

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Book I

Prologue

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

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

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

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

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

² Cf. Judges 6.14.

³ Cf. Judges 6.19-21.

⁴ 1 Cor. 10.4.

⁵ Num. 11.4.

⁶ Judges 6.21.

⁷ Luke 12.49.

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

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

⁸ Cf. Judges 6.25.

⁹ Cf. Isa. 11.2.

¹⁰ Cf. John 8.56.

¹¹ Cf. Judges 7.6; 6.36-38.

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

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

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

¹² Cf. Deut. 32.2.

¹³ Cf. Matt. 15.24.

¹⁴ Cf. Jer. 2.13.

¹⁵ Cf. Isa. 5.6.

¹⁶ Ps. 71.6.

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

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

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

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

¹⁷ Jos. 5.13.

¹⁸ Luke 10.2.

¹⁹ Cf. Judges 6.39,40.

²⁰ Matt. 20.28.

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

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

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

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

²¹ Cf. John 13.4.5.

²² Cf. John 13.8.

²³ Cant. 5.3.

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

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

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

²⁴ John 13.13,14.

²⁵ Cf. Gen. 18.4.

²⁶ This reference cannot be identified.

²⁷ John 13.7.

²⁸ Cf. Ps. 22.2.

²⁹ Cf. Ps. 71.6.

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

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

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

³⁰ Cf. Gen. 3.15.

³¹ That is, the soul.

³² Cf. Luke 10.19.

³³ Cf. 3 Kings 17.9; 4 Kings 5.14.

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

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

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

Chapter 1

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

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

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

³⁶ Joel 2.28.

³⁷ Cf. Ps. 97.10.

³⁸ Cf. 1 Cor. 12.10.

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

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

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

2 Ps. 118.91.

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

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

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

3 1 Cor. 2.10.

4 John 15.26.

5 John 1.18.

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

Chapter 2

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

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

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

⁶ Cf. 1 Cor. 2:10.

¹ John 1:3.

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

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

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

² Cf. Matt. 10:20.

³ 1 Cor. 8:6.

⁴ 2 Cor. 5:18.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

BOOK TWO

Prologue

ALTHOUGH IN THE FIRST BOOK of the ancient history it has been made clear from reading both that the grace of the sevenfold Spirit was reflected in the judges themselves of the ancient Jews and that the mysteries of the heavenly sacraments were revealed through the Holy Spirit, whom Moses was not unaware of as eternal, accordingly at the beginning of the world—rather, before the beginning—he joined Him with God, whom he knew to be eternal before the beginning of the world. For, if anyone notices carefully, he will recognize in the beginning the Father and the Son and the Spirit. For of the Father it is written: 'In the beginning God created heaven and earth.' Of the Spirit it is said: 'The Spirit was moved over the waters.'¹ And in the beginning of creation the figure of baptism is well indicated,

¹ Gen. 1.1.2.

through which the creature had to be cleansed. It is also read of the Son that it is He who made a separation of the light and the darkness; for there is one God the Father who speaks, and one Lord Jesus who acts.

(2) But, again, lest you think that there was either arrogant power on the part of Him who spoke or base complacency on the part of Him who acted, the Father confesses the Son as equal to Himself in the oneness of the work, saying: 'Let us make man to our image and likeness.'² For what else do image and working and common likeness signify than the oneness of the same majesty?

(3) Yet, that you may recognize more fully the equality of the Father and of the Son, just as the Father spoke and the Son did, so, too, the Father works and the Son speaks. The Father works, as it is written: 'My Father worketh until now.'³ You have it said to the Son: 'Say the word, and he shall be healed.'⁴ And the Son says to the Father: 'I will that where I am, they also may be with me.'⁵ The Father did what the Son said.

(4) But Abraham was not ignorant of the Holy Spirit. And thereupon he saw three, and adored one,⁶ because there is one God, one Lord, and one Spirit. And so there is oneness of honor, because there is oneness of power.

(5) And what shall I say of each one? Samson, born by the divine promise, had the Spirit with him, for so we read: 'The Lord blessed him, and the Spirit of the Lord began to be with him in the camp.'⁷ And thus foreseeing the future

² Gen. 1.26.

³ John 5.17.

⁴ Cf. Matt. 8.8.

⁵ Cf. John 17.24.

⁶ Gen. 18.2-3.

⁷ Judges 13.25.

mystery, he demanded a wife from the foreigners, which his father and mother did not know, as it is written, because it is from the Lord. And rightly was he held stronger than the rest, for the Spirit of the Lord directed him, under whose guidance, he alone now put to flight the peoples of the foreigners, now tore the lion asunder with his hands, inaccessible to its bite, invincible in his strength.⁸ Would that he had been as careful to preserve grace as he was strong to overcome the beast!

(6) Perhaps this was not only a marvel of courage, but also a mystery of wisdom, an oracle of prophecy. For it does not seem to be without meaning that when he was on his way to the sacrament of marriage, a roaring lion met him, whom he tore apart with his hands, in whose body, as he was on the point of gaining the desired wedlock, he finds a swarm of bees, and from whose mouth he took honey, which he gave to his father and mother to eat.⁹ The people of the Gentiles, who believed, had honey; the people who before belonged to savagery is now of Christ.

(7) The riddle is not without mystery, which he proposed to his companions, saying: 'Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.'¹⁰ Then it was mysterious to the point that its solution was sought within three days, which could not have been solved except through the faith of the Church on the seventh day, when the time of Law had been completed, after the passion of the Lord. For thus you have it, that the Apostles also did not understand, 'because Jesus was not yet glorified.'¹¹

⁸ Cf. Judges 14.1-5ff.

⁹ Cf. Judges 14.8ff.

¹⁰ Cf. Judges 14.14.

¹¹ John 7.39.

(8) They say: 'What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?' To this he replied: 'If you had not ploughed with my heifer, you had not found out my riddle.'¹² O divine mystery! O manifest sacrament! We have evaded the slayer; we have overcome the powerful! There now is the food of life, where before was the hunger of a miserable life. Dangers are turned into safety, bitterness into sweetness. Grace has come forth from the offence; power from weakness, life from death.

(9) Yet there are those who on the other hand believe that the wedlock could not have been established except by the slaying of the lion of the tribe of Judas, and that so in His body, that is, the Church, bees were found, who store up the honey of wisdom, because after the Lord's passion the Apostles believed more. So Samson, as a Jew, kills this lion, but in it he found honey, as in the figure of the heritage to be redeemed, that a remnant might be saved according to the election of grace.¹³

(10) Scripture says: 'And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him; and he went down to Ascalon, and slew there thirty men.'¹⁴ For he was unable not to possess the victory, who comprehended the mysteries. So in the garments they receive the reward of wisdom, the badge of intercourse, who resolve and answer the riddle.

(11) Here, again, other mysteries arise, in that his wife is carried away, and so foxes set fire to the sheaves of aliens.¹⁵ For those who contend against the divine sacraments are usually deceived by their own cunning. So again Scripture

¹² Judges 14.18.

¹³ Cf. Rom. 11.5.

¹⁴ Judges 14.19.

¹⁵ Cf. Judges 15.1ff.

says in the Canticle of Canticles: 'Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines, that our vineyards may flourish.'¹⁶ Well did he say 'little,' because the larger could not destroy the vineyards, although to the strong even the Devil is little.

(12) He, then (to make a summary of the story, for the consideration of the whole passage must be reserved for its own time), was unconquered as long as he possessed spiritual grace, as was the people of God chosen by the Lord, that Nazarene in the Law. So Samson was unconquered, and so invincible that he struck a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass,¹⁷ so full of heavenly grace that when thirsty he even found water in the jawbone of an ass, whether you compare this to a miracle, or turn it to a mystery, since in the humility of the people of the Gentiles there was both rest and triumph, according as it is written: 'If anyone strike thee on the cheek, turn to him the other also.'¹⁸ For by this endurance of injuries, which the sacrament of baptism teaches, we triumph over some stings of anger, that, when we have met death, we may obtain the rest of the resurrection.

(13) Was it that Samson, then, who broke the ropes intertwined with thongs, who broke new cords like weak threads? Was it that Samson who did not feel the bonds of his hair fastened by a fixed beam, so long as he possessed spiritual grace? He, I say, after the Spirit of God departed from him, greatly changed from that Samson who returned clothed in the spoils of the foreigners, fallen from his strength on the knees of a woman, caressed and deceived, shorn of his consecrated hair.¹⁹

¹⁶ Cf. Cant. 2.15.

¹⁷ Cf. Judges 15.15.

¹⁸ Cf. Mat. 5.39.

¹⁹ Cf. Judges 16.7-19.

(14) So did the hairs of his head possess such importance that, while these remained, his strength remained unconquered, but when the head was shorn, all the strength of the man was suddenly lost? We should not think that the hairs of the body possess such strength. There is the hair of religion and faith; the hair of the Nazarene perfect in the Law, consecrated in parsimony and abstinence, with which she, in type the Church, who had poured oil over the feet of the Lord, wiped the feet of the heavenly word;²⁰ for then she knew Christ also according to the flesh. Manifestly, that is the hair of which it is said: 'Thy hair is as flocks of goats'; growing from that head of which it is said: 'The head of every man is Christ' and elsewhere: 'His head is as the finest gold; his locks as black pine-trees.'²¹ The good ships of Tharsis are of pine, which float upon the floods of the world, and show the safe oarage of salvation.

(15) And so also in the Gospel our Lord, pointing out that certain hairs of the head are visible and perceptible, says: 'But the very hairs of your head are all numbered,'²² pointing out manifestly the deeds of spiritual virtue, for God has no care for our hair. And yet it is not absurd to believe that, since in accord with His divine majesty nothing can be hidden from Him.

(16) But what does it profit me, if God Himself knows all my hairs? That redounds and is of benefit to me if He, the ever-watchful witness of good deeds, grants the reward of eternal glory. Finally, Samson himself, declaring that these hairs are not corporeal but perceptible, says: 'If my head

²⁰ Cf. John 12.3.

²¹ Cant. 4.1; 1 Cor. 11.3; cf. Cant. 5.11.

²² Matt. 10.30.

be shaven, my strength shall depart from me.'²³ This concerns the mystery. Now let us consider the order of the passage.

Chapter 1

(17) Above you have it that 'the Lord blessed him, and the Spirit of the Lord began to be with him.' Below it says: 'And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him.' Likewise it says: 'If my head be shaven, my strength shall depart from me.' After he was shaven, see what Scripture says: 'The Lord,' it says, 'was departed from him.'¹

(18) You see, then, that He who was with him, Himself departed from him. The same, then, is the Lord, who is the Spirit of the Lord; that is, He called the Spirit of the Lord, Lord, just as also the Apostle says: 'Now the Lord is a spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.'² You have then, the Lord called also the Holy Spirit; for the Holy Spirit and the Son are not one Person, but one Substance.

(19) In this place, also, he mentioned Power and signified the Spirit. For just as the Father is Power, so, too, is the Son Power, and is the Holy Spirit Power.³ Of the Son you have read that 'Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God.'⁴ We read also that the Father is Power, as it is written: 'You shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God.'⁵ Here, surely, He called the Father

²³ Judges 16.17.

¹ Judges 13.24-25; 14.6; 16.17,20.

² 2 Cor. 3.17.

³ Cf. 1 John 5.17.

⁴ 1 Cor. 1.24.

⁵ Matt. 26.64.

Power, on whose right hand the Son sits, as you have it: 'The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand.'⁶ The Lord Himself also named the Holy Spirit Power when He said: 'You shall receive the power, when the Ghost comes upon you.'⁷

Chapter 2

(20) For the Spirit Himself is power, for you have read: 'The Spirit of counsel, and of fortitude [power].'¹ And as the Son is the Angel of great counsel, so also is the Spirit of counsel, that you may know that the counsel of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one—the counsel not on some doubtful matters, but on foreknown and established matters.

(21) But that the Spirit is the Arbiter of divine Counsel, learn also from this. For when we taught above² that the Arbiter of baptism is the Holy Spirit, and have read that baptism is the counsel of God, as you have it: 'But the Pharisees despised the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized by him,'³ it is very clear that, since there can be no baptism without the Spirit, there can also be no counsel of God without the Spirit.

(22) And that we may know more fully that the Spirit is Power, we should know that He was promised, when the Lord said: 'I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh.'⁴ He

⁶ Ps. 109.1.

⁷ Cf. Acts 1.8.

¹ Isa. 11.2.

² See Book 1, ch. 6.

³ Cf. Luke 7.30.

⁴ Joel 2.28.

then who was promised us is Himself Power, just as also in the Gospel the same Son of God declared when He said: 'And I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay you in the city, till you are clothed with power from on high.'⁵

(23) And the Evangelist so far points out that the Holy Spirit is power, so that St. Luke also related that He descended with great power, when he says: 'And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as though the Spirit were borne with great power.'⁶

(24) But lest you again think that this is to be referred to sensible and corporeal things, learn that the Spirit so descended just as Christ is to descend, as you have it: 'They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and majesty.'⁷

(25) For how is not the power one and the might the same, when the work of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one, the judgment one, the temple one, the vivification one, the sanctification one, the kingdom also one?

Chapter 3

(26) For let them say in whom they think there is an unlikeness of the divine work. Since just as life is to know the Father and the Son, as the Lord himself declared when He said: 'This is life everlasting; that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent,'¹ so also is life to know the Holy Spirit. For the Lord says: 'If

⁵ Luke 24.49.

⁶ Cf. Acts 2.2.

⁷ Matt. 24.30.

¹ John 17.3.

you love me, keep my commandments; and I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive; because it seeth him not, nor knoweth him; but you know him, because he abides with you, and he is in you.²

(27) The world, then, did not have eternal life, because it had not received the Spirit; moreover, where the Spirit is, there is eternal life, for the Spirit himself is He who effects eternal life. Therefore, I wonder why the Arians raise the question as to the only true God. For just as it is eternal life to know the only true God, so it is eternal life to know Jesus Christ, so it is eternal life to know the Holy Spirit, whom the world does not see as it sees the Father, does not know as it knows the Son. Moreover, he who is not of this world has eternal life, and the Spirit, who is the light of eternal life, abides with him for ever.

(28) So, if the knowledge of the only true God confers this which the knowledge of the Son and of the Spirit confers, why do you separate the Son and the Spirit from the honor of the true God, when you do not separate them from the magnitude of the benefit? For either you must believe that this greatest boon is of the only true Godhead, and as you will confess the only true Godhead of the Father, so you will confess it of the Son and of the Spirit, or if you should say that he, too, can confer eternal life who is not true God, you will fall into the position of seeming to derogate rather from the Father, whose work you do not think to be the chief work of the only true Godhead, but to be compared to the works of a creature.

² Cf. John 14.15-17.

Chapter 4

(29) Moreover, what wonder is it if the Spirit works life, who gives life as the Father does, who gives life as the Son does?¹ Moreover, who would deny that to give life is of the Eternal Majesty? For it is written: 'Enliven thy servant.'² So he is enlivened who is a servant, that is, man, who did not have life before, but received the privilege of having it.

(30) Therefore, let us see whether the Spirit is enlivened, or Himself enlivens. But it is written: 'The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.'³ So the Spirit giveth life.

(31) But that you may understand that the quickening of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is not divided, learn that there is a oneness of quickening also, since God himself quickens through the Spirit; for Paul said: 'He that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies, because of his Spirit dwelling in you.'⁴

Chapter 5

(32) Who indeed can doubt that the Holy Spirit quickens all things, since He, too, just as the Father and the Son, is the Creator of all things, and God, the omnipotent Father, is understood to have done nothing without the Holy Spirit; for even in the beginning of the creation the Spirit moved over the waters?¹

¹ Cf. John 5.21.

² Cf. Ps. 118.17.

³ 2 Cor. 3.6.

⁴ Rom. 8.11.

¹ Cf. Gen. 1.1.

(33) So, when the Spirit moved over the waters, there was no grace in creation, but after the creation of this world also received the operation of the Spirit, it gained all the beauty of that grace with which the world is illumined. Finally, the Prophet declared that the grace of the universe cannot abide without the Holy Spirit, when he said: 'Thou shalt take away their breath, and they shall fail, and shall return to their dust. Send forth thy spirit, and they shall be created, and thou shalt renew the face of the earth.'² Not only then did he teach that all creation cannot stand without the Spirit, but also that the Spirit is the Creator of the whole creation.

(34) And who will deny that the work of the Holy Spirit is the creation of the earth, whose work it is that it is renewed? For if they should desire to deny that it was created through the Spirit, since they cannot deny that it must be renewed through the Spirit, then those who desire to separate the Persons will maintain that the operation of the Holy Spirit is better than that of the Father and of the Son, which is far from the truth; for there is no doubt that the renewed earth is better than the created earth. Or, if at first the Father and the Son made the earth without the operation of the Holy Spirit, but afterwards the operation of the Holy Spirit was joined to this, that which was made will seem to have needed the aid of that which was added. God forbid that anyone should think this, that the divine operation be believed to have a variety of authors, which Manichaeus introduced.³

(35) Or, indeed, do we think that the substance of the

² Cf. Ps. 103.29,30.

³ Manes or Manichaeus, the author of Manichaeism, professed to have effected the true synthesis of all the religious systems then known. It actually consisted of Zoroastrian dualism, Babylonian folklore, Buddhist ethics, and some small and superficial addition of Christian elements. The theory of two eternal principles, good and evil, is predominant. See article on Manichaeism in *Cath. Encycl.*

earth exists without the work of the Spirit, without whose work the vault of the heavens does not subsist? For it is written: 'By the word of the Lord, the heavens were established; and all the power of them by the spirit of his mouth.'⁴ Notice what he says. He says that all the power of the heavens is to be referred to the Spirit. For how was He who was moving, before the earth was made, resting when the earth was being made?

(36) Gentile writers, following ours through shadows, as it were, because they could not take in the truth of the Spirit, have indicated in their verses that the Spirit within nourishes the heaven and the earth, as well as the spheres of the glittering moon and stars.⁵ Thus they do not deny that the power of creatures stands firm through the Spirit; do we who read deny this? But you think that a spirit produced from air is indicated. If they have declared a spirit made of air as the author of all, do we doubt that the Spirit of God is the creator of all?

(37) But why do I delay with unrelated matters? Let them accept the evident proof that there can be nothing which the Spirit is denied to have made, nor can it be denied regarding the Angels, the Archangels, the Thrones, and Dominions, that they subsist by His operation, since the Lord Himself according to the flesh, whom the angels serve, was begotten when the Spirit came upon the Virgin, just as according to Matthew the angel said to Joseph: 'Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.' And according to Luke, he said to Mary: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee.'⁶

⁴ Ps. 32.6.

⁵ Cf. Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.724.

⁶ Matt. 1.20; Luke 1.35.

(38) So the birth from the Virgin is the work of the Spirit. The fruit of the womb is the work of the Spirit, according to what is written: 'Blessed art thou among women; and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.'⁷ The flower of the root is the work of the Spirit, that flower, I say, of which it was well prophesied: 'There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root.'⁸ The root of the patriarch Jesse is the family of the Jews; Mary is the rod; Christ is the flower of Mary, who sprouted forth from a virginal womb to spread the good odor of faith throughout the whole world, as he himself said: 'I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valley.'⁹

(39) The flower, even when cut, keeps its odor, and when bruised increases it, and when torn does not lose it; so, too, the Lord Jesus on that gibbet of the cross neither failed when bruised, nor fainted when torn; and when cut by the pricking of the lance, made more beautiful by the sacred color of the outpoured blood, He grew young again, Himself not knowing how to die and exhaling among the dead the gift of eternal life. On this flower, then, of the royal rod the Holy Spirit rested.

(40) A good rod, as some think, is the flesh of the Lord, which raised itself from the root of the earth to the regions above and carried about the world the sweet-smelling fruits of the holy religion, the mysteries of the divine generation, and pouring out grace upon the altars of heaven.

(41) So we cannot doubt that the Spirit is Creator, whom we know as the Author of the Lord's Incarnation. For who will doubt when in the beginning of the Gospel you have it,

⁷ Luke 1.42.

⁸ Isa. 11.1.

⁹ Cant. 2.1.

that the generation of Christ was thus: 'When Mary his Mother was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost'¹⁰

(42) Although most manuscripts have *de Spiritu*, nevertheless, the Greek from which the Latins translated, said: ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου, that is, *ex Spiritu Sancto*. For what is from someone is either of his substance or of his power. Of his substance as the Son, who says: 'I came out of the mouth of the most High,'¹¹ as the Spirit who proceeds from the Father, of whom the Son says: 'He shall glorify me; because he shall receive of mine.'¹² Of the power, moreover, according to this: 'One God, the Father, of whom are all things,'¹³

(43) How, then, did Mary have Him of the Holy Spirit in her womb? If as of her substance, then was the Spirit turned into flesh and bones? Surely not. If the Virgin conceived as of His operation and power, who will deny the Spirit as Creator?

(44) What of the fact that Job also clearly indicated the Spirit as his Creator, when he said: 'The divine Spirit, who made me.'¹⁴ Surely in one small verse he showed Him to be both divine and Creator. If, then, the Spirit is Creator, He certainly is not a creature, for the Apostle separated creature and Creator, when he said: 'They served the creature rather than the Creator.'¹⁵

(45) At the same time he warns that the Creator is to be served by condemning those who serve the creature, when we owe service to the Creator. And since he knew the Spirit as Creator, he taught that He should be served saying: 'Beware

¹⁰ Matt. 1.18.

¹¹ Eccli. 24.5.

¹² John 16.14.

¹³ 1 Cor. 8.6.

¹⁴ Cf. Job 33.4.

¹⁵ Rom. 1.25.

of dogs, beware of evil-workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, who serve the Spirit of God.¹⁶

(46) But if someone objects because of the disagreement in the Latin manuscripts, some of which heretics have falsified, let him examine the Greek manuscripts, and notice that it is written there: οἱ πνεύματι Θεοῦ λατρεῖσθε, which is translated in Latin: 'Who serve the Spirit of God.'

(47) So, when the same Apostle says that the Spirit should be served who asserts that not the creature but the Creator is to be served, surely he shows clearly that the Holy Spirit is Creator, and is to be venerated with the honor of the eternal Godhead, because it is written: 'The Lord thy God thou shalt adore and him only shalt thou serve.'¹⁷

Chapter 6

(48) And it does not escape me that heretics have been accustomed to object that the Holy Spirit seems to have been created on this account, because many of them advance as an argument to establish their impiety what Amos said about the blowing of the wind, as the very words of the Prophet declare. For you have these words: 'Behold I am He that established the thunders, and createth the wind [spirit], and declareth His Christ to men, that maketh the light and mist, and walketh upon the high places of the earth; the Lord the God of hosts is his name.'¹

(49) If they make an argument out of this, that he said

¹⁶ Cf. Phil. 3.2,3.

¹⁷ Matt. 4.10.

¹ *Spiritus*, meaning 'wind' or 'spirit,' is also used for the Holy Spirit. Throughout several chapters here St. Ambrose battles the heretics who would confuse the meaning of Scripture.

'spirit' was created, Esdras taught us that spirit is created, saying in the fourth book: 'And again on the second day you made the spirit of the firmament';² yet, to stick to the point, manifestly from these words which Amos spoke, does not the order of the words clearly prove that the Prophet spoke of the creation of this world?

(50) Then he begins thus: 'I am He that established the thunders, and createth the wind [spirit].'³ Let the very order of the words teach us; for, if he had wished to speak of the Holy Spirit, surely he would not have placed the thunders first. For the thunders are not more ancient than the Holy Spirit; although they are impious, yet they dare not say this. Then, when we see that something is added about the light and mist, is it not manifest that what is said is to be understood of the creation of the world? For we know from daily experience and example that, when the storms of this world take place, thunders come first, blasts of wind follow, the sky grows dark with clouds, and the light comes forth again from the darkness. For the blasts of the winds are also called 'spirits,' as it is written: 'Fire and brimstone and storms of winds.'⁴

(51) And that you might know that he called this 'spirit' he says: 'He that establisheth the thunders, and createth the wind [spirit],' because these are often created when they take place, but the Holy Spirit is eternal, and, if anyone dares to say that He is created, yet he cannot say that He is created daily, like the breeze of the winds. Then Wisdom herself, when speaking with reference to the assumed body, says: 'The Lord created me.'⁵ Although He was prophesying of things to come, yet, because the coming of our Lord and Saviour was prede-

² Cf. Amos. 4.13.

³ Cf. 4 Esd. 6.41, following the Latin version of Migne.

⁴ Ps. 10.7.

⁵ Cf. Prov. 8.22.