The Liturgical Homilies (Connolly translation)

Narsai of Nisibis (c. AD 399–502)

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Homily XVII: An Exposition of the Mysteries

On the Mysteries of the Church my thoughts mystically pondered; and I desired to reveal the thought of the heart by the speech of the mouth. By the speech of the mouth I desired to tell of their greatness, and with words to depict an image of their glory. Upon their glory my mind gazed narrowly; but dread seized upon me and caused me to desist (and) left me without performance. Without performance I stood still, for I was disturbed; and I began to cry out passionately with the son of Amos. With the son of Amos I gave woe to myself, as one defiled who in his defilement had fixed the gaze of his mind on the Mysteries of his Lord. On these things I pondered, and with fear I turned back; and the Spirit by Its beckoning encouraged me to enter the holy of holies. Into the holy of holies of the glorious Mysteries It permitted me to enter, that I might reveal the beauty of their glory to the sons of the Mystery. Come, then, O son of the divine Mystery, hear the record—marvellous to tell—of the Mysteries of the Church. 'I have a mystery (or secret), I have a mystery, I have a mystery'—(I) and mine, the prophet cries: with understanding, then, hear the mystery that is expounded to thee.

Lofty, in truth, and exalted is this mystery that the priest performs in the midst of the sanctuary mystically. Mystically the Church depicts the glorious Mysteries; and as by an image she shews to all men those things that have come to pass. Those things which came to pass in the death of the Son she commemorates by the Mysteries; His resurrection also from the dead she reveals before all. A mystery mystically shews that which has come to pass and that which is to come about: but the Church shews mystically in her Mysteries only that which has come to pass. The Church performs her Mysteries in secret away from those that are without; and the priest celebrates privately within the sanctuary. Only her children and her sons, the baptized and the signed, does she allow to enjoy communion in these adorable Mysteries which she performs. Wherefore she cries out before the hearers through the deacons to bow the head and receive the blessing from the priesthood: 'Bow your heads, O ye hearers, believers, baptized, and receive the blessing from the laying on of the hands of the bright(-robed) priest.'

And when they have been blessed, another proclamation is made to them: 'Let every one that has not received baptism depart hence'; go forth, ye unbaptized, ye shall not partake of the Mysteries of the Church; for only to them of the household is it permitted to partake. Again in a different manner another proclamation is made: 'Let every one that has not received the sign (rushmá) of life depart from hence'; and every one that has repented and returned from unorthodox heresy, until he is signed he shall not partake of the Mysteries of the Church. Every one, again, that has denied his faith and has returned to his (former) condition, until he is absolved by the sign of the Church he shall not partake. Again another proclamation is made in a different order: 'Let every one that receives not the Body and the Blood depart from hence': every one that has been proscribed by the priesthood and forbidden to receive; and at the season when they (the Mysteries) are offered he may not remain. Whoso has been forbidden by the canon (κανών) to receive the Sacrament, it is not even permitted to him to stand in the place where they (the Mysteries) are being offered. He that is sick (and) ailing, and perforce is unable to receive, he may not even stand in the nave (haiklá) where they (the Mysteries) are being consecrated.

Sadly they all go forth from the midst of the nave, and lament and stand with great mourning in the (outer) court (dárĕthá) of the Church, congratulating those who remain in that enjoyment, and giving woe to themselves for their exclusion. By her expulsion (of these) Holy Church depicts typically those that go forth into that darkness which is in Gehenna. The king saw a man not clad in the garments of glory, and he commanded and they bound him and cast him forth into that outer darkness. So the Church scans her congregations at the time of the Mysteries, and every one that is not adorned with clean garments she casts forth without. After these the proclamation concerning the hearers is made, that they should go and see to the doors of the Church and keep watch by them: 'Go, ye hearers, see diligently to the outer doors, that no one of (those belonging to) strange religions may enter.' Beside the doors these stand as hirelings, not partaking of the Mysteries of the Church like those of the household. Of these did the prodigal son, who squandered his substance, make mention, and meekly he asked to be made as one of the hired servants.

In that hour let us put away from us anger and hatred, and let us see Jesus who is being led to death on our account. On the paten (πίναξ) and in the cup He goes forth with the deacon to suffer. The bread on the paten and the wine in the cup are a symbol of His death. A symbol of His death these (the deacons) bear upon their hands; and when they have set it on the altar and covered it they typify His burial: not that these (the deacons) bear the image of the Jews, but (rather) of the watchers (i.e. angels) who were ministering to the passion of the Son. He was ministered to by angels at the time of His passion, and the deacons attend His body which is suffering mystically.

The priests now come in procession into the midst of the sanctuary and stand there in great splendour and in beauteous adornment. The priest who is selected to be celebrating this sacrifice, bears in himself the image of our Lord in that hour. Our Lord performed a mediation between us and His Father; and in like fashion the priest performs a mediation. Hear, O priest, whither thou hast been advanced by reason of thine order. Stand in awe of thy Lord, and honour thine order as it is fitting. See, thou hast been exalted above cherubim, above seraphim; be above nature in thy manners, as it beseems thee. See, thou hast been trusted to administer the treasures of thy Lord; be without blemish and without blame as it is commanded thee. In this fashion the priest stands in that hour, nor can aught compare with the greatness to which he is advanced. All the priests who are in the sanctuary bear the image of those apostles who met together at the sepulchre. The altar is a symbol of our Lord's tomb, without doubt; and the bread and wine are the body of our Lord which was embalmed and buried. The veil also which is over them presents a type of the stone sealed with the ring of the priests and the executioners (questionarii). And the deacons standing on this side and on that and brandishing (fans) are a symbol of the angels at the head and at the feet thereof (sc. of the tomb).

And all the deacons who stand ministering before the altar depict a likeness of the angels that surrounded the tomb of our Lord. The sanctuary also forms a symbol of the Garden of Joseph, whence flowed life for men and angels. In another order it is a type of that Kingdom which our Lord entered, and into which He will bring with Him all His friends. The adorable altar thereof is a symbol of that throne of the Great and Glorious, upon which He will be seen of watchers and men in the day of His revelation. The apse (κόγχη) typifies things below and above: it calls to mind the things that have been, and those that are to be it typifies spiritually.

And as soon as the priests and the deacons together have taken their stand they begin to recite the Faith of the Fathers:— Now we believe in one God the Father who is from eternity, who holds all by the hidden nod of His Divinity; who made and fashioned all things visible and invisible; and He brought the creation of the height and depth out of nothing. And in one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God— one person (parṣôpá), double in natures and their hypostases (qĕnômé). He is the Only-begotten in His Godhead, and first-born in His body, who became first-born unto all creatures from the dead: He who of His Father is begotten and is without beginning, and He in no wise became nor was made with creatures; for He is God who is from God, Son who is of the Father, and of the nature of His Father, and equal with Him in all His proper things; and by Him the worlds were shewn forth and everything was created that was (made); and in authority and worship and glory He is equal with His Father; who for our sake came down from heaven without change (of place), that He might redeem our race from the slavery of the Evil One and Death, and fashioned (as a body) a temple by the power of the Holy

Spirit from a daughter of David; and He became man, and He deified His temple by the union. And His body was conceived in the temple of Mary without wedlock, and He was born above the manner of men. And He suffered and was crucified and received death through His humanity, while Pilate held the governorship. And He was in the grave three days like any

The name is also employed by Jacob of Serûgh (Homiliae, ed. Bedjan, vol. ii) in an account of the passion in which he appears to be drawing upon Tatian's Diatessaron (see Journal of Theological Studies viii 588—9). dead (man); and He rose and was resuscitated according as it is written in the prophecy; and He ascended to the height, to the heaven of heavens, that He might accomplish everything; and He sat in glory at the right hand of the Father that sent Him. And He is ready to come at the end of the times for the renewal of all things, and to judge the living, and the dead also who have died in sin. And we confess also the Holy Spirit, an eternal Being, equal in ousia and in Godhead to the Father and the Son, who proceedeth from the Father in a manner unsearchable, and giveth life to all reasonable beings that by Him were created. And we confess again one Church, catholic, patristic, and apostolic, sanctified by the Spirit. And again, we confess one bath and baptism, wherein we are baptized unto pardon of debts and the adoption of sons. And we confess again the resurrection which is from the dead; and that we shall be in new life for ever and ever.

This did the 318 priests seal; and they proscribed and anathematized every one that confesses not according to their confession. The Church confesses according to the confession of the Fathers, and she employs their confession also at the time of the Mysteries. At the time of the Mysteries her children thunder forth with their Faith, reciting it with mouth and heart, without doubting. And when the Faith has been recited in due order, at once the herald of the Church gives the command to pray: 'Pray,' he says, 'over the commemoration of the Fathers, the Catholici and Bishops with the Doctors, and with them the Priests, the Deacons also and all orders, and every one that has departed this world in faith, that they may be crowned in the day when they rise from the dead: and we with them, may we inherit life in that Kingdom. Pray, brethren, over the oblation which we offer, that it may be acceptable before God to whom it is offered; and that by the brooding of the Holy Spirit it may be consecrated, that it may become unto us a cause of life in the Kingdom on high.'

With these (words) the herald of the Church urges the people, and he tells (them) to pray before God with a pure heart. The priest now offers the mystery of the redemption of our life, full of awe and covered with fear and great dread. The priest is in awe and great fear and much trembling for his own debts and the debts of all the children of the Church. He is the eye of the whole ecclesiastical body; and he makes remembrance in his mind of the doings of all his fellow-servants. He

is also the tongue of the whole body of Jesus: he is an attorney (ἐπίτροπος), and fulfils an advocacy (συνηγορία) on its behalf. Trembling and fear, for himself and for his people, lie upon the priest in that dread hour. In (his) awful character and office, an object of awe even to the seraphim, the son of dust stands in great fear as mediator. The awful King, mystically slain and buried, and the awful watchers, standing in fear in honour of their Lord! The ranks of watchers surround the altar in that hour, as Chrysostom has borne witness who saw them.

In this frame of mind stands the priest to officiate, reverent, with great fear and trembling. Like Jacob he worships three times and three; and then he draws near to kiss the tomb of our Lord (i.e. the altar). Jacob honoured his brother Esau with obeisances, and the priest honours with obeisances Jacob's Lord. He kisses with love and affection the holy altar, and trusts to receive sanctification through his lips. He asks prayer of the deacons that are round about him, that by his humility he may receive mercy from the Merciful. He now prays with a contrite heart before God, and confesses his debts and the debts of the ecclesiastical body. The priest asks for hidden power together with (divine) help, that he may be performing his gift according to his desire; and in all that the priest says before God the people concur, and they seal his ministry with Amen. With Amen the people subscribe with the priest, and take part with him by their prayers and by their word (i.e. Amen).

Then the priest blesses the people in that hour with that saying which the lifegiving mouth prescribed: 'Peace be with you,' says the priest to the children of the Church, for peace is multiplied in Jesus our Lord who is our peace. 'Peace be with you,' for death is come to naught, and corruption is destroyed through a Son of our race who suffered for our sake and quickened us all. 'Peace be with you,' for sin is removed and Satan is condemned by a Son of Adam who has conquered and given victory to (or justified) the children of Adam. 'Peace be with you,' for the Good Lord has been reconciled to you by the death of His Son who suffered on the cross for our sake. 'Peace be with you,' for you have been made at peace with the angels by Him who has authority over the angels and reigns over all. 'Peace be with you,' because you have been united—the People and the Peoples—and the barrier has been broken down by Jesus who destroyed all enmity. 'Peace be with you,' for new life is reserved for you by Him who became a first-born unto all creatures in life incorruptible. 'Peace be with you,' because you have been summoned to the Kingdom aloft by Him who entered first to prepare a place for us all.

The people answer the priest lovingly and say: 'With thee, O priest, and with that priestly spirit of thine.' They call 'spirit,' not that soul which is in the priest, but the Spirit which the priest has received by the laying on of hands. By the laying on of hands the priest receives the power of the Spirit, that thereby he may be able to perform the divine Mysteries. That grace the people call the 'Spirit' of the priest, and they pray that he may attain peace with it, and it with him. This makes known

that even the priest stands in need of prayer, and it is necessary that the whole Church should intercede for him. Therefore she (the Church) cries out that he may gain peace with his Spirit, that through his peace the peace of all her children may be increased; for by his virtue he greatly benefits the whole Church, and by his depravity he greatly harms the whole community. 'Peace be with thee,' say the people to the bright(-robed) priest, mayest thou by thy conversation obtain peace with thy Spirit. 'Peace be with thee,' by whom are celebrated the Mysteries of the Church: 'Peace be to thy Spirit' with thee through thy conduct. 'Peace be with thee,' for great is the deposit entrusted to thee. May the peace of thy Spirit grow through thy diligence in things spiritual.

Then the herald of the Church commands all the people to give the Peace, each one to his companion, in the love of our Lord. First the priests give the Peace in the midst of the sanctuary; and the people also give (it) in the nave in the same manner. It behoves him that gives the Peace to his brother in the Church to wash his heart from all hatred and anger and lust. This is the peace by which watchers and men shall be brought into concord in the day when the glorious Bridegroom comes to judge all. This is the peace in which there is no treachery and no hatred; but it is all light in light, and perfect love. Blessed is he that gives the Peace with love to his brother, for it is he that shall receive perfect peace in the midst of his mind. Peace is the name of Christ, who makes all to be at peace, for it is He that has made peace between earthly and heavenly beings. Blessed is he that makes his heart peaceful at the hour of the Mysteries, for all his debts and hateful deeds shall be forgiven him.

Here we should call to mind the saying of our Lord in which He strictly admonishes us about hatred: 'If thou remember,' He says, 'that thy brother keepeth hatred in his heart, leave thine offering and go, pacify him, and then offer.' 'Go and pacify thy brother first,' said our Lord, 'and then offer that sacrifice which thou art offering.' Even though the priest has been made a mediator to offer, yet let him be offering with the concurrence of the whole people. It behoves him, then, that offers this oblation to forgive the debts of his fellow-servants, and then to offer. But if he that keeps hatred in his heart against him be absent, let him forgive his debts before God with his mind. If a priest trample upon this commandment of the Lord of the worlds, let such an one know that there is no prayer nor oblation for him.

While the Peace is being given in the Church from one to another, the Book of the two (sets of) names, of the living and the dead, is read. The dead and the living the Church commemorates in that hour, that she may declare that the living and the dead are profited by the oblation. And the people add: 'On behalf of all the Catholici'—a prayer which follows upon that which has been recited in the reading of the book —'On behalf of all orders deceased from Holy Church, and for those

who are deemed worthy of the reception of this oblation: on behalf of these and Thy servants in every place, receive, Lord, this oblation which Thy servant has offered.'

The herald of the Church now cries and admonishes every one to confess to the Lord, and entreat of Him with purity of heart. 'Stand well,' he says, 'look with your minds on what is being done. Great is the Mystery in which ye are ministering, O ye mortals; the dread Mysteries, lo, are being consecrated by the hands of the priest: let every one be in fear and dread while they are being performed. The priest has already advanced alone to pray: pray ye with him, that your peace may be increased through his mediation. Bend to the ground the glance of the eyes of your hearts, and stretch to the height the secret glance of your minds, and entreat earnestly and make supplication to the God of all in this hour which is full of trembling and great fear. Let no man dare to speak a word with his mouth; for he that speaks oversteps, transgresses, the commandment. And he that prays, with the heart let him pray, and not with the lips, and with the mind let him beg for mercy, and not with the tongue. And be ye standing in stillness and fear, for lo, with us is that Peace which is greater than all knowledge.'

At this point the priest uncovers the adorable mysteries, and casts on one side the veil that is over them. This (the veil) being removed does not symbolize the resurrection, for neither was the stone rolled away at the moment of the resurrection: after the resurrection a watcher removed, rolled away the stone; but the priests remove the veil before the symbol (lit. 'mystery') thereof. The priest first of all blesses the people with that Canon in which he makes his voice audible to the faithful: 'The grace,' he says, 'of Jesus our Lord and the love of the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us': that grace which our Lord has given us by His coming, may it give us confidence before His Majesty: 'the love of the Father,' who sent us the Son, who is from Him, may it open to us the door of mercy in the day of His coming: 'the communion of the Holy Spirit,' of which we have been made worthy, may it sanctify us and purge from us the filth of our offences.

Then he prepares the people with an exhortation, and says: 'Let your minds be aloft in this hour where King Messiah is sitting on the right hand. Be not taken up with vain thoughts of earthly things: look upon Him that is now mystically slain upon the altar, who sits in the height and asks mercy for sinners.' The people answer: 'Unto Thee, Lord, are our minds uplifted, the God of Abram and Isaac and Jacob, the glorious King: the glorious King whom the just and the Fathers have glorified, and in whom they have been glorified, and in whom they give glory without end.' The priest adds: 'This acceptable and pure oblation, lo, is offered to the Lord—the Lord of the height and the depth: He is the Lord that hath taken away and taketh away the sin of the world. It is sacrificed now that it may blot out and forgive your sins. Lo, it is offered on behalf of angels and men, that all together may delight therein in body and soul. Lo, it is offered for sinners and for the just, that they

may be cleansed by it from the stains of their sins. Lo, it is offered for the defunct and for the living, that all peoples may find mercy in the sacrifice thereof. Lo, it is offered to the God of all as a pledge that He will save us from the torment of Gehenna.'

The people answer: 'It is meet and right and worthy and becoming to offer this oblation for all creatures.' All the ecclesiastical body now observes silence, and all set themselves to pray earnestly in their hearts. The priests are still and the deacons stand in silence, the whole people is quiet and still, subdued and calm. The altar stands crowned with beauty and splendour, and upon it is the Gospel of life and the adorable wood (sc. the cross). The mysteries are set in order, the censers are smoking, the lamps are shining, and the deacons are hovering and brandishing (fans) in likeness of watchers. Deep silence and peaceful calm settles on that place: it is filled and overflows with brightness and splendour, beauty and power. The bright(-robed) priest, the tongue of the Church, opens his mouth and speaks in secret with God as a familiar. He recounts the glory of that incomprehensible Divinity, which is the cause of intelligible and sensible beings, which cannot be comprehended or searched out or scrutinized, which cannot be known by corporeal beings nor yet by the watchers—one ousia, one lordship, one authority, one will unchangeable from what it is, the one Creator who established by His nod the height and the depth, whose Name the watchers praise in the height and men in the depth; the one God who by the hand of Moses made known that He is, and by Jesus our Lord revealed and shewed to us His Trinity. Three hypostases the Church learned from our Saviour—Father and Son and Holy Spirit—one Divinity: three hypostases, of which none is prior to or later than another, and there is no distinction, save only as to the properties—fatherhood, and generation, and procession—one will, one glory, one lordship: a mystery which is altogether hidden and concealed and covered over away from all; and the watchers are too feeble to examine the secret thereof.

The priest adds: 'All the watchers are standing in fear to praise the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The angels too offer worship to that Majesty, and the army-leaders (of heaven) send up praise continually: the cherubim applaud, the seraphim sanctify with their sanctifications, and the authorities and dominations with their praises: all at once cry and say one to another.'— And the people answer: 'Holy Lord' that dwelleth in light. 'Holy, Holy, Holy Lord,' the people answer, 'of whose glories the heavens and all the earth are full.' This is what the crying of 'Holy' three times means: but that of 'Lord' makes known that the nature of the Deity is one. Holy is the Father, who has the property of fatherhood, and is the cause and the begetter, and not the begotten. Holy is the Son, who has the property of generation, who from the Father is begotten eternally without beginning. Holy is the Spirit, who has the property of procession, who proceedeth from the Father,

and is beyond (all) times. With these (words) all the Church cries out and returns to silence.

The priest begins to commune with God. He confesses (or gives thanks for) the mercy and the grace that have been wrought in us by the revelation of the Word, who was revealed in a body which is (taken) from us. The Creator, adorable in His honour, took a body which is from us, that by it He might renew the image of Adam which was worn out and effaced. A reasonable temple the Holy Spirit built in the bosom of Mary. (and) through (Its) good-pleasure the whole Trinity concurred. The natures are distinct in their hypostases (qĕnômé), without confusion: with one will, with one person (parşôpá) of the one sonship. He is then one in His Godhead and in His manhood; for the manhood and the Godhead are one person (parşôpá). 'Two natures,' it is said, 'and two hypostases (qĕnômé) is our Lord in one person (parşôpá) of the Godhead and the manhood.' Thus does all the Church of the orthodox confess; thus also have the approved doctors of the Church taught, Diodorus, and Theodorus, and Mar Nestorius. He was laid in a manger and wrapped in swaddling-clothes, as Man; and the watchers extolled Him with their praises, as God. He offered sacrifices according to the Law, as Man; and He received worship from the Persians, as God. Simeon bore Him upon his arms, as Man; and he named Him 'the Mercy' who sheweth mercy to all, as God. He kept the Law completely, as Man; and He gave His own new Law, as God.

He was baptized in Jordan by John, as Man; and the heaven was opened in honour of His baptism, as God. He went in to the marriage-feast of the city of Cana, as Man; and he changed the water that it became wine, as God. He fasted in the wilderness forty days, as Man; and watchers descended to minister unto Him, as God. He slept in the boat with His disciples, as Man; and He rebuked the wind and calmed the sea, as God. He set out and departed to a desert place, as Man: and He multiplied the bread and satisfied thousands, as God. He ate and drank and walked and was weary, as Man; and He put devils to flight by the word of His mouth, as God. He prayed and watched and gave thanks and worshipped, as Man; and He forgave debts and pardoned sins, as God. He asked water of the Samaritan woman, as Man; and He revealed and declared her secrets, as God. He sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, as Man; and He forgave the sinful woman her sins, as God. He went up into the mountain of Tabor with His disciples, as Man; and He revealed His glory in their sight, as God. He shed tears and wept over Lazarus, as Man; and He called him that he came forth by His mighty power, as God. He rode upon a colt and entered Jerusalem, as Man; and the boys applauded Him with their Hosannas, as God.

He drew nigh to the fig-tree and shewed that He was an hungered, as Man; and His mighty power caused it to wither on a sudden, as God. He washed the feet of His twelve, as Man; and He called Himself Lord and Master, as God. He ate the legal

passover, as Man; and He exposed the treachery of Iscariot, as God. He prayed and sweated at the time of His passion, as Man; and He scared and terrified them that took Him, as God. The attendants seized Him and bound His hands, as Man; and He healed the ear that Simon cut off, as God. He stood in the place of judgement and bore insult, as Man; and He declared that He is about to come in glory, as God. He bore His cross upon His shoulder, as Man; and He revealed and announced the destruction of Zion, as God. He was hanged upon the wood and endured the passion, as Man; and He shook the earth and darkened the sun, as God. Nails were driven into His body, as Man; and He opened the graves and quickened the dead, as God. He cried out upon the cross 'My God, My God,' as Man; and He promised Paradise to the thief, as God. His side was pierced with a spear, as Man; and His nod rent the (temple-) veil, as God. They embalmed His body and He was buried in the earth, as Man; and He raised up His temple by His mighty power, as God.

He remained in the tomb three days, as Man; and the watchers glorified Him with their praises, as God. He said that He had received all authority, as Man; and He promised to be with us for ever, as God. He commanded Thomas to feel His side, as Man; and He gave them the Spirit for an earnest, as God. He ate and drank after His resurrection, as Man; and He ascended to the height and sent the Spirit, as God.

This then is the confession of the Apostles and the Fathers, and every one that agrees not with their faith is without hope. This is the truth which the Fathers preached and taught; confess with them, that ye may receive life immortal. Our Lord Jesus departed from us to the place above, that at His coming He might lift us up with Him to the Kingdom of the height. And because He went away to a place that is far from our ken, He was pleased to comfort us by His Body and His Blood until His coming. And because it is not possible that He should give His Body and His Blood to His Church, He commanded us to perform this Mystery with bread and wine. Happy is the people of the Christians! What does it (not) possess, and what hope is there (not) in keeping for it on high without end?

For when the time of the passion of the Lifegiver of all was arrived, He ate the legal passover with His disciples. He took bread and blessed and brake and gave to His disciples, and said, This is My Body in truth, without doubt. And He took the cup and gave thanks and blessed and gave to His apostles, and said, This is My true Blood which is for you. And He commanded them to receive (and) drink of it, all of them, that it might be making atonement for their debts for ever. That He gave thanks and blessed is written in the Gospel full of life: what He said the chosen apostles have not made known to us. The great teacher and interpreter Theodorus has handed down the tradition that our Lord spoke thus when He took the bread: 'Of all glory and confession and praise is the nature of Thy Godhead worthy, O Lord of all; for in all generations Thou hast accomplished and performed

Thy dispensation, as though for the salvation and redemption of men. And though they were ungrateful in their works, Thou in Thy mercy didst not cease from helping them. And that Thou mightest accomplish the redemption of all and the renewal of all, Thou

beginning 'nativitas carnis manifestatio est humanae naturae.' The long list of antithetical clauses quoted by Badger (Nestorians vol. ii pp. 35-38) from one of the Nestorian service books has the appearance of being only an elaboration of Narsai's passage. didst take Me (who am) of the nature of Adam, and didst join Me to Thee. And in Me shall be fulfilled all the compacts and all the promises; and in Me shall be realized the mysteries and types (shewn) unto the just men (of old). And because I have been without blemish, and have fully performed all righteousness, by Me Thou dost uproot all sin from human kind. And because I die without fault and without offence, in Me Thou appointest a resurrection of the body for the whole nature.' To this effect did the Son of the Most High make confession to His Father, and these words He spoke when He gave His Body and His Blood. 'This,' said He, 'is My Body, which I have given for the debts of the world; and this, again, is My Blood, the which I have willed should be shed for sins. Whoso eateth with love of My Body and drinketh of My Blood liveth for ever, and abideth in Me, and I in him. Thus be ye doing for My memorial in the midst of your Churches; and My Body and My Blood be ye receiving in faith. Be ye offering bread and wine, as I have taught you, and I will accomplish and make them the Body and Blood. Body and Blood do I make the bread and wine through the brooding and operation of the Holy Spirit.'

Thus spake the Lifegiver of the worlds to His disciples: and the bread and wine He named His Body and Blood. He did not style them a type or a similitude, but Body in reality (lit. 'in exactness') and Blood in verity. And even though their nature is immeasurably far from Him, yet by (or in) power and by (or in) the union one is the Body. Let watchers and men confess to Thee, Lord, continually, Christ, our hope, who didst deliver up Thyself for our sake. One in power is the Body which the priests break in the Church with that Body that sits in glory at the right hand. And even as the God of all is united to the First-fruits of our race (sc. Christ), Christ is united to the bread and wine which are upon the altar. Wherefore the bread is strictly (or accurately) the Body of our Lord, and the wine is His Blood properly and truly. Thus did He command His familiar friends to eat His Body, and thus did He admonish the sons of His household to drink His Blood. Blessed is he that believes Him and assents to His word; for if he be dead he shall live, and if he be alive he shall not die in his offences. Carefully did the apostles take up the commandment of their Lord, and with diligence did they hand it on to those that came after them. Even until now has this (commandment) been observed in the Church, yea, and is observed, until He shall cause His Mystery to cease by His shining forth and by His manifestation.

To this effect the priest gives thanks before God, and he raises his voice at the end of his prayer to make it audible to the people. He makes his voice heard, and with his hand he signs the Mysteries that are set (on the altar); and the people with Amen concur and acquiesce in the prayer of the priest. Then the herald of the Church commands the people and says: 'With your minds be ye praying. Peace be with us.' In mind pray ye at this hour, and in thought, for lo, great peace is being accomplished with the accomplishing of the Mysteries. The priest begins to make supplication earnestly before God, that He will graciously accept in His love the living sacrifice that is being offered to Him. He arranges the ecclesiastical orders one after another, for whom the Church offers the adorable Mysteries. He commemorates first the glorious Church that is in every place; and he asks that they (its members) may be of one mind and faith. He commemorates the priests and periodeutae and deacons; and he entreats that they may be in holiness and purity. He commemorates the martyrs and confessors and doctors, that their name may be remembered in the Church at the hour of the Mysteries. He commemorates the kings and judges who are in every place, that they may be judging with equity in all the world. He commemorates in his prayer (lit. 'word') all the

mourners and ascetics, that their prayer may daily be acceptable before God. He commemorates the just and righteous who are in every place; and he asks that they may keep the covenant that they have made in (its) integrity. He commemorates the sons of Holy Church in all their grades; and he asks that they may guard their faith with watchfulness. He now commemorates also the deceased in every place, who are deceased and departed in faith without doubting. He makes mention of himself, who has been accounted worthy of this mediation; and he asks for mercy upon all creatures collectively. He mentions those who pour out alms upon the poor; and he asks that they may receive a double reward for their alms. He makes mention of the fallen and of sinners and transgressors; and he asks that they may return to penance and pardon of debts. He makes mention of those for whom he is offering the sacrifices; that they may find mercy and forgiveness of the debts of their offences. He makes mention of the heathen and of gainsayers and of those in error; and he entreats that they may come to know the faith of Holy Church. He makes mention at once of all the world and its inhabitants, that battles and wars and strifes may cease from it. He makes mention of the weather (lit. 'air'), and of the crops of the whole year; and he asks that the crown of the year may be prosperous and blessed.

He makes mention of his own place and of all places together; and he asks that there may be peace and quiet in the midst of their habitations. He makes mention of those who are sailing on the seas and (of those) in the islands; and he asks that they may all be saved from the storms. He makes mention of those who lie in distresses and in persecutions; and he asks that there may be solace and respite to their afflictions. He makes mention of those that lie in prisons and in bonds; and he

asks that they may be loosed from their bonds and grievous torments. He makes mention of those who have been cast into exile afar off; and he asks that they may escape from tribulations and temptations. He makes mention of those who are vexed with sicknesses and diseases; and he entreats that they may recover health of body with healing. He makes mention of those whom the accursed demons are tempting; and he asks that they may find mercy and compassion from the Lord. He makes mention in his prayer of the haters also of Holy Church, that there may be an end put to their impieties before God. He makes mention of the debts of the whole ecclesiastical body; and he asks that they may be made worthy of the forgiveness of debts and offences.

Of all these the priest makes mention before God, imitating Mar Nestorius in his supplication. To this effect the priest prays before God, and he asks of Him that He will graciously accept the sacrifice which he offers unto Him. On behalf of all is the living sacrifice sacrificed in the midst of the Church; and this sacrifice helps and profits all creatures. By that supplication which the priest makes on behalf of all classes all his sins and offences are forgiven him.

After this the priest makes confession before God according as our Lord Jesus taught His twelve: 'Lo, we typify,' says the priest, 'and commemorate the passion and death and the resurrection also of our Lord Jesus.' He summons the Spirit to come down and dwell in the bread and wine and make them the Body and Blood of King Messiah. To the Spirit he calls, that He will also light down upon the assembled congregation, that by His gift it may be worthy to receive the Body and Blood. The Spirit descends upon the oblation without change (of place), and causes the power of His Godhead to dwell in the bread and wine and completes the mystery of our Lord's resurrection from the dead. These things the priest says in earnest entreaty; and he draws himself up and stretches out his hands towards the height. Towards the height the priest gazes boldly; and he calls the Spirit to come and celebrate the Mysteries which he has offered. The Spirit he asks to come and brood over the oblation and bestow upon it power and divine operation. The Spirit comes down at the request of the priest, be he never so great a sinner, and celebrates the Mysteries by the mediation of the priest whom He has consecrated. It is not the priest's virtue that celebrates the adorable Mysteries; but the Holy Spirit celebrates by His brooding. The Spirit broods, not because of the worthiness of the priest, but because of the Mysteries which are set upon the altar.

As soon as the bread and wine are set upon the altar they shew forth a symbol of the death of the Son, also of His resurrection; wherefore that Spirit which raised Him from the dead comes down now and celebrates the Mysteries of the resurrection of His Body. Thus does the Holy Spirit celebrate by the hands of the priest; and without a priest they (sc. the Mysteries) are not celebrated for ever and ever. The Mysteries of the Church are not celebrated without a priest, for the Holy Spirit

has not permitted (any other) to celebrate them. The priest received the power of the Spirit by the laying on of hands; and by him are performed all the Mysteries that are in the Church. The priest consecrates the bosom of the waters of baptism; and the Spirit bestows the adoption of sons on those that are baptized. Without a priest a woman is not betrothed to a man; and without him their marriage festival is not accomplished. Without a priest the defunct also is not interred; nor do they let him down into his grave without the priest. Common (lit. 'unclean') water is not consecrated without the priest; and if there were no priest the whole house would be unclean. These things the Holy Spirit celebrates by the hands of the priest, even though he be altogether in sins and offences. And whatever (function) the priests perform they accomplish (it), even though they be sinners. They that possess not the order cannot celebrate, be they never so just.

The righteous cannot by their purity bring down the Spirit; and the sinful by their sinfulness do not hinder His descent. Here does the Long-suffering One bear with a sinful priest, and He celebrates by his hands the glorious unspeakable Mysteries. In the world to come He will judge (him) strictly by his own hand, and will take away from him that gift which was given to him. And because he has not honoured the excellence of his order as it beseems him, he will there be despised and set at naught before all creatures. Hear, O thou priest, that hast not works agreeable to thine order; stand in awe and be affrighted at the torment of Gehenna. More grievous than all punishments will be thy punishment, O wicked priest, because thou hast not fittingly administered the order allotted to thee. In the world to come there are no orders nor classes; but Christ alone will be all in all.

The Priest summons the Spirit, and He comes down upon the oblation; and he worships with quaking and with fear and harrowing dread. Then the herald of the Church cries in that hour: 'In silence and fear be ye standing: peace be with us. Let all the people be in fear at this moment in which the adorable Mysteries are being accomplished by the descent of the Spirit.' Then the Priest makes his voice heard to all the people, and signs with his hand over the Mysteries, as before. He signs now, not because the Mysteries have need of the signing, but to teach by the last sign that they are accomplished. Three signs the priest signs over the oblation; and by them he mystically perfects and completes it. Three bows does the priest make before God; and by them he openly adores before the water of baptism) on them and on the wall of the city. He also carried with him on his rounds the eucharist, in order to let them receive the mystery at their stations, lest for this reason any one of them should quit his post and come down from the wall.' Wright places the composition of this Chronicle in the year 507 (Introd. p. ix).

His Majesty. With one he praises, with one he confesses (or gives thanks), with one he prays; and he calls to the Spirit to dwell and light down upon the oblation. Three days did our Lord remain in the bosom of the earth; and on the third He

arose and was resuscitated in great glory. And in like manner the priest bows three times; and by the third (bow) he symbolizes the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. Genuflexions also the priest makes three times; and he typifies thereby our Lord's being in the tomb. Three times he genuflects before the descent (of the Spirit); and again he does not genuflect, because the mystery of the resurrection has been accomplished. A mystery of the resurrection does the priest accomplish by the completion of the Mysteries; and he does not again symbolize the mystery of His death by a genuflexion. The 318 priests gave command that on all Sundays and festivals there should be no genuflexion. No man therefore is allowed to bow the knee at the Mysteries, save only the priest who by his genuflexions signifies a mystery. Even the priest,—before the descent he may bow the knee, but after the descent of the Holy Spirit he may not (so) worship.

Then the priest takes in his hands the living Bread, and lifts up his gaze towards the height, and makes confession of his Lord. He breaks the Bread in the name of the Father and Son and Spirit, and unites the Blood with the Body, and the Body with the Blood. He signs the Blood with the Body, and makes mention of the Trinity: and he signs the Body with the living Blood with the same utterance. He unites them—the Body with the Blood, and the Blood with the Body—that every one may confess that the Body and the Blood are one. Then the Priest, after all the ceremonies have been completed, blesses the people with that formula with which our Lord gave blessing. He now begins to break the Body little by little, that it may be easy to distribute to all the receivers. The resurrection of the Son the priest symbolized by the completion of the Mysteries; and most suitably does he break His Body that he may distribute it, since our Lord also, when He was risen from the tomb in glory, appeared to the women and to the disciples ten times: once to Mary the Magdalene alone; once to Luke and Cleopas who were going in the way; once to the band of eleven in the upper room; another time on the shore of the sea of Tiberias; to all He appeared, and assured them of His resurrection; and to Thomas also He shewed His side (and) the place of the lance; and upon the Mount of Olives our Lord blessed His twelve, and was parted from them and ascended in glory to the heaven of heavens; and now He appears, in the reception of His Body, to the Sons of the Church; and they believe in Him and receive from Him the Pledge of life.

Then the herald of the Church cries and lifts up his voice: 'Let us all approach with fear to the Mystery of the Body and the Blood. In faith let us recall the passion of Jesus our Lord, and let us understand also His resurrection from the dead. For our sake the Only-begotten of the God of all took a perfect man and accomplished His dispensation; and He suffered on the cross and died and was resuscitated and rose and ascended; and in His love He gave us as a pledge His Body and His Blood, that by them we might recall all the graces which He has wrought towards us. Let us confess and worship and glorify Him at all times. Let us now draw near,

then, in pure love and faith (and) receive the treasure of spiritual life; and with prayer, clean and pure, and with contrition of heart let us partake of the adorable Mysteries of Holy Church; and let us set the condition of repentance before God, and let us have remorse and contrition for the abominable deeds we have done; and let us ask mercy and forgiveness of debts from the Lord of all; and let us also forgive the offences of our fellow-servants.' The people answer: 'O Lord, pardon the sins of thy servants, and purify our conscience from doubts and from strifes. O Lord, pardon the offences of them that are praising Thee, and make clear our soul from hatred and slander. O Lord, pardon the sins of Thy servants who have confessed Thy name, and make us worthy to receive this Sacrament with faith. O Lord, pardon Thy servants who call upon Thy name daily; and grant us, Lord, to be Thine, even as Thou desirest; and may these divine Mysteries, Lord, be to us for confidence and courage before Thy Majesty.'

Then the Priest prays and begs of God that He will sanctify us and blot out our sins by His grace, and make us all worthy to stand before Him without blemish, and call Him, all of us, with confidence, Abba, Our Father. Then the people answer and say earnestly the prayer which the Living Mouth taught His beloved sons: 'Our Father, who dwellest above in heaven and in every place, hallowed be Thy holy name in us by all peoples. May that kingdom come unto us which Thou hast promised us, and may we delight therein through (Thy) Pledge from henceforth: May the will of Thy love be done and satisfied and accomplished in (or by) us, and may we be worthy to perform all actions according to Thy will; and as in heaven all (other) wills cease from us, so on earth let us will according to Thy will alone. Give us bread and every bodily need in this the time of our sojourning in this world; and forgive our debts and pardon our sins whereby we are in debt through our neglect and our frailty and our feebleness; for we also have forgiven from our heart every one that is in debt to us, and we keep not hatred in our heart against any man. And make us not to enter into temptation nor trial, who are feeble and without Thy power are nothing; but deliver us from the evil of the crafty Evil One, and suffer him not to draw near to us by his wiles: for Thine is the power, also the Kingdom, and to Thee is due also glory for ever and ever.'

Then the priest says to the people: 'Peace be with you.' And the people answer: 'And with thee, O priest, and with thy spirit.' With the prayer of our Lord the priest began in the beginning of the Mysteries, and with it he makes an end now that all the Mysteries are completed. 'Peace be with you,' says the priest in this hour: and he reminds us of our Lord's resurrection from the dead. 'Peace be with you,' said our Lord to His twelve, when He appeared to them and announced to them concerning His resurrection. 'Peace be with you,' said our Lord to His familiars; 'for lo, I am risen, and I raise up the whole nature.' 'Peace be with you,' said He to his brethren, His intimates, 'for lo, I am ascending and preparing a place for you all.' 'Peace be with you,' said our Lord to His twelve, 'for I am with you for ever

without end.' And this Peace the priest gives to the sons of the Church; and he confirms them in love and hope and faith.

And when the children of the Church have been prepared to receive the Mysteries, the priest cries out: 'To the holy ones is the Holy Thing fitting.' To all the holy ones, sanctified by the Spirit of adoption of sons, is the Holy Thing fitting by the consensus of the Fathers. To all the holy ones whom baptism has sanctified the Holy Thing is fitting according to the ecclesiastical law. Those other grades who have been driven out from the midst of the Church may not take part in the reception of the divine Mysteries. The people answer: 'One is the Father, that Holy One who is from eternity, without beginning and without end; and as a favour He hath made us worthy to acquire sanctification from the spiritual birth of baptism. And one is the Father, and one also is the Son and the Holy Spirit: one in three and three in one, without alteration. Glory to the Father, and to the Son who is from Him, and to the Holy Spirit, a Being who is for ever and ever without end.'

Then the priest himself first receives the Sacrament, that he may teach the people that even the priest himself stands in need of mercy. The priest who has consecrated stands in need of the reception of the adorable Mysteries, that he also may be made worthy of the communion of the Pledge of life. The priest precedes the bishop in the reception of the Mysteries, if a priest has consecrated them and not the high priest (i.e. the bishop). In due order (or by degrees) the priests and deacons receive; and then the people, men and women, little and great. And at his setting forth the priest blesses the people, and says: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.'

The Sacrament goes forth on the paten (πίναξ) and in the cup with splendour and glory, with an escort of priests and a great procession of deacons. Thousands of watchers and ministers of fire and spirit go forth before the Body of our Lord and conduct it. All the sons of the Church rejoice, and all the people, when they see the Body setting forth from the midst of the altar; and even as the apostles rejoiced in our Lord after His resurrection, so do all the faithful rejoice when they see Him. Great, my brethren, is this Mystery and unspeakable; and he that is able fitly to describe (it), let him fitly describe (it) if he can. 'I have a mystery (or secret), I have a mystery,' cried Isaiah, the marvel of prophets, concerning the revelation of God which he saw in the temple. If I should seek to write aught concerning this matter, all the parchments (χάρτης) in all this (world) would not suffice me. Flesh, moreover, is fitting for the perfect and full-grown: milk is for children until they arrive at the perfect age. 'Whoso eateth My Body, he abideth in Me, and I in him, if so be he keep all My commandments with diligence.' For 'whoso eateth of My Body and drinketh of My Blood unworthily, unto his condemnation he eateth and drinketh,' without profit.

He who approaches to receive the Body stretches forth his hands, lifting up his right hand and placing it over its fellow. In the form of a cross the receiver joins his hands; and thus he receives the Body of our Lord upon a cross. Upon a cross our Lord Jesus was set at naught; and on the same cross He flew and was exalted to the height above. With this type he that receives approaches (and) receives. And the priest who gives says unto him: 'The Body of our Lord.' He receives in his hands the adorable Body of the Lord of all; and he embraces it and kisses it with love and affection. He makes to enter, he hides the Leaven of life in the temple of his body, that his body may be sanctified by the reception of the Body of our Lord. Debts He pardons, blemishes He purifies, diseases He heals, stains He cleanses (and) purges with the hyssop of His mercy.

And while the Body and Blood is being distributed to all the receivers, the Church cries out in honour of the Mysteries; and thus it says: 'Lo, the Medicine of life! Lo, it is distributed in Holy Church. Come, ye mortals, receive and be pardoned your debts. This is the Body and Blood of our Lord in truth, which the peoples have received, and by which they have been pardoned without doubt. This is the Medicine that heals diseases and festering sores. Receive, ye mortals, and be purified by it from your debts. Come, receive for naught forgiveness of debts and offences through the Body and Blood which takes away the sin of the whole world.' And after the whole congregation has been communicated with the Body and Blood, they reply and say with love and rejoicing: 'Our Lord Jesus, King to be adored of all creatures, do away from us all harms by the power of Thy Mysteries; and when Thou shinest forth at the end of the times for the redemption of all, may we go forth to meet Thee with confidence with Hosannas. May we confess to Thy name for Thy goodness towards our race, who hast pardoned our debts and blotted them out by Thy Body and Thy Blood. And here and there may we be worthy to send up to Thy Godhead glory and comeliness and confession for ever and ever.' Then the herald of the Church cries with his proclamation, and urges the people to give thanks; and thus he says: 'All we that have been made worthy of the gift of the Mysteries, let us give thanks and worship and glorify the God of all.'

And the people answer: 'To Him be the glory for His gift, which cannot be repaid for ever and ever. Amen, and Amen.' Then the priest prays and gives thanks to the God of all, who has made our race worthy of the glorious unspeakable Mysteries; and he begs and entreats that He will strengthen us that we may become acceptable before Him by thoughts and words and works together. Then all in the altar and without in the congregation pray the prayer which that lifegiving mouth taught. With it do (men) begin every prayer, morning and evening; and with it do they complete all the rites (or mysteries) of Holy Church. This, it is said, is that which includes all prayer, and without it no prayer is concluded. Then the priest goes forth (and) stands at the door of the altar; and he stretches forth his hands and blesses the people, and says—the whole people the priest blesses in that hour, symbolizing the

blessing which our Lord Jesus gave to His twelve. On the day of His ascension He, the High Pontiff, lifted up His hands and blessed and made priests of His twelve; and then He was taken up. A symbol of His resurrection has the priest typified by the completion of the Mysteries, and a symbol of His revelation before His disciples by distributing Him. By the stretching out of the hands of the bright(-robed) priest towards the height he confers a blessing upon the whole congregation; and thus he says: 'He that hath blessed us with every blessing of the Spirit in heaven, may He also now bless us all with the power of His Mysteries.'

With this blessing with which the bright(-robed) priest blesses us he depicts a type (or mystery) of that (blessing) which is about to work in us. When we have been raised from the dead and have put on glory we shall be lifted up on high into heaven with the Saviour. There shall all passions cease from our human nature, and we shall delight in desirable good things without end. In this world wherein we dwell with all passions, may He keep our lives from hidden and open harms; and as He has made us worthy of the reception of His Mysteries by His grace, may He make us all worthy to become temples for His Divinity; and with every breath let us confess and worship and praise Him for His gift unspeakable by tongue of flesh. These things the bright(-robed) priest confers by his blessings; and with his right hand he signs the congregation with the living sign.

These are the glorious Mysteries of Holy Church; and this is the order in which they are celebrated by the priesthood. Blessed is he whose heart is pure in that hour in which the awful Mysteries of the Body of our Lord are consecrated. The watchers on high congratulate the sons of the Church, that they have been deemed worthy of receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus. Glory to Thy name for Thine unspeakable gift! And who can suffice to render glory to Thy Godhead?

Come, then, O son of the Mystery of the sons of the Church, learn the order by which thou mayest draw nigh to the priesthood, that thou mayest approach it in the manner that the apostle Paul enjoined. With a pure heart approach the Body and Blood of our Lord which cleanse thee from the stains of thy offences which thou hast committed; they (the priests) will not recoil from a sinner who wishes to return, nor yet from one defiled who mourns and is distressed for his defilement. On this condition they receive the defiled and sinners, that they make a covenant that they will not return to their works. Pray with the priest with love in that hour; for the Giver of life receives thee and forgives thy debts. Beware, moreover, that thou go not forth without the nave, in that hour when the awful Mysteries are consecrated. Who is he that would willingly estrange himself from that supper to which watchers and men have been summoned? Who is he that, when he is set in the portion of the sons, would place himself with the strangers whom the Church has driven out? This is the time when he ought to stand as an angel, in that hour wherein the Holy Spirit lights down. This hour gives life to him that stands therein;

this hour distributes gifts to him that receives it. Blessed is he that believes in it and receives of it; for if he be dead he shall live, and if he be alive he shall not die in his offences.

Here our ship has arrived in port, and our net is filled. Let us then be silent; for what it has gathered in, that was our quest. I confessed it at the beginning, that you might not with carpings condemn my feebleness; and now with love correct my short-comings, if any such you should find. Glory to Thy name, who hast completed with us what we began in Thee, and praise to Thy Father and to the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.

Homily XXII: On Baptism

Who suffices to repay (His) love to the Fashioner of all, who came in His love to beget men spiritually? Too little is the tongue of height and depth to give thanks with us to the power of the Creator who has renewed our image and blotted out our iniquity. As in a furnace He re-cast our image in Baptism; and instead of our clay He has made us spiritual gold. Spiritually, without colours, was He pleased to depict us; that the beauty of our image might not again be corrupted by death. O Painter, that paints an image upon the tablet of the waters, nor is His art hindered by opposition! O Artist, that breathes the Spirit (and works) without hands, and sows life immortal in mortality! Ah, for the Command, to whom all hard things are easy, who gives power to things feeble by the might of His greatness! Ah, for the Will, whose purpose precedes His operation,—and before He had created He saw by His knowledge that which He created! Visible to His purpose was this will which He has shewn towards us; and on it He was gazing when as yet He had not created us who created us in the beginning. Before its creation the image of our renewal was depicted before Him; and with His (very) Being He had it in His heart to do this. With wisdom He performed it, even as it befits the All-knowing; and wisely He accomplished His will and shewed His power.

He created a second time the creation which He had created in the beginning; and He purged out from it the old things of mortality. The rust of iniquity He willed to wipe away from mortals; and His purpose put the sponge of the Spirit into the hand of our body. Who is (this) that has set the will of His love towards our race, and appointed our vileness as officers over His wise (designs)? Out of our clay He has made treasure-keepers of His hidden things; and from it He has appointed stewards (ἐπίτροποι) to dispense life. He chose Him priests as mediators between Him and our people; and He has sent them on an embassy to men. To them He gave the great signet of His Divinity, that with it they might seal the work of the renovation of all. To them He entrusted the boundless wealth of the Spirit, that they might lovingly distribute it according to its greatness. A spiritual art He taught them, that they should be tracing the image of life on the tablet of the waters. Ah, corporeal beings, painters of the Spirit, without hands! Ah, mortals, mixers of life with mortality! Ah, priesthood, how greatly is it exalted above all, having won a

station in the height and the depth by the power of Him that has chosen it! Ah, marvel, the wonder whereof is too great to be set forth, that death (or mortality) should quicken itself, as though by its own (power)!

Ah, Will, that has let itself down to its own creatures, and has placed its riches in a hand of flesh, that it may enrich itself! Ah, Creator, that came and renewed His creation, and has given to the work of His own hands a pen, that it should depict itself! Who would not marvel at the greatness of His love and His graciousness, that He has made our clay the creator of a creation, after His own likeness? Who would not praise His care for our race, who has exalted our low estate together with His own incomprehensible Divinity? To our own nature did He give the authority, together with its renewal, that it should create itself a new creation of immortals. A power of life He breathed into our body, parent of passions, and it began to interpret spiritual things that were to it invisible.

His art of creation He shewed to our soul; and it acquired power to create a creation, even as the Creator. By a word that (comes) from Him it forms men in the bosom of the waters, and fashions them spiritually without hands. This is a design the interpretation whereof is too high to be set forth; and the will of the Hidden One (alone) is able to describe it as it is. By the transparence of the soul the mind is able to discern it; and with the understanding instead of eyes it sees its dignity. August is the theme thereof, and it cannot be spoken bodily; and high is the quest thereof, and it cannot be achieved in earthly wise. Spiritually is composed the story of the renewal of our image; and save by the Spirit no mouth can expound its history. In heavenly fashion did He mix the drug for the disease of our iniquity; and unless the mind ascend to the height it cannot see it. By the chief Rabbi (or Master) is written the lesson (or alphabet) of the redemption of our life; and unless the learner imitate he cannot understand.

Come, ye disciples of the Master, Christ, let us gaze attentively upon the spiritual writings of Baptism. Come, ye heirs of the covenant written in blood, look upon the substance of your inheritance with the eye of the spirit. Come, examine with affectionate love your possessions, and praise and magnify Him that enriches men from His stores. Come, together, ye purified sons of Baptism, let us depict the word that cries out in the waters so that they acquire power. Come, let us examine discerningly the hand of flesh that buries bodies and raises them up swiftly. Come, let us make ready to look upon a marvel in the holy temple; and upon the armies of the height that attend the mystery of our redemption. Behold the hour that requires of the beholders that they be in orderly array. Let every one fasten the gaze of his mind on the things that are said.

Lo, the priest is ready to enter the holy of holies, to open the door of the kingdom of the height before them that would enter. Lo, he approaches the curtain of the royal house, that he may receive power to perform the mysteries that are to be

done by his hand. Lo, the King of the height reaches out to him the hand of the Spirit, and places in his hand the signet of His name, that he may seal His sheep. Lo, He puts on him the vesture of glory of the immortals, that he may hide therewith the disgrace of men who were guilty and exposed. Lo, He has brought him to visit the flock entrusted to him; and he lifts up his voice and calls the sheep by their names. Lo, the sheep are gathered together, and the lambs and the ewes; and he sets upon them the stamp of life of the word of his Lord. Lo, he brings them, as it were, into a furnace by means of their words; and he exacts from them the one confession of the name of the Creator. As a pen the (divine) Nod holds him spiritually, and inscribes (and) writes body and soul in the book of life. As with a rod it drives from them by the word of his mouth the darkness of error which had blinded them from understanding.

He lifts up his voice and says: 'Renounce ye the Evil One and his power and his angels and his service and his error.' They first renounce the dominion of the Evil One who brought them to slavery; and then they confess the power of the Creator who has set them free. Two things he says who draws nigh to the mysteries of the Church: a renunciation of the Evil One, and a (confession of) faith in the Maker: 'I renounce the Evil One and his angels,' he cries with the voice, 'and I have no dealings with him, not even in word.' The priest stands as a mediator (i.e. here 'interpreter'), and asks him: 'Of whom dost thou wish to become a servant from henceforth?' He learns from him whom he wishes to call Master; and then he inscribes him in the number of the first-borns of the height.

From Satan and his angels he (the priest) turns away his (the catechumen's) face; and then he traces for him the image of the Divinity upon his forehead. The Evil One he renounces as an evil one whose intercourse is evil, and his angels as haters of the word of truth. The Evil One and his adherents hate the word of truth; and it behoves him who loves the truth to hate them. 'Thy haters, O Lord, I have hated,' let him repeat with the son of Jesse; and let him exact of him (Satan) vengeance for the wrong (done to) the name of the Creator. A warfare has he that approaches Baptism with Satan and with his angels and with his service.

His angels are men clothed in deceit, who minister to him with abominations full of wickedness. One of his angels is Mani, the preacherous wolf, who clothes himself in the likeness of the lambs of the flock and leads the flock astray. Another of his angels is Valentinus, the perverter of the truth, who obscures the resurrection of the dead with his idle prating. His angel also is Arius, the foul-minded, who lies sick of the disease of 'inequality,' which is worse than the leprosy. His angel also is Eunomius, the subtle serpent, who by his bites destroys the soul of them that obey him. One of his angels is the fool Apollinarius, who builds deceit into the edifice of the truth and is not abashed. Of his angels is Paul, the stubborn-minded, who insolently challenges the power of the Word of the Father. Among his

angels we must number also Eutyches, the madman, who went mad in the matter of the passibility of the Impassible. As an inn-keeper (κάπηλος) he learned the inn-keeper's trade; and every moment he mixes up the living Nature with the passions of the body. Far greater is his wickedness than the wickedness of his fellows, and he renders greater help to the devil than his companions. By these the hater of men leads men astray; and by them he casts the poison of his deceit into the mind of men. These perform the various services of his abominations, and even improve upon them with lying inventions.

His service is that service of which they boast; and therein his mysteries are uttered, and not those of the truth. Him the heretics serve in all manner of ways; and by his wiles they go astray, and lead astray their hearers. We must flee from them, then, as from the unclean, and we must not mingle with the abominations of their doings. 'Unclean' and 'evil ones' let us call them—them and the Evil One; and let us turn away our faces from their mysteries (which are) full of wickedness. Full of wickedness is the invention of the Evil One and of them that listen to him; and diseases of iniquity are hidden in the error of his craft. His invention are the circus and the stadium and the theatres, and the riotous sounds of the songs which he has composed and written. His error are soothsayings and witchcrafts of all sorts—eye-winking and ear-tickling and street accosting. These things the disciple of the truth renounces when he becomes a disciple.

And then he comes to the confession of the faith. The truth of his soul he reveals by the sensible voice: 'Lo,' he says, 'I have turned away from the Evil One to the Creator.' He puts the devils to shame by the utterance of his mouth, (saying): 'Hearken, ye rebellious ones, I have no part with you.' The assemblies of the height he makes to rejoice by the words of his faith: 'Come, ye spiritual ones, rejoice with me, for I am saved alive from destruction; I am your fellow-servant and a fellow-labourer in your works; and with that Lord to whom ye minister I am desirous of serving.' He names himself a soldier of the Kingdom of the height—a fugitive who has returned to take refuge with the King of kings.

He first entreats the stewards of Holy Church to present him at the door of the King, that he may speak his words. The stewards are the priests, the ministers of the Mysteries, to whom is committed the treasury of the Spirit to dispense. To one of them the wanderer, the exile, approaches, that they may set him free from the subjection of the Evil One who took him captive. As an exile he stands naked, without covering; and he shews him (the priest) the toil and labour of his captors' house: 'I appeal to Thee, O King,' cries the captive to the King's servants, 'approach the King and entreat for me, that He may be reconciled to me. Enter and say to Him, "One of Thy servants has returned from captivity, and lo, with love he beseeches to see Thy face." I have verily been made a captive by the slave that rebelled against Thy Lordship; free my life from his slavery, that he may not deride me. I am Thy

servant, good Lord, and the son of Thy handmaid, why should I serve a wicked slave who has revolted from Thee? Heretofore I have wickedly served the all-wicked one; ransom me from him, that I may be Thine, for Thine I am.'

These words the wanderer puts together on the day of his return, after the manner of the story of the younger son. For his sake were the parables enacted; and it is right that he should frame his words according to those that are written. He it is of whom it is written that he strayed and went forth, and turned and came (back); and the day of his going forth and of his repentance is inscribed in the Gospel. To-day comes to pass in truth that which is written; and abundant mercies go forth to meet him and receive him. At his repentance the heavenly assemblies are rejoicing; and they are escorting him as a dead man that has returned to life. The devil alone does he make to be in sorrow over his return,—that he has severed his meshes and broken his snares and left him and fled. From his (Satan's) bitter slavery the sinner has fled; and he has taken sanctuary with the good Lord whose love is sweet. From his exile the exile has returned to his Maker; and lo, he entreats to enter (and) see the face of the King. By means of his petition he frames an indictment against his captor, and convicts him out of the law of God. To the servants of the King he gives the pen of the word of his mouth; and they write (it) down and bring him before the Judge.

The priests he asks (to be) as an advocate (συνήγορος) in the suit against the suit (opposed to him); and they plead the cause for him while he is silent. As in a lawsuit the priest stands at the hour of the Mysteries, and accuses the devil on behalf of sinners. The sinner also stands like a poor man that has been defrauded; and he begs and entreats that mercy may help him in the judgment. Naked he stands and stripped before the Judge, that by his wretched plight he may win pity to cover him. Without covering he pleads his cause against his adversary, that the King may see him and swiftly exact judgment for him.

He bends his knees and bows his head in his confusion, and is ashamed to look aloft towards the Judge. He spreads sack-cloth (upon him); and then he draws near to ask for mercy, making mention of his subjection to the Evil One. Two things he depicts by his kneeling down at the hour of the Mysteries: one, his fall, and one, that he is making payment as a debtor. That fall which was in Paradise he now recalls; and he pleads a judgment with Satan who led astray his father (sc. Adam). He is in dread of him, therefore his face is looking upon the ground till he hears the voice of forgiveness, and then he takes heart. He waits for the priest to bring in his words before the Judge; and he (the priest) restores to him the chart of liberty with the oil and the water. A sponsor also he brings with him into the court, that he may come in and bear witness to his preparation and his sincerity. With sincerity he protests that he will abide in love of the truth; and his companion becomes surety (saying): 'Yea, true is the protestation of his soul.' He becomes as a guide to his

words and his actions; and he shews him the conduct of spiritual life. He calls (or reads) his name, and presents him before the guards (i.e. the priests), that they may name him heir, and son, and citizen.

In the books the priest enters the name of the lost one, and he brings it in and places it in the archives (ἀρχεῖα) of the King's books. He makes him to stand as a sheep in the door of the sheep-fold; and he signs his body and lets him mix with the flock. The sign (rushmá) of the oil he holds in his hand, before the beholders; and with manifest things he proclaims the power of things hidden. And as by a symbol he shews to the eyes of the bodily senses the secret power that is hidden in the visible sign.

O thou dust-born, that signest the flock with the sign of its Lord, and sealest upon it His hidden Name by the outward mark! Ah, dust-born, that holds the Spirit on the tip of his tongue, and cuts away the iniquity of soul and body with the word of his mouth! Ah, mortal, in whose mouth is set a mighty spring, and who gives to drink life immortal to the sons of his race! Ah, pauper, son of paupers, that is grown rich on a sudden, and has begun to distribute the wealth of the Spirit which his fathers had not! Ah, dust-born, whose dust bears witness to his vileness, who has received power to create himself (as) a new creation! A new creation the Good One taught the sons of his house, that they might restore the handiwork of His creation. The iniquity of men had cast down the high edifice which His hands had made; and He gave authority to men to build it again. He saw His work, that it was grown old and worn out in mortality, and he contrived for it a remedy of life immortal. He saw that the walls of His house were tottering through weakness; and He laid its foundations in the deep of the waters and made them firm. With feeble waters He was pleased to confirm feeble bodies; and with the power of the Spirit He would strengthen the wavering faculties (of the soul). The furnace of the waters His purpose prepared mystically;

and instead of fire He has heated it with the Spirit of the power of His will. His own handiwork He made a craftsman over His creation, that it should re-cast itself in the furnace of the waters and the heat of the Spirit. Come, ye mortals, see a marvel (wrought) in mortal man, who dies and lives again by the mediation of its working. Come, let us examine the mystery of our dying in the midst of the waters; and let us look upon the wonder that is mystically achieved in us. Come, let us draw nigh to the treasurers of the Church's treasures, and let us hear from them how they give life by the water. Let us enter with them the mystical holy of holies, and let us learn from them the explanation of the mysteries of death and life. Death and life is the mystery of Baptism; and two things in one are performed therein by the hand of the priesthood. By the hand of the priesthood the Creator has been pleased to reveal His power; and to it He has entrusted the great riches of His sweetness. The priests He has established as stewards (ἐπίτροποι) over His possessions, that

as trusty officers (or Sharrîrs) they may distribute wealth to the sons of His house. To them He gave the signet of the name of the incomprehensible Divinity, that they might be stamping men with the holy Name. The stamp of His name they lay upon His flock continually;

and with the Trinity men are signing men.

The iron of the oil the priest holds on the tip of his fingers; and he signs the body and the senses of the soul with its sharp (edge). The son of mortals whets the oil with the words of his mouth; and he makes it sharp as iron to cut off iniquity. The three names he recites in order, one after the other; and in triple wise (i.e. with the three names) he completes and performs the mystery of our redemption. Ah, weak one, how great is the wonder that is administered by thee! and the mouth is too little to say how great is the power of its significance. Ah, lowly one, how greatly is thy feebleness exalted! and the mind cannot ascend with thee whither thou hast arrived. Ah, man—it is to the priest that I have said what I have said—how great is the authority given to thee, that hast (the power) to be giving life! Life does the priest give to his fellows by his ministry; and he treads out a way for his fellow-servants towards the things that are to come. The office of a mouth he fulfils for (mental) faculties and (bodily) members; and on behalf of all he pronounces the words of forgiveness of iniquity. Oil and water he lays first as a foundation, and by his words he completes (and) builds the name of the Divinity. With liquid oil and weak water he re-casts the body; and instead of clay he changes (and) makes (it) pure gold. Who would not marvel at the power our poverty has acquired, that it should enrich itself from the gift incomprehensible? As a treasure-keeper the priest stands at the door of the sanctuary; and he applies the keys of the word of his mouth, and opens up life.

The three names he casts upon the oil, and consecrates it, that it may be sanctifying the uncleanness of men by its holiness. With the name hidden in it he signs the visible body; and the sharp power of the name enters even unto the soul. Ah, marvel, which a man performs by that (power) which is not his own; signing the feeble bodies so that the inward (parts) feel the pain. The office of a physician, too, he exercises towards the members; touching the exterior and causing pain (or sensation) to reach unto the hidden parts. To body and soul he applies the remedies of his art; and the open and hidden (disease) he heals by the divine power. Divinely he mixes the drug that is given into his hands; and all diseases he heals by its power without fail. As a (drug-)shop he has opened the door of the holy temple; and he tends the sicknesses and binds up the diseases of his fellow-servants. With the external sign (rushmâ) he touches the hidden diseases that are within; and then he lays on the drug of the Spirit with the symbol (âthâ) of the water. With the open voice he preaches its hidden powers; and with his tongue he distributes hidden wealth. The words he makes to sound in the ears of the flock while he is signing it;

and it hearkens with love to the three names when they are proclaimed. With the name of the Father and of the Son and the Spirit he seals his words;

and he confirms him that is being baptized with their names. The three names he traces upon his face as a shield; that the tyrant may see the image of the Divinity on the head of a man. The cause of the signing on the forehead is (that it may be) for the confusion of the devils; that when they discern (it) on the head of a man they may be overcome by him (or it). On account of these (the devils) are performed the mysteries of the oil and water, that they may be an armour against their warfare and attacks. An armour is the oil with which the earth-born are anointed, that they may not be captured by the (evil) spirits in the hidden warfare. It is the great brand of the King of kings with which they are stamped, that they may serve (as soldiers) in the spiritual contest. On their forehead they receive the spiritual stamp, that it may be bright before angels and men. Like brave soldiers they stand at the King's door, and the priest at their head like a general at the head of his army. He sets their ranks as if for battle at the hour of the mysteries, that they may be casting sharp arrows at the foe. The arrows of words he fixes (as on a bow-string, and) sets in the midst of their mouths, that they may be aiming against the Evil One who made them slaves. A mark he sets before their eyes for them to aim at;

and as (arrows) on a bow-string he draws back the words on their tongues. They enter into an examination at the beginning of the warfare to which they have been summoned, being tested by the confession of their minds. In truth the priest stands at the head of their ranks, and shews them the mark of truth that they may aim aright. They renounce the standard of the Evil One, and his power and his angels; and then he (the priest) traces the standard of the King on their forehead. They confess and they renounce—the two in one, without doubting—(making) a renunciation of the Evil One, and a confession of the heart in the name of the Divinity. By the hand of the priesthood they make a covenant with the Divinity, that they will not again return to Satan by their doings. They give to the priest a promise by the words of their minds; and he brings in, reads (it) before the good-pleasure of God. The chart which is the door of the royal house he holds in his hands; and from the palace he has (received) authority to inscribe (the names of) men.

He calls the King's servants by their names and causes them to stand (forth); and he makes them to pass one by one, and marks their faces with the brand of the oil. By the voice of his utterances he proclaims the power that is hidden in his words, (and declares) whose they are, and whose name it is with which they are branded: 'Such a one,' he says, 'is the servant of the King of (all) kings that are on high and below; and with His name he is branded that he may serve (as a soldier) according to His will.' The name of the Divinity he mixes in his hands with the oil; and he signs and says 'Father' and 'Son' and 'Holy Spirit.' 'Such a one,' he says, 'is signed

with the three names that are equal, and there is no distinction of elder or younger between One and Another.'

The priest does not say 'I sign,' but 'is signed'; for the stamp that he sets is not his, but his Lord's. He is (but) the mediator who has been chosen by a favour to minister; and because it is not his it drives out iniquity and gives the Spirit. By the visible oil he shews the power that is in the names, which is able to confirm the feebleness of men with hidden (powers). The three names he recites, together with (the rubbing of) the oil upon the whole man; that hostile demons and vexing passions may not harm him. It is not by the oil that he keeps men from harms: it is the power of the Divinity that bestows power upon (its) feebleness. The oil is a symbol which proclaims the divine power; and by outward things He (God) gives assurance of His works (done) in secret. By His power body and soul acquire power; and they no more dread the injuries of death. As athletes they descend (and) stand in the arena, and they close in battle with the cowardly suggestions that are in them. This power the oil of anointing imparts: not the oil, but the Spirit that gives it power. The Spirit gives power to the unction of the feeble oil, and it waxes firm by the operation that is administered in it. By its firmness it makes firm the body and the faculties of the soul, and they go forth confidently to wage war against the Evil One. The sign of His name the devils see upon a man; and they recoil from him in whose name they see the Name of honour. The name of the Divinity looks out from the sign on the forehead; and the eyes of the crafty ones are ashamed to look upon it.

The second Sun has shone from on high on the head of man; and with His beams He drives away error, the second darkness. Come O man, praise and magnify Him that has honoured thee, who has made thy body a second sun by His gift. Come, O debtor, pay (the debt of) praise to Him that has set thee free; for He has redeemed thee and set thee free from the slavery of the Evil One and Death. Come, O mortal, give glory to the power of the Divinity, who has set in thee power to sow life in thy mortality. Cry out with all mouths, O race of Adam the earth-born, to Him who has lifted thee up from the dust to His own greatness.

Homily XXI: On the Mysteries of the Church and on Baptism

Our Lord has opened up for us the sweet spring of Baptism, and has given our race to drink of the sweetness of life immortal. By the heat of iniquity our mind was withered, and its fruits had dropped off; and He sprinkled His gift as dew and watered our soul. The grievous thirst of death had slain our body; and He buried it in the water, and life teemed in its mortality. The rust of passions had defaced the beauty of our excellence; and He turned again and painted us in spiritual colours which may not be effaced. Cunningly He mixed the colours for the renewal of our race, with oil and water and the invincible power of the Spirit. A new art the Chief Artist put forth; that men should be depicting men without draftsmanship. An invention that had not been the divine nod discovered, that without seed man should beget (children) from the midst of the water. Where ever had the like been done or achieved—that the bosom of the waters should bring forth without wedlock? Who ever heard that kind should bring forth that which was not its kind, as now a senseless nature (brings forth) the rational? Even though the waters brought forth creeping things and birds: that water has brought forth man has never been heard. This is a wonder, and, as we may say, full of astonishment, that the womb of the water should conceive and bring forth babes full grown. It is altogether a new thing, and great is the lesson given therein, that within an hour should be accomplished the period of conception and birth. Outside the order that is set in nature does its order proceed; and it is not trammelled with a growth that is gradual.

Come, O hearer, listen to the wonder of the new birth, the conception whereof and the bringing forth are accomplished in one hour. Come, O beholder, look upon the painter that paints babes: and while yet the word lingers in the mouth (the birth) has come forth from the womb. Come, thou that art prudent, and discern and mark well the power of the Divinity that bestows strength on things feeble. Come, ye mortals, and look upon a nature full of mortality that puts off its passions in Baptism and puts on life. Come, let us examine exactly the mystery of our renewal; and let us learn concerning the power that is hidden in the visible waters. Come, let us draw near to the priesthood, the salt of the earth; and let us see how it

seasons man with things spiritual. Let us enter with it (the priesthood) whither it is entering to make atonement; and let us bend our mind and hearken to the voice that speaks with it. Let us hearken how the power of the Spirit speaks with it and teaches it to bestow power upon common water. With it a hidden intimation is interpreting the hidden mysteries, and expounding them openly with the voice before the hearers. The workmanship of the new birth it performs before it (the priesthood), and shews it how to depict a spiritual image.

The priest is like a pen to the hidden Power; and in Its hands he writes the three names over the water. O writer, that writes the Spirit upon a weak tablet, and the ink of his words is not effaced by the liquid waters! How great is thine art, O mortal, and no man knows how to examine it for its greatness. O how slender is the pen of thy mind to depict the mysteries! and (yet) there is no painter that is able to copy thy drawings. O thou priest, that doest the priest's office on earth in a manner spiritual, and the spirits may not imitate thee! O thou priest, how great is the order that thou administerest, of which the ministers of fire and spirit stand in awe! Who is sufficient to say how great is thine order, that hast suppressed the heavenly (beings) by the title of thine authority? The nature of a spirit is more subtle and glorified

than thou; yet it is not permitted to it to depict mysteries like as it is to thee. An angel is great, and we should say he is greater than thou, yet when he is compared with thy ministry he is less than thou. Holy is the seraph, and beauteous the cherub, and swift the watcher: yet they cannot run with the fleetness of the word of thy mouth. Glorious is Gabriel, and mighty is Michael, as their name testifies: yet every moment they are bowed down under the mystery which is delivered into thy hand. On thee they are intent when thou drawest near to minister, and for thee they wait, that thou wouldst open the door for their Holies. With voices fraught with praise they stand at thy right hand; and when thou hast celebrated the Mysteries of thy redemption they cry out with praise. With love they bow beneath the Will that is concealed in thy mysteries; and they give honour to thee for the office that is administered by thee. And if spiritual impassible beings honour thine office, who will not weave a garland of praises for the greatness of thine order? Let us marvel every moment at the exceeding greatness of thine order, which has bowed down the height and the depth under its authority. The priests of the Church have grasped authority in the height and the depth; and they give commands to heavenly and earthly beings.

They stand as mediators between God and man, and with their words they drive out iniquity from mankind. The key of the divine mercies is placed in their hands, and according to their pleasure they distribute life to men. The hidden Power has strengthened them to perform this, that by things manifest they may shew His love to the work of His hands. He shewed His love by the mystery which He delivered to

them of earth, that men to men might be shewing mercy by His gift. The power of His gift He delivered into the hand of the priests of the Church, that by it they might strengthen the feebleness of men who were in debt by sin. The debt of mankind the priest pays by means of his ministry; and the written bond of his race he washes out with the water and renews it (sc. his race). As in a furnace he re-casts bodies in Baptism; and as in a fire he consumes the weeds of mortality. The drug of the Spirit he casts into the water, as into a furnace; and he purifies the image of men from uncleanness. By the heat of the Spirit he purges the rust of body and soul; and instead of clay they acquire the hue of heavenly beings. The vat of water he prepares, he sets, in the likeness of a furnace; and then he draws near and reveals the power of his art.

With fair garments he covers his body outwardly, and the raiment of the Spirit adorns his soul within. Completely adorned he stands before the beholders, that by his adornment he may reveal to men concerning the things that are about to be (done). He becomes as a mirror to the eyes of his fellow-servants, that they may look upon him and conceive the hope of being glorified. A mark he sets before their eyes by the garments that are upon him, that they may be aiming to be adorned spiritually. This he teaches by the adornment that is upon his limbs: that the mystery which is (administered) by his hands clothes with glory him that approaches it. In his hands is placed the treasure of life that is concealed in the water; and unless he draw near and distribute it it is not given. He holds out the key of his word (and) opens the door of the gift; and by (his) word he distributes presents to the King's servants. He also stands as it were by the sea, after the likeness of Moses; and instead of a rod he lifts up his word over the dumb (elements). With the word of his mouth he strikes the waters, like the son of Amram; and they hearken to his voice more than to the voice of the son of the Hebrews. They hearkened to Moses, yet when they hearkened to him they were not sanctified. To the priest of the Church they are obedient and acquire sanctification.

The Israelite did but divide the sea: the iniquity of his people he did not suffice to cleanse by the power of his miracle. To the priest that great (miracle) belongs—and there is naught to compare with it in the things that have come about—which gives the power of forgiving iniquity to senseless things. His gaze is lifted up to that nod which created the creation; and from it he learns how to create a new creation. He also imitates the fashion (of Him) that brought into being the world; and he makes a voice to be heard like unto that which cried out in the world in the beginning. Like the Creator he also commands the common water, and instead of light there dawns from it the power of life. The voice of the Creator created the luminaries from nothing; and he from something creates something by the power of the Creator. Not his own is the creation which he creates in the bosom of the water; but it belongs to the nod (of Him) that created creation out of nothing. That Command which 'said, and there were made' things rational and senseless:

the same commands by him, and men become a new being. That word which the waters heard, and brought forth creeping things: the same they hear from the mouth of the priest, and bring forth men. Greater is the fruit they bring forth now than that (former), by how much rational man is of more account than dumb things.

As a seed he casts his word into the bosom of the waters; and they conceive and bring forth a new, unwonted birth. With words of spirit his mouth converses with the dumb (elements), and they receive power to give life to that which is rational. The dumb (elements) hear a new utterance from rational beings, like that utterance which Mary heard from Gabriel. He (the priest) also causes a goodly gospel to fall upon the ears of men, like to that hope which the watcher preached at the birth of the Son. In his office he fills the place of the watcher: and better than the watcher; for he gives hope to them that are without hope by the voice of his words. Betwixt the Divinity and men he stands as mediator, and by his words he ratifies the condition of each party. With anguish he entreats the Hidden One—who is hidden, but revealed by His love—and the power from Him comes down unto him and gives effect to his words.

With the name of the Divinity, the three Names, he consecrates the water, that it may suffice to accomplish the cleansing of the defiled. The defilement of men he cleanses with water: yet not by the water, but by the power of the name of the Divinity which there lights down. The power of the Divinity dwells in the visible waters, and by the force of His power they dissolve the might of the Evil One and of Death. The Evil One and Death are undone by Baptism; and the resurrection of the body and the redemption of the soul are preached therein. In it, as in a tomb, body and soul are buried, and they die and live (again) with a type of the resurrection that is to be at the end. It (Baptism) fills for men the office of the grave mystically; and the voice of the priesthood (is) as the voice of the trump in the latter end.

In the grave of the water the priest buries the whole man; and he resuscitates him by the power of life that is hidden in his words. In the door of the tomb of Baptism he stands equipped, and he performs there a mystery of death and of the resurrection. With the voice openly he preaches the power of what he is doing—how it is that a man dies in the water, and turns and lives again. He reveals and shews to him that is being baptized in whose name it is that he is to die and swiftly come to life. Of the name of the Divinity he makes mention, and he says three times: 'Father and Son and Holy Spirit, one equality.' The names he repeats with the voice openly, and thus he says: 'Such a one is baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Spirit.' And he does not say 'I baptize,' but 'is baptized'; for it is not he that baptizes, but the power that is set in the names. The names give forgiveness of iniquity, not a man; and they sow new life in mortality. In their name he that is baptized is baptized (and buried) as in a tomb; and they call and raise him up from his death.

Three times he bows his head at Their names, that he may learn the relation—that while They are One They are Three. With a mystery of our Redeemer he goes into the bosom of the font (lit. 'of baptism') after the manner of those three days in the midst of the tomb. Three days was our Redeemer with the dead: so also he that is baptized:—the three times are three days. He verily dies by a symbol of that death which the Quickener of all died; and he surely lives with a type of the life without end. Sin and death he puts off and casts away in Baptism, after the manner of those garments which our Lord departing left in the tomb.

As a babe from the midst of the womb he looks forth from the water; and instead of garments the priest receives and embraces him. He resembles a babe when he is lifted up from the midst of the water; and as a babe every one embraces and kisses him. Instead of swaddling-clothes they cast garments upon his limbs, and adorn him as a bridegroom on the day of the marriage-supper. He also fulfils a sort of marriage-supper in Baptism; and by his adornment he depicts the glory that is prepared for him. By the beauty of his garments he proclaims the beauty that is to be: here is a type, but there the verity which is not simulated. To the Kingdom of the height which is not dissolved he is summoned and called; and the type depicts beforehand and proclaims its truth. With a type of that glory which is incorruptible he puts on the garments, that he may imitate mystically the things to be. Mystically he dies and is raised and is adorned; mystically he imitates the life immortal. His birth (in Baptism) is a symbol of that birth which is to be at the end, and the conduct of his life of that conversation which is (to be) in the Kingdom on high.

In the way of spiritual life he begins to travel; and, like the spiritual beings, he lives by spiritual food. His mystical birth takes place in a manner spiritual; and according to his birth is the nourishment also that is prepared for him. New is his birth, and exceeding strange to them of earth; and there is no measure to the greatness of the food with which he is nourished. As milk he sucks the divine mysteries, and by degrees they lead him, as a child, to the things to come. A spiritual mother (sc. the Church) prepares spiritual milk for his life; and instead of the breasts she puts into his mouth the Body and Blood. With the Body and Blood the Church keeps alive the sons of her womb; and she reminds them of the great love of her betrothal. Her betrothed gave her His Body and His Blood as a pledge of life, that she might have power to give life from her life. He expounded to her that by the food of His Body He quickens her children, through the parables which beforehand He composed symbolically. He styled the sacrifice of His Body the fatted ox; which He sometime sacrificed on the day of the return of one of her children. That which is written in the story of the erring one (sc. the Prodigal) has been fulfilled in her children; for His love has gone forth and received them in Baptism.

With love and mercy He has gone forth to meet them, and received and embraced them as dead men returned to life. The force of His parables He has explained and revealed before their eyes; and He has made them to rejoice with spiritual meat and drink. He has given as a pledge the ring of which the power of the Spirit spoke; and He has clothed them with the glorious robe of Baptism. He sacrificed Himself who was fatted spiritually; and He has made them to eat food in the eating whereof life is hidden. He has shod them with the goodly race of the conduct of life, that they should not stumble in the treacherous path of mortality. He has summoned and called the heavenly ones on the day of their (men's) renewing, and has made them (the angels) to rejoice that were sorrowing over their offences. The womb of the waters has brought them forth spiritually; and the power of His grace has filled up and made good their needs. Watchers and men were glad, yea, are glad, at their repentance: that the words of the parables have been joined to performance. Heaven and earth are rejoiced that they have returned to their Father, and have recovered the plot of their possessions of which they had been plundered. The devils had wickedly plundered the inheritance of men; and there arose one Man, and He pleaded the cause and convicted them.

Just judgment He pleaded with the deceitful ones, and snatched from them the spoil which they had robbed from the house of His Father. By Adam did the Deceiver, who sows error in the world, lead (men) astray; and a Son of Adam was jealous and avenged the wrong of all His race. Great jealousy did He put on in wrath for the sake of His fathers; and He consented to die, that they should not be styled slaves of the evil ones. As an athlete He went down to the contest on behalf of His people; and He joined battle with Satan, and vanquished and conquered him. On the summit of Golgotha He fought with the slayer of men, and He made him a laughing-stock before angels and men. With the spear of the wood He overthrew him, and cast him down from his confidence: with that whereby he had hoped that death should enter in he was smitten and pierced. Over the death of men the arrogant-minded was boasting; and by the death of one Man his boasting came to naught. One Man died on the cross on behalf of mortals: and He taught them to travel by the way of His death and His life. His death and His life men depict in Baptism; and after they have died with Him they have risen and have been resuscitated mystically. In the new way of the resurrection of the dead they travel with Him; and they imitate upon earth the conduct of the heavenly beings.

By the food of His Body they drive out death from their bodies; and with His living Blood they give their minds to drink of life. Body and soul they nourish with the food of His Body and His Blood; and Satan and Death they conquer by the power of His gift. By the power of His gift they have washed and been sanctified from their debts, and have gained power to fight against passions. They that were clothed with passions have put on hidden power from the water; and they have begun to defy the foe, that they may trample upon his power. As athletes they have gone up

from the vat of Baptism; and watchers and men have received them lovingly. The tidings of their victory earthly and heavenly beings have shouted; and the devils have heard and trembled and been dismayed at the new voice. The height and the depth have woven garlands for them by the hands of men; for they have seen that they have conquered (in) the great battle with the strong one. Gifts, high above their labours, they have received from the King; and gloriously has He honoured them beyond (their) power. In the midst of His secret palace He has made them to recline; and the table of life immortal He has set before them. A beauteous bride-chamber He has fitted on earth for a type of that which is above, that they may delight therein mystically unto the end.

A sanctuary He has built Him wherein they may sanctify His holy Name, until they are lifted up to the holy of holies that is hidden in the height. Priests He has chosen for it that they may minister therein holily, and instead of sacrifices offer the sacrifice of the Mystery of His Son. The Mystery of His Son they offer every hour before His good-pleasure; and by it they atone for the iniquity of men who call upon His name. The silver of His word He has placed in their hands by way of inducement, that they may trade withal (and gain) possessions of spiritual life. Men are re-casting men as in a furnace, and purging from them the hateful alloy of hateful wickedness. A beauteous colour they acquire on a sudden from the midst of the water; and more than the sun burns the light of their minds. Beams of light come into the world through the light that is in them, and the world is illumined with the beauteous rays of their conduct. They suck the Spirit after the birth of Baptism; and according to the birth is also the nourishment that is high and exalted. Like young birds they lift up the wings of their conduct, and enter and rest in the fair nest of Holy Church.

As an eagle the priest hovers before them, and prepares the food of perfect age for them to be nourished withal. The living sacrifice he prepares, he sets before their eyes; and he summons them to examine it with affection of soul. A dread mystery he begins to depict spiritually; and he mixes his words as paints before the beholders. With the pen of his word he draws an image of the Crucified King; and as with the finger he points out His passion, also His exaltation. Death and life his voice proclaims in the ears of the people; and forgiveness of iniquity he distributes, he gives, in the Bread and the Wine. A mystery of death he shews first to mortal man; and then he reveals the power of life that is hidden in his words.

As for one dead he strews a bed with the sacred vessels; and he brings up, he sets thereon the bread and wine as a corpse. The burial day of the King he transacts mystically; and he sets soldiers on guard by a representation. Two deacons he places like a rank (of soldiers), on this side and on that, that they may be guarding the dread Mystery of the King of kings. Awe and love lie upon the faculties of their minds while they look intently upon the bread and wine, as upon the King. With

bright apparel they are clothed exteriorly upon their bodies; and by their garments they shew the beauty of their minds. By their stoles (oraria) they depict a sign of the heavenly beings that were clothed in beauteous garments at the temple of the tomb. Two angels the disciples saw in the tomb of our Lord, who were attending the place of His body as though it were His body (itself). And if spiritual beings in fear honoured the place of His body, how much more should corporeal beings honour the Mystery that has honoured them? After the manner of the two watchers the two deacons are standing now to hover over the Mysteries.

The priest fills the place of a mouth for all mouths; and as a mediator his voice interprets in secret. He calls upon the Hidden One to send him hidden power, that he may give power in the bread and wine to give life. He turns the gaze of all minds towards that which is hidden, that they may be looking upon secret things by means of things visible. 'Let your minds be aloft,' he cries and says to them of earth. And they answer: 'Unto Thee, Lord, who art hidden in the height.' He recites and says what is the cause of the gazing aloft, and why he calls men to take part with him. 'Look,' he says, 'O men, upon the offering of the sacrifice which is for you, which the Divinity accepts with love on behalf of your lives. Look steadfastly upon the bread and wine that are upon the table, which the power of the Spirit changes into the Body and Blood. See the outward things with the outward senses of your members, and depict things hidden by the hidden faculties of your minds. Recall your deaths by the sign that is full of death and life, and praise and magnify Him that sets power in things feeble.'

As with a signet they seal his words with their voices: 'Meet and right and becoming and holy is the sacrifice of our life.' As (with) a pen he writes the words with the tip of his tongue; and they subscribe with the saying: 'Yea, they are true.' They bear witness to the words (uttered) on their behalf; and with Amen for a signet they seal the mystery of their life. The deed of confession he inscribes, writes, with his words; and they become sureties (saying): 'Yea, we will pay the debt of praise.' With the voice openly they pay (the debt of) praise that is (recorded) in his writing; and he carries it to the Divine good-pleasure. With the oblation the priest sends up the prayer of the people, and he sanctifies it (sc. the people) by the participation of the living Mystery. With great earnestness he prays for himself and for all men, that his word may be an acceptable sacrifice before the Most High.

He imitates the spiritual beings by his words while he is making supplication; and holily he teaches the people to cry 'Holy.' The utterance of sanctification of the heavenly beings he recites to men, that they may be crying: 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord.' That saying which the seraphim cried three times—the same he utters in the ears of the people at the hour of the Mysteries. Like Isaiah he also is in anguish when he utters it, remembering how greatly the vileness of men has been advanced. The meaning of that which the prophet saw mystically he (now) discerns in the reality

by faith. A coal of fire Isaiah saw coming towards him, which the seraph of fire held in a hand of fire. It touched his mouth—though in truth it did not touch it—and blotted out the iniquity of his body and his soul in truth. It was not a sensible vision that the seer saw; nor did the spiritual one bring towards him a material coal. An intimation he saw in the coal of the Mystery of the Body and Blood which, like fire, consumes the iniquity of mortal man. The power of that mystery which the prophet saw the priest interprets; and as with a tongs he holds fire in his hand with the bread. He fills the place of the seraph in regard of the people—even as (the seraph was) in regard of Isaiah—and by his actions he blots out iniquity and gives life. The seraph of spirit did not hold in his hand the vision of spirit: and this is a marvel —that a hand of flesh holds the Spirit. The swift-winged did not suffice to bring the food into the belly: and the gross of body stretches forth his hand even unto the faculties (of the soul).

Body and soul he nourishes with the food of power of the Mystery; and from (being) mortal he makes men immortal. His voice does away the authority of Death from mortals; and the dominion of the Evil One it looses (and) removes from mankind. With food the Evil One slew us in the beginning and made us slaves; and by food the Creator has now willed to quicken us. By the hand that plucked the fruit in Eden wickedly—by the same He has reached out to us the fruit of life wisely. In Adam He cursed us and gave us for food to gluttonous Death; and by a Son of Adam He has opened to us the spring of His sweetness. In our very nature He performed His will and shewed His love, that that saying in which He called us His image might be confirmed for us. To us He gave to set the Pledge of life in our mortality; that according to our will we might minister to ourselves by the power of His will. By the power of His will the priest distributes life in the Bread, and drives out iniquity and makes the Spirit to dwell in the midst of the members (of the body). The power of the Spirit comes down unto a mortal man, and dwells in the bread and consecrates it by the might of His power. O marvel, that, whereas He is the Spirit with which everything is filled, until the earth-born commands He does not approach! O gift, which, though given from the beginning, is not received until a son of dust makes entreaty! He is the Spirit, with all and in all, in the height and the depth: and He is hidden and concealed, and the priest points Him out by his words.

To the height above he spreads out his hands with his mind; and he summons Him to come down and perform the request of his soul. Not in (His) nature does the Spirit, who does not move about, come down: it is the power from Him that comes down and works and accomplishes all. His power lights down upon the visible table, and bestows power upon the bread and wine to give life. His power strengthens the hand of the priest that it may take hold of His power; and feeble flesh is not burned up by His blaze. A corporeal being takes hold with his hands of the Spirit in the Bread; and he lifts up his gaze towards the height, and then he breaks it. He

breaks the Bread and casts (it) into the Wine, and he signs and says: 'In the name of the Father and the Son and the Spirit, an equal nature.'

With the name of the Divinity, three hypostases, he completes his words; and as one dead he raises the Mystery, as a symbol of the verity. In verity did the Lord of the Mystery rise from the midst of the tomb; and without doubt the Mystery acquires the power of life. On a sudden the bread and wine acquire new life; and forgiveness of iniquity they give on a sudden to them that receive them. He (the priest) makes the Bread and Wine one by participation, forasmuch as the blood mingles with the body in all the senses (of man). Wine and water he casts into the cup before he consecrates, forasmuch as water also is mingled with the blood in things created. With these (elements) the priest celebrates the perfect mysteries; then he makes (his) voice heard, full of love and mercy. Love and mercy are hidden in the voice of the word of his mouth; that the creature may call the Creator his Father. In the way of his voice run the voices of them that are become obedient, while they are made ready to call the hidden Divinity 'Our Father.'

O incomprehensible gift to men! who have received for naught the name (of Him) for whose name the world is not sufficient. 'Our Father,' the sons of dust call the Fashioner of all, while they ask of Him holiness and the Kingdom of the height. May Thy holy name be hallowed in us, O Maker of all; and may the pledge of life without end be made sure to us. They ask at once for sanctification, and the help of the Spirit, and the will of the Hidden One, and the daily ration, and forgiveness of iniquity. By their petitions they shew the love of their minds—how greatly they desire to be partakers of the things that are to come. With the voice of praise they seal the words of the completion of the Mysteries; and they render holiness to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: 'Holy is the Father, and holy is His Begotten, and the Spirit who is from Him (sc. the Father); and to them is due holiness and praise from all mouths.'

After the utterance of sanctification and the rendering of praise they stretch the gaze of their minds towards the Gift. With their senses and mental faculties together they are eager to approach to the Bread and Wine in the midst of which is hidden forgiveness of iniquity. By faith they acquire power to see things hidden; and, as it were the King, they bear in triumph the Sacrament in the midst of their palms. They hold it sure that the Body of the King dwells in the visible bread; and in it the resurrection of the dead is preached to him that eats of it. 'The Body,' says the priest also when he gives it; and 'the Blood' he calls the mingled Wine in the midst of the cup. He gives the Bread, and says: 'The Body of King Messiah' (or 'of Christ the King'); and he gives to drink the Wine, and in like manner (he says): 'The Blood of Christ.'

He believes that the Bread and the Wine are the Body and the Blood; and exceeding sure is it to giver and receivers. Forgiveness of iniquity and the resurrection of the

dead he preaches with it; and, though they are not apparent, to faith they are exceeding manifest. Faith shews to the soul the hidden vision, and makes her to understand, that she may not doubt on account of the visible things. The bread and wine the eyes of the bodily senses see, and the faculties of the soul (behold) the hidden invincible Power. With the faculties of the soul it is right that we should look upon the Mystery of our redemption, and that we should set faith as a mark before our mind. Let us receive the Bread, and let us affirm that it is able to forgive iniquity; let us drink the Wine, and let us confess that the drinking of it distributes life. Let us honour them as the Body and Blood of the King; that they may conduct us even unto the glorious things that are in the Kingdom. Let us believe that they are able to give life to our mortality; and let us stretch forth our mind to the expectation of the hope that is in them. With the hidden mind let us look in a hidden manner on the visible things; and let us not doubt concerning the renovation that is (wrought) in the things that are manifest.

Let the beholder not look upon the bread, nor yet upon the wine, but upon the Power that consecrates the bread and the wine. The bread and the wine are set as a sign before the eyes of the body, that it may take part with the mind in those things that are not apparent. The body cannot with the mind see hidden things, nor can it, like the thoughts, discern things secret. On its account the Gift was given by means of bread, that by outward things it might gain hope toward things hidden. To it and to the soul was promised the enjoyment that is hidden in the Mystery; and for its comfort were the manifest things of food and drink. Lo, by visible things it is accustomed to be comforted from its grief; and, that He might not grieve it, its Lord comforted it with the bread and wine. With bread and wine He prepared for it a mark towards the things to come, that it might be aiming at the renovation that is prepared for it.

Come, ye mortals, let us aim at the mark that is hidden in our Mystery; and let us not relinquish the expectation of the life that is promised. Come, let us have recourse to the power of its spiritual aid, that it may aid us in the warfare of fierce passions. Come, let us be eager to approach it in holiness; and let us receive from it the medicine that is meet for our bruises. Let us lay it on at all times as a salve to the senses and the faculties (of the soul); that it may drive out from us sloth of body and remissness of soul. It is a goodly medicine which, in His goodness, His power mixes; and there is no hidden or manifest sickness that can resist it. The Physician of the height has mixed (and) given it to them of earth, that by its aid they may heal the diseases of their minds. In faith let us all put it upon our sores, and acquire from it resurrection of body and salvation of soul.

Homily XXXII: On the Church and on the Priesthood

A holy temple the Creator built for them of earth, that in it they might offer the worship of love spiritually. A holy temple and a holy of holies He adorned, He fashioned: a sanctuary on earth and a holy of holies in the heavens above. In the earthly sanctuary He commanded that (men) should perform the priestly office mystically; and in the heavenly also with the same works, without doubt. Two several institutions He made in His incomprehensible wisdom; and He filled them with temporal and everlasting riches. An earthly abode He called the earthly sanctuary; and a holy of holies He called that institution which is hidden in the height. A twofold sanctuary His love shewed to the sons of His house; and He taught them how to consecrate it mystically. In the holiness of His name He willed to make the work of His hands participate; that by it they might be sanctified when they sanctify His holy name. He is not profited by the voices of their sanctifications; for He is the Holy One who by His purity sanctifies the unclean. By means of inducements he incites His own to imitate Him, that He may make them heirs of the glory of His Son. To this end He built a sanctuary and a holy of holies, and urged men to minister therein as priests on behalf of their lives. To them He granted to forgive the iniquity of their doings; and He gave power to their own free will to justify (men).

Them (the priests) He set as stewards (ἐπίτροποι) of the treasure that is in their midst, that as much as they would they might increase the riches of righteousness. The will that is in them He made a treasure-keeper of things excellent, that it might enrich itself and its fellow-servants with excellent good things. A treasure of life without end He promised; and He took it up and set it in a place that is hidden from beholders. In secret He shewed it to the hidden will that is hidden in the soul, that it might examine it (sc. the treasure) with the eyes of the mental faculties and see its beauty. The desire of spiritual wealth He cast upon earth, that they of earth should long for it and hate the earth. A new path He shewed them, that they might travel towards Him; and the one Victor who conquered by the Spirit trod it by (His) sufferings. As a guide He set out first in the path of life; and He arrived and came to the end of perfection. He promised the sons of His race that they should be with

Him, and that by means of His Mystery they should travel with Him in (the way of) perfection. After His likeness He taught them to perform the priest's office; for He (performs it) in heaven, and they on earth mystically. To them He gave the order that is greater than the order of the Law; and instead of sacrifices He taught them to sacrifice love.

He perfected the Law by the law of the words of His preaching; and He gave a priesthood instead of the priesthood, that He might pardon all. Twelve priests He chose Him first, according to the number of the tribes; and instead of the People He called all peoples to be His. He gave into their hands the power of the Spirit to conquer all; and they uprooted error and sowed the truth of the name of the Creator. They pardoned iniquity and they cleansed spots by His help; and they taught men to hate the iniquity of their doings. As priests they performed on earth a mystery of the institution of the Kingdom of the height; and by things manifest they depicted parables of the things to be. By them was preached the word of life among mortals; and men began to travel in the way of new life. They began to make priests spiritually, even as they had received from the High Pontiff who consecrated them. After His pattern they made priests, and were multiplied, after His likeness; and they delivered the order to their disciples, that they might do according to their (the apostles') acts.

To this end He gave the priesthood to the new priests, that men might be made priests to forgive iniquity on earth. For the forgiveness of iniquity was the priesthood (set) among mortals; for mortal man has need every hour of pardon. Evil passions are born in man's nature; and they are not cleansed without the drug of holiness. Man is not able to travel in the way without stumbling; and when he stumbles he has need of mercy to heal his iniquity. In body and soul mortals lie sick with diseases of iniquity; and there is need of a physician who understands internal and external diseases. For the cure of hidden and manifest disease the priesthood was (established), to heal iniquity by a spiritual art. The priest is a physician for hidden and open (diseases); and it is easy for his art to give health to body and soul. By the drug of the Spirit he purges iniquity from the mind; and men put off the garments of iniquity, and put on truth. With the tip of his lips he treads out (sic) a way towards knowledge; and as with fire he proves the truth and rejects iniquity. 'He is an angel of the Lord' and a minister, as it is written; and by him is performed an agency towards men. As a limb he is chosen from the body of the sons of his race; and as the head he is commanded to direct his

fellow-servants. The office of a head he fulfils to the mental faculties and to the limbs; and by him men test iniquity and righteousness. By him they see truth and fraud, as with the eye; and as a mirror he shews an image of virtues. As a tongue he interprets truth before learners; and he makes the force of secret things to shine before the ignorant. Spiritual doctrine is hidden in the midst of his lips; and every

moment he sprinkles the dew of mercy on men's clay. He sows much hope and love and faith; and he reaps as fruits the promised good things incorruptible. He makes the report of the word of life to enter by the outward senses; and the mind hearkens to the voice of (his) pleasant sayings. The mental faculties have need of the sweet savour (of the doctrine) of the resurrection of the dead; and they make the dead body glad with the voice of the resurrection. As a trumpet he (the priest) cries every hour in the ears of men: 'Hear, O men, and let not go the promises.' As a guide he shews the way before travellers: 'Come, ye mortals, set forth with the escort of the promise of life.' With his words he sails continually in the sea of mankind; and much he warns every man to guard the riches of his soul. In the ship of the Church he stands and gives warning night and day; and he keeps it from the harms of the wind of evil-doers.

He is an exceeding skilful steersman amid the billows; and he knows how to sail to the berth of life without end. With rudders of the Spirit he steers the reasonable ships; and he makes straight their course to the harbour of life that is hidden in the height. In the hope of the things to come he bears his labours; and he fears every moment lest the oil in his lamp should give out. A spiritual talent he has received from his Lord to trade withal; and he owes it to cast the silver of (his) words upon the table of the soul. The art of forgiving iniquity he has learned from the King, that he be not hard in the matter of forgiving his fellow-servants. The treasure of the Spirit is delivered into his hands to dispense, and it is his part wisely to provide for his fellows. His Lord has given him reasonable sheep to control, that he may pasture them in the living meadows of spiritual words. The sheep and the lambs and the ewes he has been commanded to tend, and all conditions of men and women and children. The (divine) purpose which called him to itself has set him for the service of men; to uproot error and sow on earth the name of the Creator. 'Go forth,' said He, 'and make disciples and preach and baptise all peoples,' (teaching them) the one Divinity of the one Creator, three hypostases.

The three names he is bound to preach in the ears of men, and to cause them to think upon the name of the Divinity that is hidden from all. For this are priests set on earth to perform the priestly office, that men may turn from error to knowledge. By their words men see the light of life; and by their labours they taste the sweet savour of the truth.

He (the priest) is as a mediator between God and men; and by him spiritual sacrifices are offered before the Lord of all. By him spiritual wealth is distributed to them of earth; and they get power to be strengthened for the service of the truth. Every hour he opens the door of mercy before the beholders; and he appoints and gives forgiveness of iniquity to the sons of his race. With the waters of the Spirit he casts them, as in a furnace; and he puts off (from them) iniquity, and puts on the garments of righteousness. He calls and entreats the hidden Power to come

down unto him and bestow visible power to give life. The waters become fruitful, as a womb; and the power of grace is like the seed that begets life. Body and soul go down together into the bosom of the water and are born again, being sanctified from defilement. O marvel, so great, towards our race! that He (God) should be pleased by sinners to justify sinners. O incomprehensible gift of the God of all! which by paupers has distributed its riches to paupers. O command, so powerful over all that He has made, that it has given authority to the work of His hands to imitate Him! By man's hand he opened His treasure to men; and they have enriched men from the treasures of His Godhead. The keys of His mercies He gave to them of earth, as to trusted officers (or Sharrîrs);

and every hour they open by faith the treasury of His mercies. A mortal holds the keys of the height in his lips; and he opens and shuts the doors of the hidden (places) with a tongue of flesh. He buries men in the bosom of the waters, as in a tomb, and brings back and quickens to new life them that were dead in iniquity. By the power of the Creator he buries the dead and quickens the dead; and as from the womb he begets men spiritually.

He causes the spiritual babes to grow by the power of the Spirit; and when they are grown up he holds out the food of perfect age. With the food of the Spirit he nourishes bodily men; and according to the birth is also the food for them that are born. The living sacrifice he prepares every hour before them that eat (of it); and he mingles for drink the power of life for body and soul. The table of life he prepares, he sets before their eyes; and he depicts a mystery of life and death with the Bread and the Wine. By visible things he shews the power of things hidden; and men live by the food of the Bread and the drink of the Wine. Bread and wine the outward senses behold; and the hidden faculties (of the mind) acquire power by means of the visible things.

The priest stands as a tongue to interpret; and his voice preaches death and life to men. In the bread and wine he shews the Body and Blood of the King who died for the sake of all, and lived and gave life to all by His cross. In fear the corporeal being stands to minister; and he asks for mercy upon himself and upon his race, that it may be made worthy of mercy. And he calls to the Spirit to come down to him by the power that is from Him, that he may give power in the bread and wine to give life. In the visible bread and wine life dwells; and they become food for short-lived mortals. With the name of the Divinity—three hypostases—he seals his words; and he teaches men to cry 'Holy' with the spiritual beings. The people answer after his words: 'Holy, Holy, Holy Power, hidden from all and revealed to all.'

And he stretches out his hands and breaks the spiritual Bread; and he signs the type of the Body and Blood that died and was raised up. With his hands he gives the Body of the King to his fellow-servants, being strengthened by the power of

grace to give life. He gives the Bread and says: 'The Body of King Messiah (or of Christ the King')'; and he gives to drink the Wine, and calls it the precious Blood. O corporeal being, that carries fire and is not scorched! O mortal, who, being mortal, dost distribute life! Who has permitted thee, miserable dust, to take hold of fire? And who has made thee to distribute life, thou son of paupers? Who has taught thee to imprison fire in hands of flesh? And who has expounded to thee the power of the wisdom that is hidden from thee? It is not thine to perform things that are too high for thee; it is the power of the help of the God of all that has raised up thy unworthiness. It is He that has made hidden power to dwell in thee and has strengthened thy faculties; and He by thee has interpreted the power of hidden things in the ears of flesh. By His assistance thou hast gotten the gift to give life; and thou, being earthly, holdest the treasure of spiritual things. The priest of the Spirit is made a treasure-keeper of the treasury of the Spirit; and things spiritual are set in his hands to distribute.

A mortal holds the keys of the height, as one in authority; and he binds and looses by the word of his mouth, like the Creator. He binds iniquity with the chain of the word of his mouth; and when a man has returned from his iniquity he turns and looses him. The nod of the Creator's power sets the seal after his words, and binds the wicked and looses the good when they have been justified. It is a great marvel of the great love of the God of all that He has given authority to the work of His hands to imitate Him. His nod alone has authority over all that He has created; and it is His to bind and loose according to His will. As a favour He has given to men the authority of His nod, that He may make known His love—how greatly he loves the sons of His house. Wisely He acts when He communicates His own to His own, that by inducements He may urge His own to become His own. With beautiful things He entices men as children, that through His words they may acquire the order that bestows life. By the title of the priesthood He opened the treasury of His great riches, that every man might receive forgiveness of iniquity through a son of his race. In the sanctuary of the height He will cause them of earth to rejoice; and He has given the priesthood as a pledge (for the fulfilment) of His words of

promise. The priests in the earthly sanctuary imitate by a mystery that abode; and as a mirror they shew an image of the things to come. They are set as guides in the way (that leads) towards the height, and no man sets out without them to the appointed place that is beyond. They fill the place of light on earth to them that are dark; and as with salt they season them that are without savour. Every hour they lay the reasonable nets of their words, and catch men from death unto life. By them are raised up those that were dead in iniquity, whom error had buried; and in their words they see the light of the resurrection of the dead. By them are judged the dead and the living, in both abodes; and unto their authority is reserved the trial of men and watchers. They judge spiritual and corporeal beings; and the devils are put to shame by the fair ray of their conduct. And if the ray of their conduct

convicts iniquity, how shall men be guiltless who have traversed their words? If the spiritual angels are judged by them, he will be guilty of a double judgment whoso sets them at naught. A debt of love every man owes to pay them; and on behalf of all men they beg mercy from Him that shews mercy to all. To them let the wages of love be rendered by the hearers; and may they supply the needs of the spiritual life.

As fathers let them shew their love towards their children; and in place of bodily members let them nourish the faculties (of the soul) with spiritual food. Shepherds of reasonable sheep they are called by our Lord; and according to (the needs of) the flock, so also is the spiritual nourishment. To them was spoken that word to Simon, that they should pasture the sheep and the reasonable lambs and the ewes. Hear the words of that interrogation, O ye priests of the Church; and shew the love that Simon shewed to our Saviour. Pasture (your sheep) well according to the command of the Good Shepherd; and tend His flock with the great love that befits His love. See, and examine, how He bought with His blood the flock of men; and on the summit of

the cross He wrote and set it free from slavery. See how He suffered from the wrongdoers for the sake of His flock, and despised and made light of all sufferings that it might not perish. He was desirous that His dear friends should imitate His example, and that they should travel in His footsteps in the way of His preaching. A great reward He has promised to him that loves Him, even that he shall be with Him in the enjoyment of life without end. Who then is he whose love is true and his mind wise, and who knows well to govern his fellow-servants? With Amen He swore to such a one as should observe and do these things that He would deliver into his hands all the riches of the Kingdom of the height. And with the reward (promised) to him who should administer well His riches He uttered a threat against the fraudulent who received and acted fraudulently. But if the wicked servant should say, 'The judgment is far off,' his Lord will come and exact at his hands that wherein he has dealt fraudulently.

Come, then, ye servants, bought with the all-precious Blood, hearken to the word of Him who sets free the slavery of our race. Come, and understand the force of the meaning that is hidden in His words, that beside the reward there will also be torment without end. The good He encouraged by naming the reward of future things, and into the rebellious He cast the fear of grievous stripes. Let us fear His words, then, as true; and let us not be slack, lest we be condemned with the guilty. True is His judgment, and the word of His promise will not be broken. Let us not doubt concerning His promises, lest perchance we perish. It behoves the priests more than all men to observe these things, even as the order they possess is more excellent than (the condition of) all men. He that knows his Master's will and does it not is guilty of stripes according to (his) knowledge, because he knew

and acted fraudulently. And if he that acts fraudulently does so in defiance, he defrauds himself of the good things that are promised him. To his free will (God) promised the future reward; and he shall be beaten as one who knew, who knew and did wrong. The priest who sins, great is his condemnation and grievous are his stripes; and according to his order shall be either his torment or else his exaltation.

The greatness of the title and the order of the priesthood I desired to praise; and anguish goaded me when I saw how it has been degraded by ignorance. I wondered to see the greatness of the glory of those who triumphed; and I was pained and grieved at the disgrace of those who played the coward. By how much their office was greater than all orders, even so is it become immeasurably less than all grades. The treasury of the Spirit He delivered to them to administer, and fools who have not known how to discern the power of its greatness have despised it. The hidden nod gave into their hands the keys of the height; and wicked priests have shut the door before those that would have entered in. It was granted to them to pardon the iniquity of men; and the iniquity of them that should have given pardon has surpassed that of the defiled. Light and salt the High Pontiff called it (the priesthood) when He gave it; and its light is darkened and its taste has lost its savour in the hand of them that received it. He summoned and called it to give life to mortality; and lo, itself is dead through deeds of abomination. Good seed it received to cast upon the earth; and the labourers have ceased from the service of the word of truth. It went forth to meet the spiritual Bridegroom; and the priests slept and the light of their lamps was quenched.

The oil of mercy failed from the vessels of their deeds; and they received no mercy because they shewed no pity nor forgave mercifully. Foolish virgins He has named them that are without pity, because they have kept the body (chaste) but have not been sanctified from malice. What is he profited who keeps his body in purity, if his mind be not purified from hateful (thoughts)? What is the priest benefited who has put on the name of priesthood, if the inward work agree not with the outward name? The title of priesthood is a great work, and not (a great) authority; and whoso approaches it owes a debt of deeds. Paul teaches how he that desires it should approach: 'He that is desirous of the presbytery is desirous of a work.' The priests have wrested the word of Paul, the chosen vessel, and have desired the authority and hated the labour that bestows life. The title they have loved because of (their) love of things earthly; and they have despised honourable works and prized fraud. Fraud they have honoured more than the truth that has honoured them; and they have gotten lying credit and applause before beholders. They have received the gift that may not be bought with earthly (wealth); and they have received and sold it for the silver of deceit to them that are unworthy. For dead silver they have given the gift that is full of life; and dead men, who have died in sin and have not been pardoned, have received it.

They have thrust the staff of spiritual things into the hands of fools, and ignorant men have stood at the head of the flock to direct it.

A stupid shepherd has lifted up his rod over them that are like to himself, and has become the childish-minded head of a childish people. An incompetent man, he has supposed that he is pasturing sheep, and not reasonable beings; and as dumb (animals) he governs them by earthly means. The fool has supposed that he is exercising authority on earth; and he has begun to exact tribute of the flock, as kings do. Himself knows not what is the import of the title of his authority; nor has his flock gotten understanding, how it may live. A blind man, blind of knowledge, has taken hold of the blind; and they have begun to travel in the way of error without understanding. A fool without knowledge is leading his fellows; and as in the dark he travels in the way of ignorance. That which is written in the prophecy agrees with his case: 'The priest becometh ignorant even as the people.' Priest and people are agreed together in what is unseemly; and they have forgotten the way and left the course (that leads) towards justice. Justice also, seeing that they have gone astray to a degree that is unwonted, has sharpened her sword against the iniquity of their doings. The iniquity of priests and flock she saw and was grieved; and she has shut the door, that Mercy may not entreat her on our behalf. Without the door of Mercy the petition of men is standing; and Mercy is restrained by the curtain of the frown of Justice.

Come, then, O men, let us beg (mercy) for our iniquity whilst yet we live, that we may not be condemned with the everlasting sentence. Come, let us build us a fence of Mercy before Justice: if haply she may be appeased and blot out our iniquity from the midst of her book. Let the priests be as mediators by their words; and let them offer the contrition of their minds, as it were a bribe. Them it behoves to offer sacrifices of love, and to make atonement for the iniquity of men and of themselves. To them it is granted to open the door before sinners, like treasure-keepers of the great and boundless treasury. Let them be as a tongue to interpret; and let them make a defence before the Judge who tries iniquity. Let the priest utter that saying before his flock: 'Turn, ye sinners, that mercy may heal all your debts.' The hope of life let him sow every moment in the ears of all men; and let him lay repentance as a drug upon the diseases of the soul. Let him suffer for all and grieve over all discerningly; and let him reckon as his own the griefs of his fellows, like Paul. He has written a note of hand (as surety) for the debts of his race, and he owes it to pay the debt of love to them that have honoured him. Mercy has brought him near to the order that is high above his fellows;

and according to his order let him shew the labour that befits his title. His title is as a declaration before men that he is set to perform the priestly office; and it behoves him to answer to his title by his works. The silver of mercy is committed into his hands to distribute; and if he misuse it he will hear the saying: 'Thou

wicked servant.’ For he also who received the talent and hid it hoped to escape; and the glance of the hidden Judge caught him in the words of his own answer. A wicked servant also his Lord called him, according to his wickedness; because he received for naught, and gave not for naught as he had received. Let the priests hearken discerningly to that saying, and let them cast the silver of the word of life among their hearers. Let the hearers also receive the seed of their words, that they be not condemned with the fraudulent who received and dealt fraudulently. With love let them hearken to the voice of rebuke that is in their words; and let them not complain when they are beaten for their debts. Let every man receive with good grace the correction of his iniquity, and himself beseech the physician that he will lay a salve upon his sore. The priest is a physician who heals the diseases that are in the midst of the soul; and it behoves him that is sick in his mind to run to him continually.

He knows how to lay the drug of the Spirit upon the thoughts; and he cuts off iniquity with the iron of the divine mercy.

Ye sick of soul, come, draw near to them that have knowledge, and shew the spots of your mind to the hidden glance. Ye that travel in the way, come, and join the company of the wise, and make a prosperous journey to the appointed place of life everlasting.

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