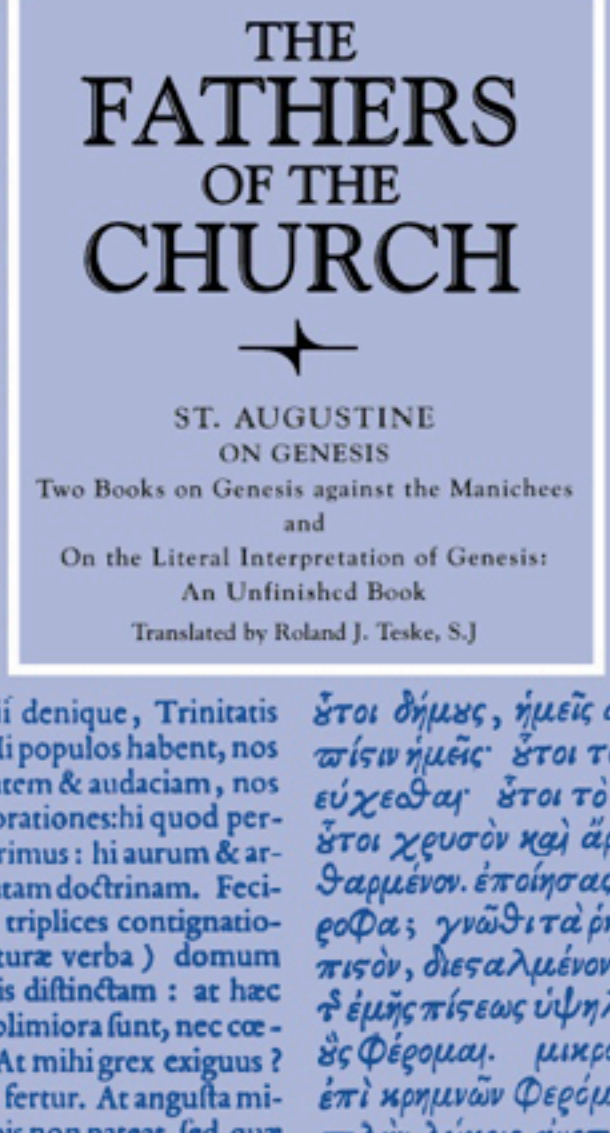
THE
FATHERS
OF THE
CHURCH
ST. AUGUSTINE
ON GENESIS
Two Books on Genesis against the Manichees
and
On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis:
An Unfinished Book
Translated by Roland J. Teske, S.J

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

A NEW TRANSLATION

VOLUME 84

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ON GENESIS

TWO BOOKS ON GENESIS AGAINST THE MANICHEES and ON THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF GENESIS: AN UNFINISHED BOOK

Translated by
Roland J. Teske, S.J.
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For my brothers:
John, Robert, Charles, and Paul

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

Periodicals and Reference Works

ACW	Ancient Christian Writers. New York, New York/Mahwah, New Jersey: Newman Press, 1946–.
AM	Augustinus Magister. Congrès international augustinien. Paris, September 21–24, 1954. Vols. 1 and 2: Communications. Vol. 3: Actes.
AS	*Augustinian Studies*
BA	Bibliothèque augustinienne. Oeuvres de saint Augustin. Paris, 1936–.
BAC	Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos. Madrid, 1946–.
CCL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina. Turnhout, 1953–.
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. Vienna, 1966–.
DS	*Enchiridion Symbolorum.* Ed. H. Denzinger-A. Schönmetzer. Rome: Herder, 1976.
DTC	*Dictionnaire de théologie catholique.* Ed. A. Vacant, E. Mangenot, and E. Amann. Paris, 1935.
EP	*Enchiridion Patristicum.* Ed. M. J. Rouët de Journal. 24th ed. Rome, 1969.
FOTC	The Fathers of the Church. New York and Washington, D.C., 1947–.
NCE	*New Catholic Encyclopedia.* New York, 1967.
ODCC²	*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church.* 2d ed. Ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone. Oxford, 1984.
PG	Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca. Ed. J.-P. Migne. Paris, 1957–1866.
PL	Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina. Ed. J.-P. Migne. Paris, 1878–1890.
RAug	*Recherches augustiniennes*
REAug	*Revue des études augustiniennes*
SC	Sources chrétiennes. Paris, 1942–.
SP	Studia Patristica
TS	*Theological Studies*
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur. Berlin, 1882–.

Works of Saint Augustine

C	*Confessiones*
CA	*Contra academicos*
CEM	*Contra epistolam Manichaei quam vocant fundamenti*
CF	*Contra Faustum*
CO	*Contra Orosium*
DBV	*De beata vita*
DCD	*De civitate dei*
DD83	*De diversis quaestionibus LXXXIII*
DDC	*De doctrina christiana*
DFS	*De fide et symbolo*
DGnI	*De Genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus*
DGnL	*De Genesi ad litteram*
DGnM	*De Genesi contra Manichaeos*
DH	*De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum*
DI	*De immortalitate animae*
DLA	*De libero arbitrio*
DME	*De moribus ecclesiae et de moribus Manichaeorum*
DMu	*De musica*
DOR	*De ordine*
DQ	*De quantitate animae*
DT	*De trinitate*
DUC	*De utilitate credendi*
DVR	*De vera religione*
E	*Epistulae*
EnP	*Enarrationes in Psalmos*
JE	*In Joannis evangelium tractatus CXXIV*
QH	*Quaestiones in Heptateuchum*
R	*Retractationes*
S	*Sermones*
SO	*Soliloquia*

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

DURING THE many years of his writing career Saint Augustine undertook an explanation of the beginning of the Book of Genesis at least five times.[1] The first of these, *On Genesis against the Manichees* (*De Genesi contra Manichaeos*), was written in 388 or 389, shortly after his return to Africa and before his ordination to the priesthood. The second attempt, *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis: An Unfinished Book* (*De Genesi ad litteram imperfectus liber*), was written about 393; that it remains incomplete bears witness to Augustine's inability to offer a literal interpretation of the text. A third time, in the final three books of his *Confessions* (*Confessiones*), Augustine once again takes up the exposition of the beginning of Genesis, presenting a highly figurative interpretation.[2] Fourthly, there is his monumental work in twelve books, *On Genesis Literally Interpreted* (*De Genesi ad litteram*), which he began later than 404 and eventually published before his work *On the Trinity* (*De trinitate*) which was completed, it now seems, after 420.[3] Finally he again turned to the beginning of the Book of Genesis in book eleven of *The City of God* (*De civitate Dei*) that was written by 417/8.[4] This volume

1. Cf. Gilles Pelland, *Cinq études d'Augustin sur le début de la Genèse* (Paris and Tournai: Desclée. Montreal: Bellarmin, 1972).

2. Cf. Robert J. O'Connell, *St. Augustine's Confessions: The Odyssey of Soul* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969) for a commentary on these books that integrates them into the whole work.

3. This work has been translated into English as *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* by John H. Taylor, ACW 41 and 42 (1982). Taylor has provided excellent notes, many of which also throw light upon the earlier commentaries on Genesis. The French translation, *La Genèse au sens littéral* in *Oeuvres de saint Augustin,* tr. P. Agaësee and A. Solignac, BA 48 and 49 (1972), also provides excellent notes and commentary. For the dating of DGnL, cf. Robert J. O'Connell, *The Origin of the Soul in St. Augustine's Later Works* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1987), 202.

4. Cf. O'Connell, *Later Works,* 283.

presents Augustine's first two commentaries on the beginning of Genesis—neither of which has been previously translated into English.

THE DATES AND CONTEXTS OF THE TWO WORKS

On Genesis against the Manichees is listed as ninth among Augustine's works in his *Retractations* (*Retractationes*).[5] Augustine tells us that he wrote these two books soon after his conversion when he had become settled in Africa after his return from Italy.[6] Augustine had been baptized in Milan by St. Ambrose at the Easter Vigil on April 24, 387. Then, with the intention of returning to Africa, he made his way with his mother, Monica, his son, Adeodatus, his friends, Alypius and Evodius, future bishops in Africa, to Ostia, the port of Rome; however, with the port blockaded by civil war, the party was prevented from leaving. At Ostia Monica and Augustine shared the celebrated vision recounted in C 9.10.23–25.[7] Shortly thereafter Monica became gravely ill, died and was buried in Ostia. Augustine stayed in Rome until the blockade was lifted and then returned to Africa in 388, setting up in his hometown, Thagaste, a community of "servants of God." Back in Thagaste, Augustine was confronted with the Manichees whom he had joined and with whom he had remained as a "hearer" (*auditor*) for nine years, from 373 to 382.[8] During that time he had drawn a number of his African friends, such as Romanianus and Honoratus, into Manichaeism, and

5. This enumeration excludes the works on the liberal arts, the section on which is missing from the better MSS of R.

6. DGnL 8.2.5 and R 1.10.1.

7. Cf. Paul Henry, *The Path to Transcendence: From Philosophy to Mysticism in St. Augustine*, tr. Francis F. Burch (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1981) = *La vision d'Ostie. Sa place dans la vie et dans l'oeuvre de saint Augustin* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1938).

8. There were two classes of membership in Manichaeism, the "elect" and the "hearers." The elect were bound by a stricter ethical code and dietary requirements. For the best general biography of Augustine, cf. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969).

a number of his early works are addressed to these men whom he would now bring into the faith of the Catholic Church.[9]

In DME 1.2.2 Augustine points out that the Manichees use two principal traps by which they deceive the naive into becoming their students. "First, they find fault with the Scriptures which they either misunderstand or want to be misunderstood; second, they parade the image of a chaste and remarkable self-control." In DME Augustine undertakes a defense of Catholic moral conduct against the Manichaean pretenses to virtue. There he tells us, obviously referring to DGnM, "In other works I think I have sufficiently shown how we can counter the ignorant and impious attacks which the Manichees make against the Law, called the Old Testament, and by which they become inflated with empty boasting amid the applause of the ignorant" (DME 1.1.1). Hence, along with DME, DGnM forms a two-pronged counterattack upon the principal snares by which Manichees try to entrap the ordinary believers of the Catholic faith.[10]

On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis: An Unfinished Book is listed as seventeenth in Augustine's catalogue of his works in R 1.18, immediately after DFS which Augustine preached at Hippo on October 8, 393, before a general council of the Church of Africa, while he was still a priest.[11] Hence, Bardy concludes that DGnI was begun in 393.[12] It was never fin-

9. CA and DVR are addressed to Romanianus; DUC to Honoratus. Brown speaks of Romanianus as a "fellow traveler" of Manichaeism; cf. *Augustine of Hippo*, 54 and 134.

10. Though DME is listed prior to DGnM in R, the initial paragraph of DME may have been a later addition when *De moribus Manichaeorum* was added to DME as its second book. I owe this suggestion to Kevin Coyle, O.S.A., who is editing DME for CCL and presented a paper on this topic at the Toronto Augustine Conference in May, 1987. All translations from Augustine and secondary sources are mine, except for John K. Ryan's translations of *The Confessions* (New York: Image Books, 1960), which I have at times modified.

11. He had been ordained a priest in the spring of 391 by Valerius of Hippo: Augustine was in Hippo to visit a friend when the priesthood was forced upon him by the congregation—not without the connivance of Valerius. Once Augustine was ordained, Valerius insisted that he preach, a task normally reserved to the bishop.

12. Cf. the note on DGnI in BA 12.571, nt. 27.

ished, and published only after the composition of R. When Augustine found it among his works in 427, he added the final two paragraphs in which he changes his earlier exposition of Gen 1.26 from a Christological to a Trinitarian interpretation of man's being made to the image and likeness of God.

Unlike DGnM, which dealt with Gen 1–3, this second explanation of Genesis would have been simply a *hexaemeron,* a commentary on the six days of creation.[13] Augustine mentions in R 1.18 that he did not dare in DGnM to expound the great secrets of natural things that Genesis recounts "according to the letter (*ad litteram*), that is, according to their historical character (*secundam historicam proprietatem*)." He did, however, want to try his hand at "this very laborious and difficult work," but when he undertook this literal interpretation in DGnI, he admits that "my inexperience in Scriptural exegesis collapsed under the weight of the burden. And before I finished one book, I gave up the labor that I could not sustain." When Augustine found DGnI in 427, he "neither published it nor decided to destroy it." He did, however, revise (*retractavi*) it and "wanted it to remain as an indication"—in my opinion not a useless one—"of my first attempts (*rudimentorum*) in explaining and investigating the divine oracles."[14]

THE AUDIENCES FOR WHOM THE WORKS WERE INTENDED

Two Books on Genesis against the Manichees

DGnM is clearly an apologetic work. As the very title indicates, it is directed against the Manichees. In R 1.10.1 Augustine said that, unlike his other works up to that point,

13. Augustine says in R 1.18, "If I had completed it, I would have at least discussed all the works and words of God that belong to the sixth day."

14. Recent scholarship has emphasized the development of Augustine's thought. For excellent examples of this approach, cf. Olivier du Roy, *L'intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon saint Augustin: Genèse de sa théologie trinitaire jusqu'en 391* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1966) and Robert J. O'Connell, *St. Augustine's Early Theory of Man, A.D. 386–391* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), as well as O'Connell, *Later Works.*

which opposed the Manichaean errors in general, "these two books were explicitly published against [the Manichees] in defense of the Old Law which they attack with the passionate zeal of their unhealthy error." So too, in DGnM 1.4.7 he says that he excludes from the aim of the work the refutation of the whole Manichaean error and focuses his efforts upon the defense of the Old Testament in the face of their objections. However, the intended audience is not merely or principally the Manichees. Rather, like any apologetic work, DGnM is aimed to a large extent at the defense of those who already believe, or at the protection of those who are wavering. Indeed the opening paragraphs of DGnM show that Augustine wrote this work for the uneducated Catholic who understood his previous writings only with difficulty or not at all, "our weak and little ones, who find no way to respond to [the Manichees]" (1.1.2). Hence, we can distinguish between the Manichees against whom Augustine wrote and the uneducated Catholic for whom Augustine wrote.

The Manichees

Though Manichaeism was in fact a separate world religion, Augustine regarded it as a Christian heresy.[15] Mani (or Manes) was born in 216 in what is now Iraq and founded his own religion at the age of 24 after receiving a revelation. Manichaeism rapidly spread eastward to India, central Asia and even Manchuria; within 50 years of Mani's death (276 or 270), Manichaeism had also spread widely in the Roman empire. It taught a universal dualistic gnosis that explained the human predicament in terms of a metaphysical materialism cloaked in a highly imaginative myth. It also taught a doctrine of salvation and prescribed a system of ethics by which that salvation was attained.

As a dualism, Manichaeism held that the world is the result

15. For general information on Manichaeism, cf. J. Ries, "Manichaeism," in *NCE* 7.153–160; J. Lienhard, "Manichaeism," in *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Gordon S. Wakefield (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983), 256–257; and now the *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, ed. E. Ferguson et al. (New York: Garland, 1990), 562–563.

of two uncreated principles, good and evil, or light and darkness. Originally these two principles were separate, but in these middle times good and evil, or light and darkness, have become intermingled as a result of a conflict in which some of the good was captured and imprisoned in the evil. Hence, in these middle times man experiences himself as divided: his soul literally a particle of divinity imprisoned in the dark and evil body. There is much in human experience for which the conflict between light and dark, soul and body, spirit and flesh can account.[16] Moreover, Manichaeism teaches the consoling doctrine that it is not we who do evil. Rather, we remain sinless, while the evil in which we are imprisoned bears the guilt for the wrong that is done.[17] Manichaeism also presents a doctrine of salvation whereby in the end times there will again be the separation of the good from the evil, the liberation of the kingdom of light from captivity in darkness and evil.

Manichaeism is a metaphysical materialism in the sense that both uncreated principles are bodies extended in three dimensions, the good principle bright light, the evil darkness, each extended endlessly save where the two touch. During his years as a Manichee Augustine thought of God as "an immense shining body" of which he himself was a part (C 4.16.31). Even when he was in Rome and was beginning to free himself from the Manichees, he still "did not know how to think of [God] except as a vast corporeal mass, for [he] thought that anything not a body was nothing whatsoever. This was the greatest and almost sole cause of [his] error. As a result, [he] believed that evil was a substance . . ." (C 5.10.19–20). Hence, he thought of God and evil "as two masses opposed to each other, each infinite, but the evil one on a narrower scale, the good on a larger" (C 5.10.20). In CEM 21.23 Augustine reports that the Manichees used the

16. The conflict between the flesh and the spirit that St. Paul speaks of in Rom 7 could, for example, be interpreted as man's participation in the cosmic struggle between good and evil.

17. Cf. C 5.10.18 for Augustine's admission that he preferred to excuse himself and accuse something else in him as if he were not a single whole.

example of a cross-shaped bread to aid the imaginations of their followers. Three parts were white and infinitely extended in every direction except on the side where the black part rests.[18]

Augustinian scholars often speak in the plural of Augustine's conversions and list as the first conversion his leaving the faith of Monica and the African Church to become a Manichee.[19] Augustine had just read Cicero's exhortation to the life of philosophy, the *Hortensius,* and reports, "It turned my prayers to you, Lord, . . . and with incredible ardor of heart I desired undying wisdom. I began to rise up, so that I might return to you" (C 3.4.7). And then he fell in with the Manichees—at least partially because of the problems he encountered with the Scriptures.[20] In any conversion there is the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem,* the group one leaves and the group one joins. It is quite clear that Augustine became a "hearer" among the Manichees because he was attracted by their promises of the truth, but there is also reason to believe that Augustine was repelled by the anti-intellectualism of the African Church. His references to the terror of superstition and the yoke of authority that he found in the *Catholica* would seem to indicate that he not merely could not find within the Church solutions to his intellectual problems, but met with a conservative anti-intellectualism that refused to deal with them.[21] In DUC 1.2 Augustine writes to his friend, whom he had led into Manichaeism,

> You know, Honoratus, that we fell in among such men for no other reason than that they kept saying that they would, by pure and simple reason, bring to God those willing to be their hearers and free

18. For a further discussion of this, cf. R. Teske, "The Aim of Augustine's Proof that God Truly Is," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 26 (1986) 253–268, especially 257–258.

19. Cf. Leo Ferrari, *The Conversions of Saint Augustine* (Villanova, PA: Villanova University Press, 1984); J. M. Le Blond, *Les conversions de saint Augustin* (Paris: Aubier, 1950); and François Masai, "Les conversions de saint Augustin et les débuts du spiritualisme en Occident," *Moyen Age* 67 (1961) 1–40.

20. Cf. C 3.5.9 and 3.7.12–13 for Augustine's problems with Scripture.

21. Cf. O'Connell, *Early Theory,* 232–235, as well as Brown, *Augustine of Hippo,* 42–43.

them from every error, after setting aside all the terror of authority. For what else forced me for almost nine years to spurn the religion implanted in me as a boy by my parents and to follow as a hearer those men, except that they kept saying that we were frightened by a certain superstition and that faith was imposed upon us before reason, whereas they pushed no one to faith, until they had sifted and clarified the truth.

O'Connell speaks of the uncompromising conservative spirit of Tertullian as still dominant in the African Church of Augustine's youth.[22] Henry Chadwick mentions Augustine's contemporary Christians who read only the Bible in its awkward Old Latin version.[23]

The followers of Mani prided themselves on not picturing God in human form and challenged Catholics to explain how man was made in God's image if God did not have hair, teeth, eyes and the inner organs humans have. During the nine years that Augustine was a Manichee—and probably before that—he believed that the Catholic Church held such an anthropomorphic view of God. According to C 6.3.4 it was only in the Milan of Ambrose that he found that the Catholic Church did not hold, as he had thought, that God "was limited by the shape of the human body. . . ." He tells us in DBV 1.4 that in hearing Ambrose preach, he began to realize that Ambrose was not thinking of God as bodily at all. Thus he came to regard as "infantile nonsense" what he had thought was the doctrine of the Church, namely, that God was confined "in a space, however high and wide, yet bounded on every side by the shape of human members" (C 6.4.5). Hence, he recalls his joy when he finally realized that learned men in the Church were not anthropomorphic thinkers. "One great hope has dawned: the Catholic faith does not teach what we once thought and what we vainly accused it of. Her learned men hold it blasphemy to believe that God is limited by the shape of the human body" (C 6.11.18). Even after his baptism, Augustine admits that within the ranks of the Mani-

22. Cf. O'Connell, *Early Theory,* 233.

23. Cf. Henry Chadwick, *Augustine* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 35.

chees there is found no one "who limited the substance of God by the shape of the human body"—an opinion that he calls most abject—though there are, he admits, many within the Church who "think of God in a human form and suppose that he is such" (DME 1.10.17).

There is further evidence of the anti-intellectualism of the African Church. The Manichees found Augustine, he tells us, "as one spurning old wives' tales and desirous of holding and drinking in the clear and pure truth" (DUC 1.2). We may well find a sample of the caliber of Catholic arguments against Manichaeism in the story of the simple believer (*religiose simplex*) of the African Church who would stamp on a patch of sunlight and say, "See, I stamp upon the sun and your god" (DUC 6.13). So too, in C 11.12.14, in refusing to give the flippant answer that God was preparing hell for those who ask profound questions, when he was asked what God was doing before he created heaven and earth, Augustine may well be giving us an example of the caliber of intellectual response his own questions met.[24]

In DME 1.1.1 Augustine admits that many things in Scripture seem absurd to the unlearned though they seem praiseworthy when explained by the more learned. In fact, they produce greater pleasure, once they have been explained, in proportion to the difficulty of their explanation. Hence, one ought to seek a pious teacher rather than an impious attacker. But then Augustine adds a comment that is quite revealing:

> And if someone desirous of learning these things should fall in among either bishops or priests, or such prelates or ministers of the Catholic faith who avoid laying bare the mysteries generally or, content with simple faith, have no concern to know loftier things, let him not despair that knowledge of the truth is present where not all who are asked can teach and not all who ask are worthy to learn.

That is, Augustine by no means equates the learned with the hierarchy; even some bishops and priests are apparently men quite content with simple faith.[25]

24. Cf. O'Connell, *Early Theory*, 234–235.
25. Shortly after his ordination Augustine addresses the assembled bish-

The idea that Augustine was mistaken about what Catholics in the Church of Africa believed hardly squares with his obvious intelligence. The idea that the inability to conceive a spiritual substance was a personal intellectual difficulty perhaps due to his life of sin runs counter to the facts. What seems to have been the case is that the whole Western Church up until the time when Augustine came into contact with the Neoplatonic circle in the Church of Milan thought of God and the soul in materialistic terms.[26] If whatever is real is bodily, as Tertullian and the prevalent Stoic materialism had held, then the fact that man is made in the image and likeness of God inevitably entails that God have the shape and form of the human body. And if the Church of Africa had no use for an intellectual understanding of the faith, if it rejoiced in the yoke of authority and terror of superstition and was largely content with the Old Latin Bible as its one book, it is easy to see why an educated young man like Augustine would be repelled by the Catholic Church into Manichaeism as a faith for the intellectuals.

The Little Ones

In the opening paragraphs of DGnM Augustine expresses his pleasure over an admonition he received from some men learned in the liberal arts who warned him that his previous writings against the Manichees were all but unintelligible to the unlearned and that he should write in a simpler fashion for these uneducated folk.[27] Who or what sorts of persons were the unlearned or untrained who were unable to grasp

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ops of Africa on the meaning of the *Creed* in plain and simple terms; cf. DFS passim.

26. Masai, "Conversions," 19, nt. 34 and 29.

27. Despite the mention of a simpler or lowered style in the Migne subtitle (*ad imperitiorum captum*) the problem was, I suspect, more a matter of Augustine's using in his previous works a highly philosophical language for which "the little ones" were quite unprepared. The fact that he seems to have stopped work on DLA in the beginning of Book Three and did not finish it for seven years might be reason to suppose that those who admonished him had that highly philosophical work in mind.

what Augustine had previously written against the Manichees? I suggest that the little ones are precisely the men and women of simple faith who had little use for anything intellectual, men and women "not very learned, but full of faith."[28] Such was precisely the sort of person that had earlier repelled Augustine from the *Catholica* and pushed him toward the Manichees. There is, however, a big difference. For Augustine is now in some sense their pastor.[29]

From the text of DGnM we learn that these unlearned or untrained people are "our weak and little ones" (1.1.2). Later Augustine explains that Scripture uses concrete terms, such as water or heaven and earth to draw our attention not to such visible things, but to invisible things. Scripture uses "the names of visible things on account of the weakness of the little ones who are less suited for grasping invisible things" (DGnM 1.5.8). Similarly we learn that a variety of terms is used to convey the difficult philosophical notion of unformed matter to those less trained (DGnM 1.7.12). Moreover, the Manichees accuse the Catholic little ones of holding an anthropomorphic view of God since the implication of Gen 1.26 is that God has a human form and shape—an implication that seems inevitable if one holds a metaphysical materialism.[30] Augustine insists that it is ridiculous, even impious, to

28. Cf. EnP 106.13 for this description of the "animal" as opposed to the "spiritual men" in the Church. Cf. also C 3.5.9 where Augustine admits that he then disdained to become a "little one."

29. Cf. Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*, 2e ed. augmentée d'une *Retractatio* (Paris: De Boccard, 1949), 337. Marrou claims that until his arrival in Hippo Augustine was merely an intellectual, but that as bishop he discovered the Christian people with their needs and problems. DGnM makes it clear that Augustine's concern for the little ones, the *rudes* of Hippo, antedates his episcopacy.

30. The vast majority of Christians for all their lives (and all of us for most of the time) do quite well without a concept of God as a spiritual substance in the technical sense. For the early centuries it was quite possible to remain with the language of the Bible. But once the Arians posed the question as to whether the Son was God or a creature, precise terminology and conceptual clarity became mandatory. So too, once the Manichees raised questions with regard to the biblical account of man's being made in God's image and likeness, and with regard to the origin of evil, that were simply unanswerable within the framework of the prevalent Stoic materialism of the Western Church, there arose the need for a spiritualist metaphysics if such questions were to be answered and not merely brushed aside.

suppose that God has "a nose, teeth, a beard, inner organs, and the rest that we need" (DGnM 1.17.27). But he points out, "Scripture generally mentions these members in presenting God to an audience of the little ones. . . ." He notes that the New Testament does this as well as the Old and adds, "All who understand the Scriptures spiritually have learned to understand by those terms not bodily members, but spiritual powers . . ." (DGnM 1.17.27). So too "the spiritual believers in the Catholic teaching do not believe that God is limited by a bodily shape. When man is said to have been made to the image of God, these words refer to the interior man, where reason and will reside." Even our erect body reminds us that our mind ought to be raised up "to eternal spiritual things." Augustine contrasts the "spiritual believers in the Catholic discipline," men "who understand the Scriptures spiritually," with "the little ones" who, as we saw, "are less suited for grasping invisible things" (DGnM 1.5.9). These spiritual believers are, it seems, "the few" who can understand, for example, how the Spirit of God was borne over the water (DGnM 1.5.8) and how "the will of the artisan is borne over the things he intends to make" (DGnM 1.7.12).

After hearing the preaching of Ambrose, Augustine mentions in C 6.3.4,

> I found that "man was made by you to your image" was understood by your spiritual sons, whom you had regenerated by grace in our Catholic Mother, not as though they believed and thought of you as limited by the shape of the human body—although what a spiritual substance would be like I did not surmise even in a weak and obscure manner. . . .

What Augustine does not mention, and is often overlooked, is that no one in the West aside from the small group of Neoplatonists in the Church of Milan thought of God as a spiritual substance. These latter were the "spiritual believers" or "her learned men," while the ordinary faithful in the Church were "the little ones," men who could not rise up to a spiritual understanding.[31]

31. Augustine does not mention this lack of a concept of the spiritual,

These spiritual sons of the *Catholica* were not, I suggest, the typical believer or everyone baptized in the Church. They were rather the exception; they were educated men, men who had absorbed enough Neoplatonism to be able to conceive of God and the soul as non-bodily, or spiritual, beings. These spiritual believers who, as we shall see, interpreted Scripture spiritually were Christian Neoplatonists, such as Ambrose, Simplician, Marius Victorinus and Theodorus. The vast majority, the many as opposed to the few, the corporeal men as opposed to the spirituals, the little ones as opposed to the adults, those needing the milk of Christ's humanity as opposed to those able to feed on the Word, the bread of angels, were those who remained content with simple faith, who believed without understanding.[32]

On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis: An Unfinished Book

Like most of Augustine's writings during this period, DGnI has as one of its aims the defense of the Catholic faith against the Manichees. Augustine's presentation of that faith in DGnI 1.2–4 within the framework of the *Apostles' Creed* indicates that the book was intended primarily for those who shared that faith.[33] One of the striking characteristics of DGnI is its

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because he was convinced that Christ and the apostles, not to mention Abraham, Moses and the prophets, all shared this basic Neoplatonic insight. Cf. DOR 1.11.32 where Augustine tells us that Christ did not say that his kingdom was not of the world, but not of this world, thereby showing that there is another intelligible world, the world Plato has spoken of (CA 3.17.37).

32. Cf. T. Van Bavel, "L'humanité du Christ comme *lac parvulorum* et comme *via* dans la spiritualité de saint Augustin," *Augustiniana* 7 (1957) 245–281; cf. also R. Teske, "Spirituals and Spiritual Interpretation in Augustine," *AS* 15 (1984) 65–81.

33. Augustine does not present the Catholic faith in the form of a creed, but there is an unmistakable parallel between Augustine's words and the symbol, despite changes of case, tense and mood and word order. The credal structure is apparent even in an English translation. The words in brackets have been added, though ellipses and changes in word order have not been indicated. Italicized words are derived from the *Nicene Creed*. "[I believe in] God the Father almighty, *ma*[*ker*] and creat[or of] *all things invisible* [and] *visible*; [I believe in] his *only-begotten* Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, [who was]

hesitant and aporetic character. Again and again Augustine proposes a view, or series of views, as possible interpretations of the text without affirming any one of them as correct. Often he raises questions that he examines and then leaves unanswered. His discussion of the various lights and their corresponding darknesses, his appeal to the function of the world soul in the formation of the sensible world, his appeal to form as unifying, and his metaphysics of participation with the distinction of what is like from likeness itself are all elements that would indicate that DGnI is not addressed to the uneducated faithful but rather to those of considerable learning and intellectual interest.

By the time he wrote DGnI Augustine was ordained a priest and not merely called upon to preach to the faithful in the presence of the bishop—something almost unheard of in Africa—but was called upon to preach to the assembled bishops of Africa—something truly exceptional.[34] It is not hard to imagine that Valerius and some of his fellow bishops would ask from Augustine a literal interpretation of the *hexaemeron* for themselves or for the more learned members of their flock. On the other hand, it may have been that Augustine simply "wanted to test his powers in this very laborious and difficult work."[35]

AUGUSTINE'S INTERPRETATION OF GENESIS

So much has been written on the patristic interpretation of Scripture and the various senses of Scripture that it is difficult to approach the text of Augustine without bringing with

born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, was crucified, buried, rose and ascended into heaven, that he is coming to judge the living and the dead at the resurrection of the dead in the flesh. [I believe] in the Holy Spirit, the Catholic Church, [that] sins have been forgiven, and eternal life." Cf. *Bibliothek der Symbole und Glaubensregeln der alten Kirche,* ed. August Hahn, 3rd revised edition by G. Ludwig Hahn (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1962), 38, nts. 42 and 43. Hahn links the symbol in DGnI with the *Milanese Creed,* though there are also influences from the *Nicene Creed.*

34. Cf. the note to R 1.17 in BA 12.571, nt. 26.

35. R 1.18.

one later views more or less foreign to his thought.[36] Furthermore, Augustine's own exegetical practice and theory, it would seem, developed from his early to his later works so that it is difficult to know whether one is justified in reading his earlier expositions of Genesis in the light of some of his later remarks—even in the light of later remarks about his earlier works.[37] Also Augustine's terminology seems lacking in fixity and precision with different sets of terms that overlap and are remarkably resistant to a systematic presentation.[38] Finally, there is some reason to think that Augustine's understanding of some of the key terms, such as "literal interpretation," may have changed from his earliest to his later writing.[39]

36. The works of Henri de Lubac and Jean Daniélou have been especially important in restoring interest in patristic exegesis. Cf. Jean Daniélou, *Les divers sens de l'Ecriture dans la tradition chrétienne primitive* (Bruges and Paris: Desclée Brouwer, 1948) and *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers,* tr. Wulston Hibbard (London: Burns and Oates, 1960) = *Sacramentum futuri: études sur les origines de la typologie biblique* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1950); Henri de Lubac, *Histoire et Esprit: L'intelligence de l'Ecriture d'après Origène,* in Théologie 16 (Paris: Aubier, 1950), as well as his multivolume work, *Exégèse médiévale. Les quatre sens de l'Ecriture,* in Théologie 41, 42, and 59 (Paris: Aubier, 1959). Cf. 41.1.177–187 for a discussion of the four senses in Augustine. Also of value for Augustine is: Jean Pepin, "A propos de l'histoire de l'exégèse allégorique: l'absurdité, signe d'allégorie," SP, in TU 63 (1955) 395–413, as well as "L'exégèse 'ad litteram,'" in Agaësse's and Solignac's introduction to DGnL in BA 48.32–50. Recent important works include A. M. La Bonnardière, *Biblia Augustiniana* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1960); and id., *Saint Augustin et la Bible* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1986).

37. For example, in DGnL 8.2.5 Augustine says that he interpreted paradise in DGnM in an allegorical rather than a proper sense, and in R 1.18 he also speaks of having expounded Genesis in accord with its allegorical rather than literal meaning. Yet he does not use such language in DGnM.

38. He speaks, as we shall see, of spiritual as opposed to carnal interpretation of a text; he maintains that the text of Genesis can be treated as history and as prophecy. A text may present things clearly or in figures, enigmas, and allegories. There are figures of speech and figures of things. He speaks of interpretation according to history, analogy, allegory, and etiology. So too, a passage may teach eternal things, narrate what was done, show the harmony of the two testaments, or prescribe and counsel action.

39. For instance, in DGnM 2.2.3 Augustine speaks of understanding the text literally, that is, "just as the letter sounds." But by the time of DGnL the literal sense seems to involve a highly sophisticated interpretation that is quite

Hence, this introduction will try to prescind not merely from the later medieval doctrine of the four senses of Scripture, but from what Augustine himself says in his later works—at least as far as one can do so. Since DGnI is later than DGnM, it will be dealt with separately. Moreover, the second book of DGnM differs considerably from the first; hence, this introduction will deal with the first book of DGnM independently of the second.

On Genesis against the Manichees, Book One

The first book deals with the six days of creation and the seventh day of God's rest—with what modern exegetes speak of as the Priestly account as opposed to the Yahwist account that begins in Gen 2.4 and runs through Gen 3. Augustine, of course, did not know of such a division and regarded the narrative as a continuous, if not a seamless, whole. From the beginning of Book One through 1.22.33, Augustine presents the creation narrative as history, that is, as a narrative account of the actions performed by God and by man.[40] Throughout this section of the first book Augustine focuses upon objections that the Manichees raised to the Genesis account of the six days of creation and the subsequent day of God's rest; his avowed aim is to counter their attacks and not to refute their whole myth.[41] However, beginning with chapter 23, Augustine begins to treat the six days as prophecy and shows how they symbolize the six ages of human history and the six ages of the human life, as well as the six stages of growth in perfection, in each case followed by the Sabbath rest of heaven.

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metaphysical and not what we would ordinarily call the literal sense. Cf. the introduction to DGnL by Agaësse and Solignac in BA 48.40, where they come to the paradoxical conclusion that for Augustine the literal sense goes beyond the letter of the text.

40. To treat a text as history does not, as we shall see, necessarily entail that the events occurred; cf. below, pp. 27–28.

41. Cf. DGnM 1.4.7. Hence, Augustine passes over verses to which the Manichees have no objections.

The Six Days as History

Instead of following the order of the creation narrative and commenting on Augustine's exegesis chapter by chapter, this introduction will single out various devices that Augustine used to defend and explain the text of Genesis. In doing so, the introduction will try to remain as faithful as possible to Augustine's terminology, though at certain points it will be necessary to introduce other terms in order to be clear about what he is doing.

Spiritual and Carnal Interpretation. There is, first of all, a distinction between understanding a passage spiritually and understanding it carnally. The Manichees, for example, mocked the Catholic faithful for believing that God made man to his image and likeness. For the Manichees believed that such a claim entails that God has the shape of a human body with its various members and inner organs. Augustine counters their attack by citing New Testament passages (cf. DGnM 1.17.27) that are equally anthropomorphic and points out that Scripture speaks this way when talking of God to an audience of little ones, though "all those who understand the Scriptures spiritually have learned to understand by those terms not bodily members, but spiritual powers. . . ." These spiritual interpreters, for example, understand the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit (Eph 6.16–17) spiritually, that is, as referring to spiritual realities, not carnally, that is, as referring to corporeal things.[42] "Spiritual believers in the Catholic teaching do not believe that God is limited by a bodily shape . . . ," but understand our being made to God's image as referring to the interior man, his incorporeal reason and will.

Similarly, in DGnM 1.19.30 Augustine asks whether the command to increase and multiply should be understood carnally or spiritually. He holds that it is permissible to interpret the command spiritually and to hold that carnal fecundity

42. Cf. Solignac's note on C 13.12.13 in BA 14.630 where he says that "for Augustine, as already for Origen, . . . the spiritual exegesis of Scripture is reserved to the spirituals."

came about only after sin. Prior to sin there was the chaste union of virile reason and the part of the soul it rules in order to bring forth spiritual children, that is, intelligible and immortal joys. A spiritual interpretation of this command to increase and multiply understands the union in terms of non-bodily parts of the soul coupled to bring forth intelligible joys.[43]

A third example of spiritual interpretation has to do with God's rest on the seventh day. Augustine says that the Jews understood God's rest carnally and observed the Sabbath carnally, not seeing what the meaning of that day foreshadowed. The Manichees also fail to understand the mystery of the Sabbath because of their carnal accusation. Here Jewish carnal observance would seem to mean bodily repose, and the Manichees' carnal attack would seem to mean their charge that God was tired and needed bodily rest. Spiritual observation of the Sabbath means abstinence from the works of servitude to the devil, namely, sins, and spiritual understanding of God's rest would have us understand God as giving us rest, while he remains utterly immutable in himself.[44] Augustine adds that each of them should cross over to Christ so that the veil might be removed, that is, that the cloak of likeness and allegory be removed and the truth laid bare.[45] Apart from the richness of the last remarks, it seems clear from these examples that spiritual interpretation understands what is said as referring to incorporeal realities rather than to bodily things. Hence, spiritual interpretation involves understanding texts that sound as though they were speaking of bodily things as referring to spiritual realities, whereas carnal inter-

43. Cf. DGnM 1.20.31 for another instance of spiritual interpretation.

44. Cf. JE 20.2 for Augustine's spelling out what the spiritual observance of the Sabbath means.

45. Augustine seems to use the terms "allegory" and "likeness" to refer to something that conceals the meaning of the text. He does not in DGnM speak of understanding a text as allegory, though he does speak this way in DGnI 2.5. There a text is explained as allegory when figurative expressions are understood. Augustine does not speak of an allegorical sense as one of the threefold spiritual senses and he does not mean by allegory understanding the Old Law in the light of the New Law, as did St. Thomas (cf. S.T. 1, qu. 1, a.10).

pretation of a text would seem to take the text "just as the letter sounds" (DGnM 2.2.3).

Such spiritual interpretation presupposes, as we have seen, some grasp of a spiritualist metaphysics. For unless one can conceive of incorporeal realities, it is impossible to interpret a text that sounds as though it were speaking of bodies as referring to incorporeal or spiritual realities. If, however, this is what he means by spiritual interpretation, there are other passages in which he gives a spiritual interpretation without so describing what he is doing. For instance, when he explains why there was no time when God did not create and that God's eternity is not endless duration, he is giving a spiritual interpretation. So too, when he explains that Genesis uses many concrete terms to signify unformed matter, he might be thought to be interpreting those concrete terms spiritually, since Scripture uses such terms to convey this idea of matter to the little ones who are not used to understanding invisible things.

In Figures or Figuratively. Augustine speaks of figures in two senses. There are figures of speech (*figurae locutionis*) and also figures of things (*figurae rerum*). In DGnM 1.22.34 he speaks of a figure of speech and stresses the importance of the rule of this expression for understanding many passages in Scripture. Augustine never names this figure, but from the many examples he gives it is clear that the figure is metonymy—the figure that uses the part for the whole or the cause for the effect. On the other hand, Augustine speaks of figures of things to come in DGnM 1.13.19; here he is thinking of something foreshadowing or symbolizing something else.[46] The latter sense of figure is much more in evidence in the second book and we shall examine it there. In the first book when he speaks of figures, he seems to mean principally figures of speech.

46. Cf. also DGnM 2.2.3 where he speaks of figures of things. DGnL 8.1.4 would seem to confirm this point. There Augustine speaks of "figurative signification of either spiritual natures and sentiments or also future things."

There is, first of all, the figure of metonymy that Augustine employs several times to avoid having Scripture say something unworthy of God. For example, in DGnM 1.7.11 Scripture calls unformed matter heaven and earth, though it is not yet heaven and earth. Augustine claims that, since it was certain that heaven and earth would come to be from this matter, it could already be called heaven and earth. The same figure, he notes, explains how Christ could have said in John 15.15 that he had revealed to his disciples all that he heard from his Father and then say in John 16.12 that he had much more to tell them. Christ had revealed everything in the sense that he would certainly do so; so too, when we are certain that something will take place, we say, "Consider it done."

There is another instance of metonymy in DGnM 1.8.14 wherein Augustine is dealing with the verse in which God saw that the light was good. This would seem to imply that God learned something that he previously did not know and that there was, consequently, a change in his knowledge. Indeed the Manichees seemed to argue that the text portrayed God as surprised by having done something well. Augustine points to Christ wondering at the faith of those who believed (Matt 8.10) and argues that Christ's wonder did not imply a change in his knowledge; rather his wondering teaches us to wonder. So too, God's seeing that the light was good teaches us that it is good. Again, in DGnM 1.22.33–34, Augustine uses metonymy to explain God's rest on the seventh day; God rests in the sense that he will cause us to rest in him. Augustine points out that this rule of speech allows us to explain how Scripture can say that the Spirit groans (Rom 8.26), or that God tests us to see whether we love him (Dt 13.3) or that the Father alone knows the day and the hour (Matt 24.36) without implying anything unworthy of God.

In these cases the language of Scripture is figurative, or Scripture presents something in a figure so that the reader cannot take the text "just as the letter sounds," that is, literally. The text is figurative or enigmatic so that the reader has to work to get an acceptable meaning that is veiled or only hinted at in the text. The reader is forced to an *exercitatio*

animi—an exercise of the mind that prepares the mind to grasp the truth and makes its discovery more pleasing.[47] It should not be surprising that Augustine—professor of rhetoric that he was—finds in the text of Genesis the same sort of figures that students of Virgil have learned through the centuries to recognize in the *Aeneid.*

In the second book, if we may jump ahead for a moment, Augustine twice refers to another unnamed figure, amphiboly. In DGnM 2.22.33 he points out that the words, "See, Adam has become as one of us . . ." is an ambiguous expression that forms a figure of speech. The text could have the ironic meaning that Adam has become a god, or it could have the meaning that he has ceased to be a god—something he was destined to be, had he not sinned. Similarly in DGnM 2.22.34 Augustine points out that the expression, "lest Adam stretch forth his hand to the tree of life," is ambiguous, for it can express the idea that Adam should stretch forth his hand to the tree of life as well as the idea of preventing him from doing so.

Finally, it would seem necessary to admit metaphor as a third figure of speech. For example, we saw that St. Paul's words, the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith and the sword of Spirit, referred to spiritual realities, not literally to a helmet, shield and sword; surely this is the figure of speech we would call metaphor, and Augustine explicitly says that Scripture frequently transfers words from human to divine realities (DGnM 1.14.20). Indeed, to understand helmet spiritually, that is, as signifying a spiritual reality, would seem to entail taking helmet of salvation as a figurative expression, namely, a metaphor, not a literal statement—"just as the letter sounds."

The Use of Analogy. A number of times Augustine uses a comparison or analogy to explain the text so that it does not say something unworthy of God. He frequently compares God to a human workman. In DGnM 1.5.8 the Spirit is said to move over the waters, not in a bodily way, but as the will

47. Cf. DME 1.1.1.

of the artisan moves over what he intends to make. In DGnM 1.8.13 Augustine compares God's pleasure over the completed work to the artisan's pleasure in his finished product. He argues: Just as the artisan knows the work in the interior art of his mind by which he produces the work, so God knew in the divine art the creatures he produced and proclaimed to be good. Again, in DGnM 1.16.25, he returns to the analogy of the human artisan to counter the Manichees' objections to useless and harmful creatures. Just as an ignorant fellow finds many things in the artisan's workshop that seem useless or even harmful to him, so many find some of God's creatures useless or harmful. While most people will suppose that the tools in the artisan's shop have a purpose and are not dangerous when used properly, some really stupid folk—the Manichees, of course—dare to find fault with tools and works of the divine artisan.

Finally, we should mention an analogy that Augustine draws between the beauty of the created universe and an ornate and polished speech—one of his favorite means of defending the goodness and justice of God.[48] Just as we do not find the individual syllables and letters that pass away to be what is pleasing and praiseworthy, but the whole speech, so we should not be surprised that we do not always find individual things beautiful and pleasing. Thus, Augustine brings the aesthetic principle of totality to bear upon his defense of God's goodness and justice.[49]

The Six Days as Prophecy

Augustine promised to treat the text of Genesis first as history and then as prophecy. In DGnM 1.23.35 Augustine turns to a more careful consideration of why rest is attributed to the seventh day. This consideration leads him to a comparison of the six days of creation followed by God's rest with the six ages of human history and the six stages of the life of

48. For other examples of Augustine's use of such an analogy, cf. E 116.5.13 and DVR 22.42–43.

49. Cf. *Ennead* 3.2.3 for the Plotinian source of this principle.

any man. Though no words can describe how God made heaven and earth and every creature, "this exposition according to the order of days recounts it as a history of works he did so that it has special regard for the prediction of what is to come" (DGnM 1.23.41). That is, Genesis reports the works of God as a story of what he did, but it has special concern with foreshadowing or prefiguring what is to come.

The details of Augustine's viewing the *hexaemeron* as prophecy exceed the limits of this introduction; however, one should note that as early as DGnM Augustine has the sweeping overview of human history that provides the historical framework for *The City of God* that he began more than twenty years later.[50] In the creation of light on the first day, Augustine finds a likeness to the beginnings of human history, the ten generations from Adam to Noah, and to the infancy of every man, when each one of us begins to see the light. As that age was wiped away by the flood, so our infancy was wiped away by oblivion. On the second day God set a firmament between the waters; here Augustine finds foreshadowed the ten generations from Noah to Abraham. It is like childhood; we remember it, but we are not yet ready to generate. God's separation of the dry land and the waters on the third day provides a likeness to the fourteen generations from Abraham to David which is like the adolescence of every man. In this age there comes into existence the people of God. The creation of the heavenly bodies on the fourth day is analogous to the age of kings, from David to the exile, and also to the youth of every man. On the fifth day God made the living things in the water and the birds; Augustine finds in it a likeness to the period from the exile to the coming of Jesus and to the period of decline in each person's life from youth to old age. The sixth day, on which God made the other animals and man, is like the age that began with the preaching of the gospel and continues up to now; it is also like old age in each of us. God's rest on the seventh day bears a likeness to Christ's coming in glory and to our eternal rest in God. Au-

50. Cf. DCD 16.12, 24 and 43.

gustine adds an explanation of why the numbers of the generations are first ten and then fourteen in terms of the five senses times the two sexes for the first two ages. Knowledge and action are added to the senses after childhood so that the number is raised to fourteen for the next three, but the sixth age, like our old age, has no fixed limit.

Then in DGnM 1.25.43 Augustine finds that the six days form a ladder of perfection by which each of us grows in good works and a just life.[51] On the first day one receives the light of faith. On the second day he has the firmament of learning by which he distinguishes between carnal and spiritual things. On the third day he separates his mind like the dry land from the waves of temptation in order to bring forth good works. On the fourth day he sees the immutable truth like the sun shining in the soul and spiritual intelligences like the stars. Strengthened by such knowledge, he begins to act in the sea of this world on the fifth day and to bring forth mighty works for the sake of the society of his brethren. On the sixth day he brings forth from the earth, that is, from his stable mind, the living soul and rules over all its stirrings. Thus as male and female, that is, contemplation and action, man fills the earth with spiritual offspring. And after these six days he hopes for perpetual rest, when God rests in giving us rest.

On Genesis against the Manichees, Book Two

In the beginning of the second book Augustine states that "this whole narrative begins to unfold not clearly, but in figures." After noting that such a figurative presentation was intended by divine providence to exercise the minds of those seeking the truth and to draw them to spiritual activity, he cites the whole text of Gen 2.4–3.24. Then in DGnM 2.2.3 he urges a reverent investigation of the secrets of the text. He proposes to discuss the text as history and then as prophecy, following the pattern he set in Book One.[52]

51. Cf. DQ 33.70–76 where Augustine speaks of seven levels of the soul's greatness.

52. He turns in DGnM 2.24.37 to a treatment of the text as prophecy;

Genesis 2.4–3.24 as History

Augustine would welcome a literal interpretation of the text, that is, he would like "to understand it just as the letter sounds," provided such a literal interpretation could avoid blasphemy and explain everything in accord with the Catholic faith.[53] He has, however, the example of the apostles who solved many of the enigmas of the Old Testament and, in doing so, provided the justification for regarding the text of Scripture as figurative and enigmatic, if there is no way to understand it literally in a pious manner that is worthy of God.[54] We have seen Augustine follow this procedure in Book One, and he proposes "to hold to the manner of exposition we have taken up . . . to explain all those figures of things according to the Catholic faith"—those pertaining to history and those pertaining to prophecy. The major difference, then, between Book One and Book Two is that in the latter the whole narrative is figurative, but that does not preclude its being treated as history.

When Augustine speaks of treating a text as history, he means treating it as a narrative of events—as a story with a beginning, middle and end. It is quite another question whether the events narrated occurred or not. For example, in DUC 3.5 Augustine says, "Thus something is handed on as history when it teaches what was done or what was written, [that is,] what was not done, but only written as if it were done." In the historical books, for example, Kings, there is

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this treatment runs to 2.28.42, where he concludes the work with a list of Manichaean errors and replies to them.

53. Since the sort of blasphemous reading of the text he is concerned with seems to be the anthropomorphic understanding of the Manichees, it seems that Augustine at this time has a very literal understanding of what it means to understand a text literally.

54. In DDC 3.10.14 Augustine says, "Whatever in the sacred text cannot be referred either to the goodness of morals or to the truth of the faith you should know is figurative." Marrou, in *Saint Augustin*, 478–479, points out that this rule maximizes the amount of Scripture that one views as figurative. In DGnM Augustine's practice—perhaps because he is dealing with the Manichees who insisted upon taking Genesis literally—is much more sober, for he almost always resorts to regarding the text as figurative only if he cannot take it literally without blasphemy or having it say something unworthy of God.

reported what was done, but in a parable, like that of the Samaritan, there is reported what was not done, but written as if it were done. In DGnL 1.1.1 Augustine says, "In a narrative of events we can ask whether we should understand everything exclusively in a figurative sense or whether we should expound and defend everything as a reliable account of what occurred." So too, in DGnL 8.7.13 Augustine speaks of "events that really occurred (*res vere gestae*) in a narrative of events," implying, of course, that there are narratives of events that did not occur. A parable, like that of the Samaritan, draws some elements from reality, such as the two cities, but the whole account is obviously figurative.[55] Similarly Gen 2.14 speaks of the Tigris and Euphrates which are to be understood spiritually, that is, as symbolizing virtues, even though they are found on earth according to history (DGnM 2.10.13). Is the whole text of Gen 2.4.–3.24 to be understood in an exclusively figurative sense, that is, like a parable? Or are at least some events real occurrences as well as figurative of something else?

In DGnL 8.1.2 Augustine clearly classes the beginning chapters of Genesis with the Books of Kings rather than with the Song of Songs. In the introduction to their commentary Agaësse and Solignac contrast the Augustinian meaning of allegory with the contemporary meaning; they imply that for Augustine allegory meant the interpretation of the Old Testament in the light of the New Testament such that the figurative sense depends upon the literal sense.[56] In its contemporary meaning, they say, allegory is an extended metaphor or imaginary account intended to convey a moral or spiritual lesson; in that meaning allegory excludes rather than supposes a literal sense. Agaësse and Solignac note that it is not

55. Cf. DGnL 8.7.13.

56. Actually Augustine says in DGnI 2.5 that to understand a text according to analogy is to understand the Old Testament in relation to the New Testament; to understand a text as allegory is to understand it as presenting something in figures. The term "allegory" in DGnM seems to serve almost as a synonym for "enigma," that is, something dark or obscure, something that presents a problem to be solved or a text where the author only hints at his meaning.

an unreal hypothesis to suppose that the beginning of Genesis is an allegory in the modern sense, "since it is precisely to this kind of allegory that Augustine has recourse—at least at times—in *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*."[57] The examples they give are all from the second book: the green of the field and the plants symbolizing the invisible creature, the spring that watered the whole earth symbolizing the font of truth, the trees of paradise signifying spiritual joys, and the east signifying the light of wisdom.

Moreover, in DGnL 8.1.2 Augustine mentions some Catholic exegetes who interpret paradise in a purely spiritual sense; they do not accept what Genesis says in a proper, but only in a figurative sense. They would have "history, that is, the narrative of events that properly occurred, begin when Adam and Eve came together and bore children after being dismissed from paradise." In DGnL Augustine explicitly rejects such a view, which seems to have been that of Origen and the Alexandrian school.[58] But this view comes very close to the view that Augustine presents in the second book of DGnM. To say that history in the proper sense did not begin until Adam and Eve fell and were dismissed from paradise, clothed in tunics of skin, does not mean that neither God nor man really did anything prior to this; it means that the proper sense of the text is not the literal sense, that is, to understand what was properly done one has to go beyond how the letter sounds to a spiritual interpretation of the text. That is, if one takes "the green of the field" as plants and shrubbery, one understands it "just as the letter sounds," but then one does not understand the proper sense of the text. If one takes this as history in the proper sense, he is faced with the absurdity of God's having made the plants and food before they were on earth. If one understands by "the green of the field" the invisible creature, one certainly does not take what is said literally or as history in the proper sense, but that does not deny the fact that God really made the invisible creature.

57. Cf. Agaësse and Solignac in BA 48.38.

58. Cf. Agaësse and Solignac's note to DGnL 8.1.4 in BA 49.13 where they suggest that Augustine is probably referring to Origen or to Philo.

The text of DGnM makes it clear in a number of places that one cannot understand everything in an exclusively figurative sense. For example, in DGnM 2.11.15, after he explains that virile reason should hold in check the animal part of the soul, he mentions that the woman was made to provide an illustration of this subjection—which, of course, implies that God really made the woman. Similarly, in DGnM 2.19.29, Augustine contrasts "this visible woman" with "that more hidden woman," that is, the lower part of the soul. Moreover, Augustine tells us in DGnM 2.12.17 that "in accord with history a visible woman was made by the Lord from the body of her husband . . . ," even if he did this "to intimate some secret." Yet he leaves it an open question whether "these things were said figuratively or were also done figuratively . . . ," though in no case were they said or done without purpose. Rather they contain mysteries and sacraments that have to be understood. On the other hand, Augustine cannot find any way to understand Adam's leaving his father and mother according to history, save in the sense that this is what now generally happens; rather he must take it as prophecy (DGnM 2.13.19). Though Augustine leaves it an open question whether paradise was a corporeal place or not, he clearly favors the view that Eve was not in a corporeal paradise and insists that Satan certainly did not approach her in a bodily fashion (DGnM 2.14.20).

Certainly God really created all things visible and invisible and placed the human soul in its mid-rank position above bodies and beneath God in the happy life, and man certainly sinned and was dismissed from paradise in a mortal body. But it would seem that most of the other events narrated did not occur as they were recounted, but are merely figurative of something else. In that sense the text does not provide a history in the proper sense. If this is a correct interpretation of what Augustine is about, some of the oddities in the second book of DGnM disappear. For example, if at this point Augustine regarded the whole of Book Two more or less as a parable, then the sin of Adam and Eve was not, in Augustine's

view at this point, so much a real event as merely a story that illustrates what happens in each of us when we sin. And this is exactly what Augustine says: "Even now nothing else happens in each of us when one falls into sin than occurred in those three: the serpent, the woman and the man" (DGnM 2.14.21). So too he asks us to "consider how the serpent persuaded them to sin, since this question is especially pertinent to our salvation. Scripture reports these things precisely so that we might now avoid them" (DGnM 2.15.22).[59] That is, Adam and Eve are not historical figures whose sin has influenced our present condition for the worse. There is no mention here of the "ignorance and difficulty" with which we are born as a result of their sin; rather we are now in precisely the same situation in which they were. Hence, Augustine speaks of our being dismissed from the happy life when we sin (DGnM 2.14.21).

Genesis 2.4–3.24 as Prophecy

Augustine continues to treat the text as figurative, but it prefigures what was or is to come. Taking his cue from Eph 5.31–32, Augustine treats the text as referring to Christ and the Church. Christ left his Father by becoming flesh; he also left his mother, the synagogue, to cling to his wife, the Church, which was born from his side when he slept in death. Christians now bear the person of Christ, though we no longer enjoy the delights of paradise, and live amid heretics who are symbolized by the serpent.

Finally, Augustine sums up the objections of the Manichees and his replies to them and compares their errors with the Catholic teaching in a brief pair of chapters that could well have been meant to provide the Catholic with catechism-like answers to the common objections of the Manichees. And with that DGnM comes to an end.

59. One need only compare these remarks with DGnI 1.3 where Augustine speaks of the natural sins we necessarily commit after our fall.

On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis: An Unfinished Book

Augustine begins DGnI by stressing that one should proceed as a cautious inquirer and avoid any dogmatic assertion of a doubtful opinion about the natural things God has created. Doubt, however, has its limits set by the faith of the *Catholica.* And since heretics twist the meaning of Scripture to their views, Augustine first sets forth the Catholic faith, in words clearly reflecting the *Apostles' Creed.* The investigation of Genesis proceeds in accord with that formulation of the faith fleshed out with emphasis upon God, Creator of all things, upon the goodness of all of creation and its distinction from the Creator.

The very title of DGnI indicates that Augustine intended to give a literal interpretation of the text. Yet nowhere in DGnI does he explain what he understands by such a literal interpretation. In DGnI 2.5 Augustine introduces four manners of explaining the Law: in accord with history, allegory, analogy and etiology. History, he explains, reports deeds done whether by God or by men. Allegory concerns the interpretation of things spoken in figures. Analogy reveals the conformity of the Old and New Testaments, and etiology reports the causes of what is said or done.[60]

Augustine immediately adds that we can ask whether "In the beginning" should be understood only as history or whether these words also signify something in figures, how they conform to the gospel and why they are said this way. He provided a longer discussion of these four modes of interpretation in DUC 3.5–9 when he wrote that work in 391, and he again

60. This list raises interesting questions about its sources. C. Mayer simply says that Augustine derived it from the tradition; cf. his *Die Zeichen in der geistigen Entwicklung und in der Theologie Augustins.* Teil 2. Die antimanichäische Epoche (Würzburg: Augustinus Verlag, 1974), 336. Others suggest that he derived it from the Alexandrian School, especially Clement and Origen, but there does not seem to have been any direct influence of Origen upon Augustine at this point. Perhaps we can do no better than follow Augustine's admission that he learned to interpret Scripture spiritually from hearing Ambrose, who was certainly quite familiar with Origen and the Alexandrian School.

returns to them in DDC and DGnL 8.1.1–8.2.5. However, having introduced these exegetical terms in DGnI, he has nothing more to say of them, except for a single mention of a figurative expression in DGnI 14.45. Presumably DGnI proceeds to give a literal interpretation of Genesis; while it does not rule out other interpretations, it has nothing to say about them.[61]

Briefly let me illustrate the aporetic character of the work and what Augustine now means by a literal interpretation of the text. Whether one takes *in principio* as referring to the beginning of time or to the Wisdom of God, one is taking the text as history. Augustine begins to examine the implications of taking "in the beginning" to mean that God first made heaven and earth. If that is the case, when did he make the angels? Were they made in time or at the beginning of time? If the angels were made at the start of time, how could God have made the lights on the fourth day to indicate times? Or is all of this simply presented in a narrative that requires a beginning, middle and end so that we humans can have some grasp of God's ineffable working? Question follows upon question until Augustine finally sets the limits demanded by the faith, namely, that every creature, including time, has a beginning so that there is no creature coeternal with God (DGnI 3.8).

Augustine continues in the same aporetic manner throughout the book. Thus heaven and earth might mean the whole of creation, both the invisible and the visible creatures. But were heaven and earth already formed, or are the heaven and

61. In DGnL 1.1.1 Augustine mentions another quaternity: "In all the sacred books we have to see what eternal things they convey, what past events they narrate, what future events they foretell, and what actions they prescribe or counsel." This quaternity comes closest to the medieval four senses of Scripture that received its classic formulation in the couplet of Augustine of Dacia (+ 1282): "The letter teaches what was done; allegory what you should believe; the moral sense what you should do; and analogy where you are going." However, the four from DGnL do not correspond with the four modes of interpretation from DGnI. Though there is history in both and allegory might correspond with the intimation of eternal things, there is nothing in the latter that corresponds with etiology or analogy and nothing in the former that corresponds with prophecy and moral direction.

earth mentioned in Gen 1.1 the unformed matter out of which heaven and earth would be formed? In any case it is clear that such matter was made by God who formed and ordered it. All else is simply inquiry, and none of the views should be rashly affirmed. What Augustine said of DGnL holds equally true of DGnI: There are more questions asked than answers given, and there are more answers given than are solidly grounded (R 2.24.1).

The procedure of Augustine has implications for what he means by 'literally interpreted' (*ad litteram*). It is apparently a literal interpretation to take *in principio* as 'in the beginning of time' or as 'in Christ, the Wisdom of God.' It is a literal interpretation to take heaven as the invisible creation and earth as the visible creation, but it is also a literal interpretation to take heaven and earth as unformed matter. It is a literal interpretation to take the series of expressions, heaven and earth, the unformed earth, the dark abyss, and water, as all indicating unformed matter.

So too, in DGnI 4.16 the Spirit of God is first taken as the Holy Spirit borne over the waters which he makes and creates, as the will of an artisan moves over his product. But the spirit of God can also be "that living creature which encompasses and moves this whole visible universe and everything bodily" (DGnI 4.17), that is, the world soul. Finally, the spirit of God might simply be the element, air. All of these are presumably literal interpretations. Once again, nothing is asserted save that we must believe that God is the Creator of all things—the natures themselves, but not their defects which he only orders.

Augustine is clear that the words, "Let there be light," were not produced by lungs, tongue and teeth and that we should not allow any carnal image to disturb the spiritual understanding and suppose any real change in God. The little ones, of course, still need such imagery and should not be disturbed, since they too will become adults. However, he is quite hesitant as to whether what God spoke he spoke to the Son or whether what he spoke was the Son. Though in DGnM the little ones who took the words of Scripture "just as the letter sounds"

were the literal interpreters, here the literal interpretation does not take the text as the letter sounds, but understands it spiritually.[62]

Apart from the uncreated light, Augustine distinguishes three senses of created light: the bodily light we see with our eyes, the sentient light by which we see visible things, and the rational light by which we see intelligible things. To each there is a corresponding darkness. And yet each of these ways of taking light would seem to be a literal understanding of the text.

NOTES ON THE TRANSLATION

The translation of DGnM was made from the edition of the Benedictines of St. Maur as it is found in PL 34.173–220. The translation retained the chapter titles from Migne, though at times they are misleading. The translation of DGnI was made from Joseph Zycha's edition in CSEL 28.1.459–503 though at times the Maurist reading in PL 34.219–246 seemed necessary to the sense of the text and was used instead.

Augustine's text of Genesis was the Old Latin version of the Bible—a crude version from the Septuagint made by many anonymous translators.[63] There are slight variations between the versions used in DGnM and in DGnI and at times differences within a single work. The translation attempts to reflect such differences. By design the translation of the Old Latin text of Genesis is often painfully literal. Augustine's explanation of the text at times demanded such literalness, for example, when he distinguishes between flying things and birds. In any case, a very literal translation provides more of the rough flavor of the original.

62. It seems that the meaning of "literal" has changed from DGnM to DGnI; cf. above note 53.

63. For the character of the Old Latin version, cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (London: Duckworth, 1975), 86. By the fourth century it existed, according to Jerome, in almost as many forms as codices.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TWO WORKS

The first two of Augustine's expositions of Genesis have been quite neglected. Neither has been translated into English, though translations into Spanish and more recently into Italian have appeared in the second half of this century. Moreover, even so distinguished an Augustinian scholar as John J. O'Meara wrote of DGnM that Augustine

> felt at that time that the literal interpretation he could make neither avoided what he considered blasphemy, nor could be reconciled with the Catholic faith. He therefore often had recourse in this work to an allegorical approach. Subsequently he wrote of this attempt as a failure. Four or five years later he tried the literal approach a second time in the *De Genesi liber imperfectus*. As the title suggests he abandoned the task—and that quickly.[64]

Admittedly, Augustine did admit that he was unable to give a literal interpretation of Genesis, but he did not write that DGnM was a failure.[65] And even though Augustine admits that in writing DGnI his inexperience (*tirocinium*) collapsed under the effort to interpret Genesis literally, he did consider the work worth preserving as an example of his early endeavours (R 1.17). The relevant sections of the *Retractations* are added at the end of this Introduction.

Joseph Zycha, who in 1894 did the critical edition of DGnI, tells us, "The correction of this frequently rather obscure work depends principally upon one manuscript because in the treatment of these matters St. Augustine is of less use. He himself admits that he was not equal to so great a task."[66] Zycha's regard for Augustine's work as a commentator on the

64. John J. O'Meara, *The Creation of Man in St. Augustine's* De Genesi ad Litteram (Villanova, PA: Villanova University Press, 1980), 14.

65. In R 1.10 Augustine does not even hint that DGnM was a failure; in R 1.18 he admits that he "treated the words of Scripture in accord with their allegorical meaning, not having dared to expound such great secrets of natural things literally." In that section he does admit that he failed in DGnI to carry out his proposed literal interpretations of Genesis. In DGnL 8.2.5 he says that in writing DGnM he "did not see how everything could be understood properly—rather I thought that it could not be or could hardly or only with difficulty be understood properly."

66. Joseph Zycha, in the preface to CSEL 28.1.xviii.

text of Genesis could well explain why neither he nor anyone else has yet done a critical edition of DGnM; after all, one would hardly expect an earlier attempt at an interpretation of Genesis to have been of more use. Attitudes such as his could also go a long way toward explaining why no English translation of either work has been produced prior to this one.

There are, nonetheless, at least two reasons that account for an interest in these early works of Augustine at present, even though such interest was lacking earlier. One reason has to do with the state of Scripture studies; the other with the state of Augustinian studies. After a period in which modern scientific approaches to biblical exegesis had tended to be regarded as the only legitimate approach to the biblical text, there has emerged a renewed interest in the exegesis of the Fathers of the Church. Whereas earlier in this century even Catholic exegetes seemed at times exclusively interested in the meaning of the text intended by the particular author—and as that meaning could be established by modern biblical criticism, there is now a greater openness toward, and interest in, the exegesis of the Fathers of the Church and in the multiple senses of Scripture. The work of Lubac, Daniélou and others has done a great deal to restore the exegesis of the Fathers of the Church to its rightful place in the life of the Church.[67]

Secondly, it is now generally accepted that Augustine himself must be studied as a man whose thought changed and developed over the years from his conversion through the many diverse controversies until the final revision of his works. He himself warned us in the Prologue to his *Retractations* that in reading his books we should not imitate his mistakes, but follow his progress toward what is better. He adds, "Whoever reads my works in the order in which they were written will perhaps discover how I made progress in my writing." Despite such a clear admission that his thought had developed, which should have alerted scholars to real development in his thought and should have cautioned them against reading early texts in the light of later ones, and *vice versa,*

67. Cf. above, note 36, for the works by Daniélou and Lubac.

Gilson said when he wrote his classic work on St. Augustine's philosophy in 1928 that he had found not "the slightest properly philosophical variation in any of his essential theses. St. Augustine fixed his main ideas from the time of his conversion—even, we believe, regarding grace—and he always drew on the capital he had acquired."[68] Now, however, Augustinian scholars, such as Roy and O'Connell, have shown that Augustine's thought did change on highly significant philosophical and theological matters.

For both of these reasons Augustine's first ventures at an explanation of the beginning chapters of Genesis ought to be matters of interest to students of patristic exegesis and of Augustine's thought. Written so soon after his baptism, DGnM throws considerable light on his assimilation of the Christian revelation and his understanding of the faith in the light of the Neoplatonism that he first encountered in the Church of Milan. Perhaps no other work of Augustine's provides such a clear insight into his early view of man as a soul fallen into a mortal body. The second book provides us with an extraordinary view of man as an incorporeal creature created in a spiritual paradise and nourished by the font of truth with no need for human words that sound and pass away. This soul sinned and fell from its mid-rank position in which it was ordered beneath God and over bodies into these mortal bodies symbolized by the tunics of skin. Dismissed from the paradise of the happy life, man now works on the earth, that is, in the body, as he struggles to return, stretching out his hand to the cross of Christ. In a spiritual, highly figurative, almost ahistorical interpretation of the text, Augustine presents a startling view of human beginnings that recalls the views of Origen that would soon precipitate such controversy in the East. One may certainly disagree with the view of man Augustine presents, but it is undeniably brilliant.

DGnI fails as an attempt to interpret the *hexaemeron* literally, but it fails only in being able to carry the project to its end.

68. E. Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine* (London: Gollancz, 1961), 364; the English translation was made from the third French edition (Paris, 1949) which was basically unchanged from the first edition of 1928.

Even though the halting, hesitant style conveys a feeling of the pain in each difficult step, DGnI is presumably successful in presenting a literal interpretation of the text for twenty-five verses, before coming to that difficult verse on man's having been made to God's image and likeness. Perhaps the most intriguing question about the work is what there was about Gen 1.26 that caused the problem. Roy has emphasized the shift from taking God's image and likeness as referring to Christ, so that in being assimilated to the Image of God we are caught up in the economic Trinity, to taking God in whose image and likeness we were made as the one triune God.[69] But was this the only problem? Had the metaphysics of participation with Christ as the Likeness run into theological problems with the Spirit who also is consubstantial to the Father and just as much the Likeness of the Father as was the Word?

Regardless of the solution one might entertain, these two expositions of Genesis reveal the brilliance of Augustine in dealing with one of the crucial texts of Scripture for our understanding of God and man and the abiding value of his approach to the word of God, and at the same time show us the progress he made in his thought.

APPENDIX: ST. AUGUSTINE, THE *RETRACTATIONS**

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 9:
Two Books on Genesis, against the Manichaeans
(De Genesi adversus Manicheos libri duo)

(1) After I was now settled in Africa, I wrote two books, *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans.* Although whatever I discussed in earlier books in which I showed that God is the supreme Good and the unchangeable Creator of all changeable natures and that no nature or substance, insofar as it is a nature and substance, is an evil, was intentionally directed against the Manichaeans,[1] yet these two books

69. Roy, *L'intelligence,* 360.

*Tr. Sister Mary Inez Bogan, R.S.M., FOTC 60 (1968) 41–44, 76–77.
1. Cf. *On Free Choice; Retr.* 1.8.

very manifestly were published against them in defense of the Old Law which they attack with the vehement intensity of frenzied error.[2] The first book begins from the words: "In the beginning God made heaven and earth"[3] and continues up to the passage when seven days have passed where we read that God rested on the seventh day.[4] The second book begins from the words: "This book of the creation of the heaven and the earth"[5] and covers up to the place when Adam and his wife were driven from Paradise[6] and a guard was placed over the tree of life.[7] Then, at the end of this book, I contrast the error of the Manichaeans with the creed of Catholic truth, including briefly and clearly what they hold and what we hold.

(2) But the new Pelagian heretics are not to think that what I said was said in agreement with them, namely: "This light, however, does not nourish the eyes of irrational birds but the pure hearts of those who believe in God and turn from the love of visible and temporal things to the fulfillment of His precepts; all have this in their power if they will."[8] Indeed, it is entirely true that all men have this in their power if they will; but "the will is made ready by God"[9] and is strengthened by the gift of charity to such a degree that they have it in their power. This was not said here, then, because it was not pertinent to the question under discussion.

But as to the fact that one reads there, that the blessing of the Lord concerning which the following was said: "Increase and multiply,"[10] should be believed to have been transformed into carnal fertility after *the* sin,[11] if one cannot understand that this was said only in the sense that men would not have had children if men had not sinned, I entirely disapprove.

It does not, indeed, follow that an allegorical interpretation alone is warranted of what is said in the Book of Genesis: green herbs and fruit-bearing trees are given as food to every kind of beast and to all birds and to all serpents[12] because there are four-footed beasts and fowls of the air that seem to live on flesh alone.[13] Perhaps they could also have been fed by men on the fruits of the earth if, in reward for an obedience whereby they served God without any iniquity, they had deserved to have all beasts and birds entirely subservient to them.

2. Cf. *On Heresies* 46.
3. Cf. Gen 1.1.
4. Cf. *ibid.* 2.2.
5. Cf. *ibid.* 2.4.
6. Cf. *ibid.* 3.23.
7. Cf. *ibid.* 3.23–24.
8. Cf. *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans* 1.3.6.
9. Cf. Prov. 8.35 according to the Septuagint.
10. Cf. Gen 1.28.
11. Cf. *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans* 1.19.30.
12. Cf. Gen 1.29–30.
13. Cf. *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans* 1.20.31.

Moreover, the manner in which I spoke of the people of Israel could be disturbing: "Even now that people, in the sea of the people of God, so to speak, by corporeal circumcision and sacrifices obeyed the law";[14] for it was not possible for the people of Israel to offer sacrifice in the midst of the Gentiles, just as, even at the present time, we see that they have remained without sacrifices,[15] unless, perchance, the fact that they immolate a lamb during the Passover be counted as sacrifice.

(3) In the second book also, my statement that the term *food* could signify life[16]—the manuscripts of a more correct translation do not have *food* but *hay*—does not seem to have been stated aptly enough, for the term *hay* does not correspond to the meaning *life* in the same way as the term *food*.

Moreover, I do not seem to have correctly called prophetic[17] the words in this passage: "Why is earth and ashes proud?"[18] for the book in which this is read is not the work of one of whom we can be certain that he should be called a prophet.

When I explained[19] the passage: "God breathed into his face the breath of life and man became a live soul or a living soul,"[20] I did not understand the Apostle as he wished to be understood when he used testimony from Genesis saying: "The first man, Adam, became a living soul."[21] For the Apostle used this testimony in order to prove that the body is animated;[22] I thought, however, that from this, one could prove that, in the beginning, the entire man, not his body alone, was created animated.

Moreover, I said: "Sins harm only the nature of him who commits them."[23] I said this because he who harms a just man does not really harm him since he increases his "reward in heaven";[24] by sinning, however, he really harms himself, since, because of the very will to harm, he will receive the harm that he has done. The Pelagians, of course, can ascribe this opinion to their belief and, accordingly, can say that the sins of another have not harmed infants on the ground that I said: "Sins harm only the nature of him who commits them." Hence, they do not realize that infants, who assuredly possess human nature, inherit original sin because in the first men human nature

14. Cf. *ibid.* 1.23.40.
15. Cf. *Against a Letter of Petilian* 2.37.87 (*Retr.* 2.51); Jerome, *Letter* 52; Deut 16.6.
16. Cf. *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans* 2.3.4.
17. *Ibid.* 2.5.6.
18. Cf. Ecclus (Sir) 10.9.
19. Cf. *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans* 2.8.10.
20. Cf. Gen 2.7.
21. Cf. 1 Cor 15.45.
22. That is, has a soul.
23. Cf. *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans* 2.29.43.
24. Cf. Matt 5.12; Luke 6.23.

has sinned, and for this reason, "Sins harm only the nature of him who commits them." Indeed, "by one man" in whom all have sinned, "sin entered into the world."[25] For I did not say, "only the *man*," but I said: "Sins harm only the *nature* of him who commits them."

Likewise, they[26] can seek a like subterfuge in a statement I made a short time afterwards: "There is no natural evil,"[27] if this statement is not applied to nature as it was created in the beginning without sin. For this is truly and properly called the nature of man. However, we used the word in a transferred sense just as we, indeed, designate the nature of man at birth, according to the meaning of the Apostle when he said: "For we also once were by nature children of wrath even as the rest."[28]

This work begins thus: "If the Manichaeans should choose those whom they could deceive."

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 17:
One Unfinished Book on the Literal Meaning of Genesis
(De Genesi ad litteram liber unus inperfectus)

After I had compared the two books of *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans,* and had explained the words of Scripture according to their allegorical meaning, not presuming to explain such great mysteries of natural things literally[1]—that is, in what sense the statements there made can be interpreted according to their historical significance—I wanted to test my capabilities in this truly most taxing and difficult work also. But in explaining the Scriptures, my inexperience collapsed under the weight of so heavy a load and, before I had finished one book, I rested from this labor which I could not endure. But while I was re-examining my writings in the present work, this very book came into my hands, unfinished as it was, which I had not published and which I had decided to destroy since, at a later time, I wrote twelve books entitled *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis.*[2] Although in those books many questions seem to have been proposed rather than solved, yet this present book is by no means to be compared with those books. But, still, after I had re-examined this book, I decided to keep it so that it might serve as evidence, useful in my opinion, of my first attempts to explain and search into the divine Scriptures, and I determined that its title should be *One Unfinished Book on the Literal Meaning of Genesis.*[3] In fact, I discovered that this

25. Cf. Rom 5.12. 26. The Pelagians.
27. Cf. *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans* 2.29.43.
28. Cf. Eph 2.3.

1. Cf. *Retr.* 1.9. 2. *Ibid.* 2.50.
3. Cf. *One Unfinished Book on the Literal Meaning of Genesis* 1.1 (PL 34; CSEL 28.1).

book had been dictated as far as these words: "The Father, however, is the Father and the Son is nothing else but the Son, because even when likeness to the Father is mentioned, although it shows that there is no unlikeness between them, yet the Father is not alone if He has a likeness."[4]

Then, I again repeated the words of Scripture for consideration and examination: "And God said, 'let us make man to our image and likeness.'"[5] I had left the book unfinished, dictated up to this point. But when I re-examined this book, I thought that what follows here ought to be added and yet, even by doing this, I did not finish it. For if I had finished it, I would at least have discussed all the works and words of God which pertain to the sixth day.[6] It seems superfluous to me to note in this book the same things that displease me, or to defend those which may displease others through not being well understood. Instead, in fact, I briefly advise them to read the twelve books that I composed much later. From those, this book can be judged.

This book, then, begins thus: "With regard to the obscurities of natural things which we know were made by the omnipotent God, the Creator, we should make an investigation, not by affirming, but by inquiring."

4. *Ibid.* 16.60.
5. Cf. Gen 1.26.
6. Cf. Gen 1.24–2.1.

TWO BOOKS ON GENESIS AGAINST THE MANICHEES

BOOK ONE

In this book he defends the beginning of Genesis against the attacks of the Manichees, starting from this verse of chapter one, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth," and continuing up to verse two of chapter two in which God is said to have rested on the seventh day.

CHAPTER 1

In Defense of the Old Law against the Manichees He Is Going to Write in a Style Made Simpler So the Uneducated May Understand

 F THE Manichees would choose those whom they would lead astray, we too would choose our words to reply to them. But they pursue both the learned with their letters and the unlearned with their error, and they attempt to turn men away from the truth while they promise the truth.[1] Hence, their vanity must be refuted by the plain facts, not by an elegant and polished discourse. For I was pleased by the opinion of some truly Christian men who, though they had been well trained in the liberal arts, nonetheless saw, when they read the other books we published against the Manichees, that the less educated understood them either not at all or only with difficulty.[2] They advised me in a friendly

1. This was, of course, the case with Augustine who was lured into the Manichaean sect as an auditor by their promises of truth; cf. DUC 1.2.

2. Prior to DGnM Augustine had written CA, DBV, DOR—all in 386, DI in 387, DMu in 387/90, DQ in 387/88, DME in 387/89 and part of DLA, which was begun in 388, but not completed until 395. It is not clear to which of these Augustine is referring. Augustine says in R 1.10.1 that he was on guard in his works prior to DGnM "to show that God who is supremely good and immutable is the creator of all mutable natures and that there is no evil nature or substance." However, he adds that DGnM was "explicitly published against [the Manichees] in defense of the Old Law which they attack with the impassioned zeal of their foolish error."

fashion not to abandon the common manner of speaking if I was planning to uproot those destructive errors from the minds of the uneducated as well. For the learned also understand this familiar and simple language, but the unlearned do not understand the former.

2. Accordingly the Manichees are accustomed to attack the Scriptures of the Old Testament that they do not recognize and to mock and mislead by that attack our weak and little ones, who find no way to respond to them.[3] For there is no book of Scripture that cannot be censured with ease in the eyes of those who do not understand it. Divine Providence permits many heretics with their differing errors so that at least, when they insult us and ask us what we do not know, we may shake off our sluggishness and long to know the divine Scriptures. This is why the Apostle says, "It is necessary that there be heresies in order that those who are approved among you might become manifest."[4] For those are approved before God who can teach well, but they can only become manifest to men when they teach. They are, however, willing to teach only those who seek to be taught. Yet many are slow to seek if they are not aroused as if from sleep by the troublesomeness and insults of the heretics. Then, embarrassed over their ignorance, they perceive that they are in danger because of that ignorance. If these are men of solid faith, they do not give in to the heretics, but carefully seek what response they should make to them. God does not abandon them. When they ask, they receive, and when they seek, they find, and when they knock, the door will be opened for them.[5] Those, however, who give up hope that they can find in Catholic teaching what they are seeking are worn down by their errors. But if they seek with perseverance, they will return, exhausted after many labors, thirsting and almost dead, to the very fountains from which they wandered away.

3. For the identity of "the little ones," the uneducated Christians whom Augustine had especially in mind in writing this work, cf. the Introduction, pp. 12–15.

4. 1 Cor 11.19.

5. Cf. Matt 7.7.

CHAPTER 2

Verse One of Chapter One of Genesis Is Defended against the Critics Who Ask What God Was Doing before the Creation of the World and Why He Suddenly Decided to Create the World

3. The Manichees are accustomed to find fault in the following way with the first book of the Old Testament, which is entitled, Genesis. About the words, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth,"[6] they ask, "In what beginning?" They say, "If God made heaven and earth in some beginning of time, what was he doing before he made heaven and earth? And why did he suddenly decide to make what he had not previously made through eternal time?"[7] We answer them that God made heaven and earth in the beginning, not in the beginning of time, but in Christ. For he was the Word with the Father, through whom and in whom all things were made.[8] For, when the Jews asked him who he was, our Lord Jesus Christ answered, "The beginning; that is why I am speaking to you."[9] But even if we believe that God made

6. Gen 1.1.

7. The Manichaean objections suppose that God's duration is temporal. The first objection supposes that God did nothing at all for ages upon ages before he created heaven and earth. The second objection supposes that God changed when he suddenly began to create after the ages of inactivity. Such Manichaean objections posed serious problems for Augustine. Just as he was unable to solve the Manichaean objections to the Christian view of God as anthropomorphic until he had learned from the Neoplatonists in Milan to conceive of God as incorporeal, so he could not solve the Manichaean objections about what God was doing before creation until he came to a view of God as eternal, that is, as timeless. Augustine's enthusiasm for what he learned in the *libri Platonicorum* is largely due to their supplying him with the concept of an incorporeal and timeless God—a concept that the whole Western Church lacked, apart from a handful of Neoplatonists in Milan, prior to Augustine. Cf. Gerard Verbeke, *L'évolution de la doctrine du pneuma du stoïcisme à s. Augustin* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer. Louvain: Institut supérieur de Philosophie, 1945), and Masai, "Conversions." Cf. also R. Teske, "'Vocans Temporales, Faciens Aeternos': St. Augustine on Liberation from Time," *Traditio* 61 (1985) 29–47.

8. Cf. John 1.1,3.

9. John 8.25. Augustine interprets *in principio,* 'in the beginning' or 'principle' as referring to Christ on the basis of John 8.25. Hence, Genesis is not speaking about some temporal beginning, but about Christ, the Word, who

heaven and earth at the beginning of time, we should certainly realize that there was no time before the beginning of time. For God also made time, and thus there was no time before he made time. Hence, we cannot say that there was a time when God had not yet made anything. For how could there be a time that God had not made since he is the maker of all time? And if time began to be with heaven and earth, there cannot be found a time when God had not yet made heaven and earth.[10] When they say, "Why did he suddenly decide?" they speak as if some time passed during which God produced nothing. But a time could not pass that God had not already made, because he cannot be the producer of time unless he is before time. Surely the Manichees themselves read the Apostle Paul and praise and honor him, and they mislead many by interpreting his Letters wrongly.[11] Let them tell us what the Apostle Paul meant when he said, "The knowledge of the truth which is in accord with the goodness of God for the hope of eternal life, which God who cannot lie, promised before eternal time."[12] For what could precede eternal time? Let them be forced to explain this. Then they will understand that they do not understand when they rashly want to find fault with what they ought to study with care.

4. Suppose, however, that they do not say, "Why did God suddenly decide to make heaven and earth?" but remove the word "suddenly" and only say, "Why did God decide to make heaven and earth?" For we do not say that this world has the

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was with the Father, through whom and in whom all things were made (John 1.1,3). Roy, in *L'intelligence,* 270, points out that this is the first time that Augustine calls the Son of God the Word. Cf. DGnI 3.6 where Augustine speaks of the Father as principle without principle and the Son as principle with the Father.

10. If one interprets *in principio* as referring to the beginning of time, one should, of course, realize that there was no time before God created time and that there was, therefore, no time during which God had not created; cf. C 11.13.16.

11. The Manichees accepted the New Testament and were fond of using passages from St. Paul in order to prove the opposition between the two testaments and thus to support their rejection of the Old Testament. Hence, in using St. Paul against them, Augustine has a powerful argument.

12. Titus 1.1–2.

same duration as God, for this world does not have the same eternity as the eternity that God has. God certainly made the world, and thus time began to be along with the creation that God made, and in this sense time is called eternal. Nonetheless, time is not eternal in the same way that God is eternal, because God who is the maker of time is before time.[13] So too, all the things that God has made are very good, but they are not good in the same way that God is good, because he is their maker, while they are made. Nor did he give birth to them out of himself so that they are what he is; rather he made them out of nothing so that they are equal neither to him by whom they have been made nor to his Son through whom they have been made.[14] For this is just.[15] But if they say, "Why did God decide to make heaven and earth?" we should answer them that those who desire to know the will of God should first learn the power of the human will.[16] They seek to know the causes of the will of God though the will of God is itself the cause of all that exists. For if the will of God

13. Times can be eternal in the sense that they are everlasting, but God is eternal in the sense that his duration is not stretched out, but is all at once; cf. C 11.13.16. It was Boethius who provided the classical definition of eternity as "the perfect possession of unending life all at once"; cf. *De consolatione philosophiae* 5, prose 6. Yet all the elements of that definition were already present in Augustine; cf. also Plotinus, *Ennead* 3.7.

14. Augustine is concerned to distinguish the generation of the Son out of the Father from the production of creatures out of nothing. Because the Son is generated, he is equal to the Father. Because creatures are made out of nothing, they are not divine. Hence, the Manichaean claims about the divinity of the soul are undone; cf. C 8.10.22.

15. One of Augustine's principal concerns in DGnM and his other anti-Manichaean writings is the defense of the justice of God in view of the evil we encounter in the world.

16. If the Manichees drop from their objection "suddenly" and merely ask why God created heaven and earth, they are asking for the cause of God's will. On this point, Augustine is abrupt: God made heaven and earth because he willed to do so, and to ask why he willed to do so is to look for something greater than the will of God. In *L'intelligence,* 271–272, Roy finds that Augustine at this point identifies the will of God with the Holy Spirit. Hence, Roy sees the motive for creation as combining "because he willed" and "because he is good" in the idea of "a will which is personal love and which one does not grasp save by participating in it." Cf. also R. H. Cousineau, "Creation and Freedom. An Augustinian Problem: 'Quia voluit?' and/or 'Quia Bonus?'" *RAug* 2 (1963) 253–271.

has a cause, there is something that surpasses the will of God—and this we may not believe. Hence, one who asks, "Why did God make heaven and earth?" should be told, "Because he willed to." For the will of God is the cause of heaven and earth, and the will of God, therefore, is greater than heaven and earth. One who asks, "Why did God will to create heaven and earth?" is looking for something greater than the will of God, though nothing greater can be found. Hence, let human temerity hold itself in check, and let it not seek what is not lest it not find what is.[17] If anyone desires to know the will of God, let him become a friend of God. For, if anyone wanted to know the will of a man of whom he was not a friend, everyone would laugh at his impudence and folly. But one becomes a friend of God only by the highest purity of morals and by that goal of the command, of which the Apostle speaks, "The goal of the command is charity from a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned,"[18] and if they had this, they would not be heretics.

CHAPTER 3

Verse Two Is Defended

5. The Manichees, in finding fault with what follows in the Book of Genesis, "But the earth was invisible and without form,"[19] ask, "How did God make heaven and earth in the beginning if the earth was already invisible and without form?"[20] Since they want to attack the divine Scriptures be-

17. The expression "that which is" is a reference to the God Who Is of Exod 3.14. In searching for something greater than the will of God—that which is not, the Manichees risk failing to find God, He Who Is. Augustine never, despite his enthusiasm for Neoplatonism, placed God above being, but identified God with being or essence—so much so that in comparison to God other things are not. Cf. EnP 134.4, EnP 101, S 2, 10, and C 7.11.17. Cf. Emilie Zum Brunn, *St. Augustine: Being and Nothingness* (New York: Paragon House, 1988), 97–118, for the Augustinian exegesis of Exod 3.14.

18. 1 Tim 1.5. 19. Gen 1.2.

20. The Manichees used this text to argue that God did not create matter; cf. DGnI 4.11. However, besides the Manichees, the ancient philosophers too held the doctrine of the eternity of matter, and Augustine had heard Ambrose preach against this doctrine; cf. his *Hexaemeron* 1.7.25.

fore they know them, they fail to understand even the clearest things. For what could be said more clearly than the words, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth, but the earth was invisible and without form"? That is, in the beginning God made heaven and earth, but the very earth which God made was invisible and without form before God arranged the forms of all things by ordering and distinguishing them in their places and ranks, before he said, "Let there be light" and "Let there be the firmament" and "Let the waters be gathered together" and "Let the dry land appear" and the remaining things which are explained in order in the same book so that even the little ones can grasp them. All these things contain such great mysteries that whoever has learned them either grieves over the vanity of all heretics, because they are human beings, or mocks it, because they are proud.[21]

6. There follows in the same book, "And darkness was over the abyss."[22] The Manichees find fault with this and say, "Was God then in darkness, before he made the light?" They themselves are truly in the darkness of ignorance, and for that reason they do not understand the light in which God was before he made this light. For they know only the light they see with the eyes of the flesh. And therefore they worship this sun which we see, not only along with the larger animals, but even with flies and worms, and they say that this sun is a particle of that light in which God dwells.[23] But let us understand that there is a different light in which God dwells.[24] From it there comes that light of which we read in the gospel, "He was the true light that enlightens every man coming into

21. Augustine says that the text contains "great mysteries," that is, secrets which are not disclosed to the outsiders like the Manichees.

22. Gen 1.2.

23. In his profession of faith, the Manichee Bishop Faustus says, "But we believe that the Father inhabits the supreme and principal light, which Paul elsewhere calls inaccessible (1 Tim 6.16), that the Son has his being in this second and visible light, and since it is twofold, as the Apostle recognizes in calling Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1.24), we believe that his power dwells in the sun and his wisdom in the moon. . . ." (CF 20.2).

24. Cf. C 7.10.16 where Augustine speaks of the far different light he saw by the eye of his mind above his mind—an unchangeable light.

this world."[25] For the light of this sun does not enlighten all of man, but the body of man and his mortal eyes, in which we are surpassed by the eyes of eagles which are said to gaze upon this sun much better than we.[26] But that other light feeds, not the eyes of irrational birds, but the pure hearts of those who believe God and turn themselves from the love of visible and temporal things to the fulfillment of his commands. If they wish to, all men can do this, because that light enlightens every man coming into this world.[27] Hence, darkness was over the abyss before there was this light, about which more is said in what follows.

CHAPTER 4

In Defense of Verse Three: Darkness Is Shown to Be Nothing

7. "And God said, 'Let there be light.'"[28] He said this because where there is no light, there is darkness, not because darkness is something; rather the very absence of light is called darkness.[29] So too, silence is not some reality, but silence is said to be where there is no sound. And nakedness is not something, but nakedness is said to be where there is no

25. John 1.9.

26. The Latin, *omnem hominem,* is ambiguous and can mean 'every man' or 'all the man.' In John 1.9 one would usually translate it in the first way, but Augustine clearly understands it here in the second sense. For the light of the sun enlightens only our bodily eyes, but the true light enlightens minds and hearts.

27. In R 1.9.2 Augustine warns the Pelagians not to think that he said this in their sense. "It is true that all men can do this if they wish, but 'the will is prepared by the Lord' (Prov 8.35 according to LXX) and is increased so much by the gift of charity that they can. This was not said here because it was not necessary for the question under consideration."

28. Gen 1.3.

29. Darkness, like nakedness, silence and emptiness, is a lack or absence, not a positive reality. Augustine belabors this point to teach the little ones that evil too is not a nature, but a lack or absence in a nature. The Manichees held that evil is a positive reality which is opposed to the good and called "the nation of darkness." Given a metaphysical materialism, if evil is to be something real, then it must be bodily. Moreover, the good, which is also a body, is limited by the evil nature where they touch; cf. C 5.10.20 and CEM 21.23.

covering on the body. And emptiness is not something, but the place where there is no body is called empty. So darkness is not something, but darkness is said to be where there is no light. We are saying all this because they are accustomed to say, "From where did that darkness over the abyss come, before God made light? Who made it or gave birth to it? Or if no one had made it or gave birth to it, the darkness was eternal." They say this as if darkness was something, but, as we said, the absence of light bears this name. They were deceived by their myths and believe that there is a nation of darkness, and in that nation they think there are bodies and forms and souls in those bodies. Thus they suppose that darkness is something, and they do not understand that darkness is only perceived when we do not see, as silence is perceived only when we do not hear. But as silence is nothing, so darkness is nothing. Just as they say that the nation of darkness fought against the light of God, so another similarly empty head can say that the nation of silence fought against the voice of God. But we have not now undertaken to refute and prove such nonsense wrong. Our present goal is to defend, to the extent that the Lord grants us strength, those things with which they find fault in the Old Testament and to show in these matters that the blindness of men can do nothing against the truth of God.[30]

30. Augustine states the aim of this work: He is not here about to refute the whole Manichee myth; rather he is merely defending those passages of Genesis which they attack. Hence, Book One, at least, follows the pattern of reporting and then responding to charges raised against Genesis by the Manichees. Texts with which they did not find fault are generally passed over quickly, though in some of his later expositions of the beginning chapters they are developed at great length. For example, the creation of light is passed over rapidly in DGnM, but in DGnL he spends considerable time on the verse in which he finds the creation of the angels; cf. DGnL 2.8.16ff. and 4.21.38–4.35.56.

CHAPTER 5

How It Should Be Understood, According to Verse Two, That the Spirit of God Was Borne over the Waters

8. The Manichees are accustomed to find fault with the words, "And the Spirit of God was borne over the water."[31] They ask, "Was the water, then, the dwelling of the Spirit of God, and did it contain the Spirit of God?" With their perverted minds they try to distort everything, and their malice blinds them. For when we say, "The sun is borne over the earth," do we want to imply that the sun dwells in the earth and that the earth contains the sun?[32] And yet the Spirit of God was not borne over the water, as the sun is borne over the earth, but in another way that few understand. For that Spirit of God was not borne over the water through stretches of space, as the sun is borne over the earth, but by the power of its invisible grandeur. Let these men tell us how the will of the craftsman is borne over the things he intends to make. If they do not comprehend these human and everyday matters, let them fear God and seek with a simple heart what they do not understand, lest, in trying to cut with their sacrilegious words the truth which they cannot see, the ax bounce back onto their legs. For what stands immutable cannot be cut, and whatever blows are hurled against it are thrown back and redound with greater force upon those who dare to cleave what they ought to believe so that they might merit to understand.[33]

31. Gen 1.2.

32. The Latin *superferebatur,* which is literally translated as 'was borne over,' here seems to be taken to mean 'works upon.' Augustine may have gotten this meaning from hearing Ambrose's instructions before baptism; cf. *De mysteriis* 3.9; also DGnI 4.16. Only the few—presumably those who can grasp spiritual realities—know how the will of an artisan moves over things he makes; cf. below, 1.7.12, as well as ch. 7, nt. 43. In DGnL 1.18.36 Augustine shows that he is aware that the Syrian translation of the Bible used a word meaning 'cherished' or 'hovered over' (*fovebat*) instead of 'was borne over.' Cf. the note by Agaësse and Solignac on DGnL 1.18.36 in BA 48.590–593.

33. Augustine's Old Latin text of Isa 7.9 read, "Unless you believe, you will not understand." The LXX has that reading, though the Vulgate and most modern versions differ. Augustine's many years of seeking knowledge

9. Then they seek and ask with insult, "From where did that water come, over which the Spirit of God was borne? Did Scripture previously say that God made the water?" If they were seeking this with piety, they would find how it should be understood. For this passage does not mention water so that we should understand this water that we can see and touch, just as the earth which is said to be formless and invisible is not such as we can see or touch. It said, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth,"[34] and the expression "heaven and earth" signified the whole of creation which God made and established. These things are called by the names of visible things on account of the weakness of the little ones who are less suited for grasping invisible things.[35] First there was made confused and formless matter so that out of it there might be made all the things that God distinguished and formed. I believe the Greeks call this *chaos*. For in another passage we read the words spoken in praise of God, "who made the world from unformed matter,"[36] for which some manuscripts have "from invisible matter."[37]

CHAPTER 6

Unformed Matter Was Made from Nothing, and from It All Things Were Made

10. And, therefore, we correctly believe that God made all things from nothing. For, though all formed things were made from this matter, this matter itself was still made from

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before submitting to authority and to the faith taught him the wisdom of first humbly submitting to authority in order that one might merit to understand. However, he was always insistent that understanding was the goal. The translation tries to preserve the assonance of *caedere* and *credere* with 'cleave' and 'believe.'

34. Gen 1.1.

35. "Water" here is not to be understood literally; the name of the familiar substance is used for the sake of the little ones who have difficulty in understanding invisible things; cf. C 12.5–6 where Augustine speaks of his difficulties in coming to understand what matter was.

36. Wis 11.18.

37. The Latin Vulgate of Wis 11.18 has *materia invisa*, 'unseen matter.' The LXX (Wis 11.17) has 'from unformed matter.'

absolutely nothing.[38] For we should not be like those who do not believe that Almighty God could have made something from nothing, when they observe that carpenters or any workmen cannot produce anything unless they have something out of which to make it. For wood helps the carpenter, and silver helps the silversmith, and gold the goldsmith, and clay helps the potter so that they are able to accomplish their works. For if they are not helped by that matter out of which they make something, they cannot make anything since they do not themselves make the matter. A carpenter does not make wood, but makes something out of wood, and the case is the same with all the rest of these workmen as well. But Almighty God did not have to be helped by anything that he had not made so that he could make what he wanted. For if something that he had not made helped him to make those things he wanted to make, he was not almighty, and that is sacrilegious to believe.[39]

CHAPTER 7

Unformed Matter Is Called by Various Names

11. Hence, that unformed matter which God made from nothing was first called heaven and earth, and Scripture said, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth," not because

38. Augustine insists that God made the unformed matter out of nothing, and he points out that, unlike other makers, God needs no help from some matter out of which he makes something. If God needed such help from matter he would not be omnipotent. He inculcates the idea of creation out of nothing by comparison with an artisan making something and by the denial of any need for a material cause out of which God makes the unformed matter. The idea of nothing was not an easy one to come by, especially for a Platonist who views being in terms of permanence and stability. Cf. DBV 2.8 where Augustine, struggling with the concept of nothing, describes it as "whatever is flowing, dissolving, melting and—so to speak—perpetually perishing."

39. God's omnipotence has as a necessary condition that he needs no help from anything else for creating all that he has created. In DCD 21.7.1 Augustine says, "God is called almighty (*omnipotens*) for no other reason than that he can do whatever he wills."

it already was, but because it could be.[40] For it said that heaven was made later. If we consider the seed of a tree, we say that the roots, trunk, branches, fruit and leaves are present there, not because they are already in the seed, but because they will come to be from it. In the same way Scripture said, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth," the seed, so to speak, of heaven and earth, since the matter of heaven and earth was still in a confused state. But because it was certain that heaven and earth would come to be from it, the matter itself was already called heaven and earth. The Lord also uses that kind of expression when he says, "I will no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father."[41] This full revelation had not yet taken place, but was most certainly to come about. For a little later he says to them, "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot now bear them."[42] Why then had he said, "I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father," if not because he knew that he would do this? So too, matter could be called heaven and earth. Heaven and earth had not yet been made from it, but they were not going to be made from anything else. Very many expressions of this kind are found in the divine Scriptures. So too in our ordinary language when we feel sure that something will come about, we say: Consider it done.

12. He also wanted to call this still unformed matter the earth, invisible and without order, because among all the elements of the world earth seemed less beautiful than the rest. He said "invisible" on account of its obscurity and "without order" on account of its lack of form. He also called this same matter the water over which was borne the Spirit of God, just as the will of the artisan is borne over things he intends to

40. Gen 1.1. Augustine explains that unformed matter can be called heaven and earth, because it is the seed out of which heaven and earth will certainly come. It is a figure of speech, metonymy, which Augustine also illustrates by Christ's words and by ordinary language.

41. John 15.15. 42. John 16.12.

make. Though the intelligence of a few men can attain this, I still do not know whether it can be explained in human language, even by these few.[43] This matter is not unreasonably called water since all the things which come to be on the earth, whether animals, or trees, or plants and other such things, begin to be formed and nourished by moisture. Hence, all these expressions, whether heaven and earth, or the earth invisible and without order, and the abyss with darkness, or the water over which was borne the Spirit of God, are names for unformed matter. Thus something unknown is communicated to the minds of the uneducated by familiar terms, and not by one term, but by many. For, if there were only one term, this might be taken for what men usually understand by that term. Hence, it was called heaven and earth, because heaven and earth were going to be made out of it. It was called the earth invisible and without order and the darkness over the abyss, because it was formless and had no beauty that could be seen or touched, even if there were a man who might see and touch it. It was called water, because it lies submissive and workable before the workman so that all things might be formed out of it. But beneath all these names there was the invisible and formless matter, out of which God created the world.

CHAPTER 8

The Manichees' Attack on Verse Four Is Countered

13. "And God said, 'Let there be light.' And the light was made."[44] The Manichees do not usually find fault with this, but with what follows: "And God saw that the light was good."[45] They say, "Hence, God had not known the light, or

43. What only the few can grasp is how the will acts upon the body. Along these lines Augustine speaks of the union of a spiritual soul with a corporeal body as more mysterious than the union of the Word with a human soul; cf. E 137.11.

44. Gen 1.3. 45. Gen 1.4.

had not known what was good."[46] Wretches! They are displeased that God was pleased with his works. Yet they see that even a human artisan, for example, a woodworker, though he is almost nothing in comparison with the wisdom and power of God, nonetheless cuts and handles the wood for a long while, turning, sawing, planing, or shaping and polishing it, until it is brought, as far as possible, in conformity with the norms of the art and pleases the artisan. Did he, therefore, not know what was good, just because he is pleased by what he made? Of course, he knew it interiorly in his mind, where the art itself is more beautiful than the things which are produced by the art. What the artist sees interiorly in the art, he tests externally in his work, and it is finished when it pleases the artisan.[47] Hence, "God saw that the light was good," and these words do not mean that God found before him a good that he had not known, but that he was pleased by one that was finished.

14. If it had said, "God marvelled that the light was good," how they would shout! How they would argue! For wonder usually arises from unexpected things, and yet they read in the gospel with approval that our Lord Jesus Christ wondered at the faith of believers.[48] Who produced their faith but he who marvelled at it? But even if someone else had produced it, why would he who had foreknown it marvel at it? If the Manichees resolve this question, let them see that the former one can be resolved as well.[49] But if they do not

46. The Manichees' objection supposes that God learned of the light or learned that it was good. Once again the analogy with a human artisan reveals that God, like the human artisan, knows what he is making and yet rejoices in the product of his work.

47. In DVR 30.55 and 31.57 Augustine distinguishes between the common art grounded in the memory of past experience of pleasing things that enables a workman to construct a beautiful object and art in the sense of the ideal or standard by which things are judged more or less beautiful. Ultimately it is the wisdom of God that is "the art of all the arts and the art of the almighty artist" (DVR 31.57). The human mind knows this latter art in the divine ideas which are the exemplars in accord with which one judges correctly.

48. Cf. Matt 8.10.

49. Augustine points out that if Gen 1.4 had said that God marvelled at

resolve it, why do they find fault with what they reject as any concern of theirs, though they are ignorant of what they admit is their concern? For that our Lord marvelled means that we should marvel, for we still need to be moved in this way. Hence, all such emotions of his are not signs of a troubled mind, but of a teacher at work.[50] So too, there are words of the Old Testament which do not prove that God is weak, but are a concession to our weakness. For nothing can be said worthily of God. Still there are said those things that we can grasp so that we may be nourished and come to those things which cannot be said by any human language.[51]

CHAPTER 9

He Deals with the Second Part of the Same Verse, and the First Part of the Following Verse

15. "And God divided the light and the darkness, and God called the light day and he called the darkness night."[52] It did not say here, "God made the darkness," because darkness, as we said above, is the absence of light. Yet God made a distinction between light and darkness. So too, we make a sound by crying out and we make a silence by not making a sound, because silence is the cessation of sound; still in some sense we distinguish between sound and silence and call the one sound and the other silence. As we are correctly said to pro-

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the goodness of the light, the Manichees would have felt that their case was even stronger. Yet Christ marvelled at the faith of believers, even though he produced that faith and had foreknowledge of it. Since the Manichees accept the New Testament, they have to explain this marvelling of Christ's—which is reported in the part of the Scriptures they accept.

50. Augustine often appeals to the cause-for-effect sort of metonymy. Christ's wondering is said to teach us that we should wonder; cf. below, 1.9.15.

51. Though we can say nothing worthy of God, we still dare not remain silent. Cf. DT 5.1.1 where he begins to speak of "the Lord our God, of whom we ought always to think, but of whom we cannot worthily think. To him we ought to render our blessing at every moment in praise, though no utterance we speak befits him." Cf. also Vladimir Lossky, "Les éléments de théologie négative dans la pensée de saint Augustin," AM 1.575–581.

52. Gen 1.4–5.

duce silence, so too in many passages of the divine Scriptures God is correctly said to produce darkness, because he either does not give, or withdraws light from whatever times or places he wishes.[53] All these expressions are adapted to our intellect. For in what language did God call the light day and the darkness night? Was it in Hebrew, or Greek, or Latin, or some other? In the same way we can ask regarding everything he named the language in which he named them. For with God there is pure intellect, without the noise and diversity of languages.[54] Still, "he called" was said in the sense that he made them to be called, because he separated and ordered all things so that they could be distinguished and receive names. Later in its proper place we will inquire whether "God called" should really be taken in this sense. For the more we approach the Scriptures and become familiar with them, the better we know their modes of expression. In the same way we say that the father of a family built this home, that is, he had it built. Many expressions of this sort are found throughout all the books of the divine Scriptures.

CHAPTER 10

How It Is Correctly Understood, According to Verse Five, That One Day Began and Passed

16. "And evening came and morning came, one day."[55] The Manichees also wrongly interpret this verse, supposing that it meant that the day began with the evening. They do not understand that work by which God made the light and made a division between the light and darkness and called the light day and the darkness night. They do not understand

53. Cf., for example, Exod 10.21–23.

54. Augustine has just pointed out that these things were said for our intellect which needs spoken words since the Fall. On the other hand, God is pure intellect. He does not speak in any human language. Augustine again uses metonymy; he interprets "he called" to mean "he made them to be called." In paradise we drank directly from the fountain of truth without need for human words; for this point cf. below, 2.4.5.

55. Gen 1.5.

that this whole work belongs to the day and that after this work, as if the day were finished, evening came. Because the night belongs to its day as well, one day is not said to have passed until the night has also passed when morning has come. Thus the remaining days are calculated from morning to morning. For now, when morning has come and one day has passed, there begins the work that follows upon the morning that has come, and after that work there comes evening and then morning and another day passes. In this way the rest of the days pass from then on.

CHAPTER 11

How the Waters Are Divided by the Firmament: Verses Six to Eight

17. "And God said, 'Let there be the firmament in the middle of the water, and let there be a division between the waters.' So it was done. And God made the firmament, and God divided the water that is above the firmament from the water that is below the firmament, and God called the firmament heaven, and God saw that it was good."[56] I do not recall that the Manichees are accustomed to find fault with this. The waters were divided so that some were above the firmament and others below the firmament. Since we said that matter was called water, I believe that the firmament of heaven separated the corporeal matter of visible things from the incorporeal matter of invisible things.[57] For though heaven is a very beautiful body, every invisible creature sur-

56. Gen 1.6–8.

57. Though Augustine cannot recall any Manichaean objections to this verse, he cannot resist saying something about the waters above and below the firmament, that is, about incorporeal and corporeal matter. For Augustine there is matter in everything but God, for it is the principle of mutability, and God alone is absolutely immutable; cf. C 12.6.6. For an excellent account of Augustine's view of matter, cf. Solignac's note on C 12.3.3–6.6 in BA 14.599–603. Augustine derived the doctrine of spiritual and corporeal matter from Plotinus; cf. *Enneads* 1.8.9; 2.4.8; 2.7.2; 6.9.7. Cf. also A. H. Armstrong, "Spiritual and Intelligible Matter in Plotinus and Augustine," AM 1.276–283. It is only the few that understand how invisible waters surpass this sky; the little ones presumably have to believe until they can understand.

passes even the beauty of heaven, and perhaps for that reason the invisible waters are said to be above the heaven. For few understand that they surpass the heaven, not by the places they occupy, but by the dignity of their nature, although we should not rashly affirm anything about this, for it is obscure and remote from the senses of men. Whatever the case may be, before we understand it, we should believe.[58] "And evening came and morning came the second day."[59] All the things which are repeated should be understood and treated as above.

CHAPTER 12

The Gathering of the Waters, of Which Verses Nine and Ten Speak, Is Their Formation

18. "And God said, 'Let the water which is below the heaven be gathered into one gathering, and let the dry land appear,' and so it was done. And the water which was below the heaven was gathered into one gathering, and the dry land appeared. And God called the dry land the earth and the gathering of water he called the sea. And God saw that it was good."[60] On this passage the Manichees say, "If everything was full of water, how could the waters be gathered into one place?" We already said above that the matter over which the Spirit of God was borne was called water and that God would form all things from that matter. Now when it says, "Let the water which is below the heaven be gathered into one gathering," these words mean that this corporeal matter is to be formed into the beauty that these visible waters have.[61] This

58. Faith precedes understanding, but once understanding is attained by the few, it would seem faith is no longer needed. Just two years previously Augustine had spoken of a "knowledge to which few can come in this life, but beyond which no one can go even after this life" (DOR 2.9.26). These few, unlike those "content with authority alone," seem to have entered upon the happy life that the men of faith will attain only hereafter.

59. Gen 1.8. 60. Gen 1.9–10.

61. The gathering of the waters is the formation of the corporeal matter into the 'beauty' or 'form' (*species*) of the visible and tangible waters. The

gathering into one place is the formation of these waters that we see and touch. For every form is reduced to a rule of unity. What else should we understand is meant by the words "Let the dry land appear" than that this matter receives the visible form which this earth that we see and touch now has? Hence, the previous expression "the earth invisible and without form" signified the confusion and obscurity of matter, and the expression "the water over which the Spirit of God was borne" signified that same matter. But now this water and earth are formed from that matter which was called by their names before it had received the forms that we now see. In the Hebrew language every gathering of waters, whether salt or fresh, is correctly called the sea.[62]

CHAPTER 13

The Destruction of Their Complaint about Verses Eleven to Thirteen, Namely: Why Does the Earth Bear Fruitless and Harmful Things?

19. "And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth the edible plants producing seed, each according to its own kind and likeness, and the fruit-tree bearing fruit, whose seed is in it according to its likeness.' And so it was done. And the earth brought forth the edible plants producing seed according to their kind and the fruit-tree bearing fruit, whose seed is in it according to its likeness, according to its kind upon the earth. And God saw that it was good. And evening came and morning came the third day."[63] Here they are accustomed to say, "If God commanded that the edible plants and the fruit-tree come forth from the earth, who commanded that there come forth so many thorny or poisonous plants that are useless for

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waters are gathered into one place, for every form is a norm or standard of unity. Thus the creation of the familiar waters is a two-step process, the creation of the formless corporeal matter and the formation of that matter. The formless matter, however, is not temporally prior to the formed matter. Cf. C 12.29.40 where Augustine distinguishes four kinds of priority.

62. Though Augustine did not learn Hebrew, he did know Punic and many of the roots were common. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo,* 22 and nt. 2.

63. Gen 1.11–13.

food and so many trees that bear no fruit?" We should answer them that no mysteries are disclosed to the unworthy and that they are not shown the figures of things to come in which Scripture spoke of these things in this way.[64] We should say then that the earth was cursed by reason of the sin of man so that it bears thorns, not that it should suffer punishment since it is without sensation, but that it should always set before the eyes of men the judgment upon human sin. Thus men might be admonished by it to turn away from sins and to turn to God's commandments. Poisonous plants were created as a punishment, or as a trial for mortals. All of this is the result of sin, because we became mortal after sin.[65] Men are taunted by the fruitless trees so that they might understand how embarrassed they should be to be without the fruit of good works in the field of God, that is, in the Church, and that they might fear that God abandon them, as they too abandon fruitless trees in their fields and apply no cultivation to them. Hence, before man's sin Scripture did not say that the earth produced anything but the edible plants and fruit-trees, but after man's sin we see many wild and fruitless growths come forth from the earth. I believe this occurs for the reason we have given. For after he sinned the first man is told, "The earth will be cursed for you in all your works;

64. Augustine stresses that the mysteries will not be disclosed to outsiders, nor will such be able to grasp that things are said figuratively, that is, as foreshadowing what is to come.

65. Augustine clearly states that we became mortal only after sin. What is less clear is whether we became corporeal after sin. Some texts seem to suggest that at this point Augustine held the view that we souls preexisted embodiment and fell into bodies and time as a result of the sin. Other texts seem to distinguish corporeity and mortality. Scholarly opinion too is divided. In the conclusion to his chapter on the fall of the soul, O'Connell says, "The main contention of this chapter is exactly this: during the years A.D. 389–391, Augustine said, and meant to say, that we were 'fallen souls'" (*Early Theory,* 183). Gerald O'Daly, however, in *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 199, insists, "Nowhere in his early writings does he unequivocally assert the soul's preexistence: it is never more than one possibility among others." Roy claims, "Augustine clearly distinguishes corporeity itself from this immersion in the flesh which constitutes the immanent punishment of sin" (*L'intelligence,* 289, nt. 2); cf. below, 2.21.32.

in sorrow and groaning you will eat from it all the days of your life. It will send forth thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the food of your field. In the sweat of your brow you will eat your bread until you return to the earth from which you were taken, because you are earth and you will go back into the earth."[66]

CHAPTER 14

The Resolution of Difficulties concerning Verses Fourteen to Nineteen

20. "And God said, 'Let there come to be the heavenly bodies in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth and to divide the day and the night and to be as signs for times and for days and for years. And let them be as a splendor in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth.' And so it was done. And God made two lights, a greater and a lesser, the greater light for the beginning of the day and the lesser light for the beginning of the night,[67] along with the stars. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth and to rule over the day and the night and to divide the day and the night. And God saw that it was good. And evening came and morning came the fourth day."[68] Here they ask, first of all, how it could be that the heavenly bodies, that is, the sun and the moon and the stars, were made on the fourth day. How could the three previous days have passed without the sun; for we now see that a day passes with the rising and setting of the sun, while night comes to us in the sun's absence when it returns to the east from the other side of the world?[69] We answer them that

66. Gen 3.17–19.

67. Augustine's Old Latin version translates the Greek *archē* by *inchoatio,* though the Hebrew would only justify the sense of 'rule' or 'dominion'—the sense which, as a matter of fact, Augustine adopts.

68. Gen 1.14–19.

69. The Manichees first object to the passing of the three days before the creation of the sun. Augustine responds that time could be calculated even without the sun, just as men in a cave could calculate the passing of days without the sun. This might be an allusion to Plato's cave image in book

the previous three days could each have been calculated by as great a period of time as that through which the sun passes, from when it rises in the east until it returns again to the east.[70] For men could perceive this period and length of time even if they were dwelling in caves where they could not see the sun rising and setting. Thus we see that even without the sun this period of time could have come about before the sun was made and that this period of time could have been calculated during each of those three days. This would be our answer if we were not held back by the words, "And evening came and morning came," for we see that this cannot now take place without the movement of the sun. Hence, we are left with the interpretation that in that period of time the divisions between the works were called evening because of the completion of the work that was done, and morning because of the beginning of the work to come. Scripture clearly says this after the likeness of human works, since they generally begin in the morning and end at evening. For the divine Scriptures habitually transfer words from human to divine realities.

21. Next, they ask why it said of the heavenly bodies, "Let them be as signs for times."[71] "For how could those three days," they ask, "have been without time, or do they not pertain to the stretches of time?" The words "as signs for times" were said because men distinguish and differentiate times by these heavenly bodies. For, if times run and are distinguished by none of the divisions which are marked by the courses of the heavenly bodies, times can, of course, run and pass away,

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seven of the *Republic,* but the mention of evening and morning spoils this response. Hence, Augustine suggests that evening here merely marks the end of God's working, as men usually begin work in the morning and end it in the evening. This exemplifies, he says, the transferral of terms from the human to the divine.

70. By Augustine's time the Greek view of the earth as round had given way to the view that it was flat; cf. the note by F.-J. Thonnard on DCD 16.9 in BA 36.712–715.

71. Gen 1.14. The second objection focuses upon the sun and moon serving as signs for times and asks how the previous days could have passed without times? Augustine answers that the heavenly bodies merely mark off the times for us—times which existed without being marked off.

but cannot be marked and discerned by men. In the same way the hours pass and complete their stretches when the day is cloudy, but they cannot be distinguished and noticed by us.

22. The words "And God made the two lights, the greater light for the beginning of the day, and the lesser light for the beginning of the night"[72] should be understood to mean "for presiding over the day and for presiding over the night."[73] For the sun does not merely begin the day; it also continues and ends it. And the moon comes to us at times in the middle of the night or at the end of the night. Hence, if those nights on which it does this are not begun by it, how was it made for the beginning of the night? But if you understand "beginning" as "principle" and "principle" as "supremacy," it is clear that during the day the sun is supreme and that the moon is supreme during the night. For, though the other stars then appear, it still surpasses them all by its brightness and thus is rightly said to be their leader.

23. The words "And to divide the day and the night"[74] can be turned into an attack. They ask, "How did God previously divide the day and the night, if he made the heavenly bodies on this the fourth day?"[75] Therefore, these words, "To divide the day and the night," mean "To divide among themselves the day and the night so that the day is given to the sun and the night to the moon and the other stars." The day and the night had already been divided, but not yet among the heavenly bodies, so that it was already certain which, from among their number, men would be able to see during the day and which during the night.

72. Gen 1.16.

73. The third objection rests upon the translation of *archē* as *inchoatio*, that is, as 'beginning'; cf. DGnI 13.40.

74. Gen 1.18.

75. The fourth objection asks how there were three days and nights before this, if the sun and moon only now divide the day and night. He answers that they divided it among themselves for their respective rules.

CHAPTER 15

The Cloudy Air Is Called Water in Verse Twenty

24. "And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth the reptiles with living souls and the birds that fly over the earth beneath the firmament of the heaven.' And so it was done. And God made the great fish and every soul of animals and reptiles which the waters brought forth according to each one's kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that they were good, and God blessed them, saying, 'Increase and multiply, and fill the waters of the sea, and let the birds multiply over the earth.' And evening came and morning came the fifth day."[76] Here they usually find fault, questioning, or rather misrepresenting, Scripture for saying that not merely those animals that live in the water, but also those which fly in the air, and all winged creatures were born from the waters. Let all those who are upset by these difficulties know that learned men who carefully investigate these matters usually include with the water this cloudy and moist air in which the birds fly. For it comes together and becomes dense with the exhalations and what I might call vapors of the sea and land, and it becomes in a sense thick from this moisture so that it can support the flight of birds. Thus on calm nights it produces dew, and drops of this dew are found on the grass in the morning. That mountain of Macedonia, called Olympus, is said to be of such height that on its summit no wind is felt and no clouds gather. By its height it rises above all this moist air in which the birds fly, and thus birds, it is claimed, do not fly there.[77] This is said to have been disclosed by those who climbed the peak of that renowned mountain each year

76. Gen 1.20–23.

77. The claim that rain does not fall on Mount Olympus is found in DGnL 3.2.3, QH 1.9, and DCD 15.27.2. In DGnL Augustine claims to have found this information in "one of the secular poets," referring probably to Lucan, *Pharsalia* 2.271. G. Bardy, in his note on DCD 15.27.2 in BA 36.706–707, suggests that Augustine may well refer to a geographical dictionary, such as Vibius Sequester's *De fluminibus*; cf. also Marrou, *Saint Augustin,* 135–136. The note by Agaësse and Solignac on DGnL 3.2.3 in BA 48.216–217, nt. 3, suggests Apuleius, *De mundo* 362–363 as the source.

for the sake of some sorts of sacrifices. They made some marks in the dust, and they found them intact the next year. This could not have happened if that place was exposed to wind or rain. Moreover, because the thinness of the air on that peak did not provide them with breath, they could not remain there without applying wet sponges to their nostrils from which they could draw the thicker and usual breath. These men also reported that they had never seen a bird in that place. Therefore, it is not without reason that the most trustworthy Scripture mentions that not merely the fish and the rest of the living things that live in the waters, but also the birds were born from the waters, because they can only fly through this air that is formed from the moisture of the sea and the earth.

CHAPTER 16

Why Harmful Animals Were Created

25. "And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth the living soul according to each kind of quadruped and reptile and beast of the earth.' And so it was done. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kind, and the cattle according to their kind and all the reptiles of the earth according to their kind. And God saw that they were good."[78] The Manichees also stir up this question and ask, "What need was there for God to make so many living things, either in the waters or on the land, that are not necessary for men? And also many that are harmful and frightening?" When they say this, they do not understand how all things are beautiful to their creator and maker, who uses all of them for governing the universe which he rules by the supreme law.[79] For if an untrained person enters the workshop of an artisan, he sees many tools whose uses he does not know, and if he is quite

78. Gen 1.24–25.

79. The Manichees object to the uselessness of many animals as well as the harmful or frightening character of others. Augustine answers that all things are beautiful to God who made them and that God uses them for the governance of the universe.

stupid, he thinks they are superfluous. Moreover, if he carelessly falls against the kiln or injures himself, while mishandling some sharp piece of iron, he thinks that the shop contains many dangerous and harmful things. Still, since the artisan knows their uses, he laughs at his visitor's foolishness and goes about his work, not paying attention to his silly comments. But some men are very foolish. They do not dare to find fault with what they do not understand in the shop of a human artisan; rather, when they see such things, they believe that they are necessary and made for certain functions. Yet in this world, of which God is proclaimed the creator and governor, they dare to find fault with many things whose purposes they do not see, and they want to appear to know what they do not know in the works and tools of the Almighty Artisan.

26. I admit that I do not know why mice and frogs were created, or flies or worms. Yet I see that all things are beautiful in their kind, though on account of our sins many things seem to us disadvantageous. For I observe the body and members of no living thing in which I do not find that measures, numbers, and order contribute to its harmonious unity. I do not understand where all these things come from if not from the highest measure, number and order, which lies in the immutable and eternal sublimity of God.[80] If those silly chatterboxes would think of this, they would stop bothering us and, considering all the beauties, both the highest and the lowest, they would praise God their craftsman in all of them. Since reason is nowhere offended, as perhaps the sense of the flesh is offended, they would attribute this, not to the defect of things, but to the merits of our mortality. Surely all living things are either useful for us, or harmful, or superfluous. They have nothing to say against the useful things. From the harmful we draw punishment or training or fear. As a result we do not love and desire this life that is subject to many dangers and toils, but another better life where there is su-

80. Cf. Roy, *L'intelligence,* 279–281, for measure, number, and order as reflecting the Trinitarian structure of created being.

preme security, and we obtain it for ourselves by the merits of our piety. Why do we need to ask about superfluous things? If you are displeased that they are not to our advantage, be pleased that they are not to our disadvantage. Though they are not necessary for our house, they nonetheless complete the integrity of this universe which is much greater and much better than our house. For God governs this universe much better than each of us governs his own house. Hence, make use of what is useful, watch out for what is harmful, leave what is superfluous. When you see measures, numbers, and order in all things, seek their maker. You will not find him except where there is the supreme measure, the supreme number, and the supreme order, that is, in God, of whom it has most truly been said that he disposed all things in measure, number, and weight.[81] In this way you will perhaps gather richer fruit when you praise God in the lowliness of a fly than when you cross the river on the height of some beast.

CHAPTER 17

How Man Is Understood, According to Verse Twenty-Six, to Have Been Made to God's Image

27. "And God said, 'Let us make man to our image and likeness, and let him have power over the fish of the sea and the birds of heaven, and all cattle and wild beasts, and all the earth and all reptiles that creep upon the earth,'"[82] and the rest, up to the evening and the morning by which the sixth day is completed. It is this question above all that the Manichees raise with their endless chatter, and they taunt us for believing that man was made to the image and likeness of God.[83] They look at the shape of our body and ask so infeli-

81. Wis 11.21. Roy, in *L'intelligence,* 280, points out that this is the first time Augustine cites this text from Wisdom.

82. Gen 1.26.

83. The Manichaean objection regarding man's being made to God's image and likeness troubled Augustine from his youth. He tells us in C 3.7.12 that one of the questions that tormented him was "whether God was limited

citously whether God has a nose and teeth and a beard and also inner organs and the other things we need. However, it is ridiculous, even wicked, to believe that there are such things in God, and so they deny that man was made to the image and likeness of God. We answer them that the Scriptures generally mention these members in presenting God to an audience of the little ones, and this is true, not only of the books of the Old Testament, but also of the New Testament. For the New Testament mentions God's eyes and ears and lips and feet, and the gospel proclaims that the Son is seated at the right hand of God the Father.[84] The Lord himself says, "Do not swear by heaven, for it is the throne of God, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool."[85] Likewise he says that he was casting out demons by the finger of God.[86] All who understand the Scriptures spiritually have learned to understand by those terms, not bodily members, but spiritual powers, as they do in the case of helmets and shield and sword and many other things.[87] Hence, we should first point out to these heretics the impudence with which they attack such words of the Old Testament, since they see these things used in the New Testament as well. Or perhaps they do not see them since they are blinded in their disputes.[88]

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by a bodily form and has hair and nails. . . ." The question of man's being made in God's image is, of course, most acute for someone whose whole philosophical background is materialistic, as was the case with Augustine and almost everyone in the Western Church until he came into contact with the small group of Neoplatonists in the Church of Milan. Cf. Gerald A. McCool, "The Ambrosian Origin of St. Augustine's Theology of the Image of God in Man," *TS* 20 (1959) 62–81, for the influence of Ambrose upon Augustine and through Ambrose the influence of Clement and Origen.

84. Cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 2d ed. (New York: David McKay, 1960), 151, for the credal formulation of Christ's session at the right hand of the Father, along with its Scriptural sources.

85. Matt 5.34–35.

86. Luke 11.20.

87. Eph 6.16,17.

88. Augustine's argument is directed to men who reject the Old Testament because of its supposed anthropomorphism, though they accept the New Testament. He points out how passages in Scripture that speak of God's members and organs are to be understood and also points out that such passages occur in the New Testament as well as in the Old Testament. Hence, the Manichees cannot consistently reject the Old Testament without also rejecting the New Testament as well.

28. Let them know, nonetheless, that the spiritual believers in the Catholic teaching do not believe that God is limited by a bodily shape. When man is said to have been made to the image of God, these words refer to the interior man, where reason and intellect reside.[89] From these man also has power over the fish of the sea and the birds of heaven and all cattle and wild animals and all the earth and all reptiles which creep upon the earth. For when God said, "Let us make man to our image and likeness," he immediately added, "And let him have power over the fish of the sea and the birds of heaven," and the rest, so that we might understand that man is said to have been made to the image of God, not on account of his body, but on account of that power by which he surpasses the cattle. For all the other animals are subject to man, not by reason of the body, but by reason of the intellect which we have and they do not have. Even our body has been made so that it reveals that we are better than the beasts and, for that reason, like God. For the bodies of all the animals which live either in the waters or on the earth, or which fly in the air, are turned toward the earth and are not erect as is the body of man.[90] This signifies that our mind ought to be raised up toward those things above it, that is, to eternal spiritual things. It is especially by reason of the mind that we understand that man was made to the image and likeness of God, as even the erect form of the body testifies.

CHAPTER 18

Man's Power over the Beasts

29. At times they also ask, "In what sense did man receive power over the fish of the sea and the birds of heaven and all the cattle and wild animals? For we see that men are killed by

89. It is the spiritual believers in the Catholic discipline, that is, men like Ambrose, Simplician, Theodorus and Marius Victorinus, who understand how man has been made in God's image; cf. C 6.3.4 and DBV 1.4.

90. Cf. DCD 22, 24. This idea was a commonplace in the ancient world; cf., for example, Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.84–86.

many wild animals and that many birds harm us when we want to avoid them or to capture them, though we often cannot. In what sense then did we receive power over these?" On this point they should first be told that they make a big mistake when they consider man after sin, when he has been condemned to the mortality of this life and has lost that perfection by which he was made to the image of God. But even man's state of condemnation involves such power that he rules many animals. For though he can be killed by many wild animals on account of the fragility of his body, he can be tamed by none, although he tames very many and nearly all of them. If, then, this state of man's condemnation involves such power, what ought we to think of that reign of his, which is promised to him by the word of God, once he has been renewed and set free?

CHAPTER 19

How Verse Twenty-Eight Should Be Taken Spiritually

30. There follows the words, "He made them male and female, and God blessed them, saying, 'Increase and multiply, and generate and fill the earth.'"[91] Here one is completely right to ask in what sense we should understand the union of male and female before sin, as well as the blessing that said, "Increase and multiply, and generate and fill the earth." Should we understand it carnally or spiritually? For we are permitted to understand it spiritually and to believe that it was changed into carnal fecundity after sin.[92] For there was

91. Gen 1.27–28.

92. In R 1.10.2 Augustine says, "One reads [in DGnM] that we should believe that the blessing of God, by which he said, 'Increase and multiply,' was changed into carnal fecundity after the sin. If this cannot be understood otherwise than as saying that those humans would not have children if they had not sinned, I completely disapprove." In DVR 46.88 Augustine says that "we would not have any such temporal relationships which arise by being born or dying, if our nature remained in the precepts and image of God and was not dismissed to this corruption." And of that passage he says in R 1.13.8, "I completely disapprove of this meaning which I already rejected above in

first the chaste union of male and female, of the former to rule, of the latter to obey, and there was the spiritual offspring of intelligible and immortal joys filling the earth, that is, giving life to the body and ruling it. That is, man so held [the body] subject that he experienced from it no opposition or trouble. We should believe that it was this way, since they were not yet children of this world before they sinned. For the children of this world generate and are generated, as the Lord says, when he shows that we should contemn this carnal generation in comparison with the future life which is promised us.[93]

CHAPTER 20

Power over the Beasts Taken Allegorically

31. Then God said to them, "Have power over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heaven and all reptiles that creep upon the earth."[94] Apart from that interpretation according to which it is clear that man is master of all these animals by reason, we can still understand this verse spiritually in the sense that we should hold in subjection all the affections and emotions of our soul, which are like those animals, and have mastery over them by temperance and modesty. For if we do not rule these emotions, they burst forth and turn into the foulest habits, carrying us off with all sorts of destructive plea-

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the first book of *On Genesis against the Manichees*. For it leads to the belief that the first spouses would not have generated later humans if they had not sinned, as if it were necessary that they be born destined to die, if they were born from the relations of husband and wife. For I had not yet seen that it was possible that offspring not destined to die would be born from parents not destined to die, if human nature were not changed for the worse by that great sin. In this way, if fecundity and felicity had remained in both parents and offspring until the certain number of the saints which 'God has predestined' (cf. Rom 8.28ff., 1 Cor 2.7, Eph 1.5,11), men would be born not to take the place of dying parents, but to reign with living ones. Hence, there would be these relationships and ties even if no one sinned and no one died."

93. Luke 20.34–36. The Latin is ambiguous as to whether Augustine has the Lord teaching us to contemn the act of generating carnally or the carnal generation in which we live. Both meanings, of course, are probably intended.

94. Gen 1.28.

sures and making us like every kind of beast. But when we rule them and hold them in subjection, they become completely tame and live in harmony with us. For the emotions of our mind are part of our nature. They are even nourished along with us by knowledge of the finest rational and moral principles of eternal life, as if by the grain and the fruit-trees and the green plants. Man's life is happy and peaceful when all his emotions are in accord with reason and the truth. Then they are called joys and holy, chaste and fair loves. But if they are not in accord [with reason] and are managed with negligence, they tear the mind apart and dissipate it, making life most miserable. Then they are called perturbations and lusts and evil desires. We have been commanded to crucify them in ourselves with all the energy we can until death is swallowed up in victory.[95] For the Apostle says, "Those who belong to Jesus Christ have crucified their flesh with its perturbations and desires."[96] We should also be warned not to understand these matters carnally from the fact that in Genesis the green plants and fruit-bearing trees were given to every kind of animal and to all the birds and to all the reptiles as food. Yet we see that lions, hawks, kites, and eagles feed only on meat and the killing of other animals. I believe this is also true of some serpents which live in sandy desert areas where there are neither trees nor grass.[97]

95. Cf. 1 Cor 15.54. 96. Gal 5.24.

97. In R 1.10.2 Augustine says, "Likewise, from the fact that there are quadrupeds and birds that seem to live from meat alone, it does not follow that we must interpret as pure allegory the report in the Book of Genesis that the plants and fruit-bearing trees are given as food to every kind of animal and to all the birds and to all the reptiles. For it could be that men would feed them from the fruits of the earth, if on account of the obedience with which they themselves served God without any iniquity, men merited to have all the animals and birds completely at their service."

CHAPTER 21

Why "Very Good" Is Said in Verse Thirty-One

32. Certainly we should not carelessly pass over the words of Scripture that say, "And God saw that all the things which he had made were very good."[98] For when dealing with individual things, it only says, "God saw that it is good," but in speaking of all things, it was not enough to say "good" without adding "very" as well. For if prudent men consider the single works of God, they find that, individually in their own species, they have praiseworthy measures, numbers, and orders. How much more [then will this be true of] all of them together, that is, of the universe which is filled with these individual things gathered into unity? For every beauty that is composed of parts is much more praiseworthy in the whole than in a part. In the case of the human body, if we praise the eyes alone, or the nose, or the cheeks, or the head, or the hands, or the feet, and we praise the remaining beautiful parts individually and by themselves, how much more should we praise the whole body to which all the members, which individually are beautiful, contribute their beauty? If a beautiful hand, which we praise even by itself in the body, is separated from the body and loses its attractiveness, the other members also are ugly without it. The force and power of integrity and unity are so great that many good things are pleasing only when they come together and form a universe (*universum*). A universe gets its name from unity. If the Manichees would consider this, they would praise God, the author and creator of the universe. They would integrate into the beauty of the universe what they find displeasing in some part on account of the condition of our mortality, and they would see how God has made all things not only good, but very good. If in an ornate and polished speech we consider the individual syllables, or even the individual letters, which pass away as soon

98. Gen 1.31.

as they sound, we do not find in them what is pleasing and praiseworthy. For the whole speech is beautiful, not from the individual syllables or letters, but from all its parts.[99]

CHAPTER 22

The Rest of the Seventh Day Taken Allegorically: Chapter Two, Verses One to Three

33. Now let us also look at the verse that they mock with greater impudence than ignorance. Scripture says that, after completing heaven and earth and all the things he made, God rested from all his works on the seventh day and blessed the seventh day and made it holy by reason of his resting from his works.[100] They say, "What need did God have for rest? Was he perhaps tired and worn out by the works of the six days?" They also add the testimony of the Lord, where he says, "My father works up to now,"[101] and by this they deceive many of the uneducated, whom they try to convince that the New Testament contradicts the Old Testament. The [Jews] to whom the Lord said, "My father works up to now," understood God's rest carnally, and in their carnal observance of the Sabbath they did not see what the meaning of that day foreshadowed. The [Manichees], although with a different intention, equally fail to understand the mystery of the Sabbath. The former fail to understand the Sabbath because of their carnal observance, the latter because of their carnal accusation. Let each cross over to Christ so that the veil may be removed, as the Apostle says.[102] For the veil is removed when the cloak of likeness and allegory is removed and the truth is stripped bare so that it can be seen.[103]

99. This analogy is one of Augustine's favorite ploys for dealing with the evils of this passing world; cf., for example, DVR 22.42–43 and E 166.5.13.

100. Cf. Gen 2.1–3.

101. John 5.17.

102. Cf. 2 Cor 3.16.

103. The Manichees objected to Gen 2.2–3 which says that God rested on the seventh day because it implied, they thought, the anthropomorphic view

34. We should first notice and learn the rule for this expression in many passages of the divine Scriptures. Scripture says that God rested from all his works which he made very good. What else does this signify but our rest, the rest, which he will give us from all our works, if we too have done good works?[104] According to this figure of speech the Apostle also says, "We do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes on our behalf with ineffable groans."[105] The Holy Spirit, who intercedes with God on behalf of the saints, does not groan as if he were in need and experiencing distress. Rather he moves us to pray when we groan, and thus he is said to do what we do when he moves us. In the same way Scripture says, "The Lord your God tests you in order to know whether you love him."[106] He permits us to be tested, not in order that he, for whom nothing lies hidden, might know, but in order that he might make us know the extent of our progress in love for him. According to this same mode of speech our Lord also says that he does not know the day or the hour of the end of the world.[107] What can there be that he does not know? He was concealing it from the disciples for their benefit, and he said that he did not know it, because he was causing them not to know by concealing it. According to this same figure he said that the Father alone knew that day, because it was the Father who made it known to the Son. This figure easily resolves many questions in the divine Scriptures for those who are familiar with this mode of expression. Our

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that God needed rest after the tiring labors of the previous six days. Furthermore, they used John 5.17 to show that the Old Testament contradicts the New Testament, thus providing further reason for their rejection of the Old Testament. As the Jews understood Christ carnally and carnally observed the Sabbath and thus failed to understand the mystery, so the Manichees too failed to understand the Sabbath. The remedy for both is the same. If they would cross over to Christ, the veil of likeness and allegory would be removed and the truth would be laid bare and visible. Augustine urges a spiritual observance of the Sabbath, involving abstinence from sin, that is, from the works of servitude to the devil; cf. JE 20.2.

104. Augustine's solution again appeals to metonymy, by which God is said to rest, because he is the cause of our rest. He points out three other occurrences of this figure in Scripture as well as its use in ordinary discourse.

105. Rom 8.26.

106. Deut 13.3.

107. Cf. Matt 24.36.

ordinary language also abounds with such expressions. For example, we call a day happy, because it makes us happy, the cold numbing, because it makes us numb, a ditch blind, because we do not see it, and a tongue polished, because it produces polished speech. Finally, we speak of a time of rest from all troubles, when we live in it at rest from them all. Scripture said that God too rested from all the works which he made very good, because we will rest in him from all our works, if we have done good works. For even our good works should be attributed to him, who calls, who commands, who shows the way of truth, who invites us to will, and supplies the power to fulfill, what he commands.

CHAPTER 23

The Seven Days and the Seven Ages of the World

35. *The First Age.* I think that we should consider more carefully why this rest is attributed to the seventh day. For throughout the whole text of the divine Scriptures I see that six work ages are, as it were, distinguished from one another by their limits so that in the seventh age rest is hoped for. These same six ages bear a likeness to the six days in which God made those things which Scripture reports that he made.[108] For the beginnings of the human race, in which it began to enjoy this light, can well be compared to the first day on which God made the light. This age should be regarded as the infancy of the whole world, which we ought to think of as one man in terms of its greatness. For every man, when he is first born and comes into the light, passes through the first age, infancy. This age extends from Adam to Noah over ten generations.

108. Augustine draws a parallel between the six days of creation followed by the day of rest and the six ages of an individual man followed by the rest in heaven. But he also sees that the six days of work followed by the day of rest prefigures the whole of human history as it is sketched in the biblical ages. Cf. DD83 58 for the comparison of the six days with the six ages of man; and also J. de Ghellinck, "Iuventus, gravitas, senectus," *Studia Mediaevalia, in Honorem R. J. Martin* (Bruges, 1948), 39–59.

The flood came like the evening of this day, because our infancy too is wiped out by the flood of forgetfulness.

36. *The Second Age.* In the morning the second age, like childhood, begins with the time of Noah, and this age extends up to Abraham over another ten generations. It can well be compared to the second day on which was made the firmament between the waters. For the ark, in which Noah was with his family, was the firmament between the lower waters on which it floated and the higher waters which rained upon it. This age is not wiped out by the flood, because our childhood too is not wiped from our memory by forgetfulness. For we remember that we were children, but not that we were infants. The evening of this day is the confusion of languages among those building the tower, and morning begins with Abraham. This second age also did not generate the people of God, because childhood is not yet ready for generating.

37. *The Third Age.* Morning begins from Abraham, and there comes the third age that is like adolescence. It can well be compared with the third day, on which the land was separated from the waters. For the term "sea" that is unstable and stirred up by the empty teachings about idols, as if by all the winds, fittingly signifies the error of all the nations. From this vanity of the nations and from the waves of this world Abraham separated the people of God, which was like the land, when it emerged as dry, that is, thirsting for the heavenly rain of the Divine Commandments. By worshipping the one God, this people received the Holy Scriptures and the prophets like a land watered so that it could bring forth the useful fruits. For this age could now generate a people for God, because the third age, that is, adolescence, can already bear children. This is why God said to Abraham, "I have set you to be the father of many nations, and I will increase you very much, and I will set you over nations, and kings will come forth from you. And I will set my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you, for generations of them as an eternal covenant, that I may be God for you and for your offspring after you, and I will give you and your offspring after you the land in which you dwell, all the land of Canaan,

as an eternal possession, and I will be their God."[109] This age extends from Abraham up to David over fourteen generations. The evening of this age lies in the sins of the people by which they transgressed the Divine Commandments, up to the wickedness of the evil king, Saul.

38. *The Fourth Age.* From there in the morning there came the kingdom of David. This age is like the age of youth. Among all the ages youth is truly king, and it is the firm ornament of all the ages. It is, therefore, rightly compared to the fourth day on which God made the heavenly bodies in the firmament of the heaven. For what more clearly signifies the splendor of a kingdom than the perfection of the sun? The splendor of the moon represents the people, like the synagogue, obedient to the kingdom, and the stars [represent] its leaders, and all of them are fixed in the stability of the kingdom as in the firmament. The evening of this day lies in the sins of the kings for which that people deserved to be taken captive and enslaved.

39. *The Fifth Age.* In the morning there came the exile to Babylon, and in that captivity away from their fatherland the people hardly found rest.[110] This age extends up to the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ. It is the fifth age, namely, the decline from youth toward old age, not yet old age, but no longer youth. This is the age of the elder that the Greeks call *presbuten* (πρεσβύτην). For they do not call an old man a *presbyter* (πρεσβύτης), but a *gerōn* (γέρων). Thus the Jewish people was in this age truly bent down and broken from the vigor of the kingdom, just as a man becomes older from youth. It is well compared to the fifth day, on which God made the living things in the waters, and birds of the heaven. For that people began to live among the nations, as in the sea, and to have, like the birds that fly, no certain and fixed abode. Clearly in that exile there were also the great sea animals, that is, those

109. Gen 17.5–8.

110. *Leniter* could, and more usually does, mean 'gently' so that the text could mean that the people found a gentle leisure in the exile, but such a translation seems to run counter to the sense of the rest of the passage and history.

great men who could rule over the waves of the world rather than be their slaves in that captivity. For no terror could reduce them to the baseness of worshipping idols. Here we should, of course, note that God blessed those animals, when he said, "Increase and multiply, and fill the waters of the sea, and let the flying things multiply above the earth."[111] For, from the time of their dispersal among the nations, the nation of the Jews really grew greatly in number. The evening of this day, that is, of this age, is the multiplication of sins among the people of the Jews, who became so blind that they could not recognize even the Lord, Jesus Christ.

40. *The Sixth Age.* Morning came with the preaching of the gospel by our Lord, Jesus Christ, and the fifth day ended. There begins the sixth, in which the old age of the old man appears. For in this age that carnal kingdom was violently crushed, when the temple was torn down and the sacrifices came to an end. Now, in regard to the strength of its kingdom, that nation is drawing its last breath. In this age, nonetheless, like the old age of an old man, a new man is born and now lives spiritually. For God said on the sixth day: "Let the earth produce the living soul."[112] For he said on the fifth day: "Let the waters produce," not a living soul, but "reptiles with living souls."[113] For bodies are reptiles, and that people, as in the sea of the nations, was still serving the Law with bodily circumcision and sacrifices.[114] But it calls a living soul the life by which they now begin to desire eternal things. The serpents and cattle which the earth produces signify the nations that will firmly believe the gospel. Scripture speaks of them in the vessel that was shown to Peter in the Acts of the Apostles, when it says, "Kill and eat." When he said they were unclean, he was told, "What God has made clean, you shall not call

111. Gen 1.22. 112. Gen 1.24.

113. Gen 1.20.

114. In R 1.10.2 Augustine notes with regard to this sentence, "So too one might be upset by what I said concerning the people of Israel. . . . For they were unable to offer sacrifices among the nations, just as we see that they now remain without sacrifices, unless one might perhaps regard as a sacrifice the immolation of the lamb at the time of Passover."

unclean."[115] On that day man is made to the image and likeness of God, just as in the sixth age our Lord is born in the flesh. The prophet said of him, "He is a man, but who will recognize him?"[116] As on that day there were a male and a female, so also in this age there are Christ and the Church. On that day man was placed over the cattle, and the serpents and the birds of heaven, just as in this age Christ rules souls obedient to him who have come to his Church in part from the Gentiles and in part from the Jewish people. Thus, whether given over to carnal desire, like the cattle, or blinded by dark curiosity, like the serpents, or puffed up with pride, like the birds,[117] men might be tamed by him and grow gentle. As on that day man and the animals that are with him feed on the grains, and the fruit-bearing trees and the green plants, so in this age the spiritual man who is a good minister of Christ and imitates him as well as he can, feeds along with the people on the foods of the holy Scriptures and the divine Law.[118] Thus he finds there an abundance of ideas and words which, like the grains, serve partly as an improvement of his conduct in human society, which is like the fruit-bearing trees, and partly to strengthen faith, hope, and charity for eternal life, which is like the green plants. For these plants are so vigorous that they do not dry up under the hot blast of any tribulation. The spiritual man is fed by these foods so that he understands many things; the carnal man, however, that is, the little one in Christ, like God's animal, is fed so that he believes many things that he cannot yet understand.[119] All, nonetheless, have the same food.

115. Acts 10.13–15.

116. Jer 17.9 (LXX and *versio antiqua*).

117. For Augustine's triad of concupiscence, or carnal desire, curiosity, and pride, cf. O'Connell, *Early Theory*, 173–182.

118. The "spiritual man" has the same food as the "animal or carnal man" in the Church; there is not a difference in the doctrine taught to the two groups, but in their ability to grasp what is given them. Thus the spirituals understand many things which the little ones in Christ have to believe, because they cannot yet understand.

119. In JE 1.1 Augustine referred to some in his congregation as 'animals,' *animales*, following St. Paul's language. While such language jars our sensi-

41. *The Seventh Age.* May the evening of this age not find us [in this life], if it has not already begun. This is the evening of which the Lord says, "Do you think that the Son of Man will find faith on the earth when he comes?"[120] After this evening there will come the morning, when the Lord himself will come in glory. Then they to whom he said, "Be perfect as your Father, who is in heaven, is perfect,"[121] will rest with Christ from all their works. For such men perform works that are very good. After such works one should hope for rest on the seventh day, which has no evening. Words can in no sense express how God made and created heaven and earth and every creature that he created, but this exposition according to the order of days recounts it as a history of works he did so that it has special regard for the prediction of what is to come.

CHAPTER 24

Why the Ages of the World Are Unequal

42. It may upset someone that we have found in these ages of the world that the first two ages each encompass ten generations, while the next three ages are each composed of fourteen generations and this sixth age is not defined by any number of generations.[122] It is easy, however, to see in the case of every man that the first two ages, infancy and childhood, are bound to the senses of the body. These bodily senses are five: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. The number "five" is doubled because the human sexes, as the result of which there exist such generations, are two, male and female. The

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bilities and leads us to speak of "natural men," Augustine's *pecus Dei,* 'God's dumb beast,' reminds us that he seems to have taken such expressions in a stronger sense that is quite jarring. Cf. EnP 106.13 where he says, "They are called animals or cattle who live simply in the Church, useful [members], not very learned, but full of faith."

120. Luke 18.8. 121. Matt 5.48.

122. Augustine follows Luke 3.34–38 for the first two ages with ten generations each and Matt 1.17 for the next three ages with fourteen generations each.

number "five" doubled, as I said, makes the number "ten." But from adolescence on, when reason begins to prevail in man, there is added to the five senses knowledge and action, by which life is ruled and governed, so that now there begins to be the number "seven." This number, likewise doubled because of the two sexes, emerges clearly in the fourteen generations which the next three ages each have, like the ages of the adolescent, the young man and the mature man. But, as is the case with us, the period of old age is defined by no fixed number of years. Rather, after those five ages, however long one may live, it is counted as old age. In that age of the world we find no generations, and thus the last day is also concealed since the Lord has declared that it should be hidden for our good.[123]

CHAPTER 25

A More Profound Allegory of the Seven Days

43. In good works and a just life each of us has something like these six distinct days, after which he ought to hope for rest. On the first day each of us has the light of faith, when he first believes in visible things. Because of such faith the Lord has deigned to appear visibly. On the second day he has the firmament, so to speak, of learning by which he discerns between carnal and spiritual things, as between the lower and the higher waters. On the third day he separates his mind from the stain and waves of carnal temptations, as the dry land [is separated] from the storms of the sea. Thus he bears the fruits of good works and can already say, "With the mind I obey the Law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."[124] On the fourth day he produces and distinguishes in that firmament of learning various spiritual knowledges. He sees the unchangeable truth that shines in the soul like the sun, and he sees how the soul becomes a partaker in this truth and confers order and beauty on the body, just as the moon illu-

123. Cf. Matt 24.36.

124. Rom 7.25.

mines the night. He sees how the spiritual knowledges sparkle and shine in the obscurity of this life, like all the stars in the night. Made stronger by his awareness of these things, he begins on the fifth day to take part in the actions of this very turbulent world, as in the waters of the sea, in order to benefit the society of his brothers. Thus he begins to produce from these bodily actions pertaining to the sea, that is, to this life, the reptiles with living souls, that is, works that profit living souls, and the great sea animals, that is, mighty deeds that break and make light of the waves of the world, and the birds of heaven, that is, words preaching the things of heaven. On the sixth day let him bring forth from the earth the living soul. That is, from the stability of his mind where he has spiritual fruits, that is, good thoughts, let him rule over all motions of his mind, that there may be in him the living soul, that is, one obedient to reason and justice, not to rashness and sin. Thus let man be made to the image and likeness of God, male and female, that is, intellect and action. From their union let spiritual offspring fill the earth, that is, let him hold the flesh in subjection, as well as the other things we mentioned above concerning human perfection. In these what I may call days, evening marks the completion of the individual works, and morning the beginning of the next ones. After the very good works of these six days let man hope for perpetual rest and understand the meaning of the words "God rested on the seventh day from all his works."[125] For he who bids us to work produces these good works in us. We are right to say that he rests because he will give us rest after all these works. Just as it is correct to say that the father of a family builds a house, though he does not do so by his own labor, but by that of the servants to whom he gives orders, so it is also correct to say that he rests from his works when, after the house is finished, he allows those to whom he gave the orders to relax and enjoy pleasant leisure.

125. Gen 2.2.

BOOK TWO

He continues the exposition of Genesis from verse four of chapter two, "This is the book of the creation of heaven and earth," and so on, up to the verse in which Adam and Eve are thrown out of paradise. At the end he compares the teachings of the Church with the errors of the Manichees.

CHAPTER 1

The Recitation of Chapters Two and Three of Genesis

AFTER THE enumeration and exposition of the seven days, there is inserted a sort of conclusion, and the entire previous account is called the book of the creation of heaven and earth, although it is a small part of the book. It deserved to be called this because a brief image of the whole world from the beginning to the end is prefigured in these seven days.[1] Then it begins to report about man with greater care.[2] This whole narrative unfolds, not clearly, but in figures so that it might exercise the minds of those seeking the truth and call them from carnal labors to spiritual labor.[3]

1. Hence, the many *Hexaemera* written in the patristic and medieval periods; cf. *DTC* 6.2325–54. In fact, Augustine has just shown us in the last chapters of Book One how the six days prefigure the history of the world and the seventh our eternal rest in God. In speaking of Augustine's use of the beginning chapters of Genesis in the *Confessions,* O'Connell says, "We are reminded that the story of creation was, for the ancient *Hexaemeral* interpreters, a privileged locus for explaining the Christian 'theory of man'" (*Odyssey,* 20–21).

2. Modern exegetes distinguish two accounts of creation: the Priestly account that begins with Gen 1.1 and runs through Gen 2.4a and the Yahwist account beginning with Gen 2.4b and running through the Fall. Augustine sees the first three chapters as a seamless whole—a view that raises many problems for a literal interpretation of the text.

3. Unlike the first book, the narrative here as a whole 'unfolds not clearly,

This is its content. "This is the book of the creation of heaven and earth, when there was made the day on which God made heaven and earth, and all the green things of the field, before they were on earth, and every food of the field before it sprang up. For God had not yet made it rain upon the earth, and there was no man to work on it. But a spring came up from the earth and watered the whole face of the earth. And then God formed man from the mud of the earth and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Then God planted a paradise in Eden to the east, and he placed in it the man whom he had formed. God also brought forth from the earth every tree beautiful to see and good to eat, and he planted the tree of life in the middle of paradise and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. A river went forth from Eden and watered paradise. From there it divided into four parts. The name of one part is Phison; this is the one that encircles the whole land of Evilath, where there is gold. The gold of that land is the best, and diamonds and emeralds are found in that land. The name of the second river is Geon; it encircles the whole land of Ethiopia. The third river is the Tigris; this is the one that flows toward the Assyrians. The fourth river is called the Euphrates. The Lord God took the man whom he had made and set him in paradise to work in it and to guard it. The Lord commanded Adam, saying, 'From every tree which is in paradise, you shall eat for food, but as for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat from it. For on the day that you eat from it, you will die the death.' The Lord God said, 'It is not good that man is alone; let us make him a helper like to him.' Whatever God formed from every kind of cattle and from every kind of beast of the field and from every kind of bird that flies below the heaven, he brought them to Adam to see what he would call them, and what Adam called each living soul, this is its name. After this Adam called the names of all the cattle and of all the birds of the heaven and of all the

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but in figures' (*non aperte, sed figurate*). Such figurative language has the dual purpose of exercising the minds of those seeking truth and of drawing them to spiritual labor.

beasts of the field, and according to what Adam called them, this is their name to this day. But for Adam himself there still was not a helper like to himself. God sent a sleep upon Adam and he fell asleep, and God took one of his ribs and filled its place with flesh, and God formed the rib that he took from Adam into woman. He brought her to Adam to see what he would call her. And Adam said, 'Now this is bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh; she will be called woman, because she was taken from her man, and she will be a helper to me.' For this reason a man will leave father and mother and he will cling to his wife, and they will be two in one flesh. And they were both naked, Adam and his woman, and they were not embarrassed.

2. "The serpent was the wisest of all the beasts that were upon the earth that God had created. The serpent said to the woman, 'Why did God say that you should not eat from every tree which is in paradise?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We shall eat from every tree which is in paradise; however, from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of paradise, God said that we should not eat and that we should not even touch it lest we die.' The serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die the death; for God knew that on the day that you eat from it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil.' The woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was good for the eyes for seeing and knowing, and she took fruit from that tree and ate and gave it to her man, and Adam took and ate. Their eyes were opened, and then they knew that they were naked, and they took fig leaves and made aprons for themselves. When they heard the voice of the Lord as he walked in paradise toward evening, Adam and his woman hid themselves from the face of the Lord God near the tree that was in the middle of paradise. The Lord God called Adam and said to him, 'Adam, where are you?' He said, 'I heard your voice, Lord, in paradise, and I was afraid and hid myself, because I am naked.' And the Lord God said, 'Who told you that you were naked, unless because you have eaten from that tree about which I told you that from it alone you should not eat?' Adam said,

'The woman you gave me gave it to me to eat and I ate.' God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent enticed me and I ate.' And the Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, you will be cursed by every animal and every kind of beast. You will creep upon your chest and belly, and you will eat the earth all the days of your life. I will place enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. She will watch for your head, and you will watch for her heel.' To the woman he said, 'I will greatly multiply your sorrows and sighs, and you will bear your children in pain, and you will turn to your man, and he will rule over you.' Then God said to Adam, 'Because you listened to the voice of your woman and ate from the tree about which I commanded you that from it alone you should not eat, the earth will be cursed for you in all your work, and you shall eat from it in your sadness and groaning all the days of your life. It will bring forth thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the food of your field. In the sweat of your brow you will eat your bread until you return to the earth from which you were taken, because you are earth and you will return to the earth.' Then Adam gave to his wife the name "Life" because she is the mother of all the living. The Lord God made for Adam and his woman garments of skin and clothed them. He said, 'See, Adam has become as one of us with respect to the knowledge of discerning good and evil.' Then lest Adam stretch forth his hand to the tree of life and take for himself from it and eat and live forever, the Lord God dismissed him from the paradise of pleasure to work the earth from which he had been taken. Cast out from paradise, he lingered opposite the paradise of pleasure. God set the Cherubim and that flaming sword that turns to guard the path of the tree of life."[4]

4. Gen 2.4–3.24.

CHAPTER 2

Genesis Cannot Always Be Understood Literally

3. If the Manichees preferred to search out the secrets of these words, without finding fault and making accusations, but investigating with reverence, they would, of course, not be Manichees, but it would be given to those who ask, and those who seek would find, and it would be opened to those who knock.[5] For those who seek with pious diligence raise more questions on this discourse than those impious wretches, but with this difference: the former seek in order to find; the latter work only at not finding what they seek. Hence, this whole discourse must first be discussed according to history, then according to prophecy. According to history events are narrated; according to prophecy future things are foretold.[6] Of course, if anyone wanted to take everything that was said according to the letter, that is, to understand it exactly as the letter sounds, and could avoid blasphemies and explain everything in harmony with the Catholic faith, we should not only bear him no hostility, but regard him as a leading and highly praiseworthy interpreter.[7] But if there is no way in which we can understand what has been written in a manner that is pious and worthy of God without believing that these things have been set before us in figures and in enigmas, we have the apostolic authority by which so many enigmas from the books of the Old Testament are solved.[8] So let us hold on to

5. Cf. Matt 7.7. Augustine immediately warns that the text contains mysteries that have to be investigated with pious diligence rather than complaint.

6. Augustine proposes to deal with the whole, first as history and then as prophecy. History states what has been done; prophecy foretells the future. Both history and prophecy can be taken either literally or figuratively, i.e., the 'events' (*res gestae*) and prophecies can be understood either just as the letter sounds or as figurative of something else.

7. Augustine's aim is to interpret the Genesis account literally, but, as he said of this passage in DGnL 8.2.5, he did not see how he could interpret everything in a proper sense; cf. Introduction, pp. 26–31.

8. Augustine finds in the New Testament, but especially in Paul, the scriptural authority to interpret the enigmas of the Old Testament as referring to Christ; cf. 1 Cor 2.6–7, 3.1–2, 10.4; 2 Cor 3.6; Rom 15.4; Gal 4.24; Heb 5.12–14. An enigma is a riddle or puzzle; the author hints at his meaning

the manner of exposition that we have taken up, with the help of him who urges us to ask, to seek and to knock,[9] in order to explain all those figures of things according to the Catholic faith, both those which pertain to history and those which pertain to prophecy. We do this without prejudice to a better and more careful treatment, whether God should deign to make it known through us or through others.

CHAPTER 3

What the Green of the Field Signifies: Verse Five, Chapter Two

4. Therefore, "there was made the day on which God made heaven and earth, and all the green of the field before it was upon the earth and every food of the field."[10] Previously Scripture spoke of seven days; now it says there is one day on which God made heaven and earth and all the green of the field and every food. We are right to understand that this day signifies all of time. For God made all of time along with all temporal creatures, and heaven and earth signify these visible creatures. We ought to be stirred to inquiry by the fact that, after having mentioned the day that was made and heaven and earth, it also adds, "the green of the field and all food." For, when it said, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth,"[11] it did not say that he made all the green of the field and food. For we clearly read that he made all the green and food of the field on the third day.[12] The words "In the beginning God made heaven and earth" do not belong to any one of those seven days. For up to that point it

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rather than states it clearly. Cf. Appendix 2, "Greek Exegetical Terminology," 120–121, in R. M. Grant, *The Letter and the Spirit* (London: S.P.C.K., 1957), for the meaning of "enigma."

9. Cf. Matt 7.7.

10. Augustine follows the African text of the *Vetus Latina* for Gen 2.4. Cf. BA 48.668–670, for the note by Agaësse and Solignac on the text Augustine has here as opposed to that of DGnL. Augustine is immediately confronted with the one day of the Yahwist account as opposed to the seven days of the Priestly account.

11. Gen 1.1.

12. Cf. Gen 1.11–13.

called by the name of heaven and earth the matter from which all things were made, or at least it first set forth by the name of heaven and earth the whole of creation, when it said, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth." Afterwards, following the order of the days, as was fitting, on account of the prophecy which we mentioned in the first book, it explained the works of God one by one.[13] What then does it mean that, after mentioning heaven and earth, it now adds, "the green of the field and food," while it is silent about so many other things that are in heaven and on earth or even in the sea? It must want us to understand the green of the field as an invisible creature like the soul.[14] For in the Scriptures the world is frequently called a field in a figurative sense. Even the Lord said, "This field is the world,"[15] when he was explaining that parable in which weeds were mixed in with the good seed. Hence, the green of the field means the spiritual and invisible creature on account of the vigor of life, and by the term "food" we surely do well to interpret this also as on account of life.[16]

5. Then the addition, "before they were upon the earth," means: before the soul sinned.[17] For soiled by earthly desires,

13. At the end of the previous book the seven days were taken prophetically as foreshadowing the whole history of the human race. Augustine says here that the division of the creation narrative into days is for the sake of prophecy. Earlier in DGnM 1.23.41 he said that, though no words can express God's creative activity, Genesis 1 presents it as a history of God's works with an eye to the prediction of things to come.

14. It is the apparent contradiction of taking the *res gestae* according to the letter that leads Augustine to interpret the green of the field as signifying the invisible creature and the field as signifying the world. The phrase "before they were on earth" suggests the existence of the soul before sin and embodiment. In what is close to an allegory in the modern sense, Augustine begins to suggest a vision of man as a soul that has fallen into body and time.

15. Matt 13.38.

16. In R 1.10.3 Augustine says, "In the second book my claim that the word 'food' (*pabulum*) can signify life seems inappropriate, since the better manuscripts do not have food, but 'hay' (*foenum*)."

17. O'Connell, *Early Theory,* 158, remarks, "Noteworthy here is the fact that the original sin is regularly imputed not to 'man' but to 'soul.' Augustine seems bent on distinguishing the ideal state 'before the soul sinned' (*antequam anima peccaret*) and a post-lapsary state where the term 'man' (*homo*) appears for the first time to become an entirely appropriate designation. Only after

it is correctly said to have come to be upon the earth or to be upon the earth. Therefore, Scripture added, "For God had not yet made it rain upon the earth."[18]

CHAPTER 4

The Meaning of Verse Five: Why It Had Not Yet Rained upon the Earth

Now God also makes the green of the field, but by raining upon the earth; that is, he makes souls become green again by his word.[19] But he waters them from the clouds, that is, from the writings of the prophets and apostles. They are correctly called clouds, because these words which sound and pass away after they strike the air become like clouds when there is added the obscurity of allegories like a fog that has been drawn over them.[20] When they are pressed by study, the rain of truth, so to speak, is poured out on those who understand well. But it was not already this way before the soul sinned, that is, before the green of the field was upon the earth. "For God had not yet made it rain upon the earth, and there was no man to work on it."[21] For the rain from the clouds, which we have already mentioned, is necessary for man who is laboring on the earth. After sin man began to

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the Fall, he observes, was there 'man laboring upon the earth' (*homo laborans in terra,* 2.5)."

18. Gen 2.5.

19. Augustine probably intends that we should understand the Word of God. The allegory continues with the clouds, the writings of the prophets and apostles and the flesh of Christ; these human words are obscure—compared with the Word, at whose fountain the soul had once drunk. Now humans need to squeeze drops of truth out of the clouds. Before sin the invisible creature was watered interiorly by a spring that spoke to its intellect with no need to receive words from the outside.

20. For the meaning of the term "allegory," cf. Grant, *Letter and Spirit,* 121–123, where he traces its meaning in Christian and non-Christian sources. St. Paul uses the term in Gal 4.24; Quintilian defines it as a continuous metaphor in *Institutio* 8.6.14 and 9.2.46. Here allegories make the writings of the prophets and apostles cloudy or obscure so that they demand careful study.

21. Gen 2.5.

labor on the earth and to have need of those clouds. But before sin God had made the green of the field and food, and we said that this expression signified the invisible creature. God watered it by an interior spring, speaking to its intellect, so that it did not receive words from the outside, as rain from the aforementioned clouds. Rather it was satisfied from its own spring, that is, by the truth flowing from its interior.

CHAPTER 5

The Spring Watering the Earth Taken Allegorically, and What Pride Is

6. "For a spring came up," it says, "from the earth and watered the whole face of the earth."[22] [It came up] from that earth, of which Scripture said, "You are my hope, my portion in the land of the living."[23] When the soul was being watered by such a spring, it had not yet thrust forth its inmost parts through pride. For "the beginning of man's pride is to turn away from God."[24] And as it swelled out into external things through pride, the soul ceased to be watered by the inner spring. Hence, it is rightly mocked by the words of the prophet and told, "Why is earth and ashes proud? Because in its life it has thrust forth its inmost parts."[25] For what is it to be proud but to have abandoned the secret place of con-

22. Gen 2.6. 23. Ps 141.6.

24. Sir 10.14.

25. Sir 10.9,10. Augustine is fond of the Scriptural description of the proud man "casting forth his innards." He links this "swelling" or "tumor" of pride with the body as a 'swelling' (*tumor*) (cf. DQ 14.24 and DVR 30.56) and with time as a distention of the soul; cf. C 11.29.39. As the soul swells with pride, it no longer receives watering from the inner fountain, but needs human words from the outside.

In R 1.10.3 Augustine says, "Also I seem to have incorrectly called those words prophetic which read, 'Why is earth and ashes proud?' (Sir 10.9), since they are not found in the book of an author whom we are certain should be called a prophet." Though Sirach is not in the strict sense called a prophet, the whole Old Testament is referred to as the Law and the prophets and was, moreover, regarded as prefiguring the New Testament.

science and to want to seem to be externally what one is not?[26] And, therefore, having begun to labor on the earth man had need of rain from the clouds, that is, of instruction from human words, so that he might in this way grow green again from that dryness and again become the green of the field. I wish that it would gladly welcome the rain of truth from these clouds. For on account of it our Lord deigned to assume the cloud of our flesh and poured out most generously the rain of the holy gospel. He promised that, if anyone should drink of his water, he will return to that inner spring so that he does not seek rain externally. For he says, "There will come to be in him a spring of water springing up unto eternal life."[27] This spring, I believe, came up from the earth before sin and watered the whole face of the earth, because it was interior, and it did not desire the help of the clouds. "For God had not yet made it rain upon the earth, and there was no man to work on it."[28] For when it said, "For God had not yet made it rain upon the earth," it also added the reason why he had not made it rain: because "there was no man to work on it." Man then began to work on the earth when after sin he was dismissed from the happy life which he enjoyed in paradise. For Scripture said, "And the Lord God dismissed him from the paradise of pleasure to work the earth from which he had been taken,"[29] and we shall investigate this in its proper place.[30] I mention it now only in order that we might understand that man as he labors on the earth, that is, as he has become dried up by his sins, has need of divine teaching from human words, like rain from the clouds. However, such knowledge will be destroyed.[31] For, while seeking our food, we see now in an enigma, as in a cloud, but then we will see face to face,[32] when the whole face of our earth

26. The definition of pride suggests the soul's fall from the spiritual reality that is its real being into bodily and temporal distention which it is not. By its swelling in space and time it leaves its own self and seems to be what it is not.

27. John 4.14.
28. Gen 2.5.
29. Gen 3.23.
30. Cf. below, ch. 22.
31. Cf. 1 Cor 13.8.
32. Cf. 1 Cor 13.12.

will be watered by the interior spring of water springing up. For, if we want to understand the words, "But a spring came up from the earth and watered the whole face of the earth,"[33] as referring to some spring of this visible water, it is not likely that we find throughout the whole world so many springs of streams or rivers continuing to flow, while only that one has dried up which watered the whole face of the earth.[34]

CHAPTER 6

The Terms Signifying Invisible Things

7. Hence, these few words present to us the whole of creation before the soul's sin. For the expression "heaven and earth" signifies the whole visible creation, and the expression "day" all of time, while the expression "green things and food of the field" signifies the invisible creation, and the expression "the spring coming up and watering the whole face of the earth" signifies the flood of truth satisfying the soul before sin. This day, which we said signifies the whole of time, teaches us that not only the visible, but also the invisible creation can perceive time. This is made clear to us with regard to the soul. We have proof that it is subject to change in time from the great variety of its loves and from the fall by which it became wretched and from the restoration by which it returns again to happiness. Hence, it did not merely say, "When there was made the day on which God made heaven and earth," which terms indicate the visible creation, but it also added, "the green of the field and food."[35] This latter expression, we said, signifies the invisible creation, such as the soul, because of its vigor and life. Thus it said, "When there was made the day on which God made heaven and earth, and all the green and the food of the field," so that we might

33. Gen 2.6.

34. The improbability of the spring that watered all the earth drying up leads Augustine to understand that spring as other than this visible water.

35. Gen 2.4–5.

understand that not only the visible, but also the invisible creature pertains to time on account of its mutability. For only God, who is before time, is immutable.[36]

CHAPTER 7

The Mystery Contained in the Mud

8. After mentioning all creation both visible and invisible and the universal gift of the divine spring with regard to the invisible creature, let us see what it says of man in particular, for this especially pertains to us. First of all, the fact that God formed man from the mud of the earth[37] usually raises a question about the sort of mud it was or the kind of material the term "mud" signifies. Those enemies of the Old Books, looking at everything in a carnal manner and, therefore, always being in error, bitingly find fault with this point as well, namely, that God formed man from the mud of the earth.[38] For they say, "Why did God make man from mud? Did he lack a better and heavenly material from which he could make man, that he formed him fragile and mortal from this earthly corruption?" First of all, they do not understand how many meanings either earth or water have in the Scriptures; for mud is a mixture of earth and water. Also we say that the human body began to waste away and to be fragile and mortal after sin. For they abhor in our body only the mortality which we merited as punishment. But even if God made man from the mud of this earth, still what is there that is strange or difficult for God in making man's body such that it would not be subject to corruption if, in obedience to God's commandment, he had not willed to sin? For we say that the beauty of heaven was made from nothing or from formless

36. Augustine uses the text to argue that Genesis is teaching that the soul is mutable and, therefore, is not divine. The Manichees held that the soul was literally a particle of God; cf. below 2.8.11.

37. Cf. Gen. 2.7.

38. To look at things in a carnal manner inevitably and consistently leads to error.

matter, because we believe that the maker is almighty. Why is it strange that the Almighty Maker could make the body that was made from some sort of mud of the earth so that before sin it afflicted man with no trouble or need and wasted away from no corruption?[39]

9. [The Manichees] have no grounds for their complaint about the material from which God made the body of man, if indeed Scripture is here speaking of the formation of the body. I have heard that some of ours understand it in this way.[40] They say that, after the words "God formed man from the mud of the earth" it did not add "To his image and likeness" precisely because Scripture was here speaking of the formation of the body. Then the words "God made man to the image and likeness of God" signified the interior man.[41] But if we understand man in this passage as made from body and soul, this discourse does not disclose a beginning of some new work, but the more careful treatment of what was briefly indicated earlier. If, then, as I said, we understand man in this place as made from body and soul, that mixture bears the name of mud with good reason. For, as water gathers, glues, and holds earth together when by its mixture it makes

39. Augustine seems to imply that man had a body before sin, although not a body subject to corruption and death.

40. The Maurist editors suggest that the Christian authors who interpret the text as referring to the creation of the body of man are Tertullian, *De resurrectione carnis* 5, and Hilary, *In Psalmum* 108. However, Augustine is referring to Catholic exegetes who held that Gen 1.26 referred to the previous creation of the soul of man and that Gen 2.7 referred to the subsequent creation of the human body. This doctrine of the soul's preexisting its embodiment is surely Origen's rather than Tertullian's or Hilary's. Cf. DGnL 6.7.12 where Augustine rejects such a position because it would imply that creation had not been completed in the six days and because it would necessitate a figurative interpretation of the sexes in Gen 1.27. As the BA edition of DGnL notes, it was Origen (*In Genesim homiliae* 1.15, tr. R. Heine, FOTC 71 [1982], 68) who interpreted sexual differentiation in Gen 1.27 allegorically—as Augustine also does in DGnM 1.19.30; cf. BA 48.267, nt. 29; the note by Agaësse and Solignac BA 48.625–627; and also FOTC 71.68.

41. Cf. Gen 1.26–27. Augustine runs together part of both verses. Origen had explicitly linked the image and likeness to the interior man; cf. *In Genesim homiliae* 1.13 (Heine, FOTC 71.63–67). Augustine could have learned this view from Ambrose; cf. G. A. McCool, "The Ambrosian Origin," 66–68.

mud, so the soul by vivifying the matter of the body forms it into a harmonious unity and does not allow it to fall into dissolution.

CHAPTER 8

The Breathing Forth of the Spirit, and What Is Meant in the Scriptures by the Spirit of Man

10. Scripture says, "And he breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living soul."[42] If up to this point there was only the body, we should understand that the soul was at this point joined to the body. Perhaps the soul had been already made, but was still as if in the mouth of God, that is, in his truth and wisdom.[43] But it did not depart from there as if separated by places, when it was breathed forth. For God is not contained by place, but is present everywhere.[44] Or perhaps the soul was made when God breathed the breath of life into the mud he had formed so that the breathing forth signifies God's activity by which he made the

42. Gen 2.7.

43. Augustine's suggestion that the soul of man was already made, but remained in God's truth and wisdom is puzzling. Perhaps he is thinking of his hypothesis that the soul made by God already existed somehow in God and was subsequently sent into the body. Cf. DBV 1.1 and DLA 3.20.57; in the latter text he says, "But if souls already existing in some secret place of God are sent. . . ."

The idea that the soul was made and yet remained in the wisdom of God seems to echo Origen's hypothesis in *Peri Archōn* 1.4.4. To avoid the idea of God's inactivity prior to creation, Origen suggested that God was active from eternity; he was then forced to admit a creature coeternal with God. In *Origène, Traité des Principes* 2. Livres 1–2, SC 253 (1978) 80, H. Crouzel and M. Simonetti say, "La création co-éternelle à Dieu c'est le Monde Intelligible, contenant les plans de la création et les germes des êtres à venir, et s'identifiant avec le Fils en tant qu'il est Sagesse." Augustine much later hears of this position from Orosius who informed him that both the Aviti and Basil held "that the things God made remained forever in his wisdom, before they became visible." Augustine answers in CO 8.9 that their position lacks sobriety and argues that, if they are made, they have not remained in God's wisdom.

44. Even though Augustine is writing for the "little ones" who have difficulty in understanding spiritual realities, he cannot resist touching upon the theme of God's omnipresence.

soul in man by the spirit of his power.[45] If the man who had been made was already body and soul, sensation was added to the soul by that breath, when man was made a living soul—not that this breath was turned into the living soul, but it acted upon the living soul. We should not yet think of the man who was made into a living soul as spiritual, but as still animal. For he was made spiritual, when he was established in paradise, that is, in the happy life, and received the commandment of perfection so that he might then be made perfect by the word of God.[46] Thus, after he sinned by withdrawing from God's commandment and was dismissed from paradise, he remained in such a state that he was animal.[47] And so all of us who were born from him after sin first bear the animal man until we attain the spiritual Adam, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ, who committed no sin.[48] Then, recreated and brought to life by him, we will be restored to paradise, where the thief merited to be with him on that very day on which he ended this life.[49] For the Apostle speaks this way: "But what is spiritual is not first, but what is animal, as it has

45. The "spirit of his power" may be a reference to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Son, who is the wisdom and power of God. Here Augustine seems to entertain the hypothesis that Adam's soul was created at the point of embodiment; cf. DLA 3.20.56.

46. Augustine uses the Pauline terms "animal man" and "spiritual man" (cf. 1 Cor 2, 3) and claims that Adam was created as "animal" and became "spiritual" only when he was placed in paradise and was made perfect by the word of God.

47. In R 1.10.3 Augustine says, "I did not understand the words of the Apostle as he wanted them to be interpreted, where, using a proof from Genesis, he says, 'The first man Adam was created as a living soul' (1 Cor 15.45). I was explaining the text, 'God breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul.' The Apostle used that text to prove that the body of man was animate, while I thought that the text should show that man, not merely man's body, was first made animal." That is, Augustine later did not want to say that God created man as what Paul refers to as "animal man" rather than "spiritual man." To say that man was created as "animal" would imply that man was created in a state such as that he had after the Fall.

48. Cf. 1 Pet 2.22.

49. Cf. Luke 23.43. Augustine emphasizes our restoration to the paradise from which we have been dismissed.

been written: The first Adam was made into a living soul; the last Adam into a lifegiving spirit."[50]

11. Hence, we ought to understand this passage so that we do not take the words "He breathed into him the breath of life, and he became a living soul"[51] to mean that a part, as it were, of the nature of God was turned into the soul of man. Thus we are not forced to say that the nature of God is mutable. It is especially in this error that the truth weighs down upon these Manichees. For as pride is the mother of all the heretics, they dared to say that the soul is the nature of God. And thus they are under pressure from us when we say to them: Then the nature of God errs and is unhappy and is corrupted by the stain of vices and sins, or is, as you say, soiled by the filth of the opposing nature, and other such things that it is wicked to believe about the nature of God. For in another passage Scripture clearly says that the soul was made by Almighty God and that it is, therefore, not a part of God or the nature of God. There the prophet says, "He who formed the spirit for all men made all things,"[52] and in another place it says, "He who formed the spirit of man is in him."[53] These testimonies clearly prove that the spirit of man was made. In Scripture the rational part of man's soul by which he differs from the beasts and rules over them by the law of nature is called the spirit of man.[54] On this the Apostle says, "No one knows what pertains to man except the spirit of man which is within him."[55] If these testimonies were not clear proof that the soul of man was made, there would be no lack of those who would say that the spirit of man was not made, and who would think that it is the nature of God and

50. 1 Cor 15.44–46. 51. Gen 2.7.

52. Ps 32.15. Though the Maurists treat the whole line as a quotation, it is more properly a paraphrasing of the idea.

53. Zech 12.1.

54. Augustine points out that "spirit" is the scriptural term for the rational part of the human soul. The term is indeed scriptural, but the concept of a spiritual reality as something that is whole everywhere is derived, not from Scripture, but from Platonic or Neoplatonic sources; cf. Masai, "Conversions," 16–24.

55. 1 Cor 2.11.

say that part of God was changed into it, when there took place that breathing forth by God. Healthy doctrine likewise rejects this, because the spirit of man itself is at times in error and at times thinks wisely; thus it proclaims that it is mutable, and it is in no way permissible to believe this of the nature of God.[56] But there cannot be a greater sign of pride than that the human soul says that it is what God is, while it still groans under such great burdens of vice and unhappiness.

CHAPTER 9

The Meaning of the Paradise of Delights

12. Now let us look at man's happiness which is signified by the name of paradise. Men usually find delightful rest in meadows, and the light rises for our corporeal senses from the east and then climbs the heaven which is a body higher and more excellent than our body. Hence, these words also express figuratively the spiritual delights that the happy life contains, and the garden is planted in the east. We should understand that our spiritual joys are signified by every tree beautiful to the gaze of the intelligence and good for the food which is not corrupted and by which the happy souls are fed. For the Lord also says, "Work for the food which is not corrupted."[57] Such is every idea which is the food of the soul.[58] He set the light of wisdom to the east in Eden, that is, in

56. Cf. C 7.1.1 where Augustine speaks of his seeing that the immutable is better than the mutable. His seeing this truth—even, it seems, before his contact with the books of the Platonists—is what led him to break definitively with the Manichees. For, if God were mutable, then Augustine could conceive of something better than God.

57. John 6.27.

58. "Idea" refers to a divine idea, one of the exemplars in the mind of God in accord with which he creates. Augustine is clear that human knowing somehow depends upon contact with the 'divine ideas' (*rationes divinae*) and that they provide the standard by which the spiritual man judges all things; cf. DLA 2.12.34 and 3.5.13. The nature of the soul's contact with these ideas is less clear. Some passages seem to say that at least some souls at times see the ideas in God's mind; others seem able to be interpreted in a milder fashion; cf. the classic text on the divine ideas, DD83 46.

immortal and intelligible delights. For this word is said to signify delights, or pleasure, or a feast if it is translated from Hebrew to Latin.[59] It is set down in this way without translation so that it seems to signify a particular place and to make the expression more figurative. We take every tree that the earth produced as every spiritual joy; for such joys rise above the earth and are not caught and overwhelmed by the tangles of earthly desires. The tree of life planted in the middle of paradise signifies the wisdom by which the soul should understand that it is ordered in a certain middle range of things. Thus, though it has all corporeal nature subject to itself, it still understands that the nature of God is above it and that it should not turn either to the right by claiming for itself what it is not, or to the left by contemning through negligence what it is.[60] This is the tree of life planted in the middle of paradise. But the tree of the knowledge of good and evil likewise signifies the mid-rank of the soul and its ordered integrity. For the tree is planted in the middle of paradise, and it is called the tree of discernment of good and evil, because the soul ought to stretch itself out toward those things which are before, that is, to God and to forget those things which are behind,[61] that is, corporeal pleasures. But if the soul should abandon God and turn to itself and will to enjoy its own power as if without God, it swells up with pride, which is the beginning of every sin. When punishment has followed upon this sin, it will learn by experience the difference between the good which it abandoned and the evil into which it has fallen. This is what it will be for it to have tasted the fruit of the tree of the discernment of good and evil. Hence, it received the

59. In *Quaestiones in Genesim* 1.7 Philo says that the term *Eden* is translated as 'delights and joy.'

60. In the Augustinian world there are three levels: God, soul, and body. God is utterly unchangeable; souls are changeable only in time, and bodies are changeable in both time and place. Hence, souls occupy a mid-rank position beneath God and above bodies. The soul can turn away from God and turn toward itself and bodies, thus destroying the order in which it should stand. On the soul's mid-rank position in the order of reality; cf. Appendix 4, "La situation médiane de l'âme," in Roy, *L'intelligence,* 476–478, and O'Connell, *Early Theory,* 155–166.

61. Cf. Phil 3.13.

commandment to eat from every tree that is in paradise, but not to eat from the tree in which there is the discernment of good and evil. That is, it was not to enjoy it, because by eating from it it would violate and corrupt the ordered integrity of its nature.

CHAPTER 10

What the Four Rivers Mean

13. The river that came forth from Eden, that is, from delights, pleasure, and feasts, is referred to by the prophet in the Psalms, when he says, "You will give them to drink from the torrent of your pleasure."[62] For *Eden* is called "pleasure" in Latin. The river divides into four parts and signifies the four virtues: prudence, fortitude, temperance and justice.[63] The Phison is now called the Ganges, the Geon the Nile, as can be seen in the Prophet Jeremiah as well.[64] In the same way the Tiber is the river that was previously called the Albula,[65] while the Tigris and the Euphrates have the same names even now. These names signify the spiritual virtues, as I have said. The translation of their names shows this as well, if one considers the Hebrew or Syrian language.[66] In this way, though Jerusalem is a visible and earthly place, it nonetheless spiritually signifies the city of peace, and though Sion is a mountain on earth, it signifies contemplation, and this name is often transferred in the allegories of the Scriptures to understanding spiritual things.[67] Thus the one who went

62. Ps 35.9.

63. The interpretation of the four rivers as signifying the cardinal virtues also goes back to Philo (*Quaestiones in Genesim* 1.12). The Phison is the sign of prudence; the Geon of sobriety; the Tigris of fortitude, and the Euphrates of justice.

64. Jer 2.18 (LXX) links the Geon with Egypt.

65. Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.332 and Ovid, *Fasti* 4.68.

66. Here Augustine's point is that the rivers are figurative of spiritual realities despite the fact that two of the rivers still bear the same name and the other two can perhaps be identified with the Ganges and the Nile.

67. In *De nominibus hebraicis* (PL 23.822, 830, 852, et aliis), Jerome gives

down from Jerusalem to Jericho, as the Lord says, and was wounded on the way and left injured and half-dead by the thieves clearly demands that those places of the earth be understood spiritually, although in accord with history they are found on earth.[68]

14. Prudence therefore signifies that contemplation of truth foreign to every human mouth, because it is ineffable. If you try to express it, you will be in labor and not give birth. Even the Apostle heard in such contemplation ineffable words that a man is not permitted to speak.[69] This prudence encircles the earth that has gold, diamonds, and emeralds, that is, it has the doctrine of living that shines, as if purified by fire from all earthly filth, just as the brilliance of a diamond is not overcome by night. It has eternal life that is signified by the greenness of the emerald, on account of its vigor that is not dried up. The river that encircles Ethiopia, a land very hot and burning, signifies fortitude, quick and alive with the heat of action. The third river, the Tigris, flows toward the Assyrians and signifies temperance that resists desire that is much opposed to the counsels of prudence. For this reason the Assyrians are generally cast in the role of adversaries in the Scriptures. We are not told in which direction the fourth river flows or which land it encircles. For justice pertains to all the parts of the soul, because it is the order and balance of the soul by which these three are joined to one another in harmony: first, prudence; second, fortitude; third, temperance; and justice consists in this whole union and order.

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as the meaning of *Sion*: 'watchtower,' 'scout,' or 'cliff' (*specula, vel speculator, sive scopulus*), from which the move to contemplation is understandable, though unjustified. Jerome's work was written too late for Augustine to have used it, but that work set out to correct a similar work by Origen, whose work was based on Philo. The works of Philo could well have been available to Augustine.

68. Cf. Luke 10.30. The account of the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of thieves clearly calls for a figurative interpretation despite the fact that the two cities refer to historical places. Cf. EnP 125.15 where Augustine argues that the Samaritan is Christ.

69. Cf. 2 Cor 12.4.

CHAPTER 11

Man's Work in Paradise and Woman Is Made As His Helper

15. Although man was placed in paradise so as to work and guard it,[70] that praiseworthy work was not toilsome. For the work in paradise is quite different from the work on the earth to which he was condemned after the sin. The addition "and to guard it" indicated the sort of work it was. For in the tranquility of the happy life, where there is no death, the only work is to guard what you possess. He also receives the command that we have already dealt with above.[71] This command ends so that it is not addressing one person, for it says, "On the day that you eat, you shall die the death."[72] Hence, Scripture begins to explain how the woman was made. It says that she was made as man's helper so that by spiritual union she might bring forth spiritual offspring, that is, the good works of divine praise, while he rules and she obeys. He is ruled by wisdom, she by the man. For Christ is the head of the man, and the man is the head of the woman.[73] Thus it said, "It is not good that man is alone."[74] For there was still need to bring it about not only that the soul rule over the body, because the body has the position of a servant, but also that virile reason hold subject to itself its animal part, by the help of which it governs the body. The woman was made as an illustration of this, for the order of things makes her subject to man. Thus we can also come to see in one human what we can see more clearly in two humans, that is, in the male and the female. The interior mind, like virile reason, should hold subject the soul's appetite by means of which we control the members of the body, and by just law it should place a limit upon its helper, just as man ought to rule woman and ought

70. Cf. Gen 2.15.
71. Cf. above, 2.9.12.
72. Gen 2.17. The Latin verbs in Augustine's text are in the plural, though at this point in the narrative there is only Adam to whom they can be addressed.
73. Cf. 1 Cor 11.3.
74. Gen 2.18.

not to allow her to rule him. When this happens, the home is perverted and unhappy.[75]

16. Hence, God first showed man how much better he was than the cattle and all irrational animals, and this is signified by the statement that all the animals were brought to him that he might see what he would call them and give them names.[76] This shows that man is better than the animals in virtue of reason, since only reason which judges concerning them is able to distinguish and know them by name. This latter idea is an easy one to grasp, for man quickly understands that he is better than the cattle. The former idea is a difficult one to grasp, namely, that by which he understands that the rational part in him that rules is distinct from the animal part which is ruled.

CHAPTER 12

The Meaning of Adam's Sleep and His Union with Eve

Because he sees these things with a more hidden wisdom, I think this hidden wisdom is signified by the sleep that God sent upon Adam when he made the woman for him.[77] To see this there is no need of these bodily eyes; rather to the extent that anyone withdraws from these visible things into the interior realm of the intelligence (for this is in a sense to fall

75. Augustine's view of the role of women is far from what would satisfy most contemporaries—not to mention contemporary feminists. On this point, as on others, one should realize that his ideas were molded by his society and culture as well as by passages in the Scriptures which seem to subordinate women to men. On the other hand, the life of Monica sketched in C 9.8.17–9.11.28 presents a portrait of a wife and a mother that is unparalleled in antiquity and should surely be weighed in the balance with some of Augustine's clearly objectionable statements. Moreover, his Platonic view of human beings led him to identify the real person with the soul or mind. Hence, differences of bodily sex are theoretically extrinsic to the real person and men and women are equal as souls. Cf. Richard McGowan, "Augustine's Spiritual Equality: The Allegory of Man and Woman with regard to *Imago Dei*," *REAug* 33 (1987) 255–264, for current bibliography on this topic.

76. Cf. Gen 2.19–20.

77. Cf. Gen 2.21–22.

asleep), to that extent he sees it better and more clearly. For this knowledge, by which we understand that what rules within us by reason is distinct from what obeys reason, this knowledge is like the production of the woman from the man's rib, because it is meant to signify their union. Secondly, there is need of perfect wisdom if anyone is correctly to rule this part of himself, and preside over the marriage in himself so that the flesh does not lust against the spirit,[78] but is subject to the spirit, that is, so that carnal desire is not opposed to reason, but rather ceases, by obeying, to be carnal. Because the contemplation of this is more interior and hidden and utterly remote from every sense of the body, it can itself also suitably be understood by the term "sleep." For the man is the head of the woman in perfect order, when Christ, who is the Wisdom of God, is head of the man.[79]

17. He rightly filled the place of the rib with flesh[80] so that this term might convey the affection of love by which each one loves his own soul and is not so insensitive as to contemn it. For each one loves that over which he presides.[81] For flesh is not mentioned in this passage in order to signify carnal desire, but rather in the way in which the prophet says that a heart of stone is taken away from the people and a heart of flesh is given them.[82] The Apostle too, speaks in this way, "Not on tablets of stone, but on the tablets of flesh in hearts."[83] For a proper expression is one thing, and a figurative expression, such as the one we are now considering, is quite another. Hence, although in terms of history a visible woman was first made by the Lord God from the body of her husband, this was certainly not done in this way without reason, but to in-

78. Cf. Gal 5.17.
79. Cf. 1 Cor 11.3.
80. Cf. Gen 2.21.
81. Cf. Eph 5.29. While St. Paul says that no one hates his own flesh, Augustine avoids the word "flesh" and substitutes "soul." In his early theory of man, Augustine's attitude toward the body was quite negative. He refers to the body as a "most heavy chain" (DME 1.22.40) and seems fond of the Porphyrian dictum, "One should flee from every body" (SC .14.24). So too, he insists that we are souls and that we should hate all carnal relationships (DVR 46.88).
82. Cf. Ezek 11.19.
83. 2 Cor 3.3.

timate some secret.[84] For was there a lack of mud from which the woman might be formed? Or, if the Lord wished, could he not have removed the rib from man while he was awake and without pain? Whether these things were said figuratively or were also done figuratively, they were not said or done this way without a purpose, but are clearly mysteries and sacraments, whether they are to be interpreted and understood in this manner as our weak intelligence is trying [to interpret them] or in some other better way which is still in accord with sound faith.

CHAPTER 13

The Spiritual Marriage in Man

18. As the master, the man gave a name to his woman, his inferior, and said, "Now this is bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh."[85] "Bone from my bones" perhaps on account of fortitude. "Flesh from my flesh" on account of temperance. For these two virtues, we are taught, pertain to the lower part of the mind that the prudence of reason rules.[86] It said, "She will be called woman because she was taken from her man."[87] This derivation and interpretation of the name is not apparent in the Latin language. For we do not find any similarity between the word, 'woman' (*mulier*), and the word, 'man' (*vir*). But in the Hebrew language the expression is said to sound just as if one said: "She is called a *virago* because she was taken from her *vir.*" For *virago* or rather *virgo* has some similarity with the word, *vir,* while *mulier* does not, but this is caused by the difference of languages.[88]

84. Augustine is clear that in the historical sense a visible Eve was made from Adam's body while he slept. Yet what was done is figurative of something else.

85. Gen 2.23.

86. This doctrine is found in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* 1102a28–1102b34, though Augustine probably learned it from a Latin author, such as Cicero; cf. *De officiis* 1.102–103.

87. Gen 2.23.

88. In Hebrew the terms, 'man' and 'woman,' are *'ish* and *'ishah.* There is

19. Scripture said, "A man will leave father and mother and he will cling to his wife, and they will be two in one flesh."[89] I find no way that this pertains to history except insofar as this is what generally happens in the human race.[90] Rather this is all prophecy, and the Apostle reminds us of this when he says, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and he will cling to his wife, and they will be two in one flesh. This is a great mystery; I mean in Christ and in the Church."[91] If the Manichees who deceive many by means of the Letters of the Apostle did not read this blindly, they would understand how to interpret the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and they would not dare to bring charges with such sacrilegious words against what they do not understand. The fact that Adam and his wife were naked and were not embarrassed[92] signifies simplicity and chastity of soul. For the Apostle speaks this way: "I have joined you to one husband to present to Christ a chaste virgin; but I fear lest, as the serpent deceived Eve by his cleverness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity and chastity which is in Christ."[93]

CHAPTER 14

The Serpent Is the Devil, and Eve Is Affection

20. The serpent signifies the devil who was certainly not simple. His cleverness is indicated by the fact that he is said to be wiser than all the beasts.[94] The serpent was not said to be in paradise, though the serpent was among the beasts that God made. For paradise signifies the happy life, as I said

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no such similarity between the Latin, *vir* and *mulier*. *Virago* means 'man-like woman' or 'female warrior,' and *virgo* means 'maiden.' Both are derived from *vir*. The Vulgate has *virago*.

89. Gen 2.24.

90. Since leaving one's parents cannot be taken according to history in Adam's case, it either refers to what generally happens in the human race or is a mystery that signifies the union of Christ and the Church.

91. Eph 5.31–32.

92. Cf. Gen 2.25.

93. 2 Cor 11.2–3.

94. Cf. Gen 3.1.

above,[95] and the serpent was not present there, because he was already the devil and had fallen from his happiness because "he did not stand in the truth."[96] We should not be surprised that he was able to speak with the woman although she was in paradise and he was not. For perhaps she was not in paradise according to place, but rather according to the disposition of happiness. Or, even if there is such a place which is called paradise in which Adam and Eve dwelled corporeally, do we have also to understand the devil's approach as corporeal?[97] Of course not! [His approach was] rather spiritual, as the Apostle says, "According to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit who now is at work in the children of disbelief."[98] Does he appear visibly or approach by corporeal places those in whom he is at work? Of course not. Rather he suggests in marvelous ways whatever he can by thoughts. They resist these suggestions who say with truth what the Apostle also says, "For we are not ignorant of his wiles."[99] How did he approach Judas when he persuaded him to betray the Lord? Was it by places, or did he appear to him through bodily eyes? Rather he entered, as it said, into his heart.[100] But man repels him if he guards paradise. For God placed man in paradise to work it and to guard it. Thus the Song of Songs called the Church "An enclosed garden, a

95. Cf. above, 2.9.12.

96. John 8.44.

97. Augustine raises the possibility of interpreting paradise as an exclusively spiritual or incorporeal reality, i.e., not as a bodily place, but as the happy life. Indeed this passage suggests a decided preference on Augustine's part for such an exclusively spiritual interpretation. Cf. the note on the diverse interpretations of paradise by Agaësse and Solignac in BA 49.497–499. In DGnL 8.1.1 Augustine acknowledges three interpretations of paradise: corporeal, spiritual, and both. At the time of DGnL, Augustine favors interpreting it in both senses, at times corporeally, at times spiritually. In retrospect, he says that at the time he wrote DGnM he could not find ways to take everything said in Genesis in a proper sense and had to interpret much allegorically (DGnL 8.2.5). In fact Augustine's position in DGnM would seem to be close to that of the Catholic exegetes he mentions in DGnL 8.1.2 who interpreted everything figuratively up to the point where Adam and Eve were dismissed from paradise and begot children; at that point they would have history begin.

98. Eph 2.2.

99. 2 Cor 2.11.

100. Cf. Luke 22.3.

sealed spring,"[101] where that enticer toward perversity is certainly not admitted. Still he deceives by means of the woman. Nor can our reason be brought to the consent that is sin, except when delight is aroused in that part of the soul which ought to obey reason as its ruling husband.[102]

21. Even now nothing else happens in each of us when one falls into sin than occurred then in those three: the serpent, the woman and the man. For first the suggestion is made, whether by thought or by the senses of the body, by seeing or touching or hearing or tasting or smelling. When this suggestion has been made, if our desire is not aroused toward sinning, the cunning of the serpent will be excluded. If, however, it is aroused, it will be as though the woman were already persuaded. At times reason checks and suppresses in a virile way even desire that has been aroused. When this happens, we do not fall into sin, but we are crowned for our modest struggle. But if reason consents and decides that what desire has stirred up should be carried out, man is expelled from the whole happy life as if from paradise. For the sin is already imputed to him, even if the deed is not carried out, since conscience is held guilty by reason of the consent.[103]

CHAPTER 15

How Temptation Brings One Down

22. We must carefully consider how the serpent persuaded them to sin, since this question is especially pertinent to our salvation. Scripture reports these things precisely so that we

101. Cant 4.12.

102. Augustine sees Genesis as exemplifying in the two first humans what happens in each of us—both male and female—namely, that our reason is brought to consent to sin by the arousal of the soul's appetitive side.

103. Apparently we now face temptation in exactly the same condition as did Adam and Eve, that is, with no inherited "ignorance and difficulty," such as we find in DLA 3.18.52. For further references, cf. Goulven Madec's note, "La condition malheureuse," in BA 6 (3rd ed, 1976), 578–583. Or is Augustine speaking of our sinning in Adam? For he says that we too are expelled from the happy life after we sin.

might now avoid them. For, when she was asked, the woman told him what they had been commanded. [The serpent] said, "You will not die the death. For God knew that on the day that you eat from it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil."[104] We see from these words that they were persuaded to sin through pride, for this is the meaning of the statement "You will be like gods." So too he said, "For God knew that on the day that you eat from it, your eyes will be opened." What does this mean but they were persuaded to refuse to be under God and to want rather to be in their own power without God? Thus they refused to obey his Law as if, by his prohibition, he jealously begrudged them an autonomy that had no need of his interior light, but used only their own providence, like their own eyes, to distinguish good and evil. This is what they were persuaded to do: to love to excess their own power. And, since they wanted to be equal to God, they used wrongly, that is, against the Law of God, that middle rank by which they were subject to God and held their bodies in subjection. This middle rank was like the fruit of the tree placed in the middle of paradise. Thus they lost what they had received in wanting to seize what they had not received. For the nature of man did not receive the capability of being happy by its own power without God ruling it. Only God can be happy by his own power with no one ruling.

23. "And the woman saw," it says, "that the tree was good for food and that it was good for the eyes for seeing and knowing."[105] How did she see, if her eyes were closed? From these words we should understand that, after they had taken that fruit, those eyes were opened, by which they saw themselves naked and were displeasing to themselves, that is, the eyes of cunning to which simplicity is displeasing.[106] For when anyone has fallen from that intimate and hidden light of

104. Gen 3.4–5. 105. Gen 3.6.

106. Since the woman saw the tree, her eyes were obviously already open. But since Genesis says that her eyes were opened after eating the fruit, we have to understand the latter statement as referring to the eyes of cunning and not to the eyes of the body.

truth, there is nothing else from which pride wants to derive pleasure than fraudulent pretenses. From this there also arises the hypocrisy by which men think that they are very wise if they can deceive and beguile whomever they wish. For the woman gave to her man and they ate, and there were opened those eyes of theirs, of which we have just spoken. Then they saw that they were naked by perverted eyes to which that simplicity signified by the term, nakedness, seemed to be something to be ashamed of. And, so that they might no longer be simple, they made aprons for themselves from the leaves of the fig tree,[107] as if to cover their private parts, that is, to cover their simplicity, of which that cunning pride was ashamed. The leaves of the fig tree signify a certain itching, if this is correctly said in the case of incorporeal things, which the mind suffers in wondrous ways from the desire and pleasure of lying.[108] As a result those who love to joke are even called "salty" in Latin.[109] For in jokes pretense plays a primary role.

CHAPTER 16

The Meaning of Their Hiding and of God's Walking and Questioning

24. Toward evening God was walking in paradise,[110] that is, he was coming to judge them. He was still walking in paradise before their punishment, that is, the presence of God still moved among them, when they no longer stood firm in his command. It is fitting [that he comes] toward evening, that is, when the sun was already setting for them, that is, when the interior light of the truth was being taken from them. They heard his voice and hid from his sight. Who

107. Cf. Gen 3.7.

108. Augustine warns that talk of the itching of the fig leaves may be quite inappropriate to incorporeal beings in an incorporeal paradise.

109. The Latin is *salsi*: 'salty' or 'briny,' but 'witty' or 'facetious' in a transferred sense.

110. Cf. Gen 3.8.

hides from the sight of God but he who has abandoned him and is now beginning to love what is his own? For they now were clothed with a lie, and he who speaks a lie speaks from what is his own.[111] This is why they are said to hide near to the tree that was in the middle of paradise, that is, near themselves who were set in order in the middle rank of things beneath God and above bodies. Hence, they became hidden to themselves so that they might be troubled by their wretched errors after they had left the light of truth which they were not.[112] For the human soul can be a partaker in the truth, but the truth is the immutable God above it. Hence, whoever turns away from that truth and turns toward himself and does not rejoice in God who rules and enlightens him, but rather in his own seemingly free movements, becomes dark by reason of the lie. For he who speaks a lie speaks from what is his own; thus he is troubled and illustrates the prophet's cry, which says, "Toward myself my soul is troubled."[113] Adam is questioned, not because God did not know where he was, but because he was forcing him to confess his sin. Similarly the Lord Jesus Christ was not ignorant of the many things about which he asked. When Adam heard God's voice, he answered that he hid because he was naked.[114] His answer was a wretched error, as if a man naked, as God had made him, could be displeasing to him. It is a distinguishing mark of error that whatever anyone finds personally displeasing he thinks is displeasing to God as well.[115] We should understand in a lofty sense the words of the Lord, "Who told you that you were naked, unless because you have eaten from that tree about which I told you that from it alone you should not eat?"[116] For he was naked of dissimulation, but clothed with the divine light. From this light he turned away and turned

111. Cf. John 8.44.

112. The fallen soul not merely lacks the light of truth, but has become darkness to itself. It knows neither God nor itself.

113. Ps 41.7.

114. Cf. Gen 3.10.

115. This is one of the basic mistakes of the Manichees with regard to the evils in the world. Augustine insists that to God all things are good and beautiful. Certainly the human body is not displeasing to its maker.

116. Gen 3.11.

toward himself, and this is the meaning of his having eaten from that tree. He saw his nakedness and was displeasing to himself because he did not have anything of his own.

CHAPTER 17

Their Rejection of Guilt and the Punishment of the Serpent

25. Then, as is the custom with pride, he does not accuse himself of having consented to the woman, but pushes the fault off upon the woman. Thus, as if out of a cleverness the poor fellow had conceived, he subtly tried to attribute his sinning to God himself. For he did not just say, "The woman gave to me," but added on, "The woman you gave to me."[117] Nothing is as familiar for sinners as to want to attribute to God everything for which they are accused, and this arises from that vein of pride. For man sinned in wishing to be like God, that is, to be free from his dominion, as God is free from all dominion, since he is the Lord of all. Because he could not be equal to him in majesty, now that he has fallen and is lying in his sin, he tried to make God his equal. Or rather he wants to show that God has sinned, while he himself is innocent. When the woman is asked, she passes the guilt on to the serpent. They act as if he had received his wife in order to obey her rather than to make her obey him, or as if she had not been able to keep God's commandment rather than listen to the words of the serpent.

26. The serpent is not now questioned, but he received his punishment first, because he cannot confess his sin and has no ground at all for excusing himself. There is no mention now of that condemnation of the devil which is reserved for the last judgment,[118] that one the Lord speaks when he says, "Depart into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the

117. Gen 3.12.

118. Augustine indicates that the devil will be condemned to everlasting fire only at the final judgment and that until then he is free to roam the earth.

devil and his angels";[119] rather it mentions that punishment of his against which we must be on guard. For his punishment is that he has in his power those who despise the command of God. The words by which sentence is pronounced against him make this clear, and the punishment is the greater because he rejoices over this unhappy power, whereas before his fall he was accustomed to rejoice in the sublime truth, in which he did not stand.[120] Hence, even the cattle are set ahead of him, not in power, but in the preservation of their nature. For cattle did not lose a heavenly happiness which they never had, but live their life in the nature that they received. Hence, God said to him, "You will creep upon your chest and belly."[121] We can see this in the snake as well, and the expression is transferred from that visible animal to this invisible enemy of ours. For the term "chest" signifies "pride" because the strong drives of the soul rule there. The term "belly" signifies "carnal desire" because that part of the body is recognized as softer. Since by these means he creeps up on those whom he wants to deceive, God said, "You will creep upon your chest and belly."

CHAPTER 18

The Enmity between Eve and the Serpent

27. "You will," it said, "eat the earth all the days of your life,"[122] that is, all the days in which you enjoy this power before that final punishment of the judgment. For this [power] seems to be the life over which he rejoices and boasts. Hence, "You will eat the earth," can be understood in two ways: Either you will own those whom you deceive by earthly desire, that is, sinners, who are signified by the word, earth, or these words surely symbolize the third kind of temptation, namely, curiosity.[123] For one who eats the earth penetrates things deep and dark, but nonetheless temporal and earthly.

119. Matt 25.41.
120. Cf. John 8.44.
121. Gen 3.14.
122. Gen 3.14.
123. For Augustine's view of curiosity, cf. DMu 6.13.39–40 and C 10.35.54, as well as O'Connell's *Early Theory*, 174–182.

28. Enmities are not set between him and the man, but between him and the woman. This is surely not because he fails to deceive and tempt men, is it? On the contrary, it is clear that he does deceive them. Or is it because he did not deceive Adam, but his woman? But is he then not the enemy of him to whom that deception came through his woman, especially since "I will place enmities between you and the woman"[124] is stated in the future? If the reason is that he did not thereafter deceive Adam, it is also true that he did not thereafter deceive Eve. Hence, why does Scripture put it this way except to show clearly that we cannot be tempted by the devil except through that animal part, which reveals, so to speak, the image or exemplification of the woman in the one whole man.[125] We have spoken of this a great deal above.[126] Enmities are placed between the seed of the devil and the seed of the woman; the seed of the devil signifies perverse suggestion, and the seed of the woman the fruit of the good work by which one resists such perverse suggestion. Thus he watches the foot of the woman so that, if ever it should slip in that forbidden pleasure, he might seize her. And she watches his head so that she may exclude him in the very beginning of his evil temptation.

CHAPTER 19

The Punishments Imposed on the Woman

29. There is no question about the punishment of the woman. For she clearly has her pains and sighs multiplied in the woes of this life.[127] Although her bearing her children in pain is fulfilled in this visible woman, our consideration should nevertheless be recalled to that more hidden woman. For even in animals the females bear offspring with pain, and this is in their case the condition of mortality rather than the punish-

124. Cf. Gen 3.15.

125. Once again Augustine is forced to a figurative interpretation of the text.

126. Cf. above 2.14.20–2.15.22.

127. Cf. Gen. 3.16.

ment of sin. Hence, it is possible that this be the condition of mortal bodies even in the females of humans. But this is the great punishment: they have come to the present bodily mortality from their former immortality.[128] Still there is a great mystery in this sentence, because there is no restraint from carnal desire which does not have pain in the beginning, until habit has been bent toward the better part. When this has come about, it is as though a child is born, that is, the good habit disposes our intentions toward the good deed. In order that this habit might be born, there was a painful struggle with bad habit.[129] Scripture adds after the birth, "You will turn to your man, and he will rule over you."[130] Do not many or almost all women give birth while their husbands are absent and, after the birth, turn to them? There are, of course, proud women who rule their men. Do they lack this vice after giving birth so that their husbands rule them? No, indeed! They even believe that they have acquired a dignity by becoming mothers and they generally emerge as even more proud. After saying, "You will bear your children in pain," it adds, "and your turning will be to your husband, and he will rule over you." What can this mean except that, when that part of the soul held by carnal joys has, in willing to conquer a bad habit, suffered difficulty and pain and in this way brought forth a good habit, it now more carefully and diligently obeys reason as its husband? And, taught by its pains, it turns to reason and willingly obeys its commands lest it again decline to some harmful habit. Hence, those things which seemed to be curses are commandments, if we do not read those spiritual things in a carnal way. For the Law is spiritual.[131]

128. Though Augustine does not have an Aristotelian concept of nature, without which the concepts of supernatural and preternatural cannot be clearly defined, there is present here an adumbration of the doctrine that the immortality of the first parents was a preternatural gift. That is, it could be natural for women to bear children in pain; the penal aspect is the loss of the previous immortality.

129. Augustine compares habits to chains; cf. C 8.5.10.

130. Gen 3.16.

131. Cf. Rom 7.14.

CHAPTER 20

The Punishment of the Man

30. Likewise, what shall we say about the sentence that was pronounced against the man? Are we perhaps to think that the rich, for whom the necessities of life come easily and who do not labor on the earth, have escaped this punishment? It says, "The earth will be cursed for you in all your works, and you shall eat from it in sadness and groaning all the days of your life. It will bring forth thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the grain of your field. In the sweat of your brow you will eat your bread until you return to the earth from which you were taken, for you are earth and you will return to the earth."[132] It is certainly clear that no one escapes this sentence. For anyone born in this life has difficulty in discovering the truth because of the corruptible body. For as Solomon says, "The body which is corrupted weighs down the soul, and the earthly habitation presses down the mind that thinks many thoughts."[133] These are the labors and sorrows which man has from the earth. The thorns and thistles are the prickings of torturous questions or thoughts concerned with providing for this life. Unless these are uprooted and cast forth from the field of God, they generally choke off the word, so that it does not bear fruit in man, as the Lord says in the gospel.[134] Now it is necessary that we be admonished about the truth through these eyes and these ears, and it is difficult to resist the phantasms which enter the soul through these senses, although truth's admonition also enters through them.[135] In this perplexity whose brow would not sweat in order that he might eat his bread? For all the days of our life we are going to suffer, that is, of this life which is going to pass away. These words are spoken to one who cultivates his

132. Gen 3.17–19.
133. Wis 9.15.
134. Cf. Mark 4.18–19.
135. In paradise man did not receive admonitions about the truth through the bodily senses; rather the truth spoke directly to his mind. Now after sin we receive such admonitions through the senses which are also the source of distracting phantasms.

field, because he suffers these things until he returns to the earth from which he was taken, that is, until he comes to the end of this life. For one who cultivates this field interiorly and gains his bread, albeit with toil, can suffer this toil up to the end of this life, but after this life he need not suffer. One who did not cultivate his field and allowed it to be overcome with thorns has in this life the curse of his earth in all his works, and after this life he will have either the fire of purgation or eternal punishment.[136] Thus no one escapes this sentence, but we should act so that we feel its punishment only in this life.

CHAPTER 21

Why after Their Sin Adam Called Eve Herself "Life," and the Meaning of the Garments of Skin

31. Who is not troubled by the fact that after sin and the sentence of God as judge, Adam calls his woman "Life"? For she is [called] the mother of the living, after she merited death and became destined to bear mortal offspring. Perhaps Scripture has in mind those offspring that we mentioned above.[137] These offspring she will bear in pain, and afterward she will turn to her husband, and he will rule over her. For in that way she is life and the mother of the living. For the life which is in sins is often called death in the Scriptures. Thus the Apostle says that a widow who lives in pleasures is dead,[138] and we read that sin itself is signified by the expression, dead body, "He who is cleansed from a dead body and touches it again, what profit has he from his bath? So too, he who fasts over his sins and goes and again does these same things?"[139]

136. Catholic theologians have found in this passage a foundation for the doctrine of purgatory as a place in which souls suffer punishment that purifies them from venial sins and temporal punishment due to sin; cf. *EP* 1544.

137. Cf. above 2.19.29. The incongruity of Adam's giving his woman the name "Life" immediately after she merited death and became destined to bear mortal offspring leads him to return to his spiritual exegesis begun above. The offspring of the woman are understood as the inclinations toward good that are brought forth in the labor of overcoming bad habits.

138. 1 Tim 5.6.

139. Sir 34.30–31.

For Scripture set "dead body" there for "sin," and abstinence and fasting from sin it compared to a bath, that is, a cleansing from a dead body. Returning to sin is like touching a dead body again. Hence, why should that part of our soul not be called life? For it ought to obey reason as its husband, when it has conceived through reason from the word of life the burden of living rightly. And when by the childbirth of abstinence, albeit with pains and groans, it has resisted an evil habit and has brought forth a good habit for good deeds, why should [that part of our soul] not be called the mother of the living, that is, of good deeds, to which sins stand opposed? These we learned are signified by the expression "dead body."

32. For all of us who are born from Adam have begun to owe to nature that death with which God threatened us when he gave the command not to eat the fruit of that tree; that death was prefigured by the garments of skin.[140] For they made for themselves aprons from the leaves of the fig tree, but God made for them garments of skin. That is, having abandoned the face of truth, they sought the pleasure of lying, and God changed their bodies into this mortal flesh in which deceitful hearts are hidden.[141] For we should not believe that thoughts could be hidden in those heavenly bodies, as they lie

140. Cf. Jean Pépin, "Saint Augustin et le symbolisme néoplatonicien de la véture," AM 1.302–305. Pépin argues that Origen is probably the source for this exegesis of the tunics of skin. On this point cf. Berthold Altaner, "Augustinus und Origenes," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 70 (1971) 15–41 = B. Altaner, "Augustinus und Origenes," *Kleine Patristische Schriften,* in TU 83 (1967) 224–254. Altaner argues that Augustine was influenced indirectly by Origen, *In Leviticum homiliae* 6.2: "Those tunics of skin were taken from animals. For it was necessary that the sinner be clothed with such 'tunics of skin,' which were the mortality he received for his sin and the sign of his frailty which came from the corruption of the flesh" (cited from Altaner, 237 [27]). Since Rufinus did not begin his work of translating Origen until much later, a direct influence seems ruled out; cf. also Basil Studer, "Zur Frage des westlichen Origenismus," SP 11.3, in TU 94 (1966) 270–287.

141. Augustine's wording here is interesting. He uses the expression 'not hidden' (*non latere*), which parallels the Greek *mē lathein.* Thus, in dependence upon Plotinus (*Ennead* 4.4.19), Augustine defines sensation in DQ 25.48 as "a passion of the body that of itself is not hidden from the soul." The Greek word for truth, *alētheia,* means 'non-hiddenness,' and it seems that Augustine is playing on that etymology when he says that the first parents turned away from the face of truth and are now hidden in bodies that conceal thoughts.

hidden in these bodies.[142] Rather as some states of soul are apparent on the countenance, and especially in the eyes, so I think that in the clarity and simplicity of those heavenly bodies absolutely no states of the soul are hidden. Men will merit that dwelling and transformation into angelic form if even in this life, when they could hide lies under the garments of skin, they hate and avoid them out of a burning love of the truth, hiding only what their hearers cannot bear, but not telling any lies.[143] For there will come the time that nothing may even be hidden; for nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest.[144] They were, however, all the while in paradise, although already under the sentence of the condemning God, until it came to the garments of skin, that is, to the mortality of this life. For what could more clearly signify the death that we experience in our body than skins which we get from dead animals? And so, when against God's command man desired to be God, not by legitimate imitation, but by illicit pride, he was cast down to the mortality of the beasts.

33. Thus the divine Law mocks him by the mouth of God. By this mockery we are admonished to avoid pride as much as we can.

142. Roy points out that the mortality symbolized by the tunics of skin refers to the incarnate condition of fallen man along with its consequences for the relations of body and soul. He claims that "Augustine clearly distinguishes corporeity itself from this immersion in the flesh which constitutes the immanent punishment of sin" (*L'intelligence,* 289, nt. 2). The present and the following sentences would appear to support this claim. O'Connell, on the other hand, argues that Augustine at this point held that the soul literally fell into body and time; cf. his *Early Theory,* the whole chapter, "Fall of the Soul," but especially 155–183.

143. The preacher of the Christian message does not lie, but he may conceal from his hearers what they cannot yet understand. Cf. above 1.23.40 where Augustine maintains that the spiritual man and the little one have the same food, though the former understands more. In DVR 26.51 Augustine says that in the times of the new people "great and spiritual men" provide milk as food to "the many weak, but eager ones," while they themselves eat solid food with "the few wise men." "For they speak wisdom among the perfect, but to the carnal and animal, albeit new, men who are still little ones they hide some matters, but lie about nothing"; cf. JE 98.6.

144. Cf. Matt 10.26.

CHAPTER 22

The Allegorical Meaning of Adam's Expulsion

"See, Adam has become as one of us with respect to the knowledge of discerning good and evil."[145] This ambiguous expression forms a figure of speech.[146] For we can take "Adam has become as one of us" in two ways. It can mean "one of us," namely, like God himself. In this sense we say, "one of the senators," that is, "as a real senator." In that case the expression is meant as mockery. On the other hand, because man would be a god, though by the gift of the Creator, not by nature, if he had willed to remain under his power, "of us" can be taken in the sense that one says, "from the consuls," or "on behalf of the consuls" of one who is not now a consul. But with respect to what did he become as "one of us"? With respect, of course, to the knowledge of discerning good and evil so that he might learn by experience when he feels the evil that God knew in his wisdom. Thus he would learn by his punishment that he cannot avoid the power of the Almighty that he did not wish to suffer voluntarily when he was happy.

34. "And then, lest Adam stretch forth his hand to the tree of life and live forever, God dismissed him from paradise."[147] It is well put, "he dismissed," and not, "he excluded," so that he might seem to be drawn down by the weight of his own sins to a place that suits him.[148] A bad man generally experi-

145. Gen 3.22.

146. The figure of speech is amphiboly. That is, the words can have two different meanings.

147. Gen 3.22–23.

148. Augustine's Latin text read 'dismissed' from *dimisit,* not 'excluded' from *exclusit,* and provided him with what O'Connell calls "the *dimisit* insight." Augustine sees God's action in dismissing Adam and Eve rather than expelling them as combining and reconciling the views that our presence in these mortal bodies is both due to some sin we voluntarily committed and due to some natural necessity. O'Connell links Augustine's interpretation of the words of Genesis with Plotinus' *Ennead* 4.3.12–13. Cf. *Early Theory,* 169–173, and *Later Works,* 37–39. Augustine's image of love as a weight that carries man to his natural place makes the punishment of sin the natural consequence of one's sin, not an arbitrary punishment from God.

ences this when he begins to live among good men, if he is unwilling to change for the better. He is driven from the company of good men by the weight of his bad habit, and they do not exclude him against his will, but dismiss him in accord with his will. The phrase "lest Adam stretch forth his hand to the tree of life" is also an ambiguous expression. We speak this way when we say, "And so I warn you not to do again what you did," obviously willing that one not do it. But we also say, "I warn you lest you be good," willing, of course, that one be good.[149] That is, I warn you, not despairing that you could be good. The Apostle speaks this way, when he says, "Lest perchance God grant them penitence to know the truth."[150] Hence, we can see that man was dismissed into the labors of this life so that he might at some point stretch forth his hand to the tree of life and live forever. The stretching forth of the hand clearly signifies the cross by which eternal life is recovered. But, even if we understand, "lest he stretch forth his hand, and live forever," in the first way, it is not an unjust punishment that after sin the entrance to wisdom was closed until by the mercy of God he who was dead should come alive again at the time determined and he who was lost should be found.[151] Hence, he is dismissed from the paradise of pleasure in order to work the earth from which he was taken, that is, in order that he work in this body and establish in it, if he can, the merit to return. He delayed in front of paradise, in misery, which is, of course, opposite to the happy life. For I think the happy life is signified by the name "paradise."

149. Again the language is ambiguous. The Latin *ne* can introduce a subordinate clause whose sense is negative or, after verbs of hoping and fearing, one whose sense is affirmative. The ambiguity is difficult to preserve in English.

150. 2 Tim 2.25.

151. Cf. Luke 15.32.

CHAPTER 23

The Cherubim and the Turning Sword

35. "God placed Cherubim and a flaming sword that moves" —this could be said in the one word "movable"—"to guard the way to the tree of life."[152] Those who translate the Hebrew words in Scripture say that "Cherubim" means in Latin "the fullness of knowledge."[153] The flaming movable sword means temporal punishments, because times move in their continual variety. It is called "flaming," because every tribulation burns somehow or other. But it is one thing to be burned until consumed, another to be burned until purified. For the Apostle also says, "Who is scandalized and I am not burning?"[154] This passion was further purifying him, because it came from charity. And those tribulations that the just suffer pertain to that flaming sword, "because gold and silver are tried in fire, and worthy men in the furnace of humiliation."[155] And again, "The kiln tests the vessels of the potter, and the trial of tribulation just men."[156] As the Apostle says, "God chastises him whom he loves and scourges every son he receives,"[157] and, "Knowing that tribulation develops patience, but patience the proof."[158] Hence, we read, and we hear, and we should believe, that the fullness of knowledge and the flaming sword guard the tree of life. No one can come to the tree of life except by these two ways, that is, by the endurance of troubles and the fullness of knowledge.

36. The endurance of troubles must be borne in this life by almost all who make their way toward the tree of life. The fullness of knowledge, however, seems to come to very few, so that not all who arrive at the tree of life come by way of the fullness of knowledge, although all experience the endurance

152. Gen 3.24.

153. In *De nominibus hebraicis* (PL 23.820) Jerome gives the meaning of *Cherubim* as 'knowledge multiple' or as 'many,' though Augustine could not have used this work; cf. above ch. 10, nt. 67.

154. 2 Cor 11.29.

155. Sir 2.5.

156. Sir 27.6.

157. Heb 12.6.

158. Rom 5.3–4.

of troubles, that is, the flaming movable sword. But if we attend to what the Apostle says, "The fullness of the law is charity,"[159] and if we see that the same charity is contained in the twin commandment, "You shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart, and from your whole soul, and from your whole mind," and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," on which "two commandments there hang the whole Law and the prophets,"[160] we understand without a doubt that one comes to the tree of life not only by the flaming movable sword, that is, by the endurance of temporal troubles, but also by the fullness of knowledge, that is, by charity, because he says, "If I do not have charity, I am nothing."[161]

CHAPTER 24

Adam Is Christ, Eve the Church

37. I promised in this discourse to consider the works of creation, and I think that I have done that. But I also promised to consider Genesis as prophecy, and I still have to explain that briefly.[162] For after having set up a certain clear beacon for the direction of what remains, we will not be long detained, I believe, by this consideration. The Apostle calls it a great sacrament when Scripture says, "On account of this a man will leave father and mother, and will cling to his wife, and they will be two in one flesh." He interprets this by adding, "But I say this of Christ and the Church."[163] Hence, what was fulfilled as history in Adam signifies as prophecy Christ, who left his Father, when he said, "I went forth from my Father and came into this world."[164] He left not by place, because God is not contained by place, and not by turning away in sin, as apos-

159. Rom 13.10.
160. Matt 22.37–40.
161. 1 Cor 13.2.
162. Augustine had said (above, 2.2.3) that all of Genesis could be treated as history and as prophecy. The distinction seems to be between regarding Genesis as narrating past events and as foretelling future ones. That is, as history Genesis deals with Adam; as prophecy it deals with Christ. History and prophecy can both contain proper and figurative expressions.
163. Eph 5.31–32.
164. John 16.28.

tates leave God, but by appearing to men in a man, when "the Word became flesh and dwelled among us."[165] This does not mean a change in the nature of God, but the assumption of the nature of an inferior, that is, a human person.[166] This is also what is meant when it said, "He emptied himself,"[167] because he did not appear to men in that dignity which he had with the Father, but took into account the weakness of those who did not yet have a clean heart whereby they might see the Word in the beginning with the Father.[168] What then do the words, "he left the Father," mean but that he left [the Father] to appear to men as he is with the Father? He likewise left his mother, that is, the old and carnal observance of the synagogue, which was a mother to him from the seed of David according to the flesh, and he clung to his wife, that is, the Church, so that they might be two in one flesh.[169] For the Apostle says that he is the head of the Church and the Church is his body.[170] Hence, he too was put to sleep by the sleep of the Passion in order that the Church might be formed as his wife. He sings of this sleep through the prophet, when he says, "I have fallen asleep and have slept; I have arisen, because the Lord has taken me up."[171] Hence, there was formed for him a wife, the Church, from out of his side, that is, from out of the faith of the Passion and Baptism. For his side struck with a lance poured out blood and water.[172] As I said above, he "was made according to the flesh from the seed of David,"[173] as the Apostle says, that is, as from the mud of the earth, although there was no man who worked on the earth, because

165. John 1.14.

166. According to the Maurists, two late MSS drop the word "person" but the older MSS have this reading. Augustine obviously should not be held to the formula of the Council of Chalcedon (451) that was to define that Christ is one divine person with two natures. Augustine normally speaks of the Word assuming a human nature or a whole man; cf. DGnI 1.4. In the following chapter he says that each Christian bears the person of Christ. Even many years later, in DT 7.4.7, he indicates that he uses the term "person" simply in order to have something to say when asked what the three are.

167. Phil 2.7.

168. Cf. Matt 5.8 and John 1.1.

169. Cf. Gen 2.24.

170. Cf. Col 1.18.

171. Ps 3.6.

172. Cf. John 19.34.

173. Rom 1.3.

no man has worked on the Virgin, from whom Christ was born. "But a spring came up from the earth and watered the whole face of the earth."[174] The face of the earth, that is, the dignity of the earth, is correctly taken as the mother of the Lord, the Virgin Mary. She was watered by the Holy Spirit who is signified in the gospel by the terms "spring" and "water."[175] Thus there was made as if from such mud that man who was placed in paradise in order to work and guard it, that is, in the will of the Father, in order to fulfill it and keep it.

CHAPTER 25

The Serpent Refers to Heretics, Especially the Manichees

38. For the commandment that he received, we received in him, because each Christian bears quite appropriately the person of Christ, since the Lord says, "What you did to one of my least ones, you did to me."[176] And would that we were enjoying, as we were commanded, every tree of paradise, which signifies spiritual delights. "But the fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, continence,"[177] as the Apostle says. And would that we were not touching the tree of the knowledge of good and evil planted in the middle of paradise. That is, would that we were not willing to be proud of our nature which, as we have already said, lies in the middle, so that we would not be deceived and experience the difference between the simple Catholic faith and the deceits of the heretics! For we have in this way come to the discernment of good and evil. For he said, "It is necessary that there also be heresies so that the approved among you might become manifest."[178] For that serpent taken prophetically signifies the poisons of the heretics and especially of these Manichees and all those opposed to the Old

174. Gen 2.6.
175. Cf. John 7.38–39.
176. Matt 25.40.
177. Gal 5.22–23.
178. 1 Cor 11.19.

Testament. I think that nothing has been more clearly foretold than that they should be avoided in that serpent, or rather that it should be avoided in them. For no men promise more loquaciously and boastfully the knowledge of good and evil, and they are confident that they will demonstrate that discernment in man as in the tree that was planted in the middle of paradise. Moreover, who more than they utter the words, "You will be as gods"? In their proud vanity, trying to win others to that same pride, they assert that the soul is by nature that which God is. And to whom more than to them pertains the opening of the eyes of the flesh? For they have abandoned the interior light of knowledge and force men to worship this sun which pertains to the eyes of the body. In general, all heretics deceive by the promise of knowledge and find fault with those whom they find believing in all simplicity.[179] Because the objects of their persuasion are things utterly carnal, they try to bring men to what I might call the opening of the eyes of the flesh so that the interior eye is blinded.

CHAPTER 26

The Serpent Is the Manichaean Heretic

They are also displeased with their own bodies, not because of the punishment of mortality that we have merited by sinning, but so as to deny that God is the creator of bodies, as if they found this nakedness displeasing when these eyes of the flesh were opened.

39. Nothing marks and points them out more clearly than the words of the serpent, "You will not die the death; for God knew that on the day that you eat your eyes will be opened."[180] They believe that the serpent was Christ, and they imagine that some god of the nation of darkness, as they say, gave that

179. Twice in this chapter Augustine favorably mentions simple faith. He contrasts the simplicity of the Catholic faith with the Manichaean deceitfulness, and he points out that the objects of their persuasion are utterly carnal and that they open carnal eyes while blinding the interior eye of the mind.

180. Gen 3.4–5.

commandment as if he begrudged men the knowledge of good and evil. From that opinion I believe there have arisen some men or other of the serpent who are said to worship the serpent in place of Christ.[181] They do not heed the Apostle who says, "I fear lest, as the serpent seduced Eve by his cunning, so your minds are also being corrupted."[182] I believe that these men were prefigured by that prophecy. Our carnal concupiscence is seduced by the words of this serpent, and through it Adam is deceived, not Christ, but the Christian. If he willed to observe the commandment of God and lived from faith with perseverance, until he became suited to understand the truth, that is, if he were working in paradise and guarding what he received, he would not come to such deformity. For, when he is displeased by his flesh as if by his nakedness, he gathers the more carnal coverings of lies like the leaves of the fig tree, from which he made himself an apron. These men do this when they lie about Christ and preach that he has lied. They, so to speak, hide themselves from the face of God after they have turned to their lies from his truth, as the Apostle says, "They will turn their hearing from the truth and will turn to fables."[183]

40. That serpent is certainly the error of the heretics that tempts the Church. The Apostle utters a formula against it when he says, "I fear lest, as the serpent seduced Eve by his cleverness, your minds may also be corrupted."[184] That error creeps on its chest and belly and eats the earth. For it deceives none but the proud who claim for themselves what they are not, and who soon believe that the supreme God and the human soul have one and the same nature. They deceive also

181. Augustine is referring to a Gnostic sect, such as the Ophites or the Naassenes, who worshipped the serpent out of hostility for the God of the Old Testament who had trampled down the serpent's wisdom; cf. Hippolytus (*Adversus haereses* 5.6–17) and "Naassenes" and "Ophites" in ODCC² 953 and 1000; see also Robert M. Grant, *Second-Century Christianity: A Collection of Fragments* (London, 1946), 128f., where he cites Pseudo-Tertullian *Against All Heresies*: "They [the Ophites] exalt the serpent to such an extent that they prefer it even to Christ"; cf. DH 17.

182. 2 Cor 11.3.

183. 2 Tim 4.4.

184. 2 Cor 11.3.

those caught in carnal desires, who are glad to hear that it is not they themselves who do whatever they do in their wantonness, but the nation of darkness. They deceive also the curious who are wise about the things of earth and search out spiritual things with an earthy eye.[185] There will, however, be enmities between it and the woman, and between its seed and the woman's if she bears children with pain and turns to her husband so that he may rule over her.[186] For then one can know that one part of us does not belong to God as its author and another to the nation of darkness, as these men say. Rather the part that has the power of ruling in man and that lower part that should be ruled are both from God. Thus the Apostle says, "A man certainly should not cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but a woman is the glory of man. For the man is not from the woman, but the woman is from the man. For man was not created on account of the woman, but the woman on account of the man. For that reason a woman ought to have a veil over her head, on account of the angels. Nonetheless, woman is not without man, and man is not without woman in the Lord. For as the woman is from the man, so the man is through the woman, but all things are from God."[187]

CHAPTER 27

Adam's Fall and Punishment Taken Allegorically

41. Let Adam now labor in his field and let him understand that the fact that the earth bears thorns and thistles is not due to nature, but to punishment. Let him not attribute this to some nation of darkness or other, but to the judgment of God, because the directive of justice is to give to each his due.[188]

185. Cf. above, 1.23.40 for Augustine's triad of sins.

186. Cf. Gen 3.16. 187. 1 Cor 11.7–12.

188. The directive of justice as "giving to each his due" is found in Cicero, *De officiis* 1.15. One of Augustine's principal concerns throughout the anti-Manichaean writings is the defense of God's justice. Hence, he has to portray the "thorns and thistles" of this life as just penalties. Cf. DLA 3.23.66–68 for

Let him give to the woman the heavenly food that he has received from his head who is Christ. Let him not receive from her the forbidden food, that is, the deceit of the heretics with their many promises of knowledge and the disclosure of the so-called secrets, by which their error is made more hidden so as better to deceive. For the proud and curious desire of the heretics cries out in the Book of Proverbs in the guise of a woman and says, "Let him who is foolish turn aside to me," and she exhorts the senseless, saying, "Eat the hidden bread gladly and drink the secret fresh water."[189] And yet, when anyone is led on by the desire for lies and has believed those words and, as a result, believes that Christ has lied, it is necessary that he also receive by God's judgment the garments of skin. This term seems to me to signify as prophecy, not the mortality of the body that it signifies as history, with which we have already dealt, but rather the phantasms drawn from the senses of the flesh.[190] By the Law of God these phantasms follow upon and clothe the one who lies carnally. Thus he is dismissed from paradise, that is, from the Catholic faith and truth, destined to dwell opposite paradise, that is, in opposition to the same faith. If he should at some point turn to God by way of the flaming sword, that is, through temporal tribulations, acknowledging and grieving over his sins and accusing himself, not some foreign nature which does not exist, he might merit pardon. Then, by way of the fullness of knowledge, which is charity, loving God who is immutable above all things, and loving him with his whole heart, and with his whole soul, and with his whole mind, and loving his neighbor as himself,[191] he will arrive at the tree of life and will live for eternity.

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his attempts to defend God's justice even in such problematic areas as the sufferings of children and the damnation of unbaptized infants.

189. Prov 9.16–17.

190. 'Phantasms' (*phantasmata*) are not merely 'images' (*phantasiae*), but images that do not represent things as they are; cf. DMu 6.11.32 and C 3.6.10.

191. Cf. Matt 22.37–40.

CHAPTER 28

As an Epilogue He Refutes the Individual Slanders of the Manichees

42. What then do these men have to find fault with in these books of the Old Testament? Let them ask in their customary way, and let us answer them as the Lord deigns to provide. "Why," they ask, "did God make man whom he knew would sin?" Because he could produce many good things from the sinner, ordering him according to the directive of his justice, and because his sin in no way harms God. If man had not sinned, there would be no death, but because he sinned, other mortals are corrected as a result of his sin. For nothing so calls men back from sin as the thought of imminent death.[192] "He should have made him," they say, "so that he would not sin." By no means should he have done so! For man was made so that, if he were unwilling, he would not sin. "The devil," they say, "should not have been allowed to approach the woman." On the contrary, she should not have allowed the devil to approach her; she was made so that, if she were unwilling, she would have prevented his approach. "The woman," they say, "should not have been made." This is to say that something good should not have been made. For she is certainly something good and so good that the Apostle says that she is the glory of the man, and that all things are from God.[193] Again they say, "Who made the devil?" He made himself; for the devil was made by sinning, not by nature. "Or," they say, "God should not have made him if he knew that he would sin." On the contrary, why should he not have made him? For through his own justice and providence he corrects many as a result of the malice of the devil. Or have you perhaps not heard the Apostle Paul saying, "And I handed them over to Satan so that they might learn not to blaspheme"?[194] And of himself he says, "And lest I be raised up by the great-

192. The Maurists note that this sentence is missing from seven of the better manuscripts.

193. Cf. 1 Cor 11.7, 12.

194. 1 Tim 1.20.

ness of the revelations, there was given me a needle in the flesh, an angel of Satan who buffeted me."[195] "And so," they ask, "is the devil good, because he is useful?" On the contrary, he is evil insofar as he is the devil, but God who is good and almighty draws many just and good things out of the devil's malice. For the devil has to his credit only his will by which he tries to do evil, not the providence of God that draws good out of him.[196]

CHAPTER 29

He Compares the Teachings of the Church with the Errors of the Manichees

43. Finally, we are discussing with the Manichees the question of religion, and the question of religion is: what does piety demand that we think concerning God? Since they cannot deny that the human race is in the misery of sin, they say that that nature of God is in misery.[197] We deny this and say that the nature that God made from nothing is in misery and that it came to this state, not under compulsion, but by the will to sin. They say that the nature of God is forced by God himself to do penance for sins; we deny this and say that the nature that God made from nothing is forced, after it sinned, to do penance for its sins. They say that the nature of God receives pardon from God himself; we deny this and say that the nature that God made from nothing receives pardon for its sins, if it turns from its sins to its God. They say that the nature of God is by necessity changeable; we deny this and say that the nature that God made from nothing has been changed by its own will. They say that the sins of others harm the nature of God; we deny this and say that sins harm only the nature

195. 2 Cor 12.7.

196. This battery of crisp questions and answers forms a sort of brief catechism for the Catholic believer to use when faced with the standard Manichaean complaints.

197. Augustine works out the implications of the Manichaean position that the soul is literally divine, a part of God, in contrast with those of the Catholic faith that the soul is a creature.

of the sinner.[198] We say that God is of such great goodness, of such great justice and of such great incorruption that he does not sin, that he harms no one who does not will to sin, and that he is harmed by no one who wills to sin. They say that there exists an evil nature to which God is forced to surrender a part of his own nature to be tortured; we say that there is no natural evil,[199] but that all natures are good and that God is the highest nature. We say that other natures are from God and that all are good insofar as they are, because God made them all very good, but he ordered them in distinct levels so that one is better than another. Thus this universe is filled with every kind of good, and this universe with some beings perfect and others imperfect is perfect as a whole, and God its Maker and Creator does not cease to administer it with his just governance. He made all good things by his will; he suffers no evil by necessity. For his will surpasses all things; in no respect does he experience something against his will. [The Manichees] hold the former positions and we hold the latter ones. Let each person choose which he will follow. For I have spoken in good faith in the presence of God, and I have explained what I thought without any desire for argument, without any doubt of the truth and without prejudice to a more careful treatment.

198. In R 1.10.3 Augustine says, "When I said that 'sins harm only the nature of the sinner,' I said this because one who harms a just man does not really do him harm. He even 'increases his reward in heaven' (Matt 5.12; Luke 6.23). But by sinning one really harms himself. On account of his will to harm he will receive the harm he does. The Pelagians can, of course, twist that sentence to their own opinion and say that the sins of others have done no harm to children, since I said, 'sins harm only the nature of the sinner.' But 'through one man,' in whom all have sinned, 'sin entered the world' (Rom 5.12). I did not say 'sins harm' no man, but 'only the nature of the sinner.'" Thus Augustine's words do not rule out the harm done to every human being as a result of the sin of the first parents.

199. In R 1.10.3 Augustine comments, "Likewise, in what I said a little later, 'There is no natural evil,' they can seek a similar escape. But this saying refers to nature as it was originally created without defect; for that is truly and properly called the nature of man. We also use the word in a transferred sense to speak of the sort of nature that man is born with. In accord with this way of speaking, the Apostle said, 'For we also were once by nature children of wrath, as the rest'" (Eph 2.3).

ON THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF GENESIS: AN UNFINISHED BOOK

CHAPTER 1

IT IS NOT by way of assertion, but by way of inquiry that we have to treat the hidden matters concerning natural things which we know were made by God, their almighty maker. Especially in the books that the authority of God has commended to us, rashness in asserting an uncertain and doubtful opinion scarcely escapes the charge of sacrilege. Still, doubt in inquiry ought not exceed the bounds of the Catholic faith.[1] Since many heretics try to twist the exposition of the divine Scriptures to their own opinion which stands apart from the faith of the Catholic discipline, we must first briefly explain the Catholic faith before dealing with this book.[2]

2. Here is that faith: God the Father Almighty made and established all of creation through his only-begotten Son, that is, through the Wisdom and Power consubstantial and coeternal to himself, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, who is also consubstantial and coeternal.[3] Therefore, the Catholic discipline commands that we believe that this Trinity is called one

1. In the notes to DGnL 1.1.2 in BA 48.575–580, Agaësse and Solignac point out that the same aporetic character marks Augustine's larger commentary on Genesis. In R 2.24.1 Augustine says of it, "In that work there are more questions than discoveries, and of the discoveries fewer still are solidly grounded; the rest are set down as matters needing further investigation."

2. Augustine sets forth a statement of the Catholic faith that is a commentary on the *Apostles' Creed* in, it would seem, the version of Ambrose and the church of Milan, the church of Augustine's own baptism; cf. Hahn, *Bibliothek der Symbole*, 38, nts. 42 and 43. Augustine adds to the Symbol the consubstantiality of the Son and the Spirit with the Father and emphasizes the distinction of the Trinity from creatures and the goodness of all creatures.

3. The emphasis upon the consubstantiality of the Son and the Holy Spirit reflects the definitions of the Councils of Nicea (325) and of Constantinople (381).

God and that he has made and created all the things that there are insofar as they are. Thus all of creation, whether intellectual or corporeal—or, as we can put it more briefly in the words of the divine Scriptures, whether invisible or visible[4] —has been made by God, not out of the nature of God, but out of nothing. Thus nothing of the Trinity is found in all of creation apart from the fact that the Trinity created it and it was created. Hence, we may not say or believe that the whole of creation is either consubstantial with or coeternal with God.[5]

3. All the things which God made are very good; natural things are not evil. Rather whatever is called evil is either sin or the punishment of sin. Sin is nothing but the evil assent of free will, when we incline to those things which justice forbids and from which we are free to abstain. [Sin] does not lie in the things themselves, but in their illegitimate use. The legitimate use of things consists in the soul's remaining in God's Law and being subject to the one God with the fullest love, and in governing all the other things subject to it without desire or lust, that is, according to God's commandment. For thus it will govern [them] without difficulty and unhappiness and with the greatest ease and happiness. It is the punishment of sin that the soul is tormented by creatures that do not serve it, when it in turn does not serve God. Creation obeyed it when it obeyed God. Thus fire is not bad, since it is a creature of God; yet in our weakness we are burned by it because of what sin deserves. Those sins are called natural which we necessarily commit prior to the mercy of God, after we have fallen into this life by the sin of free choice.[6]

4. Man, however, was renewed by Jesus Christ our Lord,

4. Cf. Col 1.16.

5. Augustine distinguishes all of creation from the Creator in terms of creation being neither consubstantial nor coeternal with the Trinity.

6. Augustine's use of "we" is startling. He seems to say that we have fallen into this life and that this fall was due to a sin involving a free choice that we no longer have. He implies that we existed as souls prior to this life into which we fell by sin. Subsequent to that fall and prior to God's mercy we necessarily sin, and these necessary sins are called natural. This state of natural sinning was prior to the coming of Christ who renewed man.

when the ineffable and immutable Wisdom of God deigned to assume a whole and complete man and be born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. He was crucified, buried, rose, and ascended into heaven—all of which has already happened. He is coming to judge the living and the dead at the end of the world and at the resurrection of the dead in the flesh—this is proclaimed as yet to come. The Holy Spirit was given to those who believe in him. He founded Mother Church which is called Catholic, because it is everywhere perfect, not at all weak, and because it is spread throughout the whole world. For those who do penance previous sins have been forgiven, and eternal life and the kingdom of heaven have been promised.

CHAPTER 2

5. In accord with this faith we must consider whatever can be investigated and discussed in this book. "In the beginning God made heaven and earth."[7] Four ways of expounding the Law are handed down by certain men who treat the Scriptures. Their names can be set forth in Greek, while they are defined and explained in Latin: in accord with history, allegory, analogy, and etiology. It is a matter of history when deeds done—whether by men or by God—are reported. It is a matter of allegory when things spoken in figures are understood. It is a matter of analogy, when the conformity of the Old and New Testaments is shown. It is a matter of etiology when the causes of what is said or done are reported.[8]

7. Gen 1.1.

8. Augustine reports that certain exegetes speak of four ways of interpreting the Law. Though there is a similarity to the doctrine of the four senses of Scripture familiar to the Middle Ages, Lubac argues that Origen rather than Augustine is the source for the traditional four senses. Augustine's sources for this doctrine are obviously Greek-speaking, but it is difficult to be certain whether he is indebted to Philo or to Origen—or possibly to both. In C 6.4.6 Augustine tells us that he learned to understand Scripture in a non-literal sense from Ambrose, who may have been the direct source of much of his knowledge of Philo and Origen. For other treatments of the

CHAPTER 3

6. We can ask whether we should understand the words "In the beginning God made heaven and earth"[9] only in accord with history, or whether they also signify something in figures, and how they conform to the gospel and for what reason this book begins in this way. According to history one asks whether "In the beginning" means in the beginning of time or in the principle, in the very Wisdom of God. For the Son of God said that he was the principle. When he was asked, "Who are you?" he said, "The principle; that is why I am speaking to you."[10] For there is the principle without principle, and there is the principle along with another principle.[11] The principle without principle is the Father alone, and thus we believe that all things are from one principle. But the Son is a principle in such a way that he is from the Father. The first intellectual creature can also be called a principle for those things God made of which he is the head. Since a head is rightly called a principle, the Apostle did not call the woman the head of anything in that ranking of his. For he called the man the head of the woman, and Christ the head of the man, and God the head of Christ.[12] In that way creation is subject to the Creator.

7. Did it say, "In the beginning," because it was made first? Or was it impossible for heaven and earth to have been made

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four senses, cf. DUC 3.5–9 and DGnL 1.1.1. On the four senses in Augustine, cf. Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale,* 1.177–187. Despite Augustine's introduction of this terminology from the tradition and its exemplification in the following chapter, he says virtually nothing more about the senses of Scripture in this work.

9. Gen 1.1.

10. John 8.25. Zycha's text reads *quod et loquor,* while DGnL 1.5.10 reads *quia et loquor.* Our text could be translated 'which also speaks' though *quod* can also be equivalent to *quia*; cf. JE 38.11 for a discussion of John 8.25.

11. It sounds as though Augustine at this point held that there are two principles—the one with no principle and the other with a principle. Whatever the case is here, he later rejects the idea that the Father and the Son are two principles; rather as they are one God, so they are one principle; cf. EnP 109.13.

12. Cf. 1 Cor 11.3.

first among the creatures, if the angels and all the intellectual powers were made first? We must believe that the angels are the creation of God and were made by him. For the prophet included the angels in Psalm 148, when he said, "He commanded, and they were made; he gave the order, and they were created."[13] But if the angels were made first, we can ask whether they were made in time or before all time or at the start of time. If [they were made] in time, there already was time before the angels were made, and since time itself is also a creature, it turns out that we have to admit that something was made before the angels. But if we say that they were made at the start of time, so that time began with them, we have to say that it is false that time began with heaven and earth, as some claim.[14]

8. If, however, the angels were made before time, we have to ask how the following verses can say, "And God said, 'Let there come to be lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth and to divide the day and the night and to be as signs for times and for days and years.'"[15] For here it can seem that time began to be, when heaven and the lights of heaven began their courses in ordered paths. But if that is true, how could there be days before there was time, if time began with the course of the lights, which Scripture says were made on the fourth day? Or was this arrangement of days set forth according to what human frailty is used to and by the law of narrating and of conveying exalted things to the humble in a humble fashion? By this law the tale of the narrator must have a beginning, middle and end.[16] Or did Scripture say that the lights should be for those times that men measure by the duration of the motion of bodies? For, if there were no motion of bodies, those times would not be, and they are quite manifest to humans. If we accept this, we must ask

13. Ps 148.5.

14. Augustine offers no clue as to the identity of these exegetes, though it would seem that their position is similar to that of Origen who held that history began with the soul's fall and embodiment; cf. the note by Agaësse and Solignac on DGnL 8.1.1–2.5 in BA 49.497–499.

15. Gen 1.14.

16. Cf. Aristotle, *Poetics,* 1450b26.

whether, apart from the motion of bodies, there could be time in the motion of an incorporeal creature, such as the soul or the mind, which changes, of course, in its thoughts. In that change it has one thing earlier and another later, and that cannot be understood without an interval of time. If we accept this, we can understand that there was time even before heaven and earth, if the angels were made before heaven and earth. For there was a creature that passed through time by incorporeal movements, and we rightly understand that time existed along with that creature just as in the soul that has become used to corporeal motions through the senses of the body.[17] Perhaps time is not in the powers and supereminent creatures. However this may be (for it is a most recondite matter and one impenetrable to human conjectures), we certainly must accept in faith, even if it surpasses the measure of our thought, that every creature has a beginning, that time is a creature and, hence, that it has a beginning and is not coeternal with God.

9. Heaven and earth can be regarded as standing for the whole of creation. Thus this visible and ethereal firmament as well as that invisible creature of supereminent powers was called heaven; so too, all the lower part of the world along with the animals which inhabit it was called the earth. Or is every sublime and invisible creature called heaven and everything visible the earth, so that by the expression "In the beginning God made heaven and earth"[18] one might understand the whole of creation? Perhaps in comparison with the invisible creature everything visible is not inappropriately called earth so that the former might be called by the name of heaven. And when the soul, though invisible, swells up from the love of visible things and is exalted by the acquisition of them, it is called earth, for Scripture says, "Why is earth and ashes proud?"[19]

10. We can ask whether Scripture called heaven and earth all the things which were already distinct and formed, or

17. Augustine implies that the soul has fallen from its angelic state into the body where it has become accustomed to bodily motions.

18. Gen 1.1.

19. Sir 10.9.

whether it first called by the name of heaven and earth that formless matter of the universe which was changed into these formed and beautiful natures by God's ineffable command. Although we read in Scripture, "You who made the world from formless matter,"[20] still we cannot say that whatever sort of matter this was it was not made by him, from whom we confess and believe that all things are. Thus the transformation and ordering of all the individual formed and distinct things is called the world, but its matter is called heaven and earth, like the seed of heaven and earth. This heaven and earth which were confused and mixed up were suited to receive forms from God their maker. What we have done up to this point concerning the words, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth,"[21] should be looked upon as matter for ongoing inquiry, for none of these views could be affirmed without hesitation.

CHAPTER 4

11. "But the earth was invisible and without form, and darkness was over the abyss, and the Spirit of God was borne over the water."[22] The heretics who are opposed to the Old Testament usually stir up charges against this passage, saying, "How did God make heaven and earth in the beginning, if the earth already was?" They do not understand that this addition was made to explain the condition of the earth, of which Scripture says, "God made heaven and earth."[23] Hence, we should take it this way: "In the beginning God made heaven and earth,"[24] but this earth which God made was invisible and without form until, by introducing distinctions, he brought it from confusion and established it in a certain order of reality. Or are we better off in understanding that this discussion once again calls to our attention the same matter

20. Wis 11.18.
21. Gen 1.1.
22. Gen 1.2.
23. The heretics in question are, of course, the Manichees.
24. Gen 1.1.

of things which was previously called heaven and earth? Thus the sense is this: "In the beginning God made heaven and earth," but what is called heaven and earth was the invisible and unformed earth and the darkness over the abyss. That is, what it called heaven and earth was a confused kind of matter out of which the world, which consists of two chief parts, heaven and earth, might be produced by the ordering of its elements and the reception of form. In this way this confusion of matter could be conveyed to the intelligence of ordinary people, if it were called the invisible and unformed, or unordered or unfurnished earth and the darkness over the abyss, that is, over the vast deep. This deep was perhaps so named because it could be penetrated by the intelligence of no one because of its formlessness.

12. "And darkness was over the abyss."[25] Was the abyss below and the darkness above, as if their places were already distinct? Or, since it is still explaining the confusion of matter, which is called *chaos* in Greek, did it say that "darkness was over the abyss," because there was no light? If there were light, it would certainly be above, since it is more eminent and it would illumine the things placed beneath it. One who diligently considers what darkness is, really finds only the absence of light. Thus it said, "darkness was over the abyss," as if to say, "There was no light over the abyss." Hence, this matter which is ordered and distinguished by the next work of God is called the invisible and unformed earth and the deep that is lacking light. This is what was above called heaven and earth, like the seed, as was said, of heaven and earth, unless Scripture wanted to set before us by saying "heaven and earth" the whole universe so that afterward, after mentioning matter, it might discuss the parts of the world.

13. "And the Spirit of God was borne over the water."[26] It never said, "God made the water," and yet one should on no account believe that God did not make the water and that it already was before he made anything. For he is the one "from

25. Gen 1.2. 26. Gen 1.2.

whom are all things, through whom are all things, and in whom are all things,"[27] as the Apostle says. And so God made the water, and it is a great mistake to believe otherwise. Why then did it not say that God made the water? Was it that he wanted to call the same matter that he previously called heaven and earth and the invisible and unformed earth and the abyss by the name "water"? Why should it not be called water as well, if it could be called earth, since up to then neither the water nor the earth nor anything else was distinguished and formed? Perhaps it was first called heaven and earth; secondly, the unformed earth and the abyss lacking light; and thirdly, and not inappropriately, water. Thus the matter is first called by the name of the universe, that is, of heaven and earth, for the sake of which it was made from absolutely nothing. Secondly, its formlessness is conveyed by the mention of the unformed earth and the abyss, because among all the elements earth is more formless and less bright than the rest. Thirdly, by the name, water, there is signified matter that is subject to the work of the maker, for water can be moved more easily than earth. And thus on account of the easiness by which it can be worked and moved, the matter subject to the maker should be called water rather than earth.

14. Air can surely be moved more easily than water. And we believe quite reasonably or perceive that ether can be moved more easily than air, but matter would be less suitably called air or ether. For these elements are thought rather to have the power of acting, while earth and water that of being acted upon. If this is obscure, I think that what is quite clear is that the wind moves the water and some earthly things. But wind is air in motion and, as it were, in waves. Hence, although the air clearly moves the water, it is not clear what moves it so that it is wind. Who would doubt that matter is more fittingly called water because it is moved than air which moves? To be moved is, however, to be acted upon; to move to act. Besides, there is the fact that the things the earth brings forth are moistened by water so that they can come to

27. Rom 11.36.

be and develop. Thus the very water almost seems to be turned into those things that are brought forth. Hence, that matter is more suitably called water than air. The name, "water" implies that it is subject to the work of the maker on account of its mobility and conversion into the bodies that are brought forth; whereas, the name "air" only conveys the idea of mobility, and the other things which more clearly express matter would be lacking. Thus the whole sense is this: "In the beginning God made heaven and earth,"[28] that is, the matter which could receive the form of heaven and earth, and this matter was "the earth invisible and without form,"[29] that is, a deep lacking form and light. Yet since this deep was subject to the motion and work of the Maker, it was called water as well, precisely because of the fact that it yields to one working it.

15. This signification of matter first conveys its end, that is, that for the sake of which it was made; secondly, its formlessness; thirdly, its service and subjection to the Maker. Therefore, it is first called heaven and earth; for its sake matter was made. Secondly, the earth invisible and without form and darkness over the abyss, that is, the formlessness itself without the light, as a result of which the earth is said to be invisible. Thirdly, water subject to the Spirit for receiving its acquired disposition and forms. And thus the Spirit of God is borne over the water so that we might understand the Spirit as making, and the water as that from which he makes, that is, the matter that can be worked upon. For we say that these three, the matter of the world, unformed matter, and matter that can be worked upon, are the names of one reality. Heaven and earth is rightly linked to the first of these names; obscurity, confusion, deep, and darkness to the second; and to the third the ease with which it yields as the Spirit of the Maker is borne over it in order to work upon it.

16. "And the Spirit of God was borne over the water."[30] He was not borne over the water as oil over water, or water

28. Gen 1.1.
29. Gen 1.2.
30. Gen 1.2.

over earth, that is, as if he were encompassed by it. If we must take examples for this from visible things, he was borne over the water, as this light of the sun or the moon is borne over these bodies which it illumines on earth. For it is not encompassed by them, but it is borne over them, while it is encompassed by the heaven. Likewise, we must guard against thinking that the Spirit of God was borne over matter as if through stretches of space; rather [he was borne over it] by a certain productive and creative power. Thus that over which he is borne is produced and created, as the will of the Maker is borne over the wood or whatever is subject to his working, or even the members of his body which he moves for working. Though this likeness is more excellent than any body, it is still slight and almost nothing for understanding the Spirit's being borne over the matter of the world that was subject to his working. But we have not found a clearer and closer likeness of the reality of which we are speaking, in those things which humans can somehow grasp. Hence, in this sort of thinking we will do best to keep that rule of Scripture, "Blessing God, exalt him as much as you can; he will surpass even that."[31] This is what we should say, if in this passage the Spirit of God is taken as the Holy Spirit whom we venerate in that ineffable and immutable Trinity.

17. But it can be interpreted in another way so that we understand the spirit of God as that living creature which encompasses and moves this whole visible universe and everything bodily. Almighty God has given to it a certain power of serving him by working in those things which come to be in nature.[32] Since this spirit is better than any ethereal body, because every invisible creature surpasses every visible creature, it is not inappropriately called the spirit of God. For what is not God's among those things which he created? For

31. Sir 43.33.

32. Augustine is thinking of the world soul; for evidence that he held such a view at least in his early writings, cf. Vernon Bourke, *Wisdom from St. Augustine* (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1984), "The Problem of a World Soul," 78–90. There seem to be further allusions to a world soul below; cf. ch. 5, nt. 41 and ch. 8, nt. 70.

it is said also of the earth, "The Lord's is the earth and its fullness,"[33] and it says with an all-inclusive sweep, "For all things are yours, O Lord, who love souls."[34] We can understand here this spirit, if we take the words, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth,"[35] as referring only to the visible creation. Thus there was borne over the matter of visible things at the start of their production an invisible spirit, which is nonetheless a creature, that is, not God, but a nature made and established by God. But if we think that the matter of all things, that is, of the intellectual and animal and corporeal creation, was referred to by the term "water," the spirit of God in this passage can only be understood as that immutable and holy Spirit of God which was borne over the matter of all the things which God made and created.

18. A third opinion can arise concerning this spirit. One might think that the mention of this spirit refers to the element of air. Thus the four elements are indicated from which this visible world arises, namely, heaven, earth, water, and air—not that they were distinguished and ordered, but because in the confusion of that matter, formless as it was, there was marked out what would arise. This formless confusion is conveyed by the mention of darkness and the abyss. But whichever of these opinions is true, we must believe that God is the Maker and Creator of all things which have arisen, whether they are seen or not seen, not as regards the defects which are against nature, but as regards the natures themselves. We must also believe that there is no creature at all which does not have from him the beginning and the perfection of its kind and substance.

CHAPTER 5

19. "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and the light was made."[36] We ought to understand that God did not say, "Let there be light," by a sound brought forth from the lungs, or

33. Ps 23.1.
34. Wis 11.27.
35. Gen 1.1.
36. Gen 1.3.

by the tongue and teeth. Such thoughts are those of carnal persons, and to be wise in accord with the flesh is death.[37] "Let there be light," was spoken ineffably. One can ask whether what was spoken is the only-begotten Son. For what was spoken is called the Word of God by whom all things were made.[38] Only let us banish the impiety of believing that the Word of God, the only-begotten Son, comes about like a sound uttered by us. The Word of God, by whom all things were made, does not begin to be nor cease to be, but is born without beginning and is coeternal with the Father. Hence, if "Let there be light" begins and ceases to be said, this word is rather spoken to the Word than is itself the Son. And yet this is said ineffably. Let no carnal image creep into the mind and disturb the pious spiritual understanding. For it is a rash and foolhardy opinion that something begins or ceases in the nature of God, if that [becoming] is understood in a proper sense.[39] Yet we should in all humanity permit this to the carnal and little ones, not as if they were going to remain in that state, but as to ones who will rise up from it. Whatever God is said to begin or to cease to be must in no sense be understood in his nature, but in his creation which obeys him in wondrous ways.

20. "And God said, 'Let there be light.'"[40] Is this the light that is obvious to these carnal eyes, or some hidden light which we are not permitted to see through this body? And if it is hidden, is it a bodily light which is stretched out through areas of space perhaps in the lofty parts of the universe? Or is it non-bodily light, such as is in the soul, for the senses of the body report to the soul the experience of what should be avoided and what should be sought? Even the souls of the other animals do not lack such light. Or is it that superior

37. Cf. Rom 8.6.

38. Cf. John 1.1,3.

39. In some sense we say that God begins and ceases to be, for example, our Lord or our refuge, but such beginning or ceasing to be does not properly involve a change in God, but in some creature; cf. DT 5.16.17 for a more precise formulation of this point. The "little ones" should not be disturbed despite their thinking of God as changing, for they would grow and become adults.

40. Gen 1.3.

light that becomes apparent in reasoning and from which there begins everything which was created?[41] For whichever light it signifies, we ought to say that it is made and created, not that by which there shines forth the very Wisdom of God, which is not created, but born, lest we should think that God was without light before he created that light with which we are now dealing. As the words themselves make sufficiently clear, we are told that this light was made. It says, "And he said, 'Let there be light,' and the light was made."[42] The light born from God is one thing; the light which God made is another. The light born from God is the very Wisdom of God, but the light made by God is something mutable, whether corporeal or incorporeal.

21. It usually troubles people how there could be bodily light before there was the heaven or the lights of heaven that are mentioned afterwards. [They act] as if a man can easily or in any way perceive whether apart from the heaven there is a light and whether that light is nonetheless divided and diffused in the stretches of space and embraces the world. But since we may also understand here an incorporeal light, if we say that this book describes not only visible creation, but all of creation, what need is there to delay in this dispute? And since men ask when the angels were made, they are perhaps signified by this light, very briefly, but still most suitably and appropriately.[43]

22. "And God saw that the light was good."[44] We should understand that this sentence does not signify joy as if over an unexpected good, but an approval of the work. For what is said more fittingly of God—insofar as it can be humanly said—than when Scripture puts it this way: "He spoke," "It was made," "It pleased him." Thus we understand in "He

41. This light "from which there begins everything which was created" is the light made on the first day. Augustine interprets this light as a rational creature; cf. Augustine's reference, above, 3.6, to the first intellectual creature and below, 5.24.

42. Gen 1.3.

43. In DGnL Augustine interprets this light as the angels; cf. DGnL 2.8.18–19 and 4.24.41ff.

44. Gen 1.4.

spoke" his sovereignty, in "It was made" his power, and in "It pleased him," his goodness. These ineffable things had to be said in this way by a man to men so that they might profit all.

23. "And God divided the light and the darkness."[45] From this one may understand the great ease of the divine work by which these things are said to have been brought about. For no one thinks that the light was made in such a way that it was confused with darkness and, hence, needed separation. Rather, by the very fact that light was made, there also occurred the division between light and darkness. For "what fellowship does light have with darkness?"[46] Hence, God divided the light and the darkness by making the light, whose absence is called darkness. The difference between light and darkness is like the difference between clothing and nakedness, or full and empty, and so on.

24. We have already stated above the many ways in which light can be understood, and the privations opposed to these can be called darkness. For one is the light that is seen by these bodily eyes, itself bodily, such as the light of the sun, the moon, the stars, and whatever else, whose opposite is darkness, when some place lacks that light. Another light is life that is sentient and able to discern those things which are reported through the body to the judgment of the soul, such as white and black, melodious and harsh, sweet and bitter, hot and cold, and other things of this sort. For the light that is perceived by the eyes is one thing; the light which acts through the eyes so that sensation might occur is something else. For the former is in the body; the latter is in the soul, although it perceives through the body those things it perceives. To it is opposed as darkness a certain insensibility, or perhaps it is better called insensitivity, that is, not perceiving, although things are presented which could be perceived, if there were in [the soul] that light by which something is perceived. [I do not mean] when the functions of the body are lacking, as in the blind and the deaf. For in the minds of these men there is this light we are talking about, though the

45. Gen 1.4. 46. 2 Cor 6.14.

organs of the body are lacking. Nor is it the way a sound is not heard in silence when this light is in the soul and the bodily organs are present, but nothing is presented that might be perceived. One who does not perceive for these reasons does not lack this light. But when such a power is not present in the soul, it is not in that case usually called soul, but life of the kind found in vines and trees and any sorts of plants, if we can persuade you that they have even such life. For some heretics in grave error think that these things not only sense through the body, that is, that they see, hear, and discern heat and fire, but that they also understand an idea and know our thoughts.[47] But dealing with them is another question. Insensibility, then, is the darkness of this light by which anything is perceived, when any life does not have the power of sensing. Hence, one appropriately grants that this is called light if he admits that something by which things become manifest is rightly called light. For when we say it is manifest that this is pleasing to the ear, it is manifest that this is sweet, it is manifest that this is cold, and whatever of this sort that we may attain by the bodily senses, this light by which [these things] are manifest is certainly within and in the soul, though the things which are perceived in this way are presented through the body. A third kind of light can be understood in creatures, that by which they reason. To this is opposed as darkness the irrationality, such as is found in the souls of the other animals.

25. Whether this sentence means for us to understand that the ethereal or the sensual light that the animals share, or the rational light that the angels and men possess, was made first by God in the nature of things, we should hold that God divided the light and darkness by the fact that he made the light. For light is one thing, and those privations of light that God ordered in the opposing darkness are something else. For Scripture did not say that God made the darkness. God made the forms, not privations that pertain to that nothing out of which all things were made by the divine artist. But we

47. Augustine is referring to the Manichees.

understand that he ordered these privations when it is said, "And God divided the light and the darkness,"[48] so that even these privations are not without their order, since God rules and governs all things. Thus when we sing, the moments of silence at certain and measured intervals, although they are privations of sounds, still are well ordered by those who know how to sing and they contribute something to the sweetness of the whole melody. So too, shadows in a painting highlight certain things and are pleasing, not by their form, but by their order. For God does not make our vices, but he still orders them when he puts sinners in that place and forces them to suffer what they deserve. This is what it means for the sheep to be placed on the right and the goats on the left.[49] Hence, God makes some things and orders them, but other things he only orders. He both makes and orders the just, but he does not make sinners insofar as they are sinners, but only orders them when he places the ones at his right and the others at his left, and the fact that he bids them to go into the eternal fire pertains to the ordering of their merits. Thus he both makes and orders the very forms and natures, but he does not make, but only orders, the privations of forms and the defects of natures. Thus he said, "Let there be light, and the light was made."[50] He did not say, "Let there be darkness, and darkness was made." One of these he made; the other he did not make. But he ordered both of them, when God divided the light and the darkness. Thus, since he is their maker, individual things are beautiful, and since he orders them, all things are beautiful.

CHAPTER 6

26. "And God called the light day and he called the darkness night."[51] Light is the name of something just as is day, and darkness and night are each names. Did Scripture have

48. Gen 1.4.
49. Cf. Matt 25.33.
50. Gen 1.4.
51. Gen 1.5.

to say in this way that names were imposed on things, so that the thing upon which the name is imposed can also be called by another name, while otherwise it could not? And did it say "God called the light day" so that it could be said the other way around with no difference, "God called the day light and called the night darkness"? What shall we say to one who might ask us: Was the name "day" given to the light? Or was the name "light" given to the day? For these two, insofar as they are pronounced with a human voice to signify things, are names. In this way we can also ask about the other two. Is the name "night" given to the darkness, or is the name "darkness" given to the night? As Scripture describes it, it is clear that "day" is said to be the name of light and "night" is said to be the name of darkness. When it said, "God made the light and divided the light and the darkness,"[52] there was not yet question of words. Hence, afterward the words "day" and "night" were used, although the former, namely, "light" and "darkness," are certainly also words that signify some things, just as "day" and "night." Hence, should we understand that the thing that received the name could not be talked about otherwise than by some name, or is this naming rather to be understood as distinguishing them? For not all light is day, nor is all darkness night, but light and darkness ordered and divided from each other in certain alternations are called by the names of day and night. Of course, every word is useful for distinguishing. Hence, a name which denotes a thing is also called a denotation. But it denotes it, that is, it distinguishes and helps to discern it by way of instruction. Perhaps, then, God divided the light and the darkness, that is, called the light day and the darkness night, so that ordering them was the same as naming them. Or do those words mean to signify to us which light and which darkness it meant as if it said, "'God made the light, and he divided the light and the darkness.'[53] By the light I mean day and by the darkness I mean night." Thus you would not understand

52. Cf. Gen 1.3–4. Augustine paraphrases rather than quotes the text.
53. Cf. Gen 1.3–4.

any other light than day, and you would not understand any other darkness than night. For, if all light could be understood as "day" and all darkness considered under the name "night," there might not have been any need to say, "And God called the light day and he called the darkness night."[54]

27. Likewise we can ask what day and what night it means. If it wants us to understand the day that begins with the rising of the sun and ends with its setting, and the night that begins from the sun's setting and lasts until its rising, I find no way that these [days] could be before the lights of the heaven were made. Or could stretches of hours and times be spoken of in this way even without the distinction of light and darkness? And how could this change signified by the names, day and night, occur in that light of reason, if this is what is meant, or in that light of the senses?[55] Or are these mentioned, not according to what happened, but according to what can happen, since error can come into reason and dullness into the senses?

CHAPTER 7

28. "And evening came and morning came, one day."[56] Scripture does not now speak of a day in the same sense as when it said, "And God called the light day."[57] Rather it speaks [of a day] in the same sense as when we say, for example, that a month has thirty days, for here we include under the name "day" the nights as well. Above it spoke of a day as separated from night. Therefore, when Scripture mentioned the work God did during the light, it said afterwards that "evening came and morning came, one day," that is, so that it is one day from the beginning of the day to the beginning of the day, that is, from morning to morning. We speak

54. Gen 1.5.

55. In DGnL 4.24.41 Augustine interprets the alternation between light and darkness in the rational light as the morning and evening knowledge of the angels.

56. Gen 1.5.

57. Gen 1.5.

of such days, as I said, when we include the nights. But how did evening come and morning come? Did God make the light and divide the light and the darkness during such a length of time as the day lasts with its brightness, that is, without night included? But how can Scripture say, "For you have the power when you will,"[58] if God needs a length of time in order to complete something? Or were all things completed for God as if in their art and idea, not in a length of time, but in the very power which stands unmoved while it makes those things which we see do not stand still, but pass away? For although, as we speak, some words pass away and others take their place, we should not believe that it happens this way in the very art by whose steadfast working there is produced an artful speech. Although God, who has the power when he wills, makes without a length of time, natures still produce in time their temporal motions. Hence, Scripture may have said, "And evening came and morning came, one day,"[59] as it is foreseen in reason[60] that it ought to or can take place, not as it does take place in stretches of time. For he who said "He who remains for eternity created all things at once,"[61] contemplated[62] the very idea of the works in the Holy Spirit. But in this book the account of the things that God made is broken down most conveniently as if in periods of time so that the very arrangement which weaker souls could

58. Wis 12.18. 59. Gen 1.5.

60. 'In reason' (*in ratione*) is ambiguous. The Latin *ratio* can refer to the human mind, or it can refer to the divine idea in which the order of things exists timelessly. The two are not unrelated since by our reason we see, or judge in accord with, the divine ideas. Augustine distinguishes the timeless activity of God and the timeless knowledge of how things can be or ought to be—as they are in the divine art—from the temporal existence of things.

61. Sir 18.1. Augustine had not used this text in DGnM where he interprets the days of creation literally; cf. DGnM 1.10.16 and 1.14.20. Later (cf. DGnL 4.33.52; 5.3.6; 5.17.35) he will use this text to ground the doctrine of the simultaneous creation of all things, but here he uses it only to deny the activity of God and a temporal extension to divine art; cf. below, 9.31, nt. 79.

62. Zycha's text has a negative. That reading seems to run counter to the sense of the passage. Hence, I have followed the Maurist reading.

not look upon with a firm gaze could be discerned as if by these eyes, when it is set forth through the order of such a discourse.[63]

CHAPTER 8

29. "And God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the middle of the water, and let it divide the waters.' And so it was done. And God made the firmament and divided the water that was below the firmament from the water that was above the firmament."[64] Were the waters above the firmament like these visible ones below the firmament? Scripture seems to refer to the water over which the Spirit was borne, and we took that water to be the matter of this world. Should we then believe that in this passage this matter is separated by the interposition of the firmament so that the lower matter is that of bodies and the higher matter that of souls? For Scripture here calls the firmament what it later calls heaven. Among bodies there is none better than the body of the heaven. Indeed heavenly bodies are completely different from earthly bodies, and the heavenly ones are better. I do not know how anything that surpasses their nature can still be called a body. Perhaps there is a power subject to reason, by reason of which God and the truth are known. This nature can be formed by virtue and prudence, and by their power its fluctuation is checked and bound. Hence, we can regard it as material, and it is rightly called water in Scripture, though it surpasses the reaches of the bodily heaven, not by stretches of space, but by the merit of its incorporeal nature.[65] Since Scripture called

63. Weaker souls cannot gaze upon the arrangement of things in the divine art; hence, Genesis presents God's works in a temporal sequence.

64. Gen 1.6–7.

65. Augustine cautiously suggests the existence of this incorporeal power. It is matter, i.e., changeable, and yet incorporeal. It is distinguished from the reason that knows God and the truth and is subject to that reason. Like the animal part of the soul mentioned in DGnM 2.11.15, it can be formed by virtue and prudence and so held in check. Augustine speaks of this power

heaven the firmament, we can without absurdity hold that anything below the ethereal heaven, in which everything is peaceful and stable, is more mutable and perishable and is a kind of corporeal matter prior to the reception of beauty and the distinction of forms; for this reason it is said to be below the firmament. There were some who believed that these visible and cold waters surrounded the surface of heaven. They tried to use as a proof [of this] the slowness of one of the seven wandering stars which is higher than the rest and is called *Phainōn* by the Greeks.[66] It takes thirty years to complete its starry orbit. Its slowness is supposedly due to its proximity to the cold waters that are above the heaven. I do not know how this opinion can be defended by those who have searched out these matters most carefully. We should affirm none of these opinions rashly, but carefully and moderately discuss them all.

30. "And God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the middle of the water, and let it divide the waters.' And so it was done."[67] After it said, "And so it was done," what need was there to add, "And God made the firmament and divided the water that was below the firmament from the water that was above the firmament"?[68] For when it said above, "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and light was made,"[69] it did not add, "And God made the light." But here, after it said, "And God said, 'Let there be,' and so it was done," it adds, "And God made." Does this make it clear that we should not understand that light was corporeal lest it seem that God—I mean God the Trinity—made it by the interposition of some creature? But because this firmament of the heaven is corporeal, we should believe that it has received beauty and form through the incorporeal creature.[70] The truth, then, would have im-

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in the singular; perhaps it is both one and many; cf. DQ 32.69 and below, nt. 7.

66. *Phainōn* is the planet Saturn.

67. Gen 1.6. 68. Gen 1.7.

69. Gen 1.3.

70. The intellectual creature that receives form and beauty from the truth and communicates form and beauty to bodies seems to be the world soul; cf. DI 15.24–16.25, and above, 4.17, nt. 32.

pressed upon the incorporeal nature in a way suited to reason what the latter impressed in a way suited to bodies so that there might come to be the firmament of the heaven. Thus it added, "And God said, 'Let there be,' and so it was done." Perhaps there was first produced something in the rational nature, and from it beauty was impressed on the body.

CHAPTER 9

Scripture added, "And God made the firmament and divided the water that was below the firmament from the water that was above the firmament."[71] Does this refer to the working on that matter in order that the body of the heaven might come to be? Or was it perhaps for the sake of variety that it did not say above what it said here so that the text of the narrative might not bore the reader? We need not scrupulously search out all these matters. Let each choose what he can; only let him not say something rashly and assert something as known when it is not. Let him recall that he is human and is investigating the works of God to the extent we are permitted.

31. "And God called the firmament heaven."[72] What we said earlier about naming can also be considered here.[73] For not every firmament is heaven. "And God saw that it was good."[74] I would repeat what I said above on this point except that I do not see the same order. For above it said, "And God saw that the light was good,"[75] and afterward it added, "God divided the light and the darkness, and God called the light day and he called the darkness night."[76] Here, however, after reporting the deed that Scripture said was done and after the firmament was called heaven, it said, "And God saw that it was good."[77] This change may have been made in order to avoid repetition, but in any case we have to hold to the words,

71. Gen 1.7.
72. Gen 1.8.
73. Cf. above, 5.19 and 6.26.
74. Gen 1.8.
75. Gen 1.4.
76. Gen 1.4–5.
77. Gen 1.8.

"And God made all things at the same time."[78] Why did he in the previous case first see that it is good, and afterward give it a name, while here he first gave it a name and afterwards saw that it was good? Surely that difference indicates that there are no intervals of time in God's working, although they are found in his works.[79] Something is made earlier and later in accord with the intervals of time, and without these [intervals of time] there could not be a narrative account of what God made, although God could make these things without them. "And evening came and morning came the second day."[80] We have already dealt with this above, and I think the same reasons are valid here as well.

CHAPTER 10

32. "And God said, 'Let the waters which are below the heaven be gathered into one gathering, and let the dry land appear.' And so it was done."[81] This verse gives us highly probable grounds for believing that the water mentioned above is, as we thought, the very matter of the world. For, if everything were filled with water, from where or to where could it be gathered?[82] But if Scripture called some material confusion by the name "water," this gathering should be interpreted as its formation whereby the water received the form we now see that it has. The addition "Let the dry land appear" can be understood as the formation of the earth so that the earth might have this form that we see. For it was called invisible and without form when matter still lacked form. Hence, God said, "Let the water which is below the heavens be gathered," that is, let the corporeal matter be brought into form so that it might be this water that we perceive. "Into one

78. Cf. Sir 18.1.

79. Augustine seems to restrict the simultaneity of creation to the divine activity, while God's works are produced earlier and later in time. The narrative account demands their temporal extension, even if God could make them all at once; cf. above, 7.28, nt. 61.

80. Gen 1.8.

81. Gen 1.9.

82. This is the Manichaean objection; cf. DGnM 1.12.18.

gathering"—the power of the form is called to our attention by the mention of unity. To be truly formed is to be brought into a unity.[83] For what is supremely one is the principle of all form. "And let the dry land appear," that is, let it receive form that is visible and free from confusion. It is good that the water is gathered so that the dry land might appear, that is, that the flow of matter might be checked and what is dark might be brought to light. "And so it was done"; perhaps this too was first carried out in the ideas of the intellectual nature.[84] Thus, the later addition, "And the water was gathered into one gathering, and the dry land appeared," would not seem superfluous, although it had already said, "And so it was done." Rather we should understand that the corporeal work followed after the rational and incorporeal work.

33. "And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of water he called the sea."[85] The reason for these terms still raises [questions] for us.[86] For not all water is the sea, nor everything dry the earth.[87] Hence, what was water and what was dry land had to be separated by these terms. We can without absurdity interpret their distinction and formation as God's naming them. "And God saw that it was good."[88] Here the order is preserved; hence, let those things that have already been dealt with be applied to this passage as well.

CHAPTER 11

34. "And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth the edible plants producing seed according to their own kind and likeness, and the fruit-tree bearing fruit, whose seed is in it ac-

83. Augustine is strongly influenced by the Neoplatonist emphasis upon the One. On the oneness of created being, cf. DOR 2.18.48.

84. The Latin *rationibus* could refer to the ideas or to the reasons of the intellectual nature; cf. above, ch. 7, nt. 5.

85. Gen 1.10.

86. The Latin is not clear; the French translation says, "Once again it is for us that these names are given"; the Spanish has, "The character of these words continues to favor us."

87. Genesis has simply 'dry' (*arida*) which we have elsewhere translated as 'dry land.'

88. Gen 1.10.

cording to its likeness.'"[89] The earth and sea were made, named and approved. We have often said that this should not be understood [to have been done] in periods of time, lest the ineffable power of God as he works should be involved in some slowness.[90] Scripture does not immediately add, as on the two preceding days, "And evening came and morning came the third day."[91] Rather it adds another work so that "the earth brought forth the edible plants producing seed according to their own kind and likeness, and the fruit-tree bearing fruit whose seed is in it according to its likeness."[92] Scripture did not say this of the light and the firmament and the waters and the dry land. For that light does not have offspring in succession, and another heaven is not born from heaven, nor does the earth or the sea give birth to other seas and earths which take their place. Hence "producing seed according to their own kind and likeness" and "whose seed is in it according to its likeness" were appropriately said here, where the likeness of those being born preserves the likeness of the one passing away.

35. All these things are above the earth in such a way that they cling to the earth by their roots and are joined to it and are again separated from it in some way. Hence, I think this account has preserved the meaning of this nature, because they were made on the same day on which the earth appeared. Yet God spoke again, saying that the earth should bring forth, and it again said, "And so it was done."[93] Then in accord with the previous rule, after it has said, "And so it was done," it adds the execution of the work, "And the earth brought forth the edible plants producing seed according to their own kind, and the fruit-tree bearing fruit whose seed is in it according to its likeness."[94] Again it says, "God saw that it was good."[95]

89. Gen 1.11.

90. Augustine is quite clear that God's activity is not temporally extended, but he does not seem to rule out a temporal sequence in the works produced.

91. Gen 1.13.

92. Gen 1.12. The first work is the formation of the land and the sea; the second work is the production of the plants and trees with their seed.

93. Gen 1.9, 11.

94. Gen 1.12.

95. Cf. Gen 1.10, 12.

In this way these things are joined together on one day and are distinguished from each other by the repetition of God's words. I think that this was not done with regard to the earth and the sea precisely because there is more need to distinguish the nature of these things that are propagated by the transmission of seed since they come to be and pass away. Or is it that earth and the sea could have come to be simultaneously, not only in the ideas of the spiritual creature where all things were made simultaneously, but also in the motions of bodies? The trees and every sort of plant could only have come to be if the earth in which they germinated had come first.[96] Did the command of God, then, have to be repeated in order to show that the things made were different, though they did not have to be made on another day because they are fixed and held by their roots to the earth? One can ask why God did not give them names, or was this passed over because their multitude did not permit it? In any case this question will be better considered later, when we take note of other things that God did not call by name, as he called the light and the heaven and the earth and the sea. "And evening came and morning came the third day."[97]

CHAPTER 12

36. "And God said, 'Let there come to be the lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth and to divide the day and the night and to be as signs for times and for days and for years. And let them be as a splendor in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth.'"[98] On the fourth day the lights were made, of which it is said, "And to be for days." What then is the meaning of those three days passed without the lights? Why should these lights be "for days" if there could be days even without them? Is it that the

96. Augustine clearly hesitates to say that all things were created simultaneously, since the plants and trees required that the earth and waters first be separated.

97. Gen 1.13.

98. Gen 1.14–15.

motion of these lights permits men to distinguish more clearly the expanse of time and intervals of duration? Or is this enumeration of days and nights more important for distinguishing the nature that was not made from those that were made, such that morning is mentioned because of the beauty of those things which were made, while evening [is mentioned] because of privation? For they are beautiful and formed, insofar as pertains to him by whom they were made. But as far as their own power goes, they can fail, because they were made from nothing, and to the extent that they do not fail, it is not due to their matter which is from nothing, but to him who is in the highest degree and makes them be in their kind and order.[99]

37. "And God said, 'Let there come to be lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light.'"[100] Did Scripture say this only of the fixed stars, or also of those which move?[101] The two lights, the greater and the lesser, are counted among the movable stars. How then were they all made in the firmament, when all the movable ones have their own orbits or revolutions?[102] We read in the Scriptures that there are many heavens and one heaven, as in this passage when the firmament is also called heaven. Should we then take Scripture as speaking of this whole ethereal machine that holds all the stars? Beneath it there thrives the serenity of the pure and peaceful air, beneath which this turbulent and stormy air is blown about. "To give light upon the earth and to divide the day and the night." Had God not already divided light and darkness, and called the light day and called the darkness night? That earlier text made it clear that he divided the day and the night. What then does it mean when it says of the lights "To divide the day and the night"? Or was this division by the lights now made so that even men who were using only carnal

99. Creatures are insofar as they are from God; they are not insofar as they are from nothing; cf. DGnM 1.2.4, nt. 17.

100. Gen 1.14.

101. That is, the planets.

102. Augustine takes quite literally the production of the planets and stars in the firmament or vault of the heaven. Hence, the problem with their separate movements.

eyes for the contemplation of these things might know it? Did God make this division before the revolution of the lights so that only a few with a holy spirit and serene reason could see it? Or did God divide day and night from each other, that is, the beauty which he imposed upon that formlessness from the lack of form which still remained to be formed? Quite another is this day and night whose change is marked by the turn of heaven; it could not come about except by the rising and setting of the sun.

CHAPTER 13

38. "And to be as signs for times and for days and for years."[103] It seems to me that when Scripture said, "for times," it explained the words "as signs." We should not interpret the signs as something other than times. For Scripture is now speaking of these times that by their distinct intervals convey to us that eternity remains immutable above them so that time might appear as a sign, that is, as a vestige of eternity.[104] Likewise, when it adds, "and for days and for years," it shows of what times it is speaking. These days come about by the revolutions of the fixed stars, and there come about the obvious years when the sun completes its starry course, and the more obscure ones when each of the wandering stars completes its orbit. It did not say, "and for months," perhaps because the month is the moon's year, as twelve years of the moon is a year of that star which the Greeks call *Phaethon*, and thirty solar years are the year of that star which is called *Phainōn*.[105] It may be that when all the stars have come back to the same place, the great year is completed, about which many have said so much.[106] Or did it say, "as signs," to indicate those

103. Gen 1.14.

104. For time as a vestige or image of eternity, cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 37d7; Plotinus, *Ennead* 3.7.1; and DMu 6.11.29.

105. *Phaethon* was the son of Helios, the god of the sun. Here *Phaethon* seems to be used for the sun; *Phainōn* was the planet Saturn.

106. The great year was discussed by a number of Latin authors; cf. Macrobius, *Somnium Scipionis* 2.11 and Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.20.

which sailors use to mark out a certain course? And did it say, "for times," as if referring to springtime and summer and autumn and winter?[107] For these change with the revolution of the stars and keep their turn and order. But "for days and for years" should be interpreted as we explained above.

39. "And let them be as a splendor in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth."[108] It had already said, "Let there come to be the lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth."[109] Why do we suppose that this was repeated? As it said that the plants should bear seed and that there should be seed in them according to their kind and likeness, was it said here in the reverse order concerning the lights, "Let them come to be," and "Let them be"? That is, let them come to be and not generate, but let them be themselves. "And so it was done."[110] There the order is preserved.

40. "And God made two lights, the greater light the beginning of the day and the lesser light the beginning of the night, along with the stars."[111] It will soon become clear what Scripture means by the beginning of the day and the beginning of the night. It is unclear whether the addition "along with the stars" belongs to the beginning of the night or not. Some men would have it that this means that the full moon was made first, because the full moon arises in the beginning of the night, that is, soon after the setting of the sun. But it is unreasonable for us to begin to count, not from the first, but from the fifteenth or sixteenth day. You should not be troubled by the claim that the light that God made ought to have been made full. For it is full every day, though men see its fullness only when it is opposite the sun. When it is in conjunction with it, since it is beneath it, its light seems to have ceased, but it is full even then. For it is lighted from the other side and cannot be seen by those who are beneath it, that is, by those who inhabit the earth. This is not a matter that we

107. The Latin *tempora* can mean 'seasons' as well as 'times.'
108. Gen 1.15.
109. Gen 1.14.
110. Gen 1.15.
111. Gen 1.16.

can explain in a few words; rather it needs learned discourses and the help of diagrams one can see.

41. "And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth."[112] How could Scripture have said, "Let them come to be in the firmament," and now say, "God made the lights and set them in the firmament"? It sounds as if they were made somewhere else and afterwards set in the firmament, although it already said that they should come to be there. Or does this passage once again convey the idea that God did not work in the way humans usually work, but that the story was told in the way humans could understand it? For among men "made" is one thing, and "set" another, but each of these is the same with God who sets by making and makes by setting.

42. "And to rule over the day and the night and to divide the day and the night."[113] It had said, "the beginning of the day," and, "the beginning of the night,"[114] and now it explains this by saying, "To rule over the day and the night." We ought to understand that beginning as ruling, for among those things that are seen during the day none is more excellent than the sun, and at night none is more excellent than the moon and the stars. The lack of clarity that we previously mentioned should cause no problem,[115] and we should believe that the stars were set there so that they might belong to the beginning, that is, to ruling over the night. "And God saw that it was good."[116] The same order is preserved. Let us bear in mind that God did not give them names, although Scripture could have said, "God called the lights stars." For not every light is a star.

43. "And evening came and morning came the fourth day."[117] If you are thinking of these days that are marked off by the rising and the setting of the sun, this is not the fourth, but perhaps the first day. We might suppose that the sun rose at the time it was made and that it had set until the other stars

112. Gen 1.17.
113. Gen 1.18.
114. Gen 1.16.
115. Cf. above, 13.40, for the previous lack of clarity.
116. Gen 1.18.
117. Gen 1.19.

were made. But one who understands that the sun is elsewhere when we have night and that it is night elsewhere when we have the sun will look more deeply into the enumeration of these days.

CHAPTER 14

44. "And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth the reptiles with living souls and the flying things that fly over the earth beneath the firmament of the heaven.' And so it was done."[118] The animals that swim are called reptiles, because they do not walk with feet. Or is it because there are other animals that crawl on the earth below the water? There are in the water other winged things; there are, for instance, some fish that have scales, and others that do not, but use wings. One can wonder whether these should be counted among the flying things in this passage. There is some question as to why Scripture assigns the flying things to the water instead of the air. For we cannot interpret the text as referring only to those birds that are water fowl, such as divers and ducks and the like. For if it had meant only these, it would have mentioned the other birds elsewhere. Among the birds some are such strangers to water that they do not even drink. Perhaps Scripture called this air next to the earth "water" because it is found to be moist with dew even on the calmest nights and because it is gathered into clouds. A cloud is water, as all can see who have the chance to walk among the clouds in the mountains or even amid the fog in the fields. In such air the birds are said to fly. For they cannot fly in that higher and purer air, which is truly called air by everyone. For because of its thinness it does not support their weight. In that air they say that clouds do not gather and no stormy weather exists. Indeed where there is no wind, as on the peak of Mount Olympus, which is said to rise above the area of this humid air, we are

118. Gen 1.20. The translation of *volatilia* as 'flying things' is necessary here, because Augustine asks whether there are not other things that fly besides the birds.

told, certain letters are regularly made in the dust and are a year later found whole and unmarred by those who climb that mountain for their solemn memorials.[119]

45. Hence, we can reasonably suppose that in the divine Scriptures the firmament of the heaven is said to extend to these areas, and we may believe that this most tranquil and pure air pertains to the firmament. For the name, firmament, can signify tranquillity itself and a great part of reality. For this reason I think that the Psalms also say, "And your truth reaches to the clouds."[120] For nothing is more firm and peaceful than the truth. But clouds gather under that region of the purest air. Although we take this as having been said figuratively, it was still drawn from these things which bear a certain likeness to them. Hence, the more stable and pure bodily creature which extends from the highest point of the heaven to the clouds, that is, down to the misty, stormy and humid air, is correctly regarded as bearing the image of the truth. Thus the flying things that fly above the earth beneath the firmament of the heaven are appropriately assigned to the waters, since this air is not inappropriately called water. Hence, we are also given to understand that nothing was said about how or when the air was made, since this air is included under the name of the waters, while the other [purer air] is included under the name of the firmament. Thus no element is passed over.

46. Someone might say: From the words "Let the water be gathered"[121] we understood that the water was made out of the confusion of matter, and God called this gathering the sea. And so, even if this air can be called water, how can we understand that this air was made at that point, since it is not called the sea? It seems to me that the words "Let the dry land appear"[122] convey to us the form not only of the earth, but also of this thicker air. For the earth is illumined through this air so that we can clearly see it. Hence, in the one expression "Let [the dry land] appear" it conveyed all those things

119. Cf. DGnM 1.15.24, nt. 77.
120. Ps 35.6 = 56.11.
121. Gen 1.9.
122. Gen 1.9.

without which it could not appear, that is, its form and the removal of the waters and the diffusion of the air by which the light from the higher part of the world is poured out in it. Or do the words "let the water be gathered" convey the form of this air; for when this air becomes dense, we see that it produces this water? Perhaps Scripture called the gathering of the water this condensation by which it became the sea. Thus the air that is borne above [the earth] without having been gathered, that is, without having been thickened, is the water that is able to support birds in flight. It is aptly named in both ways so that we can call it subtile water or thick air. But why does Scripture not say when it was made? Or is it perhaps true, as some would have it, that the moister exhalations of the sea and the earth make these breezes thicker than that higher and clear air so that they are suited to support the flight of birds? That they are thinner than those waters by which the body is bathed so that in comparison with them they feel dry and airy? Since Scripture had already spoken of the earth and the sea, what need was there to mention their exhalations, that is, the waters used by the birds? For you understand that the most pure and tranquil air is assigned to the firmament.

47. Neither is anything said about how the springs and rivers were made. Those who diligently investigate and discuss these matters say that a fresh vapor is invisibly drawn off from the sea by the movement of air over its surface, that is, by those evaporations that we cannot see at all. They say that clouds are formed from these and that the earth is drenched by rain and that it drips and seeps into remote caverns in great quantity. Then, after it is gathered together and has passed through various channels, it bursts forth in springs, whether small ones or ones capable of bringing forth rivers. They offer as proof of this that the steam of boiled sea water caught in a coiled lid provides fresh water to those who taste it. Almost everyone is aware that smaller springs feel the lack of rain. Even sacred history bears witness to this, for when Elias begged for rain during a period of drought, he ordered Eliseus to watch the sea while he prayed. When he saw a tiny cloud arise, he reported to the worried king that rain was

upon them, and while he took flight, he was drenched by it.[123] David too says, "Lord, you who summon the water of the sea, and pour it out over the face of the earth."[124] Hence, once it had mentioned the sea, it would be superfluous to speak of the other waters, whether those dewy ones that by their fineness offer to flying birds their breezes, or those of springs and rivers. If the former come about by evaporation, the latter flow forth because of the corresponding rains that the earth drinks in.

CHAPTER 15

48. "Let the waters bring forth the reptiles with living souls."[125] Why does Scripture add "living"? Can they be souls if they are not living? Or does it want to emphasize the more obvious life that is present in sentient animals, because it is lacking in plants? "And flying things that fly over the earth beneath the firmament of the heaven."[126] If flying things do not fly in that most pure air where no clouds are formed, these words make it clear that [such air] pertains to the firmament. For it was beneath the firmament of heaven that the flying things are said to fly over the earth. "And so it was done."[127] The same order is kept. Hence, the same addition is made as in the other cases, with the exception of the light that was made first.

49. "And God made the great fish and every soul of crawling animals, which the waters brought forth according to their kind, and every winged flying thing according to its kind."[128] We recall, of course, that "according to its kind" is said of those creatures that are replenished by propagation from seed. For it already said this of the plants and trees. "And every winged flying thing." Why is "winged" added? Can there

123. Cf. 1 Kgs 18.43–44.
124. The verse is from Amos 5.8 or 9.6 despite Augustine's mentioning David.
125. Gen 1.20.
126. Gen 1.20.
127. Gen 1.20.
128. Gen 1.21.

be flying things that do not have wings? Or, if there can be, surely God has not made this kind? For we do not find where it was made. Bats, locusts, flies, and such things lack feathers, but not wings. "Winged" was added so that we do not understand only the birds, since fish have wings and fly over the earth below the waters. Hence, it did not say, "birds," but [called] flying things in general "winged flying things." "And God saw that it was good."[129] This should be understood as in the other passages.

50. "And he blessed them, saying, 'Increase and multiply, and fill the waters of the sea, and let the flying things multiply over the earth.'"[130] He wanted the blessing to have the power of fecundity which is revealed in the succession of offspring. Thus, though they were made weak and mortal, they might, by that blessing, preserve their kind by giving birth. But why did he not bless the plants too, since by being born they bear the likeness of things that pass? Was it that they lack sensation which is close to reason? For it may well be significant that God uses the second person in blessing them so that he urges these animals as if they were somehow listening, when he says, "Increase and multiply, and fill the waters of the sea." Still he does not continue in the same person until the end of the blessing; for there follows, "And let the flying things multiply over the earth." He did not say, "Multiply over the earth." Perhaps this signifies that the sensation of living souls is not so close to reason that they can perfectly understand one urging them, as can those who have intelligence and can use reason.

51. "And so it was done."[131] Here even someone slow clearly ought to wake up and understand the kind of days that are being counted. For God gave to animals precisely numbered seeds that preserve a marvelous constancy in their determinate order so that for a certain number of days, each according to its kind, they bear their young in their womb after conception and incubate the eggs they have produced. The

129. Gen 1.21. 130. Gen 1.22.

131. Gen 1.22. From what Augustine says it seems that his version of Genesis had, "And so it was done," in 1.22 as well as 1.24.

law of this nature is preserved by the wisdom of God that stretches "from end to end with might and arranges all things with gentleness."[132] How on one day could they conceive and grow heavy in womb, and warm and nourish their offspring, and fill the waters of the sea and multiply over the earth? For, "And so it was done," is added before evening comes. Perhaps when it says, "evening came," it recalls unformed matter, and when it says, "morning came," it calls to mind the form which is impressed upon matter by the work itself. For after the work it brings to a close the day that has passed. Yet God did not say, "Let there be evening," or, "Let there be morning." For this expression very briefly recalls the things that have already been made, since evening and morning signify form and matter. Scripture already said that God made these, though it did not say that God made their failing, that is, when they tend from form toward matter and nothing, if we are right in supposing that this idea is conveyed by the name "night." Yet God ordered it, when it said above, "God divided the light and the darkness."[133] Thus the term "evening" signifies unformed matter, which, even though it is made out of nothing, still is and has the capability to receive forms and beauty. The name "darkness" can also be taken to mean absolute nothingness, which God did not make, but out of which he made everything he deigned to make in accord with his ineffable goodness. For he who made such great things out of nothing is the Almighty.

52. "And evening came and morning came the fifth day."[134] Here, after it said, "And so it was done," it does not add, as it usually does, the execution of the work, as if the things were made again; for it had already said this above. The blessing that pertains to the generation of offspring produced no new nature, but preserved by succession those things which had already been made. Thus it did not say, "And God saw that it was good." For the thing itself was pleasing, and it was only to be preserved in the offspring. Thus nothing is repeated here except that it says, "And so it was done," and immediately

132. Wis 8.1.
133. Gen 1.4.
134. Gen 1.23.

thereafter it speaks of evening and morning. We said that the mention of these signifies the works produced from unformed matter and from the form that is imposed on it. Perhaps we will meet with something better and loftier as we continue our investigation.

53. "And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth the living soul according to its kind, quadrupeds, serpents and beasts of the earth according to their kind, and cattle according to their kind. And so it was done."[135] When "soul" was mentioned, why was "living" added? And what does "according to its kind" mean? The usual conclusion, "And so it was done," should be considered and understood as we dealt with it above. Though in the Latin language the name "beasts" signifies every irrational animal, still we have to distinguish their kinds so that we understand the quadrupeds as all beasts of burden, the serpents as all crawling things, the beasts or wild animals as all untamed quadrupeds, and the cattle as those that do not help us by work, but provide some benefit to those who eat them.

CHAPTER 16

54. "And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kind, and the cattle according to their kind, and all the serpents of the earth, according to their kind."[136] This repetition of the phrase, "And God made," when it had already said, "And so it was done," should be interpreted according to the previous rule.[137] Here the name "cattle," I believe, signified all the quadrupeds that live under man's care. "And God saw that it was good"[138] should be understood in the usual manner.

55. "And God said, 'Let us make man to our image and likeness.'"[139] Here we should notice how the animals are grouped together and yet kept separate. Scripture says that

135. Gen 1.24.
136. Gen 1.25.
137. Cf. above, 15.52, or perhaps 8.30 or 13.41.
138. Gen 1.25.
139. Gen 1.26.

man was made on the same day as the beasts; for they are all alike earthly animals. Yet on account of the excellence of reason, according to which man is made to the image and likeness of God, it speaks of him separately, after it had finished speaking of the other earthly animals in the customary manner, by saying, "And God saw that it was good."[140]

56. We should also note that in the other cases God said, "Let there be made, and there was made," but here God said, "Let us make," since the Holy Spirit wanted to convey the excellence of human nature in this way also.[141] But to whom is it now said, "Let us make," if not to him to whom it was said, "Let there be made"? For "all things were made through him, and without him nothing was made."[142] But why do we suppose that it said in one case, "Let there be made," if it was not that he should make at the bidding of the Father, and why do we suppose that in the other case it said, "Let us make," if not that both should make man together? Or does the Father make all the things he makes through the Son? And therefore, it now says, "Let us make," so that to man himself, for whose sake the Scripture itself was made, it might be shown in himself that the Father also makes those things that the Son makes at the Father's bidding? Thus, since it had said in the other cases, "Let there be made, and it was made," it here explains that the speaking was not separate from the making, but that both occurred together, when it said here, "Let us make."

57. "And God said, 'Let us make man to our image and likeness.'"[143] Every image is like that of which it is an image, but not everything which is like something is also its image. Thus, because in a mirror or in a picture there are images, they are also like. But if the one does not have its origin from the other, it is not said to be the image of the other. For it is an image only when it is derived from the other thing. Why, then, since it had said, "to our image," did it add, "and like-

140. Gen 1.25.

141. Augustine attributes the authorship of Scripture to the Holy Spirit and has the Father saying to the Son, "Let us make."

142. John 1.3.

143. Gen 1.26.

ness," as if an image could be unlike? It would be sufficient to say, "to our image." Or is like one thing, and likeness another, as a chaste person is one thing and chastity another? So too a strong person is one thing and strength another. Whatever things are strong are strong by strength. And whatever things are chaste are chaste by chastity. So too, are all like things like by likeness? But our image is not quite properly said to be our likeness, although it is properly said to be like us. The likeness by which like things are like lies where there is found the chastity by which chaste things are chaste. But chastity is not chaste by participation in something else; rather, whatever things are chaste are chaste by participation in it. This chastity is surely in God where there is also that wisdom which is not wise by participation; rather, by participation in it, every wise soul is wise. Hence, the likeness of God, through which all things were made, is properly said to be likeness, because it is not like by participation in some likeness, but is itself the first likeness, and whatever things God made through it are like by participation in it.[144]

58. The explanation may be that the addition, "to the likeness," after it had said, "to the image," was meant to show that what was called the image is not like God in the manner of one participating in some likeness, but that this image is itself the likeness, in which all things participate which are said to be like. Thus there is in God chastity itself, by participation in which souls are chaste, and wisdom, by participation in which souls are wise, and beauty, by participation in which all beautiful things are beautiful. For if it only said, "likeness," it would not signify that it had its origin from him, and if it only said, "image," it would signify that it had its origin from him, but not that it was so like to him that it was not merely like, but likeness itself. As, however, nothing is more chaste than chastity itself, and nothing more wise than wisdom itself, and nothing more beautiful than beauty itself, so nothing at all can either be said to be, or thought to be, or be more like

144. This difficult section on participation tries to explain the difference between the Son who is the image and the likeness of the Father and human beings who are made "to the image and likeness of God."

than likeness itself. From this we understand that likeness to the Father is so like him that it fully and perfectly embodies his nature.

59. The greatness of the power that the likeness of God, through which all things were made, has for imposing unity on things vastly surpasses human thought. Still we can get some idea of it if we consider that the whole of nature, whether what we attain by our senses or what we attain by our reason, preserves the impression of unity by parts like one another. For rational souls are called wise from the wisdom of God. This name does not have a further extension, for we cannot call either cattle or, even less, trees or fire or air or water or earth wise, although all these things also exist, insofar as they exist, through the very wisdom of God. But we say that stones and animals and men and angels are like themselves. Even in individual things we say that the earth is made to be earth because it has its parts like to one another. And every part of water is like the remaining parts; otherwise it could not be water. So too if any part of air was unlike the rest, it could in no way be air. A particle of fire or of light is made to be what it is by reason of the fact that it is not unlike the remaining parts. Thus in every body, whether of stones or of trees or of any living thing, we can see and understand that they not only would not be with other things of their kind, but would not be individually in themselves, if they did not have parts like one another. A body's beauty increases in proportion to its having parts that are more like one another. Finally, not merely do like customs produce mutual friendship between souls, but in each individual soul as well like actions and virtues, without which there can be no constancy, are a mark of the happy life. We can say that all these things are like, but not that they are likeness itself. Hence, the universe is made up of things like one another such that the individual things are whatever they are and all of them fill the universe which God both created and governs. But all such things were made through the supereminent and immutable and undefilable likeness of him who created all things. Thus they are beautiful with parts like one another; yet not all things, but only the

rational substance, was made "to the likeness." Hence, all things were made through it, but only the soul was made to it.

60. Thus the rational substance was made both through and to the likeness. For there is no nature that comes between, and thus the human mind clings to nothing but the truth, though it is aware of this only when it is most pure and blessed. This truth is called the likeness and image and wisdom of the Father. Thus, "Let us make man to our image and likeness"[145] is correctly understood according to what is within man and is his principal part, that is, according to the mind. For the whole of man should be assessed from that which holds the principal place in man and which distinguishes him from the beasts. Though the other things in man are beautiful in their own order, man has them in common with the cattle, and for that reason they should be lightly valued in man.[146] Perhaps the fact that the human figure is erect for gazing upon heaven carries some weight so that one might believe that the body also was made to the likeness of God.[147] As likeness is not turned away from the Father, so the human body is not turned away from heaven as the bodies of the other animals are turned away, for they are stretched out on their belly with their face down. Yet this parallel should not be understood in every respect, for our body is very different from heaven, but in that likeness which is the Son there cannot be anything unlike him to whom he is like. Whatever other things are like are also in some respect unlike, but the likeness itself is not unlike in any respect. The Father is only the Father, and the Son is nothing other than the Son, because even when he is called the likeness of the Father, although this shows that no unlikeness comes between them, yet the Father is not alone, if he has the likeness.

61. "And God said, 'Let us make man to our image and

145. Gen 1.26.

146. Augustine insists that the image of God is found only in the mind, not in the other parts of man that he has in common with the other animals.

147. Grudgingly he is willing to admit an image of God in man's erect body.

likeness.'"[148] What we said above about this quite sufficiently explains these words of Scripture in which we read that God said, "Let us make man to our image and likeness." Thus the likeness of God to which man was made can be understood as the very Word of God, that is, the only-begotten Son, not, of course, that man is the same image and likeness equal to the Father. Still man is an image of God, as the Apostle most clearly showed, when he said, "The man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God."[149] But this image made to the image of God is not equal to and coeternal with him whose image it is, and it would not be, even if it had not sinned at all. But in these words of God we should rather choose that meaning whereby we understand "Let us make man to our image and likeness"[150] as spoken not in the singular, but in the plural. For man was not made to the image of the Father alone, or of the Son alone, or of the Holy Spirit alone, but to the image of the Trinity. This Trinity is a trinity in such a way that it is one God, and it is one God in such a way that it is a trinity. He did not say to the Son, "Let us make man to your image," or, "to my image." Rather he said in the plural, "to our image and likeness." Who would dare to remove the Holy Spirit from that plural? Since this plural is not three gods, but one God, we should understand that the Scripture later introduced the singular, saying, "And God made man to the image of God."[151] Thus we should not understand this as though God the Father made man to the image of God, that is of his Son. Otherwise, how are the words, "to our im-

148. Gen 1.26. At this point Augustine left the work unfinished until he added the remaining paragraphs at the time when he found the work unfinished as he mentions in R 1.18, "I left the book incomplete as I had dictated it up to this point. What follows is what I thought should be added when I reviewed it; still I did not finish it but left it incomplete even with this addition. For if I had completed it, I would have discussed at least all the works and words of God which belong to the sixth day. It seemed superfluous to me to point out the things which displease me in this book or to defend those things which could displease others if they are not correctly understood. In brief, I prefer to advise that those twelve books be read which I composed much later when I was a bishop; from those this one can be judged."

149. 1 Cor 11.7.

150. Gen 1.26.

151. Cf. Gen 1.27.

age," true, if man was made to the image of the Son alone? Since God's words, "to our image," are true, Scripture said, "God made man to the image of God," as if to say, "to his image which is the very Trinity."[152]

62. Some, however, think that "likeness" was not repeated and it did not say, "And God made man to the image and likeness of God," because he was at that time made only to the image, while the likeness was being kept for him at the resurrection of the dead, as if there could be an image in which there was no likeness. For if it was not like at all, it was certainly not an image. Still, in order that we may not seem to be making this point by reason alone, we should use the authority of the Apostle James who says, while speaking of man's tongue, "With it we bless God, and with it we curse men who are made to the likeness of God."[153]

152. In the earlier part Augustine had understood "to the image of God" as "to the Son." That is, man was made to the image of the Image and Likeness of the Father; at the time of R 1.18 he is quite insistent that man is an image of the Trinity.

153. Jas 3.9.

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