

THE LITURGICAL HOMILIES OF NARSAI

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH
WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY
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OF DOWNSIDE ABBEY

WITH AN APPENDIX
BY
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latter agree with the Creed in
g the clause 'First-born of all
y-begotten'; while the words in
ment ('in unum et solum verum
appear to be directly connected
αληθινὸν θεὸν παντοκράτορα in
read in A: 'and He is about to
s.' The italicised words are not
Creed; but in *Const. Apost.* we
συτελεία τοῦ αἰῶνος. Cassian
Creed he quotes from may well
and in Narsai and *Const. Apost.*,
Creed of Antioch (A.D. 341).
Const. in the two following cases
paraphrase:—(1) Art. 1: *Const.*
ν ἀπάντων; A, 'who made and
Const. Apost. καὶ ἀποθανόντα
h through His manhood.'

e apparent points of agreement
present Nestorian Creed, it is
urgy bore a very remarkable
loch in the time of Nestorius.
here existed a Syriac Creed
ch, or whether the Creed in A
Nestorius's own, due to the
ol, can hardly be determined.
n the Persian Churches at the
alternative has at least a fair
a question whether the actual
iturgy does not date from this

e to bear evident marks of Syrian
n, which was composed by the Syrian
is creed by Dr Sanday in *J. T. S.* iii
αληθινὸν θεὸν, πατέρα παντοκράτορα:
Const. (2) κτίστην καὶ δημιουργὸν τῶν
(3) δι' οὗ οἱ τε αἰῶνες κατηρτίσθησαν καὶ
the present Nestorian Creed. (4) καὶ
s: cf. *Const. Apost.*, 4th formula of

HOMILY XVII (A).

AN EXPOSITION OF THE MYSTERIES.

vol. i

ON the Mysteries of the Church my thoughts mystically p. 270
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 pon-
dered, 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 p. 271
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.

¹ Isaiah xxiv 16 (Pesh.). Instead of the last occurrence of the phrase the
Peshitta has 'Woe unto me.'

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 of¹ the Mysteries of the Church; for only to them of the household is it permitted to partake².

Again in a different manner another proclamation is made: 'Let every one that has not received the sign (*rushmd*) of life depart from hence'; and every one that has repented and returned from unorthodox heresy, until he is signed he shall not partake of³ the Mysteries of the Church⁴. 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 partake⁵.

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

¹ Or, 'take part in.'

² Or, 'take part.'

³ Or, 'take part in.'

⁴ Cf. the seventh canon of the Synod of Laodicea.

⁵ Or, 'take part.'

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 (*haiklā*) where they (the Mysteries) are being consecrated. p. 272

Sadly they all go forth from the midst of the nave, and lament and stand with great mourning in the (outer) court (*dārēthā*) 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 deacon¹ 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)² who were

¹ The context would seem to require 'deacons.'

² And so elsewhere. 'Watcher' is a very common Syriac synonym for 'angel,' especially in verse compositions.

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 p. 278 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 be seems 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)¹ 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 Joseph², whence flowed life for men and angels. In another

¹ The verb *kash* signifies in the *aphel* conjugation 'to scare away,' 'drive off.' It is used in Gen. xv 11 of Abraham driving away birds from the sacrifice. Here and below (p. 12) it is employed absolutely to describe the action of the deacons in guarding the sacred elements. Since there is a noun *makkeshitá* (formed from the *aphel* conjugation of the same verb) which means 'a fan,' we may conclude (comparing *Const. Ap.* viii 12) that Narsai uses the corresponding verb in the sense of 'fanning,' i.e. for the purpose of keeping off insects.

² In the 2nd century *Gospel of Peter* (c. 6) it is said that our Lord was buried in a 'tomb (the place of?) which was called The Garden of Joseph.'

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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 (*κόρυμβος*) 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:— p. 274

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 (*parṣōpā*), double in natures and their hypostases (*qñōmē*)†¹. 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 Serūgh (*Homiliae*, ed. Bedjan, vol. ii p. 609) 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).

¹ The verse within †† is omitted by the editor from the text, but is given in the Preface p. 10, note 2.

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, p. 275 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.

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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 p. 270 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 them¹.

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

¹ I have not been able to discover any authority for this statement in the writings of St Chrysostom. But in one of the letters attributed to St Nilus, a disciple of the famous doctor, the following is given as Chrysostom's own account of what he himself had often seen: 'Ἀρχομένου γὰρ, φησί, τοῦ ἱερέως τὴν ἁγίαν ποιεῖσθαι προσκομιδὴν, πλείσται ἐξαίφνης τῶν μακαρίων δυνάμεων ἐξ οὐρανοῦ κατελθούσαι, ὑπερλάμπρους τινας στολὰς περιβεβλημέναι, γυμνῶ τῷ ποδί, συντόνῳ τῷ βλέμματι, κάτω δὲ νέοντι τῷ προσώπῳ περιστοιχίσασαι τὸ θυσιαστήριον μετ' εὐλαβείας καὶ πολλῆς ἡσυχίας καὶ σιωπῆς παρίστανται μέχρι τῆς τελειώσεως τοῦ φρικτοῦ μυστηρίου· εἰτα διαφεθέντες καθ' ὅλον τὸν σεβάσμιον οἶκον τῆδε κάκεισε ἕκαστος αὐτῶν τοῖς παρατυχοῦσιν ἐπισκόποις καὶ πρεσβυτέροις καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς διακόνοις τὴν χορηγίαν ποιούμενοι τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ τιμίου αἵματος συνεργοῦσαι συμπράττουσι καὶ συνεπισχύουσιν (*Patr. Gr.* lxxix cols. 345—8). This, however, appears to be based on Chrysostom's *De Sacerdotio* vi 4 (*Patr. Gr.* xlviii 682), where he describes a similar vision reported to him as having been seen by a certain worthy old man. It may be that in the 5th century the view was current that Chrysostom was here modestly veiling his own identity. The presence of angels at the celebration of the Mysteries is alluded to also in C (*infra*, p. 48).

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
 p. 277 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

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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 p. 278 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 light¹, 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.'

¹ This unusual form of expression can be paralleled from another of Narsai's Homilies in which he thrice speaks of Jonah as confined 'tomb in tomb' within the fish (vol. i pp. 140, 141, 143).

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) names¹, 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 book²
 p. 279 —'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, 'look³ 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

¹ I.e. the Diptychs.

² Lit., 'what the book has proclaimed which has been read.'

³ Lit., 'stand,' he says, 'well, look.' The adverb goes more naturally with 'stand,' but it possibly admits of being taken with 'look.' In other Homilies Narsai frequently uses the phrase 'look well' (ܕܚܝܬ ܕܡܝܬ): once, almost certainly, and probably always, the words come as a reminiscence of the Liturgy. In vol. ii p. 66 Narsai says that his mind admonished itself to 'look well' upon the beauty of God; he goes on: "'Look well," said my mind, giving counsel to itself.' On p. 67 he goes on playing on the two words, together and separately, in a way that points to their being a quotation. He uses the phrase also i 12, ii 93, 137, 143, 215, 228 (*bis*), 235, 352. The present rite has: 'Stand well, and look.'

may be increased by the glance of the secret glory, make supplication trembling and with his mouth commandment pray, and not mercy, and not fear, than all know

At this point and casts on (veil) being received neither was the reaction: after the stone; but (lit. 'mystery')

The priest which he makes he says, 'of Jesus communion of our Lord has before His Most Son, who is for the day of Heaven which we have from us the

Then he 'Let your mind sitting on the of earthly things

ܕܡܝܬ refer to either Christ. But the printed text (ܕܡܝܬ) 'remove the veil symbolized by the

² Cf. C p. 56

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made a mediator to offer, concurrence of the whole at offers this oblation to us, and then to offer. But against him be absent, let with his mind. If a priest the Lord of the worlds, no prayer nor oblation for

the Church from one to names¹, of the living and living the Church community declare that the living oblation. And the people—a prayer which follows the reading of the book² in Holy Church, and for reception of this oblation: in every place, receive, as offered.'

and admonishes every of Him with purity of h your minds on what which ye are minister- s, lo, are being conse- every one be in fear and The priest has already him, that your peace

been read.' b goes more naturally with 'look.' In other Homilies (see *Hom.*): once, almost as a reminiscence of the admonished itself to 'look well,' said my mind, giving the two words, together and tion. He uses the phrase The present rite has:

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 p. 280 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

¹ *וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁמַח*. The suffix here, being pointed as masc., cannot refer to either 'resurrection' or 'stone.' As the text stands it must refer to Christ. But the sense is not good. If we make a minute alteration in the printed text (reading the fem. instead of the masc. suffix) we can translate 'remove the veil before the mystery thereof,' i.e. before the resurrection is symbolized by the consecration of the elements.

² Cf. C p. 56.

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
p. 281 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 secret¹ 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

¹ The Syriac expression *bērdā* may only mean 'privately,' 'familiarily.'

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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.'

p. 282

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

¹ Cf. C, p. 57.

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 (*q̄ñómē*), without confusion: with one will, with one person (*paršōpā*) of the one sonship. He is then one in His Godhead and in His manhood; for the manhood and the Godhead are one person (*paršōpā*). 'Two natures,' it is said, 'and two hypostases (*q̄ñómē*) is our Lord in one person (*paršōpā*) 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.¹ † 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 Mercy²' 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 p. 283 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

¹ The words within †...† are omitted from the text by the editor, but he refers us for them to his Latin Preface p. 10 note 2, where the Syriac text of the verses is given.

² Lk. ii 30, where the Peshitta reads, 'for lo, mine eyes have seen Thy mercy.'

Man; and He sat at meat in the sinful world; the mountain of His glory in over Lazarus, His mighty power in Jerusalem, as Hosannas, as that He was caused it to v of His twelve Master, as G exposed the sweated at t and terrified seized Him a ear that Sin judgement an is about to His shoulder destruction of and endured darkened the as Man; and God. He crucified and He pronounced pierced with veil, as God. the earth, as power, as God and the water said that He to be with u His side, as as God. He He ascended

¹ Cf. St Cyr

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 rod 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 God¹.

¹ Cf. St Cyril of Jerus. *Catech.* iv 9—11, and the passage in St Leo's *Tome*

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
p. 285 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 humane 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.

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To this effe to His Father Body and His l given for the d the which I ha with love of M and abideth in memorial in t My Blood be wine, as I hav them the Boc bread and wi Holy Spirit.'

Thus spak and the bread did not style (lit. 'in exact their nature power and by and men conf who didst del Body which that sits in gl all is united is united to Wherefore th Lord, and the

¹ The above Ehedjesu ascribe

² Joh. vi 56,

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 nature¹.

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 him². 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, p. 286 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

¹ The above passage may be derived from a book 'On the Mysteries' which Ebedjesu ascribes to Theodora. Cf. *Introd.* p. lxix.

² Joh. vi 56, 59.

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 p. 287 mourners and ascetics¹, that their prayer may daily be accept-

¹ The Syriac words '*abhlê*' and '*ânwâyê*', literally 'the sorrowful,' or 'mourners,' and 'the lowly ones,' have regularly the technical meaning 'religious,' 'ascetics.'

able before God are in every covenant that commemorates the asks that they now commemorate deceased and mention of his mediation; and He mentions the asks that they He makes men and he asks the debts. He makes sacrifices; that debts of their of gainsayers may come to mention at or battles and mention of the whole year; a prosperous and and of all places and quiet in the of those who and he asks He makes in persecutions; to their afflictions prisons and in their bonds and those who have they may escape mention of the and he entreats healing. He

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able 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 gainsayers¹ 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
 p. 288 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 Nestorius¹ 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 down² 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 gift³ it may be worthy to receive the Body and Blood. The Spirit descends upon the oblation without change (of place⁴), 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 dead⁵.† These things the priest says in earnest entreaty; and he draws himself up and stretches out his hands

¹ The editor has substituted in the text the name of Barsamyā (I do not know on what authority), with this note in Syriac: "'Nestorius" was in the codex, and we have altered it.' The only Barsamyā mentioned by Wright in his *History of Syriac Literature* is the bishop said to have been martyred at Edessa in the reign of Trajan. There is nothing in the Acts of his martyrdom (Cureton *A. S. D.* pp. 63 ff.) to suggest the ascription to him of any liturgical formula.

² Cf. C, p. 58.

³ 'Charisma' would be nearer to the meaning of *shukkânâ*.

⁴ The word *shunnâyâ* denotes local change, migration, departure.

⁵ The words within †...† are omitted from the text by the editor, but are quoted in his Latin Preface, the Syriac being given in a note on pp. 13—14.

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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 consecrated¹. It is not the priest's virtue² 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 p. 289 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 unclean³. These things the Holy Spirit celebrates

¹ Or, 'who has consecrated,' but the above is perhaps more in accord with the context.

² I.e. his virtuousness, moral goodness (Syr. *ܡܕܝܢܐ*).

³ An interesting passage in the *Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite* (ed. Wright Engl. transl. p. 48) may be quoted here. It refers to the defence of the city of Tellâ by the Romans against the Persian king Kâwâd (c. 503): 'They guarded the city carefully by night and by day, and the holy Bar-hadad [the bishop] himself used to go round and visit them and pray for them and bless them, commending their care and encouraging them, and sprinkling holy water (*lit.*

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 becoms 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
p. 290 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. V gives thanks), with dwell and light Lord remain in the arose and was re the priest bows t izes the resurrec priest makes thr being in the t descent (of the because the mys A mystery of th the completion symbolize the 318 priests gav there should be to bow the knee his genuflexions the descent he Holy Spirit he

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² Council of Ni

³ I.e., it would

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 times¹; 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 genuflexion². 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 Trinity³: 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. p. 291

Then the Priest, after all the ceremonies have been completed, blesses the people with that formula with which our Lord gave blessing⁴.

He now begins to break the Body little by little, that it may be easy to distribute to all the receivers. The resurrection

¹ It appears from what follows that Narsai is here referring back, and that the genuflexions were made before the Invocation.

² Council of Nicaea, Canon xx.

³ Cf. O, p. 59.

⁴ I.e., it would seem, 'Peace be with you.'

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 times¹: 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
p. 292 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.'

¹ Only seven appearances are enumerated. Solomon of Basra (saec. xiii) in his *Book of the Bee* (ed. Budge ch. 45) also reckons ten appearances of Christ after His resurrection, which he gives as follows: (1) to Mary Magdalene, (2) to the two women at the tomb (Mt. xxviii 9), (3) to Cleopas and his companion, (4) to Simon Peter, (5) to the apostles without Thomas, (6) to the disciples with Thomas, (7) On the mountain (Mt. xxviii 17), (8) by the Sea of Tiberias, (9) on the Mount of Olives, (10) to 500 disciples together (1 Cor. xv 6).

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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 p. 293

¹ The addition 'and pardon our sins' may in the 5th century have belonged to a liturgical text of the Lord's Prayer. It is found also in a paraphrase made by the Monophysite (?) Jacob of Serûgh († 521). Still earlier, the version of the Prayer given in the *Acts of Judas Thomas* has 'and forgive us our debts and our sins.' The idea that Jacob's paraphrase was based upon liturgical use is supported by the fact that it contains also a very characteristic 'Old Syriac' reading, 'the continual bread of the day,' where the Syriac Vulgate has 'the bread of our necessity to-day' (see Burkitt *Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe* ii 105, 268-9).

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 completed¹.

'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 Fathers². To all the holy ones whom baptism has sanctified the Holy Thing is fitting according

¹ If these words refer to the Lord's Prayer, and not to the salutation 'peace be with you,' it would seem that the couplet containing them has got displaced, and that it originally stood just before the one that now precedes it; otherwise its insertion here is most abrupt. The words refer more naturally to the *paz vobis*: Narsai elsewhere speaks of this as the formula appointed by our Lord (cf. pp. 8, 23).

² The Syriac word is *qudshā*, which means 'holiness': but it is regularly used to denote 'the Sacrament,' and the context shews that this is the meaning here.

³ Or, 'in agreement with the Fathers,' i.e. according to their teaching. The word translated 'consensus' can also mean 'perfection,' and it evidently belonged to Narsai's formula. So in the present rite (Brightman *op. cit.* p. 296): 'The holy thing to the holies is fitting in perfection.'

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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, ^{p. 294} 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

¹ In C (p. 60) we find 'Holy is the Father, and holy is His Begotten, and the Spirit who is from Him.' This might seem to imply a different formula from that above. But the formula in the present Nestorian rite is 'One Father holy, one Son holy, one Spirit holy'; and it is possible that this underlies both A and C: in the one case the unity of God is the idea uppermost in the writer's mind, in the other His holiness. But however this may be, we must allow for the possibility that an interval of many years lay between the composition of the two Homilies. A, I believe, is Narsai's commentary on his own revision of an older liturgy; and C may have been written long before this revision was made. Narsai was head of the school at Nisibis for at least 45 years. B obviously was composed about the same time as C; and so, probably, was D, which often expresses the same thoughts as B and C in almost identical language.

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 describe¹ (it) if he can. 'I have a mystery (or secret), I have a mystery²,' 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 p. 295 and drinketh of My Blood unworthily, unto his condemnation he eateth and drinketh³,' without profit.

He who approaches to receive the Body stretches forth his hands, lifting up his right hand and placing it over its fellow⁴. 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 Lord⁵.'

¹ Lit. 'and he who is able to be sufficient, let him be sufficient.' But the Syriac verb 'to be sufficient' frequently has the meaning 'to be equal to speak about, or praise.'

² Cf. Is. xxiv 16 (Peshitta).

³ Joh. vi 56; 1 Cor. xi 27.

⁴ Similarly St Cyril of Jerus. *Catech.* xliii 21: ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀριστερὰν θρόνον ποιῆσαι τῇ δεξιᾷ ὡς μελλούσῃ βασιλείᾳ ὑποδέχεσθαι.

⁵ The present rite of Addai and Mari has a longer formula beginning 'The Body of our Lord'; but over the cup the deacon, and not the priest, says 'The precious Blood,' etc. In C (p. 60) the formula is given as follows: 'He gives the Bread, and says: "The Body of King Messiah"; and he gives to drink the Wine, and in like manner (he says): "The Blood of Christ."' In D (p. 67) we read: 'He gives the Bread and says: "The Body of King Messiah"; and he gives to drink the Wine, and calls it the precious Blood.' Narsai's formula was perhaps 'the Body of Christ,' 'the Blood of Christ.' But the words in D ('and calls it The precious Blood') recall what the deacon says in the present rite. See, however, p. 27, note 1. The present rite has: 'The Body of our Lord.'

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He receives in his hands the adorable Body of the Lord of all; and he embraces it and kisses¹ 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 p. 296 be worthy to send up to Thy Godhead glory and comeliness and confession for ever and ever.'

¹ This is doubtless to be taken literally. Compare the Palestinian custom, mentioned by St Cyril (*Catech.* xxiii 21, 22), of touching the eyes with the consecrated Particle, and, after the reception of the chalice, of moistening the hand at the lips and touching the eyes, brow, and other senses. The practice of kissing the Eucharist is referred to by Narsai elsewhere (vol. i p. 319): 'The lips which have shouted praise and kissed the Mystery of the medicine of life are shouting phrases of blasphemy.' So Aphraates *Hom.* ix 10 'Let thy lips beware of dissension with which thou kissest the King's Son.' And in vii 21 and xx 8 he says that the receivers put the Body of our Lord 'upon their eyes' (not 'ante oculos' or 'coram oculis' as Parisot renders).

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 concluded¹.

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 Pontiff², 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

¹ Or, simply, 'performed.'

² The Syriac word *Kumrā* is ordinarily used only of heathen priests (cf. Acts xiv 13); but it is the regular (and only) word employed in the Epistle to the Hebrews for *tepeús*, *Rab* *Kumrā* being used in the same Ep. for *ἀρχιεpeús*. The ordinary word for priest (*Kāhnā*) does not occur in Heb.; whilst *Kumrā* does not occur in any other book of the N. T. except to denote a heathen priest.

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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 p. 297 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 it¹ 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. p. 298 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

¹ Reading *láh*, 'to it' (*sc.* the priesthood) instead of *lú*, 'not.' The reference is apparently to 1 Cor. xi 28.

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.

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