great things, and small things shall be added unto you; seek heavenly things, and earthly things shall be added unto you. 4. Wherefore He wishes us to seek greater things, not to linger upon earth. And He knows what to bestow upon us, dividing unto every man severally as He will. Sometimes, knowing our capacity, which we are ignorant of, He says to us, Ye cannot receive it now. I ask for myself the |234 sufferings of martyrdom, the Holy Spirit is willing, but sees the weakness of my flesh, and lest, while I seek for greater things I should lose what is less, says to me, 'Thou canst not bear this. What opportunities have I not had, and yet when near the goal I have been held back . The good physican knows what food is suitable to each disease, and to each season, for the benefit of health. Sometimes food seasonably taken restores health; but if a man eat food unseasonably or of an improper kind, it is dangerous to him.

5. Therefore since we know not what to pray for, nor how to pray, the Holy Spirit prays for us; for He is the Spirit of Jesus our Advocate, and He prays with groans unutterable, for Christ also mourns for us. And God the Father says, My bowels, My bowels, I am pained at

the very heart. We often read too of Him as being indignant and grieved. He groans to take away our sins, and to teach us to do penance. For there are pious groans, and of prevailing power with God, whereof the Prophet speaks, And my groaning is not hid from Thee. For he did not hide himself, like Adam, but said, Behold I am the shepherd, but these sheep, what have they done? it is I that have sinned, let Thine hand be on me. 6. Hence then cometh the groaning of the Spirit of God, and those groans of the Prophet, truly unutterable because they are divine. So those words which Paul heard in heaven are unspeakable, which it is not lawful for a man to utter, but what is hidden from man is known to God. Now He Who is the Searcher of hearts knows all things, but the things which He searches are those which the Spirit hath cleansed. God therefore knoweth what the Spirit prays for, and what is the wisdom of the Spirit Which intercedes for the saints, as it is written, For the Spirit maketh intercession for us. For those for whom Christ suffered, and whom He cleansed by His Blood, for them the Spirit also intercedes.

Farewell: love me as a Son, for I too love you. |235

Letters 31-40 — LETTER XXXVII. [A.D.387.]

Simplician, to whom this and the following Letters, and several later ones, are addressed, seems, from what little we know of him, to have been a very learned and yet simple-minded man. He was older than S. Ambrose, who speaks in this Letter of his 'fatherly love' towards himself, and was probably his adviser in the early days of his episcopate, and possibly, as the Benedictine Editors, (note on Letter lxv,) suggest, his 'father in the faith,' as having prepared him for his ordination, or even taught him as a catechumen at Rome in earlier days. Paulinus tells us that when S. Ambrose was on his death-bed he overheard some of his Clergy discussing the probabilities as to his successor, and when they mentioned Simplician's name, he said, "as if he were taking part in the conversation, 'An old man, but a good one.'" Certainly Simplician was unanimously chosen his successor.

In this Letter he dwells in detail upon the theme that goodness is true freedom and sin slavery, which he illustrates at great length and with much rarity of argument. It is one of the most interesting of his expository Letters. AMBROSE TO SIMPLICIAN, GREETING. 1. When we were lately conversing together, in the intimacy of an old-standing affection, you let me see that you were much pleased by my taking a passage from the writings of the Apostle Paul to preach upon to the people. You said further that this was the case, because the depth of his counsels is difficult to grasp, while the loftiness of his sentiment rouses the audience, and stimulates the preacher; and also because his discourses are so fully, for the most part, the interpreters of his meaning, that the expounder of them finds nothing to add of his own, and, if he would say ought, fills the part of a critic rather than of a preacher.

2. However since I recognize herein the feelings of long friendship, and what is still more precious, the tenderness of your paternal regard, (for in length of attachment many may participate, but in paternal love they cannot;) since moreover you consider that I have already done what you ask satisfactorily, I will comply with what you desire, and that the more, as I am admonished and stimulated by my own example, an example not difficult for me to follow, |236 since I shall imitate no great one, but myself only, thus returning to my own humble customs. 3. As to the plan pursued in my discourse, seeing that the image and character of the blessed life is delineated therein, I think I have so arranged the argument

of it that it will not be disapproved by others, certainly not by yourself who are so partial to me, although it is more difficult to satisfy your judgment than theirs, only your affection softens its severity and renders it more indulgent to me.

4. Now this Letter, written as it is in your absence, has for its subject the sentence of the Apostle Paul, who calls us from slavery into liberty, saying, Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men, shewing that our liberty lies in the knowledge of wisdom. This opinion has been bandied to and fro by philosophers in energetic discussions, while they assert that every wise man is free and every fool a slave. 5. But this was said long before by the son of David, The fool changeth as the moon. The wise man on the other hand is not dispirited by fear, nor changed by power, nor exalted by prosperity, nor cast down by sadness; for where wisdom is, there also is strength of mind, constancy, and fortitude. Now the wise man remains the same in mind, neither depressed nor exalted by the vicissitudes of things, he is not tossed to and fro as a child, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, but continues perfect in Christ, grounded in charity, rooted in faith. Hence he is not conscious of failure, he knows not the various losses which befal the soul, but shall shine forth as the Sun of righteousness Who shines in the kingdom of His Father.

6. But let us now consider from what source Philosophy more fully derived this, from what discipline and wisdom of the Patriarchs. Did it not come first from Noah who, perceiving that his son Ham had foolishly derided the nakedness of his father, cursed him in these words, Cursed be Ham , a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren, and set his brethren as lords over him, seeing that they had wisely deemed their fathers old age worthy of honour? 7. Did not also that source of all good discipline, Jacob, |237 who on account of his wisdom was preferred to his elder brother, instil into the breasts of all the riches of this copious subject? So also the pious father, whose paternal affection was equally strong towards his two sons, although his judgment varied, (for while the ties of blood sway the affections, our judgments are formed according to desert,) and who therefore dispensed to the one grace, to the other mercy, to the wise grace, to the foolish mercy, seeing that Esau could not raise himself to virtue by his own proper strength nor make progress spontaneously, blessed him in rendering him the subject and servant of his brother, shewing thereby that folly was so much worse than slavery that slavery itself is a remedy for it; because a fool cannot govern himself, and unless he has some director he falls by his own will.

8. His father therefore, loving him and careful for his welfare, made him the servant of his brother that he might be ruled by his counsels. And thus wise rulers are given to an indiscreet nation, that by their vigour they may guide the weakness of the people, ruling them by a show of power, and by this weight of authority constraining them against their wills to obey those wiser than themselves, and to submit to the laws. On the foolish son therefore he laid a yoke as on one untamed, and to him who had said he would live by his sword he denied even freedom; that he might not fall away through presumption he set his brother over him, that being subdued by his authority and governance he might make progress towards conversion. And since there are two kinds of service, (for that which proceeds from

necessity is weaker, that from free will stronger, for that good is more transcendent which proceeds not from necessity but from free will,) he therefore first laid upon him the yoke of necessity, and afterwards imparted to him the blessing of voluntary subjection.

9. It is not then nature which makes a person a slave, but folly; not manumission which sets free, but discipline. Esau was born free, and was made a servant, Joseph was sold into slavery, and then elected to power, to rule over those who bought him. He disdained not to be sedulous and obedient, but he maintained the height of virtue, he |238 preserved the liberty of innocence, the dignity of integrity. The Psalmist therefore says well, Joseph was sold to be a bond-servant; they humbled his feet in fetters. He was sold, it is said, to be a bond-servant, but they could not make him a bond-servant; they humbled his feet, not his soul. 10. For how was that soul humbled of which it is said: His soul pierced the iron? For while sin pierces the souls of others, (for the iron means sin, which has a penetrating power,) the soul of holy Joseph was so far from being vulnerable by sin that it pierced through sin itself. The blandishments of his mistress' charms moved him not, and with reason was he insensible to the flames of lust, seeing that he was consumed by the brighter fire of Divine grace. It is therefore well said of him also, The word of the Lord inflamed him; for thereby he quenched the fiery darts of the Devil.

11. How was he a bond-servant who directed the princes of the people to store up the corn, that thus they might forestall and provide for future dearth? Or how was he a bond-servant, who gained the whole land, and reduced all the Egyptians to bondage? And this, not in order to impose upon them the condition of an ignoble bondage, but that he might establish a tribute from all but the lands of the priesthood, which he preserved free from tribute, that among the Egyptians also respect for the priesthood might be held inviolable. 12. His being sold then did not make him a slave; for though of a truth he was sold to merchants, yet, if you regard price merely, you will find many who have bought for themselves maidens of an elegant form, and then, captivated by love, have basely enslaved themselves to them. Apame the concubine of King Darius was once seen sitting at his right hand, taking his diadem off his head, and placing it on her own, and with the palm of her left hand striking his face, while the King gazed upon her with open mouth, glad if she would only smile upon him, and thinking himself miserable and afflicted if she scorned him, laying aside his authority, and seeking to soothe and persuade her to be reconciled to him.

13. But why should I quote this at so great a length? |239 Do we not often see parents who have been made slaves by pirates or cruel barbarians ransomed by their children? Are then the laws of mercy more powerful than the laws of nature? Is natural affection produced in slavery? People often buy lions and yet have no mastery over them, nay are so much their slaves that if they see them becoming enraged and shaking out their manes on their brawny necks, they run away and hide themselves. Money then determines nothing, for it often buys masters over itself, nor do catalogues of auctions, for by them the purchaser himself is often sold and allotted to another. A contract of sale does not change a man's nature, nor deprive

wisdom of her liberty. Many free men, as it is written, serve a wise servant, and there is a wise slave, who governs foolish masters.

14. Whom then do you consider as more truly free? Wisdom alone is free, she sets the poor over the rich, and makes the servants lend at usury to their own masters; lend, that is, not money but understanding, lend the talent of that Divine and eternal Treasure which is never wasted, the mere loan of which is precious: to lend that mystical money of the heavenly oracles of which the Law says, Thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow. This the Jew lent to the Gentiles, for he received not instruction from them but imparted it; to him the Lord opened His treasures, that He might moisten the Gentiles with the dew of His Word, and might become the Head of the nations, while He Himself had no head over Him. 15. He then who is wise is free, bought with the price of the heavenly oracles, with that gold, that silver of the Divine Word; bought with the price of blood (for it is no small tiling to acknowledge one's Redeemer;) bought with the price of Grace: he who heard and understood the words, Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and drink and eat.

16. He is free who going forth to war, if he have seen a beautiful woman, and when he spoils his enemies' goods has found her among them and has a desire unto her, takes her to wife, having first shaved her head and pared her nails, |240 and taken off from her the raiment of her captivity, taking her no longer as a slave but free, for he understands that prudence and discipline are not liable to a state of bondage. And therefore the Law says, Thou shalt not sell her at all for money, for truly she is above all price. And Job says, Take wisdom into thine inmost parts. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, for it is more precious than gold and silver. 17. Freedom therefore is not his alone who has never had the auctioneer for his master, nor seen him raising his finger, but he is more truly free, who is free within himself, who is free by the laws of nature, knowing that this law has a moral not merely an arbitrary sanction, and that the measure of its obligations is in accordance not with the will of man but with the discipline of nature. Does such a person therefore seem to you free merely? Does he not rather appear to you in the light of a censor and director of morals? Hence the Scripture says truly that the poor shall be set over the rich, and private men over those who administer the state .

18. Think you that he is free who buys votes with money, who courts the applause of the people more than the approbation of the wise? Is he free who is swayed by the popular breath, who dreads the hisses of the populace? That is not liberty which he who is manumitted receives, which he obtains as a gift from the blow of the lictor's palm. For it is not munificence but virtue that I hold to constitute liberty; liberty, which is not bestowed by the suffrages of others, but is won and possessed by a man's own greatness of mind. For a wise man is always free, always honoured, always one who presides over the laws. For the law is not made for the righteous but for the unrighteous, for the just man is a law unto himself, having no need to fetch for himself from a distance the form of virtue, seeing that he bears it within his heart, having the works of the law written on the tablets of his heart,

to whom it is said, Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. For what is so near to |241 us as the Word of God? This word is in our hearts, and in our mouth; we see it not, and yet possess it.

19. The wise man therefore is free, for he who does that which he wills is free. But it is not every will that is good, but it is the part of a wise man to will all things which are good, for he hates what is evil, having chosen that which is good. If therefore he has chosen what is good, he whose choice is free and who has chosen what he will do is free, for he does what he wills to do: the wise man therefore is free. All that the wise man does he does well. But he that does all things well does all things rightly, and he that does all things rightly does them all without offence or reproach, without causing disturbance or loss to himself. Whoever then has this power of doing all things without offence or reproach, without loss or disturbance to himself, does nothing foolishly but does all things wisely. For he who acts wisely has nothing to fear, for fear is in sin. But where no fear is, there is liberty, and where liberty is, there is the power of doing what one wishes: the wise man therefore alone is free.

20. He who can neither be compelled nor forbidden is no slave; now it belongs to the wise man to be neither compelled nor forbidden; the wise man, therefore, is not a slave. Now he is forbidden who does not execute what he desires, but what does the wise man desire but the things which belong to virtue and discipline, without which he cannot exist? For they subsist in him, and cannot be separated from him. But if they are separated from him he is no longer wise, seeing that he is without the use and discipline of virtue, of which he would deprive himself if he were not the voluntary interpreter of virtue. But if he be constrained, it is manifest that he acts unwillingly. Now in all actions there are either corrections proceeding from virtue, or falls proceeding from malice, or things between the two and indifferent. The wise man follows virtue not compulsorily but voluntarily, for all things that are pleasing he does, as flying from malice, and admits not so much as a dream of it. So far is he from being moved by things indifferent, that no forces have the power to move him hither and thither as they do the herd of men, |242 but his mind hangs as in a balance in equal scales, so that it neither inclines to pleasure, nor in any respect directs its desires however slightly to things which ought to be avoided, but remains unmoved in its affections. Whence it appears that the wise man does nothing unwillingly or by compulsion, because were he a slave he would be so compelled; the wise man therefore is free.

21. The Apostle likewise gives this definition, saying, Am I not an Apostle, am I not free? Truly he was so free that when certain persons had come in privily to spy out his liberty, he gave place, as he himself says, by subjection, no not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might be preached. He therefore who yielded not preached voluntarily. Where free will is, there is the reward of free will; where obligation is, there is the service of obligation. Free will therefore is better than obligation; to will is the part of the wise man, to obey and to serve is the part of the fool. 22. This is also the Apostle's definition, who says, For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward : but if against my will a dispensation is committed to me. On the wise man therefore a reward is conferred, but the wise man acts willingly,

according to the Apostle therefore the wise man is free. Wherefore he also exclaims, Ye have been called unto liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh. He separates the Christian from the Law, that he may not seem to yield to the Law against his will; he calls him to the Gospel, which the willing both preach and practise. The Jew is under the Law, the Christian is by the Gospel; in the Law is bondage, in the Gospel, where is the knowledge of wisdom, is liberty. Every one therefore who receives Christ is wise, and he who is wise is free, every Christian therefore is both wise and free.

23. But the Apostle has taught me something even beyond freedom itself, namely that to serve is real freedom, Though I be free from all, he says, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. What is that which surpasses liberty but to have the Spirit of grace, to have charity? Liberty renders us free to men, but charity genders us beloved by God. Wherefore Christ also says, |243 But I have called you friends. Good indeed is charity; whereof it is said, By love of the Spirit serve one another. Christ also became a servant that He might make all free. His hands served in the baskets: He Who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made all things to all men, that He might bring salvation to all. Following this example, Paul was both, as it were, under the Law, and lived without the Law, for the benefit of those whom he desired to gain: to the weak he voluntarily became weak that he might strengthen them; he ran so as to obtain, he kept under his body that he might be victorious over heavenly powers in Christ.

24. To the wise man therefore even bondage is freedom; whence we may gather that even to be in power is bondage to the fool, and what is worse, while he rules over a few, he serves more and severer masters. For he serves his own passions, his own lusts, their tyranny he can escape neither by night nor day, for he carries these masters within his own breast, and suffers within himself an intolerable bondage. For there is a double bondage, one of the body, another of the soul; now the lords of the body are men, but the lords of the soul are evil dispositions and passions, from which liberty of the mind alone frees the wise man and enables him to depart from his bondage. 25. Let us seek therefore that truly wise man, that truly free man, who although he live under the dominion of many, says freely, Who is he that will plead with me? from Whose sight I shall not be able to hide myself, only do Thou withdraw Thy hand far from me, and let not Thy dread make me afraid.

26. And King David, who followed him, said, Against Thee only have I sinned. For being supported by the royal dignity, and being, so to speak, master of the laws, he was not subject to them but was liable to God alone, Who is the Lord of hosts. 27. Hear another free man; But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment : yea, I judge not mine own self, for I know nothing against myself, ... but He that judgeth me is the Lord. |244 The freedom of the spiritual man is a true freedom, because he judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man, because he knows himself to be subject to nothing which has any participation in the creature, but to God alone, Who only is without sin, of Whom Job also says, God liveth Who hath taken away my judgment, for the just man

can only be judged by Him in Whose sight the heavens are not clean, nor the light of the stars pure and clean.

28. Will any one bring forward those verses of Sophocles which say 'Jupiter, and no mortal man is ruler over me?' How much more ancient is Job, how much older is David? Let them acknowledge then that they have borrowed from us the more excellent of their sayings. 29. Who then is wise but he who has arrived at the very mysteries of the Godhead, and has known the hidden things of wisdom to be manifested to him. He then alone is wise who has taken God as his guide, to conduct him to the secret resting-place of truth, and although but a mortal man has become by grace the heir and successor of the eternal God, and partaker, as it were, of His sweetness, as it is written, Wherefore God, even thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

30. Now if any man will examine more closely these matters, he will perceive what great assistance the wise man finds and what great obstacles the foolish, in the very same things; that to the one freedom is an aid, to the other bondage is an impediment. For the wise man rises as a conqueror, having vanquished and triumphed over lust, fear, sloth, sadness and other vices. This he does until he casts them out from the possession of his mind, driving and excluding them from all its bounds and limits, for as a cautious general he knows how to guard against the incursions of robbers, and those hostile stratagems which the wicked enemies of our soul are frequently attempting with their fiery darts; for we have both wars in peace and peace in war. Whence also he says, Without were fightings, within were fears. But in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. He says this because he was terrified neither by straits nor persecutions, nor hunger, nor danger, nor death. |245

31. But he who fears these things, who dreads death, how is he not a slave? Truly he is a slave, and that in a miserable bondage; for nothing so subjects the mind to all kind of bondage as the fear of death. For how can the abject and vile and ignoble sense raise itself up, when it is deeply sunk in the pit of corruption, through the lusts of this life. Behold, how much he is a slave: I shall be hid, he says, and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, and it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me. Therefore as a slave he received a sign, but even thus he could not escape death. Thus the sinner is a slave to fear, to cupidity, to avarice, to lust, to malice, to anger, nay, he is a greater slave than if he were set under tyrants.

32. But they are free who live by the laws. Now true law is right reason, true law not sculptured on tablets, nor engraved in brass, but impressed on the mind, and fixed in the senses; for the wise man is not under the law, but is a law unto himself, bearing the work of the Law in his heart, inscribed and formed therein by a kind of pen natural to himself. Are we then so blind as not to see the manifest characters of things, and the images of virtues? And how unworthy is it that whole nations should obey human laws, that they may become thereby partakers of liberty : but that wise men should neglect and abandon the true law of nature formed according to the image of God, and true reason, the sign-bearer

of liberty; since there is so much liberty therein, that when children we are unconscious of any bondage to vice, being removed from anger, free from avarice, ignorant of lust. How miserable therefore, that we who are born in liberty should die in bondage!

33. But this arises from the levity of our mind and the infirmity of our character; because we are occupied by idle cares, and superfluous actions: but the heart of the wise man, his works and deeds, ought to be stedfast and immoveable. Moses taught us this, when his hands became heavy, so that Joshua the son of Nun could scarcely hold them up. And therefore the people were victorious when works not of a perfunctory kind, but full of gravity and virtue were being carried on, not the works of a mind |246 unsteady, and staggering to and fro in its affections, but of one firmly rooted and established. The wise man therefore stretches out his hands, but the fool draws them together, as it is written, The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh, meditating on carnal more than spiritual things. But not so did that daughter of Juda, who stretched forth her hands and cried to the Lord, Thou knowest thai they have borne false witness against me. She thought it better not to sin and to incur the calumnies of her accusers, than to commit sin under the veil of impunity. And by the contempt of death she preserved her innocence. Not so, either, the daughter of Jepthah, who by her own consent confirmed and even encouraged her father's vow concerning her own immolation.

34. For I will not produce the books of philosophers on the contempt of death, or the gymnosophists of the Indians, of whom the answer of Calanus to Alexander, when he commanded him to follow him, is especially commended. 'To what praise' said he 'do you consider me entitled, that you require me to travel to Greece, if I can be compelled to do that to which my will consents not?' A reply truly full of dignity, and yet his mind was more full of liberty. He wrote this letter also. CALANUS TO ALEXANDER. 35. "Your friends persuade you to lay hands and even constraint on the Indian philosophers, not even in their dreams beholding our works. Our bodies you may remove from place to place, our souls you cannot compel to do what they do not will, no more than wood or stone to utter sounds. A great fire burns pain into living bodies and begets corruption; on this fire we are, for we are burning alive. There is neither king nor prince who can compel us to do what we have not determined to do. Nor are we like the philosophers of Greece, who have conceived words rather than realities, in order to give celebrity to their opinions; in our case realities are associated with words and words with realities; our acts are swift and our discourses short, we enjoy a delightful freedom in the exercise of virtue."

36 and 37. Excellent words, but still words; excellent constancy, but that of a man; excellent letter, but that of |247 a philosopher. But amongst us, even maidens through desire of death have mounted even up to heaven by the lofty steps of virtue. Why should I mention Thecla, Agnes, or Pelagia, who sprouting forth as noble tendrils have hastened to death as if to immortality? The virgin exulted among lions, and dauntlessly beheld the roaring beasts. And to compare our history with that of the Indian philosophers, what Calanus boasted in words holy Laurence proved by his acts, for he was burnt alive, and surviving the flames

said, 'Turn me and eat me.' Nor did the youths of the race of Abraham or the sons of the Maccabees strive less boldly; the former sung while in the midst of the flames, and the latter, during their punishment, asked not to be spared, but reproached their persecutor in order to enrage him more. The wise man therefore is free.

38. But what can be more sublime than holy Pelagia, who was surrounded by persecutors, but before she came into their presence said; 'I die willingly, no man shall touch me, no one with wanton look shall defile my chastity, I will carry away with me my modesty, my honour untainted; these ruffians shall reap no profit from their insolence. Pelagia will follow Christ, no man shall deprive her of her liberty, no man shall see her free faith made captive, her illustrious chastity, her inheritance of wisdom. What is enslaved shall remain here, not amenable to any duty.' Great therefore is the freedom of that pious virgin, who encircled by her persecutors gave way not the least in the midst of these great dangers to her integrity and her life. 39. But he is not free over whom anger reigns, for he is subject to the yoke of sin; for an angry man diggeth out sin, and, Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin. Neither is he free who is enslaved to avarice, for he cannot possess his vessel. Neither is he free who seeing his desires and pleasures, fluctuates in his devious course. He is not free who is bowed down by ambition, for he obeys the rule of another. But he is free who is able to say, All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient, all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meals for the belly, and the belly for |248 meats. He is free who says, For why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?

40. Liberty therefore belongs to the wise man not to the fool; for he who binds a stone in a sling is like him who giveth honour to a fool, for he wounds himself, and while brandishing his dart chiefly endangers his own body. Certainly as he is stung by the sling, and by the falling of the stone the evil is increased, so the fall of a fool when he is set at liberty is more rapid. Wherefore the power of a fool is rather to be retrenched than any new liberty added, for slavery is suitable for him. And therefore it is added, As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools. For as he is wounded by his cups, so is the fool by his deeds. The one by drinking involves himself in sin, the other by acting subjects himself to censure, and by his deeds is drawn into bondage. Paul saw himself brought into captivity by the taw of sin, and therefore, in order to be freed, he fled to the grace of liberty.

41. Fools then are not free, for it is said to them, Be ye not like to horse and mule, which have no understanding, whose mouths must be held with bit and bridle lest they fall upon thee. Great plagues remain for the ungodly; for they have need of these, in order that their folly may be restrained. It is good discipline which requires this, not severity. Further, he that spareth his rod hateth his son: for a man's own sins scourge him still more severely. For heavy is the weight of crime, heavy the scourges of sin; they are heavy as a sore burthen, they inflict wounds upon the soul, and make the ulcers of the mind to stink. 42. Wherefore let us lay aside this grievous burthen of slavery, let us renounce sensuality, and the evil delights which bind us with the bonds, as it were, of lusts, and fetter us with chains. For

these delights profit not the fool, and whoever has given himself to them from his boyhood will abide in bondage; living he will be as dead. Let sensuality then be cut down, let evil delights be pruned away, and let him who has been wanton bid farewell to his former courses. For the vine which has been cut down bears fruit, that which has been partly pruned puts forth leaves, |249 that which has been neglected grows too luxuriantly. Therefore it is written, Like a field is the foolish man, and like a vineyard the man void of understanding; if you leave him alone, he will become desolate. Let us then tend this body of ours, let us chasten it, let us reduce it to subjection, let us not neglect it.

43. For our members are instruments of righteousness, they are also instruments of sin. If they are raised upwards, they are instruments of righteousness, that sin should not reign in them: if our body has died to sin, transgression will not reign therein, and our members will be free from sin. Let us not therefore obey its lusts, nor yield our members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. If you have looked upon a woman to lust after her, your members are the instruments of sin. If you have spoken and solicited her, your tongue and your mouth are instruments of sin. If you have removed the landmarks which your fathers set up, your members are instruments of sin. If you have hasted with swift feet to shed the blood of the innocent, your members ars instruments of sin. 44. On the other hand, if you have seen a poor man, and taken him into your house, your members are instruments of righteousness. If you have rescued one who was suffering wrong, or one who was being led to execution; if you have cancelled the bond of the debtor, your members are instruments of righteousness. If you have confessed Christ (for the lips of knowledge are the instruments of understanding,) your lips are the members of righteousness. He who can say, I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame, I was a father to the poor, his members are members of righteousness.

45. Being therefore set free from sin, and redeemed, as it were, at the price of the Blood of Christ, let us not be made subject to the bondage of men or of passion. Let us not blush to confess our sins. Behold how free he was who could say, I feared not the multitude of the people; that I should not confess my sin in the sight of all. For he that confesses his sin is released from servitude, and the just accuses himself in the beginning of his speech. Not only the free but the just man also; but justice is in liberty |250 and liberty in confession, for as soon as a man shall confess he is absolved. Lastly, I said I will confess my sins unto the Lord, and so Thou forgavest the wickedness of my sin. The delay of absolution depends on confessing, the remission of sins follows closely on confession. He therefore is wise who confesses; he is free whose sin is remitted, for he contracts now no debt of guilt. Farewell: love me as indeed you do, for I also love you.

Letters 31-40 — LETTER XXXVIII. [A.D.387.]

In this Letter S. Ambrose continues the subject, maintaining that the truly wise man is not only free but rich also, illustrating his statements with instances from the Old Testament. AMBROSE TO SIMPLICIAN, GREETING. 1. When we lately pointed out, taking our theme from the epistle of the Apostle Paul, that every wise man is free, we seemed to have fallen into philosophical discussion. But afterwards, in reading the epistle of the Apostle Peter, I perceived that every wise man is also rich: and this he says without distinction of sex, for he writes that all a woman's ornaments consist in a virtuous life, not in costly jewels, Whose adorning, he says, is not that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and, of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but the hidden man of the heart. 2. Here then are two things, both that there is a man within the man, and that he is rich who seeks not for himself the enjoyment of any riches. And he has well said, the man of the heart, in that the whole man of wisdom is hidden, as is wisdom itself, which is not seen but understood. No one before Peter used such an expression as, the man of the heart; for the outward man consists of many members, but the inward man of the heart is entirely full of wisdom, full of grace, full of beauty. |251

3. In that, he says, which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. And he is truly rich, who can appear rich in the sight of God, in whose sight the earth is small, the world itself is narrow, but God considers him only to be rich who is rich for eternity, who lays up the fruit not of riches, but of virtues. And who is rich before God but that meek and quiet spirit which is never corrupted? Does not he appear to you to be rich, who possesses peace of mind and the tranquillity of rest? who desires nothing, is not tossed by the storms of lust;, despises not old things, seeks not new, so as by his constant desire to become poor in the midst of riches? 4. That peace is truly rich, which passeth all understanding. Peace is rich, modesty is rich, faith is rich, for to the faithful the whole world is a possession. Simplicity is rich, for there are also the riches of simplicity; for she scrutinizes nothing, has no mean, no suspicious, no deceitful thoughts, but pours herself forth with pure affection.

5. Goodness too is rich, and if a man preserve it he is fed by the riches of the heavenly inheritance. To quote also the more ancient examples of Scripture, Happy, it is said, is the man whom God correcteth. Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty .... in famine He shall redeem thee from death, and in war from the power of the sword. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue; .... the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee, and thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace. For the vices of this flesh being subdued, and those passions which are wont to war against the soul, your tabernacle shall be undisturbed, your house without offence, your seed shall not fail, your posterity shall be as the smell of a fruitful field, your burial as the harvest. For while others are looking for theirs to fail, the heap of your corn will be carried ripe into the heavenly garners.

6. Fit it is that the righteous ever lendeth, while the wicked man is in want. He lendeth justice, he lendeth the commandments of God to the poor and needy; but the fool does not possess even that which he believes himself to possess. Do you suppose that he can be said to possess, |252 who brooding over his treasure night and day, is troubled by covetous and wretched anxiety? Such a one truly wants; although to others he appears rich, to himself he is poor, because he who is still grasping after more and desiring more uses not that which he possesses. For where there are no bounds to desire, what profit can there be in riches? No man is rich who cannot carry away with him that which he has, for that which is left behind, is not our own but another's.

7. Enoch was rich who carried away with him that which he had, and laid up all the riches of his goodness in the heavenly treasure-house; he was taken away lest that wickedness should alter his understanding. Elias was rich, who riding in a chariot of fire carried the treasures of his virtues up to the heavenly mansions. Not small were the riches he left to his heir, and yet he himself did not lose them. Who would have called him poor even then, when being himself in need of the sustenance of daily food, he was sent to the widow that he might be nourished by her, when at his voice the heaven was shut and opened, when at his word the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil failed not for three years, but overflowed; when it was replenished not diminished by use? Who would call him poor at whose word there came fire down from heaven, whom the river impassible by others could not retard, retiring back to its source that the prophet might pass over dry-shod?

8. Ancient history tells us of two neighbours, king Ahab and the poor Naboth; which of these do we believe to be the richer, which the poorer? The one, endowed with the royal support of riches, insatiable and not to be replenished with wealth, coveted the little vineyard of the poor man; the other, despising in his mind the golden fortunes of kings, and imperial treasures, was content with his own vines. Does not he appear richer and more kingly, who was sufficient to himself, and controlled his own desires, coveting nothing that belonged to another? Does not he, on the other hand, appear most needy, in whose eyes his own gold was accounted vile, and another man's vine precious. But learn for what reason he was most needy: |253 because riches unjustly gotten are vomited up again, but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit, and flourishes like a palm-tree.

9. Is not he more needy than the poor man, who pass-eth away like a shadow? To-day the ungodly is in great power, to-morrow he is not, and his place can no more be found. But what is it to be rich, unless it be to abound? But who abounds whose mind is contracted, and therefore straightened, and what abundance can there be in straits? He therefore is not rich who does not abound. Wherefore David says well, The rich lack and suffer hunger; for although they possessed the treasures of the Divine Scriptures, they still lacked in that they did not understand, and hungered in that they tasted not the food of spiritual grace. 10. Nothing can therefore be richer than the temper of the wise man, nothing poorer than that of the fool. For since the kingdom of God belongs to the poor, what can be richer? And therefore the Apostle says well, O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! Well also David, who had as great delight in the way of the heavenly testimonies as in all manner of riches. And Moses says expressly, Naphtali, satisfied with favour. Now Naphtali means when translated, 'abundance' or 'increase.' So that to be satisfied and to abound go together, but where there is the hunger of desire and insatiable lust, there truly is poverty. But since scarcely any desire of money or of this world can be satisfied, it is added, full with blessing.

11. It is in accordance with these principles that the Apostle Peter has declared that the ornament of women consists not in gold and silver and apparel, but in the secret and hidden man of the heart. Wherefore let no woman put off the dress of piety, the ornament of grace, the inheritance of eternal life. Farewell: love me, for I love you. |254

Letters 31-40 — LETTER XXXIX. [A.D.387.]

S. Ambrose in this Letter seeks to rouse Faustinus from excessive grief for his sister's death, first on the ground of duty towards the children left to his care and protection, and then on the higher ground of submission to the Divine will, and realization of Christian hopes. AMBROSE TO FAUSTINUS, GREETING. 1. I was well aware that you would grieve with bitter grief for the death of your sister: still you should not go into banishment, but rather give yourself back to us, for although mourners are little inclined to receive consolation, it is sometimes necessary for them. But you have fled to the recesses of the mountains, and made your dwelling in the caves of wild beasts, laying aside all customary human converse and, what is worse, the use of your own reason. 2. Is it in accordance with your esteem for your sister, that human nature, which ought to be much regarded by you for producing a woman so excellent, should on her account be of less value in your eyes? In quitting this life it doubtless was a consolation to her to believe that she left you behind her as a parent to your nephews, a guardian of their tender years, a succour to their destitution; but you so utterly withhold yourself both from your nephews and from us, that we do not reap any benefit from what she thus found a ground of consolation. These dear pledges invite you not to grieve, but to comfort them, that in seeing you they may believe their mother to be still alive. In you then let them recognize her, in you let them enjoy her presence, in you think that she still survives to them.

3. But you grieve that she has been lately cut off in the flower of her age. This however is the common fate not only of men, but of states and countries themselves. Coming from Bononia you left behind you Claterna, Bononia |255 itself, Matina, Rhegium; Brixillum was on your right, in front of you Placentia, by its very name still recalling its ancient lustre, on the left you saw with pity the wastes of the Apennines, you surveyed the fortresses of these once flourishing tribes, and remembered them with sorrowful affection. Do not then the carcases of so many half-ruined cities, and states stretched on their bier beneath your eyes, do not these remind you that the decease of one woman, holy and excellent as she was, is much less deplorable, especially as these are for ever laid prostrate and destroyed, but she though removed from us for a while is passing a more blessed life elsewhere?

4. Wherefore I deem that you ought not so much to deplore her, as to offer for her your prayers; make her not sorrowful by your tears, rather commend her soul to God by oblations. 5. Perhaps however you will declare yourself to be secure of her merits and faith, you cannot endure the feeling of regret at seeing her no longer after the flesh, which is to you a better grief. And does not the Apostolic saying move you that henceforth we know no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. For our flesh cannot be perpetual and lasting, it must needs die that it may rise again, it must be dissolved that it may rest, and sin come to an end. We too have known many according to the flesh, but now we know them no more. We have known the Lord Jesus, says the Apostle, after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. For now He has put off the coil of the body, and is not seen in fashion as a Man, but has died for all and all are dead in Him, to the intent that being renewed by Him and quickened in the Spirit they may no longer live to themselves but to Christ. Wherefore the same Apostle also says elsewhere, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

6. And well indeed was it that he who had before known Christ after the flesh, who had before persecuted and oppressed with bitter hatred the disciples of the Man, and the attendants on His bodily presence, but who now recognized His invisible workings, discerning not His bodily presence |256 but His power,----well indeed was it that he became the teacher of the Gentiles, and began to instruct and prepare the worshippers of His Divinity to become preachers of the Gospel. Wherefore he added, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, that is, he that is perfect in Christ is a new creature, for all flesh is imperfect. And the Lord saith, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh. No carnal man then is in Christ, but if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, formed by newness not of nature but of grace. These old things which are according to the flesh have past away, all things are made new. And what are they but the things which the scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven knows, like unto that householder, who brings forth out of his treasure things new and old; neither old things without new, nor new things without old? Thus too the Church saith, things new and old have I laid up for Thee. For old things, that is, the hidden mysteries of the Law are passed away, all things are made new in Christ.

7. This is the new creature of which the Apostle writing to the Galatians saith, For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, already our flesh now renewed flourishes, and having before borne the thorns of inveterate sin hath now found the fruit of grace. Why then need we grieve, if we can now say to the soul, thy youth is renewed like the eagles? And why should we bewail the dead, now that by our Lord Jesus the world has been reconciled to the Father? Since then we hold the benefits which Christ hath given, we are to you as well as to all ambassadors in Christ's stead, that you may know His Gift to be irrevocable, that you may believe what you always have believed, and not bring your opinion into discredit by too much sorrow. For the Lord Jesus was made sin that He might take away the sin of the world, and we all might be made the righteousness of God in Him; now no longer subject to the penalty of sin, but sure of the reward of righteousness.

Farewell; love me, for I love you. |257

Letters 31-40 — LETTER XL. [A.D.388.]

In the year 388 A.D. the synagogue of the Jews at Callinicum in Mesopotamia was burnt by the Christians, at the instance, it was asserted, of the Bishop. Some monks also in the same district, having been insulted by some Valentinian heretics, while singing Psalms in processsion on the Festival of the Maccabees, (Aug. 1st.) had burnt their conventicle. Theodosius had ordered that the Bishop should re-build the synagogue at his own cost, and that the monks should be punished, and the whole matter carefully sifted, and justice done. This Letter is written by S. Ambrose to remonstrate. He urges his plea with the boldest importunity, and, as he tells his sister in the following letter, Theodosius eventually yielded. TO THE MOST GRACIOUS PRINCE AND BLESSED EMPEROR HIS MAJESTY THEODOSIUS, BISHOP AMBROSE SENDS GREETING. 1. Nearly incessant are the cares which harass me, most excellent Emperor, but never was I in such trouble as at present; for I see I must be on my guard against the danger even of a charge of sacrilege. Wherefore I beseech you patiently to hear my address. For if I am unworthy to be heard by you, I am unworthy to offer for you, or to have your vows and prayers intrusted to me. Will you not hear him whom you wish to be heard in your behalf? Will you not hear him pleading for himself whom you have heard when pleading for others? Will you not dread the consequences of your own judgment; and fear to render him unworthy to be heard in your behalf, by treating him as unworthy of a hearing from you.

2. But it is neither the part of an Emperor to deny liberty of speech, nor of a Bishop not to utter what he thinks. There is no quality more amiable and popular in an Emperor than to cherish freedom even in those who owe him military allegiance. For there is this difference between good and bad rulers, that the good love freedom, the bad slavery. And there is nothing in a Bishop so offensive in God's sight, or so base before men, as not freely to declare his opinions. For it is written, I spake of Thy testimonies also even before kings, and was not ashamed, and in another place, Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; with the intent, it proceeds, |258 that if the righteous man doth turn from his righteousness and commit iniquity, because thou hast not given him warning that is, hast not told him what to beware of, his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the

righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou shalt deliver thy soul,

3. I prefer then, to have fellowship with your Majesty in good rather than in evil; and therefore the silence of a Bishop ought to be displeasing to your Clemency, and his freedom pleasing. For you will be implicated in the danger of my silence, you will share in the benefits of my outspokenness. I am not then an officious meddler in matters beyond my province, an intruder in the concerns of others, but I comply with my duty, I obey the commandment of our God. This I do chiefly from love and regard to you, and from a wish to preserve your well-being. But if I am not believed, or am forbidden to act on this motive, then in truth I speak from fear of offending God. For if my own danger could deliver you, I would consent to be offered for you, though not willingly, for I would rather that without danger to myself you should be accepted and glorified by God. But if I am to suffer under the charge of silence and dissimulation without effecting your exculpation I had rather you should deem me too importunate than useless or mercenary. For it is written, in the words of the holy Apostle Paul, whose teaching you cannot gainsay, Be instant in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

4. We then also have One Whom it is even more dangerous to displease; especially as even Emperors themselves are not offended with any man for fulfilling his function, but you patiently give ear to every one speaking concerning his own department, nay you reprove him for not acting in accordance with his line of duty. Can that then which you readily accept from your soldiers, seem to you offensive in a Bishop; seeing that we speak not according to our own wills, but as we are commanded? For you know that it is written, when ye shall be brought before |259 governors and kings take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father Which speaketh in you. Were it in civil causes that I had to speak, my not obtaining an audience would not give me such apprehension, although even then justice ought to be observed, but in God's cause whom will you hear, if you hear not the Bishop, at whose great peril it is that sin is committed? Who will dare to tell you the truth, if a Bishop does not?

5. I know that you are pious, merciful, meek and gentle, having at heart the faith and fear of the Lord; but some failings oftentimes escape our notice. Some men have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge, and we ought, I think, to beware lest this steal even over faithful souls. I know your piety towards God, your lenity towards men; I am myself indebted to your courtesy for many benefits. Wherefore I feel greater fear, and deeper solicitude lest even your own judgment should hereafter condemn me for having failed, through cowardice or flattery, in saving you from a fall. If I had seen you sin against myself, I ought not to have kept silence, for it is written, If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault; then rebuke him before two or three witnesses, and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church. Shall I then be silent in the cause of God? Now then let us consider what it is I have to apprehend.

6. The military Count of the East reported that a synagogue had been burnt, and that this had been done at the instigation of the Bishop. You decided that the others should be punished, and that the synagogue should be rebuilt by the Bishop himself. I will not insist on the propriety of calling for the Bishop's own statement; for the clergy are wont to check disturbances and desirous of peace, |260 save when they are themselves moved by some offence against God or insult to the Church. But suppose this Bishop to have been too eager in setting fire to this synagogue, and now to grow timid before the judgment-seat, has your Majesty no fear, lest he should acquiesce in your sentence, no apprehension of his becoming apostate? 7. Do you not fear, what will certainly be the case, that he will meet your officer with a refusal; and so he will be obliged to make him either an apostate or a martyr, and both of these are adverse to your interests and savour of persecution, that he should be forced either to become an apostate or undergo martyrdom. You see then whereunto this matter tends; if you think the Bishop firm, avoid driving his firmness to martyrdom; if you think him frail, shun exposing his frailty to a fall. For a heavy responsibility lies on him who has caused one who is weak to fall.

8. Under these circumstances I suppose that the Bishop will say that he himself kindled the fire, gathered the crowd, collected the people; so as not to lose an opportunity of martyrdom, and in place of the weak to offer up a bolder victim. O happy falsehood; obtaining for others acquittal, for himself Grace. This is my request also to your Majesty, that you would turn your vengeance upon me, and, if you consider this a crime, impute it to me. Why do you order the absent to be punished? you have the guilty person before you, you hear his confession, I openly affirm that I myself set the synagogue on fire, or at least, that I ordered others to do so; that there might be no place in which Christ is denied. And if it be objected, why did I not set it on fire in this very city? It began to be burnt, I reply, by the Divine judgment, my work was superseded. And to speak the truth, I was the less zealous because I expected no punishment. Why should I do that which being unavenged would also be unrewarded? These words are a shock to modesty, but they also bring back grace; they provide against the commission of that which may offend Almighty God.

9. But suppose that no one will cite the Bishop to do this; for this is what I have begged of your Clemency, and |261 though I have not yet read that the edict is revoked, I will nevertheless assume it to be so. But what if other more timid persons, from a fear of death offer to rebuild the synagogue from their own funds, or the Count, finding this previously ordained, should himself command it to be restored at the expense of the Christians? Your Majesty will then have an apostate Count, and you will entrust your victorious banner, your labarum, which is consecrated by the name of Christ, to one who is the restorer of the synagogue which knows not Christ. Command the labarum to be carried into the synagogue, and let us see if they do not resist. 10. Shall then a building be raised for perfidious Jews out of the spoils of the Church, and shall that patrimony, which by Christ's mercy has been assigned to Christians, be transferred to the temples of the unbelieving? We read that temples were in former days erected from the spoils of the Cimbri and other enemies of

Rome. Shall the Jews inscribe this title on the front of their synagogue: 'The temples of impiety built from the spoils of Christians?'

11. But the maintenance of discipline is perhaps what influences your Majesty. Is the show of discipline then weightier than the cause of religion? Police should give place to religion. 12. Has your Majesty never heard that when Julian commanded the temple at Jerusalem to be restored, they who cleared away the rubbish were destroyed by fire from heaven? Are you not afraid lest this should now happen? Surely you ought not to have commanded what Julian commanded.

13. But why are you thus moved? Is it generally because a public building has been burnt, or because it is a synagogue? If you are moved by the conflagration of the meanest edifice, (and what else could there have been in so obscure a town,) does not your Majesty remember how many prefects' houses have been burnt at Rome, and yet no man enacted vengeance for them? Nay, if any Emperor had desired to punish such an act severely, he would rather have injured the cause of those who had suffered so great a loss. Which then is the more fitting, that the partial |262 burning of some houses at Callinicum , or the burning of the city of Rome should be punished, if indeed either of them ought to have been so. At Constantinople, a while ago, the Bishop's house was burnt, and your Majesty's son interceded with you, that you would not avenge the wrong done to him, the youthful Emperor, nor the burning of the Bishop's palace. Your Majesty should consider, that, if you should in like manner command this act to be punished, he may again intercede to prevent it. The former boon however was happily obtained from the father by the son, for it was only fitting that he should first remit the injury to himself. A good distribution of favour and well allotted it is, that the son should be petitioned for his own loss, and the father for the offence against his son. In this case there is nothing which you need keep back on your son's account, beware also lest you derogate ought from God.

14. There is then no adequate reason for any such commotion, that the people should be so severely punished for the burning of any building; much less seeing that it is a synagogue that has been burnt, a place of unbelief, a house of impiety, a receptacle of madness, which God Himself hath condemned. For thus we read what the Lord our God spake by the mouth of Jeremiah, Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by My Name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you, and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I wilt cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim. Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me, for I will not hear thee. Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah? God forbids him to intercede for those whom you think worthy of being avenged.

15. Were I pleading according to the law of nations, I should assuredly recount how many Churches the Jews burnt in the time of Julian's reign: two at Damascus, one |263 of which is but just repaired, and that at the expense, not of the synagogue, but of the Church, while the other is still a mass of shapeless ruins. Churches were likewise burnt at Gaza, Ascalon,

Berytus, and nearly every town in that region, and yet no man asked for vengeance. At Alexandria too the most beautiful Church of all was burnt down by the Gentiles and Jews. The Church has not been avenged, shall then the synagogue be? 16. And shall the burning of the temple of the Valentinians likewise be punished? For what but a temple is the place where Gentiles assemble? The Gentiles indeed reckon twelve gods, the Valentinians worship thirty two Aeons , whom they call gods. Concerning these I am informed that they have called for punishment upon some monks. For the Valentinians having endeavoured to stop them as they were going in procession according to ancient custom, chanting psalms, to celebrate the festival of the Maccabees, the monks exasperated by this affront, set fire to one of their rudely constructed temples in some country village.

17. How many have to offer themselves to this choice, remembering that in Julian's time he who threw down the altar and disturbed the sacrifice was condemned by the judge, and suffered martyrdom. And accordingly the judge who tried him was never considered other than a persecutor, no man would associate with him, no man deemed him worthy of a kiss of greeting. Were he not now dead, I should fear your Majesty's taking vengeance upon him. Nevertheless he escaped not the Divine vengeance, but saw his son die before him. 18. But it is reported that the judge was ordered to take cognizance of the matter, and was informed that he ought not to have reported upon it, but to have punished it, that the offerings which had been taken away were to be demanded back. Other particulars 1 will omit; but when the Jews burnt our Churches, nothing was restored, nothing demanded, nothing sought for. But what could the synagogue possess in that distant place, when everything in it was but of little value, nothing precious or abundant. |264 In short of what could a fire deprive the treacherous Jews? These are devices of the Jews who wish to accuse us falsely, that through their representations an extraordinary military tribunal may be appointed, and an officer sent, who perhaps will say what one said here before your accession, 'How shall Christ help us, when we fight for the Jews against Christ? when we are sent to take vengeance on their behalf? They have lost their own armies, and they wish to destroy ours.'

19. Nay, what are the calumnies into which they will not rush, who by false witnesses have slandered Christ Himself? who are false even in matters relating to God? Whom will they not charge with the guilt of this sedition? whom will they not thirst after, even though they know them not? They desire to see rank after rank of Christians in chains, to see the necks of the faithful placed under the yoke, the servants of God hidden in darkness, smitten with the axe, delivered to the fire, or sent to the mines, that their pains may be slow and lingering. 20. Will your Majesty give this triumph to the Jews over the Church of God? this victory over the people of Christ, this joy to the unbelievers, this felicity to the Synagogue, this grief to the Church? They will place this solemnity among their feast-days; numbering it among those wherein they triumphed over the Ammonites, or Canaanites, or over Pharaoh king of Egypt, or which delivered them from the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. This festival they will add in memory of the triumph they have gained over Christ's people.

21. Although they refuse to be bound by Roman laws, deeming them even criminal, they now pretend to claim vengeance according to those laws. Where were those laws, when they burnt the roofs of the consecrated Basilicas? If Julian avenged not the Church because he was an Apostate, will your Majesty, being a Christian, avenge the injury done to the Synagogue?

22. And what will Christ hereafter say to you? Do you not remember what he said to holy David by the prophet Nathan? 'I have chosen thee the youngest of thy brethren, and from private life have made thee Emperor. |265 I have placed thy offspring upon the Imperial throne. I have put barbarous nations under thy feet, I have given thee peace, I have delivered thine enemy captive into thy hands. Thou hadst no corn to support thy army, I opened to thee the enemies' gates, the enemies' granaries, by their own hand; they gave thee the very stores which they had provided for themselves. I confounded the counsels of thy enemy, so that he laid bare his own plans. The very usurper of thy empire I so bound, and so fettered his mind, that although he had the means of flying from you he shut himself in with all his followers, as if fearing lest any should escape you. His lieutenant and his forces on the other element, whom I had before dispersed to prevent their combining to make war on thee, I now called together again to render thy victory complete. Thy army, an assemblage of many fierce nations, I caused to keep faith and peace and concord, as if they had been one nation. And when there was imminent danger lest the perfidious plots of the barbarians should penetrate the Alps, I gave thee victory within the very barrier of the Alps, that thy victory might be without loss. Thus I made thee to triumph over thy enemy, and thou art giving my enemies a triumph over my people.'

23. Was it not the very reason why Maximus was abandoned, that before he set out on his expedition, hearing that a synagogue had been burnt at Rome, he sent an edict thither, acting as if he were the guardian of public order. Wherefore the Christians said, No good awaits this man. That king is become a Jew, and we have heard of him as a protector of order, but Christ, who died for sinners, shortly after put him to the proof. And if this was said of words only, what will be said of actual punishment? So he was soon defeated by the Franks and by the Saxons, in Sicily, at Siscia , at Petavio, and in every |266 quarter of the globe. What has a devout man in common with an unbeliever? The precedents of his impiety ought to be obliterated together with the impious man himself. That which injured the vanquished, that at which he stumbled, the victor ought to condemn, not to imitate.

24. Now I have recounted these things to you not as though you were ungrateful; rather I have spoken of them as being rightly bestowed, that reminded thereby you may love much, as being one on whom much has been bestowed. To Simon's answer our Lord thus replied, Thou hast rightly judged; and then, turning straightway to the woman who had anointed His feet with ointment, and was the type of the Church, He said to Simon, Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. This is that woman who entered the house of the Pharisee, and cast out the Jew, but gained Christ. For the Church shut out the Synagogue, and why

is it now attempted, that, with the servant of Christ, that is, from the breast of faith, and abode of Christ, the Synagogue should shut out the Church.

25. It is from affection and regard for your Majesty, that I have introduced these things into my pleading. The beneficence which has led you, at my request, to liberate many persons from exile, from prison, from the extreme penalties of death, obliges me to incur the danger of offending you for the sake of your own good, rather than lose in one moment that privilege of every Bishop which I have for so long possessed. For no man can feel greater confidence than he who zealously loves, no man certainly ought to injure him who is careful for his well-being. And yet it is not the loss of favour I deprecate, but the danger to salvation. 26. Yet how important it is that your Majesty should not think of enquiry or punishment in a matter with regard to which no one up to this time has ever held enquiry or inflicted punishment! It is a grievous thing to hazard your faith for the sake of Jews. When Gideon killed the consecrated calf, the Gentiles said, Let the gods |267 themselves avenge this affront towards them. Who is to avenge the Synagogue? Christ Whom they slew, Whom they denied? Or will God the Father avenge them, seeing that by rejecting the Son they have rejected the Father also. Who is to avenge the heresy of the Valentinians? how will your Piety be able to avenge them, seeing that you have commanded them to be shut out, and forbidden them to meet together? And should I bring forward to you the example of King Josiah as approved of God, will you condemn in this case that for which he is praised.

27. But if you do not place sufficient confidence in me, let your Majesty command the presence of those bishops whom you do approve, and let the question be discussed, what ought to be done so as not to injure the Faith. If in financial matters you consult your Courts, how much more fitting is it that in the cause of religion you should consult the Bishops of the Lord? 28. Let your Clemency consider what dangerous spies and liers in wait the Church has against her, if they find ever so small an opening they will plant a dart therein. I speak after the manner of men; but God is feared more than men, and is rightly preferred to Emperors themselves. If any man thinks obedience should be paid to a friend, a parent, or a neighbour, am I wrong in deeming that God should be obeyed, and that in preference to all others. Let your Majesty consult for your own well-being, or suffer me to consult for mine.

29. What shall I hereafter answer, if it shall appear that by an edict issued from hence Christians have been slain by the sword, or beaten to death with clubs or thongs loaded with lead? How shall I justify such an act, how shall I excuse it to those Bishops who having discharged the office of the priesthood for thirty years, nay for many more, have now bitterly to bewail, being deprived of their sacred functions and called to undertake municipal offices. If those who fight for you are set free after a certain period of service, how much more ought you to consider those |268 who fight for God! How I repeat, shall I defend this to the Bishops who complain in behalf of the clergy, and write word that the Churches are overborne by violent oppression. 30. This however I desired should be made known to your Majesty; about this you will deign to deliberate and direct according to your will; but as to that which distresses and rightly distresses myself, exclude and reject it from

your consideration. You do yourself whatsoever you have commanded to be done; even if he do it not, I would rather that you should be merciful than that he should refuse to do what he has been commanded.

31. Here are persons in dealing with whom you ought still to invite and earn the Clemency of God towards the Roman empire; here are persons for whom rather than for yourself you have to hope; let their grace, their well-being, appeal to you in what I now say. I fear your entrusting your cause to the judgement of others. As yet you are committed to nothing. Herein I will pledge myself for you to our God, fear not your oath. That change cannot be displeasing to God which is made for His honour. You have no need to alter your former letter whether it be yet dispatched or not, but command another to be written which shall be replete with faith and piety. It is open to you to change, it is not open to me to keep back the truth. 32. You have forgiven the people of Antioch their offence against you, you have recalled the daughters of your enemy , you have committed them to be nurtured by their relative, you have bestowed money from your treasury on the mother of your enemy. This great piety, this great faith towards God will be obscured by your present act. Having thus spared your armed foes, and preserved your enemies, do not, I beseech you, so eagerly seek for vengeance upon Christians. |269

33. And now I entreat your Majesty not to disdain to listen to my fears both for yourself and myself; for it is the saying of an holy man, Woe is me, wherefore was I born to see this misery of my people? is it that I should incur the risk of offending God? Assuredly I have done what is most respectful to you: I have sought that you should listen to me in the palace, that you might not have to listen to me in the Church. [Footnotes moved to the end and numbered] 1. The English Version has 'The partridge sitteth on eggs and hatcheth them not.' S. Ambrose is referring to § 11 of the preceding Letter, where he applies the text to Satan. He makes the same application of it in Letter xlvi. 14. 2. perdendo. 3. contrarius. 4. judicio. 5. judicio. 6. judicium 7. 'Cornici oculum effodere' was a familiar Latin proverb for overcoming craft with craft. See Cic. pro Mur. 11, pro Flacco, 20.

8. primitivus. 9. primogenitus. 10. Horontianus appears to have been, like Irenaeus, a pupil of S. Ambrose, and to have been ordained by him, and to have been, as the Benedictine Editors say, 'In clericorum contubernio educatus ab infantia. Nothingmore is known of him. See Letter lxx. 25. 11. e0ntele/xeia. 12. propria corporis. 13. Sun, E. V. Sol, Vulg. 14. primitias. 15. primogenita. 16. The difference in the original is only the punctuation; in the first case, 'Natu quod videt quis quid, et sperat:' in the second, 'Nam quod videt quis, quid et sperat? ' 17. S. Ambrose is evidently referring to his mission to Maximus, and the persecution of Justina. 18. There is another reading of several MSS., 'et ille profecto gemitus,' which seems to offer a better sense, 'and that groaning is indeed truly unutterable, etc' 19. Canaan E.V. 20. The Vulgate has, 'Trahitur antem sapientia de occultis.' The B. V. is, 'The price of wisdom is above rubies.'

21. This is referred by the Benedictine Editors to Prov. xxii. 7. but it does not agree with either the Sept. or Vulgate. 22. tou~ pneu&matoj is inserted in a few MSS, and Spirit us

is in the Vulgate. 23. The story of Calanus and Alexander is related in Arian vii.2. It is also more briefly alluded to by Putarch. Alex. 65. Neither writer mentions this letter. 24. vibulamina. Gr. mosxeu&mata. 25. i. e. the three children in the furnace. 26. S. Ambrose is here imitating the consolation ottered by Ser. Sulpicius to Cicero on the death of his daughter. See Up. ad Div. iv, 5, 4. 27. distonxisti ei 28. 'Oriens' or 'the East' was the title of the great civil 'diocese' which included Syria, Palestine, Cilicia, Cyprus, Mesopotamia, and some adjacent districts, and corresponded to the Patriarchate of Antioch in the ecclesiastical division. It was originally under one chief called 'Comes orientis,' but it would appear from this passage, as is asserted by Gothofred, that the civil and military functions had been divided, and there were now two officers, 'Comes orientis militarium partium,' and 'Comes orientis civilium partium.' The subject is somewhat obscure.

29. Callinicum was in Osrhoene, a name given to the north-western part of Mesopotamia. 30. Socrates, B v. ch. 13., mentions that Nectarius' house was burnt by the Arian party in the same year in which this letter was written. 31. See a note in Newman's Fleury, p. 160. 32. Andragathius, who commanded a fleet in Maximus' interest expecting Theodosius to come to Italy by sea. 33. The Benedictine editors say 'tota luce pericope in uno Cod. Reg. desideratur: forte non male.' It is difficult to elicit any sense from it. 34. Siscia, now Sissek, was a large town in upper Pannonia, on the south bank of the Save. Petavio, now Pettau, was on the Drave. It seems likely that 'in Sicilia' should he omitted, as being only a false meaning for 'Sciscia.' There is no mention of Sicily being in any way connected with the war. But see Tillemont, Theod. art. xlv.

35. S. Ambrose is quoting from memory and slightly varies the facts from the narrative in book of Judges. 36. See a learned note in Newman's Fleury vol. 1 p. 162, on the exemption of the Clergy from municipal offices, compare also letter xviii. 14, and the note there. 37. i. e. the Count of the East. 38. This refers to the famous sedition at Antioch, when the mob, enraged at the imposition of new taxes, overthrew the Emperor's statues, and dragged them through the eity. After a period of suspense, during which S. Chrysostom preached the Homilies on the Statues, Theodosius, who had at first been violently enraged, sent them a free pardon. This was in the previous year. 39. i. e. of Maximus.

Letters 41-50 — LETTER XLI. [A.D.388.]

In this Letter to his sister S. Ambrose relates the sequel of the affair referred to in the preceding one. That Letter failed to produce the effect which he had hoped for, and so he was driven to fulfil the threat with which he had ended it, and 'make the Emperor listen to him in the Church.' He gives his sister a full account of the sermon which he preached before the Emperor, and how he insisted on a promise that the matter should be quashed altogether, before he would celebrate the Eucharist, and how the Emperor at last gave way, and so all ended as he had wished. THE BROTHER TO HIS SISTER. 1. You have kindly written me word, holy sister, that you are still anxious about me, because I told you of my own anxiety; this makes me wonder that you have not received the letter, in which I told you that tranquillity had been restored to me. Complaints had been made that a synagogue of the Jews had been burnt by the Christians, at the instigation of their Bishop, and also a conventicle of the Valentinians; and while I was at Aquileia a decree was issued that the synagogue should be rebuilt by the Bishop, and that the monks who had set fire to this building of the Valentinians should be punished. Wherefore, when I found that my personal endeavours were of little avail, I wrote and despatched a letter to the Emperor, and on his going to the Church, I delivered this discourse.

2. In the book of the Prophet it is written, Take to thyself the rod of an almond tree; and with what intent the Lord said this to the prophet we ought to consider, for it |270 was not written without a purpose, and we also read in the Pentateuch that the rod of Aaron the priest, budded after being long laid up. Now the rod seems to signify that prophetic or sacerdotal authority ought to be unswerving, and to exhort rather to what is useful than to what is pleasing. 3. And the reason why the prophet is bidden to take the rod of an almond is this, that the fruit of this tree has a bitter rind and hard shell, while its inside is juicy, and so in like manner the prophet should hold out what is hard and bitter, and not shrink from declaring painful things. So too with the priest: his teaching may seem bitter for a time to some, and, like Aaron's rod, may for a long while be laid up in the ears of dissemblers, yet afterwards, when it is thought to have withered, it puts forth buds.

4. Hence the Apostle says, What will ye, shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness. First he speaks of a rod, and as with the rod of an almond tree had smitten the wanderers, that he might afterwards comfort them with the spirit of meekness. Just so did meekness restore the man whom the rod had driven from the Divine sacraments. To his disciple too he gave the same injunctions, Reprove, beseech, rebuke. Here are two harsh terms and one gentle; but they are only harsh, that they may themselves be softened. For like as bitter food or drink becomes sweet to these bodies which are laden with excess of gall, and on the other hand sweet repasts are bitter to them, so also when the mind is wounded it languishes under the flattering touch of pleasure, but is healed again by the bitterness of correction.

5. Thus much let it suffice to have gathered from the lesson from the Prophets, let us next consider what that from the Gospel would teach us: And one of the Pharisees desired the Lord Jesus that He would eat with him; and He went into the Pharisee's house and sat down to meat. And behold, a woman in the city, which teas a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meal in the Pharisee's house brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping. And then the passage was recited as far as the words, Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace. |271 How simple, I added, are the words of this Gospel lesson, how profound its counsels! Wherefore, seeing that it is spoken by the great Counsellor, let us consider its depth.

6. Our Lord Jesus Christ believed that kindness has a greater power of constraining and inciting men to do what is right than fear; and that love avails more for correction than terror. And so, when He came on earth by the Virgin's womb, He first sent His free grace, forgiving our sins in baptism to make us more grateful to Him. Then if we will repay Him with such services as befit grateful men, He has declared by this example that He will give fresh gifts of grace to every man. Had He only remitted to us our first debt, He would have seemed cautious rather than merciful, more heedful of our amendment than munificent in His rewards. To allure is merely the cunning of a narrow mind, but it is befitting to God that those whom He has invited by grace He should lead forward by the increase of that grace. And so He first bestows on us His gifts in baptism, and afterwards if we serve him faithfully gives more abundantly. And so the benefits of Christ are both the incentives and the rewards of virtue.

7. Let no man be alarmed at the word creditor. We were indeed under an unforgiving creditor, who could not be satisfied by anything less than the death of his debtor; then the Lord Jesus came and found us burthened with a heavy debt. This debt no man could satisfy by his natural innocence; I had nothing of my own wherewith to purchase my freedom, and therefore He bestowed on me a new kind of acquittance; He made me debtor to Himself, seeing I had no means of discharging my debt. Now we became debtors not by nature but by our own fault; by our sins we contracted heavy debts, so that we who were free came under a bond; for he is a debtor who has received of his creditor's money. Now sin is from the devil, this is the money which belongs to the wicked one as his patrimony; for as virtues

are the treasure of Christ, so crimes are the riches of the devil. He had brought the human race under the perpetual slavery of an inherited liability by that heavy debt which our improvident ancestor transmitted by inheritance to his posterity. But then the Lord Jesus came, |272 He gave His life for the life of all, and shed His blood for the blood of all.

8. Thus we have changed our creditor, not discharged our debt, nay we may even say we have discharged it, for although it remains, our bond is cancelled, the Lord Jesus having said to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves; your sins therefore are forgiven. Thus He has forgiven all, nor is there any one to whom He has not shewn mercy. For so it is written, that He has forgiven all trespasses; blotting out the hand-writing of the ordinances that was against us. Why then do we hold the bonds of others? why would we exact our claims from others when we have obtained remission of our own? He Who has shewn mercy to all requires of each of us that what he remembers to have been remitted to himself he should himself remit to others. 9. Beware lest you begin to incur heavier blame as a creditor than you did as a debtor; as that servant in the Gospel to whom his Lord forgave all his debt began to exact from his fellow servant what he himself had not paid; wherefore his Lord was wroth, and exacted from him with the greatest severity what he had before remitted to him. Let us beware therefore lest the same evil befal us, lest by not remitting our debts we also be called on to pay what had been forgiven us, for so it is written in the words of the Lord Jesus, So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. Let us then forgive small things to whom great have been forgiven, and understand that the more we forgive the more acceptable we shall be to God, for we are so much the more acceptable to God the more we have been forgiven.

10. Further, when the Pharisee was asked by our Lord, Which of them loved him most, he answered, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. Whereupon the Lord said, Thou hast rightly judged. The Pharisees judgment is praised, but his affection is blamed. Of others he judges correctly, but what he believes of others, he does not believe in his own case. Thus you hear the Jew praising the discipline of the Church, praising its true graces, |273 honouring its priests; but when you exhort him to believe he refuses to do so, and thus follows not himself what he praises in us. His eulogy then is not complete, though Christ has said to him, Thou hast rightly judged, for Cain also offered rightly, but did not divide rightly, wherefore God said unto him, If thou offer rightly, but divide not rightly, thou hast sinned; be still. And so this man offered rightly, because he judges that Christ, having forgiven Christians many sins, ought to be more earnestly loved by them; but he has not divided rightly, because he believes that He Who remitted the sins of men could possibly be ignorant of them.

11. And therefore He says to Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet, but she hath washed My feet with tears. We are all one body of Christ, the Head is God, and we are the members: some perhaps as the Prophets, may be the eyes; others the teeth, as the Apostles, who have filled our hearts with the food

of the Evangelical preaching, and of whom it is written, His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk. They are His hands who perform good works: His belly are they who bestow the strength of nourishment on the poor: Some too are His feet also, and would that I might be counted worthy to be even His heel. He then who pardons the very lowest their sins, pours water on the feet of Christ, and Avhile he frees only the mean, yet washes the feet of Christ Himself.

12. He also pours water on the feet of Christ who cleanses his conscience from the pollution of sin; for Christ walks in the breast of each of us. Beware then lest your conscience be defiled, or you thus begin to stain the feet of Christ. Beware lest He encounter the thorn of wickedness within you, whereby His heel as He walks in you may be wounded. The reason why the Pharisee did not pour water on the feet of Christ was because his soul was not clean from the stain of wickedness. How could he cleanse his conscience, who had not received that water which Christ gives? But the Church has that water, and the Church has tears, the waters of Baptism and the tears of penitence. For faith, which mourns for former sins, is also wont to |274 avoid fresh ones, wherefore Simon the Pharisee as he had no water so neither had he tears. For how could he have them, who did no penance? but as he believed not in Christ so neither had he tears. Had he had them, he would have washed his eyes that he might see Christ, Whom as yet, when he first sat down, he saw not. For had he seen Him, he would not have doubted of His power.

13. Nor had the Pharisee hair, in that he knew not the Nazarite; but the Church had hair, and she sought for the Nazarite. Hairs are considered a superfluous part of the body, but if they are anointed they send forth a good smell, and are an ornament to the head, but if not anointed with oil they grow heavy. So likewise riches are a burthen, if you know not how to use them, if you sprinkle them not with the odours of Christ. But if you feed the poor, if you wash and cleanse their filth, their wounds, you have truly wiped the feet of Christ. 14. Thou gavest Me no kiss, but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet. A kiss is the sign of love. But how could the Jew possess this, who knew not peace, who received not peace from Christ when He said, Peace I have with you, My peace 1 give unto you? This kiss belongs then not to the Synagogue but to the Church, to her who looked for Him, who loved Him, who said, Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth. For the ardour of that lingering desire, which had grown with waiting for the Lord's coming, she sought slowly to quench by His kiss, and to satisfy her thirst by this gift. Wherefore the holy Prophet says, Thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall shew Thy praise. He then who praises the Lord Jesus kisses Him; and he who praises surely believes in Him. Thus David Himself says, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; and before, Let my mouth be filled with Thy praise, and let me sing of Thy glory.

15. Concerning the gift of special grace the same Scripture also teaches thee that he who receives the Spirit kisses Christ, for the holy Prophet says, I opened my mouth, and drew in the spirit . He then kisses Christ, who confesses Him; For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the month confession is made unto salvation. He |275 kisses the

feet of Christ, who, reading the Gospel, recognizes the acts of the Lord Jesus, and admires them with pious affection; thus religiously kissing, as it were, the Lord's steps as He walks. We kiss Christ then with the kiss of Communion; Whoso readeth let him understand. 16. But how can the Jew have this kiss? For as he believed not in His Advent, so neither did he believe in His Passion, for how can that man believe that He suffered, who believes not that He came? Hence the Pharisee had no kiss save haply that of the traitor Judas. But neither had Judas this kiss, and therefore when he would have shewn to the Jews that kiss which was the concerted sign of his betrayal, the Lord says to him: Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? that is, 'Thou offerest a kiss, though thou hast not the love that the kiss should express, thou offerest a kiss who art ignorant of the mystical meaning of the kiss.' What is required is not the kiss of the lips, but of the heart and mind.

17. But you will say that he kissed the Lord. True it is he kissed Him with his lips, and this kiss the Jewish people has, wherefore it is said, This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Wherefore he has not the kiss who has not faith and charity; for by a kiss is conveyed the force of love. Where love is not, nor faith, nor charity, how can there be any sweetness in kisses? 19. Now the Church ceases not to kiss the feet of Christ, and therefore in the Song of songs she asks not for one but many kisses; like holy Mary she is attentive to all His discourses, she receives all His words, when the Gospel is read, or the Prophets; she keeps all His sayings in her heart. The Church, alone, then, as being the spouse, has kisses, for a kiss is, as it were, the pledge of marriage and the privilege of wedlock. How can the Jew have kisses who believes not in the Spouse, who knows not that He is already come?

19. Nor is it kisses alone that he lacks, but oil also, wherewith to anoint the feet of Christ, for if he had had oil he would before now have bowed down his neck. For Moses says, It is a stiff-necked people; and the Lord says |276 that the priest and levite passed by on the other side, nor did either of these pour oil and wine into the wounds of him who had been wounded by robbers; had they possessed this oil they would have poured it into their own wounds. But Isaiah says, They cannot apply ointment nor oil nor bandage. 20. But the Church has oil wherewith she dresses the wounds of her children, that the hardness of the wound may not sink inwards; she has oil, which she has received secretly. With this oil Asher has washed his feet, as it is written, A blessed son is Asher; and he shall be acceptable to his brethren, dip Ms foot in oil. With this oil therefore the Church anoints the necks of her children, that they may receive the yoke of Christ; with this oil she has anointed the martyrs to purify them from the dust of this world; with this oil she has anointed confessors, that so they might not yield to labour, or sink down through weariness, or be overwhelmed by the waves of this world; it is for the purpose of refreshing them with spiritual oil that she has thus anointed them.

21. The Synagogue possesses not this oil, for she hath not the olive, she did not recognize that dove which brought back the olive branch after the deluge. This same dove afterwards descended, when Christ was being baptized, and abode upon Him, as John testifies in the

Gospel, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. But how could he see the dove, who saw Him not upon whom the Spirit descended as a dove? 22. So then the Church both washes the feet of Christ, and wipes them with her hair, and anoints them with oil, and pours ointment upon them, in that she not only tends the wounded and comforts the weary, but also sprinkles over them the sweet odours of grace. Nor is it upon the rich and powerful only that she sheds this grace, but on men of low birth also, she weighs all in an equal balance, she receives all in the same bosom, and cherishes them in the same lap.

23. Christ died once, and was buried once, nevertheless He daily desires that ointment should be poured upon His |277 feet. Now what are these feet of Christ whereon we pour ointment? The feet of Christ are they of whom He saith Himself, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me. These feet that woman in the Gospel tends, and washes with her tears, when the lowest have their sins remitted, their faults washed away, their pardon granted. These feet he kisses who loves even the lowest of the holy congregation. These feet he anoints with ointment, who imparts even to the weaker brethren the graces of His meekness. In these the martyrs, in these the Apostles, in these the Lord Jesus Himself declares that He is honoured.

24. Thou seest what instruction the Lord imparts, how by His example He stimulates thee to devotion; for He instructs by His censure. And He thus accuses the Jews, O My people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against Me. For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; adding, and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. Remember what Balak devised against thee, he, that is, who sought the aid of enchantments, but I suffered him not to hurt thee. Truly thou wert oppressed while sojourning in foreign lands, thou wert laden with heavy burthens: I sent Moses Aaron and Miriam before thy face, and he who had spoiled the strangers was himself despoiled. Thou, who hadst lost thine own goods gainedst others, thou wert delivered from the enemies that surrounded thee, and in the midst of the waters thou sawest in safety the death of thine enemies, for the same wave which had separated and carried thee forward flowed back again and drowned the Egyptians. When thou wert in want of food while journeying through the wilderness, did I not rain bread from heaven for thee, and scatter food around thee, whereon thou wentest? Did I not subdue all thy enemies and bring thee into the region of the cluster of grapes? Did I not deliver up to thee Sihon (which means 'proud') king of the Amorites (that is, chief of them that provoked thee);

did I not also deliver to thee alive the king of Ai, whom, subject to the sentence of the ancient curse, thou nailedst to the wood and hangedst upon a tree? What shall I say |278 of the slaughter of the hosts of the five kings, who strove to exclude thee from the promised land? And what doth the Lord require of thee, o man, for all these things, but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

25. And to king David himself, that meek and holy man, what was His expostulation by the prophet Nathan? I chose thee, He says, the youngest among thy brethren; I filled thee

with the spirit of meekness; by the hand of Samuel, in whom was My Spirit and My Name, I anointed thee king. And from an exile I made thee a conqueror, taking out of the way that former king whom an evil spirit instigated to persecute the priests of the Lord. Upon thy throne I set one of thy seed not so much as an heir as a colleague. I made even strangers subject to thee, that they who resisted might serve thee, and wilt thou deliver My servants into the hands of My enemies, wilt thou take away that which was My servant's, whereby both thou wilt be branded with sin, and My adversaries will have whereof to glory?

26. Seeing therefore, O Emperor, (for I will now not only discourse of you but address myself to you) how severe the Lord's censures are wont to be, you must take care, in proportion as you become more illustrious, to submit so much the more humbly to your Maker. For it is written: When the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into a foreign land, and thou shalt eat the fruits of others, say not,'By my own strength and righteousness I obtained these things,' but, 'The Lord God gave them to me, Christ in His mercy conferred them on me,' and therefore by loving His body, that is, the Church, pour water on His feet and kiss His feet; thus shalt thou not only absolve those who have been taken in sin, but in giving to them peace you will bring them into concord and restore to them rest. Pour ointment on His feet, that the whole house wherein Christ sits at meat may be filled with the odour of thy ointment, and let all who sit at meat with Him rejoice in thy fragrance; that is to say, pay such regard even to the lowest, that in their absolution the Angels may rejoice, as they do over one sinner that repenteth, the Apostles may be glad, |279 the Prophets may exult. For the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee, nor the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Since therefore each member is necessary, do thou protect the whole body of the Lord Jesus, that He also of His divine mercy may protect thy kingdom.

27. On my coming down he says to me, 'You have been preaching at me to-day.' I replied that in my discourse I had his benefit in view. He then said, 'It is true, I did make too harsh a decree concerning the reparation of the synagogue by the Bishop, but this has been rectified. As for the monks, they commit many crimes.' Then Timasius, one of the Generals-in-chief , began to be very vehement against the monks. I replied to him, 'With the Emperor I deal as is fitting, because I know that he fears God, but with you, who speak so rudely, I shall deal differently.' 28. After standing for some time, I said to the Emperor, 'Enable me to offer for you with a safe conscience, set my mind at rest.' The Emperor sat still, and nodded, but did not promise in plain words; then, seeing that I still remained standing, he said that he would amend the order. I said at once that he must quash the whole enquiry, for fear the Count should make it an opportunity for inflicting wrong on the Christians. He promised that it should be done. I said to him, 'I act on your promise,' and repeated the words again. 'Do so' said he. Then I went to the altar; but I would not have gone, if he had not given me his distinct promise. And indeed so great was the grace attending the oblation, that I myself was sensible that this favour he had granted was very acceptable to our God, and that the divine Presence had not been withheld. Then all was done as I wished. |280

THE LETTER OF POPE SIRICIUS TO THE CHURCH OF MILAN. [A.D.389.] The Letter of Siricius was addressed to the Church of Milan to inform them of the sentence of excommunication passed against Jovinian and his followers. Jovinian had been a monk, but had abandoned the ascetic life and rushed into extremes of self-indulgence: there is a good description of him in Tillemont, (Vie de S. Ambr. 63, 61,) who calls him 'cet Epicure des Chretiens.' The false doctrines with which he 'barked at the true doctrines of the Church' are stated in this Letter and in the reply of the Synod of the Church of Milan which follows. Jovinian was answered by S. Jerome, who writes against him with much vehemence. SIRICIUS TO THE CHURCH OF MILAN. 1. I would fain always, beloved brethren, send you tidings of joys, sincere as you are in love and peace, so that by means of the mutual interchange of letters we might be pleased by the tidings of your welfare . Our ancient Adversary however does not suffer us to be free from his attacks, he who is a liar from the beginning, the enemy of truth, envious of man, in order to deceive whom he first deceived himself, the adversary of chastity, the teacher of sensuality, who is fed by cruelty, punished by abstinence, who hates fasts, asserting, as his followers also give out, that they are superfluous, having no hope of things to come, obnoxious to the censure of the Apostle, Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die.

2. O miserable boldness, O craft of a desperate mind! Already was this unknown language of heresy spreading through the Church like a cancer, seeking to fill the breast, and plunge the whole man in destruction: and unless the Lord of Sabaoth had broken through the snare which they had laid, the public exhibition of so much evil and hypocrisy would have led to ruin the hearts of many simple ones, for the human mind is easily drawn aside towards evil, choosing rather to fly through open space, than to travel with pain along the narrow way. 3. Wherefore it was very necessary, most dearly beloved, to commend what has been done here to your notice and consideration, lest through the ignorance of any priest, the Church might he infected by the contagion of these most wicked men who are breaking in upon it under a religious pretext, as it is written and the Lord has said, Many |281 come to you in sheeps' clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves; ye shall know them by their fruits.

These are they who under a mean garb boast themselves as Christians, that walking under the semblance of piety they may enter the house of prayer and utter the words of wily disputation, that they may privily shoot at them which are true of heart, and, seducing them from Catholic truth, may draw them over, after the example of Satan, to the madness of their own doctrines, beguiling the simplicity of the flock. 4. And indeed from the times of the Apostles up to now we have heard and known by experience of many malignant heresies, but the sacred truth of the Church has never been assailed by the barking of such dogs as those who have now suddenly broken in upon us, with the doctrines of unbelief fully sprouted, enemies of the faith; who by the fruit of their works have betrayed whose disciples they are. For while other heretics misunderstanding single points have proposed to bear away and abstract from the Divine system of teaching, these men, not having on a wedding garment, wound the Catholics, perverting, as I have said, the continuity of the New and Old Testament, and interpreting it in a diabolical spirit, have by their alluring and false

arguments already begun to ruin some Christians, and to make them associates of their madness, not keeping within themselves the poison of their iniquity: but some of their chosen ones have betrayed their blasphemies by writing a rash discourse, which the rage of a desperate mind has led them openly to publish, favouring, as it does, the cause of the Heathens.

5. But of their madness I suddenly received intelligence by means of a shocking writing which certain faithful Christians, men of high rank, and signal piety, caused to be conveyed to me, unworthy as I am, in order that the opposition of these men to the Divine Law might be detected by the discernment of the Clergy and repressed by a spiritual sentence. Assuredly we receive without scorn the vows of those marriages which we assist at with the veil , but virgins, for whose existence marriage is necessary, as being devoted to God, we honour more highly. 6. Having therefore held an assembly of my clergy it became clear that their sentiments were contrary to our doctrine, that is, to the Christian law. Therefore, following the Apostolic precept, we, seeing that they were preaching another Gospel than that which we received, have excommunicated them. Know therefore that it was the unanimous sentence of us all, as well of the presbyters and deacons as |282 of the other clergy, that Jovinian, Auxentius, Genialis, Germinator, Felix, Prontinus , Martianus, Januarius, and Ingeniosus, who were discovered to be the promoters of the new heresy and blasphemy, should be condemned by the Divine sentence and our judgment, and remain in perpetual exclusion from the Church.

7. Nothing doubting that your Holinesses will observe the aforesaid decree, I have sent you this Epistle by my brethren and fellow-priests, Crescens, Leopardus and Alexander, that they, with a fervent spirit, may perform a religious and faithful service.

Letters 41-50 — LETTER XLII. [A.D.389.]

In this, their reply to Siricius, drawn up in all probability by S. Ambrose himself, the Council of Milan thank him for his care, and announce that they have followed his example and condemned Jovinian and his followers in the same way. They dwell upon his errors, particularly on his disparagement of virginity, on his denial of the true virginity of our Lord's Mother, on his contempt of widowhood, and of fasting, and condemn him as a follower of Manes. They argue in especial detail against his argument with regard to the Virgin Mary, which differs from that of Helvidius and other assailants of the a_ei\ pa&rqenoj. TO THEIR LORD, THEIR DEARLY BELOVED BROTHER, POPE SIRICIUS, AMBROSE, SABINUS, BASSANIUS, AND THE REST SEND GREETING. 1. In your Holiness' Letter we recognized the vigilance of a good shepherd, for you faithfully guard the door which has been entrusted to you, and with pious solicitude watch over the fold of Christ, being worthy to be heard and followed by the sheep of the Lord. Knowing therefore the lambs of Christ, you will easily discover the wolves, and meet them as a wary shepherd, so as to keep them from scattering the Lord's flock by their unbelieving life and dismal barking.

2. We praise you for this, our Lord and brother dearly beloved, and join in cordial commendations of it. Nor are we surprised that the Lord's flock was terrified at the rage of wolves in whom they recognized not the voice of |283 Christ. For it is a savage barking to shew no reverence to virginity, observe no rule of chastity, to seek to place every thing on a level, to abolish the different degrees of merit, and to introduce a certain meagreness in heavenly rewards, as if Christ had only one palm to bestow, and there was no copious diversity in His rewards.

3. They pretend that they are giving honour to marriage. But what praise can rightly be given to marriage if no distinction is paid to virginity? We do not deny that marriage was hallowed by Christ, for the Divine words say, And they twain shall be one flesh, and one spirit, but our birth precedes our calling, and the mystery of the Divine operation is much more excellent than the remedy of human frailty. A good wife is deservedly praised, but a pious virgin is more properly preferred, for the Apostle says, He that giveth his virgin in marriage doeth well, but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better; for the one

careth for the things of the Lord, the other for the things of the world. The one is bound by the chains of marriage, the other is free from chains; the one is under the Law, the other under Grace. Marriage is good, for thereby the means of continuing the human race has been devised, but virginity is better, for thereby the heritage of the heavenly kingdom is regained, and the mode of attaining to heavenly rewards discovered. By a woman care entered the world; by a virgin salvation was brought to pass. Lastly, Christ chose virginity as His own special gift, and displayed the grace of chastity, thus making an exhibition of that in His own person which in His Mother He had made the object of His choice.

4. How great is the madness of their dismal barkings, that the same persons should say that Christ could not be born of a virgin, and yet assert that women, after having given birth to human pledges, remain virgins? Does Christ grant to others what, as they assert, He could not grant to Himself? But He, although He took on Him our flesh, although He was made man that He might redeem man, and recal him from death, still, as being God, came upon earth in an extraordinary way, that as He had said, Behold I make all things new, so also He might be |284 born of an immaculate virgin, and be believed to be, as it is written, God with us. But from their perverse ways they are induced to say 'She was a virgin when she conceived, but not a virgin when she brought forth.' Could she then conceive as a virgin, and yet not be able to bring forth as a virgin, when conception always precedes, and birth follows?

5. But if they will not believe the doctrines of the Clergy, let them believe the oracles of Christ, let them believe the admonitions of Angels who say, For with God nothing shall be impossible. Let them give credit to the Creed of the Apostles, which the Roman Church has always kept and preserved undefiled. Mary heard the voice of the Angel, and she who before had said How shall this be? not asking from want of faith in the mode of generation, afterwards replied, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word. This is the virgin who conceived, this the virgin who brought forth a Son. For thus it is written, Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son; declaring not only that she should conceive as a virgin, but also that she bring forth as a virgin. 6. But what is that gate of the sanctuary, that outward gate which looketh towards the East, which remains shut, and no man, it is said, shall enter in by it but the Lord, the God of Israel. Is not Mary this gate, by whom the Saviour entered into the world? This is the gate of righteousness, as He Himself said, Suffer us to fulfil all righteousness. Blessed Mary is the gate, whereof it is written that the Lord hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut after birth; for as a virgin she both conceived and brought forth.

7. But why should it be incredible that Mary, contrary to the usage of natural birth, should bring forth and yet remain a virgin; when contrary to the usage of nature, the sea saw and fled, and the floods of Jordan retired to their source. It should not exceed our belief that a virgin should bring forth, when we read that a rock poured forth water, and the waves of the sea were gathered up like a wall. Nor need it, again, exceed our belief that a man should be born of a virgin, when a running stream gushed |285 forth from the rock, when iron swam

upon the waters, and a man walked upon them. If therefore the waves carried a man, could not a virgin bring forth a man? But what man? Him of Whom we read, The Lord shall send them a Man Who shall deliver them; and the Lord shall be known to Egypt. Wherefore in the old Testament a Hebrew virgin led the people through the sea, in the New Testament a royal virgin was elected to be a heavenly abode for our salvation.

8. But what more? let us also subjoin the praises of widowhood, since in the Gospel next after that most illustrious birth from a virgin, comes the widow Anna; she who had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served with fastings and prayers night and day. 9. And fitting it is that these men should despise widowhood, which is wont to keep fasts, for they regret that they should have been mortified by these for any time, and avenge the wrong they inflicted on themselves, and by daily banquets and habits of luxury seek to ward off the pain of abstinence. They do nothing more rightly than in thus condemning themselves out of their own mouth. 10. But they even fear lest their former fasting should be reckoned against them. Let them choose whichever they like: if they ever fasted, let them repent of their good work, if never, let them confess their own intemperance and luxury. And so they assert that Paul was a teacher of excess. But who can be a teacher of temperance if he was a teacher of excess, who chastised his body and brought it into subjection, and recorded his performance of the service he owed to Christ by many fastings; and this not for the purpose of praising himself and his doings, but that he might teach us, what example to follow. Did he then teach excess who said, Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances? Touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using; who also says, Not in indulgence of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying and love of the flesh, not in the lusts of error; but in the Spirit by Whom we are renewed. |286

11. If what the Apostle has said is not enough, let them hear the Prophet saying, I chastened myself with fasting. He therefore who fasts not is uncovered and naked and exposed to wounds. And if Adam had clothed himself with fasting he would not have been found to be naked. Nineveh delivered itself from death by fasting. And the Lord Himself says, This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. 12. But why need we say more to our master and teacher? seeing that these persons have now paid the worthy price of their perfidy, who have on this account come even hither, that no place might remain where they were not condemned; who have proved themselves to be truly Manichees, by not believing that He came forth from a virgin. What madness is this, almost equal to that of the modern Jews? If He is not believed so to have come, neither is He believed to have taken upon Him our flesh, therefore He was seen only in figure, He was crucified only in figure. But He was crucified for us in truth, He is in truth our Redeemer.

13. He is a Manichee who denies the truth, who denies that Christ came in the flesh; and therefore the remission of sins is not their's; but it is the impiety of the Manichees which both the most merciful Emperor has abhorred, and all who saw them have fled from as

a plague. Witnesses thereof are our brethren and fellow-presbyters, Crescens, Leopardus, and Alexander, fervent in the Holy Spirit, by whose means they have been exposed to common execration, and driven as fugitives from the city of Milan. 14. Wherefore you are to know that Jovinian, Auxentius, Germinator, Felix, Plotinus, Genialis, Martianus, Januarius and Ingeniosus, whom your Holiness has condemned, have also, in accordance with your judgment, been condemned by ourselves. May our Almighty God keep you in safety and prosperity, Lord and brother most beloved. |287 Here follows the subscription. I Eventius , Bishop, salute your Holiness in the Lord, and have subscribed this Epistle. Maximus, Bishop.

Felix, Bishop. Bassianus, Bishop. Theodorus, Bishop. Constantius, Bishop. By command of my lord Geminianus Bishop, and in his presence, I Aper, Presbyter, have subscribed. Eustasius, Bishop, and all the Orders have subscribed.

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