

COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 1-3



by

Cornelius a Lapide

INTRODUCTION

In his masterpiece *Pascendi*, St. Pius X identified the worst heresy in the history of the Church and foresaw the untold damage that this heresy would inflict upon the Church and the world if it remained unchecked. The heresy was “modernism,” “the synthesis of all heresies,” and its “principal doctrine,” wrote St. Pius X, was “evolution.” Other heresies, he noted, had added, subtracted or distorted some part of the Deposit of Faith; but evolution-based modernism conceived of the whole world as in a state of continuous evolution and thus abandoned the very notion of immutable Truth. On every side, he saw Catholic intellectuals rejecting scriptural inerrancy and the sacred history of Genesis on the grounds that “natural science” had proven that the Bible contained historical errors and that advances in geology and biology had proven that man had evolved from a one-celled organism through millions of years of the same kinds of natural processes he observed in the present. Vatican One had already anathematized the proposition that “the progress of the sciences demands that the Catholic doctrine of creation be recast,” but St. Pius X saw that the ranks of Catholic intelligentsia holding that error continued to swell, so he renewed the anathema in his own name.

In *Pascendi*, St. Pius noted that, for the modernist, liturgy and doctrine had to be adapted to the changing circumstances produced by the evolutionary process. The doctrines and liturgical traditions of the past had to give way to new expressions and practices better adapted to the current stage of evolution. Thus, in Europe, the Faith that had given birth to Christian civilization began to be subverted and replaced by a counterfeit modernist religion that affirmed the right of fallible human natural science to pass judgment on the supernatural divine Revelation of God, as it had been understood in the Church from the beginning.

One of the greatest obstacles to the restoration of the traditional Catholic doctrine of creation, the foundation of our holy Faith, is the widespread belief that the literal historical interpretation of Genesis 1-11 has no place in the history of Catholic theology, and that it was an invention of protestant fundamentalists. This absurd claim is repeated again and again by Catholic theistic evolutionists, in spite of the fact that all of the Fathers, Doctors, Popes and Council Fathers in their authoritative teaching believed and proclaimed the literal historical truth of every word of the first eleven chapters of the Book of Genesis from the time of the Apostles. This “diabolical disorientation” affects even Catholics who defend the liturgical and doctrinal tradition of the Church, so that it is not unusual to find the champions of theistic evolution among the most zealous promoters of the traditional Liturgy—in spite of the fact that, in keeping with the principle of “*Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi*,” all of the liturgical traditions of the Catholic Church harmoniously proclaim the literal historical truth of Genesis 1-11.

The translation and publication of the great scholar Cornelius a Lapide’s commentary on the first three chapters of the Book of Genesis is the latest in a series of on-going efforts by the Kolbe Center for the Study of Creation to demonstrate that the literal historical interpretation of Genesis enjoys the support, not only of all of the Apostles, Fathers and Doctors of the Church, but of the greatest Catholic exegetes of the last 500 years. As the biographical sketch of Lapide below demonstrates, he was an exegete in the tradition of the Fathers of the Church who combined exceptional learning with great sanctity. His interpretation of the first three chapters of the book of Genesis draws upon three thousand years of Hebrew and Catholic exegesis, revealing an intimate knowledge of all of the major commentaries on the Bible of the Latin and Greek Fathers

and Doctors. This magnificent work ought to destroy once and for all the absurd claim that protestant fundamentalist innovators invented the literal historical interpretation of Genesis 1-3.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God and of all the Saints, may He who created all things by His Word use this work to renew in the members of His Mystical Body the Faith of our Fathers in the sacred history of Genesis and in the traditional Catholic doctrine of creation which is the foundation of our Holy Faith.

Hugh Owen, Director, Kolbe Center for the Study of Creation
Feast of St. Jerome, September 30, 2019

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF CORNELIUS A LAPIDE

The Flemish Jesuit and exegete, b. at Bocholt, in Flemish Limburg, 18 December, 1567; d. at Rome, 12 March, 1637. He studied humanities and philosophy at the Jesuit colleges of Maestricht and Cologne, theology first, for half a year, at the University of Douai, and afterwards for four years at Louvain; he entered the Society of Jesus, 11 June, 1592, and, after two years' noviciate and another year of theology, was ordained priest 24 December, 1595. After teaching philosophy for half a year, he was made professor of Holy Scripture at Louvain in 1596 and next year of Hebrew also. Twenty years later, in 1616, he was called to Rome in the same capacity, where, on the 3rd of November, he assumed the office which he filled with such renown for many years after. The latter years of his life, however, he seems to have devoted exclusively to finishing and correcting his celebrated commentaries. He was a sincerely pious and zealous priest and an exemplary religious. During his professorship at Louvain he liked to spend his holidays preaching and administering the sacraments, especially at the pilgrimage of Scherpenheuvel (Montaigu). With moving simplicity and truth he portrayed himself in an emotional prayer to the Prophets at the end of his commentary on Daniel: "For nearly thirty years I suffer with and for you with gladness the continual martyrdom of religious life, the martyrdom of illness, the martyrdom of study and writing; obtain for me also, I beseech you, to crown all, the fourth martyrdom, of blood. For you I have spent my vital and animal spirits; I will spend my blood too." With his brethren in religion at Rome he enjoyed so high a reputation for sanctity that, when he died, they gave him a separate burial place, in order to be the more certain of finding his bones when eventually, as they hoped, he should receive the honour of beatification.

Cornelius a Lapide wrote ample commentaries on all the books of the Catholic Canon of Scripture, with the exception only of Job and the Psalms. Even before leaving Flanders, he edited the "Commentaries in omnes divi Pauli epistolas" (1614) and, "in Pentateuchum" (1616), both at Antwerp. The commentaries on the Greater and Lesser Prophets, on the Acts of the Apostles, the Canonical Epistles and the Apocalypse, Ecclesiasticus and the Proverbs, followed later on. The rest were edited only after his death; but all of them have been several times re-edited, both separately and collectively. Of the Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul he himself was permitted to see at least eleven editions. The complete series, with Job and the Psalms added by other hands, appeared at Antwerp, 1681, 1714; at Venice, 1717, 1740, 1798; at Cologne, 1732; at Turin, 1838; at Lyons, 1839-42, 1865 and 1866; at Malta, 1843-46; at Naples, 1854; at Lyons and Paris, 1855 and 1856; at Milan, 1857; at Paris, 1859-63. The best-mentioned edition has been enriched by Crampon and Péronne with annotations from more recent interpreters. All these commentaries are on a very large scale. They explain not only the literal, but also the allegorical, tropological, and anagogical sense of the sacred text, and furnish a large number of quotations from the Fathers and the later interpreters of Holy Writ during the Middle Ages. Like most of his predecessors and contemporaries, a Lapide intends to serve not only the historical and scientific study of the Bible, but, even more, the purposes of pious meditation, and especially of pulpit exposition. An extract from the commentary on the Acts appeared in 1737 at Tyrnau, under the title: "Effigies Sancti Pauli, sive idea vitæ apostolicæ". A large work in 4 vols., "Les trésors de Cornelius a Lapide: extraits de ses commentaires de l'écriture sainte à l'usage des prédicateurs, des communautés et des familles chrétiennes", by the Abbé Barbier, was published at Le Mans and Paris, 1856, re-edited at Paris, 1859, 1872, 1876, 1885, 1896; and an Italian translation of the same by F. M. Faber, appeared at Parma, 1869-70, in 10 vols., 16 mo.

These numerous editions show how highly these works are estimated by Catholics. But Protestant voices have joined in the appreciation. G. H. Goetzius (Leipzig, 1699) wrote an academical dissertation, "Exercitatio theologica de Cornelii a Lapide Commentariis in Sacram Scripturam", in which he praises the Jesuit author as the most important of Catholic Scriptural writers. An English translation of the complete commentaries was undertaken by the Rev. Thomas W. Moseman, an Anglican clergyman, under the title, "The great Commentary of Cornelius a Lapide" (London, 1876—). A manuscript in the Vatican Library contains an Arabic translation of the Commentary on the Apocalypse, by Yusuf ibn Girgis (beginning of the eighteenth century). The same Maronite writer is said to have translated the Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul.¹

¹ Van Kasteren, John Peter. "Cornelius Cornelii a Lapide." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 4. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908. 13 Mar. 2018 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04377a.htm>>.

About the Translator

Craig Toth holds a bachelor's degree from Ohio Dominican University, from which he graduated *magna cum laude* in 1970 with a degree in Classical Languages and English Literature and a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship in classics. He also holds a master's degree from the Ohio State University, where he did graduate work in Latin and Greek. He studied Hebrew at Trinity (Lutheran) Seminary in Bexley, Ohio. He has translated portions of the commentaries on Genesis of St. Lawrence of Brindisi, Francisco Suarez, Cornelius a Lapide, and Cardinal Perrone as well as many works of medieval rhetoric, theology, history, and poetry as a private contractor.

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COMMENTARIES ON GENESIS

CHAPTER I

Synopsis

The creation of the world and the work of the six days are described. The heaven, earth, and light were made on the first day. On the second day the firmament was made. On the third day the sea was made, and then the dry land with vegetation and plants. On the fourth day the sun, moon, and stars were made. On the fifth day the fishes and fowl were created. On the sixth day, cattle, creeping things, and wild animals were brought forth, and God blessed them and designated their food, and He put man in charge of the other creatures as their master.

Verse 1. IN THE BEGINNING —

First, St. Augustine,² St. Ambrose and St. Basil³ say “in the beginning” is interpreted to mean *in the Son*; for as the Apostle teaches in Colossians 1:16, all things are created through the Son; the idea and wisdom, as it were, of the Father. Truly this is a mystical and symbolic meaning of this phrase.

Second, and more literally, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, St. Basil, and also the [Fourth] Lateran Council⁴ say “in the beginning” means *at the onset* or *starting point*, not of eternity, not of an age or the aevum,⁵ but of time and the world, when certainly along with the world the duration of the world began; that is to say, time. In the beginning of the world, time was not as it is now; that is, time is the measure of the movement of the first mobile,⁶ the sun and the heavens. However, neither the first mobile nor the sun and heavens had then yet come into existence, and so consequently neither had their movements (which are measured by time) begun. Nevertheless, at that point there did exist duration of a corporeal body (i.e., heaven and earth), and this duration was similar and comparable to our notion of time, and therefore, time did exist. Time was in the

² *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book I, Chapter 1.

³ *Work of Six Days*, Homily 1.

⁴ In *Firmiter*, Chapter 1, concerning the Most Holy Trinity and the Catholic Faith.

⁵ The aevum is the measure of duration of incorruptible but created beings, namely angels and devils.

⁶ The first mobile, viz. the first movable, viz. the *primum mobile*, is defined as follows: material cause is unknown; efficient cause is God; formal cause is unceasing circular movement of place in the outermost sphere of the universe; final cause is to revolve the material heavens in a diurnal motion. See St. Thomas Aquinas' commentary on Aristotle's *Physica* and *De coelo et mundo*.

entity itself. This is known because every corporeal body is measured by time: either it is moved or it is at rest, and time is the measure of this. So time is the measure of corporeal bodies, just as the aevum is of the angels and eternity is of God. Nevertheless, speaking in Aristotelian terms, time according to nature is after a corporeal body, because time follows upon motion and motion follows upon there being a movable body. Whence St. Augustine says:

Once creatures were made, time began to run in movements. Whereas before the creation, one searches in vain for time, as if it could be found to exist before time itself. For if there is no movement of either a spiritual or corporeal creature whereby future events through the present might follow upon past events, no movement existed at all. Therefore, time began from the Creation rather than the Creation began from time; however, both come from God, for all things are from Him, and through Him, and in Him.⁷

Note that God created heaven and earth, not in time, but in the beginning of time, that is, in the first moment of time, namely, in the first instant of the world. St. Basil and St. Bede think that heaven and earth were created not on the first day but a little before the first day, specifically, before light. But it is manifest from *Exodus* 20:11 that these were created not before, but on the very first day, explicitly at the beginning of the first day, before light was brought forth.

Third, and most simply: “in the beginning,” means *before all things*, inasmuch as God created nothing before He created either heaven or earth. So it is written in *John* 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word,” as if he were to say: Before all things, namely from eternity, was the Word. St. Augustine, in the work cited above, also affirms this sense.

Both the second and third senses are natural and literal, and from the second one, it is clear that—contrary to Plato, Aristotle, and others—the world is not eternal. From the third sense, it is plain to see that the angels were not created before the corporeal world, but were created together with it by God, as the Lateran Council⁸ teaches.

To these three senses of “in the beginning” the ancients add other explanations. Therefore, *fourth*, “in the beginning” means *in sovereignty*, or in royal power—for this is also what the Greek

⁷ In the *Sentences*, Number 280.

⁸ [The Fourth] Lateran Council under Innocent III declared: “One must believe with firm faith that from the beginning of time God created from nothing both spiritual and corporeal creatures, viz., the angelic and the mundane.”

word ἀρχή, *archē*, means, from which kings and magistrates are called ἄρχοντες, *archontes*—God made heaven and earth, says Tertullian.⁹ Procopius asserts the same, saying, “God Who is the King of Kings, existing most clearly by His own right and not depending on any other, ruling all things by His will, enlivened the Universe with shapes and forms. Yes, indeed, He created matter, and He did not borrow it from any other thing.”

Fifth, instead of “in the beginning,” Aquila translated “In the head,” (inasmuch as the Hebrew word *rēshith* (that is, *beginning*) comes from ראש *rosh*, which means *head*); that is, in the manner of a summary, in a manner embracing all things at once, cumulatively. Indeed, God, by creating heaven and earth, generally created all the rest; for from these He formed other things afterward.

Sixth, St. Ambrose and St. Basil¹⁰ say: “In the beginning, that is, in the moment just short of even the least whole interval of time, for a beginning is indivisible. Just as the beginning of a journey is not the journey, so the beginning of time is not time but an instant.”

Seventh, “in the beginning,” that is, the chief, more distinguished and original things. St. Ambrose, Procopius and St. Bede affirm this.

Eighth, “in the beginning,” that is, first, as the foundations and bases of the universe, say St. Basil and Procopius. Thus it is said, “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord,” inasmuch as fear is the foundation of wisdom and the first step toward it.

Finally, Junilius says “in the beginning” denotes the eternity and omnipotence of God: “The words bear witness that He created the world in the beginning of time; the phrase indicates that He has existed eternally before time; and it tells us that He created heaven and earth at the very beginning of the creation; since His activity was so rapid, the phrase affirms that He is omnipotent.”

HE CREATED —

First, of course, properly He created *ex nihilo*, from no pre-existing matter. So said the holy mother to her son in 2 Machabees 7:28: “I beseech thee, my son, look upon heaven and earth, and all that is in them: and consider that God made them out of nothing.”

⁹ In his book *Against Hermogenes*.

¹⁰ In *Work of Six Days*, Homily 1.

Second, “He created” implies He created alone, as Isaiah 44:24 says.¹¹ God created everything by Himself and His omnipotence, not by means of the angels, seeing that they were not yet in existence; but even if they had been, they cannot be assistants of the creation.

Third, “He created” according to an idea and model, which He had conceived in His mind from eternity. Certainly, as Boethius¹² poetically wrote, at that moment God was “Himself most beautiful by representing in His mind the beautiful world.”

Fourth, He created the heavens, not because He dwelled there, but because He is good, and because God wished, for this reason, to confer His goodness to the world and to human beings. Indeed, it was fitting that good things should be made by a good God, says Plato; and following Plato, St. Augustine says the same.¹³ In another place St. Augustine¹⁴ adds, “Thou hast made us, O Lord, according to Thyself, and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee” and “Heaven and earth exclaim: ‘O Lord! Oh, that we may love Thee!’”

Note: According to Cicero and the Gentiles, *to create* is to engender; but according to the Greeks, creation and foundation are the same thing. But when in sacred Scripture “to create” is said of those things that had not existed beforehand, it means to make something from nothing. The following authors affirm likewise: St. Cyril of Alexandria,¹⁵ St. Athanasius,¹⁶ St. Justin,¹⁷ Rupert of Deutz,¹⁸ St. Bede and Nicholas of Lyra. As St. Thomas Aquinas¹⁹ teaches, the emanation of all things could not be accomplished except *ex nihilo*.

Hieronymus ab Oleastro translates the Hebrew word בָּרָא, *bārā*, as “He divided,” and so he renders the verse “in the beginning God divided the heaven and earth.” In fact, he thinks that God first of all created the waters with the land, and they were very large and vast, and from them He brought forth the heavens, claiming this is something this verse does not speak about, but which Scripture presupposes. Finally, he thinks God divided the heavens from the earth and the waters. But this fantasy is rejected by all the Fathers and the Doctors, who translate *bārā* as *He created*. This is what the word properly means, for it never means *He divided*, as those who are competent

¹¹ “I am the Lord, that make all things, that alone stretch out the heavens, that establish the earth, and there is none with me.”

¹² *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Book III, Song 9.

¹³ *The City of God*, Book XI, Chapter 22.

¹⁴ *Confessions*, Book I.

¹⁵ *Treasury*, Book V.

¹⁶ In the epistle that he wrote concerning the *Decrees of the Council of Nicæa against the Arians*.

¹⁷ In his *Admonitory*.

¹⁸ *Genesis*, Book I, Chapter 3.

¹⁹ *Summa Theologica*, First Part, Q. 61 Art. 2.

in Hebrew know. In this verse Moses describes the first work and production of the world, and, what is more, by means of the work of Genesis, he initiates history. The passages from Joshua and Ezechiel that Hieronymus ab Oleastro cites for his argument prove nothing. For in those passages *bārā* does not mean *to divide* but *to cut down* and *to destroy*. Indeed, this is one of his wrong definitions.

Figuratively speaking, we must think about creatures in a threefold manner.

First, by considering what they are relative to themselves: that is, truly nothing because they have been made from nothing and relative to themselves they are changed daily and direct themselves to nothing.

Second, by considering what they are as a gift of the Creator: that is, good, beautiful, stable and eternal, and thus they model the immovability of their Maker.

Third, by considering that God uses them for the punishment and reward of mankind. In this way, we hear every creature crying out to us with these three words: Accept, repay, avoid: accept the benefit, repay the debt, and avoid receiving the punishment. The first word comes from the one serving, the second from the one warning, the third from the one rebuking.

Hence, *first*, it is clear that Straton of Lampsacus was in error. He erred in assuming that the world was engendered and existed by its very own force.

Second, manifestly wrong is the opinion of Plato and the Stoics, who held that the world had indeed been built by God but was made of eternal and engendered matter. They also believe that this uncreated matter, being co-eternal with God, was as a result God Himself. Tertullian was right to register his objection to Hermogenes on this point.

Third, the Peripatetics were also wrong to assert that God had created the world from eternity as a result of the necessity of Nature and not freely of His own will.

Fourth, Epicurus was wrong to teach that the world has been brought about by the chance combination and attraction of atoms.

St. Augustine²⁰ famously says “The world itself, by its most orderly changes and movements, and by the very beautiful appearance of all visible things, proclaims silently, as it were, both that it has been made, and also that it could not have been made except by an unspeakably great and invisibly beautiful God.” Hence all schools of philosophers who have engaged in some kind of theological speculation affirm unanimously that there is nothing that so

²⁰ *The City of God*, Book XI, Chapter 3.

proves that the world was made by God and is governed under His care as the very appearance of the whole world and the contemplation of its beauty and order. This is the opinion of Plato, the Stoics, Cicero,²¹ Plutarch and Aristotle.

Note: God created heaven and earth by bidding and speaking: “Let there be heaven and earth,” as is expressly found in 2 Esdras²² 6:38 and Psalm 32:6,²³ which says, “By the word of the Lord the heavens were established”; wherefore St. Basil concludes that because God made this world by power, art, and freedom, He can create by the same many other worlds. On the other hand, by the same He can annihilate the world. For with respect to God, the world is like a drop of a bucket or a drop of the morning dew, as it says in Isaiah 40:15 and Wisdom 11:23. Hence God is said to poise the bulk of the earth with three fingers.

One might ask: Why therefore does Moses not say in this verse: “God said, Let there be heaven” just as Moses reports that He said “Let there be Light”? I reply that Moses uses the verb “He created” rather than “He said” lest the unlettered ancient Hebrew people should, based on the verb “Let there be,” take it to mean that God spoke the words to previously existing matter, or that He brought heaven and earth forth from any matter. Such is the opinion of Rupert of Deutz, who assigns three explanations: *first*, since the very beginning is the Word of God, it would be unnecessary and awkward to write, “In the beginning God said.” *Second*, such a phrase would not be necessary because there was nothing yet in existence to which He might have given the command. *Third*, Moses writes “He created” not “let there be” so that there not be any doubt at all that God is the creator of all matter.

GOD —

Simon Magus, Arius and others are in error when they say that God created the Son, the Son created the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost created the angels, and the angels created the world. Secondly, Pythagoras, the Manichæans, and the followers of Priscillian err in saying that there are two beginnings of things or that there are two gods – the one good and creator of spirits and the other evil and creator of bodies. In Hebrew the word for *God* is אֱלֹהִים, *’lōhim*, which is taken

²¹ *On the Nature of the Gods*, Book II.

²² 2 Esdras is the modern scholarly name for the “IV Esdras” found in Cornelius’ printed Latin text. 2 (IV) Esdras is apocryphal, not a canonical book of the Catholic Bible; however, it is found in an appendix of the Vulgate, the official Latin version of the Church. Sometimes this book is styled 4 Ezra. The referenced verse reads: “And I said: O Lord, speaking, Thou hast spoken from the beginning of the creation, on the first day, saying: Let there be heaven and earth, and Thy Word accomplished the work.”

²³ This is the Psalm number in the Vulgate.

from אֵל, 'el, that is *the mighty one*, and אָלַח, 'ālāh, that is, *he swore an oath, he obliged, he put under obligation*, which is true to the extent that God gives His power, strength, and all good things to creatures and preserves them. By means of this, He binds them to Himself, as if by a solemn oath, to worship, obey, fear, have faith in, hope in, supplicate, and be grateful to Him.

Therefore God is said to be 'E^lōhim, inasmuch as He is the creator, ruler, judge, overseer, and vindicator of all things. Moses uses this name 'E^lōhim in verse 1 purposefully, *first*, so that men know that He is the creator and judge of the world, Who, as He created the world, so judges it as 'E^lōhim, the *judge*. *Second*, in order that men know that the world was established by God by His will, judgment and wisdom. *Third*, that men know that (a) all things have been arranged by Him in equal parts and that (b) He granted to every creature its own nature, just as though it were His obligation to do so, and that (c) He desires the good of the universe. *Fourth*, that men know that as the world was created by God, in the same way it is preserved and ruled by Him, as taught in Job 34: 18, etc. and Wisdom 11:23, etc.

Therefore, Ibn Ezra and the rabbis say that God is called 'E^lōhim in this verse to declare His majesty and His three endowments, namely, intelligence, wisdom and knowledge, by which He established the world. Others, however, think that Moses considered the multitude of ideas and perfections that are in God. Note: God revealed to Moses His name as *Jehovah*. Before Moses, God was called 'E^lōhim. Accordingly, the serpent referred to God with the Hebrew word 'E^lōhim when it asked, “Why hath God commanded you?” It is, then, perfectly clear that from the beginning of the world Adam and Eve called God 'E^lōhim. St. Bede is of the same opinion.

What therefore is 'E^lōhim? What is God?

First, Aristotle²⁴ says: “Inasmuch as a ship has a helmsman, a chariot has a driver, a choir has a conductor, a government has law, an army has a general, so likewise the world has God, the difference being that in all the other areas, control is laborious, vexing, and worrisome, but in God it is easy, well ordered, and tranquil.”

Second, Pope St. Leo I²⁵ says, “God is by His nature goodness, by His power, will, and by His mercy, activity.”

²⁴ “Or whoever it was who wrote the book called *On the World*, which was addressed to Alexander the Great.” – Fr. Lapede.

²⁵ In the second of the series of sermons titled *On the Lord's Passion*.

Third, Aristotle²⁶ says: “God is the One by Whom perpetuity, place, and time persist for His benefit”; in addition, “just as the center of a circle is in itself, yet lines drawn from it to the circumference (and even the circumference itself) exist with points in the same center, so also all natures—both those that pertain to the intellect and those that pertain to the sense—exist in and are supported in the first agent (i.e., in God).”

Fourth, God is the directive care of all things, for as St. Augustine²⁷ says: “Surely nothing is done visibly or sensibly, unless it is either ordered or permitted from the invisible and intelligible palace of the highest sovereign, according to the unspeakable justice of rewards and punishments, of favors and retributions, in that unlimited and vast republic, so to speak, of all creation.”

Fifth, St. Augustine says, “If you should see a good angel, a good man, or the good heavens, take away the angel, the man, the heavens, and that which remains is the essence of good things, to wit, God.”

Sixth, a certain Gentile king said that God is the darkness behind all light and that He is known by the mind’s ignorance.

Seventh, ^Elōhim is He Who reaches mightily from end to end, and Who gently orders all things, as the Wiseman of the Old Testament²⁸ says.

Eighth, ^Elōhim is He in Whom “we live, and move, and are” (Acts 17:28).

Ninth, “The mind,” says St. Augustine,²⁹ “does not attain God, because He is incomprehensible, and neither does the intellect, because He is unfathomable. The sense does not perceive Him, because He is invisible; the tongue does not express Him, because He is ineffable, and writing does not explain Him, because He is unexplainable.”

Tenth, St. Gregory of Nazianus³⁰ says “God is that which cannot be spoken when it is spoken; that which cannot be thought when it is thought. When He is defined, He grows by the delimitation itself: He covers the heavens with His hand, with His fist He encloses the entire extent of the world. All things do not know Him, and by fearing they do know Him. This world serves His name and power, and the very momentary change of the elements coming after themselves bears witness to Him.”

²⁶ Or whoever it was who wrote the book called *On Wisdom according to the Egyptians*, Book XII, Chapter 19.

²⁷ *On the Trinity*, Book III, Chapter 4.

²⁸ I.e., the writer of the Book of Wisdom.

²⁹ In his *Meditations*.

³⁰ In his treatise *On Faith*.

Eleventh, God is He “who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and weighed the heavens with his palm, who hath poised with three fingers the bulk of the earth...Behold the Gentiles before Him are as the drop of a bucket, and are counted as the smallest grain of a balance: behold the islands are as a little dust...And Libanus shall not be enough to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering...It is He that sitteth upon the globe of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as locusts” (Isaiah 40:12, 15, 16, 22).

Twelfth, God is of Whom the Wiseman of the Old Testament spoke in XI.23: “For the whole world before Thee is as the least grain of the balance, and as a drop of the morning dew, that falleth down upon the earth.”

Thirteenth, Hermes Trismegistos says that “Air is subtler than matter, the soul is subtler than air, the mind subtler than the soul, and God Himself subtler than the mind.”

Note: *’Elohim* is plural in grammatical number, for the singular form is *Eloah*. The reasons for this use of the plural are as follows: *first*, the Jews, out of respect, call great things and nobles by a word in the plural, as we do in the West. For example, kings use the majestic plural, as in “We, Philip, King of Spain.” Thus we find in Job 40:10 that an elephant is called *Behemoth*, that is *beasts*, because (as the Jews teach) it is like many beasts on account of the great size of its body and strength.

Second, the plural form *’Elohim* means the most, the highest, the boundless strength of God and His power of creating, just as the unity of essence in God is suggested by the singular verb ברא, *bārā*, that is, *He created*. As Nicholas of Lyra, Paul of Burgos, Pietro Galatino, Agostino Steuco, Ambrose Catharinus (Lancelotti Politi), Peter Lombard and the scholastics teach³¹ in opposition to Cajetan and Alonso Tostado.

Therefore, there are four causes of Creation and creatures (the heavens and the earth). The material cause is nothingness, the formal cause is the heavens and the lands. The efficient cause is God, and the final cause is the good, not for God, but for us. From all eternity, all creatures, therefore, lay hidden beneath nothingness in the conceptions of the divine mind, but in time they were brought forth on account of mankind. For God, Who throughout all eternity had been perfectly happy in Himself, has in no way been made happier or richer as a result of Creation. But through these conceptions He willed to pour Himself forth into creatures and mankind, just as the overflowing sea pours itself forth on to the shore.

³¹ *Sentences*, Book II, Distinction 1.

Therefore, God created for the following reasons: *first*, so that He might prepare a royal house, or rather a kingdom for mankind; *second*, so that He might show mankind a theater of all things and a paradise of all manner of delights; *third*, so that He might furnish man with a book in which man should behold and read about his Creator.

HEAVEN AND EARTH —

First, St. Augustine³² says that heaven and earth in this passage are called prime matter to the extent that from it heaven was brought forth on the second day and earth on the third day. However, it is not probable that matter alone was created without a form, and formless matter as such cannot be called heaven. In his own words: “That matter which God made was without shape, and it was at first called heaven and earth, not because it had already become these, but because it could become them. For it is written that heaven was made afterwards. It is as if we were looking at the seed of a tree and then should fancy to point out its roots, and the trunk, the branches, the fruit, and the leaves. We would speak in this manner, not because these parts were physically present, but because they will develop from it.” But he adds elsewhere³³ that this matter had been given and adorned with its own form in the same instant of time. Therefore, this verse indicates that the creation of matter was only mentioned by name because it preceded its form in nature but not in time. St. Gregory of Nyssa’s explanation is close to this; by heaven and earth he understands that chaos was heaped together with the universal, common, and unfinished form, from which the celestial bodies and all elemental things were to be brought out. However, this interpretation is mystical.

Second, St. Augustine³⁴ interprets the word *heaven* to mean the angels, and by the word *earth* he understands prime, formless matter. This latter interpretation is equally improbable as his first.

Third, Benedict Pereira, Gregory of Valencia³⁵ and others understand that the word *heaven* refers to all the celestial bodies. But by the word *earth*, they understand the Earth itself with water, fire, and lower atmosphere, as if on the first day God created all the celestial spheres and elements

³² *On Genesis Against the Manichæans*, Book I, Chapter 7.

³³ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book I, Chapter 14.

³⁴ *The City of God*, Book XI, Chapter 9.

³⁵ *On the Work of Six Days*.

and then on the following five days He only provided them with movement, light, stars, influences, and intelligent Motors.³⁶

Fourth, it is very highly probable that the *heaven* in this verse means the first and highest heaven, namely the empyrean,³⁷ which St. Paul calls the third heaven, and David the heaven of heaven, which is the abode of the Blessed. This all scholars teach in opposition to Agostino Steuco, who thinks that the empyrean heaven is not a celestial body but a certain kind of created brightness, and by its reflection blessed souls may be made to appear. I say that the brightness flows from the essence of God. Thus on the first day God only created out of the heavens the empyrean heaven, and He adorned and perfected it with its own beauty. For this purpose, afterward angels and men were created to dwell there for eternity. This is what the faithful of every age call heaven - so that, if you ask them where they want to go after this life, they immediately say, "to heaven," that is to say, the empyrean, inasmuch as the blissful and blessed are there. Wherefore, St. John Chrysostom³⁸ says: "God, beyond human custom, perfecting His edifice, first stretched out heaven, and afterwards laid out the earth underneath: the top came first, then the foundation." Indeed, the top of the fabric of the world is heaven, not the starry heaven, but the empyrean.

³⁶ An intelligent motor is a spiritual substance that moves a heavenly body by direct influence and contact. St. Thomas answers whether the stars are living beings as follows: "... the operations of the sensitive soul, as we have seen, cannot be attributed to the heavenly bodies. Accordingly, the union of a soul to a heavenly body cannot be for the purpose of the operations of the intellect. It remains, then, only to consider whether the movement of the heavenly bodies demands a soul as the motive power, not that the soul, in order to move the heavenly body, need be united to the latter as its form; but by contact of power, as a mover is united to that which he moves. Wherefore Aristotle, after showing that the first mover is made up of two parts, the moving and the moved, goes on to show the nature of the union between these two parts. This, he says, is effected by contact which is mutual if both are bodies; on the part of one only, if one is a body and the other not. The Platonists explain the union of soul and body in the same way, as a contact of a moving power with the object moved, and since Plato holds the heavenly bodies to be living beings, this means nothing else but that substances of spiritual nature are united to them, and act as their moving power. A proof that the heavenly bodies are moved by the direct influence and contact of some spiritual substance, and not, like bodies of specific gravity, by nature, lies in the fact that whereas nature moves to one fixed end which having attained, it rests; this does not appear in the movement of heavenly bodies. Hence it follows that they are moved by some intellectual substances. St. Augustine appears to be of the same opinion when he expresses his belief that all corporeal things are ruled by God through the spirit of life. From what has been said, then, it is clear that the heavenly bodies are not living beings in the same sense as plants and animals, and that if they are called so, it can only be equivocally. *Summa Theologica*, First Part, Q70, A3.

³⁷ St. Thomas says the agreement of the Fathers is that it is the place of the blessed. *Summa Theologica*, First Part, Question 66, Article 3 [hereafter abbreviated as ST, I, Q66, A3]. His further description: "In the reward to come a two-fold glory is looked for, spiritual and corporeal, not only in the human body to be glorified, but in the whole world which is to be made new. Now the spiritual glory began with the beginning of the world, in the blessedness of the angels, equality with whom is promised to the saints. It was fitting, then, that even from the beginning, there should be made some beginning of bodily glory in something corporeal, free at the very outset from the servitude of corruption and change, and wholly luminous, even as the whole bodily creation, after the Resurrection, is expected to be. So, then, that heaven is called the empyrean, i.e. fiery, not from its heat, but from its brightness."

³⁸ In Homily 2.

Moreover, St. Basil³⁹ says: “Heaven and earth were first laid out and made ready as foundations and fulcrum points of the universe.” The proof of this notion is as follows: *First*, the firmament, that is, the eighth heaven and its neighboring spheres, was not only fitted out on the second day but, in fact, was produced and created at that time, as it is patently clear from Genesis 1:6. Therefore, the firmament was not created on the first day, and accordingly, the heaven that was created on the first day is none other than the empyrean. This is the opinion of Pope St. Clement of Rome, and this opinion came from the mouth of St. Peter, as St. Clement⁴⁰ himself says. This opinion is that of Origen,⁴¹ St. Theodoret, Blessed Alcuin, Rabanus Maurus, Nicholas of Lyra, Philo⁴² of Alexandria, St. Hilary,⁴³ St. Theophilus of Antioch,⁴⁴ Junilius, St. Bede, Paul of Burgos, Ambrose Catharinus, Strabo,⁴⁵ St. Anselm,⁴⁶ St. Bonaventure,⁴⁷ Rupert of Deutz,⁴⁸ William of Paris,⁴⁹ Alexander of Hales,⁵⁰ Hugh of St. Victor,⁵¹ St. Bruno the Founder of the Carthusians⁵² and Luis de Molina.⁵³ Thus St. Bonaventure asserts that this opinion is the more common, and Ambrose Catharinus affirms that it is the most accurate. *Second*, in the next section there will be more proof of this opinion.

AND EARTH —

Imagine the globe of the earth with the abyss as a mass of waters poured onto and spread over the earth extending itself out to the empyrean heaven.

These three things were created first of all: specifically, (1) the empyrean heaven, (2) the earth, and (3) the abyss, a mass of waters occupying everything from the empyrean heaven to the earth. Out of this abyss or water (which later was in parts diminished, in other parts thickened and solidified) all the other heavens, or the firmament, were made on the second day, and all the stars on the fourth day. This is analogous to the making of crystal from freezing water. This is the

³⁹ *Work of Six Days*, Homily 1.

⁴⁰ *Recognitions*, Book I.

⁴¹ In Homily 1.

⁴² Also known as Philo Judaeus. In *On the Creation of the World*, Book I.

⁴³ *On Psalm 85*.

⁴⁴ *To Autolytus*, Book II.

⁴⁵ In the *Ordinary Gloss*.

⁴⁶ *On the Image of the World*, Book I, Chapter 28.

⁴⁷ *Commentaria in Librum Secundum Sententiarum*, II, Distinction 12.

⁴⁸ *On Genesis*, Book I, Chapter 6.

⁴⁹ *On the Universe*, I Part of I, Chapters 31 and 40.

⁵⁰ *Textbook of All Theology*, Part II, Question 14, Member 2.

⁵¹ *Sentences*, Treatise II, Chapter 1.

⁵² *On New Things*, Book I, Chapter 2.

⁵³ Part I, Question 86, at beginning of the work of the first day of the world and elsewhere.

opinion of St. Peter and St. Clement,⁵⁴ St. Basil,⁵⁵ St. Bede, Molina⁵⁶ and of very many others whom I will reference at verse 6.

There are several proofs for this position:

First, it is a fact that in this verse one must understand that (as I have said) this is not the sidereal heaven but the empyrean. Now there did not exist a vacuum between this heaven and the earth, for such a void would be vast, huge, and against nature. Therefore, there existed between the empyrean and the earth some kind of body - namely water - or as Moses says, an abyss, that is, water without a bottom, impenetrable, and vast, as St. Bede and others correctly recount.

Second, it is a fact that on the second day the firmament was made so that it divided the waters above from those below: therefore, on the first day all things above and below were filled with waters.

Third, it is a fact that it says the Spirit of the Lord was carried over the waters, not upon the earth, as I will discuss below.

Fourth, in verse 6 the heavens are called in Hebrew *shāmayim*, as though one were to say *shām māyim* or “there are the waters”. Accordingly, before the heavens existed all things were filled with the waters, from which the heavens and the firmament were made so as to divide the waters above from those below.

Hence it follows that the truer opinion belongs to those who believe that the matter of the heavens and of the sublunary⁵⁷ region is the same, and that it is incorruptible.⁵⁸ Both the heavens and the sublunary region were made from the same abyss of the waters. So teaches St. Clement of Rome, Hippolytus, Severianus, Gennadius, Acacius,⁵⁹ St. Theodoret,⁶⁰ St. Jerome,⁶¹ St. Cyril of Jerusalem,⁶² Luis de Molina and others. Averroes erred, and following him Solomon ibn Gabirol and John Capreolus, too, when they said that the heavens were simple bodies that lack matter.

⁵⁴ Around the middle of Book I of the *Recognitions*.

⁵⁵ *The Work of Six Days*, Homily 4.

⁵⁶ *On the Work of Six Days*, at the beginning of Part I.

⁵⁷ The sublunary region is the region under the moon.

⁵⁸ St. Lawrence of Brindisi, Doctor of the Church, also wrote a detailed commentary for Genesis and explains why the heavens and sublunary region should be considered corruptible. See *St. Lawrence of Brindisi on Creation and the Fall*.

⁵⁹ *Catena of the Greeks*.

⁶⁰ Question XI previously cited.

⁶¹ In *Epistle to Oceanus*.

⁶² *Catecheses* 3 and 9.

The earth created by God is located in the middle of the universe and there it exists firmly. Furthermore, the will and power of God hold it up and brace it constantly like a ball suspended in midair, in accordance with that which eternal Wisdom speaks in Proverbs 8:29-30: “When He balanced the foundations of the earth, I was with Him forming all things.” Averroes and the others mentioned above deny this when they claim the heavens lack matter. These persons not only err according to Scripture, but also owing to a physical reason: the earth naturally was created with a great weight, and therefore it seeks the lowest place. Therefore, the earth is at rest in the central place by some natural attraction to itself. If indeed it should be moved from there to any part whatsoever, it necessarily would rise up and be carried upwards. But this is against its nature. Here is what St. Basil⁶³ has to say: “Some investigators of nature say plausibly that the earth remains motionless because it occupies the middle region of everything, and owing to the equal distances on all sides that extend to the farthest points of creation, the earth does not lean one way more than any other; of necessity it remains at rest on itself inasmuch as the surrounding equidistant points on all sides make it impossible for it to move downward.” St. John Chrysostom⁶⁴ brilliantly says, “He has placed earth for you as your country, nurse, mother, table, and home. He also gave it to you as your burial place. Indeed, our bodies come from it, and from it also comes the nourishment of our bodies. In addition, from it and in it is our dwelling place, and after death we are returned to it.”

You will ask, Where and when were the angels created? Some have thought that they were created before the world. This was the opinion of Origen, St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome and St. Hilary. Others such as Acacius and Gennadius⁶⁵ have also thought that they were created before the world. However, I hold that they were created together with the world in the beginning of time, and that their creation took place in the empyrean heaven, for they are its citizens and inhabitants. So teach St. Bede, Peter Lombard and the scholastics along with St. Augustine, St. Gregory, and Rupert. St. Gregory of Nazianzus⁶⁶ writes: “The angels came forth from God like the rays from the sun.” Moreover, as St. Gregory the Great⁶⁷ says: “They broke forth like sparks from flint.” To be sure, the [Fourth] Lateran Council under Innocent III declared:

⁶³ *Work of Six Days*, Homily 1.

⁶⁴ In his homily *On Fasting* and in *Lesson on Genesis*, Volume 1.

⁶⁵ In the *Catena*.

⁶⁶ In his *Oration on the Birth of Christ*.

⁶⁷ *Moralia*, Book XXXI, Chapter 19.

One must believe with firm faith that *from the beginning of time God created from nothing both spiritual and corporeal creatures, viz., the angelic and the mundane*. This declaration is properly said against Origen, who thought that souls were created before bodies, [but] the Council’s words seem too well expressed and clear as to be able to be twisted into another meaning. Wherefore, my opinion is no longer just probable, but is both certain and *de fide*, for this is what the Council itself declares and defines.

Note: Moses does not make mention of the creation of the angels because he was writing to the uneducated and unrefined Hebrew people, and they were prone to idolatry. They easily might have worshipped the angels as gods. Nevertheless, he tacitly alludes to the angels in Chapter 2, verse 1 when he says, “the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the furniture of them.” Indeed, the stars and the angels are the furniture of the heavens. This, therefore, is the massive and beautiful machinery of the world, namely, the heavens and the lands, which the great Architect of things brought forth *ex nihilo* with the beginning of time in a moment. As Jacob Middelndorp⁶⁸ relates, Epictetus, the “Second Philosopher,” in his hypothetical dialogue with the emperor Hadrian, in answer to the question, “What is the world?” replied: “It is the inaccessible distance around, the eternal continued movement.” To the question “What is God?” he answered, “The immortal mind, the inconceivable searching after, containing all things.” To “What is the ocean?” he rejoined, “The encircling of the world, the guest-room of rivers, the source of storms.” To “What is the earth?” Epictetus said, “The base of heaven, the middle of the world, the mother of fruits, the nursemaid of the living. Earth is the granary of Ceres and the storeroom of life.”

Verse 2. AND THE EARTH WAS VOID AND EMPTY —

In Hebrew, this is *תהו ובהו* *tohû wābhohû*, that is, the earth was desolation, or a void and empty thing, because it was desolate of men and beasts of burden, as the Pseudo-Jonathan targum⁶⁹ renders the verse. It was empty of plants, animals, seeds, grass, light, comeliness, rivers, springs, mountains, valleys, fields, hills, metals, and minerals, for which things it has a kind of natural inclination. Hence it is said in Wisdom 11:18 that God “created the world—*that is, its concrete*

⁶⁸ From the *Martinian Chronicle* (page 474 of his *Theological and Political Questions*).

⁶⁹A Targum (“translation” or “interpretation”) is an Aramaic version of the Hebrew Bible. Pseudo-Jonathan (the modern title) is a complete translation of the Pentateuch. Most targums attempted to express meaning rather simply be a literal rendering of the Hebrew.

matter and outward appearance—of matter without form,” which in Greek⁷⁰ is ἀμόρφου (*amorphou*), that is, *without form, unfurnished, disordered*. Accordingly, the Septuagint⁷¹ translates verse 2: “The earth was invisible and unwrought.” Aquila translates: “The earth was emptiness and nothing.” Symmachus says “the earth was inactive and disordered.” Theodotion renders the verse as “The earth was an empty thing and nothing.” Onkelos translates: “The earth was desolate and empty.” For the earth was covered with the abyss of the waters— a kind of chaos, empty, unfinished, and unarranged, of which the poet Ovid wrote:

*One was the face of Nature, if a face;
Rather a rude and undigested mass:
A lifeless lump, unfashioned, and unframed;
Of jarring seeds; and justly chaos named.*

This chaos was formless matter, as the Wiseman of the Old Testament says. It was unformed in a certain sense, having only a certain kind of unfinished, obscure, general and common form of corporeity, so that it existed in potency to receive particular other forms, as Tostado thought. In this matter, Moses’ position is well known: earth and heaven were created first. Therefore, the matter first created was not without any form, but was clothed in and imbued with the particular form of the heaven and of the earth.

You will ask, why did God not fully and perfectly furnish the heavens at the same time that He created them on the first day? My answer is that the *first* reason lies in His holy will: it was fitting, just as we see in nature (the creator of which is God) the procession from imperfect things to perfect things. The *second* is, so that we may learn that all things depend on God whether with respect to their beginning or to their adornment and perfection, and that there is nothing in created things so imperfect (with the exception of sin) that God is not the author. The *third* is so that men might not think that everything was uncreated, which might have been the case had everything been put in order from the beginning, as St. Ambrose⁷² notes. The *fourth* is so that we might conform to the imitation of the divine work by producing and assisting the same order, again as St. Ambrose says.

AND DARKNESS WAS UPON THE FACE OF THE DEEP —

⁷⁰ The Book of Wisdom was written in Greek, not Hebrew.

⁷¹ The translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek before 100 B.C.

⁷² *Work of the Six Days*, Book I, Chapter 7.

Imagine here that darkness was over the waters, i.e. the mass of waters that, like an abyss, covered the earth and stretched itself up to the empyrean heaven, as I have explained in verse 1. Something that lacks a bottom, or depth without a bottom, is called ἄβυσσος (*abyssos*), and as Eustathius says: “The abyss is water having a measureless, infinite depth.” Therefore, before light was created, darkness and murkiness occupied everything, about which the Lord says in Job 38:9: “Where were you...when I wrapped the sea in a mist as in swaddling bands?” Furthermore, the Jews call a surface, both the outermost and innermost, a *face*, as if to say: all the earth and the abyss of waters are entirely without any light and hence without any color; and indeed, the whole conglomeration, both within and without, was dark everywhere, misty and colorless. Accordingly, what St. Basil⁷³ proposes, namely, that the darkness was the shadow of the heavens, seems less plausible. He wrote: “In order for there to be a shadow, three conditions are necessary: light, a body exposed to the light, and a place devoid of light. Therefore, the darkness spread about the world arose on account of the shadow of a celestial body.” But this darkness existed before light was brought forth by God; therefore, it could not arise from the shadow of the heavens. Indeed, a shadow occurs because a body is interposed between light and the dark place. But at that time there was no light in the world.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD —

Cajetan says this is an angel. The Jews, St. Theodoret, and Tertullian⁷⁴ say the spirit of God is the wind stirred up by God. The best and the most complete opinion is that the Spirit of God is the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son, and breathing out on the waters a warm wind and breeze by Its own force, presence, and power. Such is the view of St. Jerome, St. Basil, St. Theodoret, St. Athanasius and almost all the Fathers, who use this verse as a proof of the divinity of the Holy Ghost.

MOVED —

In a novel way, Cajetan explains these and other things as follows: “The Spirit of the Lord,” that is, an angel, “moved” and moved the waters (that is the crystalline heaven⁷⁵ and all the other heavens), which in Hebrew are called *māyim*, that is the *waters*.

⁷³ *The Work of the Six Days*, Homily 2.

⁷⁴ *Against Hermogenes*, Chapter 32.

⁷⁵ The ninth heaven, the sphere just under the first movable, which itself lies just under the empyrean heaven.

Note, however, the following: The Hebrew for *moved* is מרחפת *m^erachepheth*, which is a term, according to the authority of St. Basil, Diodorus and St. Jerome⁷⁶, that is used in relation to birds while they position themselves over their eggs and chicks as if suspended in air, constantly moving and hovering in place by fluttering their wings. (This, then, is why the Arabic version of the Bible translates, “it was hovering as a bird would do, it was moving itself by means of wings.” However, the Aramaic version says, He *blew upon*.) By so brooding, birds transfer heat to, warm, and give the eggs life. In the same way, the Holy Ghost is borne above or, as Tertullian reads, *is carried above* the waters, not in place or by motion, but because His power surpasses and stands above all things, just as the will and the idea of a craftsman stand above the things he intends to fashion, as St. Augustine⁷⁷ says. Accordingly, by His own will and power, with the warm breeze He poured forth from Himself, the Holy Ghost lay upon the waters, so to speak, and He deposited on them a fertile vigor so that crawling creatures, birds, fish, and buds—in reality, all the heavens—were produced from the waters.

For this reason, the Church during the blessing of a font sings to the Holy Ghost:

Thou wilt warm with life these waters as Thou didst cause warmth over the face of the waters.

Also, as Claudius Marius Victor wrote:

*Above the far-flung wave
The Spirit spread its wing,
And sowed upon the fertile deep
The seeds of every thing.*

Plato said that this spirit, which brings the waters and everything to life, is the soul of the world; thus Virgil⁷⁸ writes that all things in heaven and earth

*Are nourished by a soul,
A bright intelligence, whose flame
Glows in each member of the frame
And stirs the mighty whole.*

⁷⁶ In *Hebrew Philological Inquiries on Genesis*.

⁷⁷ In *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Chapter 7.

⁷⁸ In the *Aeneid*, Book IV ll,726-727.

Allegorically, in this verse the Holy Ghost is represented as incubating the waters of baptism and through them giving us birth and regenerating us, as St. Jerome⁷⁹ says.

Verse 3. AND GOD SAID —

God said by a word, not of the mouth, but of His mind, and not proceeding from His intellect but proceeding from His essence, and common to the three Persons of the Trinity. Therefore, “He said,” that is, He efficaciously conceived, willed, decreed, and commanded it in His mind, and in addition by commanding, God brought forth and produced those very things - in this instance, the Most Holy Trinity brought forth light. For as St. Athanasius⁸⁰ says, the willing of God is doing.

The words *He said* are associated with the Son. For this reason, Sacred Scripture often says elsewhere, through the Son—explicitly as the Word and idea—all things were established, because the Son Himself is notionally and properly said to be the Word, and consequently wisdom, art, and idea refer to Him. In the same manner, power is attributed to the Father and goodness to the Holy Ghost.

Finally, God said these things after heaven, earth, and the abyss were created, but still during that same first day, which was the first day of the world.

BE LIGHT MADE —

Note that in Genesis and in the creation of the world, light was formed before all things, since light is a most noble, delightful, fitting, efficacious, and powerful quality, without which all things, created and to be created, would have remained invisible. “From His treasury,” says 2 Esdras 6:40, “He brought forth brilliant light” so that His works should then be visible. Refer to St. Dionysius,⁸¹ where he examines the thirty-four properties of light and fire, which are wonderfully suitable to God and divine things. Among other things, St. Dionysius teaches that light is the living image of God, and so was created first by God in order that He might portray Himself in it as if in an image and then display that portrait to the world. According to the verse of the poet Dracontius,⁸² “The beginning, the source of light, gives light by His deeds.” St. Dionysius says:

⁷⁹ *Epistle to Oceanus.*

⁸⁰ In Sermon 3 of the series *Against the Arians.*

⁸¹ *On Divine Names, Part I, Chapter 4.*

⁸² *The Work of the Six Days.*

Light is certainly from the Good itself, and is an image of goodness. Therefore, Good itself is celebrated by the name of light as in a picture an image is represented. As the goodness of the Deity Who surpasses all things...brings about, gives life to, contains, and completes all things and is the measure, the age, the number, the order, the embrace, the cause, and the end of those things that are, similarly that which is the bright and accurate image of divine goodness, that is, the great sun, wholly sheds light on all things, its light diffused throughout, unfolding the splendor of its beams onto the entire world.

God, indeed, is uncreated, eternal, and measureless light, who, although inhabiting a place of inaccessible light, still illuminates all things.

St. Basil⁸³ offers a fine illustrative example: “Just as when men put oil into a deep chasm of water, thereby making the place crystal clear, in the same manner the Creator of the Universe, at the moment when His word went forth, brought into the world the lovely and exquisitely delightful beauty of light.” St. Ambrose⁸⁴ gives another example: “What other reason is there for the adornment of the world unless it should begin by light: for the adornment would be in vain if it were not seen... He who wishes to erect a building worthy as the dwelling place of the head of the household, before he lays the foundation, he tries to determine from what direction light enters. Light is the first decoration, and if it is missing, the whole house bristles with an unsightly neglect. Light renders agreeable the remaining adornments of a house.” Lastly, Pereira holds that light was created on the first day because light is the general and chief instrument of the celestial causes by which all the energy of the stars and all the influences and effects are brought down to us. Accordingly, whatever is done by the heavens influences this world of ours here.

You may ask, what, then, was this light? *First*, Ambrose Catharinus replies that it was the brilliantly radiant sun, for this light alone was created both with a subject and indeed in a subject. However, the sun was not made as light on the first day but precisely on the fourth day. *Second*, St. Basil,⁸⁵ St. Theodoret and St. Gregory of Nazianzus⁸⁶ think that in this verse the quality of light alone was created without a subject. Therefore, St. Gregory of Nazianzus calls this light *spiritual*.

⁸³ *The Work of Six Days*, Homily 2.

⁸⁴ *The Work of Six Days*, Book I, Chapter 9.

⁸⁵ *The Work of the Six Days*, Homily 6.

⁸⁶ *On the New Day of the Lord*.

(Take note of this as an argument against the heretics who deny that the accidents of the Eucharist can exist without a subject.) *Third* and best of all, St. Bede, Hugh of St. Victor, Peter Lombard, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure, Nicholas of Lyra and Tostado, supported by St. Dionysius, think that this light was a shining body, either of the heaven or rather a shining part of the abyss, which shone forth on the earth in a circle or in the shape of a column and which was like matter. From it, the sun, moon, and stars were made, after light had been separated and divided into parts, multiplied, and fashioned into fiery globes, as it were. Whence St. Thomas Aquinas says that this light was the sun itself but at this stage still formless and imperfect. Pereira and others assert the same thing.

Note *first* that this light was not created in the proper sense of the word, because on the first day God created all prime matter⁸⁷ and laid it under the form of the waters of the abyss; from it then He brought forth the light and other forms, both essential and accidental, just as all natural forms are reduced from the state of potential existence to actual existence. Therefore, on the first day God properly created all things that were to be created: on the remaining five days, He did not create but formed and adorned the things created. Therefore, when God produced light, it seems that He compressed some kind of circular body, like a crystal, from the waters of the abyss and endowed it with light.

Second, note that in the first three days of the world (i.e., before the sun was created on the fourth day) this shining body had been moved by an angel from the East to the West in the same way and time span as the sun (namely in 24 hours); just as the sun does now, it both revolved around the hemisphere of the heavens and uniformly and diversely illuminated it. For this light delineated and marked by its own motion the first three days of the world, just as from then on the sun delineated the other days of creation by its motion, and still daily delineates and marks them.

Figuratively speaking, the Apostle Paul says in Corinthians, 4:6: “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts,” which means that as God once produced in Genesis light from the darkness, so now He has made us faithful out of the unfaithful, and He has illuminated our faith with light. St. Augustine⁸⁸ also says this: Light and day came after darkness or night, which existed before light; and again darkness came after this.

⁸⁷ For Fr. Lapidé’s understanding of prime matter, see his discussion of formless matter above in discussing Verse 2. “And the earth was void and empty...”

⁸⁸ *Against the Adversary of the Law and Prophets*, Book I, Chapter 8.

Moses teaches what happened in man spiritually; specifically, grace followed after sin, and sin after grace when we slipped back into it. Refer to St. Dionysius above. Again, as Hugh of St. Victor says, the light created first of all signifies the right intention of the mind, which ought to precede and direct all our works.

Above all, light is knowledge and wisdom. Wherefore St. Augustine⁸⁹ says: Light was created first, that is to say “wisdom hath been created before all things” (Ecclesiasticus 1:4). Light is figuratively prudence and consideration, which ought to precede and illuminate all acts, in accordance with Psalm 4:7: “The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us.” Finally, light is law and teaching, especially the teaching of the Gospels, as it says in Proverbs 6:23: “...Thy commandment is a lamp and the law a light.” It is owing to this that Isaiah prophesies of the Gospel in 9:2: “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen” and again at 60:1: “Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee...And the Gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising.”

Symbolically speaking, “Be light made,” *first*, means let the angels be made, says St. Augustine,⁹⁰ and following him so do Rupert of Deutz, St. Bede and the interlinear *Gloss*: all these authorities think that this is the literal sense, as if in this verse the creation of the angels is represented under the name of light. However, this cannot be the literal meaning, because the angels were created together with heaven and earth before there was light. *Second*, the same St. Augustine⁹¹ says this phrase means the generation⁹² of the Word of God from eternity: for in this conception in His own mind, God the Father said: “Be light made,” that is, “Be the Word made,” as the light of light. Thus, the Apostle Paul says of Him in Hebrews 1:3, “Who being the brightness of His glory, and the figure of his substance.” For light, because it is spiritual, heavenly, impassible, pouring light out from itself etc., best represents the generation of the eternal Father. This latter citation is also a symbolic, not a literal, interpretation.

Allegorically,⁹³ the Incarnate Christ is the light of the world (John 1:9): “That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world” and similarly in 8:12. Hence

⁸⁹ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book I, Chapter 17.

⁹⁰ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book I, Chapter 17 and *The City of God*, Book XI, Chapter 19.

⁹¹ Chapter 5 of his unfinished work on Genesis.

⁹² See St. Thomas, ST, I, Q27, A2.

⁹³ St. Thomas (ST, I, Q1, A10): Whether in Holy Scripture a word may have several senses?

apostles, Doctors, and preachers share the same name as from Christ, for Matthew 5:14 says, “You are the light of the world.” Wherefore, St. Basil⁹⁴ very clearly says, “Jesus bestowed His high dignities on others. One is light: ‘You are the light of the world,’ He says. He is the priest, and He makes priests. He is a lamb, and He says, ‘I send you as lambs among wolves.’ He is a rock, and He makes a rock (viz., St. Peter). Those properties that are His, He grants to his servants. This is

Objection 1: It seems that in Holy Writ a word cannot have several senses, historical or literal, allegorical, tropological or moral, and anagogical. For many different senses in one text produce confusion and deception and destroy all force of argument. Hence no argument, but only fallacies, can be deduced from a multiplicity of propositions. But Holy Writ ought to be able to state the truth without any fallacy. Therefore in it there cannot be several senses to a word.

Objection 2: Further, Augustine says (De util. cred. iii) that “the Old Testament has a fourfold division as to history, etiology, analogy and allegory.” Now these four seem altogether different from the four divisions mentioned in the first objection. Therefore it does not seem fitting to explain the same word of Holy Writ according to the four different senses mentioned above.

Objection 3: Further, besides these senses, there is the parabolical, which is not one of these four.

On the contrary, Gregory says (Moral. xx, 1): “Holy Writ by the manner of its speech transcends every science, because in one and the same sentence, while it describes a fact, it reveals a mystery.”

I answer that, The author of Holy Writ is God, in whose power it is to signify His meaning, not by words only (as man also can do), but also by things themselves. So, whereas in every other science things are signified by words, this science has the property, that the things signified by the words have themselves also a signification. Therefore that first signification whereby words signify things belongs to the first sense, the historical or literal. That signification whereby things signified by words have themselves also a signification is called the spiritual sense, which is based on the literal, and presupposes it. Now this spiritual sense has a threefold division. For as the Apostle says (Heb. 10:1) the Old Law is a figure of the New Law, and Dionysius says (Coel. Hier. i) “the New Law itself is a figure of future glory.” Again, in the New Law, whatever our Head has done is a type of what we ought to do. Therefore, so far as the things of the Old Law signify the things of the New Law, there is the allegorical sense; so far as the things done in Christ, or so far as the things which signify Christ, are types of what we ought to do, there is the moral sense. But so far as they signify what relates to eternal glory, there is the anagogical sense. Since the literal sense is that which the author intends, and since the author of Holy Writ is God, Who by one act comprehends all things by His intellect, it is not unfitting, as Augustine says (Confess. xii), if, even according to the literal sense, one word in Holy Writ should have several senses.

Reply to Objection 1: The multiplicity of these senses does not produce equivocation or any other kind of multiplicity, seeing that these senses are not multiplied because one word signifies several things, but because the things signified by the words can be themselves types of other things. Thus in Holy Writ no confusion results, for all the senses are founded on one—the literal—from which alone can any argument be drawn, and not from those intended in allegory, as Augustine says (Epis. 48). Nevertheless, nothing of Holy Scripture perishes on account of this, since nothing necessary to faith is contained under the spiritual sense which is not elsewhere put forward by the Scripture in its literal sense.

Reply to Objection 2: These three—history, etiology, analogy—are grouped under the literal sense. For it is called history, as Augustine expounds (Epis. 48), whenever anything is simply related; it is called etiology when its cause is assigned, as when Our Lord gave the reason why Moses allowed the putting away of wives, namely, on account of the hardness of men's hearts; it is called analogy whenever the truth of one text of Scripture is shown not to contradict the truth of another. Of these four, allegory alone stands for the three spiritual senses. Thus Hugh of St. Victor (Sacram. iv, 4 Prolog.) includes the anagogical under the allegorical sense, laying down three senses only—the historical, the allegorical, and the tropological.

Reply to Objection 3: The parabolical sense is contained in the literal, for by words things are signified properly and figuratively. Nor is the figure itself, but that which is figured, the literal sense. When Scripture speaks of God's arm, the literal sense is not that God has such a member, but only what is signified by this member, namely operative power. Hence it is plain that nothing false can ever underlie the literal sense of Holy Writ. (Benziger Bros. edition, 1947).

⁹⁴ *On Penance.*

the evidence of His wealth, which is to possess valuables and then give them to others. He, the Christ, is like a fountain flowing forever.”

Anagogically,⁹⁵ light signifies the brightness of glory and the clarity of the Beatific Vision, according to Psalm 35:20, “in Thy light we shall see light.” Hence Christ manifested heavenly glory by means of light in His Transfiguration: “His face did shine as the sun” (Matthew 17:2). For this reason, whenever the angels and the blessed appear, they look lustrous and shining, and artists, accordingly, always paint rays of light on them. See Apocalypse 20:11, 23.

Verse 4. AND GOD SAW THE LIGHT THAT IT WAS GOOD —

“He saw,” that is, He made us see and perceive, says St. Jerome.⁹⁶ *Second*, more plainly and simply, in this verse, by the rhetorical device of ethopoeia,⁹⁷ Moses introduces God as if He were a craftsman in the fashion of a human being, who, after he has finished his work, contemplates it and sees that it is beautiful and elegant. Moses uses this figure of speech purposely so that, contrary to what the Manichæans⁹⁸ hold, we may know that God produces nothing evil and that everything He made is good. St. Augustine⁹⁹ learnedly affirms this: “It was necessary for us to be made aware of three facts about the establishment of Creation: (1) Who made these things?, (2) through what He made them?, and (3) why He made them? God said, ‘Be light made, and light was made. And God saw the light that it was good.’ The is no author more excellent than God, and there is no skill in producing a work that is more efficacious than the Word of God. Further, there is no reason better than that good be created for good.”

The Hebrew word **טוב**, *tôbh*, means every good, beautiful, pleasant, useful, and agreeable thing: for light is both very delightful and equally very useful to the world. Hence the beginning of light is called the “early morning,” because at that time the day “stays” to the east;¹⁰⁰ or, rather, it is that the ancients called *manus*, “good,” as in the opinion of Varro, Festus, and St. Isidore of Seville.

⁹⁵ The anagogical or mystical sense carries “the soul to heavenly blessedness,” as St. Lawrence of Brindisi commented. See footnote 93.

⁹⁶ In his fifteenth *Epistle*.

⁹⁷ A Greek term literally meaning “delineation of character,” in which a person is put in place of another to express ideas more vividly.

⁹⁸ A dualistic heresy, which affirmed that Good and Evil existed from the beginning.

⁹⁹ In the *Sentences*, end of Volume III, Number 141.

¹⁰⁰The sentence is not perfectly translatable from the Latin inasmuch as it contains a play on words. Cornelius relates the Latin indeclinable noun *mānē* (“morning”) to the Latin verb *mānēre* (“to remain, stay”).

The Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint read: *God divided between the light and the darkness.* *First*, He divided them with respect to position on earth for while there is light and day at this time, at the opposite side there is night and darkness. *Second*, He divided them with respect to time, for light and darkness, night and day follow after themselves by turns in the same hemisphere but at a different time. *Third*, He divided them with respect to cause, for the one, namely a shining body, is the cause of light, and the other, specifically an opaque body, is the cause of darkness. In this verse, Moses very much has in mind the second explanation, that is to say, God acted so that after light was created by Him darkness and night would follow after. From which it follows that “He called the light Day, and the darkness Night.”

You will ask, then, when was Hell created? Luis de Molina thinks that it was created on the third day, for on the third day the earth was completely furnished, and Hell is in the center of the earth. However, the more accurate opinion is that Hell was created at this point, specifically, on the first day: Since the angels are very speedy and act instantaneously, it is very likely that they sinned on the first day, not long after their creation, and as a result were immediately thrust out from Heaven into Hell.¹⁰¹ Immediately after they sinned, God prepared Hell for them in the center

¹⁰¹ St. Thomas, ST, I, Q63, A6: “Whether there was any interval between the creation and the fall of the angel?”

Objection 1: It would seem that there was some interval between the angel's creation and his fall. For, it is said (Ezech. 28:15): "Thou didst walk perfect in thy ways from the day of thy creation until iniquity was found in thee." But since walking is continuous movement, it requires an interval. Therefore there was some interval between the devil's creation and his fall.

Objection 2: Further, Origen says (Homily 1 in Ezech.) that "the serpent of old did not from the first walk upon his breast and belly"; which refers to his sin. Therefore the devil did not sin at once after the first instant of his creation.

Objection 3: Further, capability of sinning is common alike to man and angel. But there was some delay between man's formation and his sin. Therefore, for the like reason there was some interval between the devil's formation and his sin.

Objection 4: Further, the instant wherein the devil sinned was distinct from the instant wherein he was created. But there is a middle time between every two instants. Therefore there was an interval between his creation and his fall.

On the contrary, It is said of the devil (Jn. 8:44): "He stood not in the truth": and, as Augustine says (De Civ. Dei xi, 15), "we must understand this in the sense, that he was in the truth, but did not remain in it."

I answer that, There is a twofold opinion on this point. But the more probable one, which is also more in harmony with the teachings of the Saints, is that the devil sinned at once after the first instant of his creation. This must be maintained if it be held that he elicited an act of free-will in the first instant of his creation, and that he was created in grace; as we have said. For since the angels attain beatitude by one meritorious act, as was said, if the devil, created in grace, merited in the first instant, he would at once have received beatitude after that first instant, if he had not placed an impediment by sinning.

If, however, it be contended that the angel was not created in grace, or that he could not elicit an act of free-will in the first instant, then there is nothing to prevent some interval being interposed between his creation and fall.

Reply to Objection 1: Sometimes in Holy Scripture spiritual instantaneous movements are represented by corporeal movements which are measured by time. In this way by "walking" we are to understand the movement of free-will tending towards good.

of the earth as a prison and a place of torment with fire and sulfur. Therefore, on the first day, just as God divided the light from the darkness, so He divided the angels from the demons, grace from sin, glory from punishment, and Heaven from Hell.

Allegorically speaking, Hugh of St. Victor¹⁰² and others note that when light was made and divided from darkness on the first day, the good angels had been confirmed in good and in grace, but the wicked angels had been confirmed in evil, and they were separated from the good angels. Thus that which was being done in the world perceptible by the senses was an image of those things that were being done in the transcendental world. In truth, St. Augustine throughout his works affirms this interpretation as the literal meaning of the verse, saying that “He divided the light from the darkness” means that He divided the angels from the demons. However, as I said, this sense of the verse is allegorical, or rather, symbolic.

Verse 5. HE CALLED THE LIGHT DAY, AND THE DARKNESS NIGHT —

In the verb “He called,” we have a metonymy, i.e., a term is substituted for the thing signified, that is to say, God brought it to pass that light should, for all time, produce day by the fact that it lights up the hemisphere, but darkness should produce night, so that as a result, light could be called by men the Day, and darkness be called Night. Such was St. Augustine’s¹⁰³ opinion.

AND THERE WAS EVENING AND MORNING ONE DAY —

From this passage, *first*, Ambrose Catharinus is of the opinion that light (which he thinks had been the sun) was created in the other hemisphere, which is opposite to ours, the one in which Adam was created. Thus, in order that at the beginning of the world light and day might exist in

Reply to Objection 2: Origen says, “The serpent of old did not from the first walk upon his breast and belly,” because of the first instant in which he was not wicked.

Reply to Objection 3: An angel has an inflexible free-will after once choosing; consequently, if after the first instant, in which he had a natural movement to good, he had not at once placed a barrier to beatitude, he would have been confirmed in good. It is not so with man; and therefore the argument does not hold good.

Reply to Objection 4: It is true to say that there is a middle time between every two instants, so far as time is continuous, as it is proved in Phys. vi, text. 2. But in the angels, who are not subject to the heavenly movement, which is primarily measured by continuous time, time is taken to mean the succession of their mental acts, or of their affections. So the first instant in the angels is understood to respond to the operation of the angelic mind, whereby it introspects itself by its evening knowledge because on the first day evening is mentioned, but not morning. This operation was good in them all. From such operation some of them were converted to the praise of the Word by their morning knowledge while others, absorbed in themselves, became night, “swelling up with pride,” as Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. iv, 24). Hence the first act was common to them all; but in their second they were separated. Consequently they were all of them good in the first instant; but in the second the good were set apart from the wicked.” (Benziger Bros. edition, 1947)

¹⁰² *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*, Book I, p. 1, Chapter 10.

¹⁰³ *On Genesis Against the Manichæans*, Book I, Chapters 9 and 10.

the other hemisphere, night and evening existed in ours, as it says in this verse. But this opinion is improbable, for all the other things were created by God in our hemisphere, and so, therefore, light was created there, too. *Second*, from this verse as well as verse 2, it seems to some scholars that evening, that is, darkness, was prior to light, and night prior to day. Therefore, as the first night was of 12 hours, in the beginning of which the world was created, then followed light, or a day of 12 hours. From that night and day contrived by the artistry of God, the first natural day of 24 hours was fashioned. Hence, the learned opine that both the Jews and the Church celebrate their feast days from one evening to the next evening,¹⁰⁴ in a manner befitting the primeval arrangement of days. However, the whole night itself is not properly called evening, and morning is not the whole day itself.

I think it more accurate to say that heaven and earth were created not before but on the very first day, as I discussed above. Now I add it is more likely that at first the world was created very early in the morning, and at that time the darkness was made in the earth and abyss, at which time the Spirit of the Lord moved over the waters, as is clear in verse 2. Next, in verse 5, after six hours, at noon, (since darkness and light equally filled up and divided the first day) light was created in the middle of the heavens or the abyss. After six hours of movement were completed, at which time the light turned towards its setting, the light made evening its endpoint. Thus, both darkness and light together did not last more than 12 hours in total. For light was created at mid-day, as I have said. Night followed thereafter, lasting a 12-hour period, and its endpoint is morning. Indeed, in this verse, Moses calls the day and night by their endpoints, Evening and Morning. All this is to say that after the first illuminated time had run its course — which was 12 hours long — to the ensuing evening, the time of night ran its course up to the second illumination, (which was also 12 hours in length) and so when the morning followed it, the first day of 24 hours was complete. This is the view of Giles of Rome.¹⁰⁵ If anyone prefers to think that light was created at the very earliest time of the morning, and that these things commenced the first day, he will have to accept Pereira's and Tostado's interpretation of this verse, viz., that heaven and earth were created before the first day and that time had existed before the first day, during which the Spirit of the Lord moved over the waters while darkness continued in existence.

¹⁰⁴ The Jews reckoned the day from sunset to sunset, and in the Divine Office of the Catholic Church, the celebration of a feast begins the day before at Vespers, the evening office.

¹⁰⁵ In *Work of Six Days*, Part I, 6.

ONE DAY —

“One,” that is, *the first*, as is clear from verses 8 and 13. This is how the Vulgate edition of John 20:1 (where Mary Magdalene came to the sepulcher) refers to first day of the week, reading *una... sabbati (day one...of the week)*, where the cardinal numeral *one* is used instead of the ordinal *first*. However, when the Vulgate narrates the same episode in Matthew 28:1, we find the ordinal *prima... sabbati (the first...day of the week)*. Both phrases mean the same thing. In fact, the Jews often replace cardinal numbers with ordinals. This first day of the world was a Sunday, for the seventh day, inclusive, after it was the Sabbath or Saturday. (See Pereira, at the end of the work of the first day, for the 13 privileges of Sunday.)

Note: St. Augustine¹⁰⁶ would have these days understood in a mystical sense. Indeed, he seems to be of the opinion that all things were created by God at once on the first day, but that Moses by the six days of Creation understands the angels’ different kinds of knowledge and their ways and objects. For instance, the knowledge of the *first* day is that by which the angels know both themselves and heaven and earth. The knowledge of the *second* day is the knowledge by which they know the firmament dividing the waters from the waters. That of the *third* day is the knowledge by which they know seeds and plants; that of the *fourth*, the sun and stars; that of the *fifth*, the fish and birds; that of the *sixth*, animals and mankind, which were created on the sixth day. Philo of Alexandria¹⁰⁷ teaches the same thing. However, all the other Fathers teach a contrary opinion, and the simple and historical narrative of Moses prevails over the views of St. Augustine and Philo. Wherefore it is erroneous to say that everything was produced in one day, although Cajetan felt that way as well as Melchior Cano, whom Domingo Bañez¹⁰⁸ cites. It is worth noting that St. Augustine speaks vaguely in discussing this very difficult (by his own admission) question, and he does not make himself clear as to whether he wants his assertions to be taken in a mystical or in a literal sense.

You may say that in Ecclesiasticus 18:1 it says, “He that liveth forever created all things together.” Therefore, Creation did not occur serially over six days. I answer as follows: The word *together* must modify not “He created” but “all things.” This is to say that God created all things in their entirety, that is, all things categorically, with no exception: there is nothing that did exist

¹⁰⁶ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book IV, Chapter 22, at the end of the book, and especially Book XI of his *The City of God*, Chapter 7.

¹⁰⁷ In *Allegories of the Laws*, Book I.

¹⁰⁸ At 1 p. Q. 74, Art. 2.

or now exists that God did not create. Whence in place of “together” in the Greek text of Ecclesiasticus, we read κοινῆ, *koinēi*, in general.

St. Augustine¹⁰⁹ also understands by way of the word *evening* a more obscure understanding of the angels, by which they understand things in themselves. By the word *morning*, or *early morning*, he understands a more perfect understanding, by which the angels know things in God and in the word of God. For as he himself says, a creature’s knowledge in comparison to that of the Creator is like the twilight; but it becomes light like the morning breaking when that knowledge is applied both to the light and to the praise and love of the Creator. Yet, however true and devout these notions are, they are mystical, not literal.

With respect to the moral sense of the words, St. John Chrysostom¹¹⁰ suggests that the day (in the case of mankind) and the light (in the case of other creatures) are strong incentives to serve God. “For you,” says he, “during the day, the heaven is endued with light and adorned with the brilliance of the sun; at night, with the shining mirror of the moon, the sky itself is lighted by the manifold brightness of the stars. The result is that, by the alternation of day and night, mankind discerns the variety of times; moreover, by night, mortal wretches are refreshed after their daily toils. For you, the seasons change in their turn. The forests show their leaves, the fields grow delightful, the meadows become green, animals bear their young, springs bubble forth, and rivers flow...It is as though all nature should constantly say to you: I have been commanded by the Lord of things to obey you. I obey, I comply, I serve, and I am not changed with the changed circumstances. I say that I yield to the rebellious, I comply with the impudent, I zealously serve the despiser...Are you such a one who stands firmly in this contempt? Who commands the creature and serves not the Creator? Who exercises dominion and does not recognize your master? Fear the patient Lord, lest you experience the severe judge; let the delay of Him Who defers set you right, lest the severity of the judge punish you...and you will not be able to measure what you owe even if the due service of your lips should occupy the whole time of your life in persevering in praise and devoting yourself to thanksgiving.” Then at the end he writes: The sinner “admits a double fault and a twin crime in himself, because (1) he does not return the duty of service owed to the Lord and because (2) by sinning he endeavors to consider his countless benefits as injuries.”

¹⁰⁹ In *The City of God*, Book XI, Chapter 7.

¹¹⁰ In his homily *That Man is Exalted above Every Creature*, Volume I.

ON THE WORK OF THE SECOND DAY

On the first day of the building of the world, God created and laid down the foundation, and He laid the empyrean heaven over it like a roof. The remaining intermediate space was chaos, or the abyss of waters, which He developed, arranged, and fored on the second day.

Verse 6. LET THERE BE A FIRMAMENT MADE AMIDST THE WATERS: AND LET IT DIVIDE THE WATERS FROM THE WATERS —

The word “firmament” in Hebrew is רָקִיעַ *rāqiaʿ*, the trilateral root of which is רָקַע, *rqʿ*, which means, according to the authority of St. Jerome and some very learned Jews, *to expand*, or *to distend*, and by distending to make firm and solid something that beforehand was fluid and rarefied. Just as, then, molten crude metal is distended and condensed by pouring, so in this verse the water being coagulated into the heavens is called in Greek στερέωμα (*firmament*). Indeed, the firmament is like a wall in the midst of waters, that is, between two waters, or in other words, a wall standing between those above and those below the firmament and differentiating and restraining them from each other.

You may ask, what then is this firmament and what are the waters above the firmament?

First, Origen understood the phrase “the waters above” to mean the angels and the phrase “the waters below” to mean the demons. But this is one of those peculiar allegorical fantasies of Origen.

Second, St. Bonaventure, Nicholas of Lyra, Tostado, Cajetan, Catharinus, and others hold that the phrase “the waters above” means the crystalline heaven. However, this is called water only in the very broadest, analogous sense of the word.

Third, following St. Augustine’s¹¹¹ recommendation, Rupert of Deutz, Steuco, Pereira, and Gregory of Valencia think that the firmament is the middle region of the atmosphere, which, albeit made and created on the first day so that it would be the atmosphere, was made on the second day to be the firmament—the space between that which divides the waters above (i.e., the clouds) from the waters of the rivers and springs below.

¹¹¹ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book II, Chapter 4.

But I say that the firmament is the starry sky and all its neighboring celestial bodies—both the lower and higher ones up to the empyrean heaven—which, as Job says, have been poured forth in the air. Indeed, it does not even signify a firmness, although the firmament does have a kind of association and connection and by this extends itself, and in the region proper to it is like something solid. It also comprises the atmosphere under heaven that reaches the earth. The firmament is also comprised of fire,¹¹² if above the atmosphere there exists anything in the nature of an element (for many philosophers deny the existence of corruptible elements there).

In verse 6, God arranges and forms the abyss of waters. In fact, part of this water—being matter highly suited to change from one thing into another (for water is neither very dense or very rarefied, for which reason it is easily changed into something else)—was changed and solidified into the heavens and the atmosphere, as I have said. Besides those changed into the heavens and the atmosphere, the finer and more noble part remained above the heavens and the thicker part was divided underneath the firmament into the seas and the various rivers.

Therefore, true and natural waters are above all the heavens, including above the *primum mobile*, or first movable (since the firmament comprises all these), just under the empyrean heaven. John Calvin, writing about this verse of Genesis, mocks this notion. He does so, however, absurdly, because my opinion is proven as follows.

First, because the simple and historical narrative of Moses demands it. Truly, the firmament, the Hebrew *rāqia'*, does not signify the atmosphere, nor the clouds, but properly the

¹¹² Here fire refers to the element of fire, one of the four elements in Aristotelian physics. Fr. Lapidé is probably stating the predominant element, since it was generally held that each body contained a blend of the elements, as discussed by St Thomas, *On the mixture of the elements*: "... Therefore, one must find another way by which both the truth of blends is preserved and yet the elements are not totally corrupted but, in some way, remain in the blend. It ought to be considered, therefore, that the active and passive qualities of the elements are contraries to each other, and they receive of more and less. Now a medium quality can be constituted from contrary qualities which receive of more and less, which are flavored with the nature of both extremes, such as gray between white and black, and tepid between hot and cold. So, then, by remitting the greatest qualities of the elements, there is constituted from out of these qualities some medium quality which is the proper quality of the blended body, differing nevertheless in diverse things according to the diverse proportion of the blend. And this quality is, in fact, the proper disposition for the form of the blended body, just as the simple quality is for the form of the simple body. Therefore, just as the extremes are found in the mean, which partakes of the nature of both, so the qualities of the simple body are found in the proper quality of the blended body. The quality of the simple body, however, is indeed other than the substantial form itself; nevertheless, it acts in virtue of the substantial form. Otherwise, the hot would only heat, but the substantial form would not be reduced into act through its action, since nothing acts beyond its own species. So, therefore, the virtues of the substantial forms of the simple bodies are preserved in the blended bodies. Therefore, the forms of the elements are in blended bodies, not indeed by act, but by virtue: and this is what Aristotle says in I. *De Generatione* [10 (327b 30)]: "Therefore, the elements evidently do not remain in the blend by act, as body and white do; nor are they corrupted, neither the other nor both: for their virtue is preserved."

starry sky and the celestial bodies. Again, the verb “let there be made” does not mean an assignment of a thing before it was made, (for instance, assigning the firmament to be in the middle region of the atmosphere, in order to differentiate the waters from the waters). Instead, it means a real production of a thing which is commanded to be made, the very same as when we read in Genesis: *Be light made*. So too God commands “Let there be a firmament made”, and it was made, and it was called heaven. The waters here in Hebrew is מים, *shāmayim*, as if to say *shām māyim*, *there are the waters*. In other words, a new form of heavens has been introduced into the matter of primeval water in the abyss, and so these heavens, albeit new, are still called after the name of those primordial waters, *shāmayim* (i.e. watery, born of and formed from the waters). Whence the sky has a watery color. Accordingly, Hieronymus ab Oleastro’s translation does not agree with the words of Sacred Scripture, namely of *shāmayim* as bodies worthy of admiration and astonishing, namely, highly renown and very famous (either from שמ, *shm*, that is, *name, fame* or more preferably from שמע *shāmēm*, that is, *he was astonished*). It also does not agree with the true meaning of the Hebrew original. For although *shāmayim* is in the dual number,¹¹³ it alludes to *māyim*, which is also dual, not to *shāmēm*, for if so, then the heavens would have to be *shēmāmîm*. Therefore, the verb *let there be made* signifies not the systematic arrangement of the firmament but its production. Indeed, just as God said in verse 9 about the sea and the dry land: “Let the waters...be gathered together into one place,” so He said in this verse: Let a portion of the primeval waters of the abyss, which existed before, now be the firmament, that is, the space between the waters above and those below. Some, such as St. Basil, St. Ambrose, and following them St. John Damascene,¹¹⁴ even think that the heavens (but not the stars, for it is manifest that they are solid) are not solid, but are insubstantial and fluid, so that as a result they may be cut through and divided like water and air.

Second, my assertion is also proved from the fact that on the fourth day God made the sun, the moon, and the stars in the firmament. These also are not in the atmosphere but in the heavens. Therefore, the firmament is not the atmosphere but the starry heavens.

¹¹³ Some languages like classical Greek and Hebrew have in addition to the singular and plural number a third number called the *dual*. In Hebrew, the dual denotes objects that occur in pairs, e.g., hands and lips. The Hebrew words for *heavens* and *waters* bear the *-ayim* ending for the dual, but the forms are only apparently dual and in reality are plural. (*Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, §88 d 2, 2nd English edition.)

¹¹⁴ *On the Orthodox Faith*, Book II, Chapter 7.

Third, moreover, because the clouds were not yet in existence (certainly not on the first six days), the atmosphere was perfectly clear (this is sufficiently gathered from Genesis 2:5). Therefore the waters above cannot be clouds.

Fourth, further proof comes from the fact that elsewhere in Scripture where the waters above are mentioned they are distinguished from clouds, rain, and hail; they are located above the heavens in the first place among other created things above the clouds, as we see from Daniel 3:60 and Psalm 148:4.

Fifth, this view is the common opinion of the fathers Philo, Josephus, St. Basil, St. Ambrose, Procopius, St. Theodoret, St. Chrysostom, Rupert of Deutz, Gennadius, and Severian of Gabbala.¹¹⁵ It is the opinion of St. Hilary of Poitiers,¹¹⁶ St. Bede,¹¹⁷ St. Justin,¹¹⁸ St. Augustine,¹¹⁹ Onkelos, Hieronymus ab Oleastro, Luigi Lippomano, Molina and many others.

You will say as an objection: In the beginning, God made nothing against nature. Now at that time He established nature itself. However, it is against nature for waters to be above the heavens. I answer by denying the minor premise.¹²⁰ For that is the natural place for the less dense, fine waters that differ from our kind of water. St. Augustine¹²¹ says, “Indeed, there is a natural location for each thing that He made, wherefrom is every manner, number, and order of nature.”

Similarly, he¹²² says God located phlegm¹²³ not in the lowest part in man but in the highest, specifically in the head. Likewise, He placed these waters in the world in the highest region, to wit, above the heavens. So, although the earth is very heavy, it nevertheless hangs in the middle of the world like a ball and is kept there by God. See Canon II.

¹¹⁵ *Catena of the Greeks*.

¹¹⁶ *Treatise on the Psalms*, Psalm 131.

¹¹⁷ *On the Nature of Things*.

¹¹⁸ Question 93.

¹¹⁹ *The City of God*, Book XI, last chapter.

¹²⁰ In logic, a syllogism consists of (1) a Major Premise, (2) a Minor Premise, and (3) a Conclusion. The premise Cornelius denies is: *it is against nature for waters to be above the heavens*. The inferred syllogism may be expressed as follows:

Major: Nothing made by God is against nature.

Minor: For waters to be above the heavens is against nature.

Conclusion: Therefore, God did not make waters to be above the heavens.

¹²¹ *Against Faustus*, Book XXVI, Chapter 3.

¹²² *The City of God*, Book XI, last chapter.

¹²³ In ancient Greek physiology, the four Hippocratic humours, blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile, correspond to the four elements. The due proportion of the humours was necessary for the healthy maintenance of bodily functions. According to Hippocrates, pain is felt when one of the humours is in defect or excess. The Greek physician Galen, who practiced in ancient Rome, identified phlegm as situated in the pituitary gland.

You may again ask, for what purpose are the waters, that is to say, the ones above the heavens, in that location? *First*, Procopius and St. Theodoret answer that the waters are there lest the sun, moon, and stars (being set on fire) loosen the heavens from the waters like something congealed. Alternately, according to St. Bede, the waters were to temper the heat that arose from the energy and motion of the stars. *Second*, St. Justin says the waters are there to press the firmament down so that it does not move upwards. *Third*, Procopius says that the reason they are there is to beat back the rays of the sun and the moon, and to drive them downwards to the earth. *Fourth*, Hieronymus ab Oleastro says the reason that waters had been put there was so that they could overwhelm the earth as they were released in gushing torrents during the time of Noah and the Flood.

I answer that God willed to locate these waters above the heavens (noting that from these waters the heavens were made) both as an adornment of the universe and so that this source of the heavens might appear as a sign of the creation, which the heavens might always gaze upon above themselves. Perhaps it was even created for the pleasure of the Saints dwelling in the empyrean heaven, in order for them to feast their eyes on these crystalline and multicolored waters. The waters, in fact, are of every form, beauty, and color, and they are abundantly decorated, as we clearly see in the rainbow. It seems as if St. John alludes to this in Apocalypse 7:17: “The Lamb...shall lead them to the fountains of the waters of life” and, in 22:1, “He showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal.” Above all, the purpose was this: Just as water here is subject to our atmosphere, so those waters are subject to the aether which is in the empyrean heaven. It is certainly likely that the empyrean heaven is not solid like iron (for otherwise, if you observe nature, the Saints would be confined there as if within a wall); rather, it has its own atmosphere called aether, which is furnished with every kind of loveliness. Through it, the Blessed discern all things, breathe, and move about. In short, God wanted us to marvel at many things, not scrutinize them. “The authority of the Scriptures,” says St. Augustine, “is greater than the capability of all human genius.”

Yet again, you may ask, why did Moses not say on this day what he said on the rest of the days of Creation, viz., “And God saw that it was good”? Catharinus and Molina answer that the reason is that up to this point the firmament was unfinished, and was to be perfected by the sun and moon on the fourth day. However, what Moses says about light is in conflict with this view: “And God saw the light that it was good” even though He perfected it on the fourth day by

multiplying it in the heavens. So too, on the third day He did not bless the plants even though He blessed the animals on the fifth day. Perhaps the best thing to be said here is that in the one summarizing sentence of verse 10, “And He saw that it was good,” Moses consolidated the three works of divine separation: to wit, the separation of light from darkness; the separation of the waters above from those below; and the separation of the waters from the earth.

Some add that this work in a certain respect was not so much of Creation as it was of spacing and dividing the waters above from those below by the interposition of the firmament. The moral lesson, then, is that just as in a commonwealth or community, union and harmony are a great good, so too division and discord are a great evil, as the Jesuit Benedict Fernández shows.

Lastly, the Septuagint has the clause “and God saw that it was good” with reference to the creation of the firmament and the other works. Nevertheless, it is missing in the Hebrew Bible, the Aramaic version, the versions by Theodotion, Aquila, and Symmachus, and in the Vulgate.

Interpreted at the moral level, the firmament is steadfastness and constancy of the soul fixed intently on God and the heavens, which constantly buttress the waters above (i.e., the prosperities) and the waters below (i.e., the adversities). Hence man possesses an upright countenance so that he may continually gaze upon the heavens. Why, he even possesses in his visage the image of heaven! There can be no doubt about this whatsoever. *First*, man has a round head like the heavens. Here is what Cassiodorus¹²⁴ has to say: “The head is joined together by six bones and was fashioned in a round concavity in the likeness of the celestial sphere.” *Second*, there are two eyes, like the sun and the moon that in turn hide and conceal themselves as do the eyes, which received their Latin name from that fact. Indeed, the eyes are said to operate by covering and by concealing.¹²⁵ Hear the testimony of Varro, and Lactantius¹²⁶ who cites him: “God concealed the eyes by means of the covering of the eyebrows so that they might be more secured from injury. From that fact comes Varro’s opinion that they are called *oculi* (eyes) in Latin.” Therefore, at the appearance of a woman, or anything alluring, cover your eyes so that you may preserve them and, in equal measure, the mind from harm (as you would by hiding something). Thus at night the sun hides itself lest it hinder men’s time of rest; by day the moon conceals itself so that at night it can be of advantage to men by lighting their way. *Third*, man received a soul

¹²⁴ *On the Soul*, Chapter 16.

¹²⁵ The Latin word for “to conceal” is *occulĕre* and the word for eyes is *oculi*.

¹²⁶ *On the Handicraft of God*, Chapter 10.

from the heavens like that of God and the angels. Look at what St. Bernard says in his sermon on the feast of St. Martin: “One may say that, in a certain way, the heavens are man; without doubt, he is similar to the celestial spirits in substance and at the same time in form: indeed, in substance, because he is spiritual, and in form because he is rational. Still by no means are these two aspects enough to raise him to merit hearing the words, ‘Thou art heaven and thou wilt go to heaven.’” *Fourth*, the Latin word for heaven (*caelum*) comes from the Latin word for something to be concealed (*celandum*). St. Bernard says in the same place as above, this is because many things are concealed and hidden from us in the heavens. Thus in man, the mind, thinking, intention, and the secrets of the heart are hidden. *Fifth*, the second man was from heaven, heavenly (namely, Christ), and as is the heavenly, so also are they that are heavenly, says the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:48. This is to say, as is Christ, so are Christians. Therefore, just as Christ is the heaven of the deity and of virtues, so also is the Christian in whom the moon is faith, the evening star hope, the sun charity, and the rest of the stars are the other virtues, says St. Bernard.¹²⁷ Wherefore, this is spoken of mystically in Isaiah 66:1: “Heaven is my throne”; and literally in Apocalypse 21:2: “I...saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven...” In Apocalypse 12:1, such a heaven was the woman in clothed with the sun, wearing a crown of twelve stars on her head, and the moon at her feet, namely the Church, and mystically, the Blessed Virgin.

Verse 7. AND GOD MADE A FIRMAMENT ¹²⁸ —

Verse 8. AND GOD CALLED THE FIRMAMENT HEAVEN —

In Latin *Caelum* (*Heaven*) is said to derive from *celandum* (*something to be concealed*), that is, *hiding* because it conceals and covers all things, says St. Augustine¹²⁹. Or, if you will, refer to St. Ambrose who says that it is called *caelum* in Latin as though it were something *caelatum* (*carved, engraved, chased*), elaborated, that is, painted with mottled stars. Varro thinks that heaven can be said to mean something like the Greek word κοῖλον, *koilon*, that is, a *hollow thing*, and thus it must be written *c o e l u m*, with *oe*, not *ae*.

¹²⁷ *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, Number 27.

¹²⁸ Fr. Lapide offers no commentary on verse 7, being very similar to verse 6. (The verse reads: “And God made a firmament, and divided the waters that were under the firmament, from those that were above the firmament, and it was so.”)

¹²⁹ *On the Knowledge of the True Life*, Chapter 43, Volume 9.

Moses, however, wrote in Hebrew, not in Latin, and God spoke in Hebrew, and He called the firmament “*shāmayim*” for the reasons I gave above.

AND THE EVENING AND MORNING WERE THE SECOND DAY —

You should not think that God was like a skilled human workman, occupied the whole day in the construction of the firmament and thereafter in other things. In truth, He did it of a sudden, in an instant, and He conserved the same through the rest of the day.

ON THE WORK OF THE THIRD DAY

Verse 9. LET THE WATERS THAT ARE UNDER THE HEAVEN, BE GATHERED TOGETHER INTO ONE PLACE: AND LET THE DRY LAND APPEAR —

You may ask, how was this done?

First, some think that the sea was gathered up into the other part of the earth and into the other hemisphere, so that as a result that entire portion of the earth was covered with waters and uninhabitable, with the consequence that there are no antipodes.¹³⁰ Such was the view of Procopius, and St. Augustine¹³¹ does not reject this view. The contrary is true though, as is well known by the Portuguese and Spanish voyages to the Indies.

Second, St. Basil,¹³² Paul of Burgos, Ambrose Catharinus and St. Thomas Aquinas¹³³ think that this sea was separated from the land such that it was made higher than the land, and thus at this time has a spherical body and center different from the spherical body and center of the land. From this idea, it is easy to come up with a reason why springs and rivers still burst forth in high places, because they originate in subterranean channels from the sea, which is higher than the land. They argue that everyone knows from experience that springs ascend to the height of their source, and this phenomenon occurs by a natural lightening of the waters by which some drive others forward until all the waters arrive at a kind of equilibrium.

I suppose the water that appears on the outside is much smaller than the land, as Alessandro Piccolomini argues in the book he published on this topic, and Julius Caesar Scaliger.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ People living on the opposite hemisphere of the earth.

¹³¹ *The City of God*, Book XVI, Chapter 9.

¹³² *Homily* 4.

¹³³ ST, I, Q69, A1, R2.

¹³⁴ In his attack against Gerolamo Cardano (*Exercise* 38).

Now I say, *first*: The land and water make one sphere, and consequently the water is not higher than the land. This is the common opinion of mathematicians, Molina, Pereira, Cajetan, St. Jerome,¹³⁵ St. John Chrysostom¹³⁶ and St. John Damascene,¹³⁷ The correctness of this position is obvious, (i), from the eclipse of the moon, which results from the earth's coming between the sun and the moon. For this eclipse brings about only a shadow of one spherical body, not of two. Therefore, the land and the sea, the shadow of which results in the eclipse, are one spherical body, not two.

(ii) because any drops of water, and any parts whatsoever of land, fall straight to their own center in the same line, in the same manner and trajectory, everywhere on earth; therefore, they share the same spherical body.

(iii) because the shores and islands project above the waters, as is evident; indeed, many islands float in the water and many have been seen to change their position. Therefore, islands and the land itself make up one spherical body with the sea.

(iv) the same thing is manifest from Scripture. Psalm 23:2: "For He hath founded it (the earth) upon the seas"; Psalm 135:6: "He Who established the earth above the waters"; Psalm 106:23: "They that go down to the sea in ships." Therefore, the sea is not higher than the land, but the land is higher than the sea.

You may remark, how, then, does it say in Psalm 103:6: "Above the mountains shall the waters stand"? I answer: "Shall stand," that is, *the waters were standing*, since evidently, as it says a little earlier in that Psalm, the waters clothed and covered the whole earth like a garment on the first and second day of the world. However, on the third day, at the voice of God, they fled into one place, and at that time God caused the mountains to rise up on the earth; elsewhere, He hollowed out the earth into valleys; elsewhere He left the original level surface and fields, as it says a little later in the same Psalm. God so made the globe of the world to have a variety of appearance, partly so that the sea and rivers might be confined by the mountains like walls, partly so that the mountains could make the fields fruitful by distilling their rains and waters and could protect them from the heat and winds.

¹³⁵ On Psalm 32.

¹³⁶ Homily 9 of the series *On the Statues to the People of Antioch*.

¹³⁷ *On the Orthodox Christian Faith*, Book II, Chapters 9-10.

Second, I say: The waters were gathered together on the third day, (i) because God caused some water which was the density of the fresh water of rivers and springs—which seems to be the density of natural water—to become denser. By that action, the sea became salty, partly so that it would not putrefy, partly so that it might provide nourishment for the fish, and partly in order to sustain ships more easily. Therefore, on the third Day God made the sea salty, and He daily conserves it with the addition of similar vapors, which are produced from the earth by the energy of the sun and the stars and are dispatched into the sea. Indeed, some philosophers have ridiculously invented the theory that the saltiness comes from the energy of the sun’s rays, by which the bottom of the sea is burnt up. They say that the saltiness results from the burning, just as ash is a sign of combustion for us. The sun, in fact, does not burn except by light, which divers report does not reach beyond 15 ells beneath the sea’s surface. The bottom of the sea, however, in many places is 500, or even 1,000 ells deep. Therefore, when the water was made denser by the operation of God, it contracted itself and occupied a smaller place of earth than before, and it left part of the earth dry. Such is the opinion of St. Augustine.¹³⁸

(ii) it was not after the Flood, as some would have it, but on the third day of the world, that God made the land partly sink, partly rise up. From this action, the mountains and valleys were made, along with various gaps and hollows in the earth, into which the sea was contained as if in a bed, as is clear from Psalm 103, beginning at verse 7. Therefore, on the third day, God fashioned all the beds for the sea and the rivers and into them He separated the sea and rivers. See Rupert of Deutz.¹³⁹

(iii) on the third day, God made deep cavities under the earth, as has been found by experience, and He filled them with a huge quantity of water. As a consequence, many call these places the lower world or the abyss. These deep pools are linked to the sea by means of various channels, and they are thought to be the source and origin of springs and rivers, seeing that by means of them the earth circulates water like blood through veins that fill up the earth. An indication of this is that wherever one digs, one almost always finds water there, as is manifest in wells, which we see dug out everywhere. Indeed, the earth is like a mother of living mixed things and compounds. Wherefore, as in the body of an animal and of every man, there is a great quantity of blood in the liver and heart, and from there it is dispersed by a network of vessels through the

¹³⁸ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book I, Chapter 12.

¹³⁹ *On Genesis*, Book I, Chapter 34 et seq.

whole body, both upwards and downwards. Thus, says Seneca,¹⁴⁰ those huge cavities or breaches under the earth are dispersed by means of underground passages like vessels through the entire earth, even the high and mountainous part; moreover, in certain places of the earth they break out into springs, streams, and rivers. Therefore, that which is the liver in man corresponds to the abyss of waters in the caverns of the earth. However, the origin of springs and rivers must be sought more exactly elsewhere.

Water going forth from the abyss, mixed with rain in the time of Noah, once again completely filled up and covered over the whole earth and all the mountains (Genesis 7:11 and 20). Hence again St. Basil,¹⁴¹ St. Ambrose¹⁴² and St. Jerome¹⁴³ teach in respect to this verse that all rivers and all confluences of waters are finally united in the ocean. Indeed, the Caspian Sea, which appears wholly separate, is linked by subterranean channels to the Arctic Ocean and is therefore salty, as St. Basil, Strabo, Pliny the Elder, and St. Dionysius¹⁴⁴ teach, despite what Aristotle and Ptolemy say. For information about this abyss, see the many observations in the Jesuits' *Coimbra Commentaries* on Aristotle¹⁴⁵ and Francisco Vallés.¹⁴⁶

Hence, I say, *third*: The waters are said to be gathered into one place, that is, into a place separated from the land, so that it might be dry and habitable, and properly the waters are said to be gathered into one place, because as I have already said, all waters are linked to the ocean and to the abyss that is the sea itself, which is partly under the land and partly contiguous to it on the earth. For this abyss is one, to which all water is linked by subterranean channels like a fountainhead and a mother's breast, and from there it is spread by channels to diverse places. Indeed, God willed that the waters mingle through various hollows and dips in the earth, both so the land be irrigated and rendered fertile by these waters and so that the sea winds might blow over it to make the land wholesome and fertile. Further, the waters which in the beginning covered the earth were not deep. Because of this, they could easily be closed up in the ocean and the deep abyss. Therefore, it was not necessary to say part of the waters was dried up by the wind (as Tostado argued) or by the sun (as Steuco held).

¹⁴⁰ *Natural Questions*, Book III, Chapter 15.

¹⁴¹ *Homily* 4.

¹⁴² Book II, Chapters 2 and 3.

¹⁴³ *Habakkuk*, Chapter 3.

¹⁴⁴ *On the Position of the Earth*.

¹⁴⁵ *On Meteors*, Tract 9, Chapter 4.

¹⁴⁶ *On Sacred Philosophy*.

St. Theodoret on Psalm 103 observes that the raging sea was not so much restrained by the shores, to which it was almost equal, as by the command of God, like a bridle and a thunderclap. Otherwise, it would repeatedly break forth upon and overwhelm all things, as it did in the beginning of the world. Hence God is said to have placed a boundary to the sea which it could not pass over, where He subdues its swelling waves, as in Psalm 103:9 and Job 38:8. Speaking similarly, St. Basil¹⁴⁷ says, “What would stop the Red Sea from overrunning with its overflowing discharge all Egypt (which lies in a great hollow lower than the sea itself) and joining itself to the sea that lies next to Egypt, if the Creator, by His command, did not restrain it as if bound by foot shackles?”

St. Ambrose, St. Thomas Aquinas,¹⁴⁸ and Pliny the Elder¹⁴⁹ hold the same theory. Pliny says that a navigable canal from the Red Sea leads not into the Egyptian Sea, as St. Basil writes, but into the Nile, at the place where it runs underground to the Delta: “Sesostris, king of Egypt, was the first of all men who thought this. Then Darius of the Persians, and later on Ptolemy II, who dug a canal...as far as the Bitter Springs. A fear of a flood deterred him from further digging, when he found that the Red Sea was three cubits higher than the land of Egypt.” However, Pliny adds, “Some historians do not give this as the reason. Rather, they assert that he stopped lest the Nile’s water, which is Egypt’s only potable supply, be polluted by the intrusion of seawater.” In fact, the geographer Strabo¹⁵⁰ rejects the earlier experience of Sesostris, Darius, and Ptolemy II, who claimed they found the Red Sea to be higher than Egypt. Pereira followed his view. There is some support for these last opinions, because, following traditional memory, Alfonso de Albuquerque, the viceroy of India, thought that the Red Sea does not run down into the Nile. He held that the situation was the exact opposite: the Nile runs from above, from Ethiopia, into the Red Sea, nearer to the ground, so to speak. Moreover, he contemplated diverting the course of the Nile from Egypt in order to render that country unfruitful and useless to the Turks. Indeed, he would have done so had his death not prevented it, as the Jesuit Maffei¹⁵¹ narrates. St. Basil¹⁵² adds that there are a great many benefits of the sea, which anyone who wishes may see.

AND LET THE DRY LAND APPEAR —

¹⁴⁷ *Hexaemeron*, Homily 4.

¹⁴⁸ ST, I, Q69, A1.

¹⁴⁹ *Natural History*, Book VI, Chapter 33.

¹⁵⁰ *Geography*, Book XVII.

¹⁵¹ *Indian Histories*, the last book.

¹⁵² *Hexaemeron*, Homily 4.

What before was slimy and covered with water is now made to appear. Wherefore, for *dry* the Hebrew word is יבשה, *yabbāshāh*, that is, dried out so that it can be habitable, planted, and fruit-bearing. Accordingly, dry is not the same thing as arid, for if so, it would be unfruitful. Dry however means the same as “not wet.” Some sweet moisture remained in the land, both to make it fruitful and to join together distant parts like a glue lest they should fall apart and be torn asunder from each other. Again, God irrigated the earth by channels of springs and rivers.

Verse 10. AND GOD CALLED THE DRY LAND, EARTH, AND THE GATHERING TOGETHER OF THE WATERS, HE CALLED SEAS —

This is a prolepsis.¹⁵³ For it was not on the third day, but on the sixth, specifically when God formed Adam, and endowed him with the Hebrew language, that God then called the land dry and ordered it to be called by Adam in Hebrew *āres* ארץ, that is Earth. And He called the gathering together of the waters *yammîm*, that is, the Seas. All this is to say that the dry place, the construction of which I recount here, is that which is known commonly in Hebrew as *āres* ארץ, which we call the Earth, and the gatherings of the waters, which I said that God did, are those things that we commonly call in Hebrew *yammîm* or the *Seas*.

Note: Earth in Hebrew is *āres* ארץ, if you will, from the trilateral root רצץ, *ratsats* or *rşş*, that is, *to tread upon*, because it is tread upon and dwelt upon by men and beasts. Just as the Latin word for Earth *terra* comes from *terendum* (*something to be worn away*), as Junilius, Varro, and Steuco¹⁵⁴ would have it. Alternately, *āres* ארץ could come from the root רצה, that is, *he wanted*, *he desired earnestly*, because it always seeks to bear fruit, as Isidore Clarius would have it. It could also come from the root רוצ, that is, *he runs*, by antiphrasis,¹⁵⁵ because the land by no means runs but is plainly fixed and immobile. Another explanation of the word is that men and animals dwell and run on it, and that all heavy things fall and run to it as the lowest place; however, around it all the elements and all the heavenly bodies run. Relying for the most part on this last explanation, in this verse God seems to have called the dry land *earth*, or *āres* ארץ in Hebrew, from *running*, because all things run and are moved toward it or around it like a base and center point. Some scholars think that the Germanic word for earth, *eerde*, comes from the Hebrew *āres* ארץ.

¹⁵³ A figure of classical rhetoric: the application of an epithet that will be relevant later.

¹⁵⁴ In his *Cosmopœia*.

¹⁵⁵ A figure of classical rhetoric: irony.

Furthermore, in Hebrew the seas are called יַמִּים, *yammîm* from the abundance and multitude of waters: for *yammîm* by anastrophe¹⁵⁶ of the letter *yôd*, is the same as *māyîm*, that is, *waters*. Again *yammîm* refers to the root הַמָּה, *hmh*, (hamah) that is, *to sound*, i.e., to make a loud noise, like that made by a crowd, a mass or a multitude of people, as the sea roars. From this, we have the word הַמּוֹן, (ha-mon) *a crowd, a mass, a multitude, a rumbling, a tumult*.

Verse 11. LET THE EARTH BRING FORTH THE GREEN HERB —

“Let it bring forth,” not by actively producing, as Cajetan and Paul of Burgos would have it, but by only by ministering to matter. For at that point in the first creation of things, God actively and efficaciously produced (by Himself alone and immediately) all the sprouts and plants, and he produced them in just their right and perfect sizes, as St. Aquinas,¹⁵⁷ Tostado, Pereira and others throughout their works teach. In truth the Psalmist says, Psalm 103:14: “Bringing forth grass for cattle, and herb for the service of men.” But now the earth competes productively to bring forth sprouts, especially if it is imbued with seed. Indeed, the earth through the pear seed, produces the pear; through the apple seed, it produces the apple. However, by itself, it produces grasses, if it is irrigated by the rain and heated by the sun. Further, the earth is a kind mother and the nurse of all living things, as Pliny the Elder¹⁵⁸ elegantly says: “She is to men as the heavens are to God, because she receives us as we are being born, nourishes us when born, and sustains us always once when have been brought to light. Lastly, having embraced us in her lap as we are abandoned by the rest of nature, then she especially covers us like a mother.” A little later he says: “she is kind, mild, indulgent, ever the handmaid of the needs of mortal men: Look at what things she produces by our demands! What things does she pour forth spontaneously! What perfumes and savors! What juices! What pleasant shapes! What colors! With what good faith does she pay back all the capital entrusted to her? What support she gives for our sake!”

Further, St. Basil speculates, and rightly so, about the providence in God’s fruits, which pour forth in stalks equal in number to their roots and support themselves. “In the meantime, the fruit,” says he, “while it is moderately warmed, receives moisture, which it sucks up through its tiny roots by the energy of the heat enticing it from the earth to the degree to which it is of

¹⁵⁶ A figure of rhetoric: arrangement by reversal of the normal order; thus *yam-* for *may-*, or using Fr. Lapide’s transliteration of Hebrew *iam(mim)* for *mai(m)*.

¹⁵⁷ ST, I, Q70, A1.

¹⁵⁸ *Natural History*, Book II, Chapter 63.

sufficiently controlled nourishment. It distributes and rations the moisture to the stalk, to the bark, to the husk (that is, to the small places or little openings), to the kernel and finally to the beards on an ear of grain.” He then continues: “See how the stalks of grain are girded by nodes or joints strengthened as if by a kind of chain or clamp, in order for them to easily bear and sustain the weight of the ears of grain as they bend to the ground, full of and heavy with fruit. Even so, oats are entirely free from these fastenings because they are not pressed forward by any weight from the top. On the other hand, nature seems to have strengthened wheat with a stalk like a chain. Also, it has hidden the grain in a husk lest it be exposed as prey to grain-loving birds. Moreover, by the wall of the ears of the grain that are like darts, Nature keeps at bay the damage of little creatures.”

Next, St. Basil discusses the vine and its tendrils, by which it connects itself to trees and reaches to their very top. A little later he symbolically applies the vine to man. “In a similar way”, says he, “God has raised up on high our senses and has not allowed us to be cast down on the ground as to be worthy to be trampled upon. For He wishes that we lean on and cleave to our neighbors by the embraces of charity, like tendrils or a kind of prop, and to come to rest on them, so that we may be borne by the yoke of affection upward, and that like the vines in a vineyard planted with trees we cleave to the heights of the lofty trees. Yea, indeed, he demands of us that we endure being dug in.” Further on he says, “The trees whose branches are rather extended and broadly developed and stretched out into the air have rather deep roots, which are similarly broadly spread out all around, showing Nature had thereby set certain foundations in a proportion corresponding to the weights at the top. Indeed, some have already observed that pine trees that have been cut down or set on fire and burned by flames are converted into a forest of oak trees. We know that, by the effort of a farmer, trees lay aside or expel the imperfection of their nature, as sour pomegranates and bitter almonds. For when perforated in the trunk in the lowest part near the root, they receive a thick wedge of pine wood driven through the middle of the pith, they then grow sweet; thus, what was something unpleasant is changed to a pleasing use.”

A little later, St. Basil adds that some palm trees are male and others female, and that the female “bending down, entices the male with her softer branches, as though she were eagerly and passionately desirous of his embrace; In fact, the cultivators of these trees cast the flower or fruit of the male, like a kind of seed, among the branches, and thus the tree from that action feels a kind of pleasure and again raises itself and returns its fronds to their proper shape. They also assert the same thing about fig trees. For that reason, others plant wild fig trees next to fig-orchards, and

others tie bundles of unripe figs to the fig trees, and in this way they cure the weakness of the fig trees by supporting the trees' already falling fruit by means of these unripe figs." St. Basil then compares the actions of Nature to human behavior, saying: "What meaning does this mystery of nature wish to disclose? That we ourselves also often ought to select from those strangers to the faith an intense sharpness of mind and an efficacious energy for good works." For instance, whenever you see a temperate, modest, upright gentile or heretic, he should inspire you to surpass him in these same virtues: thus like the fig-tree stimulated by the unripe figs, you may inhibit the loss of your fruits and more exactly nurture them. All this and more St. Basil¹⁵⁹ wrote.

AND SUCH AS MAY SEED —

This means to say, Let the earth bring forth herbs that can make seed for the propagation of their own species, that is, so that they can sow their seed.

AND THE FRUIT TREE —

That is, the tree bearing fruit, as the Hebrew has it, where in Latin the word *pomum* (which can mean *apples, cherries, berries, nuts, dates, figs*) is used for any fruit whatsoever.

WHICH MAY HAVE SEED IN ITSELF —

In other words, that which may have the power of reproducing itself through seeds which it has in itself, say, for instance, in its own fruit, or leaves, or roots, or branches. For many plants do not have what are properly called seeds, as is plain in the willow, grass, mint, crocus, garlic, reeds, elms, poplars, etc. These have something else in place of seed, namely a certain reproductive power in their very roots, as we can see in the reed etc. So say St. Ambrose and St. Basil. And it is for this purpose that, when individual plants die, they still remain in seed and in fruit, which they propagate from themselves. Therefore, they achieve a kind of immortality and eternity, which they naturally strive for, so that they evidently always exist and always continue in the generation of themselves.

Verse 12. AND THE EARTH BROUGHT FORTH —

Here we plainly see on the third day that the earth received the power not only of producing plants (as St. Augustine¹⁶⁰ seems to maintain) but also in that very moment in which God gave His

¹⁵⁹ In *Hexaemeron*, Homily 5.

¹⁶⁰ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book V, Chapters 4 and 5.

command, the earth brought forth in the state of reality all the species of plants, fully mature, many even with ripe fruit, because the works of God are perfect. So say St. Basil and St. Ambrose.

I say the same thing about animals and men, which were created on the sixth day: specifically, all things were created in perfect size, vigor, and strength, as the doctors of the church commonly teach. From their testimony, it follows that on the third day the earthly paradise was planted and adorned with a wonderful variety of trees and loveliness.

Note that on the third day the earth also produced poisonous plants as well as the rose with its thorns. Thorns are natural for the rose and are part of its natural makeup. St. Basil¹⁶¹ denies this when he speaks about the rose, as does St. Ambrose.¹⁶² St. Bede, Rupert of Deutz, Raban Maur, and Blessed Alcuin deny it, too, and they think that before the man's fall there was nothing harmful. That is, there were no poisonous plants, thorns, or caltrops. These things, they say, were produced as a punishment after man's sin. However, St. Basil and St. Ambrose teach the contrary, as does St. John Damascene.¹⁶³ This is the truer opinion (1) lest their beauty be absent from the universe and (2) because that which is poisonous to man is of service to other things and is useful to other animals, as St. Ambrose teaches. Thus the hemlock, which is harmful to man, is delicious to cows: "Starlings," says St. Basil, "feed on the hemlock, and, on account of the constitution of their bodies, they are still not overcome by the poison. Since in fact they have very fine openings penetrating their hearts, the result is that they digest the eaten hemlock before the deadly chill reaches the stomach. Hellebore, too, is food for quails and, owing to a kind of peculiar temperament, they receive nothing detrimental from it."

Another support for my view is that these things are also useful for man. St. Basil says, "Physicians induce sleep by means of mandrake; by the juice of the poppy they alleviate terrible bodily pain. Some people have reduced and gradually removed raging desire by eating hemlock, and not a few times have they utterly rooted out vices of long duration by means of hellebore." Furthermore, because God, through the six days of creation before the sin of Adam, completely brought forth all species of things, He made the universe perfect, and He did not create any new species after these six days; whence in Genesis 2, beginning at verse 1, God is said to have created every plant of the field in six days and to have rested on the seventh day. Wherefore, I say the

¹⁶¹ *Hexaameron*, Homily 5.

¹⁶² *Hexaameron*, Book III, Chapter 11.

¹⁶³ *On the Orthodox Faith*, Book II, Chapter 40.

same about wolves, scorpions, and other harmful animals, namely, that they were produced along with the other harmless creatures on the fifth day. This is manifest from the serpent that tempted and seduced Eve. Nevertheless, none of these would have been able to cause man harm had he remained in innocence. That innocence possessed by man also demanded from him a corresponding prudence so that he would, to be sure, handle roses with care lest he prick himself on the thorns, and, in turn, not provoke wolves and wild animals against himself. For otherwise, through his own fault and imprudence, he would have been injured by them, the same as if he were no longer innocent but guilty. See the saying of Wisdom 1:14.

Second, since in this verse it is the third day, on which God perfectly formed and furnished the earth, it is accordingly entirely in keeping with the truth that on this day marble, metals, minerals, and all things that must be dug out from the earth, and even the winds, were created. Indeed, the winds ventilate the earth and the living things of the earth, and they breathe pure air over the land. Truly, without winds neither plants nor men can live or be animated.

Finally, Molina thinks that on this day Hell was produced in the center of the earth. But as I have already said, the better opinion is that it was produced on the first day, immediately upon the fall of Lucifer.

You will ask: “At what time of the year was the world established by God? Many Jews, Nicholas of Lyra, Tostado, Hieronymus ab Oleastro, and Benito Arias Montano think the world was created at the fall equinox. At that time, as is clear from the forbidden fruit that Adam ate, fruits were ripe.

But I answer: The truer view is that the world was created at the spring equinox.

First, because all the Fathers teach this fact throughout their works (see the references cited in Molina and Pereira). Indeed even the poets hold this opinion, as Virgil¹⁶⁴ writes:

*'Twas springtime: then the massy globe kept spring,
And eastern winds forwent their wintry sting.*

Second, because the spring is the most beautiful time of the year; such a season was fitting for the happiness in the state of innocence, and in the spring the world was redeemed and recreated by Christ. Therefore, it seems that the world was created in the spring as well.

Third, because the Council of Palestine, held under Pope Victor I, with St. Theophilus presiding, defined the same thing in AD 198. St. Bede cites and discusses it in his book *On the*

¹⁶⁴ In *Georgics*, Book II, lines 338-339.

Vernal Equinox. This council was a particular, not a general council, and consequently its decisions, although they are not *de fide*, are of great authority. The council proves that it believed that Creation took place in the spring, *first*, from its comment on the words *Let it bring forth*: in the spring the earth begins to bud forth. *Second*, the same council teaches that the world was established at the spring equinox and demonstrates it from the fact that at that time God divided the light from the darkness, specifically into equal parts. That division happens at the equinox. *Third*, the same council adds that the first day of the world was the eighth day before the Kalends of April, in other words, March 25, the date of the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin, the same time at which Christ was incarnate. Some precise historians would have it, if you will, that after 34 years He arose from the dead on the same date. Moreover, it is certain that this day was a Sunday, although in the year in which Christ was incarnate March 25 fell not on Sunday, but on Friday. Indeed, Francisco Suarez¹⁶⁵ teaches, based on St. Athanasius, St. Augustine, and others, that Christ was incarnate and suffered on a Friday but was born and arose from the dead on a Sunday.

Wherefore it is strange that the same St. Bede,¹⁶⁶ apparently forgetful of his own assertion, says that the world was created on March 18, not March 25.

I contend with the argument of the Jews that in the beginning of the world all fruits were produced everywhere in a ripe state on the third day, for Scripture asserts nothing of the kind. Rather, God produced leaves in some plants and trees and very pleasing flowers in others; in some, fruit was becoming ripe, and in others it was fully ripe according to the nature, quality, and condition both of the plant and tree as well as the geographical region of each one. For in spring in many locales not a few fruits are ripe. Perhaps in the earthly paradise very many fruits were then ripe.

In a moral interpretation, St. Theodoret¹⁶⁷ says about matter and the world: “When we see the seasons of the year and each one cycling through its own times, rain being distributed to the earth, the land blossoming and becoming fertile with green herb, the crops waving, the meadows radiant with flowers, the forests growing green with leaves, the branches of trees becoming heavy with fruit, let us move our tongue in praise of Him Who has endowed the earth with these gifts.

¹⁶⁵ Most likely *De Incarnatione* III, Question 35, at the end.

¹⁶⁶ In his book *On the Reckoning of Time*, Chapter 11.

¹⁶⁷ *On Providence*, Book IV.

However, let us not attribute this to gods, or the nymphs of the mountains or of the springs and rivers, or the daughters of Nereus. Let us not sing songs to Ceres or Rhea, let us not sing in chorus lyrics to Bacchus, nor cultic hymns to Pythian Apollo, nor literary hymns in honor of Diana. Instead, let us offer to God, the Creator of all things, psalms of David, and let us equally exclaim with the Psalmist: How exalted are Thy works, O Lord! Thou hast done all things in wisdom! As often as we hear the singing birds warble their various songs and the cicadas whirring in tremulous harmonies, let us adore God, the wisest and most powerful, and then put aside all references to the Muses and Sirens of ancient Greece. God has given so much musical harmony to little birds and He nourishes, cherishes, and soothes the human race.”

For a mystical interpretation, ascend here with the soul from the lovely appearance of Creation to the beauty of the Creator, and say to yourself: If roses blush so red, lilies shine, hyacinths become purple, carnations cast their perfume, meadows flourish, and apples, pears, and cherries bring delight; if herbs and crops so variously burgeon; if gold so glitters, silver shines, carbuncles glisten, and gems glow; what color, what perfume, what beauty must belong to Him Who created all things? For indeed the Creator established all these things: therefore, how much more beautiful is their Overlord? All these lovely things that you see, touch, and taste are only a drop in the ocean of all good things in God the Creator. If, therefore, the appearance of a flower, a fruit, or a beautiful person seizes you, do not be captured by it. Instead direct your mind to that uncreated and immense mien that has poured out from Itself, like rays, all beautiful things. It eminently contains and holds in Itself the beauty of all flowers, fruits, seeds—of all things—in truth, of all the possible infinite worlds that He can create. Do not afflict your heart with the meager and dim beauty of a creature and thereby lose true and limitless beauty. Do not like Aesop’s dog go after the reflection of meat and allow the real piece to be lost. Do not thirst for a drop and lose the fountain and ocean of good things, exchanging a drop of honey for a sea of gall. Love the one good, the true good, in which all good things exist. Say to yourself, say to God: “My God! My Love! What indeed is there for me in heaven, and what have I wished from Thee on earth? God of my heart and God, my portion, forever and ever.”

ON THE WORK OF THE FOURTH DAY

Verse 14. LET THERE BE LIGHTS MADE IN THE FIRMAMENT —

You may ask: How was this done? Note, *first*, that the firmament in this verse means not only the eighth heaven of the fixed stars, but also stands for the extension of all the heavenly bodies. The Hebrew word רָקִיעַ, *rāqia'*, signifies all these; Moses is speaking to unsophisticated Hebrews who do not know how to distinguish these bodies.

Second, although Plato asserts it,¹⁶⁸ St. Augustine¹⁶⁹ doubts whether the sun, the moon, and the stars possess a soul and use reason, and consequently whether sometime they are to be blessed with men and angels. Although St. Augustine only doubts it, I say it is certain that neither the heavens nor the stars are rational, since neither the heavens nor the stars have an organic body. In turn, their circular, perpetual, and natural motion makes it clear that the principle of that motion—their nature, so to speak—is neither free nor or rational, but plainly determined. Thus writes St. Jerome,¹⁷⁰ and the same view is found throughout the works of the Fathers and the philosophers. Therefore, Philo¹⁷¹ errs as usual in his Platonic interpretation where he teaches that the stars are soulful intelligences. Philaster errs in turn when he says that there is a heresy asserting that the stars are fastened to the heaven, whereas it is certain that they move in the heaven, just as birds move in the air and as fish swim in water. All the astronomers teach the contrary, namely, that the stars are firmly set in their own sphere and they move and rotate with it, as in the eighth, or starry, heaven.

Third, I suppose it is truer to say that all the stars and planets¹⁷² are set apart in appearance by their spheres or heavens; in other words, the stars are distinguished from the planets by their appearance and the planets from one another. This is proved, *first*, because the stars and the planets flash with a marvelous light which the spheres lack. Again, the stars are bright as a result of their

¹⁶⁸ In Book X of *The Laws* (899^b of the Greek text), Plato says: “And of the stars too, and of the moon, and of the years and months and seasons, must we not say in like manner, that since a soul or souls having every sort of excellence are the causes of all of them, those souls are Gods, whether they are living beings and reside in bodies, and in this way order the whole heaven, or whatever be the place and mode of their existence—and will any one who admits all this venture to deny that all things are full of Gods?” (Jowett translation.)

¹⁶⁹ *Handbook for Laurentius*, Chapter 48.

¹⁷⁰ In the commentary on Isaiah 45.

¹⁷¹ *On the Creation of the World*.

¹⁷² In this paragraph Fr. Lapidé is making the argument that stars should be considered one class of objects and planets another class of objects.

own nature. Albert the Great, Avicenna, St. Bede, and Pliny the Elder¹⁷³ deny this, but other writers assert this throughout their writings, and its truth is obvious from experience: in these bodies one never discerns, even by using a dioptra,¹⁷⁴ an increase or decrease of light whether they approach the sun or recede from it. *Second*, and preferably, because they are very far from the sun, that is to say, 76 million miles,¹⁷⁵ as I will soon explain. However, the energy and light of the sun cannot reach to that point. About these bodies I say: it is clear that the moon does not produce light from itself but borrows its light from the sun. The same is true of the other planets. For Venus, just like the moon, through regular phases in which it more or less approaches the sun, becomes horned, waxes, and wanes. I myself, along with others skilled in science, have seen this clearly with a dioptra. *Third*, the same is clear from the fact that the stars have wonderful influences and a marvelous force on the things below them, which the spheres do not possess. Indeed, the planets have their own motion, forces, and influences on the land and sea, and those are astounding, especially those from the moon. Therefore, they equally have a nature different from the other bodies. So thinks Molina and others.

I said that the stars differ from the planets in appearance, for it is true that many stars have the same appearance, specifically, those that possess the same way of influencing things below them. Those that have a different influence are different in appearance. The different manner of influence comes from the diversity of the effect of dryness, wetness, heat, and cold¹⁷⁶ which they produce on the earth.

Now, I say: On the fourth day, God rarefied one part of the heavens so that it might condense the other, I mean the bright part that was created on the first day and called “light” in verse 3. Next, after He drove out the material form¹⁷⁷ of the heavens, He introduced into that part thus condensed the new form of the sun, moon, and stars. In a similar way, He made the firmament

¹⁷³ *Natural History*, Book II, Chapter 6.

¹⁷⁴ A kind of early telescope.

¹⁷⁵ Cornelius’s units of measure derive from Clavius’s tables in his *Commentarius in Sphaeram Ioannis de Sacro Bosco* (p. 114). Like the Romans, Clavius gives the value of the mile as 8 stades (an important Greek unit of distance), with each stade having 625 Roman feet. Now the Roman foot was equal to 11.65 modern inches, so the value of the stade in modern units is 607 feet (185 meters); hence $8 \times 607 = 4,854$, which is the length of a Roman mile. (The Italian mile of Columbus is almost identical at 1477.5 meters.) The Roman mile is referenced in Scripture (Mt. 5:41) and is about 140 yards less than a statute, or international, mile of today (5,280 feet of 12 inches). Therefore, a mile in Cornelius = .92 modern miles.

¹⁷⁶ These are the four primary qualities of Aristotelian physics, which are assigned in unique pairs to the four elements of earth, air, water, fire. Earth is cold and dry; water, cold and wet; air, hot and wet; fire, hot and dry.

¹⁷⁷ *Forma materialis* is “that form which in its own being is wholly and completely bound to matter and on that account only through connection with it possesses existence.” *Lexicon of St Thomas Aquinas* by Defferari.

of the second day out of the waters. Therefore, the ancients were in error when they thought that stars and planets were made from fire and were fiery. Based on this error, the poet Virgil¹⁷⁸ invokes the heavenly bodies with these words: *O eternal fires, I call ye and your inviolable divinity to witness!*

Those who think that the stars were produced in the sense of a substance on the first day are also wrong. They are also wrong when they say that on the fourth day the stars were endowed only with accidents, i.e., light, their proper movement, and the power of influencing the things below.

Molina and others think with probability that at the Resurrection of the Dead, God will produce another sun, which will have another form, not only accidental but substantial as well, explicitly one that by nature will have seven times more light than the one we have, as Isaiah 30:26 says.¹⁷⁹

Again, on the fourth day God divided the spheres of the planets into their own functions, be they eccentric circles, concentric circles, or epicycles¹⁸⁰ (should they possess this kind of motion, for Aristotle denies all these things when he teaches that the planets are moved only by the motion of their sphere). The astrologers and Blessed Duns Scotus with his followers, maintain these functions exist because they hold that the planets are moved by themselves in their own sphere according to eccentrics and epicycles.

Note: From what we have said on the work of the third day, it follows that the sun was produced at the first point of Aries.¹⁸¹ This is St. Bede's opinion, for spring begins at that moment. But the moon was produced at the point opposite the sun, at the first point of Libra. Therefore, at that moment there was a full moon, as the Council of Palestine, referred to above, defines. The result was that the sun illuminated one hemisphere, the moon the other, as Molina and others say.

LIGHTS —

¹⁷⁸ *Aeneid*, II:155.

¹⁷⁹ "...the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days."

¹⁸⁰ An eccentric circle passes around the earth but with some other point, not the earth, as the center; an epicycle is a small circle whose center passes around the circumference of a larger circle. Ptolemaic astronomy held that the planets traveled around epicycles.

¹⁸¹ The point on the ecliptic, or path of the sun's apparent orbit around the earth through the zodiac, where it intersects the celestial equator at the spring equinox. At the fall equinox, the ecliptic intersects the celestial equator at the first point of Libra. Owing to the precession of the equinoxes, in the 21st century at the spring equinox, the house of the sun is in Pisces (i.e., the sign of Aries is in the constellation of Pisces); at the fall equinox it is now in Virgo.

In Hebrew מאורת, *m^e'orot*, from the base אור, '*ôr*, that is, *light*. Therefore, the sun is *ôr*. From that word, the Egyptians gave the name of the sun and the year, which is described by the course of the sun, Horus. From that name, the year was called ὥρος (*hōros*), and from that word any primary part of the year is said to be a ὥρα (*hōra*), specifically, spring, fall, summer, and winter. Observe that the earliest form of the word came from the Hebrews and Egyptians and from them it spread to the Greeks and Romans. So reasons our Jesuit colleague Voellus.¹⁸² Indeed, from the Hebrews and then to the Egyptians and the Greeks flowed all science, especially mathematics, and the reckoning of the seasons and the construction of clocks. Whence the first clock that we find in both sacred and profane history was that of Ahaz, father of Hezekiah the king of Judah (Isaiah 38:8)¹⁸³ according to Clavius.¹⁸⁴

TO DIVIDE THE DAY AND NIGHT —

That is to say, to differentiate between day and night, to indicate the times of work and rest for men and living things, which would soon be created. On top of that, to divide the day and night with respect to place and with respect to hemisphere, so that while in one there is the sun and the day, in the other there may be night and the moon that presides over the night. From this phrase of Scripture, it appears that the moon was created on the ecliptic opposite to the sun, as I have said.

Speaking in a symbolic fashion, Pope Innocent III, writing to the emperor in Constantinople,¹⁸⁵ said: “God made two great lights for the firmament of heaven, that is, the Universal Church. This means that He established two dignities, which are (1) the authority of the Roman Pontiff and (2) the power of the king. However, that which governs the day, by which I mean spiritual things, is the greater, but that which governs things of the flesh is less. As great a difference as may be recognized between the sun and the moon exists between popes and kings.”

AND LET THEM BE FOR SIGNS, AND FOR SEASONS, AND FOR DAYS AND YEARS —

“For signs,” not as for astrological fortune telling, for Scripture condemns this practice (see Isaiah 44:25 and Jeremiah 10:2). Indeed, although the stars bring change by influencing the disposition and composition of bodies, and from that they incline the soul in the same direction,

¹⁸² Following Christopher Clavius, in his work *On the Clock*, Book I, Chapter 1, in the commentaries.

¹⁸³ “Behold I will bring again the shadow of the lines, by which it is now gone down in the sun dial of Achaz with the sun, ten lines backward. And the sun returned ten lines by the degrees by which it was gone down.” Also cf. 4 Kings 20:11.

¹⁸⁴ *Eight Books on the Art of Making Sundials*, Book 1, page 7.

¹⁸⁵ *Decretals*, Book I, Title 33, Chapter *Solidæ*.

they nevertheless do not compel action by necessity. It may well be that the soul often follows the body's composition. Thus we learn from experience that choleric people are prone to anger; sanguine people are kind; melancholic people are suspicious, timid, mean-spirited, and envious; and phlegmatic people are lazy. Nevertheless, their will, aided greatly by grace, controls their body and these passions. As a result, we see many choleric people who are gentle and melancholy individuals who are kind and magnanimous. Therefore, the sensible man will control the stars.

Thus, the sun and the moon are “for signs,” in other words, as predictors of rain, fair weather, cold, winds, etc. For instance, as St. Basil¹⁸⁶ says of the moon: “If on the third day of the new moon it is plain and shines with a pure brightness, it forecasts a stretch of fair weather. But if it appears with thick horns and looks somewhat reddish, it threatens either a fierce and heavy rainstorm or a blustery disturbance from the south.” The moon, he continues later in his homily, is moist. This, he argues, is manifest in those things that sleep out under in the open sky and the moon - their heads are filled with moisture beyond measure, both the brains of animals and the piths of trees, which grow larger with the moon. Moreover, the moon causes and signals the ebb and flow of the sea. *Second*, they are for signs of sowing, planting, reaping, voyaging, harvesting grapes, etc. *Third*, and properly, they are for signs of the days, months, and years, so that it is a hendiadys,¹⁸⁷ if you will, “for signs and seasons,” meaning “for seasonal signs” or “for signs of the seasons”; “for signs and days,” that is, “for signs of the days”; “for signs and years,” that is “for signs of the years.” Certainly the year is described by one revolution of the sun, by one turning through the zodiac; in fact, by twelve synodic periods, in other words, as the moon moves through the zodiac twelve times.

Note that in this verse, by the word *seasons* we are to understand spring, summer, winter, and fall. Likewise, dry, hot, wet, stormy, health-giving, and sickly seasons: to be sure, the sun and the moon are the causes of these.

In a symbolic and anagogic interpretation, Saint Augustine¹⁸⁸ says “Let them be for signs,” that is, let them differentiate the seasons, which signify, by the distinction of intervals, that unchangeable eternity abides above them. In fact, a sign, like a footprint of eternity, seems to represent time on earth. Accordingly, we say we ascend from the sign to the thing signified, in

¹⁸⁶ *Hexaemeron*, Homily 6.

¹⁸⁷ A figure of speech in classical rhetoric: meaning in Greek “one through two,” hendiadys expresses an idea by two nouns joined by “and” instead of a noun with a modifier, as Fr. Lapide illustrates.

¹⁸⁸ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book XIII, Chapter 13.

other words, from time to eternity, and we exclaim with St. Ignatius, “When I behold heaven, the earth appears foul to me!” Truly St. Augustine¹⁸⁹ says: “Between temporal and eternal things, the difference is this: that temporal things are loved more before they are possessed, but they become cheap when we acquire them, for nothing satisfies the mind except the true and certain eternity of imperishable joy. However, something eternal is more ardently loved when acquired rather than desired, because in something eternal, charity will acquire more than faith has believed or hope has desired.” See St. Augustine’s¹⁹⁰ discussion of this with his mother, St. Monica.

AND FOR DAYS AND YEARS —

Which means that the sun, moon, and stars are indications of the days of all natural and man-made things, of festivals, of decisive medical events, of matters of law, of fairs, and also of lunar and solar years, of matters of great import and so forth, of which Censorinus and Macrobius write. St. Basil and St. Theodoret also affirm this.

Verse 16. AND GOD MADE TWO GREAT LIGHTS —

The sun and the moon. For although the moon is smaller than all the stars except Mercury, it still seems to be larger than all the others and the same size as the sun, since it is a very close neighbor of the earth. In turn, since the moon appears larger than other stars, it is mighty with respect to its influence and in its power to affect the things below it. So says St. John Chrysostom,¹⁹¹ and Christopher Clavius,¹⁹² where he teaches that the earth has a magnitude 39 times greater than the moon’s, the moon being only one thirty-ninth of the earth’s size. When asked by the emperor Hadrian, “What is the sun?” Epictetus replied with great insight: “The eye of heaven, brightness without setting, the ornament of the day, the distributor of the hours.” When asked, “What is the moon?” He said, “the purple cloth, the rival of the sun, the enemy of evildoers, the comfort of travelers, the forecaster of storms.” Epictetus further told Hadrian: “The moon is the helper of the day, the eye of night; and the stars are the fates of men.” However, this last notion is the error of the genethliaci, or ancient birth-date astrologers. More importantly, beginning at Ecclesiasticus 43:2, it says: “The sun...an admirable instrument, the work of the most High, burneth the mountains, breathing out fiery vapors...The moon...a declaration of times and a sign

¹⁸⁹ *Sentences*, Number 270.

¹⁹⁰ *Confessions*, Book IX, Chapter 10.

¹⁹¹ *Hexaameron*, Homily 6.

¹⁹² *Commentary on the Spherical Astronomy of John Holywood*, Chapter 1.

of the world.... The moon is the sign of the festival day...An instrument of the armies on high, shining gloriously in the firmament of heaven.” This means, the stars shine in the firmament and are like instruments, that is, warlike arms of God. “The glory of the stars is the beauty of heaven; the Lord enlighteneth the world on high. By the words of the Holy One they shall stand in judgment,” i.e., the stars, by the command of God stand in judgment, which is to say, in executing His sentence and command; “and they shall never fall in their watches.” Indeed, the stars are like soldiers and watchmen of God: they perpetually keep watch, alert to His every wish.

In a symbolic interpretation, St. Basil¹⁹³ says that the moon, which perpetually either waxes or wanes, is a symbol of inconstancy; he notes that all human affairs are in a state of perpetual change, inasmuch as they are under the moon and it governs them. The sun, however, always the same with respect to itself, is a symbol of the steadfast mind. As the sage author of Ecclesiasticus 27:12 writes: “The Holy man continueth in wisdom as the sun: but a fool is changed as the moon.”

AND THE STARS —

In order that, together with the moon, they may rule over the night and make it bright (as it says in Psalm 135:9). The astronomers affirm that the height and consequently the magnitude of the celestial bodies and the stars is astonishing, with the result being that the earth, which is the center of the universe, is like a point in relation to them. In like manner, all resources, the good and joyous things of the earth, are like a point relative to heavenly things, and they are as a drop of water in the entire sea.

For *first*, they affirm that the sun is one hundred sixty times larger in quantity than the earth, and its distance from the earth is four million miles, or leagues,¹⁹⁴ and more (I call a million, ten times one hundred thousand). Here I omit details of the numerals. Whence it follows that the circumference and enormity of the sun’s path is so great that the sun, as it completes its circle in 24 hours, travels in one hour 1,140,000 miles. That is the same as if the earth were to travel around its circuit fifty times. For the circumference of the convex heaven of the sun is 27,360,000 miles that, you will find, if divided by 24 hours, results in the quotient already given above. From these

¹⁹³ *Hexaemeron*, Homily 6.

¹⁹⁴ A league, according to Isidore of Seville, is 1,500 paces. Niermeyer gives its medieval value as 2,250 meters or 1.5 Roman or 1.4 British miles (*Mediæ Latinitatis Lexicon Minus*, at LEUCA). By the time of Columbus, a (nautical) league was equivalent to 3.45 miles.

magnitudes, you can imagine how much greater God is. “For the sun and the moon compared to the Creator have the proportion of a gnat and an ant,” says St. Basil.¹⁹⁵

Second, they teach that the earth is on the average 80 million miles away from the vault of the firmament, or the eighth heaven of the fixed stars, but that the thickness of the firmament is the same, to wit, 80 million miles. How vast, then, must be the thickness of the ninth and tenth heaven, and any others that might be above them, and especially of the empyrean heaven?

Wherefore, *third*, they hold that any point whatsoever of the equinoctial circle,¹⁹⁶ and any star positioned on the equinoctial, travels 42 million and a third miles per hour; this is as much as a rider on horseback could make by riding forty miles a day for 2,904 years; put another way, it is as much if someone could traverse and circle the earth two thousand times in an hour. The ninth heaven amounts to much, much more space, and therefore is much faster, and even faster is the tenth heaven, which they think is the first movable.

Time is as fast as the movement of the first movable, of which it is the measure. Time is thought to be faster than an arrow or ball shot from a cannon. Moreover, the cannon ball would take 40 days to traverse the circumference of the entire earth, which a star, as I said above, traverses 2,000 times in an hour. Irrevocable time flies like lightning; with time we are borne like lightning and taken to eternity. “Thou sleepest,” says St. Ambrose on Psalm 1, “and Thy time” does not sleep but “walks.” No, it does not: it flies.

Fourth, the astronomers deduce from these conclusions that if a mill-stone should begin to fall to the earth from the vault of the firmament, it would require 90 years to fall and reach the earth even if it descended at a rate of 200 miles an hour. Just divide 160 million miles (the distance from the earth to the vault of the firmament) by the product of the hours in a day times the days in a year times the rate of 200 miles an hour, and you will find the time it would take to land on earth.

Fifth, they teach that no star is in the firmament which is not at least eighteen times larger than the entire globe of the earth. Following the opinions of Ptolemy and al-Fargani, the astronomers even divide all the stars into six different magnitudes. They say the stars of the first and second magnitude are 17 in number, any one of which is one hundred seven times larger than the whole earth. Those of the third magnitude number 208, any one of which is seventy-two times

¹⁹⁵ *Hexaameron*, Homily 6.

¹⁹⁶ The equinoctial circle (or line) is the celestial equator, the great circle perpendicular to the pole of the celestial sphere; the earth's equator lies in the plane of the celestial equator, which passes through well-defined constellations and stars.

greater than the whole earth. There are 264 stars of the fourth magnitude, any one of which is fifty-four times larger than the earth. The stars of the fifth magnitude number 217, any one of which is thirty-five times larger than the earth. The stars of the sixth and lowest magnitude number 249, any one of which is eighteen times larger than the earth.

Sixth, they reckon that the proportion of the whole universe is much less within the vault of the contained firmament to the totality of the empyrean heaven than is that of the globe of the earth to the firmament.

Seventh, from these things they deduce that if one were to live for two thousand years, continuously ascending on high 100 miles daily in a straight line, one would not yet arrive at the vault of the firmament after two thousand years (for at this rate you would have completed only 73 million miles). In turn, after another two thousand years of ascending daily in the same way, you would not reach from the hollow of the firmament to the vault. In short, after four thousand more years of ascending daily in the same manner, one would not reach the empyrean heaven from the vault of the firmament. Christopher Clavius¹⁹⁷ teaches these things and more.

If we were to stand on a star—and, even better, on the empyrean heaven—and look down at the globe of the earth, we would remark that this is a dot on which the sons of Adam move, like ants; this is a dot that among mortals is divided by iron and fire. O how narrow are the confines of mortals! “O Israel, how great is the house of God, and how vast is the place of His possession!” (Baruch 3:24). Look down on this dot and contemplate the circumference of heaven. Whatever you see here is narrow and short. Think upon immense and eternal things. Who, contemplating these things, would be so mindless and foolish that he would unjustly wish to take away from his neighbor, by force or fraud, one point from this dot that is earth—say, a plot of land, house or something else—and therefore cheat and deprive himself of the immense spaces of the celestial bodies? Who prefers this dot of earth to the immensity of the heavens? Who would trade the pieces of red and white earth (for gold and silver are nothing other than this) for the unbelievably large and extraordinarily resplendent palaces of the heavens? Therefore, are you poor? Consider the heavens. Are you ill? Hold fast, for in this way you will reach the stars. Are you scorned, laughed at, and persecuted? Bear it, and in this way you will reach the stars. Groan, strive, work, sweat a little, and in this way you will reach the empyrean heaven of the blessed.

¹⁹⁷ *Commentary on the Spherical Astronomy of John Holywood*, Chapter 1.

Thus when the youth St. Symphorian, in the time of the emperor Aurelian was being taken to his martyrdom, his mother inspired him with these words: “My son, my son, remember eternal life! Look up at heaven, and gaze there upon its Ruler. Your life will not be taken, but changed for the better!” Inflamed by these words, after offering his neck to the executioner, the martyr flew away to heaven.

So in our own time, that excellent lady¹⁹⁸ in England, condemned to a terrifying death for the sake of the faith, as she lay upon a sharp stone, pressed down by a heavy weight placed upon her from above, with others watching in horror, joyfully sang her swan song: “So short is the way that leads to heaven: after six hours I shall be conveyed beyond the sun and moon; I shall tread the stars and enter into the empyrean heaven.”

Thus St. Vincent, overcoming his fears and freeing himself for heaven, even laughed at the torments of the Roman governor Dacian. When, stretched out on the rack, he was derisively asked by his torturer where he was, he replied: “On high from where I, from a loftier place, look down on you, swollen with earthly power.” When the governor threatened greater tortures, he replied: “You appear not to threaten me; instead, you seem to be offering me what I have wanted with all my prayers.” Therefore, after he suffered the continuous torments of “cats paws,” brands and hot coals over his whole body, he said: “You fatigue yourself in vain, Dacian. There is no torture you can think of that I am not ready to endure.” Prison, “cats paws,” burning iron plates, even death itself are sport and jokes for Christians, not torture, for they think on heaven.

Thus St. Mennas, the Egyptian martyr, savaged by cruel punishments, said: “There is nothing that can be compared to the Kingdom of Heaven. Even the whole world, considered impartially, cannot be equal in value to one soul.”

Thus when he heard the heavenly voice sent to the martyr St. Sisinnius singing “Come thou, O blessed one of My Father, receive thou the kingdom prepared for thee from the beginning of the universe,” St. Apronian sought baptism, on that same day was martyred, and by that fact died a Christian.

Interpreted symbolically and tropologically, the firmament is the holy Church, which is the firmament and pillar of truth, as the Apostle Paul says in 1 Timothy III.15. In that firmament, the sun is Christ, the moon the Blessed Virgin, and the fixed stars are all the other saints, who share their light from Christ, like the sun. Whence they are not like the planets, which from time to time

¹⁹⁸ Bl. Margaret Clitherow (1556 – 1586), the “Pearl of York,” one of the forty martyrs of England and Wales.

hide or screen themselves from us by placing themselves in between other bodies and which have wandering and retrograde movements. Rather they are like the stars that always revere the sun (i.e. Christ); they come into full view; they foretell; and from these actions, they bear witness that they have all their own light, and they especially glory in Him, as with St. Paul, the Apostle. Forgetting whatever is behind them, they ever strive in a straight line for what is ahead.

Therefore, *first*, just as the stars are in the heavens, so the saints in their minds and lives dwell in the heavens; they pray unceasingly, and they converse with God and the angels. Hence they love solitude; they flee from the empty chatter of men and the allurements of the world.

Second, the stars, although they are larger than the whole earth, still seem small on account of their distance and height: the higher they are, the smaller they appear. The saints are humble in the same fashion: the holier they are, the humbler are they. The stars teach us patience, says St. Augustine on Psalm 93. Quoting verse 15 of the Apostle in Philippians 2, *in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world*, he comments: “How many things do men invent about the celestial lights and the moon? And yet the stars patiently bear these imaginings. Complaints are made about the stars. What is the stars’ reaction? Are they affected? Do they not maintain their appointed motion? How many unfavorable things do some men attribute to the lights of heaven? And yet they endure and bear patiently men’s reproaches and are not affected. Why? Because they are in the sky. Such is the man who keeps the word of God in a perverse and twisted generation: He is like a light shining in the evening sky.” Therefore, just as the stars do not, on account of the insults of men, abandon the paths ordained for them by God, so just men should not, on account of men’s insults, abandon the way of virtue, piety, and zeal shown and given to them by God. Wherefore, the pious man will not pay any more attention to the insolent wisecracks of buffoons than the moon does to boys who make faces at her or the barking of dogs howling at her while she shines the whole night.

Third, the stars teach loftiness and stability of mind in so many adversities and troubles, in the sense that the stars look down dispassionately from above upon all things, both bad and good, that happen in the world. For, as St. Augustine says, “So many evils are committed, and above the earth the fixed stars do not deviate from moving in the heavens along the celestial paths that the Creator appointed and set for them. So the saints should behave, but only if their hearts are fixed on heaven, only if they emulate the Apostle who says, ‘Our conversation is in heaven.’¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹ Philippians 3:20.

Therefore, those men who are among the higher things and who think upon higher things become capable of bearing the thoughts of higher things. Moreover, the saints do not care about whatever happens on earth as long as they complete their own journeys. And thus like the heavenly lights, they brook the things done against others; thus they abide even what is done against them. Surely, whoever loses sufferance has fallen from heaven.”

Fourth, the stars shine and at night they illuminate the whole sphere always with the same amount of light. Thus do the saints in this world, by means of their word and example, shine forth in the night and show the path of virtue and the road to heaven. Moreover, they always do this with a constant peacefulness of mind and countenance both in troubled as well as prosperous times. Further, the light of the stars is not like the light of a candle, or a lamp, or a torch, which are fed by tallow, oil, or wax; these slow-burning materials are consumed during illumination; after the fuel is consumed, the source of illumination dies out. Similar to man-made sources of illumination are those men who strive after virtue out of a worldly or human regard, or for money, or for instance, from a desire to be praised by men or to acquire honors. These things soon cease, and their power and fervor also cease. The saints always keep shining, like the stars, because they shine from God and on God. To be sure, they strive to please God alone and to enhance God’s honor.

Fifth, the light of the saints is very pure, just like the stars. Thus the saints eagerly pursue chastity and angelic purity. Hence, just as in the stars there is nothing cloudy, misty, or dark, so in the saints there is no melancholy, no anger, no confusion, and no suspicion because they gaze upon all things with bright and kindly eyes, exactly like the stars. They know not what dissemblance, fraud, or malice are, for charity does not think evil. Therefore, they seem to be almost sinless.

Sixth, the light of the sun and stars travels very swiftly; indeed, in an instant it spreads and propagates itself through the entire sphere. So the saints are swift regarding the works of God, especially the men of apostolic times, who journeyed through the Roman provinces spreading the Good News. That passage of Isaiah 18:2 so aptly applies to them: “Go, ye swift angels, to a nation rent and torn in pieces; to a terrible people, after which there is no other.”

Seventh, the light of the stars is spiritual. And so the speech of the saints is spiritual, the same as their thoughts.

Eighth, the light of the sun and stars, even if it shines upon sewers, dunghills, cadavers and mixen, nevertheless neither fouls nor stains the smallest thing. Thus the saints in their dealings

with sinners are not soiled by the sins of their interlocutors; instead they enlighten them and make them like themselves, that is, bright and holy.

Ninth, the light of the sun and the stars so shines that it even imparts heat. Whence, by it, all things are quickened, take on life, and grow. So the saints inflame others with charity and impart such light that they burn. But they do not burn to cast light, as Christ said of St. John the Baptist: “He was a burning and shining light.”²⁰⁰ Saints do not burn just to shine before others, as St. Bernard rightly observes and explains in his sermon on John the Baptist: “For to burn to shine perfectly is only to burn vainly and to shine a little.” Accordingly, they will shine in celestial glory like the stars in eternity, as the Apostle teaches in 1 Corinthians 15:41 and Daniel 12:3: “But they that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity.” It happens that the stars hide their substance and immense size and only show a weak light, like a spark, by which they appear and shine forth. So the saints hide themselves and their virtues, their grace and glory, from men and strive after things discreetly. Therefore, their works do surely shine so that men may glorify God from them. However, they do so in a way that makes plain the light of their work but hides the person from which the work flows, to the extent that it is in them. Indeed, they would wish not to be seen, so that men seeing the work, not the doer, will attribute it to God, Who is the father of all lights, and thus do Him honor.

ON THE WORK OF THE FIFTH DAY

Verse 20. LET THE WATERS BRING FORTH THE CREEPING CREATURE...AND THE FOWL —

You will ask whether birds were made from water. Cajetan and Catharinus deny this and think that birds were made from earth, for this seems to be the assertion in Genesis 2:19,²⁰¹ and they suggest that, according to the Hebrew text, only fish were produced from water. They offer a literal translation of the verse from the Hebrew, as follows: “Let the waters bring forth the creeping creature [viz., fish] and let the fowl fly over the earth.” However, the common opinion of St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Cyril, St. John Damascene and of other Fathers (except Rupert of Deutz), whom Pereira cites, is that both birds and fishes were produced from water, i.e. with water

²⁰⁰ John 5:36. As opposed to “He was a burning light in order to shine before others.”

²⁰¹ “And the Lord God having formed out of the ground all the beasts of the earth, and all the fowls of the air...”

as their material cause. This is clearly what the Latin version teaches and the Septuagint as well as the targums, all of which assume in the Hebrew text the pronoun אשר (*sher*), that is *which* or *that* (for this is a familiar usage in Hebrew), as though the verse should read: “Let the waters bring forth the creeping creature and the fowl that flies over the earth.” I will give a full answer later when I comment on 2:19. For all these reasons, Philo of Alexandria says that birds are relatives of fish.

You may say: birds and fish are completely different and unlike: therefore birds do not appear to be made from water—only fish were. I answer by denying the antecedent, for the relationship between birds and fish is great, as St. Ambrose²⁰² argues. *First*, because water, which is the place for fish, and the air, which is the place for birds, are closely related elements: both are transparent, moist, soft, subtle, and capable of being agitated. Hence air is easily converted into water, and water, in turn, into air. *Second*, because lightness and agility are inherent in both birds and fish. In fact, the wings on birds are the feathers and scales on fish. Hence both birds and fish do not possess a bladder, nor milk, nor teats, lest those organs hinder flight or the ability to swim. *Third*, the motion of both species is similar. Swimming is used by fish and flight for birds, and accordingly fish seem to be birds of the waters, and in turn, birds seem to be fish of the air. Again, both birds and fish direct their locomotion by means of a tail, such that, as Pliny the Elder²⁰³ says, men seem to have learned the art of sailing from them (specifically from the bird of prey called the kite). *Fourth*, many birds live on water, like swans, geese, ducks, coots, diving birds, and kingfishers.

Lastly, we have the answers of St. Augustine²⁰⁴ and St. Thomas Aquinas²⁰⁵ that fish were made from denser water but birds from more subtle water, which reached the air or was turned into vapor and a cloud, for birds have a temperament belonging more to air than to water.

LET THEM BRING FORTH —

In Hebrew ישרצו, *yishr^etšû*, (yish-re-tsu) that is, let them boil up and gush in great abundance. This is the proper term for fish and frogs in their marvelous fertility. Hence on account of their superabundance of moisture, fish are unteachable and stupid and cannot be trained or tamed

²⁰² *Hexaemeron*, Book I, Chapter 14.

²⁰³ *Natural History*, Book x, Chapter 10.

²⁰⁴ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book III, Chapter 3.

²⁰⁵ ST, I, Q71, A1.

by man, as St. Basil²⁰⁶ says: “In other words, in the genus of fish, there is nothing, like the ox or the sheep, that is furnished with teeth in two equal parts; for no fish ruminates, except only the parrot-fish. All are fortified with a very sharp array of many teeth, lest their prey flow back to the water if there is a delay in chewing it. Indeed, some fish feed on mud, others on seaweed. One fish eats another, and small fry are food for bigger fish; in addition, both of them often become the prey of a third fish.” So among men a more powerful person plunders a weaker person, and in turn becomes the prey of one more powerful than he. The crab, in order to eat the meat of an oyster, injects a little stone into the oyster when it opens itself to the sun in order so that it cannot close its shell; then it attacks the oyster and devours it. Crabs are clever thieves and plunderers. The tentacled sea polyp affixes itself to a rock and takes on the rock’s color. In that way, it devours the fish swimming up to it as if it were a rock. Polyps are like hypocrites who appear to be chaste with chaste individuals, debauched with the debauched, gluttonous with the gluttonous, etc. just as the ones whom Christ calls the ravening wolves. The fish say, as it were: “Let us go to the North Sea. For the water there is sweeter than that in other bodies of water because the sun, spending only a short time over that sea, does not by means of its rays exhaust the entire sea of drinkable water.

Even sea creatures enjoy sweet waters, whence it happens that they often swim into rivers and journey far from the sea. For this reason, they prefer the Black Sea to other gulfs, its being more suitable to deposit and bring up their spawn. O man, learn foresight from fish: “The sea urchin, when it senses a disturbance of the winds, mounts a pebble of not too small a size, fixing itself on it as if it were an anchor. When sailors see it, they forecast that there will be a storm. The viper seeks marriage with the saltwater eel and indicates its presence by a hissing sound. However, the eel runs to it and unites itself to the poisonous creature. What is my reason for telling this? Whether a husband is hard or fearsome, a wife should put up with him. However, let a husband heed this: the viper vomits forth its poison out of its esteem for the marriage. Will you not lay aside your hardness of heart, your ferocity, and your cruelty out of reverence for your union? Alternately, does this example of the viper help us by means of another interpretation? The coupling of the viper and eel is a kind of adultery against nature. Accordingly, let those who plot against other men’s marriages learn that they are like a reptile.”

Next, St. Basil wonders how sea water is made into salt; how coral is a plant when it is in the sea but is hardened into stone when it is exposed to the air; how nature should have implanted

²⁰⁶ *Hexaemeron*, Homily 7.

precious large pearls in absolutely worthless oysters; how the color purple, with which the garments of kings are dyed, is made from the blood of an insignificant little fish; and how ships, even with a strong wind in their sails, come to stop and remain becalmed if remora (little suckerfish) attach themselves to the keels. Pliny, Plutarch, and Ulisse Aldrovandi report the same phenomenon and attribute the cause to a mysterious power given by nature to the suckerfish—of the same kind found in the magnet that attracts iron and indicates the north pole.

St. Basil teaches all these things, *first*, to marvel at God’s power, wisdom, and utmost generosity in this “theater of the sea” and to give thanks to Him continually for so many benefits that are as numerous as the fishes—no, the drops of water—in the sea. *Second*, he shows how we ought to elicit relevant models of life from fish and other animals, and to apply their qualities and actions to our conception of moral behavior. To be sure, these creatures were given by God to man both as a mirror and an aid. So in Proverbs 6:6-8, the wise Solomon dispatches a lazy man to the ants: “Go to the ant, O sluggard, and consider her ways, and learn wisdom, which, although she hath no guide, nor master, nor captain, provideth her meat for herself in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.”

THE CREEPING CREATURE HAVING LIFE —

That is, the creeping creature having the life of a living thing or sentient animal. He calls creeping creatures fish because fish have no feet but lie upon the waters on their stomach, like reptiles or rowers. Amphibians are related to fish, as are beavers, otters, and hippopotami. Although these creatures have feet, they do not walk on them while they are in the water, but they use them like an oar.

Verse 21. AND GOD CREATED THE GREAT WHALES —

In Hebrew “whales” is תנינים, *tannînim*, which means *dragons*. All huge animals, both terrestrial and aquatic, are called dragons, as are whales, which are aquatic dragons. As Conrad Gessner teaches, the term “whale” is common to all large and cetaceous fishes.

By the word *tannînim*, the Jews understand very large whales, and Jewish lore says only two were created (lest they eat up all the fish and swallow all the ships if there were more of them): one was a female, which God killed and kept back for the just to eat at the time of the Messiah; the other was a male, which He kept to play with it on certain hours in each day, according to Psalm 103:26. “This sea dragon which Thou hast formed to play therein” (in the Hebrew, *in order*

that you play with him). The Jews took this fable from 2 Esdras 6:49-52, as Nicholas of Lyra and Tostado narrate. These are the mad imaginings of those wise men.

One note about the “great whales”: St. Basil and St. Theodoret say that when they swim on top of the sea with their backs exposed, they look like islands.

AND EVERY LIVING AND MOVING CREATURE —

The second “and” here means “that is,” as if it read, *God created every living animal in the waters, namely that which has in itself the principle of motion, in other words, a soul, by which it can move itself at its own pleasure, and therefore is called moving.*

Verse 22. AND HE BLESSED THEM SAYING: INCREASE AND MULTIPLY —

God’s blessing is His benefaction. However, God blessed the fish and the birds, bestowing the natural desire, potency, and power of reproducing themselves, so that even though they cannot always live as individuals in themselves but will die, they may live at least in their offspring and so attain a certain kind of eternity. Everything indeed seeks its own preservation and eternity. This being the case, God adds by way of explanation: “Increase,” not in magnitude (for they received their appropriate size when they were first created), but, as it says in the Hebrew, פָּרָו, *perû*, that is, *increase in fruitfulness* or *proliferate* so that ye are multiplied in number: O ye fishes, fill the waters. Certainly, the fecundity of fish is greater than that of birds, and that of birds is greater than that of land animals. The reason, as Aristotle²⁰⁷ says, is that the moisture in which fish abound is a more fitting circumstance for reproduction and generation.

In addition, fish and birds reproduce by eggs, which are more easily reproduced in the womb than the fetus that land animals carry in their uterus. Whence one reads here that God blessed the birds and fish, but not the land animals. Although, as St. Augustine²⁰⁸ rightly observes, that which is expressed in one thing should be understood equally in another thing like it. However, one reads that God blessed man, both because man is the sovereign of all animals and because man has been scattered abroad to all the regions of the earth, while the rest of the other animals do not naturally tolerate other lands.

²⁰⁷ *On the Generation of Animals*, Book III, Chapter 11.

²⁰⁸ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book III, Chapter 13.

You may say in objection: There is only one phoenix²⁰⁹ at a time in the universe: therefore, for it, the injunction to increase and multiply does not hold true. I reject the antecedent: many of the ancients have asserted that the phoenix exists, not from certain knowledge but from widespread rumors. However, subsequent philosophers and scientists who have written in detail about the phoenix (among whom is the very accurate Ulisse Aldrovandi of our own time) insist it is a fable, and they prove from many sources that it does not exist and never existed. The phoenix, then, is not a real bird, but merely symbolic, as I will show in my commentary on Genesis 7:2.

St. Basil,²¹⁰ and after him St. Ambrose,²¹¹ describe and marvel at multiple flying creatures.

First, the industry of bees in the construction of their honeycombs and in collecting, arranging, and protecting their honey, etc.

Second, the watch-keeping of cranes, which they perform by turns at night in order to act as a sentry and protect the others as they sleep. After having completed his appointed turn at watch, the crane that stood guard, after emitting a cry, prepares itself for sleep. Another takes its place at the watch and pays back to the others the security that it received. Cranes fly in a fixed order, almost in a military formation. One leads the way as leader, and after performing this duty for a certain amount of time, turns itself to the back of the flock and passes the duty of leadership to the one immediately behind.

Third, the habits of storks, which migrate and return at specific seasons. Crows lead them out, and they protect the storks from other birds. The evidence of this remarkable protection is that crows return with wounds. Moreover, storks warm their aged parents by enfolding them in their own wings, feed them sumptuously, and raise them up on both sides of their wings. “This is the conveyance of piety,” says St. Ambrose.

Fourth, let no man lament his poverty if he should consider the swallow, which gathers and transports bundles of straw in its beak for the construction of its nest. Since she cannot carry mud with her claws (seeing that they are so short and small that she seems to have none, and so appears to be always in flight and hardly ever to alight), the swallow moistens the edges of her wings with water, then rolls herself in dust, and in this way produces the mud with which she

²⁰⁹ The mythical bird of antiquity. Only one phoenix supposedly existed at a time, and after a life of at least 500 years, it immolated itself. From the ashes a new phoenix arose. Among the ancient historians and naturalists who mention the phoenix are Herodotus, Tacitus, and Pliny the Elder.

²¹⁰ Homily 7 of the *Hexaameron*.

²¹¹ Book V, *Hexaameron*.

fashions her nest. There, after laying her eggs, she hatches her chicks. In addition, if any of them has an eye affliction, she knows how to make them see with available swallowwort.²¹²

Fifth, the kingfisher or halcyon lays its eggs near the seashore almost in mid-winter, when the winds and storms rage; yet the surface of the sea stays calm for seven whole days while the kingfisher incubates the eggs and hatches her chicks. Then another period of seven calm days follows during which she feeds her brood, and sailors safely voyage. From this fact, the poets call these tranquil and calm days “halcyon days.” The kingfisher or halcyon teaches us to hope in God: for if He grants peacefulness to one little bird, what will He not grant to the man who calls upon Him?

Sixth, the turtle dove, which after losing her mate does not take another, provides a lesson for widows to remain chaste and not seek a union with another husband.

Seventh, the eagle is hard on her young; she soon deserts them, or worse, she immediately thrusts them out of the nest. Hence she is a symbol of parents who are cruel to their children. Completely opposite are the parents who are kind to their children. They are like quails²¹³, which accompany their young as they fly and feed them for a very long time.

Eighth, long-lived vultures (the majority of them live for a hundred years) bring forth young without sexual union. You might object to this fact, along with non-Christians who ask how could the Blessed Virgin give birth to Christ and remain a virgin. St. Ambrose²¹⁴ affirms this very fact about vultures, and indeed so do Aelian,²¹⁵ Horapollo²¹⁶ and St. Isidore of Seville.²¹⁷ Others, whom Aldrovandi cites under the heading *vulture*, hold that all vultures are females and conceive and reproduce without a male by means of the wind. But Albert the Great holds that all these things are tall tales, and following him, so does Aldrovandi.²¹⁸ Vultures are indeed complete animals, all of which, by the common law of nature, are of one sex or the other, and by that differentiation generate and propagate themselves as do other birds. Moreover, vultures possess a good sense of smell and can sniff out carrion hundreds of miles away—even those located across the sea—and

²¹² Also known as greater celandine or *cheldonium majus*, thought by herbalists of Fr. Lapide’s time to be used by swallows to restore sight. The follicles of the genus *Vincetoxicum* were thought to resemble a swallow with its wings spread. Celandine comes from the Greek *khelidōn*, “swallow.”

²¹³ The text of the *Patrologia Græca* reads (column 180) κορώνης, “sea-crow.”

²¹⁴ *Hexaameron*, Book V, Chapter 20.

²¹⁵ *On Animals*, Book II, Chapter 40.

²¹⁶ *The Hieroglyphics*, Book I.

²¹⁷ *Etymologiae*, Book XII.

²¹⁸ *Ornithology*, Book III, page 244.

fly to them. Indeed, they even can predict killing, and for that reason they follow armies and military camps in a colony.

Ninth, the bat is a quadruped but nevertheless with wings like a bird. Like a quadruped, it is viviparous. It has wings that are not separated into feathers but undivided and of a piece, like a leather membrane. Like owls are those men who are wise in vain things but not in true and well-founded knowledge, for like the owl, the sharpness of their vision grows dull as the sun grows bright; their vision only grows sharp in shadows and darkness.

Tenth, the rooster, by crowing in a loud voice and foretelling the approach of the sun from afar by its call, awakens us in the morning to arise and accomplish our tasks. Awakening with travelers in the morning, the rooster leads farmers from their cottages to their harvest labors.

Eleventh, the goose is extremely watchful and very keen to detect those things that hide others. For this reason, once upon a time in ancient Rome, geese, by noisily awakening the sleeping guards with their cackling, kept the Capitoline temple safe from the hostile Gauls who were sneaking in. Wherefore, St. Ambrose²¹⁹ says: “O Rome, with just cause you owe your empire to those geese. Your gods slept, but the geese kept watch. Therefore, on these days you should make sacrifice to a goose, not to Jupiter. Let your gods yield to geese, by which they know they are defended lest they be captured by the enemy.”

Twelfth, the host of locusts, rising up everywhere and pitching their camp in every field when given the word, do not devour the crops until God allows it, as if by His command. God provides a remedy, viz., the seleucis bird, which devours the locusts as they fly in a plague. Moreover, what is the cicada’s measure in singing? At midday it applies itself more to its song by controlling the air, which is done when its thorax is expanded and thereby produces a sound.

Thirteenth, insects like bees and wasps are so called because on all sides they evidence certain segmentations or incisions; they lack lungs and thus do not breathe but are nourished in every part of their body by the air. Accordingly, if they are moistened with oil, such as by oil pressed from olives, they perish because the openings are blocked. If one were to sprinkle them with vinegar right away, they begin to come back to life, since the holes have been unclosed.

Fourteenth, ducks, geese, and other birds that swim have feet that are not split but unbroken and spread out like a membrane so that they can more easily float and swim. Busily engaging itself at the fish-market, the swan hunts fish by plunging its long neck into deep water.

²¹⁹ *Hexaameron*, Book V, Chapter 13.

Fifteenth, silkworms are a representation and model of the Resurrection. To be sure, in these the little worm is born from the first seed. Out of that, it becomes a caterpillar, and from the caterpillar a silkworm, which stuffs itself with leaves of the mulberry. When full, it weaves filaments of fiber, which it produces from its innards. When the cocoon is made, shutting itself up, it dies; when it is unrolled, it comes to life and, taking on wings, it becomes a moth and flies away after having left its seed in the cocoon. All this is in St. Basil. In addition to St. Basil's examples, consider the wonderfully songful birds, the parrot, the blackbird, the wren, and especially the nightingale, so small that it seems to be no more than a voice, or rather music. St. Ambrose²²⁰ says of it: "Why am I interested in the voice of the parrot and the sweetness of blackbirds? Would that at least the nightingale sing, which arouses the sleeper from his dreams. For that bird usually signals the beginning of the rising day and brings a more extensive joy at dawn." He says the same thing in Chapter 5: "How do the coots, which delight on the sea's depth, play on the water as they flee from a disturbance of the sea that they forecast? The heron, which is accustomed to cleave to swamps, leaves its well-known home grounds and, fearful of bad weather, flies above the clouds so that it cannot perceive the storm."

ON THE WORK OF THE SIXTH DAY

The sixth day brought about the inhabitants of the earth, just as the fifth provided the inhabitants of the water and air. But the inhabitants were not supplied with much of the element of fire. For example, Galen²²¹ teaches that neither the salamander nor any other animal can live or remain in fire. Dioscurides²²² agrees, saying that he experimented and hurled many salamanders into a fire, wherein they were consumed. The same may be said of pyraustas²²³ or glowworms, which are a little larger than flies and live only for a short time in fire, for they are born in the copper-smelting furnaces in Cyprus; they flit about in the furnaces and walk through the fire, and as they fly away from the flames, they perish, as Aristotle²²⁴ writes.

²²⁰ *Hexaemeron*, Book V, Chapter 12.

²²¹ *On the Temperaments*, Book III.

²²² *De Materia Medica*, Book II, Chapter 56.

²²³ Pyrausta or pyralis, a legendary insect, has four legs and thus "walks."

²²⁴ *The History of Animals*, Book V, Chapter 19.

Verse 24. LET THE EARTH BRING FORTH THE LIVING CREATURE —

This is a synecdoche²²⁵ for “living animals.” In addition, “let the earth bring forth” not as the efficient cause,²²⁶ for this alone is God, but as the material cause, as if it were to say: Let animals issue, flow, rise, and proceed from the earth.

You will ask whether every species of terrestrial animals was entirely created by God on the sixth day.

I answer, *first*, every species of terrestrial animals, which is perfect and homogeneous (i.e., that can be born from only one species by the union of a male and a female) was entirely created

²²⁵ A figure of classical rhetoric: substitution of the part for the whole, genus for species, or vice versa.

²²⁶ St Thomas gives a review on Aristotle’s ideas of the four causes in his *Commentary on Aristotle’s Physics*. In the excerpt here, St. Thomas refers to Aristotle as “he”. “He says, therefore, first, that in one way a cause is said to be that from which something comes to be when it is in it, as bronze is said to be the cause of a statue and silver the cause of a vase. The genera of these things, i.e., the metallic, or the liquifiable, and such things, are also called causes of these same things.

Secondly, a cause is said to be the species and exemplar. This is called a cause insofar as it is the quidditative nature [*ratio*] of the thing, for this is that through which we know of each thing ‘what it is’. And as was said above, that even the genera of matter are called causes, so also the genera of a species are called causes. And he gives as an example that harmony of music which is called the octave. The form of an octave is a proportion of the double, which is a relation of two to one. For musical harmonies are constituted by the application of numerical proportions to sounds as to matter. And since two or the double is the form of that harmony which is the octave, the genus of two, which is a number, is also a cause. Thus just as we say that the form of the octave is that proportion of two to one which is the proportion of the double, so also we can say that the form of the octave is that proportion of two to one which is multiplicity. And so all of the parts which are placed in the definition are reduced to this mode of cause. For the parts of the species are placed in the definition, but not the parts of the matter. Nor is this contrary to what was said above about matter being placed in the definitions of natural things. For individual matter is not placed in the definition of the species, but common matter is. Thus flesh and bones are placed in the definition of man, but not this flesh and these bones. The nature of the species, therefore, which is constituted of form and common matter, is related as a formal cause to the individual which participates in such a nature, and to this extent it is said that the parts which are placed in the definition pertain to the formal cause. It must be noted, however, that he posits two things which pertain to the quiddity of the thing, i.e., the species and the exemplar...

Next he says that that from which there is a beginning of motion or rest is in some way called a cause. Thus one who gives advice is a cause, and the father is a cause of the son, and everything which brings about a change is a cause of that which is changed. It must be noted with reference to causes of this sort, namely efficient causes, there are four kinds, the perfecting, the preparing, the assisting, and the advising causes. The perfecting cause is that which gives fulfillment to motion or mutation, as that which introduces the substantial form in generation. The preparing or disposing cause is that which renders matter or the subject suitable for its ultimate completion. The assisting cause is that which does not operate for its own proper end, but for the end of another. The advising cause, which operates in those things which act because of something proposed to them, is that which gives to the agent the form through which it acts. For the agent acts because of something proposed to him through his knowledge, which the advisor has given to him, just as in natural things the generator is said to move the heavy or the light insofar as he gives the form through which they are moved.

Further, he posits a fourth mode of cause. A thing is called a cause as an end. This is that for the sake of which something comes to be, as health is said to be a cause of walking. And this is evident because it answers the proposed question ‘why’. For when we ask, ‘Why does he walk?’, we say, ‘That he may become healthy’; and we say this, thinking that we assign a cause. And thus he gives more proof that the end is a cause than that the other things are causes, because the end is less evident, inasmuch as it is last in generation.” (Blackwell, Spath & W. Thirkel, Yale University Press, 1963).

on this day. The commentators and the scholastic theologians affirm this throughout their writings. Moreover, the proof is that the perfection of the universe demands it: God perfectly established and furnished the universe in these six days, from which it follows that He created in these days all things, that is, the species of all things. Hence it is said on the seventh day He retired, that is to say, He retired from the production of new species.

I say, *second*, that as a result, on this day all poisonous beasts (like serpents) and those that are hostile to another of their kind and carnivorous (like the wolf and the sheep) were created. Moreover, in this wise they were created with this enmity and mutual hostility, for this mutual hostility is natural to them. Therefore, before the sin of Adam, the nature of the wolf was hostile to the sheep, so that the wolf should inflict death upon it. Nevertheless, the providence of God would have been careful not to allow the state of enmity to exist until enough species were propagated so that they would not disappear. St. Thomas Aquinas²²⁷ and St. Augustine²²⁸ argue in this manner, although St. Augustine seems to retract his opinion later,²²⁹ and asserts that it pertains to the natural order that all beasts feed on green plants in accordance with the words of Genesis 1:30.²³⁰ He holds that some beasts became food for others as a result of man's disobedience. Pereira thinks the same thing, as well as Tostado in Chapter 13, where he discussed these things at great length. St. Gregory of Nyssa²³¹ seems to believe the same. Junilius eloquently teaches the same thing, saying: "From the fact that God said, *Behold I have given to you every herb*, it is clear that the earth produced nothing harmful, no poisonous plant and no sterile tree. Further, it is manifest that the birds did not live by seizing the weak, and the wolf did not essay stratagems around the sheepfolds, nor were the remains of its body food for the serpent. All things feed in harmony on plants and the fruits of trees." However, what I said before is the truer case. The reasons why God created poisonous things are as follows: *first*, so that the universe should be for all kinds of things; *second*, so that from them, the goodness of others things might be highlighted, for the good shines out as opposed to evil; *third*, because these things are useful for medicines and other applications.

²²⁷ ST, I, Q69, A2,3.

²²⁸ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book III, Chapter 16.

²²⁹ *Retractions*, Book I, Chapter 10.

²³⁰ Genesis 1:29-30: "...I have given you every herb bearing seed upon the earth...and to all beasts of the earth...that they may have to feed upon."

²³¹ *On the Procreation of Man*, Oration 2.

For instance, they become antidotes against vipers' venom. Such, too, is the view of St. John Damascene.²³² Also see St. Augustine.²³³

I say, *third*, the vermin that come into existence from sweat, vapor, or putrefaction such as fleas, mice, and grubs were not *formally* created on the sixth day; rather, they were created *potentially*, as if in a seminal cause; in other words, I assert that owing to the fact that those animals were created on this day from a firmly determined disposition, they would come into existence in a manner corresponding to the natural order. So thinks St. Augustine,²³⁴ although St. Basil²³⁵ appears to teach the contrary. To be sure, it would have been contrary to the blissful state of innocence to have created at that time fleas and worms which are now in men.

Note that the magnificence of God shines forth over and over in small animals as well as in large. Hear what Tertullian²³⁶ has to say: “Although you are contemptuous of bugs (which the Supreme Craftsman has filled with industry, ingenuity, and strength, thereby showing that greatness has its proof in middling things, just as, according to the Apostle, power does in infirmity), emulate, if you can, the hives of the bee, the hills of the ant, the webs of the spider, and the threads of the silkworm. Endure, if you can, the mites of your bed and mat, the poisons of the blister beetle, the piercing stylets of the fly, and the sucking tube of the gnat. How will you regard the larger animals, when you are so pleased or injured by the tiniest ones that you do not disesteem their Creator when you look at them?” So argued the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus, as Plutarch²³⁷ relates, who said that bugs and mice are very useful to man, inasmuch as bugs arouse us from sleep and mice remind us to be careful where we store things.

St. Augustine declares in his exposition of Psalm 148: “Let your charity hearken: Who has arranged the parts of the flea and the gnat so that they should have their own order, their own life, and their own movement? Consider one very little, tiny creature—think of the smallest you can imagine. Consider, if you will, the order of its parts and the animation of the life by which it moves: it runs from death by itself, loves life, seeks pleasures, avoids discomfort, makes use of its senses, and flourishes in movement suitable to itself. Who gave the gnat its stinger by which it

²³² *On the Orthodox Faith*, Book II, Chapter 25.

²³³ *On Genesis Against the Manichæans*, Book I, 16.

²³⁴ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book III, Chapter 14.

²³⁵ *Hexameron*, Homily 7.

²³⁶ *Against Marcion*, Book I, Chapter 14.

²³⁷ *On Nature*, Book V.

sucks in blood? How delicately thin is the tube whereby it sucks? Who arranged these things? Who made them? You are thunderstruck at the smallest things; praise God Who is great.”

I say, *fourth*, that it is not necessary to state that on the sixth day God created hybrids, in other words, animals that are engendered out of the union of different species, as the mule is from a mare and a jackass, the lynx from a wolf and a deer, the bellwether from a he-goat and a sheep, the leopard from a lioness and a male panther. And so, as a pure matter of fact, it is certain that all these hybrids were not created then. This is the opinion of Rupert of Deutz, Molina, and others, although Pereira holds a contrary opinion in this matter. The proofs of my assertion are, (i) that in Africa new types of monsters arise every day, and many will come about after them, and they can come about from a new union of now one, now another breed if you will, by a new union of animals; (ii) because this union is unnatural and adulterous, whence it was forbidden by the Jews (Leviticus 19:19);²³⁸ (iii) because these hybrid animals may be sufficiently deemed to have been created when the other species were created, such that from their union hybrids would afterwards be born; (iv) because concerning mules, the Hebrews²³⁹ teach (Genesis 36:24) that long after the sixth day of the world they were found in the desert by Anah, as a result of the union of mares with jackasses.

IN ITS KIND —

According to its kind; in other words, according to its species, something like the following: Let the earth bring forth living animals according to the species of each one. Putting it another way: Let the earth bring forth one species each of terrestrial animals. St. Basil²⁴⁰ enumerates and discusses these species, and St. Ambrose²⁴¹ followed him, where among other things he says:

Although, as Scripture says, the bear is treacherous (for it is a wild animal full of deceit), nevertheless it is said to beget unformed progeny in its womb but then it licks them into shape after they are born and thereby forms them into her own appearance and likeness.

²³⁸ “Thou shalt not make thy cattle to gender with beasts of any other kind. Thou shalt not sow thy field with different seeds.”

²³⁹ Gen. 36:24 reads (with Douay spellings): “This is Ana that found the hot waters in the wilderness when he fed the asses of Sebeon his father.” Fr. Lapidé here refers to the old Jewish commentators who taught that the word *hayyêim*, “hot waters, hot springs,” which occurs but once in Hebrew, meant “mules”.

²⁴⁰ *Hexaameron*, Homily 9.

²⁴¹ *Hexaameron*, Book VI, Chapter 4.

Are you not able then to bring up your children as you are? The bear, afflicted by a serious injury and carrying wounds all about, knows how to heal itself by applying the plant called mullein to its lesions so that it is cured by the touch of it. The serpent also drives off an episode of blindness by eating fennel. The tortoise, having fed upon the innards of a serpent, when it notices that the venom courses through its veins, uses wild marjoram as a sovereign remedy for its health. You may also see the fox healing itself with the resin of the pine tree. In Jeremiah 8:7, the Lord cries out: 'The turtle and swallow, the storks of the field have observed the time of their coming: but my people have not known the judgment of the Lord.' Even the ant knows how to make use of good weather to make provision for the future: it carries outside the moistened fruits so that they can be dried continuously by the sun. As spring rains approach, oxen know how to keep themselves at their stables where they watch others outside and stretch their necks beyond the stables in order to show that they want to go out. Sheep, at the coming of winter, inexplicably and insatiably ingest grass for food because they sense the harshness and bareness of the winter to come. The hedgehog, if it senses any kind of trap, closes itself with its spines and gathers its weapons in itself in order to wound whatever tries to harm it. It also looks to the future and builds two passages for getting air, so that when it knows that the north wind will blow, it blocks the northern passage; when it knows that cloudy weather will be swept away by the south wind, it betakes itself to the northern passage in order to deflect the present and potentially harmful winds from the area. How greatly made are Thy works, O Lord! Thou hast done all things in wisdom.

Later on, St. Ambrose speaks of the tigress that follows the cubs' robber, who, when he sees that he is near her, holds out a glass sphere in front of her. The tigress, then, is deceived by the image of herself, which she sees reflected in the glass, and she lies down as if she were going to suckle her cubs. Thus deceived by the zeal of her maternal love, she loses the offspring she had intended to rescue. The lesson here is that, although the tigress is fierce, she still fails; parents should very much love their children and not rouse them to fury.

St. Ambrose then proceeds to discuss dogs, which with a wondrous keenness sniff out a hare from its tracks and pursue it. He then adduces examples of dogs that uncovered and avenged the murders of their masters. He then adds:

What worthy thing do we render to our Creator Whose food we eat? We conceal our injustices, and we often offer God's enemies the feasts that we have received from God. The little lamb calls its mother off in the distance by continuous bleating in order to elicit a corresponding response from her. Even though the lamb may be in the midst of thousands of sheep, it recognizes the sound of its mother's bleat and then rushes to her. The dam may also have many thousands of little lambs about her, but in silent testimony to her motherly devotion she recognizes her offspring alone. The shepherd errs in his ability to distinguish among his sheep, but the little lamb is never mistaken in recognizing its mother.

A puppy may not yet have its teeth, but it tries to bite itself with its own mouth as if it had them. A stag may not yet have its antlers, but still it sports with its forehead; with his burr he brandishes the weapons that he has not yet put to the test. The wolf, if it sees a man first, snatches away his voice and, as the conqueror of the missing voice, looks down upon him. If the wolf senses that it was seen first, it loses its ferocity, and is unable to run away. The lion fears the rooster, especially a white one. The wounded roe deer searches for dittany and removes the arrows from its wound. The sick lion looks for an ape to eat so he can be healed. The leopard drinks the blood of the wild roe deer and so avoids being overcome with weariness. Every sick animal is cured by drinking the blood of a dog. A sick bear eats ants. A stag chews upon little bunches of olives. Accordingly, wild animals know how to seek out what is of use to them. O mankind, you ignore your own remedies! Do you know how you may snatch power from an adversary so that, like the wolf stopped in its tracks, he cannot flee from you, so that you catch hold of his treachery with the eye of your mind, and block the course of his words beforehand, and dull his impudence and keen arguments? How shall I say that men enjoy garlic because the leopard runs away from it? If a serpent tastes the spittle of a fasting man, it dies. Look how much power there is in fasting. The turtle dove lays the leaves of the squill on its nest to keep the wolf from getting to her chicks. You neglect the means by which you may make future generations in this life safer against the wolves of spiritual wickedness.

Chapter 5 follows, and there St. Ambrose teaches that God made the necks of lions, tigers, and bears shorter because these animals, which feed on meat, did not need a long neck; He did,

however, give a longer neck to camels, horses, and cows. Inasmuch as elephants are taller, He gave them a trunk so they can bend down to pluck from the ground the sprouts upon which it feeds. Elephants charge against their enemies with an irresistible force; in battle, they move as if they were mountains in motion, they stand out like hills at a high elevation, and by the din of their trumpeting, they shatter the enemy's confidence. It is said that their lifetime stretches out more than three hundred years. All the parts of elephants are in proportionate size; the joints are compact, not separate as in man. They roll and break up anything with their trunk, and whatever they trod upon with their feet, they squash. Nevertheless, this beast of such massive size serves humans, being subject to our authority.

Then in Chapter 6, St. Ambrose relates: "The elephant that excites terror in bulls is afraid of a mouse; the lion, the king of beasts, shakes its mighty mane, yet is disturbed by the tiny tail-sting of a scorpion, and is slain by the poison of a serpent. Serpents and other poisonous animals and plants, like schoolteachers with their pupils, deny freedom to run and play and demand the necessity of discipline, and restrain us by means of deep fear: poisonous things are the schoolmaster's rod for those who are intellectually immature." St. Ambrose discussed these and even more topics.

Briefly, St. Basil²⁴² says:

The ox is steadfast and vigorous, the ass is lazy, and the horse is inflamed with lust. The wolf cannot soften its nature, the fox is deceitful and clever at arranging traps. The stag is timid, the ant hardworking, the dog complaisant and tenaciously loyal once it becomes a friend. The lion is spirited and thus is a solitary creature, for, as the tyrant of living things, it does not accept equal honors with and the company of the other animals and spurns them. It does not accept yesterday's food and never goes back to what remains from its hunt. The panther is violent, impetuous, and pernicious and therefore nimble and agile. The bear is exceedingly lazy, solitary, and cunning.

CATTLE —

²⁴² *Hexameron*, Homily 9.

Domestic and tame animals, for in Hebrew they call them בהמה, *b^ehēmāh*, the opposite of beasts, that is, wild animals of the earth, which the Greeks clearly translate²⁴³ as θηρία, *thēria* [“wild animals, beasts”].

Tropologically, the work of the Creation of six days signifies the work of the justification of man.

Therefore, on the first day light was created, that is, illumination is poured upon the sinner, by which he may see the baseness of sin and the danger of his condition and his eternal life.

On the second day, the firmament was made, that is, the sinner is endued with the fear of God and His justice; God divided the waters above, that is, the rational appetite, from those below, that is from the sensible appetite,²⁴⁴ such that although, with respect to his senses, man may be very desirous of earthy things, nevertheless, with respect to his spirit, he is ordered to heavenly things.

On the third day, man covered with water, i.e., concupiscence, is uncovered, so that even though he possesses concupiscence, he is not overwhelmed by it. He senses it but does not assent: from that fact, he carries within the buds of the virtues.

On the fourth day, the sun was made, that is, man is endowed with charity; the moon, too, was made, which is bright faith; also, the evening star, which is hope, as well as Saturn, which is temperance; so too, Jupiter, or justice, Mars, or bravery, and Mercury, which is prudence, along with all the other stars, which are the remaining virtues.

On the fifth and sixth day, living things were made: *first*, fish (i.e., men who are good but imperfect because they are immersed in the cares of the world); *second*, cattle (i.e., more perfect men who live spiritually on earth); *third*, birds (i.e., the most perfect men who, despising all material things, fly away from every desire to heaven like a bird). So think Eucherius of Lyons, Origen, Hugh of St. Victor and Pereira. Also see St. Bernard.²⁴⁵

Symbolically, Junilius likens these six days to the six ages of the world.²⁴⁶ The creation of man follows, for as Ovid states:

²⁴³ The Hebrew for “beasts of the earth” or in Latin *bestias terrae* is הַיְתוֹ-אָרֶץ, *hayetô-eres*, “animal of earth.” The Greek word is much more explicit and suggests ferocity.

²⁴⁴ See *Introduction to the Science of Mental Health* by Fr. Chad Ripperger.

²⁴⁵ *On Pentecost*, Sermon 3.

²⁴⁶ The six ages of the world identified by St. Augustine, are (1) from Adam to Noah, (2) from Noah to Abraham, (3) from Abraham to King David, (4) from David to the Babylonian Captivity, (5) from the captivity to the coming of Jesus Christ, and (6) from the coming of Jesus Christ to the end of the world. See *The City of God*.

*A creature of a more exalted kind
Was wanting yet, and then was man design'd:
Conscious of thought, of more capacious breast,
For empire formed, and fit to rule the rest.*²⁴⁷

Verse 26. LET US MAKE MAN TO OUR IMAGE AND LIKENESS —

First, notice in this verse the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Indeed, with these words, God the Father does not address the angels by way of bidding them to make the human body and the sensitive soul, and then reserving to Himself the making of the rational soul, as Plato,²⁴⁸ St. Philo of Alexandria²⁴⁹ and the Jews²⁵⁰ thought. However, St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, St. Theodoret, St. Cyril²⁵¹ and St. Augustine²⁵² condemn this as an impious opinion. For God created the body and soul of man by Himself, not through the angels, as is clear from Genesis 2:7 and 21. Accordingly, He does not say in this verse, “Make,” but rather “Let Us make man, O angels, in our image, not yours. Therefore, God the Father addresses His Son and the Holy Ghost, as though they were His colleagues, of His same nature, power, and activity. So affirm St. Basil, Rupert of Deutz, and others above. And the Council of Sirmium²⁵³ anathematizes those who explain this verse otherwise.

Second, note the excellence of man. Indeed, God deliberates and ponders on the creation of man as of great import, saying: Let Us make man, (i) for man is the first image of the uncreated world, that is, of the Most Holy Trinity, and he is a witness of Its infinite art and wisdom as well as Its most complete work. Moreover, man is the limit, the summary, the bond, and the connection of the created world. In fact, man has within himself and connects all degrees of spiritual and bodily things, and thus man is even called a microcosm, or little universe. Plato calls him the *horizon of the universe* because he marks off the boundary of and merges in himself the upper hemisphere (viz., the heaven and the angels) and the lower (viz., the earth and brute creatures).

²⁴⁷ These verses are from the Roman poet Ovid's *Metamorphoses* I, 76-78.

²⁴⁸ In his *Timaeus*.

²⁴⁹ In his book *On the Creation of the World*.

²⁵⁰ The Targum Pseudo Jonathan reads: “And God said to the angels who minister before him and who were created on the second day of the creation of the world...” (Bowker translation).

²⁵¹ *Against Julian*, Book I.

²⁵² *The City of God*, Book XVI, Chapter 6.

²⁵³ In Hilary's book *On Synods*. Held in Roman Pannonia in A.D. 351. The modern town is Sremska Mitrovica in Serbia.

Truly, man is partly like the angels and partly like the brute animals. Thus life and our time are the horizon of eternity because it divides blessed eternity, which is in heaven, from wretched eternity, which is in hell, and it has something of both. St. Clement of Rome²⁵⁴ expresses this idea beautifully when he says: “You made the limit of your creation—a living thing sharing reason, a citizen of the world, when you said, ‘Let Us make man to Our image and likeness.’ You have man made to be κόσμου κόσμος (*kosmou kosmos*), that is, an *adornment of the world*, whose body You formed with the four elements in the first bodies, but his soul from nothing; You also gave him five senses for the struggle for virtue, and you put his mind in charge of his soul, like a charioteer for the senses.”

(ii) Because through Christ as man, all creatures, which, as I have already said, are contained in man as though in a microcosm, were in a certain sense deified. See how great is the dignity of man!

(iii) Because as the world was established on account of man, and with man, so it will be renewed in the resurrection.

(iv) The greatest mystery of the faith, to wit, that of the Most Holy Trinity and Its indivisible unity, was revealed in the generation of man, because afterwards the Trinity was to be declared and acknowledged in man’s regeneration, namely baptism: for the words *let Us make* and *Our* refer to the Trinity. However, the words do declare that *God said, God made* etc.

(v) Animals and plants are said to be generated from the earth and the water. But God alone fashioned and gave shape to man’s body, and He endowed him with a rational soul created by Himself from nothing.

(vi) Man was made by God as the guide and head of all animals, even the largest of them, as though he were the king of the whole world.

(vii) God allotted a paradise furnished with delights and every abundance of things for man to dwell in and amuse himself.

(viii) God created man supplied with such integrity of intellect and innocence that his mind was subject to God, his senses to reason, and his body to his intellect, and all living things were subordinated to man’s power. Hence it resulted that he was not ashamed that he was naked.

²⁵⁴ *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, Book VII, Chapter 34.

(ix) Adam gave appropriate names to each animal. Accordingly, his knowledge and wisdom were so bright that the animals recognized and professed, as it were, that they had man as their king and master.

(x) Man had an immortal body so that naturally if he obeyed God, after having lived a very long time on earth, he would be led, free from death and all evils from his earthy life, to a celestial and everlasting life.

(xi) God signed man with the gift of prophecy when he said, “This now is bone of my bones.”²⁵⁵

(xii) God often appeared to man in human form and spoke to him in a familiar manner.

Third, St. Gregory of Nyssa says that God built the palace of the world as a kind of feast, or rather as a splendid dining room for all things that were suitable for use, enjoyment, and knowledge. Then in the end He brought into that palace thus so adorned the man He created, as though he were the highest point, culmination, and lord of all things. See St. Ambrose,²⁵⁶ St. Gregory of Nazianzus²⁵⁷ and St. Gregory of Nyssa.²⁵⁸ Also, regarding the dignity of each part of the human body, refer to St. Ambrose.²⁵⁹ Therefore, St. Bernard²⁶⁰ rightly asks: “What was lacking for the first man, whom mercy watched over, truth taught, justice ruled, and peace cherished?”

Moreover, Diogenes²⁶¹ and Philo²⁶² teach that the world is like a lovely, holy temple of God into which man was introduced so that he could be its chief priest and exercise the priestly duties for all creatures by way of giving thanks for each and every benefit conferred, and rendering propitiously unto God on their behalf so that He might add the good and drive away the bad. Hence “the whole world was in the priestly robe, which he wore” (Wisdom 18:24). Hear what Lactantius²⁶³ says: “It follows that I show why God made man: Just as He fashioned the world on for man’s sake, so He made man for His sake, as a presiding priest of a divine temple, a viewer of His works and heavenly things. For it is he alone who, sentient and capable of reason, can understand God, wonder in awe at His works, perceive his strength and power, etc. Thus he alone

²⁵⁵ Genesis 2:23.

²⁵⁶ *To Horontianus*, Epistle 43.

²⁵⁷ Oration 43.

²⁵⁸ *On the Creation of Man*.

²⁵⁹ *Hexameron*, Book VI, Chapter 9.

²⁶⁰ *On the Annunciation*, Sermon 1.

²⁶¹ In Plutarch’s account in *On the Tranquility of the Soul*.

²⁶² *On Monarchy*, Book I.

²⁶³ *On the Anger of God*, Chapter 14.

received speech and a tongue as the interpreter of his thought in order to be able to proclaim the majesty of his Lord.”

Further, St. Ambrose²⁶⁴ teaches that man was created last, in order to have all the resources of the world, all fowl, land animals, and even fish etc. subject to him. He was, then, like a king of the elements, and by means of these he would ascend by degrees to the royal dwelling places of heaven:

You will easily find that the traveler of this difficult journey is the man who has been so formed by the introduction of an intellect and by a will that he has the least familiarity with his own body; does not enter upon any intimacy with vices; is not polished smooth by the words of flatterers; does not, seated upon the wheels of good fortune, disdain the humble, flee from sadness, and cast away and make light of the praises of the saints. Sadness does not bow down his spirit, nor does injury break it. No suspicion worries him. Lust does not arouse him, and the passions of the body do not contend against him. The desire of vanities and the delight in pleasures do not distress him. Therefore, it was right that he was last, as the end of nature; he was formed for justice, the judge of what is just among the other living things. Rightly, therefore, is man the last, as the summary of the whole work, as the cause of the world, on whose account all things were made, as the inhabitant of all the elements. He lives among wild animals, swims with fish, flies above the birds, and converses with angels. He lives upon the earth and wages war in heaven. He plows the sea and feeds upon the air. He is the cultivator of the soil, the voyager of the deep, the fisherman in the waves, the bird catcher in the air, the heir in heaven, and joint-tenant of Christ.”

MAN—

Man in this verse is not the idea of an abstract and universal man, who is the cause and model of all individual men, as Philo would have it by basing his interpretation on Plato. In this verse, man is not even the intellect of man, as though God said, Let Us adorn the intellect of man in Our image, i.e. with grace, as St. Basil and St. Ambrose explain. Rather, *man* is that very first man, Adam, the father of all the others, as is abundantly clear from the words of Scripture. For in Adam and through Adam, God made and created other men.

²⁶⁴ Epistle 43.

TO OUR IMAGE AND LIKENESS —

You may ask: In what manner did this image of God, expressed in man, exist? The Anthropomorphists, whose founder was Audaeus, from whom the name Audianism comes, thought that man was the image of God according to his body, and thus that God was corporeal. But this is heresy. Oleaster and Steuco²⁶⁵ think that in this verse God endowed the human form so that He created a man like Him. But this notion is equally worthless and recent.

First, in this verse *image* is taken as a model, as if to say: Let Us make man to Our pattern so that the image refers to and represents Us, as its own pattern. This image is not the divine Word, or Son, Who is the image of the Father, as some explain in accordance with Luigi Lippomano. Rather, it is the divine essence, and the Triune God himself. Man was made in conformity to this image. Wherefore, what Rupert of Deutz considers by way of image to be the Son and by way of likeness the Holy Ghost, is a mystical understanding. Nevertheless, image can be properly understood in a secondary manner, as it may be a Hebraism, as if to say, Let Us make man to Our image, that is, that he be the image of Us, as a copy.

Second, in this verse many authorities make a distinction between image and likeness: undoubtedly, image pertains to nature and likeness to powers. So says St. Basil:²⁶⁶ “I have obtained the use of reason by way of His image stamped on my soul; truly I am become a Christian; surely I am become like God.” St. Jerome in his commentary on Ezekiel 27:12, at the verse *Thou wast the seal of resemblance*, says: “It must be noted that at that time (at Creation) only the image was made; the likeness is completed at baptism.” Also, St. John Chrysostom²⁶⁷ says: “He said *image* with reference to the order of sovereignty; *likeness* so that in place of human powers we may become like God in meekness, gentleness etc., as Christ says: Be like your Father, Who is in heaven.” St. Augustine,²⁶⁸ St. Eucherius²⁶⁹ and St. John Damascene²⁷⁰ teach the same thing. So, too, does St. Bernard:²⁷¹ “Inasmuch as the image might be burned in Gehenna, but not burned up; might be set on fire, but not destroyed. Likeness is not so: it either remains in a good man, or, should he sin in his soul, it is miserably altered and made to look like the unreasoning beasts of

²⁶⁵ *Cosmopœia*.

²⁶⁶ *Hexaameron*, Homily 10, noting this is a historical name for the work.

²⁶⁷ *On Genesis*, Homily 9.

²⁶⁸ *Against Adimantus*, Chapter 5.

²⁶⁹ *On Genesis*, Book I.

²⁷⁰ *On the Orthodox Faith*, Book II, 12.

²⁷¹ Sermon 1 of the series *On the Annunciation*.

burden.” Accordingly, therefore, the likeness of God perishes in man as a result of sin, not the image.

However, I say that the two words are not to be differentiated and are a hendiadys.²⁷² This is to say, that *to the image and likeness* means *to the image of His own likeness*, as the Book of Wisdom reads (2:23), i.e., *to a like image*, or *very much like*. Hence Scripture makes use of these nouns indiscriminately, sometimes one way, sometimes another, sometimes both ways, so that at one time He says that man was made to the image of God (as in Genesis 9:6), but at another time that he was made to the likeness of God (as in Genesis 5:1), and yet at still another time man was made to the image and likeness of God (as in this verse).

Third, in Hebrew the word for *image* is צֶלֶם, *selem*, which means shadow or the adumbration of a thing. For the root is צָלַל, *tsalal*, meaning *to overshadow*, from which is צֶל, *sel* meaning shadow and *tselem*, an overshadowing image. For like the shadow of a body, the image of its prototype is a kind of overshadowing. Therefore, *selem* suggests that man with respect to God is a shadow or a shadowy image, for God has a solid and steadfast essence, but man has a shadowy and transient one. This is what Psalm 38:6-7 says: “Every man living is vanity. Surely man passeth as an image (in Hebrew בצֶלֶם, *b^eselem*, *in a shadow*, that is, *like a shadow*).”

Fourth, man is not the image of God, with respect to God’s proper accidents (for man is not omnipotent, immense, eternal, omniscient, as is God), but only with respect to common attributes, which He naturally communicates to an intellectual creature.

Fifth, that this image of God is not in man alone, as St. Theodoret would have it, but also in an angel, and in woman, as St. Augustine²⁷³ teaches in great detail. St. Basil holds the same opinion about this verse when he explicates the words of Genesis 1, “Male and female He created them.”

My own opinion is, *first*: the image of God is situated in the mind of man, or in the part that man is in the highest degree of things, in which he is God and angel; in other words, man is of an intelligent nature and is a rational animal. For by way of reason, mind, and intellect, man very much resembles God and is most like him, far beyond any other creature. Out of this rational nature, man’s six extraordinary endowments and properties follow; the Fathers frequently locate

²⁷² A classical figure of rhetoric: Greek for “one through two,” the expression of an idea by two nouns joined by the coordinating conjunction, usually *and*, instead of a noun and a modifier. E.g., *heaviness and guilt* for *heavy guilt* or *by length of time and siege* for *by a long siege*.

²⁷³ *On the Trinity*, Book XII, 7.

the image of God, sometimes in one of these properties, sometimes in another, that is to say, partially and incompletely.

The first property is that man's soul is incorporeal and undivided, as is God Himself; St. Augustine locates the image of God in this property.

The second is that man's soul is eternal and immortal. Origen puts the image in this property.

The third is that man's soul is endowed with intellect, will, and memory. St. John Damascene locates the image of God in this property.

The fourth is that man has a free will. In that, St. Ambrose fixes the image.

The fifth is that man is capable of wisdom, virtue, grace, happiness, of seeing God, and of every good thing. Whence St. Gregory of Nyssa establishes the image of God in this capacity.

The sixth is that man is in charge of and rules all animals by his power. St. Basil posits the image in this gift.

Additionally, in the seventh place, just as all things are eminently in and are contained in God, so also are all things eminently in man, as I said at the beginning of my commentary on this verse. Again, by the act of understanding, man becomes like all things, as Aristotle says, because man forms the images and representations of all things in his imagination and his mind.

In the eighth place it follows that man is, so to speak, powerful like God, because he can shape and comprehend things by his vast skill and mind. In other words, man is the end of all created things, as God is the end of these same creatures.

In the ninth place, just as the soul governs the body, and it is entire in the whole body and whole in any part of it whatsoever, so God is entire in the whole world, and whole in any part of the world whatsoever.

The tenth and best reason is that, just as God the Father, knowing Himself by way of His intellect generates the Word, that is to say, the Son, and by loving Him the Holy Ghost proceeds in God as spirit.²⁷⁴ Thus man by intellection produces himself in his own mind as an intelligible word, expressive of his very self and like him, and thence love proceeds in the will of the same

²⁷⁴ St. Thomas Aquinas writes: "The operation of the will within ourselves involves also another procession, that of love, whereby the thing loved is in the lover...Hence, besides the procession of the Word in God, there exists in Him another procession, called the procession of love" (ST, I, Q27, A3). "The procession of love in God ought not to be called generation" because "the procession of the will is not by way of likeness, but is rather by way of impulse and movement towards an object" (ibid., Article 4). (Translations by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province.)

man. For in this manner man clearly represents the Most Holy Trinity. Such is the opinion of St. Augustine.²⁷⁵

Therefore, the image of God is natural to man, and it could not be lost by sin, inasmuch as it is intimately and indelibly impressed in his nature, so that it cannot be lost unless his nature be lost. Thus St. Augustine teaches in opposition to Origen,²⁷⁶ where he retracts what he said earlier,²⁷⁷ namely, that Adam lost the image of God by sinning. That statement, in order to be true, must be understood in this way: it is not as though no image of God remained in the sinner Adam, but that the image was rendered by sin so ugly that it required refashioning. Therefore, the opinion of the Lutheran Matthias Flacius Illyricus,²⁷⁸ who says that the image of God in man is so corrupted by sin that man has been substantially transformed into a living and substantial image of the devil, is irreligious and stupid. For he tenaciously upholds against his colleagues that this image is original sin itself (in his book *On Original Sin*).

Second, in my view there is in addition another image of God in man, namely, the supernatural image, which is situated in the grace and justification of man, by which he becomes a partaker of the divine nature, and which will be strengthened and perfected in glory and eternal life. “Grace is the soul of the soul,” says St. Augustine. Adam was established in this grace; moreover, in this verse grace is literally understood as the image of God, as is clear in Colossians 3:10 and Ephesians 4:24. The same idea is found in all the writings of the Fathers. The condition of this image depends on man’s will; if the will is sinful, it is lost, but by grace and justification it is restored and refashioned. Therefore, the Apostle says in Ephesians 4:23-24: “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind: and put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth.” Also see the words of 2 Corinthians 3:18.

From this, note that Adam had been infused at once with all the theological and moral graces in the first instant of his creation; likewise he was given original justice, which, in addition to the habits of virtue already mentioned, was the continuous assistance and support of God. The result of this gift was that all the movements of inordinate appetite (concupiscence) that contend against reason were non-existent and, in all things, the appetite was subordinated to reason, and reason was subordinated to God. Therefore, in all things man enjoyed internal peace, rectitude,

²⁷⁵ *On the Trinity*, Book X, Chapter 10 and Book XIV, Chapter 11.

²⁷⁶ *Retractions*, Book II, Chapter 24.

²⁷⁷ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book VI, Chapter 27.

²⁷⁸ Also more modernly known in Croatian literature as Matija Vlačić.

and sanctity. Accordingly, he did not feel inordinate sadness, anger, concupiscence or any other disturbing passion. Moreover, if he had not sinned, Adam would have passed down to his posterity this justice and undiminished nature. See Molina, Pereira, Francesco d'Arezzo and others about the concept of original justice.

Third, I say that the image of God is not properly in man's body, but nevertheless it shines and glows in his body in a certain way, because man's body is actually the image of his mind. Man's upright stature and features, raised up toward heaven, indicate an intellect of heavenly origin that governs the body, is capable of eternity and divinity, and must look to and strive for the things above. "For if glass is worth so much, then how much is a pearl worth?" It is proper that if the body is of such an orientation, then what is the soul's? So thought St. Augustine²⁷⁹ and St. Bernard.²⁸⁰ Therefore, man was reminded by his upright stature that he must not pursue earthly things, as do the beasts, for which every pleasure comes from the earth. For that reason, all the beasts stoop forward on their stomach and look at the ground. Accordingly, the poet Ovid²⁸¹ wrote:

*Thus, while the mute creation downward bend
Their sight, and to their earthly mother tend,
Man looks aloft; and with erected eyes
Beholds his own hereditary skies.*

Therefore, born in heaven, we were created by heaven. This is our end; this is our goal. If we should stray from this, we are men in vain; in vain have we looked up to the sky and the sun. It would have been better to have been brutes or rocks. But if we attain to what we strive for, we are three and four times blessed. Therefore, may this verse be, for us as well as for St. Bernard, an everlasting incentive for a pure and holy life. O St. Bernard, tell us the reason here. Why do you look up to heaven? Why did you receive a rational and immortal soul?

Fourth, I say that there is no image in the other creatures, but rather something like the footprint of God representing God, just as an effect represents a cause. For as one considers their nature, action, disposition, determination, and the marvelous organization and order of all of them among themselves, it is manifest that they were made and are preserved by divine reason and wisdom.

²⁷⁹ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book VI, Chapter 12.

²⁸⁰ *On the Song of Songs*, Sermon 24.

²⁸¹ *Metamorphoses*, I, 84-86.

Morally, God willed everything to belong to man, but He willed man to belong to God as His personal property. Thus He signed him with the indelible seal of His image so that, as man gazes upon himself, he recognizes God his Creator as in a portrait and knows by how great a debt and by how tight a bond he is fettered to Him. Truly, man bears the image of God: *first*, in the way a son bears that of his father, to whom he owes love and devotion; *second*, as a legal possession bears that of his master, whom he must fear and revere; *third*, as a soldier bears that of his commander or his general, to whom he must show loyalty and obedience; *fourth*, and finally, as the steward and household superintendent bears that of his lord and master, for whom he must manifest the correct use of the creatures that have been entrusted to his charge for the everlasting praise and glory of his Lord and God. Such is the opinion of Pereira, who adduces seven moral reasons why man was made in the image of God.²⁸² In this treatise we especially note the sixth reason, which is that man is fit for the eternity and infinity of God and that he may boldly dare to hope for and seek every good thing from Him and say to Him: Fill, O Lord, with good things the desire of my soul, which Thou hast created in the image of Thyself and which is fit for Thee. Thou permittest naught in the world to be empty: wilt Thou permit a vacuum in my soul? Therefore, fill it up with Thy gifts, nay, with Thyself. For nothing else but Thou can fill and sate its infinite capacity. Finally, if it is an offense against the sovereign authority of the kingdom to abuse the image of the monarch, what kind of crime will it be to befoul and pollute by sin the image of God that has been set on man?

AND LET HIM HAVE DOMINION OVER —

In Hebrew, *וירדו*, *veyirdû*, that is, let them have dominion over, let them rule, namely both Adam and Eve and their posterity. Therefore, man is an animal born for rule.

St. Basil²⁸³ says:

O man, you are an animal born for rule. Why are you subject to this wretched slavery? Why do you hand yourself over to sin as a vile servant? Why by your own will do you set yourself up as an agent and captive of the devil? God commanded you to be his lieutenant

²⁸² *Commentariorum et Disputationum in Genesim tomi quator*, in the section which treats of the creation of the first man.

²⁸³ *Hexaameron*, Homily 10. There are only nine homilies in St. Basil's *Hexaameron* (*Patrologia Græca* 29, 3-208). The homily Fr. Lapidè refers to is found in the appendix to the works of Basil (*Patrologia Græca* 30, 9-61) and is known by the Latin title *De hominis structura* ("on the putting together of man").

among the creatures. And, behold, you shake off from yourself and reject the dignity of dominion. But you are called a servant? Lo, you may clearly have mastery over every vicious emotion by reason. Even if your earthly master should serve filthy lust, you, avoiding it, nay, despising it, are the ruler of that foul emotion in comparison to him. On the contrary, he is the servant of those things that you trample under foot as it were, viz., the allurements of pleasures.

Note *first*: In the state of innocence, man had perfect dominion over all animals. That was partly owing to knowledge and naturally inherent prudence whereby he knows how each one must be subdued, tamed, and handled, and partly owing to the unique providence of God, Who through the angels bent the appearance and body of all animals to the wish, will, and power of man, just as by means of the angels He brought them to Adam in Genesis 2:19. It was fitting that animals should obey man as their master, as the flesh of man obeys the spirit and the spirit obeys God. Furthermore, this dominion is an indicator of man's great dignity. Listen to St. Ambrose:²⁸⁴

Nature seems to have nothing bigger or heartier than elephants, nothing more terrifying than the lion, and nothing more savage than the tiger. But these beasts serve man, and they lay aside their nature under training from humans. They forget what is natural to them. They do what they are commanded to do. Many are instances that illustrate this assertion. They are taught like children, they serve as attendants, they are given assistance like the sick, they are afraid like the fearful, and they are brought into order like the conquered. They assume our manners inasmuch as they have lost their own impulses.

Note *second*: This dominion remained in man after his sin, as is plain from Genesis 9:1.²⁸⁵ Hence by the law of nature, as Aristotle²⁸⁶ teaches, man has the right to hunt wild animals as well as to fish. However, by sin this dominion was much reduced, and, as Hugh of St. Victor notes, it was especially abated among those animals at the extremes, viz., among the largest, such as lions and among the least and most insignificant, like gnats, fleas, etc. Nevertheless, some very holy

²⁸⁴ *Hexameron*, beginning of Book VI.

²⁸⁵ "And God blessed Noe [Noah] and his sons. And He said to them: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth."

²⁸⁶ *Politics*, Book I.

men, who approached as closely as possible the primeval innocence, regained it. Noah obtained this dominion in regard to all the animals on the ark, Elisha with bears, Daniel with lions, St. Paul with vipers, and St. Francis with the fish and birds, to which he preached.

Tropologically, man has dominion over fish, when he overcomes his gluttony and lust; birds, when he masters his ambition; reptiles, when he controls his avarice; wild beasts, when he checks his anger. So wrote Origen, St. John Chrysostom, and Eucherius.

TO THE IMAGE OF GOD HE CREATED HIM —

“Of God,” that is, of Christ, Who is God; for man was especially created to the image of Christ. Indeed, this is what it says in Romans 8:29: “Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son.” At 1 Corinthians 15:49 it says: “As we have borne the image of the earthly, let us bear also the image of the heavenly.” Such is the opinion on this verse of St. Cyril of Alexandria,²⁸⁷ St. Hilary, St. Theodoret, and following them, Francesco d’Arezzo. However, the image of Christ is of supernatural grace and glory in this verse; but in Genesis it is treated primarily as a natural image. Accordingly, in this verse of Genesis there is the enallage²⁸⁸ of grammatical person frequent among the Hebrews, for God speaks of Himself in the third person, as if about someone else. What He said was: “God created man to His image”; He corroborates, emphasizes and makes abundantly clear that He means “His own” by saying “To the image of God He created him.”

Verse 27. MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM —

Based on this verse, recently an overly inventive Frenchman asserted that Adam was a hermaphrodite and was both male and female. Such was Plato’s thinking in the *Symposium* when he said that the first men on earth were androgynous, but this is a silly assertion, for Scripture does not say, “He created *him*,” it says “He created *them*,” specifically Adam and Eve. In other words, He created Adam a male and Eve a female. Therefore, it is clear that their names are announced by way of anticipation, for Moses has not yet described Eve’s creation, even though she was made on this same sixth day. (He reserves her creation for Genesis 2:22.) The hermaphroditic theory is equally foolish because some Hebrews relate, as well as Franciscus Georgius,²⁸⁹ that Adam and

²⁸⁷ *Apology Against Julian*, Book I.

²⁸⁸ A figure of classical rhetoric: substitution of one case, person, gender, number, tense, mood, part of speech for another.

²⁸⁹ Tome I, Problem 29.

Eve were so created by God that they were joined to each other at their sides and were almost one, but afterward God separated them from each other. However, Genesis 2:48 denies this notion, as I will show in my commentary on that verse.

Verse 28. INCREASE AND MULTIPLY —

From these words, it is clear that Adam and Eve were created fully mature, in an age and bodily size that were fit for reproducing, that is, young and virile, as Junilius says. The heretics would have it that in this verse that God commanded each man to generate offspring and to marry. But if this is so, then they must necessarily first prosecute to the end Christ the Lord (and I will remain silent about other very holy men) as guilty of violating this law. Taken rightly, if this verse is a commandment, it is given in common not for each man but for the whole species, that is, for all men, lest they permit the human race to die out, as St. Thomas Aquinas points out. However, I say that there is no commandment in this verse, for God said the same thing to the fish in verse 22, upon which He certainly did not impose a law. Therefore, in this verse God only blesses man, as is clear from His very words. This means, He approves of marriage for men, and He endows them with sexual potency and fertility so that by the union of male and female, just like the other animals, they may procreate offspring like themselves, and therefore, they may preserve and propagate themselves and their species. So argue St. John Chrysostom, Rupert of Deutz, St. Augustine,²⁹⁰ Pereira, Oleaster, François Vatable and others.

AND FILL THE EARTH —

To symbolize this fact, St. Augustine²⁹¹ says that the Greek name of Adam contains the four compass points of the world, indicated by the first letters of each word. For if you set forth the initial letters of the name Adam, you have ἀνατολή, δύσις, ἄρκτος, μεσηβρία (*anatolē, dusis, arktos, mesēbria*), that is, *east, west, north, south*, which symbolizes that from Adam all men will be born to inhabit and fill up all four parts of the world.

SUBDUE IT —

After all the wild animals have been driven out or brought under control, inhabit and cultivate it, and feed upon and enjoy its beauty and fruits.

RULE —

²⁹⁰ *The City of God*, Book XXI, Chapter 22.

²⁹¹ *On the Gospel of John*, Tract 9.

The Hebrew word דָּרָה, *r^edû*, has a twofold sense. If you derive it from דָּרָה, *rādāh*, it means *rule*. However, if you derive it from יָרַד, *yārad*, it means *go down*, as if to say: If you obey My commandment, you will rule over all animals; if not, you will lose your dominion, as the Psalmist bitterly weeps over that fact in Psalm 48:15. Such is the opinion of Del Rio. However, this sense of the verse is subtler than it is solid. It is, in fact, clear that this verse only treats of the blessing and rule of man, and that *r^edû* only means *rule* whenever it is followed by the subordinating preposition *b^e*, as happens in this verse. Therefore, *r^edû* in this verse is the same as *rule*.

Verse 29. BEHOLD I HAVE GIVEN YOU EVERY HERB...TO BE YOUR MEAT —

I have given, that is *I give*, for the Hebrews often use the past tense for the present, which they lack. Hence the more common opinion of the Fathers and Doctors (with the exception of Cajetan, Francisco de Vitoria, and Dominic Soto) is that up to the time of the flood, men had been so frugal that they fed on plants and fruits but abstained from flesh meats and wine. The abstinence was not owing to any commandment of God, but on account of a kind of religious belief, which arose from that time, that God had not yet distinctly and expressly granted the use of flesh meats and wine, as is clear from Genesis 9:3 and 21. Behold this simple frugality of the Hebrew fathers did not threaten their life but increased it, for at that time they lived for 900 years. Boethius beautifully writes of this ancient frugality:²⁹²

*Too blest the former age, their life
Who in the fields contented led,
And still, by luxury unspoiled,
On frugal acorns sparely fed.*

Ovid²⁹³ also sings of our forefathers:

*on strawberries they fed;
Cornels and bramble-berries gave the rest,
And falling acorns furnisht out a feast.*

I will comment on this and several other things at Genesis 9:3.

You may ask: Why, when after each work of creation its says, “And God saw that it was good,” is that phrase omitted after the creation of man? I answer: The first reason is that the creation

²⁹² *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Book II, Song 5.

²⁹³ *Metamorphoses*, Book I, lines 105-106.

of things is complete with man. When that was completely finished, Moses says, by way of summing up everything in general, “And God saw all things that He had made, and they were very good.” That summary applies especially to man, both because He had just before described man’s creation more fully than that of the other creatures and because man is the end, the summary, the node, and the center of all creatures. All things were certainly created on man’s account, and man is lord, partaker, connection, and bond of every creature. Wherefore, in order to avoid saying the same thing twice in a row by saying of man “God saw that it was good” and then, with respect to all things, immediately adding “and God saw all the things that He had made, and they were very good,” Moses omitted the former concluding formula and left it to be understood in the latter so that it would mean that everything from man’s good Creator (as they were created in man and on account of man) were good. This is the opinion of Pereira. He also appends that the word *very* was added for this reason; it is omitted in the other concluding formulas because man’s good excels the good of the other creatures, especially because through a man, namely Jesus Christ, all creatures would be deified: for when the humanity of Christ was deified, all creatures that are contained in it were also wondrously deified at the same time.

St. Augustine²⁹⁴ adduces a second and a third reason for the absence of a concluding formula for man. The second is because man had not yet been perfected, for he has not yet been situated in Paradise or because, after he was settled there, the words were therefore left out all the same. The third reason is the fact that God knew man would sin and would not remain in the perfection of His image, in other words, He did not wish to say that man was good when He knew that man would become evil by sin.

St. Ambrose²⁹⁵ provides a fourth reason. God, he says, did not wish to say to Adam alone “that it was good” before the creation of Eve, lest He should appear to contradict Himself. For in Genesis 2:18, He says: “It is not good for man to be alone: let Us make him a help like unto himself.” Therefore, since the good of the human race, in other words, fecundity and propagation, depended upon Eve, before her formation, God did not wish to say to Adam alone “that it was good. For He preferred that there should be more humans than just one Adam alone (who was free from sin) whom He could save and forgive.”

²⁹⁴ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book III, Chapter 24.

²⁹⁵ *On Paradise*, Chapter 10.

The fifth reason for the omission is moral, namely to show that man has a free will, which other created things lack: these creatures just have the goodness of being, or natural goodness; man, however, because he is free, possesses a greater goodness, which is moral goodness. Therefore, in order to show that the moral goodness of man, which is pre-eminent, depends upon the use of his free will, He did not wish to tell man to his face that it was good. St. Augustine, St. Ambrose and others specify this notion as a reason.

Verse 31. GOD SAW ALL THE THINGS THAT HE HAD MADE, AND THEY WERE VERY GOOD —

St. Augustine²⁹⁶ says:

When He referred to each creature, He said only: God saw that it is good. However, when He was speaking of all things, it was too little to say ‘good’ unless the word *very* were added. For if each work of God is viewed by knowledgeable men, each work will be found to have a commendable measure, number, and order, with each one arranged in its own class; how much greater, then, will be the praise of all created things considered as a whole, that is, the whole body of the work of creation, which is finished, each work having been collected into a whole. For every beauty that exists in the parts of something is much more praiseworthy in the whole than in the part.

Then St. Augustine says: “So great is the force and power of wholeness and unity, that good individual things are thereby even more pleasing when they come together and meet in some whole. The whole takes its name from unity.”²⁹⁷

Note: the beauty of the world and created things is wonderful.

First, because of the variety of things. Some are incorporeal, like the angels, which are distributed into different species, hierarchies, and choirs; they are very many in number, almost innumerable. Other things are corporeal, some of which are incorruptible like the heavens and the stars and some of which are corruptible. The latter are divided into two classes, inanimate and animate. Regarding the animate, some are plants, others animals, and others are, in short, partly

²⁹⁶ *On Genesis Against the Manichæans*, Book I, Chapter 21.

²⁹⁷ The Latin text has a play on the words *universum* (whole) and *unitas* (unity).

corporeal and partly incorporeal, as are men. How great is the variety of men in shape, gait, voice, intelligence, language, effort, works, customs, laws, modes of life, and religious scruples!

Second, because of the order and most fitting disposition of all things. The more noble hold the highest place in the world, and the ignoble the lowest, and the middling hold the middle place: these things are managed, preserved, and regulated by higher beings.

Third, because of the abundance and wholeness of things. All things are in the world in a threefold manner; (i) according to the general degrees of things, which are four in number: being, living, sensing, and understanding; (ii) according to all the classes of these degrees of any sort and their subordinate species; (iii) that nothing is in any place and nothing was made by God that is not contained in the world and that does not pertain to it.

Fourth, because of the intimate and marvelous relationship of all things among themselves, not only according to quantity, such that nothing is ever useless and void, but also in the relative sequence of natural species, such that manifestly there is no discontinuity, and such that any part whatsoever is bound together and subordinated most fittingly and harmoniously to its neighboring parts all around.

Fifth, because of the discordant harmony of things among themselves and because of their natural attraction and natural aversion. Such a natural aversion exists between the vine and the cabbage, the sheep and the wolf, the cat and the mouse, and innumerable other creatures. A natural attraction exists between the magnet and iron, male and female plants, diverse metals, fluids, and animals.

Sixth, because of the wonderful proportion of all things both among themselves and with the entire world: indeed, this is like the proportion and beauty of the human body, which arises from the harmonious composition of all its members, whereby it happens that just as man is a small world, so the world is a kind of large man.

Seventh, because of the divine and superior governing of the world: (i) that God very wisely and very liberally prepared for each thing, even the most insignificant, whatever was necessary and seasonable to protect each one's life and to achieve its end; (ii) that He directs each one of them (even those lacking reason) toward its own end, and that by His guidance they achieve their own end just as if they recognized and directed their own actions and ends, as is obvious among birds while they build their nests relative to the motion of the sun, the heavens, the winds, etc.; (iii) that He justly controls each one so that by breaking their own strength and weakening them, they

are not a cause of destruction to the world or to themselves, but are as an aid and ornament; (iv) that each one prefers a public good to a private one, as when a heavy body rises upwards to prevent a vacuum. Wherefore, St. Augustine (Epistle 38), quoting Isaiah 40:26 (as found in the Septuagint version), writes: “He Who brings out the world²⁹⁸ by number,” or in musical measures, teaches that the world is the sweetest music of God the musician. That music, composed from diverse and contrary elements such as sounds and tones, produces an admirable euphony and harmony. St. Augustine²⁹⁹ says that God made such diverse things in this world “to beautify the passage of the ages as if they were a very beautiful poem distinguished by rhetorical figures of antithesis,” just as in Cicero’s *Commonwealth*, Scipio keeps saying that a well ordered state and government is harmonious: for just as “uniform consonance results from the control of very unlike tones, so from the music-like intervals of the high, middle, and lower social classes, the state, under the influence of reason, works in concert by the common feeling of very dissimilar elements. That which musicians call harmony in song is concord in the state, and it can in no way exist without justice.”³⁰⁰

Eighth, because all the things of the world were gathered together for man’s use. For some pertain to the necessities and comforts of human life and some to the various amusements of men. Some are remedies for diseases and protections of good health. Many have been put forward as an example and for emulation. All are of use for knowledge of the universe and especially for grasping the idea, love, and sanctity of God.

Ninth, because God ordains all evils in the world for good. He ordains the evils of punishment to chastise the evils of guilt; the evils of guilt are unqualifiedly evils and sins. Nevertheless, the goodness, wisdom, and power of God are so great that He ordains them for good either in forgiving them by His clemency and mercy or in punishing them with present and eternal pains by His justice and retribution. Such is Pereira’s view.

Therefore, St. Bernard³⁰¹ says: “We must reflect on three things about the great work of this world, namely, what it is, how it is, and why it was established. In truth, an unfathomable faculty is presumed to exist in things, because so many prodigious things were created so diversely

²⁹⁸ The Vulgate (Douay translation) reads “Who bringeth out their *host (militiam)* by number.” The Septuagint uses the word κόσμος, which in addition to meaning *ornamentation* and *host* or *army* also means *world, universe*. In Hebrew הַצָּבָא is *army* and יָפֶה is *beauty*.

²⁹⁹ *The City of God*, Book XI, Chapter 18.

³⁰⁰ Cicero, *De re publica*, II.69. St. Augustine quotes this passage in book ii, *The City of God*, Chapter 21.

³⁰¹ The series *On the Feast of Pentecost*, Sermon 3.

and so magnificently. To be sure, this singular wisdom is made manifest in the way that some things in a most orderly manner are located high up, some down below, and others in the middle. But if you consider the purpose for which the world was made, there appears so useful a kindness, so kind a usefulness, that it can overwhelm even the most ungrateful of men by the multitude and the magnitude of its benefits. Whereas God created all things from nothing by His immense power, He created them beautiful by His unsurpassed wisdom, and useful by His overabundant kindness.” Moreover, St. Augustine³⁰² says: “We were required to know three things about the establishment of Creation: Who made it, by what means He made it, and why He made it. God said (says He): Be light made, and light was made, and God saw the light that it was good. There is no better author than God, and there is no artistry more efficacious than the word of God, and there is no better reason than that good be created by the Good.” Also in sentence number 140, he says: “God would not create any angel or any man whom He foreknew would be evil unless He equally knew the good uses that He would put him to and beautify the passage of the ages as if they were a very beautiful poem distinguished by rhetorical figures of antithesis.” This is the poem, this is the book of the world. Wherefore, St. Anthony of Egypt replied to someone who asked how he could live in the desert without books: “My book, O philosopher, is the universe established by God, which however often as I please gives God’s books to read.” So thinks the historian Socrates.³⁰³

Philo³⁰⁴ teaches that there was nothing missing from the works of God except an equitable evaluator and eulogist for them: “Wise men tell a tale handed down to posterity, which runs like this: Once upon a time when the Creator finished the entire world, He asked one of the prophets whether he desired anything not yet created from the earth or water or air or heaven. He answered that everything was perfect and completely realized; still he wanted one thing: someone to praise in words the creation, or rather, someone not so much to praise but to narrate everything, even, if you will, that which appears to be the smallest and most obscure detail. He said that an account of the works of God was the most suitable praise, needing no augmentation. They say that this answer pleased the Father of the Universe, and not long after that a race capable of poetry and music came forth from one of the divine faculties, the virgin Memory, whom the Greeks call Mnemosyne. This is the tale of the ancients, and on its authority we say that there is nothing more proper to God than

³⁰² *Sentences* (Number 141).

³⁰³ *Church Histories*, Book IV, Chapter 18.

³⁰⁴ *On Noah’s Planting*, toward the end.

to do good things and nothing more proper to created things than to give thanks, inasmuch as they cannot pay back anything except their gratitude.”

Finally, St. Basil³⁰⁵ says: “The whole mass of the world is like a book written with letters, clearly witnessing to and proclaiming God’s glory and His most august majesty (which otherwise is hidden and invisible), abundantly announcing it to you, a creature endowed with an intellect. *The heavens shew forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of his hands.* (Psalm 17:1)”.

³⁰⁵ This is the sermon *De paradiso* found in Migne 30, 61-72.

CHAPTER II

Synopsis

First, God's rest on the Sabbath and the sanctification of the Sabbath are described. Second, the planting of paradise, and its four rivers are described. Third, the formation of Eve from Adam's rib is described. Fourth, the institution of matrimony with Adam and Eve is described.

In this chapter there is an anacephalæosis [recapitulation or summary of known facts]: for instance, the formation of paradise was done on the third day, and the creation of Eve, as well as the institution of matrimony, was done before the Sabbath, on the sixth day, namely Friday, on which Adam was created. Moses therefore unfolds and fully explains these and other things that he, in passing, touched upon lightly in Chapter 1.

Verse 1. ALL THE FURNITURE —

Namely the stars, and also the angels who adorn heaven, just as birds adorn the air, fish the sea, and plants and animals the earth. The Hebrew word for *furniture* is צבא, *šāḇā'*, *i.e.*, host, battle-array, soldiery, excellence, ornament; for there is nothing more finely outfitted than an ordered battle array. Hence the title “God of hosts”—God of the angels and stars that serve God in appointed order. Like troops, they are deployed, appear on the scene, strike, and not infrequently fight to the end on God's behalf against the impious.

Verse 2. AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY GOD ENDED HIS WORK —

“On the seventh day,” I mean exclusively, of course, for inclusively God ended his work on the sixth day, as the Septuagint has. For God began on Sunday and ended on *feria sexta*,³⁰⁶ or Friday, such that He rested on the ensuing seventh day, which was called the Sabbath on account of God’s resting. St. Augustine,³⁰⁷ St. Bede and St. Philo³⁰⁸ give the symbolic and arithmetical reason why the world was completed in six days. To be sure, it is because the number six is perfect, for it is made complete from the chief parts of itself, namely, from the unit, from the concept of two of a kind, and from the concept of three of a kind, for one plus two plus three make six.

Symbolically, six days during which the construction of the world lasted represent six thousand years, (for in the sight of God a thousand years are as one day, Psalm 89:4). So the Antichrist, the Day of Judgment, and the Sabbath, i.e., the repose of the Saints in the heavens, should come in this exact number of years, as taught by St. Jerome,³⁰⁹ St. Irenæus,³¹⁰ St. Justin,³¹¹

³⁰⁶ Lit. “the sixth weekday.” After the first day of the week, viz. Sunday (*Dominica* usually, though Cornelius calls it *Dies Dominicus*), the Church names the weekdays in their numerical order of sequence after Sunday. Thus Monday is *feria secunda*, “second weekday,” etc. through Friday, “the sixth weekday.” Saturday is *Sabbatum*. This means of avoiding the names of pagan gods with their astrological association survives in modern Portuguese.

³⁰⁷ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book IV, Chapter 1.

³⁰⁸ *On the Creation of the World*.

³⁰⁹ *Exposition of Psalm 89 to Cyprian*.

³¹⁰ *Against Heresies*, Book V, Chapter 28: For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded. And for this reason the Scripture says: Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all their adornment. And God brought to a conclusion upon the sixth day the works that He had made; and God rested upon the seventh day from all His works (Genesis 2:2). This is an account of the things formerly created, as also it is a prophecy of what is to come. For the day of the Lord is as a thousand years (2 Peter 3:8) and in six days created things were completed: it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousandth year.

³¹¹ *To the Nations*, Question 71.

St. Augustine³¹² and others whom Sixtus of Siena cites.³¹³ Hence, also, St. Isidore³¹⁴ says the six first parents, Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Malaleel, and Jared died, and the seventh, Henoah, was carried off alive to heaven, because after six thousand years of labor and death, eternal life will follow.

HIS WORK —

Of the creation of new species; for God even up to our time completes His work of government, conservation, and production of new individuals, as is clear from John 5:17.

HE RESTED —

Not from fatigue, but from the work; whence the Hebrew word is נָשָׁב, *šā·baʿ*, i.e., He ceased. In another way, Aristobulus the Peripatetic³¹⁵ says that “He rested” means He gave rest to the things created by Himself, i.e., stability, permanence, and continuity as well as settled, fixed, and unchangeable order. Therefore, the words *He rested* tacitly mean the conservation of created things, and with them the never-failing cooperation of God in respect of their acts and proper movements. For, as St. Augustine³¹⁶ says:

The omnipotence of the omnipotent Creator is the cause for sustaining every creature. If that power sometime were to cease from ruling the beings He created, the species of all things and nature would together tumble down. Consequently, what the Lord said: ‘My

³¹² *The City of God*, Book XX, Chapter 7: Those who, on the strength of this passage, have suspected that the first resurrection is future and bodily, have been moved, among other things, specially by the number of a thousand years, as if it were a fit thing that the saints should thus enjoy a kind of Sabbath-rest during that period, a holy leisure after the labors of the six thousand years since man was created, and was on account of his great sin dismissed from the blessedness of paradise into the woes of this mortal life, so that thus, as it is written, one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, there should follow on the completion of six thousand years, as of six days, a kind of seventh-day Sabbath in the succeeding thousand years; and that it is for this purpose the saints rise, viz., to celebrate this Sabbath. And this opinion would not be objectionable, if it were believed that the joys of the saints in that Sabbath shall be spiritual, and consequent on the presence of God; for I myself, too, once held this opinion. But, as they assert that those who then rise again shall enjoy the leisure of immoderate carnal banquets, furnished with an amount of meat and drink such as not only to shock the feeling of the temperate, but even to surpass the measure of credulity itself, such assertions can be believed only by the carnal. ... Now the thousand years may be understood in two ways, so far as occurs to me: either because these things happen in the sixth thousand of years or sixth millennium (the latter part of which is now passing), as if during the sixth day, which is to be followed by a Sabbath which has no evening, the endless rest of the saints, so that, speaking of a part under the name of the whole, he calls the last part of the millennium — the part, that is, which had yet to expire before the end of the world — a thousand years; or he used the thousand years as an equivalent for the whole duration of this world, employing the number of perfection to mark the fullness of time.

³¹³ *Sacred Library*, Book V, Annotation 190.

³¹⁴ *Gloss*, Chapter V.

³¹⁵ Cited by Eusebius in Book XIII of the *Preparation for the Gospel*.

³¹⁶ *Sentences*, Number 277.

Father worketh until now' shows a kind of connection to His work by which He maintains and directs all things together. In this work, His Wisdom also remains steadfast, of which it is said: 'She reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly.' The Apostle also observed the same thing: When he was speaking with the Athenians, he said: 'In Him we live, we move, and are.' The reason is that if one were to withdraw His work from created things, we could neither live nor move nor exist. And therefore God must be understood to have rested from all His works so as to make no new creature and not so as to cease from preserving and governing His created beings.

St. Augustine³¹⁷ learnedly teaches that God is affected in the same way when He is unoccupied and when He works:

In God there is no thought of indolent exemption from activity or laborious industry; He knows both quiescent activity and active quiescence. That which is before or after in works must not be ascribed to one who does, but instead to the results of doing. For eternal and unchangeable is His will, nor does it vary by turns in its design. In it at the same time is whatever has gone before or follows in the creation or ordering of things. Hence St. Philo³¹⁸ translates the word not as 'He rested' but as 'He made to come to a rest what has come forth'; the reason, says he, is that God never comes to a rest, but as it is proper to fire to burn and snow to be cold, so it is of God to operate.

Nevertheless the Hebrew word *ישב*, *yīšbōl*, properly means "He rested," as the Aramaic Targum, the Vulgate, and the Septuagint translate. Junilius, St. Bede, and St. Augustine³¹⁹ teach that the symbolic meaning is that this rest of God on the Sabbath was a figure of Christ's repose in the sepulcher on the day of the Sabbath, after He had completed on the sixth day the work of our redemption by His passion and death. Anagogically, this was the type³²⁰ of the rest of the Saints in heaven, for there they pass an endless Sabbath.

³¹⁷ *Sentences*, Number 145.

³¹⁸ *Allegorical Interpretation*.

³¹⁹ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book IV, Chapter 12.

³²⁰ A type is a person, place or thing that actually existed that also foreshadows a future person, place or thing.

Verse 3. AND HE BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY —

I.e., He praised, commended, and approved the seventh day, says St. Philo. Thus we bless God when we praise Him. Even better, “He blessed,” i.e., as in the words that follow the phrase, He sanctified it: He decreed the seventh day sacred and a holy-day. Indeed just as it is man’s great blessing because it is sanctified, so it also bears the character of a holy day.

AND SANCTIFIED IT —

First, not on the seventh day itself, which was the first Sabbath in the world, but afterwards, in the time of Moses, namely at Exodus 20:8. So says Alonso Tostado of Ávila, who thinks the words in this verse are said by way of anticipation. *Second*, and even better according to others, at that time God already sanctified the Sabbath, not by an act and in reality, but by His decree and predetermined end, that is to say, because God rested on the seventh day He firmly determined that day as sacred to Himself, and it was as such later declared by Moses to be a solemn day to be kept by the Jews. So say Benedict Pereira, St. Bede, and Hieronymus Prado.³²¹ *Third*, and very plainly, from the beginning of the world on this first day of the Sabbath, God “sanctified” it, i.e. by an act He instituted the holy-day and wished it to be kept by Adam and his posterity for holy leisure and the worship of God, especially for reflecting upon the benefit of His creation — the whole world — that was brought to completion on that day. Accordingly, it is clear that the Sabbath was a holiday instituted and made inviolable from the very first, and not by Moses in Exodus 20:8, but long before, namely from the beginning of the world, on this very first Sabbath of the world. The same argument is marshaled at Exodus 16:23 and Hebrews 4:3. So hold Ribera, St. Philo and Ambrose Catharinus. Therefore, this precept of the Sabbath was divine, not natural, but positive; this being the case, the holy day was transferred by Christ and the Apostles from Saturday to Sunday.

WHICH GOD CREATED AND MADE —

I.e., what He created by making, and by creating He made and brought to an end. Indeed, this repetition of the same verbal idea by a synonym signifies the perfection of the work, which is expressed by “He created and made.”

³²¹ Ezechiel, Chapter 20.

Verse 4. THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS (i.e., the *creations*) OF THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH —

After which follows: “When they were created, in the day,” i.e., in the entire time of six days, concerning which, see Chapter 1 of this commentary. So says St. Bede and others.

Verse 5. AND EVERY PLANT —

Conflate these words with verse 4 thus: “In the day that the Lord God made the heavens and the earth, and every plant — Hebrew $\pi\psi$, *śîah*, it has arisen or it is sprouting — before it sprung up in the earth,” that is to say, in a natural way and by the power of seed, as it now springs up. Indeed, Moses only wishes to say that the first production of plants and of paradise, to which he gradually comes, must be ascribed not to nature, the earth, or seed, but to the power and operation of God; and he proves it from the fact that, as all herbs and plants thrive by the influence of the weather and man’s industry and cultivation, at the time there was no man to till and cultivate the earth. Also, there was no rain to water planted fields.

Secondly, it could be more clearly translated from the Hebrew, *in the day* (the first of the world) *that God made heaven and earth, every plant of the field was not yet* — for this is the meaning of טָרַם , *terem*, as is clear from Exodus 9:30: I know that you do not yet (Heb. *terem*) fear the Lord — *in the earth, and every herb of the ground was not yet growing, but a spring rose out of the earth.*

Verse 6. BUT A SPRING ROSE OUT OF THE EARTH —

You may wonder: What is this spring?

First, Aquila, the Aramaic Targum, and some Jews as well as Molina, Pereira and Delrio translate the Hebrew עָד *’ēd* as *exhalation*, which the sun by its power naturally attracted upwards from the earth. Afterward in the chill of the night, the exhalation condensed into dew, and resolved into moisture by the cold, watered the earth and its shoots in the beginning of the world, until after a little while God gave rains to the earth to water it. In this passage, therefore, the exhalation and the dew were then in place of rain and moisture, whereby the recently created plants were sustained, for it was fitting that the first days of the world were clear and serene.

You may ask: How is this exhalation called a “spring” in the Vulgate and the Septuagint? My answer is that it is so called because it flowed over the earth like a spring. For instance,

Aristotle³²² so teaches where he identifies the clouds risen from the waters and turned back into the waters as the circular and ever-flowing river which flows and floats through the air.

But in opposition to this opinion is the fact that Moses in the preceding verse denied there was any rain at the time or that there was similar celestial moisture that watered the earth. Again, because the exhalation is very improperly called a spring and because the Hebrew *'êd* means not an exhalation but rather a stream of waters (as is plain from Job 36:27), and also means “calamity” and “slaughter,” which like a stream overwhelms and envelops men (as is clear in Jeremias 43:16 and elsewhere), Oleaster translates *'êd* as an overflowing [*inundatio*].

Second, St. Augustine³²³ says that in the beginning of the world there was properly one spring, which in a set time watered the sprouts of the earth like the flooding Nile. But it is hardly believable that there was such a spring that watered the whole earth by flooding. And far more incredible is what the Gloss adds: that the earth was watered by this overflowing spring up to the time of Noe, such that before Noe there were never rains in the world.

Third, and better, are the comments on this verse by St. Augustine, St. Philo, and Pope Saint Nicholas I.³²⁴ The spring, i.e., the springs, streamlets, and rivers arise up from the earth. To be sure, all the waters, as I said at Genesis 1:9, were gathered into one place, as if into one spring, or source. Indeed, here Moses only in general considers again and reflects upon the creation of things that he narrated in due order in Chapter 1; that is to say, God alone in the beginning of the world made every plant everywhere on the entire earth. I prove this from the fact that at the time there was no man to plant these plants, and there was no rain to water them, but only the spring — i.e., the various rivers and springs flowing out of one springhead as it were — watered the whole earth in every place. However, these waters were unable, without rain, to supply moisture for germination everywhere in lands far removed from them. Therefore, at the time God produced sprouts and shrubbery alone.

Fourth, one can translate it more clearly and more completely from the Hebrew in the following manner: “spring,” in Hebrew *טַר 'êd*, i.e., a stream or an overflowing: imagine that the original abyss of waters of which I spoke at Genesis 1:9 watered and covered the whole earth, as if the entire earth were one spring. Moses summarily revisits this first source of all waters in this

³²² *Meteorology*, Book I.

³²³ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book V, Chapters 9 and 10

³²⁴ In his letter to the Byzantine emperor Michael III.

verse, as a little before, in verse 4 he revisited the creation of the heaven and earth. For God created the heaven and earth and this spring or abyss of waters first before everything. That is to say, therefore, the sense is: in the same way God alone created the heaven and earth and the abyss of waters, so He alone separated it from the land, and He uncovered the dry land, and from it produced sprouts, paradise, man, and all things, which afterwards He conserved and propagated by means of rain and dew. Wherefore, as I said at verse 5, one may plainly and clearly translate from the Hebrew original like this: “in the day that God made heaven and earth, every plant of the field was not yet in the earth, and every herb of the ground was not yet growing, but a spring” i.e. an overspreading, namely, the abyss of waters, which seemed to emerge and rise up from the land, “watered and covered the entire earth.”

Verse 7. AND THE LORD GOD FORMED MAN OF THE SLIME OF THE EARTH: AND BREATHED INTO HIS FACE THE BREATH OF LIFE, AND MAN BECAME A LIVING SOUL —

The Aramaic paraphrase renders the verse as *man became a speaking soul*, because speech, to an equal degree as reason, is proper to man.

In this verse, Moses returns to the work of the sixth day to explain more admirably the formation of man.

First, Moses here assigns the five causes of man. God is the efficient cause. The material cause is the slime of the earth or earth mixed with water; and from this fact, the dead body of a man is reduced to earth and water, to its own elements, as it were. The formal cause is the breath of life. The exemplary cause is God, for man is the image of God. The final cause is that he be a living soul, i.e., a living thing or animal, namely, sentient, moving itself, knowing itself and other things, and pursuing all the works of life (“living soul” is a synecdoche),³²⁵ and that he be set over the other animals and the whole world.

Second: the Hebrew Bible literally reads in this way: *God molded the man dust or mud from the ground*, for the Hebrew verb יצר, *yāṣār*, and the Greek ἔπλασεν [*éplasen*] properly belong to the craft of pottery-work, and the Hebrew and Greek both mean “He formed.” Wherefore, it seems

³²⁵ A figure of speech where, as employed in verse 7, a part is substituted for the whole: As St. Lawrence of Brindisi explains in his “First Dissertation,” in Gen. 2:7 “the soul or flesh is substituted in place of the whole man (*anima aut caro pro toto homine ponitur*).”

that at first God fashioned the man's body in the manner of a statue from the mud of the earth, either by Himself or by the agency of angels (as St. Augustine and hence St. Thomas Aquinas³²⁶ suggest), just as modelers shape clay images of men. And this is what Job 10:9 says: "Remember that thou hast made me as the clay." And Jeremias 18:2 compares God to a potter, and man to clay. On this account, in the Book of Wisdom 7:1, Adam is called *πρωτόπλαστος καὶ γηγενής*, "first made of the earth," and he is characterized by the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 15:47 as "of the earth, earthly." Then by degrees God produced in this man of clay the systematic arrangements of the flesh and the human body, and finally, together with the last arrangement, He brought in the heterogeneous forms of the individual parts of the human body and with these He infused by creating and created by infusing a rational soul. Therefore, man was made perfect, composed of a human body and a rational soul. In regard to this verse, such is the opinion of St. John Chrysostom³²⁷ and Gennadius I of Constantinople in the catena.³²⁸ And God alone carried it out by Himself. Whence St. Basil, St. Ambrose and St. Cyril teach that man was created by the Most Holy Trinity alone, without other assistance, calling the contrary opinion the error of the Jews.

Further, St. Clement³²⁹ thus graphically portrays the wondrous and divine arrangement of the parts of man:

Behold in the body of a man the work of the Artificer, how He has set the bones like columns, so to speak, by which the flesh may be supported and carried. Next, see how its proportions are maintained symmetrically on both sides, i.e., the right and the left, so that foot corresponds to foot, and hand to hand, and also fingers and toes to fingers and toes, in order that each side's member matches the other with absolute equality. But also one eye to the other eye and one ear to the other ear, which are not only symmetrical and in conformation with each other but also are formed to be suitable for necessary uses. Take as an example the hands that are such that they have been adapted for work, the feet for walking, the eyes preserved by the protective eyebrows to serve vision; the ears — so formed to hear, like a cymbal — replicate more loudly and transmit the reflected sound of the word they received, even to the perception of the heart.

³²⁶ ST, I, Q91, A2, Reply to Objection 1.

³²⁷ *Hexaameron*, Homily 12.

³²⁸ Collection of excerpts from patristic Biblical commentators.

³²⁹ *Recognitions*, Book VIII.

Mark the following equally artistic and wonderful traits of the human body:

The tongue, moreover, dashing against the teeth to produce speech, acts like a plectrum, or pick, to play a stringed instrument. Indeed, as to the teeth themselves, some function to cut and divide the food and pass it on to the inner teeth, while the inner teeth grind and break it into small pieces in the manner of a millstone [*molae*], whereby, delivered to the stomach, it may be digested more advantageously. For these reason, these teeth are called “molars.” What is more, the nostrils were made for the sake of conveying, exhaling, and breathing in air, so that by the exchange of the breath, the natural heat that is in the heart can either be made hotter or cooled by the function of the lungs when the conditions demand. The lungs have been implanted in the chest so that by their softness they may gently touch and keep warm the energy of the heart, in which life seems to consist — life, I say, not the soul. What, then, should I say about the substance of the blood, how like a river issuing from headwaters, first carried from one hollow cavity, then afterwards through innumerable veins, as if redirected through courses, waters the entire expanse of the human body with life-sustaining flows; flows effectuated by the effort of the liver, which lies on the right side to enable the digestion of food and the conversion of it into blood?

From all these examples, who could not recognize the activity of the intellect and the wisdom of the Creator?

St. Ambrose³³⁰ choicely describes the identical creation of the world [*cosmopœiam*] of man, where he teaches, among other things, that:

The construction of the human body is like the world. Inasmuch as the sky distinguishes itself over the air, and the seas over the lands, which are like the limbs of the world, so we also perceive that the head stands above the other limbs of the body. Indeed, in this citadel resides a kind of royal wisdom. Again, what the sun and the moon are to the sky, this is the function of the eyes in man. The sun and the moon are the lights of the world, but the eyes, like stars in the flesh, shine from above and with their clear light illuminate what is below

³³⁰ *Hexaemeron*, Book VI, Chapter 9,13.

— sentinels; they keep watch over us day and night. How lovely is the hair of the head? What is man without a head, when everything is in the head? He has a free forehead, which reveals by its exterior the condition of his mind. A kind of image of his soul speaks in his visage. Twin rows of eyebrows extend in front of the eyes as defenses, and they shelter their loveliness. Skilled physicians say that the brain is located in the head for the sake of the eyes. The brain is the origin of the nerves and of all senses. However, very many think the heart is the origin of the arteries and of the natural heat by which the vital organs are given life and made warm. Yet the nerves are like the organs of each sense, which originate from the brain like cords and, you could say, the strings of musical instruments, and are passed on through the parts of the body and involved in each and every function. Therefore, the brain is softer because it accepts all the senses. Consequently, in fact, the nerves report everything that the eye sees or the ear hears or the sense of smell inhales or the tongue causes to sound or the mouth receives by way of taste. The curving of the inner parts of the ears provides what you could say is the system of modulation, considering that a kind of modulation is produced by the curvature of the ears, and the sound of an incoming voice is represented by certain rhythmic patterns. What shall I explain about the rampart of the teeth, whereby food is ground up and a full expression of the voice is realized? The tongue is like a plectrum for a speaker, and a kind of hand for the diner, which supplies and serves to the teeth food that would be lost. The voice also is carried by a kind of rowing motion of the air, now agitating, now soothing the feelings of the hearer. As a result, the thoughts of our silent mind are made known by speech. What, therefore, is the mouth of man except the inmost recess of speech, a fountain of discussion, a court of words, a storehouse of the will?

From the head, St Ambrose next proceeds to the other members of the body, writing:

The hand is the bulwark for the whole body, the defender of the head, which is distinguished by illustrious actions, from which we offer, take, and dispense the heavenly sacraments. Who will worthily explain the wickerwork of the human chest area and the softness of the stomach? What is more salubrious than that the lungs were joined to the heart by a neighboring boundary line, so that when the heart is enflamed by anger and

indignation it is more quickly tempered by the blood and moistness of the lungs? And therefore the lungs are softer because they are always moist, so that at the same time they soften the hardness of indignation. The spleen also has a productive proximity with the liver, which, as it takes in what it feeds upon, wipes away any filth it has caught, in order that the fine and delicately thin remains of the food can pass through the more minute fibers. These food particles are then turned into blood and become serviceable for bodily strength. But as for the complex circuits of the intestines, albeit connected to one another without any knot, what do they evidence except the divine foresight of the Creator, since they do not allow ingested food to quickly pass through and immediately exit the stomach? If such a thing were to happen, perpetual hunger and an unbroken desire to eat would be produced in men.

After more discussion, St Ambrose resumes:

The pulse of the veins is either the messenger of illness or health. Yet although these are diffused in the whole body, they are neither unprotected nor uncovered; but they are so covered with light, fleshy parts that the pulse is opportunely found and quickly felt, since there is no fleshy thickness that covers it. The bones are also covered with a thin, fleshy substance and are bound fast with sinews. Those of the head are especially covered with light skin; consequently, they are clothed with thicker hair so that they can have some protection against rainstorms and the cold. What shall I say about the function of the feet, which support, without any injury, the whole body from its weight? The knee is flexible, by which an offense against the Lord is appeased above all else, so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend. There are two things that assuage God more than anything: humility and faith. Man has two feet. Wild animals and beasts have four feet, birds two. Therefore, man is like one of the winged creatures: with his vision, he seeks the heights, and with what you might call a rowing of his sublime thoughts he moves swiftly to and fro. And accordingly this psalm verse is said of him: ‘Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle’s’; to the extent that he is nearer to heavenly things and is loftier than eagles, he is one who can say, ‘Our conversation is in heaven.’”

Third: For *slime of the earth*, the phrase in Hebrew is עפר מן האדמה, ‘*āpār min hā’ăḏāmāh*, i.e., dust of the earth; the Septuagint translates it as *taking dust from the earth*. But, says Tertullian, with the addition of the best fluid, God coagulated the dust into slime and made something like potter’s clay. Indeed, dry dust is not suitable for molding; therefore, this dust was wet and accordingly slime. Again, *Adama* (from which “Adam” was formed and named) means “red earth.” Whence, many writers pass down the tradition that Adam was created from the red earth, which is in the Damascene territory — not the city of Damascus, but of a certain territory so named, which is next to Hebron. Indeed, the Jews relate this tradition, and from them it has been handed down as being located in Hebron by St. Jerome,³³¹ Nicholas of Lyra, Hugh of St. Victor, Burchard of Mount Sion, Bredembachius, Saligniacus, and van Adrichem.³³² Also they assure us the Valley of Tears is near Hebron, in which they say Adam mourned the death of Abel for 100 years. They confirm this very thing from the Josue 14:15, where it says: “The name of Hebron before was called Cariath-Arbe: Adam the greatest among the Enacims was laid there.” However, the authentic sense of the place name is much different, because Adam was not of gigantic stature but rather of proper height; otherwise he would have been a monster of a man. Therefore, Joannes Lucidus and others who think that Adam was a giant are in error. But now to the point: I certainly would choose to have other older authorities for this tradition besides the frequently legendary material of the Hebrews.

For a moral interpretation of creating man from mud, observe that Jeremiah in Chapter 18 is duly sent by God — and we along with him — to the potter’s house to look at his source material, namely clay, so that he be humbled, and learn and teach that all men are in the hand of God as clay is in the hand of the potter. The philosopher Secundus the Silent, asked by the Roman emperor Hadrian, “What is man?” neatly replied, “Incarnate mind, a phantom of time, a scout of life, a passing wayfarer, a toiling soul.” But Epictetus answered the emperor, “Man is a lamp set in the wind, a guest of the place, an apparition of the law, a tale of calamity, Death’s legal purchase.”

Fourth: The phrase “the breath of life” means, not the Holy Ghost, as St. Philastrius³³³ contended and whose error St. Augustine³³⁴ refutes, but the rational soul itself, which is in man

³³¹ *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*.

³³² *Description of the Holy Land*.

³³³ *Catalogue of Heresies*, Chapter 99.

³³⁴ *The City of God*, Book XIII, Chapter 24.

together with the vegetative and the sensitive.³³⁵ From this, indeed, arises breathing in and out, which is as much a sign as an effect of life. From that circumstance, the soul is called ψυχή in Greek, from the verb ψυχάζω, *I try to obtain the cool*, for by respiring we are made cool. In Hebrew, “soul” is נַשְׁמָה, *nəšāmāh*, and נֶפֶשׁ, *nepēš*, from the root נָפַשׁ, *nāpāš*, i.e. “he took a breath.” For “of life,” the Hebrew is חַיִּים, *hayyim*, that is, “of lives,” because the rational soul of man contains a threefold life, namely, that of plants, of brute animals, and of angels. Others say it means “of lives” because there are two openings of nostrils by which life, that is the breath of air, is drawn in. However, the nostrils are not the breath of lives, but rather its receptacle, as I will say shortly. The words “breath of life” are used because respiration is so necessary for life that we cannot live without it, not even for an instant, says Galen.³³⁶ Hence he states: Asclepiades of Bithynia said that respiration is the source of the soul; Pythagoras, however, claimed it was not the source but rather the strengthening of the soul.

Fifth: From this verse, it is clear that the rational soul is not produced from matter and it is also not from a parent, that is, it is not generated or propagated from the soul of a parent in the same way that light spreads and propagates light, as Tertullian thought and St. Augustine³³⁷ was unsure. For it is certain, as St. Jerome teaches along with all the other Fathers (and here it is the sense of the Church) that the soul is created from without and infused in man by God alone, and not by the angels, as the Seleucians³³⁸ contended. In fact, the clause “God breathed” — or as St. Cyprian reads it, *blew* — “into his face,” means that He breathed into his entire body. It is a synecdoche, for by the face, in which all the vital operations are active, and most especially respiration, we understand the entire body, as it were, from its noblest part.

Therefore, (i) says St. Theodoret, He blew in order to show that it is as easy for God to create the soul as it is for man to blow a breath; (ii) He blew in order for us to understand that the soul was not produced from matter and that it is not from a parent, as Tertullian thought (who for that reason held that the soul, just like God, was corporeal, or better still, cast in a definite visible

³³⁵ Three genera of souls of living beings are the vegetative (possessing the powers of nutrition, growth, and reproduction), the sensitive (possessing sensation), and the rational (possessing intellect and will). “Man’s vegetative and sensitive life is derived from his spiritual soul, which is virtually vegetative and sensitive.” Pohle-Preuss, *Manual of Dogmatic Theology*, Vol. 3, p. 143.

³³⁶ *On the Usefulness of Respiration*, Chapter 2.

³³⁷ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book VII, Chapter 1.

³³⁸ A third-century Gnostic (dualist) sect in Galatia that taught, among other things, that God and matter were co-eternal and the angels made man from the elements of air and fire.

image and colored, because nothing is incorporeal). St Augustine was uncertain what to think but conditionally argued the soul was created by God from the outside; (iii) He blew in order to show that the soul is something divine, the breath of God so to speak, and to show that you should certainly not believe it is a snatched portion of divinity (as Epictetus, Seneca and Cicero seem to have thought),³³⁹ but that the soul is the highest participation with divinity with respect to spiritual nature; (iv) He blew to show that blowing breath and breathing is so necessary for life that we cannot live even a moment without it, whence Galen said,³⁴⁰ “Asclepiades said that respiration is the source of the soul, Nicharchus said it was the strengthening, and Hippocrates said it was the nourishment of the soul.” By blowing out God creates man, as if He had wanted to show that just as He cannot be without man to complete the universe, so man cannot exist without breathing. Finally, when God imparted to man that very breath and soul, He shared Himself as if He had placed His heart in him.

The Hebrew for “into his face” is באפי, *bə’appāw*, which Aquila and Symmachus translate as εἰς μυστήρας, i.e., “into his nostrils,” for respiration, which is the sign of the hidden soul, flourishes in the nostrils. But the Vulgate translates it better as “into his face,” for it was not in the nostrils only but in the entire face, and consequently the soul is in the whole man and shines out, but it does so especially in the face and head. On that account, St. Ambrose³⁴¹ says that the construction of the human body is like the world. Inasmuch as the sky distinguishes itself over the air, and the seas over the lands, which are like the limbs of the world, so we also perceive that the head of our body stands above the other limbs of the body, and is the most pre-eminent of all parts, as the sky among the elements, as the citadel among the walls of a city. For in the citadel resides a kind of royal wisdom. Whence we have the saying of Solomon: “The eyes of a wise man are in his head.” Hence, too, Lactantius³⁴² says: “God Himself placed the head in the highest frame of the body, in which the ruling center of the whole living being would exist. This word [*caput*] was given to the head because, as Varro writes,³⁴³ the senses and nerves [*capiant*] take their beginning from the head [*caput*].

³³⁹ Epictetus - *Dissertation* 1, chapter XIV; Seneca - *Epistle* 92; Cicero - *I Tusculan Disputations* and *I On Divination*.

³⁴⁰ *On the Usefulness of Respiration*, Chapter 1.

³⁴¹ Book VI of his *Hexaemeron*, Chapter 9.

³⁴² *On the Handicraft of God*, Chapter 5.

³⁴³ *On the Science of Word Origins Addressed to Cicero*.

Some have thought that our soul is a part of the divine substance, as if in this verse God is said to have breathed, i.e., to have imparted, part of His breath, spirit, and soul to man. But this is an old heresy and an error of the poets, who say that the soul is “a particle of the divine ‘breeze’” and the ἀπόσπασμα (i.e. the torn-off part) of divinity. So believe Epictetus, Seneca and Cicero.³⁴⁴ “He breathed,” i.e., God *de nihilo* created in man breath, spirit, and soul as an effect of His omnipotence. Hence, St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, Eucherius of Lyons and Nicholas of Lyre define the rational soul in this manner: “The soul is the Godlike breath of life.” The author of *On the Spirit and Soul*, Tome III, spuriously included among the works of St. Augustine, says: “The soul is a kind of incorporeal substance, the partner of reason, fitted to ruling the body.” Cassiodorus says: “The soul is a spiritual substance, created by God, the vivifier of its own body. Seneca says: “The soul is an intellectual vital principle ordered for bliss in itself and in the body.” St. John Damascene says: “The soul is an intellectual spirit, ever living, always in motion, capable of good or evil will.” The author of *On the Spirit and Soul* says: “The soul is the likeness of all things.” Others say: “The soul is a spiritual substance, simple and indissoluble, capable of feeling and changeable in the body.”

Verse 8. AND THE LORD GOD HAD PLANTED A PARADISE OF PLEASURE FROM THE BEGINNING —

“He had planted,” i.e., He had erected and adorned it with plants, trees, and all delights created by Himself.

PARADISE —

Note: “Paradise” is not a Greek word, παρὰ καὶ δεύω, i.e. “I will water,” as the *Suda*³⁴⁵ maintains, or as others do with the phrase, παρὰ τὴν δέισαν πονεῖσθαι, claiming the name comes from the collecting of plants. The word, on the contrary, is Persian, says Pollux, or rather Hebrew: פרדס, *pardês*, for in Hebrew it means a place of delight, from the root, פרה, *pāra*, “he was fruitful,” and הדס, *hăḏas*, i.e., the myrtle tree, as though to say a “garden of myrtle trees,” or a “garden in which myrtle trees are fruitful.” Truly, with its bouquet and pleasant aroma, the myrtle tree refreshes and distinguishes itself above other trees.

OF PLEASURE —

³⁴⁴ Epictetus - *Dissertation* 1, chapter XIV; Seneca - *Epistle* 92; Cicero - I *Tusculan Disputations* and I *On Divination*.
³⁴⁵ 10th Century Byzantine Encyclopedia.

The Septuagint retains the Hebrew word and translates it as “in Eden,” which is the proper name of the place. The translation reflects the Hebrew preposition *bə*, i.e. “in,” and in verse 10 of the Hebrew text, clearly *Eden* is the place name where paradise was (and that will be clearer further below). However, the Vulgate and Symmachus construe *Eden* not as a proper noun but as an appellative. Then it means “pleasure.” For this reason, some derive from the Hebrew word *Eden* the Greek word ἡδονή [hēdonē], i.e., “pleasure.” St. Theodoret³⁴⁶ thinks Adam was formed in Eden, and from *Eden* he was called “Adam,” for he says that Eden means “ruddy.” He is wrong, however. *Eden*, in fact, means “pleasure” in Hebrew, not “ruddy.” Once again, Adam was named from *Adama*, i.e., the red earth from which he was formed. His name did not come from *Eden*. In Hebrew, “Adam” is spelled with the letter *ʾālep̄* א, but “Eden” with the letter *ʾayin* ע.

FROM THE BEGINNING —

That is to say, on the third day of the world, as I said at Chapter 1, verse 11. Therefore, the author of the apocryphal *IV Esdras*³⁴⁷ errs when his explanation claims that paradise was planted before the earth. The Septuagint here translates “to the east,” and it is clear this is with respect to Judæa — for Moses writes and assigns the regions of the world from the relative geographical situation of Judæa — that paradise was to the east, and Adam and men first began to inhabit the eastern zone.

For this reason, St. John Chrysostom, St. Theodoret, and St. John Damascene³⁴⁸ teach that Christians pray facing eastward, in order to remember paradise, from which they were expelled on account of sin, and in order to yearn after the heavenly paradise, of which the earthly paradise is a type and image.

You may ask: What kind of place, and where is paradise?

First, Origen thinks paradise is the third heaven into which St. Paul was caught up. The trees are the angelic Virtues, and the rivers are the waters above the firmament. St. Philo and the Seleucian heretics teach the same, and indeed even St. Ambrose in his book *On Paradise*. But St. Epiphanius, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and others condemn this heretical explanation, for it twists the plain narrative of Genesis into an allegorical fiction. From this St. Ambrose must be excused

³⁴⁶ *Question XXV*.

³⁴⁷ Chapter II, verse 6.

³⁴⁸ *On the Faith*, Book IV, Chapter 13.

because he presupposes the letter of the text and the literal sense, and he only touches upon the allegory of paradise.

Second, others cited in Hugh of St. Victor think paradise was the whole world: the river was the Ocean, from which arose those four well-known rivers. But even this is wrong, for the four rivers issue outside paradise. Again, Adam was expelled from paradise after sin, but Adam was not expelled from the world: therefore, the world was not paradise.

Third, others mentioned in Peter Lombard's *Sentences*³⁴⁹ are of the opinion that paradise is a wholly secret place raised to the sphere of the moon. So think Rabanus Maurus, Rupert of Deutz, and Walafrid Strabo. Or, as Alonso Tostado and Alexander of Hales explain, paradise is elevated above the mid region of the atmosphere, and the water of the Flood did not extend to it. However, in this case, paradise would not be on earth or in heaven. Again, if the opinion were true, paradise would be highly visible and known, just as the sun, moon, and comets are observed by everybody.

Fourth, St. Ephræm,³⁵⁰ following Moses Bar Cephais, thinks our entire earth is girt by the ocean, and that paradise is beyond it in another land and world. But this is also an error, for the four rivers of paradise are on our earth and in the world.

Fifth, Pedro Ciruelo³⁵¹ and Alonso de la Vera Cruz³⁵² are of the opinion that paradise was in Palestine, near Jordan, in the territory of the inhabitants of Sodom, which they argue from Genesis 13:10. Some maintain paradise was in Sri Lanka, others that it was in America. However, these four rivers are neither in Palestine, nor in Sri Lanka, nor in America.

Sixth, St. Bonaventure and Durandus of Saint-Pourçain³⁵³ think that paradise lies close to the equator. For instance, they think that there, where the days are always equal to the nights, one finds an ideal moderate air temperature. But this is indefinite and uncertain, and doesn't solve the problem.

The difficulty of this question hangs on the two rivers, namely the Phison and the Gehon. Whoever might know the whereabouts of these could easily track down the location of paradise from them.

³⁴⁹ *Sentences II, Distinction 17.*

³⁵⁰ In his book *On Paradise.*

³⁵¹ *Paradoxia*, Question 15.

³⁵² *On the Heavens, Speculation 15.*

³⁵³ Commenting on II *Sentences, Distinction 17.*

In the opinion of many Fathers and Doctors, the Gehon is the Nile, and the Phison the Ganges. Such is the view of St. Epiphanius, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Theodoret, Josephus, St. John Damascene, St. Isidore of Seville, Eucherius of Lyons, Rabanus Maurus, Rupert of Deutz and others, whom the Coimbra Commentaries cite and follow³⁵⁴ along with Francis Ribera of Castile³⁵⁵ and St Bellarmine.³⁵⁶

The *first* proof of this view is that the Septuagint at Jeremias 2:18, translates *Gehon* as “the Nile.” Wherefore even now the Ethiopians call the Nile “Guijon,” as Francisco Álvarez reports.³⁵⁷ However, one may reply that Gehon is the name of many rivers, for near Jerusalem there is a streamlet called “Gehon” or “Gihon.” (These two forms are the same thing, for both are the same word in Hebrew, גִּיחֹן, *gîhōwn*) Gihon was where Solomon was anointed King in 3 Kings 1, verses 33, 38, and 45; and 2 Paralipomenon, 32:30.

The *second* proof is that the Ganges properly surrounds the land of Hevilath, i.e., India (as at Genesis 10:29, St. Jerome, and others far and wide teach), where there is the finest gold. More correctly, the Ganges itself, as Pliny reports, is gold- and gem-bearing. Furthermore, the Ganges is called “Phison,” i.e. “multitude,” from the root פִּיּוּס, *pūs*, i.e. to be abundant in growth, to be increased, because ten large rivers discharge themselves into the Ganges. So say Josephus³⁵⁸ and St Isidore.³⁵⁹ In a like manner, the Gehon, i.e., the Nile, circles Ethiopia, or Abyssinia, where Prester John ruled. The flooding of the Nile is also very well known. The Book of Ecclesiasticus 24, verses 35 and 37, attributes this to the Gehon. You will say: How can the Ganges and the Nile, which are very distant from the Tigris and Euphrates, originate with them from the same spring and river? For the Ganges arises in the Caucasus,³⁶⁰ a mountain of India, and the Euphrates and the Tigris in the mountains of Armenia, while the Nile originates from the Mountains of the Moon,³⁶¹ toward the Cape of Good Hope, or preferably from a certain lake of the kingdom of the Congo, as those who traveled in those places in this century have indicated.

³⁵⁴ *Meteorology of Aristotle*, Tract 9, Chapter 10.

³⁵⁵ In his commentary on Amos, VI, verse 44.

³⁵⁶ *On the Grace of the First Man*, Chapter 12.

³⁵⁷ *History of Ethiopia*, Chapter 122.

³⁵⁸ *Jewish Antiquities* II, Book I.

³⁵⁹ *Etymologies*, Book XIII, Chapter 21.

³⁶⁰ Not the mountain system between the Caspian and Black Sea. Here Fr. Lapede refers to the Hindu Kush range, called by the ancients *Caucasus Indicus* (Καύκασος Ἰνδικός), which was located in the region called Paropamisus in classical times.

³⁶¹ Snow-capped legendary source of the Nile in eastern Africa.

However, these sources are different from each other and consequently very far from the river of paradise. This is a truly immense difficulty, in response to which St. Augustine,³⁶² St. Theodoret, Rupert of Deutz and others say that the Ganges and the Nile originate from the earthly paradise, but are hidden in underground channels and courses until they actually break forth in the aforesaid places. They also say it was God's design to hide paradise. In reality, Pausanias³⁶³ and Philostratus³⁶⁴ say that there is no dearth of individuals who think that the Nile was made from the Euphrates buried in the earth, with the Nile advancing afterward above Ethiopia. This opinion aptly answers to Sacred Scripture here in Chapter 2, which makes it known that the four rivers flow forth from one source. And it is no wonder that the Ganges and the Nile were so buried and arise so remotely, for the Caspian sea comes forth from the very remote Arctic Ocean by means of underground channels, as teach St. Basil, Strabo, Pliny, and Dionysius Periegetes.³⁶⁵ Better still, many think that all waters, even the most remote rivers, springs, and waters, originate from the sea and an underground abyss by means of subterranean veins, as I said at Chapter 1, verse 9. Accordingly, from this abyss in paradise first arose an immense river, for God willed it as an adornment of paradise, so that rising from it, as it were, the source of all the rest, it might distribute itself into four rivers. But after the sin of Adam, God buried in the earth this river of paradise, or all of them, or He wished to hide them so that paradise might be the more concealed.

But it seems unbelievable that this river of paradise conceals itself in so great and vast a space, or rather that four rivers lie buried under the earth, and this river of paradise later arises in scattered places. The reason is, as Ptolemy teaches, between the Euphrates and the Ganges lies a distance of 70 degrees of longitude, i.e., more than 4,300 miles. The same can be said of the Nile. Second, these four rivers take their origin in so ordinary a manner from the well-known places already named beforehand that it is immediately evident they originate in those places first and then grow little by little as streamlets run together. Therefore, they do not originate from that one large river of paradise. Third, Brás Viegas³⁶⁶ and other very learned men have remarked that neither India, nor the Ganges, nor other regions or rivers which lie beyond the Persian Gulf, are called in Scripture "Eastern" or "East," but only those that lie on the nearer side of the Persian

³⁶² *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book VIII, Chapter 7.

³⁶³ *Corinthian Geography*.

³⁶⁴ *On the Life of Appollonius*, Book I, Chapter 14.

³⁶⁵ *On the Disposition of the Habitable World*.

³⁶⁶ *Exegetical Commentary on the Apocalypse*, Chapter XI, Section 5.

Gulf, such as Armenia, Arabia, and Mesopotamia. Therefore, the inhabitants of these regions, for instance, the Arabs, the Idumeans, the Midianites, and Armenians, are called “Eastern peoples,” or the children of the East with respect to the Jews, and paradise was in the East, as the Septuagint reads. Fourth, if the Gehon is the Nile, and the Phison the Ganges, paradise therefore embraced all the regions lying between the Nile, the Euphrates, the Tigris, and the Ganges, namely, Babylonia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Media, Persia and many other places. Some allow this, but with little probability, as it seems. For assuredly paradise is called in this verse a garden of pleasure. Who ever saw such a garden? Hence it follows that the Phison is not the Ganges, nor is the Gehon the Nile.

Wherefore, I say that paradise seems to have been situated around Mesopotamia and Armenia.

The *first* proof is that these regions are called Eastern in Scripture, as I have already said.

The *second* proof is that men expelled from paradise first began to inhabit these regions, both before the Flood, as is clear in the case of Cain, who lived in Eden (Genesis 4:16), and after the Flood, inasmuch as these regions were situated near paradise and thus more fertile than other regions, as is clear in Genesis 8 and 11:2.

The *third* proof is that paradise was in Eden, as the Septuagint translates. However, Eden was next to Haran, as is evident from Ezechiel 27:23 and Isaias 37:12. But Haran indeed is in the neighborhood of Mesopotamia, for Haran, or Carrhæ, is a city of the Parthians, where the triumvir Marcus Licinius Crassus was slain.

The *fourth* proof is that paradise is where the Euphrates and Tigris are, as is manifest from verse 14 in this chapter. But these rivers are in Mesopotamia and Armenia. In point of fact, the Euphrates is a river of Babylonia, and the area between it and the Tigris is called Mesopotamia (as one may say the region was placed in the middle of the two rivers).

The *fifth* proof is that these regions are very lovely and very fertile.

The *sixth* proof is that paradise does not seem so very remotely distant from Judæa, just as Mesopotamia is not so very far off from Judæa. To be sure, the Fathers relate that when Adam was expelled from paradise, after having journeyed through a few places, he came to Judæa, and there died and was buried in a mountain that later generations, because it contained the head of the first man, called the Mount of the Skull,³⁶⁷ where the crucified Christ atoned for and expiated Adam’s

³⁶⁷ The Latin here is *mons Calvariæ*, “Calvary,” as we now know it owing to the Douay-Rheims New Testament.

sin. So teach Origen, St. Cyprian, St. Athanasius, St. Basil and others in various works, with St. Jerome being a dissenting exception.

Therefore it is not certain which rivers are the Phison and the Gehon. Still, it is plain enough from Ecclesiasticus 24:35 that they nonetheless still exist. Again, it is not known whether these four rivers originate from the river of paradise or whether in fact the river of paradise only flows into these four or divides itself into them. For Moses only says that this river is divided into four heads. However, he calls the four heads the four rivers themselves, which divide this one river of paradise into four branches as it were, or heads, whether they originate from it and proceed or not. For Moses later seems to explain himself in this way. Pereira, Oleaster, Agostino Steuco, François Vatable, and Cornelius Jansen³⁶⁸ opine that the Phison and Gehon are rivers that grow out of the Tigris and Euphrates as they meet. Regarding that view, note that the Tigris and Euphrates finally come together as one above the Persian Gulf and again are divided and then change their name. Indeed the one emptying into the Persian Gulf is called the Phasis or Phasitigris (which seems to be the Phison), well known in the works of Quintus Curtius Rufus, Pliny the Elder and others. This river encompasses Helvilath, i.e., Chavila, namely Cholataeos, which Strabo³⁶⁹ places in Arabia, next to Mesopotamia. The other river, which here is called the Gehon, surrounds *Arabia Deserta*,³⁷⁰ and it seems to be seeking neighboring places. Here it surrounds Ethiopia, not that region of the Abyssinians that is below Egypt, but that which is in the neighborhood of Arabia. In fact, in Scripture the Midianites and others living close to the Persian or Arabian Gulf are called Ethiopians.

Therefore, paradise seems to have been located in that place where the Euphrates and the Tigris flow together. From that confluence, they are divided and separated into these four rivers. Above, they are in fact the Euphrates and the Tigris, but below they are the Gehon and the Phasitigris, or Phison. Indeed, that these rivers ran together afterward, and again are divided is clearly evident from the more exact world-map plates of Gerard Mercator, Abraham Ortelius and others. Indeed, Mercator, on plate 4 of Asia, manifestly shows that the Tigris and Euphrates run together near Apamia,³⁷¹ and again is divided near the city that is called Asia, and form the

³⁶⁸ *Harmony of the Gospels*, Chapter 143.

³⁶⁹ *Geographica*, Book XVI.

³⁷⁰ “Arabian Desert”, The old Roman name for desert interior of the Arabian Peninsula, still in use up until the early 20th century.

³⁷¹ In the 1859 edition of *From the Talmud and Hebraica — Volume 1*, Bp. Lightfoot, the Anglican rabbinical scholar (1602-1675), cites (p. 140) a Talmudic Gloss: “Apamia is the name of a place in Syria.” Grant’s *Guide to the Ancient*

sufficiently large island Teredon. Finally it flows in on both sides to the Persian Gulf, and there leaves off. In addition, it is probable that in the time of Moses, these rivers were more divided and that afterwards they might have changed their course and flowed together in a higher degree, just as from the time of Moses many other rivers and seas have changed their place and course, as Agostino Torniello has observed. It is clear that up to the time of Moses these four rivers of paradise were divided, since he describes the four as separate, commonly known and proposes them in order that from those verses the Jews would understand where paradise was.

Even though it is not certain where paradise was precisely located, it is nevertheless certain that paradise was *de fide* a corporeal place, situated in some part of our Earth towards the east, as the Septuagint tells us. Again, it is certain that this place was very lovely and most temperate, partly owing to itself and to its own natural position, partly to the special providence of God, which had removed from paradise heat, cold, and any other inclemency of weather: a place, I say, both for men and also for other living things. St. John Damascene, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Alonso Tostado³⁷² deny this, thinking that there would be no four-footed animals in paradise but only humans. Nevertheless, Alonso Tostado allows birds in paradise for their song, and fish in the rivers. However, others far and wide teach the opposite, along with St. Basil³⁷³ and St. Augustine.³⁷⁴ Indeed, the variety and beauty of animals brought great pleasure to man in paradise. Also, everybody knows that the serpent was in paradise: St. Basil says, “In paradise were all kinds of small birds, which to an incredible degree delighted man owing to the beauty of their colors and natural melodiousness as well as to the sweetness of their harmony.

Also in that place were displays of different animals. All, however, were tame, obedient to man, and living harmoniously and peacefully among themselves; they both understood one another and communicated in a sensate manner. The serpent at the time was not dreadful, but mild and tame and did not creep frightfully on the surface of the earth as though it were swimming. Rather it walked, standing on its feet, head aloft and upright.” Note that in the quotation, St. Basil seems to say that in paradise brute animals had reason and human speech; again, note that the serpent moved along not by crawling, but upright. Neither of which seems probable. Equally paradoxical

World (p. 616) notes that in antiquity, Syria was distinguished between “Syria Beyond the River” (i.e., the Euphrates) and “Syria Between the River” (= Mesopotamia). Lightfoot also mentions a Sea of Apamia, and Jastrow’s *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature* references “Apamæa in Babylon.”

³⁷² *Opera Omnia*, Chapter XIII, *Question* 87.

³⁷³ *On Paradise*.

³⁷⁴ *The City of God*, Book XIV, Chapter 11.

is what Rupert of Deutz³⁷⁵ asserts: that by their nature our waters are salty; but just as the liver is the source of the blood, so this spring of paradise is the source of all the sweet waters that are all on earth; and consequently the same spring is the parent and originator of all offshoots, trees, plant buds, and spices.

You may ask whether the locale and the delightfulness of paradise still exist. I answer that it is certain the place exists: it is uncertain as to its delightfulness.

Asserting the claim are St. Justin, Tertullian, St. Epiphanius, St. Augustine, St. John Damascene, St. Thomas Aquinas, Alonso Tostado and others, whom Brás Viegas cites in the work mentioned above: that is to say, they believe that, by the special providence of God, in the time of Noe paradise was preserved intact from the Flood; for although the water of the Flood rose above men's ordinary mountains, as it says in Genesis 7; nevertheless, it did not overtop paradise, or, if it also rose above it, paradise still was not damaged because this is a place of innocence, wherein even now Elias and Henoch live in utmost holiness and sanctity. So say the Fathers already cited. St. Irenæus³⁷⁶ adds that after death all the souls of the just are detained in the terrestrial paradise until Judgment Day in order to go to heaven at that time and see God. But this is the error of the Armenians condemned by the Council of Florence.

Others think, and this is more probable, that paradise existed in primeval delightfulness only up to the Flood. The reason is that when God expelled Adam from it, He placed Cherubim in front of it to guard it. Again, Henoch, it is said, was taken not into the heavenly paradise, but into the earthly paradise (Ecclesiasticus 44:16). But in Noah's Flood, when the waters covered the entire earth for a whole year, these same expositors think that paradise was also overwhelmed, defiled, and destroyed by them. Moses indicates this in Genesis 7:19. In addition, there is the fact that paradise can nowhere be found now, despite the fact that the whole earth, especially around Mesopotamia and Armenia, is clearly known and inhabited. So think Oleaster, Agostino Steuco, Ambrose Catharinus, Benedict Pereira and Cornelius Jansen above, Francisco Suárez,³⁷⁷ Brás Viegas (already cited) and others. To be sure, the waters of the Flood, returning with so much force over the whole year and, as Moses says, going and coming back, covered over all the trees, houses, cities - indeed even the hills - and almost moved asunder the surface of the earth; accordingly, the

³⁷⁵ *On the Trinity*, Book II, Chapters 24 and 29.

³⁷⁶ *Against Heresies*, Book V, chapter 5.

³⁷⁷ *Summa Theologiae*, III part, Question LIX, Article VI, Disputation 55, Section 1.

waters ruined the beauty and splendor of paradise.

In a metaphorical way, paradise is the soul furnished with every variety of trees, i.e., virtues. Hence that creed of Zoroaster: “Seek paradise,” i.e. the whole choir of divine virtues, says Michael Psellus. From the same man is this saying: “The soul is winged; and when the wings fall away, it is borne headlong into the body; then finally as they grow back, it flies back to the heights.” Whereupon, his students asked him, how, with their wings fledging well, they might obtain winged minds. You will water the wings, he says, with the waters of life. Again, they inquired from where they might seek these waters. He answered them by way of a parable: paradise is washed and watered by God’s four rivers. From there you will draw salubrious waters: the name of the river that is from the north means the Good; the one from the west, means Atonement; the one from the east, Light; the one from the south, Piety.

Allegorically, St. Augustine³⁷⁸ and St Ambrose in his book *On Paradise*, say that the Church is paradise. The four rivers are the Gospels. The fruit-bearing trees are the Saints; the fruits are the works of the Saints. The tree of life is Christ, the Holy of Holies, or it is Wisdom, the mother of all glories (Ecclesiasticus 24:41 and Proverbs 3:18). The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the free will, or the test of the transgressed commandment. Again, paradise is Religion in which humility, charity, and sanctity flourish. Hear St. Basil in his homily *On Paradise*, toward the end: “But if you should ponder a place fit for saints, in which all who shone with good works on earth enjoy God’s grace and live in true and spiritual delight, you would not stray from a seemly likeness of paradise.” And so thinks St. John Chrysostom,³⁷⁹ as he discusses the happiness of monks, he compares them to Adam abiding in paradise. See St. Bernard³⁸⁰ and Giralomo Piatti.³⁸¹

In an anagogical manner, the same scholars say that paradise is heaven and the life of the blessed. The four rivers are the four cardinal virtues; to wit, the Ganges is prudence, the Nile temperance, the Tigris fortitude, and the Euphrates justice. See Pierio Valeriano Bolzani [Giovanni Pietro dalle Fosse].³⁸² Or rather, the four rivers are the four qualities of the celestially glorified body³⁸³ (Apocalypse, last chapter, verses 1-2). Thus St. Dorothy rejoiced when she was led to

³⁷⁸ *The City of God*, Book XIII, Chapter 21.

³⁷⁹ *On Matthew*, Homily 69.

³⁸⁰ *To Clerics*, Chapter 21.

³⁸¹ *On the Happiness of the Religious State*, Book III, Chapter 19.

³⁸² *The Hieroglyphics, or Commentaries on the Sacred Letters of the Egyptians*, 21.

³⁸³ *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, Article XI: “The first endowment or gift is impassibility, which shall place them beyond the reach of suffering anything disagreeable or of being affected by pain or inconvenience of any sort. The next quality is brightness, by which the bodies of the Saints shall shine like the sun, according to the words of our

martyrdom by the prefect Fabricius, because she said she was going to her Bridegroom, Whose paradise was spring-like with the delightfulness of every flower and fruit. And when the law-clerk Theophilus laughingly asked her to send him some roses from paradise when she arrived there, she replied, “I shall send them.” Consequently, after she was beheaded, a serving-lad appeared with a little chest of fresh roses (it was in the winter at that, for she suffered her martyrdom on February 6), and he said they were sent to Theophilus by Dorothy from the paradise of her Bridegroom. When he had presented the roses, he vanished from sight. Wherefore Theophilus, having converted to the faith of Christ, died a martyr’s death.

Verse 9. ALL MANNER OF TREES, FAIR TO BEHOLD, AND PLEASANT TO EAT OF —

“And” is put here instead of “or.” Moses, in fact, means that in paradise there were both beautiful and delightful trees, such as cedar, cypress, pine, and other non-fruit-bearing trees as well as fruit-bearing ones fit for eating.

THE WOOD OF LIFE ALSO³⁸⁴ —

Namely, the tree of life. You will ask: What, and of what sort, was this tree?

I say *first*: It is *de fide* that this was a genuine tree, for it is called “wood” by the Hebrews, and the simple and historical narrative of Moses demands this. So affirm all the old writers opposing Origen and Agostino Steuco, who think that the tree of life was symbolic and only symbolically meant both the life and immortality promised to Adam if he obeyed God.

Second: It is called the tree of life, not because it was the sign of life granted by God to Adam, as Peter Becker contends, but “of life,” i.e., enlivening, the cause of life, preserving and prolonging life, namely because this tree extended for a very long time the life of the person eating from it and maintained his life free from diseases and the weakness of old age, healthy, peaceful and delightful; see Benedict Pereira and Franciso Vallés.³⁸⁵ Accordingly, (i) this tree would have made life long-lasting; (ii) it would have made life healthful and robust; (iii) it would have made

Lord recorded in the Gospel of St. Matthew: The just shall shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. To the preceding quality is united that which is called agility, by which the body will be freed from the heaviness that now presses it down, and will take on a capability of moving with the utmost ease and swiftness, wherever the soul pleases. Another quality is that of subtilty, which subjects the body to the dominion of the soul, so that the body shall be subject to the soul and ever ready to follow her desires.”

³⁸⁴ Although the Douay-Rheims translates the phrase “the tree of life also,” the Latin of the Vulgate is *lignum*, “wood.” The translator departed from citing the Douay version here in order to make Fr. Lapede’s explanation clear to the reader. The Hebrew word עץ ‘*éṣ* can mean “wood” as well as “tree.”

³⁸⁵ *Sacred Philosophy*, Chapter 6.

life unchangeable, so that it never might have incurred disease or old age; (iv) it would have made life happy and cheerful, for it would have driven out all sadness and melancholy.

Third: This tree's force and power was not supernatural, and therefore was taken away after Adam's sin, as St. Bonaventure and Gabriel Biel maintain in their commentaries.³⁸⁶ Rather it was natural to this tree, like the healing properties in other fruits and trees. In fact, thereafter, by its own nature and native power, it is called the tree of life. And therefore, after sin this power remained in the tree, and for this reason Adam was barred from it and from paradise after he sinned, as is clear in Genesis 3:22. Such is the opinion of St. Thomas Aquinas, Hugh of St. Victor, and Benedict Pereira.

In paradise, therefore, nothing might have been able to harm or corrupt man abiding in innocence. Man would have had the tree of life as a protection against the action of the elements and the depletion of the radical moisture³⁸⁷ of his body, because the tree would have clearly restored that moisture. Against the violence of demons, he would have had angelic guardianship. Against the attack of wild beasts, he would have had perfect dominion over them. Against the force of men, he would have had paradise. Indeed, if anyone had wished to hurt anyone else, he would have fallen from justice and soon would have been expelled from paradise as happened to Adam. Against the contagion of the air, man would have had the very agreeable temperateness of the atmosphere. Against poisonous plants, fires, and other things that could have by chance hurt or surprised him, he would have had complete prudence in all matters and the foresight to avoid all threats. If he had not used it, i.e. if he had been no longer innocent but imprudent, rash, and culpable, he therefore could have been hurt. In the end, the protection of God would have defended and protected him from injuries on all sides.

You may ask, how might this tree have prolonged man's life? Many think that the fruit of the tree of life, once tasted and eaten, brought immortality to the one eating of it. Indeed, they say that just as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the tree of death and the wages of death, such that once tasted it occasioned the necessity of dying, so the tree of life on the contrary was the reward of obedience, because it brought men from the mortal state over to immortality. Whence

³⁸⁶ Commentaries on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* II, Distinction 19.

³⁸⁷ St Thomas Aquinas (ST, I, Q119, A1, Reply to Objection 3): "The radical humor is said to comprise whatever the power of the species is founded on. If this be taken away it cannot be renewed, as when a man's hand or foot is amputated" (translation by the English Dominican Fathers [Sullivan revision]).

St. Robert Bellarmine³⁸⁸ thinks that men at that time would have only eaten from this tree of life, since they were to be conveyed very shortly after from this life to a state of glory. Favoring this opinion are St. John Chrysostom, St. Theodoret, St. Irenæus, Rupert of Deutz, and all of whom Alonso Tostado cites and follows where he extensively treats all these matters.

First, I say it is more probable that this fruit, once tasted, would indeed have prolonged a man's life for a long time, but it would not have made him absolutely immortal. The reason is that this power was natural for this fruit and was finite, and accordingly had to be consumed in the end by the continuous action of the natural heat in man. Again, this fruit, like any others, was corruptible by its own nature. Therefore, it could not make man wholly incorruptible, but only eaten over and over again would it have further prolonged life in a man. So think Blessed John Duns Scotus, Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, Thomas Cajetan and Benedict Pereira.

Second, I say that the fruit of the tree of life restored man's whole strength (i) by supplying in him original or better natural moisture; and (ii) by stimulating and strengthening the natural heat weakened by continuous activity and engagement with other foods (which even then man ordinarily used, as St. Augustine³⁸⁹ teaches) and by restoring him to his pristine state, or even better, and by preserving and conserving him. Whence if man had eaten of this tree at appointed times, albeit few, he would have not been subject to death or old age. Aristotle,³⁹⁰ therefore, is in error when he tacitly censures Hesiod for saying that the gods who fed on ambrosia were immortal but others who lacked ambrosia were mortal. The reason, he says, is that whatever feeds on food grows old, weakens, and dies by its own nature. Certainly this is patently false in relation to the tree of life, which Aristotle did not know; whence, in Genesis 3:22, Moses here teaches that Adam was expressly expelled from paradise lest, tasting the tree of life, he might live forever. Therefore, the tree of life was able to prolong life forever.

You may say that the natural heat in man is gradually diminished by continuous activity, and by acting on the fruit of the tree of life it had been weakened. Moreover, it seems this weakening cannot be restored by means of food, because it can only be restored by the conversion of food or sustenance into a substance of nourishment. But in that event food is like nourishment and consequently does not have a greater power than nourishment. Therefore, food cannot wholly

³⁸⁸ *On the Grace of the First Man*, Chapter 18.

³⁸⁹ *The City of God*, Book XIII, Chapter 20.

³⁹⁰ *Metaphysics*, Book III, Text 15.

restore man's weakened and diminished strength.

I answer, *first*, that is false to say that food when converted is reduced only to nourishment, implying that it does not have a greater power than that. For we see, once food has been ingested, weak men are soon animated, vigorous, and strengthened.

I answer, *second*, that this fruit of the tree of life was not only food but also medicine of wondrous power, because before it is changed into man's substance, it purifies, revives, and strengthens the body and natural heat. Again, that same food and medicine, after conversion into man's substance, would have preserved the same power and property. Therefore, by reason of this natural power, it would have revived and restored in a higher degree by far the nutritive strength of man, as the action of natural heat and its weakening in the matter of fruit and food had enervated those powers. Such is the view of Luis de Molina.

You may then ask, what kind of eternity was this, which the eating of the tree of life brought? Is it absolute or restricted and respective? Luis de Molina thinks it was absolute because, he says, this tree had always restored man to his pristine vitality. But better is the opinion of Blessed John Duns Scotus, Francisco Vallés, and Thomas Cajetan, who think it was restricted. The reason is that this tree would have prolonged man's life and energy for a few thousand years until God would have transferred him to heaven, which is a certain kind of eternity. Indeed, the Hebrews in common usage call a very long period of time, the end of which man does not discern, עולם, *'owlām*, i.e. something eternal. See Canon 4. Thus in Genesis 6:3, the Lord says, "My spirit shall not remain in man forever (i.e. with reference to the long life span of the first fathers), and his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." Therefore, this tree could not absolutely prolong man's life for all eternity. The reason is that every body consisting of two or more elements is, by its own nature, corruptible, since it is composed of contrary elements in conflict among themselves. However, this very tasty and beautiful tree was a composite body; therefore it was in itself corruptible, and gradually, albeit quite slowly, it would have failed and lost its own original vitality, and finally would have perished, as oak trees, even though they be very sturdy, still die by degrees. Therefore, it could not have preserved man from death and corruption forever. That is to say, it could not give man that which he did not have in himself. And indeed, in this sense what Aristotle said is true: Everything that feeds on food is mortal. Further, the tree of life could not prolong man's life forever, because otherwise it would follow that Adam, had he been allowed to live in paradise and eat of the tree of life after his sin, would have lived absolutely forever. But

this seems unbelievable, both because before he was expelled from paradise, the sentence of death had been imposed on him and because, owing to sin, the body and human nature are so weak and wretched, susceptible to so many diseases, defects and sufferings which wear away strength and gradually lead to death, that at least it is necessary for him to die.

You may say: The fruit of the tree of life would have *always* restored natural heat and radical moisture to its pristine vitality; therefore, it would have always been able to prolong the man's life even for all eternity, if the man had eaten of it as the occasions offered.

I answer that the word *always* in the preceding paragraph must be taken in a restricted way; undoubtedly *always* means, in other words, as long as the complete force and vitality of the tree of life would have lasted. For as the tree aged and passed away, man equally would have grown old and died. Indeed, this is seen in medicated lozenges and some very juicy, animating, and nourishing foods that clearly restore radical moisture and natural heat (especially in the young) and bring people back to their whole self. However, at a definite time, say, until either a man grows old or the power and vitality of food is weakened, it cannot then in fact restore a man's strength as it once did. It is impossible for a man not to weaken gradually and pass away. So it would have been the same with the tree of life, only with this difference: Food and our medications restore human vitality for a short time, but the tree of life would have done it for a long time, for many thousands of years. After those years had come to an end, both the tree and man would have grown old and died. However, God would have forestalled this old age and death by transferring man to heaven and eternal life. Therefore, since God did not want man to live absolutely forever in paradise, but only for a long time, it seems as well that God placed in the tree of life the power of prolonging life, not absolutely forever, but only for a long time. So teaches Blessed John Duns Scotus with his followers.

Finally, the poets spoke of the tree of life, and they imagined its nectar, ambrosia, nepenthe, and moly,³⁹¹ foods of the gods, as it were, which make them immortal, ever youthful, happy, and blessed.

Note that Adam did not taste of the fruit of life, for a little after his creation he sinned and was expelled from paradise, as is clear from Genesis 3:22.

³⁹¹ Nectar = the mythical immortality-conferring drink of the gods; Ambrosia = the mythical food of the gods, which made them immortal; Nepenthe = a drug mentioned in the *Odyssey*, which made people forget their cares; Moly = the herb Hermes gave to Ulysses in the *Odyssey* to counteract the charms of the enchantress Circe.

Symbolically, the wood or the tree of life was a visual symbol of eternity, as is clear from the things that have been said.

Allegorically, the tree of life is Christ, who says in John 15, “I am the vine; you are the branches,” and in John 14, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” Again, the tree of life is the cross of Christ that, erected in the middle of paradise, i.e., the Church, gives life to the world; longing to ascend to it, the Bride therefore says in Cantic of Canticles 7: “I will go up into the palm tree, and I will take hold of the fruit sweet to my palate.” Finally, the tree of life is the Eucharist, which gives life to the soul and body, for by its power we rise up again to immortal life, according to Christ’s word in John 6: “He who eats this bread, he shall live forever.” So, too, is the opinion of St Irenæus.³⁹²

Metaphorically, the tree of life is the Blessed Virgin, from whom life was born —the God-Man, Christ Jesus; and the Virgin herself, as St. Germanus, the patriarch of Constantinople says, is the spirit and life of Christians. Then again, the tree of life is the just man who works the holy works that beget a life of grace and glory, in accordance with that verse of Proverbs 11:30: “The fruit of the just man is a tree of life.” Moreover, the tree of life is itself wisdom, virtue, and perfection, according to a verse on the same theme from Proverbs 3:19: Wisdom is “a tree of life to them that lay hold of her.”

Anagogically, the tree of life is beatitude and the vision of God, which confers a blessed life on the soul, in accordance with that verse of Apocalypse 2:7, “To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God,” and Genesis 22:2.

AND THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL —

You may ask: What kind of tree was this?

First, the Jews say that Adam and Eve were created without the use of reason, like infants, but they received the use of reason from this tree, whereby they knew good and evil.

Second, Josephus³⁹³ thinks this tree had the power of stimulating natural capacity and practical wisdom, and from that it was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In the *Panarion* of St. Epiphanius of Salamis, the Gnostic sect of the Ophites is described to have thought the same thing. They worshipped the serpent instead of Christ from the fact that it was the author of man’s acquiring knowledge, since it persuaded man to eat of the forbidden tree.

³⁹² *Against Heresies*, Book IV, Chapter xxxiv, and Book V, Chapter 2.

³⁹³ *Jewish Antiquities*, Book I, Chapter 2.

Third, St. John Damascene³⁹⁴ thinks that eating of this tree conveyed to man the knowledge of his proper nature.

But I say, (i) that the opinion of Rupert of Deutz, Alonso Tostado, and Benedict Pereira is probable, to wit, that in this verse it was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil by way of anticipation and afterwards was so called from the fact that the serpent promised, albeit falsely and mendaciously, that if man should eat of it, “You shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.” Accordingly, after Adam had eaten of it, God, mocking him, said, “Behold Adam is become as one of Us, knowing good and evil.”

I say, (ii) that it is more probable that this tree was called by God Himself the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, not afterwards, but in this verse now, both because God identified it for Adam as the tree of knowledge of good and evil and so called it by its own name (for there did not exist another name for this tree), and because in verse 17 it is again called by God the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And finally, it is more probable because the serpent seems to have deceived Eve by this name, as if he were saying, “This is called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; therefore, if you eat of it you will have knowledge of good and evil.” Presumably the serpent promised her all-encompassing and divine knowledge, although God had understood by this name a greatly different kind of knowledge.

Wherefore I say, (iii) the tree of the knowledge of good and evil seems to have been called thus by God both from God’s predetermined end itself and as result of the outcome that followed, which God had foreseen. For God had determined, in order to exercise the man’s obedience, to forbid him to eat of this tree: if the man, being obedient, refrained from it, God had determined to increase and conserve his justice and happiness. If, however, in disobedience the man ate thereof, He decided to punish him with death. Therefore, by means of this tree, man learned and knew by experience that which beforehand he only knew by speculation; namely, what the difference is between obedience and disobedience, between good and evil. Accordingly, this tree is called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; that is, the Tree from which man will learn by experience what is good and what is evil. Such is the view of the Aramaic version, St. Augustine,³⁹⁵ St. Theodoret, Eucherius of Lyons and St Cyril.³⁹⁶ Thus, in the same manner of naming a place from

³⁹⁴ *On the Faith*, Book II, Chapter 11.

³⁹⁵ *The City of God*, Book XIV, Chapter 17.

³⁹⁶ *Against Julian*, Book III.

an event that occurred in that location, in Numbers 11:34 that part of the desert of Pharan was called the Graves of Inordinate Desire, because in that very place were slain and buried those who had been exceedingly desirous of flesh meat.

I say, (iv) that with probability, Theoret, Procopius, Moses Bar Cephias, Isidore of Pelusium, and Gennadius³⁹⁷ think this was a fig tree, for immediately after eating of it, Adam, seeing himself naked, sewed together clothing from the leaves of a fig tree, as it says in Genesis 3:7. Indeed, Adam, disconcerted in such manner, seems to have taken these leaves, coverings for his nakedness, from the tree closest at hand. However, there was no tree closer to him than the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, from which he had just eaten; therefore, it was a fig tree.

Others think it was an apple or fruit tree, for in the Canticle of Canticles 8:5, it says, “Under the apple tree I raised thee up.” But the name “apple” is common to all fruits that are softer than the bark of the cork tree, whence the fig is also called an apple. However, nothing can be asserted with certainty in this matter.

The Hebrews teach or rather pass on a tale that, by the command of an angel, Seth took a seed from the forbidden tree and inserted it into the mouth of Adam lying in his grave, and from that seed grew up the tree from which was made the cross of Christ that removed Adam’s sin: for it was fitting that Christ would atone for and expiate Adam’s sin on the same wood wherewith Adam had sinned. The Jesuit Juan de Pineda of Seville³⁹⁸ recounts this fable in great detail.

Mystically and metaphorically, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a visual symbol of the free will, as I have already said. From his bad experience, Adam learned how great an evil is disobedience and sin, just as vice versa the Saints, from Adam’s good experience, learned and still learn how good is obedience and observance of the law. Therefore, this tree was equally a type of obedience and disobedience, as St. Ambrose³⁹⁹ suggests, and about which our fellow Jesuit Benedito Fernandes has collected much concerning this verse. This tree was placed in the middle of paradise, i.e., amidst a very dense forest of trees where it would not always present itself to the eye, so that it would not constantly incite the appetite with its highly visible fruit, as it would have done had it been located on the edge of the grove or all by itself in a remote place, where in full view to one and all an onlooker would have carried it off for himself.

³⁹⁷ *Catena on Genesis of Luigi Lippomano* at Chapter III, 7.

³⁹⁸ *On Deeds of King Solomon*, Book V, Chapter 14.

³⁹⁹ *On Paradise*, Chapter 6.

Verse 10. AND A RIVER WENT OUT OF THE PLACE OF PLEASURE —

In the Hebrew text, *out of Eden*. Paradise was in Eden; so affirms the Septuagint. The Vulgate takes *Eden* not as a proper noun but as an appellative, and then it means “pleasure.” The Septuagint, the Aramaic version, and others translate the Hebrew word *Eden* in Genesis 3:23 as an appellative,⁴⁰⁰ and henceforth this place has been called Eden, because it was delightful and most pleasant.

Elsewhere, a clever writer talks nonsense when he strives to prove, both from others and the similarity of the names, that Eden, and consequently paradise, was in *Edin*, or Hesdin, which is a city in the county of Artois in Northern France.

TO WATER PARADISE —

Either twisting itself by different bends and curves like the Mæander,⁴⁰¹ or watering paradise by hidden openings.

Verse 11. HEVILATH —

Many maintain it is India. However, as I said at verse 8, Hevilath here is rather the region neighboring the province of Susa (the country of the Bactrians), and Persis, lying between Assyria and Palestine, over against Sur.⁴⁰² Indeed, that is the understanding in I Kings 15:7, and Genesis 25:18; it was so named from Hevila, the son the Jectan.

IT COMPASSETH —

Not by going around or by forming a circle, but by gliding over and traversing. Thus in Hebrews 11:37 and Matthew 23:15, the word “to go around” is taken for “to traverse.”

Verse 12. BDELLIUM —

It is a kind of gum or transparent exudation that drips from a black, abundantly oleaginous tree with oak-like leaves and the fruit and nature of a wild fig tree. Such is Pliny’s description⁴⁰³

⁴⁰⁰ For Gen. 3:23, the Septuagint reads καὶ ἐξαπέστειλεν αὐτὸν Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ἐκ τοῦ παραδείσου τῆς τρυφῆς, “and the Lord God expelled him from the garden of delight.”

⁴⁰¹ A winding river in Asia Minor (in today’s western Turkey, where it is known as the Menderes). The name of the river has given us the English verb *meander*.

⁴⁰² Susa = Ancient Persian capital city of the Achæmenids; Bactria = territory now in Afghanistan; Persis = a district in the Persian empire; Sur (Shur) = “a desert that extends between lower Egypt and the desert of Pharan” (*Atlas Biblicus*, 1907).

⁴⁰³ *Geographica*, Book XII, Chapter 9.

and that of Dioscorides.⁴⁰⁴ The most highly praised bdellium is the Bactrian variety. The Hebrew word for “Bdellium” is כַּלְדָּהּ *bəḏōlah*, which François Vatable and Agostino Steucho translate as “large pearl.” The Septuagint translates it as ἄνθρακας, i.e. carbuncle.⁴⁰⁵ In Numbers 11:7 these same translators render it “crystal.” However, it is evident from the very letters spelling the Hebrew words in Genesis and Numbers that *bəḏōlah* is bdellium.

Verse 13. GEHON —

It seems this word comes from the Hebrew גֵּהוֹן, *gōah*, i.e. stomach or breast because it is like a stomach full of dirt and mud. Whence some think the Gehon is the Nile, which lies upon Egypt and makes her fruitful, as it were by its breast. However, I have said what the Gehon is at verse 8.

Verse 14. TIGRIS —

This river is so called from the tiger, a very swift animal, as Rupert of Deutz and Isidore maintain; or rather, as Quintus Curtius Rufus and Strabo hold, from the swiftness of an arrow which it imitates in its course, because the Medes call the Tigris the “arrow.” In Hebrew it is called הִדְדֵּקֶל, *hiddeqel* (from which it is now corruptly called the Tigel), i.e., sharp and light, namely on account of its course, which is very rapid.

EUPHRATES —

Gilbert Générard says the word Euphrates was conflated from the Hebrew הַוַּפְרַת, *hūperat*, from which even now it is called the *P̄arāt*, from the root פָּרָה, *parāh*, i.e., “he made fruitful,” because like the overflowing Nile it waters and makes fruitful. Wrongly do some cited by St. Ambrose derive Euphrates from the Greek εὐφραίνεσθαι, i.e. *by being gladdened*.

Anastasius of Sinai, the patriarch of Antioch under Emperor Justinian, is the author of 11 books or homilies of *Anagogical Meditations* on the work of the six days, which survive in volume I of the *Library of the Holy Fathers*. They must, however, be read with discretion and with a grain of salt, for in them he asserts that the angels were created before the corporeal world. Although at one time many thought that way, nevertheless now it is certain that the contrary holds true; namely, that they were created together with the corporeal world. In addition, he suggests the angels were

⁴⁰⁴ *De Materia Medica*, Book I, Chapter LXIX.

⁴⁰⁵ The deep red garnet stone.

not created in the image of God but only man was, something that is absolutely false. Still, in a mystical way it is true because man alone actually consists of a soul and a body, and consequently he alone possesses the image of God embodied, namely of the incarnate Christ, as He reveals Himself. Moreover, he repeatedly suggests that paradise was not a corporeal place, but must be understood in a spiritual manner. In the literal sense, this is false and erroneous. Anagogically, however, it is true. For this reason, the reader must be mindful of the title of his work, that is to say, these are his anagogical commentaries and allegorical meditations, not literal expositions of Scripture. Thus, at the end of Homily 8, he asserts that the four rivers of paradise, i.e., of the Church, are the four evangelists. In other words, the Euphrates, i.e. “the fertile river” is St. John; the Tigris, i.e., “the wide river” is St. Luke; the Phison, i.e., “the change of the spoken word” is St. Matthew, who wrote in Aramaic; the Gehon, i.e., “the advantageous” is St. Mark.

Verse 15. THE LORD GOD TOOK MAN, AND PUT HIM INTO THE PARADISE —

From this verse and from 3:23, it is clear that Adam was not created in paradise but outside it (many think he was created in Hebron). From there he was transferred to paradise on the same day by God through the agency of an angel in order that he might know he was not a native son of paradise but a settler placed there by God of His own volition, and in order that he might ascribe the place of paradise not to his own nature, as if it were owed to him, but to the grace of God; and owing to that, he was expelled from it on account of sin. This is the opinion of St. Ambrose, Rupert of Deutz, and Alonso Tostado. (Francesco Griffolini of Arezzo in *Questions on Genesis*, pp. 300 and 301, brings forward several other reasons to explain the transfer). However, in verse 21, Eve seems to have been created in paradise.

TO DRESS IT —

Not to procure food, but for worthy exercise, pleasure, and experience, such that he would neither be fatigued nor yield to idleness. Thus is St. John Chrysostom’s opinion.

Note in this verse *first*, the antiquity of agriculture, for it started with man and the world. *Second*, mark its dignity, both because it was established by God and commanded unto Adam, and because Adam, from whom all the most distinguished men descended — Abel, Seth, Noe, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob — and all the most celebrated men of antiquity were farmers.

Paolo Giovio⁴⁰⁶ recounts that when the Grand Seneschal [prime minister] Sergianni

⁴⁰⁶ In his biography of Giacomo Muzio Attendolo Sforza, of the House of Sforza-Cotignolo, Chapter LXXXIV.

Caracciolo, in order to reproach the newness of Muzio's family, brought up the story of the hoe,⁴⁰⁷ he replied to him: "As I see it, we have been on good terms with this lineage of ours since Adam, the first of mortals, dug the earth. But certainly I emerged the much more noble by means of my hoe — something which you cannot rightly deny — than did you by means of your penis and the pen." By that taunt, he indicated that Sergianni had acquired much notoriety by debauchery, and that his father was a lowly legal scribe, and that he had been declared guilty of fraudulently tampering with a forged will.

Third, mark the innocence of agriculture, because, before the other arts, it was entrusted to man while he was innocent in paradise as a harm to no one but beneficial to everyone. Listen to Virgil in Book II of the *Georgics*:⁴⁰⁸

*Oh! all too happy tillers of the soil,
Could they but know their blessedness, for whom
Far from the clash of arms, all-equal earth
Pours from the ground herself their easy fare!*

And again,

*Such life of yore the ancient Sabines led,
Such Remus and his brother: Etruria thus,
Doubt not, to greatness grew, and Rome became
The fair world's fairest, and with circling wall
Clasped to her single breast the sevenfold hills.
Ay, ere the reign of Dicte's king, ere men,
Waxed godless, banqueted on slaughtered bulls,
Such life on earth did golden Saturn lead.*

Listen to Cicero: "Of all things," he says, "from that which we gain something, nothing is better than agriculture, nothing richer, nothing sweeter, nothing more worthy of a free man."

Therefore St. Augustine worthily says, "Agriculture is the most innocent of all the arts; nevertheless Faustus the Manichæan impiously dared to condemn it," because Faustus said that farmers violate God's commandment "Thou shalt not kill," claiming that farmers, by reaping their

⁴⁰⁷ It was storied that the famous soldier of fortune Muzio Attendolo, son of a wealthy farmer and the founder of the Milan-based House of Sforza, began his career after a band of mercenaries discovered him tilling a field.

⁴⁰⁸ Blank verse translation by J. B. Greenough (Boston, Ginn & Co. 1900).

crops, by picking pears, apples, and other plants, deprive them of their life, and for that reason it should be avoided lest we deprive any living thing of life.

Morally, God taught us in this verse that the whole business of our life has been placed, you might say, in agriculture. For just as in the case of created nature, single fruit-bearing trees and seeds need the effort and industry of man, so man needs the care and cultivation of himself. God made this known to man when “He put him into paradise to dress it and to keep it.” He made the lights in the firmament of heaven “so that they would be for signs and for seasons,” in other words, to remind us about the advantageous time for sowing, reaping, etc. Therefore, the land we must continually work by God’s command is the soul. The fruit-bearing plants are sobriety, chastity, charity and the other virtues. The cockles and tares that each one must eradicate are gluttony, extravagance, anger and the other vices. The farmer is man, and the rain shower is the grace of God which supplies and instills on the mind the good sowing; i.e., holy inspiration, enlightenment, and motivation, so that the soul, pregnant as it were from the seeds, may sprout and bring forth the works of the virtues. The winds are the temptations by which the trees, i.e., the virtues, are purified and strengthened. The harvest will be the reward of eternal life. The heat of the sun is zeal, which the Holy Ghost furnishes. Therefore, just as a farmer toils in sowing but rejoices in reaping, so even the just, “they that sow in tears,” by their effort of penance, patience, and exertion, “shall reap in joy.” Again, as the sower patiently awaits the harvest, even so do the just. Whence Ecclesiasticus 6:19-20 says: “Come to her (Wisdom) as one that plougheth, and soweth, and wait for her good (abounding) fruits: for in working (cultivating) about her thou shalt labor a little, and shalt quickly eat of her fruits.” Also St. Paul in Galatians 6:9, writes: “And in doing good, let us not fail, for in due time we shall reap.” On the contrary, the impious who give in to their concupiscence “work iniquity, and sow sorrows,” both present and eternal, as our fellow Jesuit Juan de Pineda of Seville beautifully explains at Job 4:8, Note 4.

AND TO KEEP IT —

Both from the wild beasts that were outside paradise, say St. Basil and St. Augustine, and from the very animals that were in paradise, lest they might harm and defile its beauty and delightfulness.

Verse 17. THOU SHALT NOT EAT —

The Septuagint reads *ye shall not eat*, that is, *you* plural, referring both to Adam

and to Eve, who probably was created before this commandment was issued, as St. Gregory the Great⁴⁰⁹ teaches, even though her creation is narrated after this verse. Indeed, this first commandment of the world was given both to Eve and to Adam. In the homily *On the Prohibition of the Tree*, Volume I, St. John Chrysostom (or whoever the author was) with dramatic brilliance writes:

God gives a commandment in order to prove obedience; He imposes a law in order to search out the man's will. Therefore, the tree was standing in the middle, gauging the man's will. It was gauging whether the man would regard God as threatening, even as he regarded the devil as persuasive. And the man stood between the Lord and the enemy, between life and death, between ruin and safety. On one side, God threatens in order to save him. On the other, the serpent persuades in order to trouble him. On the one hand, severity on God's part holds out life; on the other, flattery on the devil's part holds out death. And assuredly (Ah! the abomination!) God threatens, and He is defied; the devil persuades, and he is heard. With God, there is severity, but it is benign; with the devil, there is flattery, but it is injurious.

And a little later we read: "Indeed it was most worthy that the man should obey God, Who had commanded him to obey all things; he should serve God, Who had made him the overlord of the world. He should struggle with the foe in order to overcome the enemy. And finally, he should receive recompenses as God grants. For virtue becomes dull where the contrary is wanting. Besides, powers are strengthened by frequent exercise." And a little later he says: "Adam was not vigilant so as to be on guard against the serpent's malice. He was guileless; he was not clever against the devil. He was of the same mind both with the devil who was inducing him and the Lord Who was threatening him, and he lost the life that he had, and received death, of which he was ignorant."

THOU SHALT DIE THE DEATH —

I.e., thou shalt incur the sentence and necessity of certain death. Whence Symmachus translates the phrase as *θεντὸς ἔσῃ*, i.e., *thou shalt be mortal*. St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and St. Theodoret read this verse in the same way.

⁴⁰⁹ *Moral Reflections on the Book of Job*, Book XXXV, Chapter 10.

Note: In this verse, God threatens a disobeying Adam with death, not only a temporal death of the body, but also a spiritual and eternal death of the soul in hell, and it is certain and infallible. Indeed, this is what the redundancy “thou shalt die the death” means: thou shalt die most certainly

Therefore, with respect to his body, the sinning Adam directly incurs the necessity of death, but with respect to his soul he incurs death actually and in reality. Hence it is clear that death was not natural to man in the state in which he was created by God, as Cicero and the philosophers maintained — and the Pelagians, too — but it was the punishment for sin, as the Council of Milevum defined, Chapter I, and St. Augustine teaches.⁴¹⁰ For although by keeping in view the nature and contrary elements from which man was made, he should have been subject to death and would have been mortal; nevertheless, by keeping in view God’s decree, assistance, and perpetual conservation, man could not have been able to die and would have been immortal had he not sinned. Whence Peter Lombard⁴¹¹ teaches that in paradise man had “the ability not to die” because man was able not to sin and therefore not to die; in heaven man will have the “inability to die” because in that place there will be the impossibility of dying, owing to the body’s glorification and the gift of impassibility; in this life after the Fall, man has “the ability to die and the inability not to die,” because there exists in him the necessity of dying. Therefore we are born condemned to death. Remember, Man, that thou shalt die the death, and it will happen shortly. Historians tell us that Xerxes, while he covered the earth with his army and the sea with his fleets, gazing upon the whole of his vast array from a lofty position, groaned and wept, saying again and again, “Of all these men here, no one will still be alive after 100 years!”⁴¹²

As he was about to die, Saladin, the king of Egypt and Syria who around 1180 took the Holy Land away from the Christians, ordered that a banner with his burial shroud be carried through all his camp and that a herald proclaim, “Of all his empire, this alone is what Saladin, ruler of Syria and Egypt, will now take with him.”

Therefore, in a parable found in *Barlaam and Josaphat*, Barlaam elegantly and fittingly compares death to a unicorn that unremittingly pursues a man. The man flees, and while in flight he falls into a pit, and by chance grabs hold of a tree at which two mice were gnawing. At the bottom of the pit was a fiery dragon, its mouth agape to swallow the man up. The man saw these

⁴¹⁰ *On Merit and the Forgiveness of Sins and the Baptism of Infants*, Book I, Chapter 2.

⁴¹¹ *II Sentences*, Distinction 19.

⁴¹² According to one ancient estimate, Xerxes had 2,000,000 men and 4,000 ships.

things, but foolishly concentrating on a little honey that was dripping from the tree, forgets all peril. The unicorn catches up to him; the mice eat away at the tree, it falls, and the dragon seizes and devours the man. The pit is the world; the tree is life, and the two mice are day and night. The fiery dragon is the maw of hell, the drop of honey is lust. So says St. John Damascene in Chapter XII of his *Barlaam and Josaphat*.⁴¹³

Verse 18. HE ALSO SAID —

He had also said before, on the sixth day. Although Origen, St. John Chrysostom, Eucherius of Lyons, and St. Thomas Aquinas⁴¹⁴ think that in this verse Moses is preserving the chronological order of his narrative, and therefore Eve was made after the sixth day of the world, nonetheless it is far more reasonable to say that in this verse Moses, as in the whole chapter, is making a restatement, and consequently Eve, as well as Adam, was created on the sixth day. *First*, because in verse 2, God is said to have completed His work in six days and to have ceased from all work on the seventh day. *Second*, because in case of the other animals, birds, and fish, just as on the fifth and sixth days God created males, even so he created females. *Third*, because in Genesis 1:27, on the sixth day, in which Adam was created, Moses expressly says, “male and female He created them,” namely, Adam and Eve. Therefore, in this chapter he meant to narrate more fully by way of restatement that just as there was the formation of man, so there was the formation of woman, a fact that he had passed over cursorily in three words in Chapter 1. Such is the opinion of Cajetan, Lippomano, Pereira and St. Bonaventure.⁴¹⁵

IT IS NOT GOOD FOR MAN TO BE ALONE —

Because if Adam were alone, the human race would have died with him, and also because man is a social animal. Therefore, a woman is necessary for the propagation of children. After mankind’s perpetuation was achieved and after the world was already filled with human beings, it began to be good for a man not to touch a woman, as St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7, and spiritual eunuchs started to be praised (cfr. Matthew 19:12). Moreover, praise and a noble reward was promised for one’s continence, both by Isaias and by Christ and the Apostles. Thus says St. Jerome in *Against Jovinian*, and St. Cyprian in his book *On the Behavior of Virgins*. There St. Cyprian

⁴¹³ St. Barlaam and St. Josaphat share a feast day in the Roman Martyrology on November 27.

⁴¹⁴ ST, I, Q73, A1, Reply to Objection 3.

⁴¹⁵ In II, Distinction 18, Question II of his commentary on the *Sentences*.

says, “God’s *first* authoritative decree commands humans to increase and to propagate; His *second* counsels continence. When the world was still uncultivated and unpopulated, an abundance of fertility was produced, our numbers were enlarged, and we increased for the augmentation of the human race. Inasmuch as now the world is completely filled, those who are able to embrace continence, living in the manner of eunuchs, are castrated for the kingdom of heaven.”

Note the word *alone* in verse 18. From this it is clear that they err who said — grounding their opinion on what was written in Chapter 1, viz. “Male and female He created them” — that God created man and woman at the same time, but in a way such that they had been joined by their sides, yet afterwards He separated them. Indeed, Scripture says that Adam was alone and that Eve was not separated from Adam, rather it teaches that she was entirely made from Adam’s rib, that is to say, when God brought her forth from him.

LET US MAKE HIM A HELP LIKE UNTO HIMSELF —

“Unto himself,” i.e. “unto *him*.” For the phrase “like unto himself,” the Hebrew is כנגדו, *kəneḡdōw*, which *first* means, *as if before his eyes*, so that the woman be plainly present to the man and a companion as a remedy and solace for his solitude. Again so that the woman be at hand for the man, so that she help and support him in all things. Whence the Aramaic version translates this sentence as *let us make for him a prop, which may be in his presence*.

Second, *kəneḡdōw* can be translated *over against*, or *opposite to him*, i.e., placed opposite and corresponding to him. Accordingly, the Vulgate clearly translates the phrase as *like unto himself*, namely in nature, size, speech, etc. Indeed, woman is like man in all these aspects. Furthermore, woman is as a help for man: for the propagation and upbringing of offspring; for governing the family; as an alleviation for cares, sorrows, and labors; and to support the other necessities of life. For many individuals, sin transforms this help into vexation, contention, and quarrels. Whence Cato said that woman was an evil necessity.

Verse 19. HAVING FORMED OUT OF THE GROUND ALL THE BEASTS OF THE EARTH, AND ALL THE FOWLS OF THE AIR —

The word *fowls* refers to the phrase *having formed* but not to the phrase *out of the ground*, for fowls were not formed out of the ground but out of the water, as I said at Chapter 1, verse 20. Moses, in fact, briefly narrates many things in a few words by anacephalæosis [recapitulation or summation of known facts]. Therefore, his words ought to be explained in that regard, for from

what was narrated beforehand, everyone knows what he has in mind.

HE BROUGHT THEM TO ADAM —

“He brought,” not by an intellectual vision, as Cajetan maintains, but in reality, and that was done by the agency of angels or by means of a disposition and movement of an image and an impression by Himself on the disposition of each animal. So says St. Augustine⁴¹⁶ and others in many places.

THE SAME IS ITS NAME —

The name is becoming to its nature, which is to say, Adam gave to each animal a suitable name that expressed the nature of each one. So says Eusebius.⁴¹⁷ Furthermore, these names were in Hebrew, for this was the language given to Adam, as is evident in verse 23, and Chapter 4, verse 1.

In this passage, behold Adam’s wisdom, whereby he notes the nature of each animal and imposed on them corresponding names. Observe the employment of his dominion over the animals, for he imposes a name on them as if they were his subjects and his private property. God did not bring the fish before him because fish cannot live naturally out of water. Wherefore, Adam did not impose names on them at this point, but their names were given to them afterward.

Verse 20. BUT FOR ADAM THERE WAS NOT FOUND A HELPER LIKE HIMSELF —

That is to say, Adam was alone with the animals, and Eve had not yet been created, nor another human being, with whom he might be able to share his life. Accordingly, it seems that Adam imposed names on the animals before the creation of Eve.

Verse 21. THE LORD GOD CAST A DEEP SLEEP UPON ADAM —

The Hebrew word for “a deep sleep” is תרדמה, *tardēmāh*, i.e., a heavy and profound sleep, which Symmachus translates as καρόν [*karon*: torpor, unconsciousness, stupor], but the Septuagint better renders it as ἔκστασις [*ekstasin*: distraction of mind, illusion, entrancement].

⁴¹⁶ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book IX, Chapter 14: “It is not to be believed that [God led the beasts and birds to Adam] as hunters and fowlers track down and drive any living things they capture into nets, or that a voice issuing an order from a cloud with words that rational souls, upon hearing them, are wont to understand and obey. Beasts or birds did not receive the power to do this; nevertheless, they obey God in accordance with their own nature, not by the will’s rational faculty of decision, but as He, Who is not moved in time, moves all things in their appropriate times through the ministry of angels, who understand in His word what must be done in that time.”

⁴¹⁷ *Preparation for the Gospel*, Chapter 4.

Whence it is clear that not only was Adam cast into a sleep lest he should feel his rib taken from him and be terrified and suffer pain, but also together with the sleep he was carried off into a state whereby his mind was not only loosed and free from the functions of the body and the senses in a natural way, but was so divinely elevated that it saw the things that were being transacted and knew in a prophetic spirit the mystery signified by them. He saw, I say, with his mind's eye, the rib removed from him and Eve formed from it; and by this act marriage was signified, both his natural marriage with Eve and the mystical marriage of Christ. Indeed, this is the meaning of Adam's words in verse 23 and of St. Paul in Ephesians 5:31. So says St. Augustine⁴¹⁸ and St. Bernard in his sermon *On Septuagesima*.

There are those who say that Adam saw the essence of God in this trance. Richard of Middleton⁴¹⁹ leans to this view, and St. Thomas Aquinas does not reject it.⁴²⁰ However, the contrary is far truer, to wit, neither Adam, nor Moses, nor Paul, and likewise no man in this life has seen the essence of God, as I said at 2 Corinthians 12:4.

Adam was a prophet and a mystic. Note Adam received from God the infused knowledge of all natural things, and based on that knowledge he imposed a name on each animal, as I said at verse 19. Nevertheless, he did not receive knowledge of future contingencies, or of the secrets of the heart, or of the number of individuals, such that he would know, for instance, how many sheep and how many lions there were in the world, or how many grains of sand were in the sea. In an equal fashion, Adam received for himself infused faith and knowledge of supernatural things, such as of the Most Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of Christ (but not of his own future fall), and the fall of the angels. In other words, he received infused knowledge of everything to be done and to be avoided. Finally, he attained the highest contemplation of God and the station of the angels. So Benedict Pereira holds, deriving his opinion from St. Augustine and St. Gregory the Great.

Allegorically, St. Augustine⁴²¹ says: "Adam sleeps so that Eve be made; Christ dies so that the Church be created. As Adam sleeps, Eve is made from his side. At Christ's death, His side is pierced by a lance so that the Sacraments, wherewith the Church is made, overflow."

HE TOOK ONE OF HIS RIBS —

Note *first*, in opposition to Cajetan, this is not said figuratively, but really as it sounds. So

⁴¹⁸ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book IX, Chapter XIX and in detail in *On John*, Tract 9.

⁴¹⁹ In his commentary on II *Sentences*, Distinction 23, Article 2, Question 1.

⁴²⁰ ST, I, Q94, A1.

⁴²¹ *Sentences*, no. 328.

teach the Fathers and exegetes everywhere.

You will say: Therefore, Adam was deformed before the removal of this rib, or certainly after it was removed he remained crippled, as he was mutilated with respect to his rib. Ambrose Catharinus answers that in place of this rib, God restored to Adam another rib with flesh. This is true because Moses distinctly says, “He took one of his ribs, and filled up” not a rib, but “flesh for it.”

Hence, *second*, and better, St. Thomas Aquinas and others answer that this rib of Adam’s was like semen, which is not needed by the individual but is necessary for the generation of offspring. For in an equal fashion this rib of Adam’s, inasmuch as it was unnecessary to him as a private person, was nevertheless necessary to him to the extent that he was the head of nature and the seed-plot of all men, from whom both Eve and other human beings were begotten. Indeed, Eve could not be begotten through semen, as offspring now are produced. Therefore, God determined that she be begotten from Adam’s rib, for a reason to be detailed presently.

Third: God seems to have removed from Adam, along with the rib, the flesh adhering to the rib, for Adam himself says in verse 23, “This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.” Therefore, Eve not only was formed from Adam’s rib bone but also from the flesh adhering to the rib.

Fourth: From this fleshy rib, as though it were a foundation, God, by mixing it in with other matter, either by creation as St. Thomas Aquinas maintains, or more correctly, from the earth and the surrounding air (for after the first true creation of the six days, God produced no matter anew), formed a woman with his marvelous handiwork, just as He formed Adam from clay. Whence the Arabic version translates the verse as *He made the rib removed from Adam grow a woman*, i.e. into a woman. This is not an error of syntax but rather a characteristic of the Arabic language. The reason is the Arabs lack the preposition *into*, which signals a change or movement to a place. Whence they say, *He went the city*, i.e., into the city. *He changed the water wine*, i.e., into wine. *He made the rib grow a woman*, i.e., into a woman.

Fifth: from Genesis 2:22, it seems conclusive that God took this rib from the sleeping Adam to another place a little ways distant and there constructed Eve from it and filled her with knowledge and grace, as He had filled Adam; and what is more, in that place He conversed with Eve. Then, after Adam had been roused from his sleep, He led Eve to him as to a bridegroom in order that he might join them in indissoluble marriage; i.e., one man to one woman, and remove

all polygamy as well as divorce. From the point of time at which the wondering Adam had seen in his ecstasy the rib taken from himself and Eve formed from it, he cried aloud, saying, “This is now bone of my bones,” which is to say: This Eve was made from one of my bones in order that she be my dearest and most closely connected bride. For the reason that Eve was made from Adam’s side and rib was so that God might teach us how great the love between spouses must be, and how holy, tightly bound and indissoluble marriage must be. Spouses, as they are, so to speak, one bone and one body, so they ought to have as it were one soul and will in order that there be, one might say, one soul for both, not in two bodies but in one and the same bone and body cut into two parts.

Listen to St. Thomas Aquinas:⁴²²

It was fitting that in humankind the woman was formed from the man, rather than the female being made from the male as in the other animals. *First*, naturally, in order that a certain dignity be retained for the first man in this regard: just as God is the principle of the entire universe, the first man, inasmuch as he was made according to the likeness of God, was the principle of his entire species. For this reason, Paul says in Acts 17 that God made the entire human race from one man. *Second*, in order that the man might love the woman more completely, and cling to her more inseparably, seeing that he knew she was made from him. Whence it says in Genesis 2:23-24, *She was taken out of man: wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife*. This was of the greatest necessity with respect to the human race, in which the male and female remain together for all their lives, something that does not happen in other animals. *Third*, because, as the Philosopher⁴²³ says: In mankind, male and female are joined together, not only on account of the need to reproduce, as in other animals, but also on account of domestic life, in which there are individual tasks for the man and the woman, and in which the man is the head of the woman. For that reason, woman was fittingly formed out of the man, as out of her principle. *Fourth*, there is, moreover, a sacramental reason, for this symbolizes that the Church takes her beginning from Christ; whence the Apostle says at Ephesians 5:32: “This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the church.”

⁴²² ST, I, Q92, A2.

⁴²³ Common epithet for Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VIII.

And in Article 3, he says:

It was fitting that the woman was formed from the rib of the man. *First*, to be sure, to signify that there ought to be a social union between man and woman, for woman ought not to rule over man; and therefore, she was not formed from the head. Neither should man look down upon her as one subject to him like a slave, and therefore she was not formed from his feet. *Second*, her formation from the rib was owing to the sacrament, because from the side of Christ sleeping on the cross flowed the sacraments, i.e. blood and water, from which the Church was established.

Additionally: In making Adam and Eve, God intended to imitate His own generation and spiration,⁴²⁴ for just as He generated the Son from eternity, and from the Son He spirated the Holy

⁴²⁴ As background for the reader, from St. Thomas, On the Power of God, Question 10: "... The Son says (John 8:42): From God I proceeded and came. Again it is stated (John 15:26) that the Spirit of truth proceedeth from the Father. Therefore there is procession in the divine persons.

I answer that in us intellectual knowledge originates in the imagination and senses which do not transcend continuous matter. For this reason we take the terms that apply to continuous matter and transfer them to whatsoever we grasp with the intellect. Take, for instance, the word distance which is applied first to place and is afterwards transferred to any difference of forms: wherefore all contraries of any genus whatsoever are said to be the most distant... In like manner the term procession was first employed to signify that local movement whereby a thing passes from one place through intermediate places to an extreme place in an ordered manner: and thence it is transferred to denote the order between any two things, one of which issues from or succeeds the other. Hence we apply the word procession to all kinds of movement: for instance, we say that a body proceeds from whiteness to blackness, or from a great to a small quantity or from non-being to being, and vice versa: and in like manner we use the word procession to indicate the emanation of one thing from another; thus we say that the ray proceeds from the sun, and the operation or even the thing produced from the operator; thus the thing made by a craftsman is said to proceed from him, and the thing generated from the generator, and in a general way we designate any such order as a procession. Now operation is twofold. There is an operation that passes from the operator into something extrinsic, as heating passes from fire into wood: this operation is not a perfection of the operator but of the thing operated, since the fire gains nothing by heating, whereas the thing heated acquires heat. Another operation does not pass into something outside but remains in the operator, such as understanding, sensation, willing and the like. These operations are perfections of the operator: for the intellect is not perfect except by understanding actually, and the senses except by sensing actually. The first kind of operation is common to animate and inanimate beings: whereas the second is proper to animate beings... In respect of both kinds of operation, procession is found in creatures. In regard to the first kind we say that the thing generated proceeds from the generator and the thing made from the maker. With regard to the second kind we say that words proceed from the speaker, and love from the lover. And we attribute both kinds of operation to God, when we say that He creates, preserves and governs all things. Nor by this do we signify that any perfection accrues to God by such operation, but rather that the creature acquires perfection from the divine perfection. We attribute the other kind of operation to God when we ascribe Him as understanding and willing, whereby we indicate His perfection. For He were not perfect did He not understand and will actually: and for this reason we acknowledge Him to be living. In respect of either operation we attribute procession to God. As regards the first we speak of divine wisdom or goodness as proceeding to creatures, as Dionysius says (Div. Nom. ix), and of creatures as proceeding from God. As regards the second we acknowledge in God a procession of word and love; and this is the procession of the Son from the Father (for the Son is the Father's word) and of the Holy Spirit who is His love and life-giving breath (spiritus). Hence St. Athanasius in a discourse pronounced in the Council of Nicea says that the Arians, by maintaining that the Son

Ghost, so in time He produced Adam in His own image, and thus generated him as if a son; and from him He produced Eve, who was Adam's love, just as the Holy Ghost is God's love.

Finally, St. Basil, St. Ambrose, St. Thomas Aquinas, Benedict Pereira and others teach that Eve was made in paradise. This favors the narrative sequence of Scripture. Therefore, it seems that following his creation, Adam was immediately transferred to paradise, and a little after, Eve was formed from his rib. Accordingly, not long after Adam's transfer, Moses subjoins the narrative of the formation of Eve from Adam.

Therefore, Ambrose Catharinus, who asserts that Eve was produced on the seventh day, not on the sixth, is in error. Cajetan, who thinks that Adam and Eve were made together in the same instant of time, is also in error.

Verse 23. THIS NOW IS BONE —

Which is to say, "Begone from me the living things brought to me beforehand! They do not please me, they do not suit me because, unlike in physical form and inclining to the ground with their head face downwards, they are devoid of speech as well as reason. This Eve is very like me, sharing reason, judgment, conversation, and speech and, most important of all, a portion of my flesh and bone." So writes Martin Delrio.

The Talmudists, as cited in Alonso Tostado, speak of Adam's having another wife before Eve, by the name of Lilith. She was made from the slime of the earth and he lived with her for 130 years, during which time he was excommunicated on account of eating the forbidden apple. And in all that time, they say, he did not beget from her men but rather demons. Then he received Eve made from his own rib and from her he procreated men. These are their insane musings by which they are forced to confess themselves to be the brothers of demons since their father Adam had sired demons.

Therefore, the word *now* does not refer to an earlier wife, but partly to living things, as I said, and partly to Eve, which is to say, "This woman was thus formed now, i.e., in this first set of circumstances, namely from a man: for henceforth none of the women that will exist in the future will be generated in this manner; but any woman at all will be procreated by a man and a woman through natural generation. So writes St. John Chrysostom on this verse in Homily 15.

and Holy Spirit are not consubstantial with the Father, seemed in consequence to say that God is not a living and intelligent being, but dead and unintelligent."

For a symbolic interpretation, in his panegyric *On Julitta*, St. Basil says, referring to the words and attitude of the matron Julitta, who was condemned to the flames on account of the faith: “The Creator made woman as capable of virtue as is a man. The reason is that in creating woman, not only was man’s flesh assumed but also bone of his bones, the result being that we women ought to render steadfastness of faith and constancy to the Lord no less than a man; likewise we should show patience in adversities. Comforting the wailing matrons with these words, she leapt onto the lighted pile of wood, which, like a bridal bed glowing in splendor, having enveloped St. Julitta’s body, destined her soul for heaven indeed, yet, with notable honor, it kept her venerable body unscathed for her kith and kin, and no part of it was injured. In fact, at the burial of this blessed woman, the ground discharged water to such an extent that the martyr calls to mind the image of a very loving mother by gently feeding the city’s inhabitants like a wet-nurse with a certain quantity of milk, so to speak, abundantly gushing forth for the use of all.”⁴²⁵

SHE SHALL BE CALLED *VIRAGO*, BECAUSE SHE WAS TAKEN OUT OF *VIR*⁴²⁶ —

The Vulgate does not match the force of the Hebrew word, and, what is more, it is clear from this passage that Adam spoke in Hebrew. To be sure, *virago* does not signify nature or sex but rather a manly strength and mind in a woman. However, the Hebrew word נִשְׂאָה, *’iššāh*, signifies the nature and sex of a woman because it is derived from נִשָּׂא, *’iš*, i.e., from *man*, with the Hebrew feminine suffix *hē* [ן] added, which is to say, “She shall be called *vira* [feminine gender as opposed to the masculine *vir*, man]” — as they spoke in Old Latin according to Sextus Pompeius Festus — “because she was taken out of the *vir*.” According to St. Jerome, Symmachus translated this in his Greek version as “ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός [‘out of the man’] He made ἡ ἄνδρις [‘the woman,’ feminine of ἀνὴρ, ἀνδρός, ὁ, ‘male human being’].” Theodotion translates this verse as “she will be called ‘assumption’ [*assumptio*] because she was taken out [*sumpta est*] of man.” The reason is that he

⁴²⁵ St. Julitta, a wealthy Christian widow from Cæsarea, refused to offer a sacrifice of incense to Zeus, for which the judge condemned her to die at the stake. “She was led to the fire, walked boldly into it, and was killed, it would seem, by the smoke stifling her, for her body was drawn out dead before the flames reached it. Julitta was buried by her fellow Christians, and St. Basil says...of her body, ‘It enriches with blessings both the place and those who come to it’” (*Butler’s Lives of the Saints: Complete Edition*, vol. III, p. 214).

⁴²⁶ *Virago* and *vir* are the Latin words found in the Vulgate for “woman” and “man” respectively, representing a not entirely successful attempt to reproduce the assonance of the Hebrew (*’iššāh*, *’iš*). In Latin, *virago* means “a woman having the qualities of a man; a physically strong woman; a warlike or heroic woman” (Glare’s *Oxford Latin Dictionary*); *vir* is the Latin word for “man” as an adult male person. It is a happy circumstance of uniquely English word formation that our language can replicate the Hebrew without taxing its idiom. The Septuagint makes no effort to imitate the effect.

derives *'iššāh* from the root נשג, *nāsā*, i.e. “he assumed, he bore, he carried.” However, the other translations provided earlier are authentic.

Symbolically and elegantly, Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra notes that the contracted name of God, ה, *iāh* [or *yāh*] is contained in the word נשא, *'iššāh*. God is the founder of marriage, and as long as His name remains in marriage — and it remains as long as spouses fear God and mutually love each other — God will be present in and bless the marriage. But if they hate one another and forget God, then the spouses will cast away that name. Therefore, with the Hebrew letters *yod* [י] and *he* [ה] removed, of which the word ה is composed, all that remains of נשא, *'iš*, and נשא, *'iššāh*, i.e. all that remains of the of the Hebrew words for “man” and “woman,” is שש, *ēš ēš*, i.e., “fire and fire,” the fire of quarrels and trouble in this life, but eternal fire in the next.

Verse 24. WHEREFORE A MAN SHALL LEAVE FATHER AND MOTHER —

These are not the words of Moses, as John Calvin maintains, but of Adam, or rather of God, Who confirms Adam’s words, and from them He produces the law of matrimony and ratifies it by His decree. Indeed, in Matthew 19:5, Christ ascribes these words to God. This, therefore, is the law and union of wedlock, that, if the circumstances demand, the husband is obliged to leave his father and mother for the sake of his spouse. Understand this to apply to cohabitation and the companionship of life, for in the equal case of famine or another similar necessity, he must come to the assistance of his father and mother, as it were to the sources of his life, rather than his spouse, as St. Thomas Aquinas teaches.⁴²⁷

AND SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE —

The Septuagint translates the verb as προσκολληθήσεται, which Tertullian aptly translates as *will be cemented*. For the Hebrew word קבץ, means a very firm union. Thus Sara was cemented to Abraham, Rebecca to Isaac, Sara to Tobias, Susanna to Joakim. Also look at the examples of the Gentiles: Theoxena, the wife of Agathocles, the king of Sicily, did not allow herself in any way to be torn from her sick husband, saying, “by marrying, I entered into a partnership not only of his good fortune but of all his fortune, and I would willingly purchase at the risk of my own life the opportunity to receive the last breath of my husband.”

Hypsicratæa, the wife of Mithradates VI, the king of Pontus, followed her defeated and fleeing husband in all his misfortunes.

⁴²⁷ ST, II-II, Q26, A11, Reply to Objection 1.

Worthy of memory is the example of the Spartan women who, after exchanging their clothes, freed their captive husbands and took their places as prisoners.

In such a manner did Penelope cling to Ulysses. Listen to the poet:

*To Ithaca Ulysses' bride would pass;
Her father, though, preferred her to remain
With him at Sparta; troubled stood the lass
Between her sire's and her husband's claim:
She sits with veiled eyes and hidden face —
Of modesty a sure and certain sign,
By which her father knew his second place.
To Modesty he then set up a shrine.⁴²⁸*

Celebrated was the example of the Roman Tiberius Gracchus the Elder, after two snakes were caught in his bedroom. When the seers replied that Tiberius or his wife Cornelia would live depending on the sex of the snake that was killed, Gracchus said, “Kill mine, for my Cornelia is young and can still bear children.” This was to spare his wife and to be mindful of the common weal, still always acting the part of the good husband, whom the ancients regarded as a great man in the Republic.⁴²⁹

Dido, the sister of Pygmalion, sailed to Africa with a great store of gold and silver. There she built Carthage. When Iarbas, the king of Libya, sought her hand in marriage, after erecting a funeral pyre in memory of her former husband Acerbas, she threw herself onto it, preferring to burn rather than marry another. A chaste woman built Carthage; in return, the same city stopped

⁴²⁸ From the 16th-century *Book of Emblems* by Andrea Alciati. *Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities* (1963) summarizes the Greek legend as follows: Icarius of Sparta “gave his daughter Penelope in marriage to Odysseus [Ulysses], King of Ithaca, but he was so tenderly attached to her that he wished her husband to settle at Lacedæmon [Sparta]. Odysseus refused; and when he saw the earnest petitions of Icarius, he told Penelope, as they were going to embark, that she might choose freely either to follow him to Ithaca or to remain with her father. Penelope blushed in silence, and covered her head with her veil. Icarius, upon this, permitted his daughter to go to Ithaca, and immediately erected a temple to the goddess of modesty, on the spot where Penelope had covered her blushes with her veil.”

⁴²⁹ Greek of Plutarch's *Tiberius Gracchus*, Chapter 1: “It is said that when [Tiberius] caught a pair of snakes on his bed, the seers, observing the marvel, [told him] not to destroy both or to let them go, but [rather] to decide between the two, since if [either one] were destroyed, the male would bring death to Tiberius, and the female [would bring death] to Cornelia. Therefore, Tiberius, who loved his wife, considering it was better for him to meet his end since he was older and she was still young, killed the male but released the female. Presently not much later in time, he met his end, leaving 12 children by him from Cornelia.”

speaking in praise of chastity;⁴³⁰ the reason is that after the capture and burning of Carthage, the wife of Hasdrubal the Boëtharch, when she saw that she would be captured by the Romans, after taking hold of both of her two little sons, rushed down into the adjacent conflagration of her own home.⁴³¹

The wife of Niceratus, unable to endure the injury inflicted upon her husband, committed suicide lest she should endure the lust of the 30 tyrants whom Lysander had imposed on conquered Athens.⁴³²

AND THEY SHALL BE TWO IN ONE FLESH —

That is, the two, namely husband and wife, will be one flesh. *First*, through carnal union, as the Apostle explains in 1 Corinthians 6:16.⁴³³ *Second*, they will be one flesh by synecdoche, i.e., they will be one human being, one civil person. (The reason is that husband and wife are considered one according to civil law, and they are.) *Third*, because a spouse is the master of the body of his or her companion, and thus the flesh of one is the flesh of the other, 1 Corinthians VII, 4.⁴³⁴ *Fourth*, in the sense of producing an effect, because they generate one flesh, namely their offspring.

Note: Among human relationships, the most tightly bound and inviolable is the bond of matrimony. Hence God made Eve out of Adam's rib, in order to signify, *first*, that man and woman are not as two but as one. *Second*, that they are indivisible and inseparable, for just as one flesh cannot be divided and still remain as one, so a wife cannot be separated from her husband to the extent that she is one flesh with her mate. Indeed, division, for instance, divorce or polygamy, is repugnant to unity. *Third*, because they should be one in love and will. Consult Rupert of Deutz on this passage. Whence Pythagoras says that in a loving marriage there is one soul in two bodies.

From this fact, it is evident that it is not true what St. Gregory of Nyssa in Chapter 17 of *On the Making of Man* (if he, notwithstanding, is the book's author), and likewise St. John

⁴³⁰ This account of Dido, as related in Justin's epitome of the *Philippic Histories* by Gnaeus Pompeius Trogus, differs from that found in Virgil's *Aeneid*.

⁴³¹ Before his wife's suicide, Hasdrubal had surrendered himself to the Romans at the end of the Third Punic War (149-146 B.C.). He remained in Italy as a state prisoner.

⁴³² At the end of the Peloponnesian War in 404 B.C., Athenian oligarchs, assisted by the Spartan general Lysander, appointed a board of 30 to draw up a new constitution to overthrow the former democracy. The 30 Tyrants are said to have killed some 1,500 citizens.

⁴³³ 1 Corinthians 6:16: "Or know you not, that he who is joined to a harlot, is made one body? *For they shall be, saith he, two in one flesh.*"

⁴³⁴ 1 Corinthians 7:4: "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband. And in like manner the husband also hath not power of his own body, but the wife."

Damascene,⁴³⁵ and Euthymius on Psalm 50 and St. Augustine⁴³⁶ assert: That in the state of innocence there would be no commingling of the sexes, but men would have had to procreate in an angelic fashion, so to speak. To be sure, in this verse of Genesis, it expressly says, “they shall be two in one flesh,” which the Apostle explains as a commingling, as I have said. Wherefore, St. Augustine retracts his opinion in Book I of *The Retractations*, Chapter 10, and from that the Doctors now commonly follow his later view. Therefore, Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples errs in his commentary on Richard of St. Victor’s book *On the Most Holy Trinity*, when he foolishly says that if Adam had not sinned, he would have produced out of himself, without a woman, a male like himself. Also in error is Almaric of Bena [Amaury de Bène] who opined that in the state of innocence there would be no difference of sex.

Again, St. Thomas Aquinas⁴³⁷ thinks that in the state of innocence, the intactness of the physical body, which is called virginity, being preserved, there would have been conception and birth. But as Benedict Pereira rightly notes, that notion is at odds with this passage and with the nature of human generation. Therefore, at that time, there would have been generation similar to as it is now, yet with concupiscence removed. Wherefore, at that time virginity would not have existed because in that state virtue would not have existed, for virginity — virtue — exists now because it bridles the concupiscence of lust. But at that time, there would have been no concupiscence or lust to be bridled. Therefore, at that time continence or virginity would not have existed. Hence Pereira with probability thinks that in that state as many females as males would be born. Indeed, everybody would have entered into matrimony, and it would have been monogamous, namely one man with one woman according to that which God established in this verse.

Verse 25. AND THEY WERE BOTH NAKED, ... AND WERE NOT ASHAMED —

Because in the state of innocence there was no lust, no concupiscence; for shame and blushing arises from this if the members in which lust reigns are visible and exposed to others. Thus says St. Augustine in his book *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, near the beginning.

⁴³⁵ *On the Faith*, Book II, Chapter 30.

⁴³⁶ *On Genesis against the Manichæans*, Book IX, Chapter 19, and *On the True Religion*, Chapter 46.

⁴³⁷ *ST*, I, Q98, Article 2.

Therefore, the Adamites,⁴³⁸ who although naked no longer blush with Adam, are silly, shameless, and impure, since soon after sinning Adam blushed and covered himself with clothing, as rightly refuting similar practices, says St. Epiphanius of Salamis.⁴³⁹

Hence, in his dialogue *The Statesman*, Plato seems to have arrived at that nudity of his, which he attributed to men of the Golden Age.⁴⁴⁰

In addition, Isidoro Chiari wrongly thinks that there was a kind of divine brightness and glory for Adam and Eve in place of clothing, of the kind with which God veiled St. Agnes and in many cases other virgins who were led, stripped of their clothes, to a brothel, and with which He will cover the bodies of the Saints at the Resurrection. This, in fact, is a gratuitous invention, and without grounds, for where there is no shame, no concupiscence, no cold, there is no need for clothing or blinding light.

Finally, Pereira, in the preface of Book V, brilliantly surveys the seven merits of the state of innocence. The *first* was complete wisdom; the *second*, grace and the friendship of God; the *third*, original justice; the *fourth*, the immortality and impassibility of soul and body, not intrinsic, as is in the glorified bodies of the blessed, but extrinsic, arising in part, naturally, as a result of God's protection, and in part as a result of man's prudence and foresight, whereby he might make himself secure from harm and injury; and these four merits of the state of innocence were in man himself. The remaining three, however, are outside man, to wit: the *fifth*, dwelling in paradise and eating of the tree of life; the *sixth*, God's special care toward man. From these followed the *seventh*, as St. Thomas Aquinas says, that man naturally could not have been able to be overly sensually desirous, nor could he sin venially, nor be in error, nor be deceived. But in uncertain matters he would either have suspended judgment or formed a doubt. Indeed, these merits do not appear capable of realization through habit or a created quality infused in man, but only by the assistance and protection of God.

Understand the following about the state of full and perfect innocence in which Adam was

⁴³⁸ St. Alphonsus Liguori in *The History of Heresies* writes "Prodicus taught that it was lawful to deny the faith to avoid death; he rejected the worship of an invisible God, and adored the four elements and the sun and the moon; he condemned all prayers to God as superstitious, but he prayed to the elements and the planets to be propitious to mankind. This impious worship he always performed naked. Noel Alexander and St. Theodoret assign to this heretic the institution of the sect called Adamites; these always performed their religious exercises in their churches, or rather brothels, as St. Epiphanius calls them, naked, pretending by this to imitate the innocence of Adam, but, in reality, practicing every abomination."

⁴³⁹ Book II of his *Panarion* 52.

⁴⁴⁰ The age of Cronus, the first of the five ages of Greek mythology. It was an idyllic era of harmony and nobility where the earth provided for all necessities. Plato says men then were "living naked in the open air."

created: he was exempt from every evil, both of fault and of punishment and misery; for otherwise, if God would have permitted him to be transferred to Eden in only semi-full innocence, he would have been able to sin venially, and likewise err and be deceived, as Blessed John Duns Scotus rightly teaches. (Regarding this, see page 450 of *Questions on Genesis* by Francesco Griffolini of Arezzo.)

On the other hand, Christ has rendered to us a greater grace than he had given to Adam, and therefore we now have seven virtues that had not existed in the state of innocence. The *first* is virginity; the *second*, patience; the *third*, penance; the *fourth*, martyrdom; the *fifth*, fasting, abstinence, and the mortification of all flesh; the *sixth*, poverty and religious obedience; and the *seventh*, mercy and almsgiving. The reason for this last entry is that, at the time of the state of innocence, there existed no paupers or wretched, which we now have in abundance so that we may practice mercy toward them.

Lastly, now a greater and more effective grace is given to fallen man than had been given to Adam, as is clear in the case of the martyrs and illustrious saints. Wherefore, the capacity of acquiring merit is now also greater both by reason of greater grace and by reason of the difficulty of the effort, although in the state of innocence the capacity of acquiring merit was greater by reason of the alacrity of the will. The reason is that, at that time, the will, being manifestly upright and not having passions contrary to virtue, would have been drawn irresistibly to virtues by an inclination favorably disposed to nature and to grace, and thus would have produced numerous mighty, great, and heroic acts of all the virtues.

CHAPTER III

Synopsis

First the serpent tempts Eve; she sins with Adam. Wherefore, second they are reproved by God. Third, the serpent is cursed by God, and Christ the Redeemer is promised. Fourth, Eve and Adam, are condemned to toil, troubles, and death. And finally, they are driven from paradise, and in front of it a guard of cherubim with a flaming sword is stationed.

Verse 1. NOW THE SERPENT WAS MORE SUBTLE THAN ANY OF THE BEASTS OF THE EARTH —

The verse can alternately be translated as *the serpent was curled up and rolled back onto itself into many coils*, for the Hebrew word עָרָם *‘āram* also means this; whence *‘ārēmîm* are called “heaps of crops.” Indeed, these coils are the indicators of the inward cunning of the serpent whereby he entangles and deceives man.

First, by the serpent, Cajetan understands the devil, who tempted Eve, not by an outward word, but only by an inward intimation.

Second, St. Cyril of Alexandria⁴⁴¹ and Agostino Steucho in his *Cosmopœia* think in this verse that it is a demon, not a true serpent, but in fact only in shape and outward appearance a serpent. This is similar to angels when they assume a human body; they rather assume an airy body, not a true one, but it has the appearance of a truly human body.

However, all others teach that this was a real serpent. The reason is that in this verse it was more subtle than all beasts, not angels; the cunning devil, having fittingly entered into the naturally subtle and cunning creature, mimicked, as he was able, a human voice in its mouth, as if in an organ moved by, brought into contact with, and modulated by determined reason. So say St. John Chrysostom, Procopius, and St. Augustine.⁴⁴²

Some think, says Peter Lombard,⁴⁴³ that this devil that tempted Adam and overcame him was Lucifer; and that this devil also tempted Christ, but was overcome by Him, and dispatched to hell.

Aptly the devil tempted Adam not in the shape of a sheep or an ass, but of a serpent. *First*,

⁴⁴¹ *Against Julian*, Book III.

⁴⁴² *The City of God*, Book XIV, 20.

⁴⁴³ *Sentences* II, Distinction 6.

because the serpent is by nature subtle; *second*, because it is naturally inimical to man, and lies in ambush for him so it can secretly bite him; *third*, it is characteristic of the serpent to crawl, pour out its poison, and slay man; and indeed a demon does this. *Fourth*, because the serpent clings to the earth with its entire body; thus did Adam by believing the serpent and the devil: every brute, as a matter of fact, is made of the earth, so that it covets naught but the goods of the earth.

Hence, St. Augustine⁴⁴⁴ teaches that the devil was wont to use the form of serpents to deceive men, because in that shape he deceived Adam and Eve, and there he saw the good success of this deceit. For this reason, Pherecydes of Syros said that demons had been cast down from heaven by Zeus, and their chief's name was Ophioneus, i.e., "serpent-like."

In a figurative interpretation, St. Augustine says, "the devil tempts like a lion and he tempts like a dragon," for, as St. Gregory the Great⁴⁴⁵ says, "The Lord teaches His faithful all the machinations of the subtle enemy - namely, how he snatches by oppressing, how he deceives by laying traps, how he terrifies by threatening, how he coaxes by persuading, how he shatters by despairing, and how he deceives by promising."

St. Bernard surveys the species and means of temptations: "Temptation," he says, "*in the first place*, is troublesome: it insists very rudely; *in the second place*, it is dubious: it envelops the mind in a cloud of doubt. *In the third place*, it appears suddenly and forestalls the judgment of reason. *In the fourth place*, it is imperceptible, and hastens past the order of deliberation. *In the fifth place*, it is violent: it exceeds our powers. *In the sixth place*, it is fraudulent, and seduces our mind. *In the seventh place*, it is entangling and hobbles us in various ways.

Note: Eve did not bristle in horror at the appearance of the serpent because, as mistress of animal life, she was certain that it was unable to harm her. So says St. John Chrysostom.⁴⁴⁶

You may say, "How, at all events, was she not terrified when it spoke?"

First, Josephus and St. Basil answered that in paradise any animal whatsoever had the power and faculty of speech (which is something that even Plato supposed in his *Statesman*). St. Ephræm⁴⁴⁷ adds that, at the time, God had not only granted the power of speech to the serpent but also the power of understanding, and he argues it from verses 1 and 13. These theses, however,

⁴⁴⁴ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book XI, Chapter 28.

⁴⁴⁵ *Moral Reflections on the Book of Job*. In Migne LXXXVI (VOL. 2), this passage is found in Book XXXII, Chapter 11, paragraph 15, column 644.

⁴⁴⁶ In *Homily* 16.

⁴⁴⁷ Quoted in book I, *Treatise on Paradise* by Moses Bar Cephas.

are paradoxes.⁴⁴⁸

Second, Procopius, St. Cyril, Alonso Tostado, and Benedict Pereira answer that Eve did not yet know that at that time the power of speech was natural to humankind alone. But this is incompatible with the perfect knowledge that both Eve and Adam possessed.

Therefore, I answer that Eve knew that the serpent, by its very nature, was unable to speak. She therefore marveled at its speaking, and surmised that the vocalization was made by a higher power, in other words, divine, angelic, or diabolic. Fear was absent because she had not yet sinned, and she knew she was an object of care to God. Thus was the view of St. Thomas Aquinas.⁴⁴⁹ Therefore, we have the saying: “To the wise man, nothing is inconceivable. Children and fools are astonished at everything as if it were new.”

Agostino Steucho thinks this serpent was the basilisk, which is the king of serpents. Martin Delrio thinks it was a viper; Benedict Pereira a cylindrical snake, because, conspicuous in size and by its variegated skin, it captures the attention of onlookers. But nothing is certain about this matter. Besides, the cylindrical snake and the basilisk are of a fanciful nature. This serpent was more subtle than any of the beasts, for the demon entered into it, not for the sake of spreading venom, but for the sake of deceiving. It is probable, as many believe, that the creature that is commonly called a serpent [*serpens*] is so named because it crawls [*serpit*], a snake [*coluber*] because it cultivates shadows [*umbras*], and a house snake [*anguis*] because it seeks out corners [*angulos*] and hiding places. It is worth noting that in this passage the creature is called a serpent without a qualifier. Many members of the order of snakes are identified by qualifying words such as king serpents or fiery serpents, etc. or with a proper name such as vipers, cerastes, amphibænæ,⁴⁵⁰ asps etc. In this passage, the serpent is also very subtle and manifestly crawls on its body face downwards, something that is said of this serpent in verse 14. Wherefore St. Bede, Denis the Carthusian, the *Historia Scholastica*,⁴⁵¹ and also St. Bonaventure⁴⁵² and Vincent of Beauvais⁴⁵³ say it is improbable that in this verse the serpent was a dragon, treading the ground on

⁴⁴⁸ Here the word does not mean “contrary to expectation” as in the common modern sense, but in the sense of *insolubilia*, “unsolvable things”.

⁴⁴⁹ *ST*, I, Q94, A4.

⁴⁵⁰ The cerastes, a horned serpent, and amphibænæ, serpents with two heads, were legendary reptiles.

⁴⁵¹ A popular medieval paraphrase of the Bible from Genesis through Acts by Peter Comestor (1100-1179).

⁴⁵² In his commentary on II *Sentences*, Distinction 21.

⁴⁵³ In his *Mirror of History*.

its feet with the face of a maiden⁴⁵⁴ and particolored skin gleaming like a rainbow such that it drew Eve into wonderment, and that it was accustomed to walk erect. The reason is that in this case it would have been a monstrous serpent that God did not create in the beginning of the world, of which Eve would have consequently been terrified and from which would have fled at once.

WHY HATH GOD COMMANDED YOU —

The Septuagint also translates the verse in this way. Here the serpent craftily tries to overturn the purpose of the commandment in order to subvert the commandment itself. The serpent appears to say, there appears to be no just reason and cause why God forbade eating of this tree: therefore, He did not really and seriously forbid it. Rather, when He said, “Ye shall not eat of it,” He was speaking jokingly and playfully. The serpent argues the foregoing from the very usefulness of the tree, saying in verse 5, “For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened: and you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.”

Note that The word in the Hebrew text for *why* is כִּי אָרַב *'ap̄ kī*, which literally means *really?* or *is it thus true?* In addition, the Aramaic version translates the verse, “*Is it true that God said (has said): Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*” In this sense it appears more clearly that the serpent did not accuse God of harshness, for Eve would have shuddered at this blasphemy. But it acted deceitfully, as though commending God: Imagine the serpent’s speaking along these lines: “I do not believe that God, Who is so generous, forbade this tree so seriously and absolutely, even though you two may think it so: for why would He begrudge you so lovely and useful a fruit? Why indeed would He so limit and burden you both? Indeed, goodness is opposed to envy. Hence in God, Who is good in the highest degree, there cannot be something invidious. This is what Boethius rhapsodized about in his *Consolation of Philosophy*, describing God as ‘Exemplar of the highest good lacking malice.’ Plato teaches the same thing in the *Timæus*, as does Aristotle⁴⁵⁵ where he attacks Simonides, who said that God was envious of man for the ornament of wisdom. Aristotle says the reason for his criticism is based on this principle: God would have been sad and consequently been wretched, for envy is the sadness resulting from the good another possesses. Furthermore, the Vulgate, not following the literal meaning but the sense of כִּי אָרַב *'ap̄ kī*, translated it *why*, as the Septuagint does. Eve’s reply answered directly to the serpent’s speech, supporting

⁴⁵⁴ “In the twelfth century, [the pictorial representation of the serpent] became a composite figure of a serpentine body and tail with a female head, and in later medieval and renaissance art, a female head and torso” (Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, *Dictionary of Christian Art* [1994]).

⁴⁵⁵ *Metaphysics*, Book I, Chapter 2.

and affirming God's commandment as serious and absolute, which the serpent wished to demolish as though it were said in jesting, and thus the serpent's explanation fell back on the same tactic as before.

From the Hebrew idiom *'ap̄ kī*, it seems that the serpent had first advanced other arguments before posing this question of verse 1 — arguments by which he had laid the ground for his query, although Moses is silent about this. For example, they may have been arguments concerning the liberty and dignity of human nature or concerning the obligation and large number of natural and supernatural commandments of faith, hope and charity imposed on man, so that from there he might argue that man was not to be further vexed by this new positive commandment of God. So think Procopius and others.

Figuratively speaking, Abbot Hyperchius⁴⁵⁶ says: “The serpent whispering to Eve threw her out of paradise. Therefore, it is like someone who speaks against his neighbor, since he destroys the soul of the one listening to him and does not save his own.” Again, St. Bernard,⁴⁵⁷ by using this passage, teaches that perfect obedience ought to be undivided, so that it actually does not decide the *why*, nor does it command the *wherefore*. “Adam,” he says, “tasted of the forbidden tree unto his own evil, having been taught by the serpent, who said by way of suggestion: ‘Why hath God commanded?’ Observe the question requiring discernment: Why has it been commanded? The serpent added: For He knew that on the day on which you shall eat, your eyes will be opened, and you will be as Gods. Observe the reason for the commandment: that He may not allow them to become Gods. Adam decided, he ate, he became disobedient and was expelled from paradise. Whence one concludes: it is thus impossible that a discerning brute, a prudent novice, a wise beginner can for a long time continue in a monastic cell and remain in the monastic community. Let him become a fool in order for him to be wise. And let this be all his discretion: that in this respect he have no discretion.” Look at John Cassian⁴⁵⁸ and St. Gregory,⁴⁵⁹ where we find this principle: “The truly obedient man neither discusses the intention of commands nor finely sifts commands according to their qualities. The reason is that he who subordinates every judgment of his life to his superior, and rejoices in this alone, supposing that he does what is commanded of him, because he regards only this as good, if only he obeys commandments.”

⁴⁵⁶ *Lives of the Fathers*.

⁴⁵⁷ In his book *On the Solitary Life*.

⁴⁵⁸ *Conferences* 12 and *The Institutes*, Book IV, Chapters 10, 24 and 25.

⁴⁵⁹ *On the Second Book of Kings*, Chapter 4.

THAT YOU SHOULD NOT EAT OF EVERY TREE —

Not every means none, say St. John Chrysostom, Rupert of Deutz and St. Augustine,⁴⁶⁰ as though the serpent should say, “God granted the fruit of no tree to man” and therefore it would be lying to accuse God of cruelty. But this would be an overly patent and crass lie.

Second and better, “not out of every,” that is, why did He prohibit some tree, namely, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?

Third and best, the devil is, in his own way, speaking ambiguously through the serpent, so that this question of his can be taken as either *of every* or only *of some* forbidden tree; and it was posed deceitfully in order to convey that the reason is not greater for forbidding one tree rather than all trees. Therefore, God should have forbidden either all trees or none of them. In other words, God, by the readiness with which He forbade this one tree, would with the same ease thereafter forbid all the other trees. This being the case, the woman immediately answers his ambiguous question in the form of a distinction: “Of the fruit of the trees that are in paradise we do eat (we are able to eat, we are allowed to eat): But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of paradise, God hath commanded us that we should not eat.”

Verse 3. AND THAT WE SHOULD NOT TOUCH IT —

St. Ambrose⁴⁶¹ supposes that Eve, out of disgust and hatred for the commandment, added this on her own and thus with ill will exaggerated the rigor of the commandment, for God had not forbidden gazing at or touching the tree, but only eating of it. However, Eve, still sound and holy, seems rather to have made this statement out of regard for the virtue of religion and reverence for the divine commandment, that is to say, “God commanded us not to touch this tree to eat of it, and therefore, He infused in us the virtue of religion and fear in order for us to decide for ourselves to touch it in no way, in no case, even lightly, so that we may be as distant as possible from eating it and violating the commandment.”

LEST PERHAPS WE DIE —

God had absolutely affirmed *you shall die*, the woman doubts, the devil denies. Indeed, as the serpent sees Eve wavering, he presses on to persuade her, saying, “You shall not die.” Such is the view of Rupert of Deutz. But Eve was still sound, and as from the virtue of religion she added

⁴⁶⁰ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book XI, Chapter 30.

⁴⁶¹ *On Paradise*, Chapter 12.

the clause *that we should not touch it*, she does not seem to have doubted the death penalty attached to the commandment. Therefore, the word *ἵνα pen*, i.e. *perhaps*,⁴⁶² for Hebrew speakers is often a word not of doubt but of assertion and confirmation of a thing or a commandment, and only indicates a doubt about a future event, when it hangs on man's future free action, that is to say, 'Lest we perhaps eat and therefore die: for if we eat, we shall die.' Thus we read the word *perhaps* in Matthew 11:23,⁴⁶³ and often among the prophets.

Verse 4. NO, YOU SHALL NOT DIE THE DEATH —

The serpent tempts Eve by removing the penalty, and by deceiving with promises.

Observe in this verse the serpent's five brilliant lies: *first*, "you shall not die"; *second*, "your eyes shall be opened"; *third*, "you shall be as Gods"; *fourth*, you will know good and evil; *fifth*, God knows all these things are true, and I am not lying, that is to say, inasmuch as God knows these things, and loves you both, it is not likely that He wanted to deprive you of such a beneficial tree. Therefore, He only forbade it by way of a jest, or under this commandment He is hiding some mystery, which you do not yet know. However, you will know when you eat of it. So says St. Augustine.⁴⁶⁴

In a moral interpretation of this verse, the devil even now convinces almost all men of the same thing. However, because the contrary state is very clear, and it is *de facto* evident that everyone absolutely dies, on this account he uses his cunning to convince everybody of his words: *No, you shall not die*. To be sure, he does what a physician is accustomed to do when he divides into parts a bitter medicine that a sick person might spit out entirely; accordingly, he administers it to him by bits so that he gradually consumes it all. And thus the demon divides death by parts and years, and persuades the young, "You will not die in the flower and vigor of your age. You are too strong. You will easily live to fifty years of age." He persuades those fond of study, "You will not die before you finish your studies." As for others, he says they will not die "before you finish your affairs, which you have at hand." Finally, no one is so old that he does not think that

⁴⁶² The Vulgate translates the Hebrew conjunction as *ne forte* ("lest perhaps"). The Septuagint reads *ἵνα μὴ hina mē*, "in order that not."

⁴⁶³ Mt. 11:23 reads (Douay version): "For if in Sodom had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in thee, perhaps it had remained unto this day." The Greek is: ὅτι εἰ ἐν Σοδόμοις ἐγενήθησαν αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ γινόμεναι ἐν σοί, ἔμεινεν ἄν μέχρι τῆς σήμερον, which can be translated as: "For if in Sodom the deeds of power had been wrought, the ones having been wrought among you, it would have remained until this very day."

⁴⁶⁴ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book XI, Chapter 30.

he still will live at least for a year. Thus he deceives everyone. Indeed, since every year death carries off a few people, and thus little by little everyone, it happens that each person is carried off by death when he least of all thinks of it because he thinks he still will live for a year. Wherefore follows this very truthful axiom: To one and all death is nearer than they think. The reason is that in the year in which each man dies, he thinks he will not die, but will live yet for a year. Moreover, Christ said he would come like a thief in the night, whom the master of the house thinks is far away, or more correctly, thinks the thief will not come (Matthew 24:43). Therefore, just as a thief notes the time when the master sleeps in order to rob him, so death catches those who are off their guard as though they were asleep. Let the wise man, therefore, open his eyes and remove this deceit of the devil, and let him persuade himself that death is nearby. Better still, let him persuade himself that he will die that year, perhaps that month, that week, that day.

The poet Horace wisely said: “Think each day that dawns the last day you will see.”⁴⁶⁵ Thus St. Jerome and St. Charles Borromeo used to keep a skull on their table to be ever mindful of impending death. This was the greeting of certain saints when they met one another: the first would say by way of greeting, “One must die.” The second would reply, “We know not when.” Thus St. Jerome, in his *Epistle to Principia*, says St. Marcella “spent her time and lived such that she always believed she would die. Accordingly, she dressed in clothes such that she would be reminded of the grave, recalling the words of the Roman satirist Persius: ‘Live mindful of death. Time flies. These very words that I am speaking are already long gone.’ Remember always the day of your death, and you will never sin. She used to praise the words of Plato, who said that philosophy is a meditation upon death.”

Our own Thomas à Kempis⁴⁶⁶ says:

Today man exists, and tomorrow he is missing, O dullness and hardness of the human heart, which only thinks on the present, and does not better foresee the things that are to come - even those that are nearby! Thus, in every deed and thought, you ought to hold yourself as though you were to die this very day.” And a little later on he says, “Blessed is he who ever has the hour of his death before his eyes, and daily disposes himself to dying. If you once saw a man die, know that even you will pass by the same way. When morning

⁴⁶⁵ Translated by John Conington (1869).

⁴⁶⁶ *The Imitation of Christ*, Book I, XXIII.

comes, think that you will not arrive at the evening. But when evening has come, do not dare to promise yourself the morning. Always, therefore, be prepared, and live accordingly so that death may never find you unprepared. When that last hour arrives, you will begin to feel very differently about the whole of your past life, and you will grieve very much that you were so negligent and remiss. How happy and prudent is he who strives now to be in life the kind of person he wishes to be found in death. For perfect contempt of the world, a fervent desire of advancing in virtue, a love of discipline, the work of penance, readiness of obedience, denial of self, endurance of any adversity for the love of Christ will give the great confidence of dying happily.

And a little later he says, “The day will come then you will want a day, or an hour, to amend your life, and I know not whether you will obtain it. While you have the time, gather for yourself immortal riches. Think of nothing except your salvation. Care only about the things of God. Preserve yourself as a stranger and a guest on earth. Keep your heart free and raised upwards to God, because on earth you do not have the permanent rights of a citizen.” Finally, observe what St. Jerome says: “Apply yourself such as though you will live forever; live always as though you will die.”

Verse 5. YOUR EYES SHALL BE OPENED —

From this phrase, some commentators quoted by Alonso Tostado⁴⁶⁷ think that Adam and Eve did not have their eyes opened but were blind until they ate the forbidden fruit. That is to say, at that moment the eyes of both were opened, and they saw that they were naked in verse 7. However, this opinion is incompatible with the happiness of the state of innocence in which Adam and Eve were created. Therefore, I say that in verse 5 we are to understand the mind’s eye, not the body’s, as Aristotle⁴⁶⁸ says, “the intellect is a kind of eye.” Especially since the eye and sight, before the other senses, serve the intellect for cognition. The reason is this: from things seen, memories arise; from memory, experience; from practical experiences, art or science. Therefore, it is a sense, that is to say, this clause of the verse means: You will be made of so bright a mind and of such insightful intelligence that you will appear to yourselves to have been blind

⁴⁶⁷ In Chapter XIII, Question 492.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ethics*, Book I.

beforehand. This is the view of Rupert of Deutz.⁴⁶⁹

YOU SHALL BE AS GODS —

Not in essence, for this is impossible, but in the likeness, so to speak, of divine wisdom and omniscience, as it logically follows. Wherefore, some wrongly explain the phrase as “you will be as angels.” The reason it is erroneous is that Adam and Eve were provoked not to strive for an angelic but a divine likeness. Indeed, this is what God says in verse 22: “Behold Adam is become as one of us.”

You may ask: What was Eve’s first sin? *First*, Rupert of Deutz, Hugh of St. Victor and Peter Lombard⁴⁷⁰ answer that the first sin of Eve was the word *perhaps*, as if in doubt she added to God’s commandment “Lest perhaps we die.” *Second*, St. Ambrose says her sin consisted in the phrase *that we should not touch it*. *Third*, St. John Chrysostom says her sin was that she associated with the serpent and the devil. However, these theories seem to have little probability, for the first sin of man was in the intellect, not in the emotions. The reason is that, before sin, man could not err or be deceived. Hence St. Thomas Aquinas⁴⁷¹ states that man in that state could not sin venially, the reason being the result of God’s special protection; and, indeed, venial sin cannot take away grace. Nor, again, can it exist with the most perfect state of original justice.

Therefore, *first*, I say that pride was Eve’s first sin, as also was Adam’s afterward. This is clear from Ecclesiasticus 10:14⁴⁷² and Tobias 4:14.⁴⁷³ Moreover, the Hebrew version here in verse 5, and the Septuagint in verse 6,⁴⁷⁴ show this: Undoubtedly when Adam and Eve heard, “You shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil,” they were enticed to consider, increase, and raise up their own excellence. Therefore, having turned to themselves, they were puffed up so that their hearts retreated from God, and in the end they longed for omniscience and a kind of equality with divinity, as Lucifer also did. Consequently, in verse 22 God reproached them for it, saying, “Behold, Adam is become as one of us, knowing good and evil.” So say St. Ambrose,⁴⁷⁵ St. Ignatius of Antioch,⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁶⁹ *On the Trinity*, Book III, Chapters 7 and 8.

⁴⁷⁰ II *Sentences*, Distinction 21.

⁴⁷¹ I-II, *Question* 89, Article 3.

⁴⁷² Ecclesiasticus 10:14-15: “The beginning of the pride of man, is to fall off from God: Because his heart is departed from him that made him: for pride is the beginning of all sin: he that holdeth it, shall be filled with maledictions, and it shall ruin him in the end.”

⁴⁷³ Tobias 4:14: “Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind, or in thy words: for from it all perdition took its beginning.”

⁴⁷⁴ The edition of Septuagint that Fr. Lapede used has for verse 1 of chapter 3 verse 25 of Chapter 2. Editions with that numbering may still be found today.

⁴⁷⁵ *On Luke*, Book IV.

⁴⁷⁶ *Letter to the Trallians*.

St. John Chrysostom⁴⁷⁷ and St. Augustine.⁴⁷⁸ St. Augustine teaches that love of excellence is so inborn and active in the whole and complete rational nature, that it is in a manner of speaking the first love in man; it encourages a man to pursue any other thing he pleases with the goal in mind that he distinguish himself. St. Bernard also says that both, namely the devil and man, aimed at an eminence: the former of power, the latter of knowledge.

Second, I say that it seems this prideful striving after divine omniscience was set, inasmuch as they strove, as Scripture says, to know good and evil, no doubt so that by themselves and by the power of their own nature and abilities, they could direct themselves in all things by discerning and choosing what is good and by avoiding what is evil. Therefore, they would be able to direct themselves to live well by their own knowledge, by their very own prowess, i.e., by their own strength and gain complete happiness as if they were deities, so to speak, whom no one, not even God, should direct and assist (as Lucifer did) - thus St. Thomas.⁴⁷⁹ For although Adam might know speculatively that he should depend on and be enlightened by God and otherwise be unable to come into existence, nevertheless, from a practical standpoint he conducted himself in this manner on account of pride. Thus he strove for this likeness of omniscience and divinity, as if in reality he could gain possession of it by his own powers without God. Truly, pride, as it slowly swells up, blinds and deludes the mind.

Third, I say that from this pride soon followed impatience and the indignation of an offended mind because it was restrained by this commandment and kept at a distance from so noble a fruit. Then curiosity followed; next the sensual greed of gluttony, as it says in verse 6. Finally came the intellectual error, for both Eve and Adam believed the words of the serpent that promised omniscience and immortality if they ate of the forbidden tree. From that point, they at last leapt forth into perfect disobedience and violation of the commandment, that is to say, to actual eating.

Wherefore, I say *fourth*, that not only Eve but also Adam, blinded by pride, believed the words of the serpent: "You will be as Gods, knowing good and evil." And therefore they lost their faith. The first part of this is clear, because God taunts the man for it, saying, "Behold, Adam is become as one of us, knowing good and evil." Indeed, these words ironically mean that, according

⁴⁷⁷ On 1 Timothy 2:14.

⁴⁷⁸ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book XI, Chapter 5, and *The City of God*, Book XVI, Chapter 13.

⁴⁷⁹ ST, II-II, Q163, A2.

to the serpent's promises, what Adam hoped for by tasting the fruit, he did not obtain in the least. Whence Adam was deceived by the serpent through Eve's relaying the serpent's promises, as he trusted those words. This is the teaching of St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Irenæus, St. Hilary, St. Epiphanius of Salamis, St. Ambrose, St. Cyril and St. Augustine.⁴⁸⁰

From this, the second part of my conclusion is also evident, for by the fact that Adam himself believed the devil when he promised divine omniscience deriving from the forbidden fruit, he became estranged from and did not believe God, Who threatened him, saying, "In what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death." Therefore he was faithless; therefore he lost not only grace but also faith in God - thus St. Augustine.⁴⁸¹

You will say: How, therefore, does the Apostle state in 1 Timothy, Chapter 2, that Adam was not seduced, but that it was Eve?

I answer that Eve was seduced by the serpent, which wanted to induce her to eat the fruit. However, Adam was not deceived by the serpent but only was allured by his wife, who did not intend to deceive him.

AS GODS, KNOWING GOOD AND EVIL —

The first perfection of God, desirable and imitable by man, is knowledge. "There is nothing by which we are more likened to the gods than by the very act of knowing," says Cicero. Whence the poet Horace, speaking of God, says:

*No mightier birth may he beget;
No like, no second has he known;
Yet nearest to her sire's is set
Minerva's throne.*⁴⁸²

And Damasius says, "In the manner of actual presence, the ever-watchful eye of God knows by a glance past, present, and future things." Furthermore, St. Boethius says of God:

*All that is, hath been, shall be,
In one glance's compass, He
Limitless descries;*

⁴⁸⁰ St. Ignatius of Antioch in his *Epistle to the Trallians*, St. Irenæus in *Against Heresies*, Book III, Chapter 23, St. Hilary on *Matthew* 3, St. Epiphanius of Salamis in *Panarion* 39, St. Ambrose on Chapter X of Luke, St. Cyril in *Against Julian*, Book III and St. Augustine in *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book XI, Chapters 21 and 24, and *The City of God*, Book IV, Chapter 7.

⁴⁸¹ *Against Julian*, Book I, Chapter 3.

⁴⁸² Translated by John Conington (1863). Minerva is the goddess of wisdom, the arts, and trades in Roman mythology.

And, save His, no eyes

All the world survey—no, none!

*Him, then, truly name the Sun.*⁴⁸³

Hence, the angels nearest to God are mighty in intelligence, and because of that are called “intelligences.” And furthermore, in Greek, they are called *daimōnes*, knowing and wise, as it were, for their natural gifts remained even after their fall, as St. Dionysius reports. Hence men, by a natural appetite, want to know, says Aristotle. Listen to Quintilian:⁴⁸⁴ “Just as birds are born for flying, horses for running, and beasts for fierceness, so mental activity and cleverness are proper to us. For this reason, we believe in a heavenly origin of the mind. Dullards and the uneducable are considered not so much according to the nature of man as they are regarded as unnatural bodies and signs of monsters.”

The reason is that the natural operation of man is to think discursively, to discuss, and to understand, by which man is differentiated from beasts and rocks. Hence Diogenes, while laughing at a certain ignorant rich man sitting on a rock, said, “A rock fittingly sits on a rock.” When Solon was asked what was a rich man who was unlearned, he replied: he is a sheep with a golden fleece. Therefore, they are fools who disdain wisdom and learning, Proverbs 1:22. Indeed, there are those who say, “I prefer a drop of fortune to a glass of wisdom.” The wise, however, say with Solomon in Wisdom 7:8: “I preferred her (wisdom) before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison to her...all gold in comparison to her is as a little sand.” Furthermore, Proverbs 8:11 says, “Wisdom is better than all the most precious things: and whatsoever may be desired cannot be compared to it.” The reason is that just as the sense rejoices in its sensible object, so the intellect rejoices in the knowable and in knowledge, as much as the will rejoices in the good and in virtue. However, in Adam, as also in his many descendants, there was, in this verse of Genesis, an excessive love of knowing.

KNOWING GOOD AND EVIL —

Because by experience you will know how great an evil disobedience is, and consequently how great a good obedience is. So say some commentators, as if in this passage the demon spoke truthfully, and by this artifice of his he deceived Eve, who thought she was promised something more here. But I say this is a Hebraism: You will know good and evil, i.e., you will know

⁴⁸³ Translated by H.R. James (1897).

⁴⁸⁴ *Institutes of Oratory*, Book I.

everything whatsoever that is good or evil, true or false, necessary or contingent so you can discern in all things what is useful, what is not useful, what must be done, and what must be avoided.

Verse 6. THE WOMAN THEREUPON SAW —

She had seen before, but without the inordinate desire of eating; now after the temptation she was raised up to pride: she sees it as something to be very desirous of and to eat. Therefore, she saw, i.e. she viewed it more inquisitively, and she contemplated it with an enticing delight and regarded it fastidiously.

From the word *thereupon* it is clear that Eve sinned after, not before she heard the words of the serpent. Rupert of Deutz, therefore, wrongly thinks that she willingly sinned beforehand by being proud and interiorly by lusting after the forbidden fruit. He surmised that the devil approached her in order to incite her to complete her sin by an external action.

GOOD —

It would be delightful, tasty, pleasing to the palate to eat: the rosy color of apples and cherries is an indicator of their flavor and stimulates the appetite.

AND DELIGHTFUL TO BEHOLD —

In Hebrew וְנַחֲמַד לְהַשְׂכִּיל, *wənehmād ləhaškīl*, i.e., desirable for understanding, which the Jews explain as desirable for procuring knowledge and practical wisdom, for about it the serpent had said, “You shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.” However, that Eve was unable to see this with her corporeal eyes, to which the word *saw* applies in this verse, is clear from the two preceding clauses. Hence the Vulgate, the Aramaic and François Vatable render it better as *desirable to look at*, that is to say, by its shape and beauty. For that reason, the Septuagint translated it as ὁραῖον [*hōraïon*], i.e., attractive in appearance — it detained, so to speak, Eve in staring at length and in gazing at it.

Refer to what St. Gregory has to say about curiosity and the custody of the eyes in his *Moral Reflections on the Book of Job*, XXI, II. Moreover, see what St. Bernard in *On the Steps of Humility and Pride* has to say about the first step, which is curiosity: “Preserve, O Eve, what has been entrusted; wait for what has been promised; and beware of what has been forbidden, lest you lose what has been granted. Why do you gaze at death so intently? Why do you so repeatedly cast your wandering eyes there? Why is it pleasurable to look at what it is not permitted to eat? You say, ‘I stretch out my eyes, not my hand. It is not forbidden for me to see: I am prohibited from

eating.’ Even if this is not a fault, nevertheless there is a hint of fault. For as you were focused on another thing, the serpent meanwhile stealthily glides into your heart and speaks enticingly. It suppresses your reason with blandishments and your fear with lies, saying, ‘No, you shall not die.’ It decreases worry while it stimulates the appetite. It whets curiosity while it prompts covetousness. In the end, it offers what has been forbidden and takes away what has been granted. It holds out an apple and snatches away paradise. She who will die swallows poison, and she will give birth to children who will die.”

AND GAVE TO HER HUSBAND —

Telling him the things the devil had promised, and bidding him that he should be free from the fear of death, since he saw that she who had eaten of it was still alive. Thus she being quickly deceived, deceived the man; for Adam, lifted to pride after having heard these words of hers and striving after omniscience, was of the same mind with his wife and ate of the forbidden tree. Thus “from woman came the beginning of sin, and by her we all die,” Ecclesiasticus 25:33. St. Augustine⁴⁸⁵ adds that Adam, to the extent that he had not learned by experience God’s severity, thought this sin of his was venial and that he would easily win his pardon from God.

Let men learn from this passage that women are dangerous enticements and attractive poison when they yield to coveted objects and sensual desires, by which they damn themselves and their menfolk. Therefore, let men manfully oppose and resist them. “Always remember,” says St. Jerome in his letter *To Nepotian*, “that a woman drove out the settler of paradise from his homestead.”

St. Satorus, King Huneric’s overseer, acted the part of a man. Tempted to Arianism, he refused. Thereupon his wife, fearing the family’s ruin, with her children at her side, threw herself at the knees of her husband and entreated him by everything holy to have mercy on her, their infant daughter depending on her mother’s milk, and the other children. Then, in the words of Job, he replied to her: “ You are speaking like one of the foolish women. I would dread those things, Woman, if only the sweetness of *this* life would become bitter with the loss of our property and privileges. By all means, if you truly loved your husband, you would never try to drive him headlong into the ruin of a second death with your deceitful blandishments. Well then! Let them separate my children, let them carry away my wife, let them rob me of my resources. Utterly confident in the Lord’s promises, I shall hold fixed in my mind His words: “If any man come to

⁴⁸⁵ *The City of God*, Book XIV, Chapter 11.

me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” His wife departed. St. Satorus, stripped of everything and weakened with many tortures, was left a beggar in the end. Victor Vitensis⁴⁸⁶ narrates this anecdote in his *History of the Vandal Persecution*. In a similar fashion, St. Thomas More resisted his wife and preferred an offense to the king and the ruin of his family over an offense to God.

WHO DID EAT —

Benedict Pereira notes the eight sins of Adam: The *first* was pride; the *second*, too great a love of pleasing his wife; the *third*, curiosity; the *fourth*, incredulity: as if God would have had threatened someone violating the law with death figuratively or menacingly and not absolutely. The *fifth* was presumption; as if this violation of the law were only a light and venial sin; the *sixth*, gluttony; the *seventh*, disobedience; the *eighth*, excuse-making, of which St. Augustine⁴⁸⁷ says: “If Adam had not excused himself, he would not have been banished from paradise” and subsequently still would have eaten of the tree of life. Therefore, he would have recovered immortality and original justice (for these are connected). However, the contrary opinion, as Benedict Pereira teaches, is truer. For as Adam then sinned, before every excuse of his, he incurred the absolute sentence of death. For in chapter II, verse 17, that sentence was passed absolutely: “In what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death,” i.e., thou shalt most certainly die.

In verse 6, the Hebrew version and the Septuagint add *with her* after the words “and gave to her husband,” to wit, “Eve gave the fruit to her husband so that he might eat together with her.” Therefore, Eve seems to have eaten of it twice: once alone and again with Adam in order to entice him to eat, for in eating again she presented herself as a companion. Whence the Septuagint has “and they ate,” and the Aramaic has “he did eat,” (namely, Adam) with her.

You will ask whether Adam or Eve sinned more gravely. St. Thomas Aquinas⁴⁸⁸ replies as follows: considering the sin in itself, Eve sinned more gravely, both because she sinned beforehand and because she led Adam into sin, and thus she ruined herself, him, and all of us. But considering the condition of the person, then Adam sinned more gravely, both because he was more perfect and prudent than Eve and because Adam had immediately received the commandment from God, but Eve only mediately through Adam.

⁴⁸⁶ “Victor *Vitensis*,” or Victor of Vita, a 5th-century North African bishop, was the author of the *History of the Persecution of the African Province in the Times of Genseric and Huneric, Kings of the Vandals*.

⁴⁸⁷ *On the Saints*, Sermon 19.

⁴⁸⁸ ST, II-II, Q163, A4.

Verse 7. AND THE EYES OF THEM BOTH WERE OPENED —

That is to say, stripped by sin of the covering of grace and original justice, they became aware of their nakedness, confusion, and shame. And because of that stripping they felt in themselves the stirrings of concupiscence rebelling against reason, especially of lust for each other. The reason is that these unseemly impulses so affect man with shame that he covers those very members of his wherein this concupiscence reigns. Also because of that stripping they realized how great a good in original justice they had lost and into how much sin and evil they had fallen. And they understood that not only was God and God’s sentence truthful, but also that the serpent in the promises made to them was a lying demon. So write St. John Chrysostom, Rupert of Deutz and St. Augustine.⁴⁸⁹

From this passage one gathers that even though Eve was stripped of grace by sin, she did not notice her confusion and nakedness until she enticed Adam into the same sin, for a brief delay occurred between each one’s sin. During the interval, Eve was occupied with her voluptuous pleasures in the fruit, and as she was presenting those delights to and persuading her husband, she did not reflect on her own wretchedness and nakedness. Or certainly the following explanation from Francesco Griffolini of Arezzo is plausible: Eve was not stripped of original justice inasmuch as there was gratuitous grace,⁴⁹⁰ nor did she notice the impulse of concupiscence and her nakedness until Adam sinned. Then, indeed, this primeval sin of disobedience was consummated, and then both were stripped of original justice according to God’s decree, and owing to that they grew ashamed. Indeed, if Eve had been deprived of original justice at the moment she sinned, she would have blushed at her nakedness and would not have dared to approach her husband but would have looked for a hiding place or clothing owing to modesty, just as she did as soon as Adam sinned.

For the reason why modesty naturally ensues on account of nudity, refer to St. Cyprian’s sermon *On the Reason for Circumcision*.

Hence St. Augustine⁴⁹¹ teaches that gluttony is the mother of lust, just as abstinence is the mother of chastity. “Adam,” he says, “only knew Eve under the incitement of intemperance: for

⁴⁸⁹ The City of God, Book XIV, Chapter 17.

⁴⁹⁰ The Latin term is *gratia gratis data*. St. Aquinas says that it is called “*gratuitous grace* because it is granted to a man above and beyond the capacity of nature and above and beyond the merit of the person; it is not given to a man so that he may be justified by it, but rather so that he may cooperate toward the justification of another. Therefore, it is not called sanctifying grace” (Ia IIae, q. 111, a. 1).

⁴⁹¹ *On the Feasts and Seasons of the Liturgical Year*, Sermon 77.

as long as tempered moderation remained in them, undefiled virginity also remained. And as long as they fasted from the forbidden viands, they also fasted from shameful sins. For hunger is the friend of virginity and the enemy of wantonness; at the same time that fullness reduces chasteness, it nourishes enticement.” In the same sermon, St. Augustine adds that owing to this, Christ fasted and was hungry in the desert - in order to fight, by means of His own fasting, the gluttony and lust of Adam and restore him and us to the immortality that we lost through his gluttony.

AND MADE THEMSELVES APRONS —

I.e., belts for the mid-section, aprons for their loins, or ventral breechcloths, naturally in order to cover their shameful parts, for in the rest of their bodies they remained naked like the present-day native peoples of Brazil, the Cafres, and other Indians, as Adam himself says in verse 10. St. Irenæus⁴⁹² thinks they made these loincloths from a fig tree as a sign of penitence, and they adapted them as a covering for themselves. The reason for supposing it a sign of penitence is that fig leaves prick the skin. Refer also to St. Ambrose’s *On Paradise*, Chapter 13.

Verse 8. AND WHEN THEY HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LORD GOD —

Namely, they heard a fearful din and noise aroused by God as a result of the shaking of the trees, for the trees were shaken, as it were, at the footsteps of God coming from afar and walking through the trees. Indeed, this was the voice of God taking a walk in paradise, as Moses says. Nevertheless, Cajetan understands the voice as not being from trees but as from God speaking in anger, and, as Alonso Tostado maintains, of God saying, “Adam, where art thou?”

Adam recognized it was the voice of God, *first*, because he had already spoken with God beforehand, and *second*, because the voice was immense and frightful, and worthy of God. For although the voice had been produced by the agency of an angel, it still echoed God (see Canon 16). *Third*, because Adam knew no other man existed who might call out in a voice, and *fourth*, because of the awareness of sin, and because God Himself suggested to his mind that this was the voice of the avenging God.

AT THE AFTERNOON AIR —

Namely, as the day was ending, when the soft west winds usually blow, and men, wearied by the heat of the day, look for a breeze. St. Jerome makes the same comment in his *Hebrew Questions on Genesis* following the versions of Symmachus, Aquila, and Theodotion. Indeed, God

⁴⁹² *Against Heresies*, Book III, Chapter 23.

appeared in this verse, or rather an angel appeared in God's place as though a man, walking in paradise in the outward appearance of a man.

In addition, "at the air" is said because a breeze or wind was present — for it was blowing from the direction from which God walked as He was advancing — and made the sound of God audible from a distance in order to unnerve Adam with a greater fear of God and give him time to look for a hiding place. So writes Francesco Griffolini of Arezzo.

Note the word *afternoon*. St Irenæus⁴⁹³ says that certainly means that Christ would come at the evening of the world to redeem Adam and his descendants.

How many ways God speaks to us can be found in Book XVIII, Chapters 2 and 3 of *Moral Reflections on the Book of Job* by St. Gregory the Great.

HE HID HIMSELF AMIDST THE TREE⁴⁹⁴ —

I.e., the trees, namely amid the thickest trees of paradise. This rhetorical figure is called an enallage.⁴⁹⁵

In this verse Benedict Pereira notes the five fruits or effects of Adam and Eve's sin: the *first* is that their eyes were opened; the *second* is their nakedness; the *third*, shame and confusion; the *fourth* is the worm of conscience; and the *fifth* is dread and fear of divine judgment. St. Bernard says very accurately, "In sin, cheerfulness passes away, never to return; anxiety remains, never to leave"; furthermore, the Stoic philosopher Gaius Musonius Rufus⁴⁹⁶ says, "When someone has done something foul for the sake of sensual pleasure, that which is agreeable departs and that which is foul and sad remains." On the other hand, in virtuous works that which is hard and sad departs, and that which is agreeable and joyful remains.

Verse 9. WHERE ART THOU? —

In other words, "I left thee, O Adam, in one place, and I find thee in another. I had clothed thee with glory: thou used to walk gloriously in My presence. Now I see thee naked, looking for hiding places. How did this happen to thee? Who enticed thee into so great a change of fortune? What thief or robber, stripping thee of all thy gifts, hath reduced thee to such poverty? How did

⁴⁹³ Book V.

⁴⁹⁴ The Vulgate version, like the Septuagint, uses the singular, following the Hebrew. In Hebrew רָץ, 'êṣ, is often collective according to J. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, p. 77, footnote to verse 8 (1925). The Douay version reads "trees," plural.

⁴⁹⁵ Substitution of one grammatical form (number, tense, person, part of speech, etc.) for another.

⁴⁹⁶ As quoted in the *Attic Nights* of Aulus Gellius.

this awareness of nakedness, this confusion take hold of thee? Why dost thou flee? Why dost thou blush? Why art thou hiding? Why dost thou quake with fear? Is someone really standing by to accuse thee? Witnesses are not crowding around, are they? From what direction did such a great terror attack thee? Now where are the serpent's very fine promises? Where is thy original mental calmness? Where is the mind's freedom from care? Where is peace and confidence of conscience? Where is all the possession of so many good things and the freedom from all evils?" St. Ambrose:⁴⁹⁷ "Where is thy confidence, well-conscious of itself? This fear of thine acknowledges the fault; the hiding place confesses the transgression. Therefore, with the question 'Where art thou?' I do not ask, 'In which place art thou?' but rather 'In what condition art thou?' Where have thy sins led thee so that thou fleest thy God - Whom before this thou wert wont to seek?"

Verse 10. I WAS AFRAID, BECAUSE I WAS NAKED —

"I was afraid," i.e. *I blushed*, I was ashamed to come into Thy sight. The reason is that these fig leaves scarcely covered my shameful parts alone; in the rest of my body I am still naked. "And," i.e., *therefore* (because the Hebrew *wāw*, i.e. *and*, is often causal), "I hid myself." Thus fear is often taken for shame, and so shame itself and reverence are called the fear or dread of reverence, as I said at *Hebrews* 12:28.

Verse 11. AND WHO —

The word *and*⁴⁹⁸ is not in the Hebrew text, and it is not causal but rather it is emphatic and has the same force as *but indeed, but in truth, but yet*. Indeed, in this verse, God urges and presses Adam to acknowledge the cause of blame for his nudity.

Verse 12. THE WOMAN, WHOM THOU GAVEST ME TO BE MY COMPANION —

In our view, after sinning Adam, already filled with concupiscence, pride, and love of self, is the first one to seek excuses in sins, and so he passes the blame on to his wife who allured him and furthermore to God Himself Who gave him such a wife.\

⁴⁹⁷ *On Paradise*, Chapter 14.

⁴⁹⁸ The Latin word in the Vulgate is *enim*, a postpositive particle with a widely nuanced range of meaning, which the Douay represents by *and*. The Septuagint like the Hebrew employs no such connective.

Verse 14. AND THE LORD GOD SAID TO THE SERPENT —

The serpent was present in front of God, Adam, and Eve. For although after the temptation the demon had left the serpent and it had crawled hither and thither, by the will of God it was sent to the place wherein Adam was called out of hiding and presented itself in front of God. The chief reason for the assertion that the location of the serpent's temptation was not very far from Adam's hiding place is because as soon as the tempted Adam fell, he sought clothing and a hiding place.

BECAUSE THOU HAST DONE THIS THING, THOU ART CURSED AMONG ALL CATTLE —

God turns around to the certain and sure author of the evil — the evil-counseling snake, and curses it.

Note *first*, in this verse the word *serpent* is literally understood as a real serpent — as St. Ephræm the Syrian, Moses Bar Cephas, Alonso Tostado and Benedict Pereira maintain — as well as the devil, who was the serpent's mover, voice, and spirit, as it were.

Wherefore, *second*, all these punishments are in some way literally fitting for the serpent, because it was the organ of the devil and the instrument of the ruin of men. Nevertheless, certain actions apply more to the devil, for all the old commentaries explain these punishments as belonging to the devil.

Third, the serpent was cursed because among all animals, it is the most abominable, bristling, poisonous, and harmful, especially to man, with whom after the sin it has a natural antipathy.

Fourth, before Eve's temptation the serpent did not walk upright — as St. Basil⁴⁹⁹ and Didymus⁵⁰⁰ hold — but advanced on its breast by crawling through hollows and ate dust, for both qualities are natural to it. Nevertheless, at that time, it was not abominable, nor was it disreputable, but it had its own place and dignity among the beasts. But after Eve's temptation and deception, the serpent became hated, disreputable, and abominable to man. And the qualities that were natural to it beforehand, viz. crawling, fleeing from light and mankind, ranging over caves, and eating dust, have now been established as its punishment and ordained for its infamy: for why, I ask, were the natural gifts, which had not been withdrawn from the demons owing to their sin, taken away from the serpent, in which there was no fault? In the same way, death is in a manner of speaking, natural to man and to the human body composed of contrary elements, but after his sin the penalty

⁴⁹⁹ In his homily *On Paradise*.

⁵⁰⁰ In the *Catena on Genesis of Luigi Lippomano*.

of sin began to be characteristic of man. Similarly, after the Flood the rainbow, which before had been a natural phenomenon, became a sign of the covenant undertaken between Noe and mankind and God (Genesis 9:16).

Fifth, the serpent's punishment was fitting and just - to wit, the snake had ventured to creep into the friendship and intimacy of man: therefore, hatred and curses became its lot. The devil had lifted the serpent up to engage in a conversation with the woman; therefore, it is ordered to creep on the ground. It had counseled the eating of the fruit; therefore, it is condemned to eat dust. It had looked at the woman face to face; therefore, now it looks at the heel of men and lies in wait for them, says Martin Delrio.

Sixth, symbolically, these punishments are applicable to the demon. For as Rupert of Deutz⁵⁰¹ says, the demon moves upon the breast because it no longer contemplates heavenly things, as he once did when an angel, but earthly things, nay rather, hellish things; and the earth — i.e., the men who taste of earthly things — is its food and fodder after Adam's sin. Indeed, he teaches all these men to crawl on the ground on their belly, i.e., give their time to gluttony and riotous living. So also says St. Gregory the Great.⁵⁰² Again, St. Augustine,⁵⁰³ St. Bede, Rupert of Deutz, Hugh of St. Victor and Cajetan say that the demon moves on its breast and stomach because it assails and seduces men in two ways: *first*, by pride which is represented by the breast; *second*, by lust, which is represented by the stomach. The reason is that the irascible power is in the breast and the concupiscible in the stomach. The demon stirs up and inflames those appetites and by them drives men to the gravest sins.

Verse 15. I WILL PUT ENMITIES BETWEEN THEE AND THE WOMAN —

That is to say, because God deprived man of his dominion over the beasts on account of sin, the serpent, starting from this time, began to be harmful and deadly to man; moreover, in turn, man began to be a killer of serpents, although beforehand there had been no antipathy, horror, hatred, or desire to do harm between man and serpent. Aristotle says that man's spittle tortures the serpent and, if it touches its jaws (with which it tempted Eve), kills it.

SHE SHALL CRUSH THY HEAD —

⁵⁰¹ *On the Trinity*, Book III, Chapter 18.

⁵⁰² *Moral Reflections on the Book of Job*, Book XXI, Chapter 2.

⁵⁰³ *On Genesis Against the Manichees*, Book II, Chapter 17.

This reading is threefold. The *first* comes from the Hebrew manuscripts, which read: “It,” namely the *seed*, “shall crush thy head.” And so read St. Leo and, from him, Luigi Lippomano. The *second* is: “He (namely man or Christ) shall crush thy head.” So read the Septuagint and the Aramaic versions. The *third* is: “She shall crush thy head.” Thus read the Roman Bible and almost all the Latin versions, with St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Gregory the Great, St. Bede, Blessed Alcuin of York, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Eucherius of Lyons, Rupert of Deutz and others. Included with the Hebrew examples are certain manuscripts that read in place of הוּא [hū’] either הוּא [hū’, “he, it”] or היא [hi’/hī’, “she”], with short or long *hîreq*.⁵⁰⁴ Moreover, הוּא, hū’, is often used in place of היא, hi’/hī’, especially when there is emphasis, and something masculine is attributed to a woman, as the crushing of the serpent’s head is in this verse. Examples in this chapter are verses 12 and 20.⁵⁰⁵ Examples elsewhere are Genesis 17:14, 24:44 38:21 and 25. The masculine verb יִשׁוּב, *yāšūḇ*, i.e., “he shall crush,” presents no difficulties, for this is a frequent enallage of the kind we find in the Hebrew language, where the masculine is used for the feminine and vice-versa, especially if a reason or some mystery lies at the bottom, as it does here, as I shall presently explain. Therefore, *hī’ yāšūḇ* is used in place of *hī’ tāšūḇ*. Thus in Chapter 2, verse 23, it reads יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה, *yiqqārē’ iššāh*, instead of תִּקְרָא אִשָּׁה *tiqqārē’ iššāh*. Whence also Josephus in Book I, Chapter 3 [of *Jewish Antiquities*], so reads it as the Vulgate has it: “He ordered that the woman render blows to its head,” as Rufinus translates. From that, it is evident that Josephus once read αὐτή [*autē*], i.e., *she*, but heretical printers have now since supplied the word γυνή [*gynē*, “woman”].

Note *first* that none of these three readings is to be rejected. No, indeed: All are true readings. For in this verse, when God sets the two against each other as if they were opponents in a contest — the woman with her seed against the serpent with its seed — He consequently wishes to say that the woman with her seed will crush the head of the serpent, just as, on the other hand, the serpent lies in wait for the heel of both the woman and her seed. And therefore in this verse Moses seems to have mixed the masculine verb with the feminine pronoun, saying היא יִשׁוּב, *hī’ yāšūḇ*, *she shall crush* [literally, *she he shall crush*], in order to signify both the woman and her seed; or rather, the woman through her seed, namely through Christ, shall crush the head of the serpent.

⁵⁰⁴ The short vowel *ī* as in “lid” or the long vowel *î* as in “machine,” hence the transcription *hi’* or *hī’*.

⁵⁰⁵ The *hū’* printed in these verses is read and transliterated *hī’* and translated as *she*.

Note *second*: these punishments, as I have said, are applicable to both the serpent and the devil, who was, as it were, the mover and soul of the serpent. Indeed, this antipathy, hatred, horror, and war between serpents and mankind, both men and women, began literally after sin, as experience now makes clear. Actually Rupert of Deutz⁵⁰⁶ relates the particular and notable empirical fact that the serpent's head can only with great difficulty be crushed by swords, bars, and hammers that the entire body is destroyed; nevertheless, if the woman with the bare sole of her foot forestalls the serpent's tooth and presses down on its head, the whole body immediately along with the head can entirely perish.

These activities are even more literally appropriate for Christ and the Blessed Virgin fighting against the devil. The woman, of course, is Eve, who crushed the devil when she did penance, or more suitably the woman is the Blessed Mary, a daughter of Eve. Her seed is Jesus and Christians. The serpent is the devil: the unfaithful and all the impious are his seed. Therefore, Blessed Mary crushed the serpent because she was always the complete and glorious victor over the devil, and, as the Church sings, she crushes worldwide all heresies (which are the serpent's head). Truly Christ most perfectly crushed the serpent and its head and its machinations while with His own power on the cross He took away from the devil his whole kingdom and his spoils. And from Christ, the penitent Eve, the innocent Mary and even we received the power of crushing the devil and his seed, understanding seed as both evil suggestions and impious men, for the devil is the father and prince of these men. To be sure, this is what Psalm 90:13 says: "Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk: and thou shalt trample underfoot the lion and the dragon." And St. Luke says in chapter 10:19: "Behold I have given you the power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy." Also at Romans 16:20: "may God ... crush Satan under your feet speedily." Such is the opinion of St. Theodoret, Rupert of Deutz, St. Bede, St. Augustine,⁵⁰⁷ St. Epiphanius of Salamis⁵⁰⁸ and here and there in the other Fathers.

Appropriately, St. John Chrysostom⁵⁰⁹ places Christ opposite to Adam, Blessed Mary to Eve, and Gabriel to the serpent: "Death," he says, "came through Adam, and life through Christ. The serpent seduced Eve, but Mary was of one mind with Gabriel. While the seduction of Eve

⁵⁰⁶ In Book III, Chapter 20.

⁵⁰⁷ *The City of God*, Book XI, Chapter 36.

⁵⁰⁸ *Against the Antidicomarianite*, Book II. "Antidicomarianites" is a Greek word meaning "Adversaries of Mary," signifying heretics who asserted that Mary and Joseph had other children after Christ's birth.

⁵⁰⁹ *On the Prohibition of the Tree*, Volume I.

brought death, Mary's accord gave birth to the Savior for the world. That which had been lost through Eve is restored through Mary. That which had been taken captive through Adam is redeemed through Christ. That which had been given up through the devil is promised through Gabriel."

SHALL CRUSH —

In Hebrew the verb is הָשָׁח , yāšūp̄ , which Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra translates as *shall strike through*. Rabbi Solomon renders it *shall bruise*, and the Septuagint τερήσει , i.e., *shall crush*. Nevertheless, St. Philo⁵¹⁰ reads with some others τηρήσει , i.e., *shall watch*. Wherefore the Aramaic version also translates this verse as *he will watch you as to what you did to him from the beginning and you will watch him unto the end*. Properly the Hebrew verb הָשָׁח , šūp̄ , seems to mean "to strike, cover over, trample upon, crush" someone suddenly and as if by ambush or from a hiding place, as is evident from Job 9:17 and Psalm 138:11. Whence the Vulgate in this passage renders the verb as "and thou shalt lie in wait."

See in this verse how silly, heretical, and idolatrous were those who were called the Ophites, i.e., the serpent-like ones, a name derived from ὄφις [*ophis*], i.e. serpent, which they worshipped because by putting forward the forbidden fruit, it was the beginning of good and evil for Adam and his descendants. And accordingly, they used to offer it bread. St. Epiphanius of Salamis recounts the rite of offering in his *Panarion* 37.

AND THOU SHALT LIE IN WAIT FOR HER HEEL —

In the Hebrew text, this is the same verb yāšūp̄ as already spoken about, which the Septuagint a little before translates as τερήσει , i.e., *shall crush*. However, here the version renders it as τηρήσεις , i.e., "you will watch" (namely, *by lying in wait for her*), for so read Josephus, St. Philo, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, St. Irenæus, St. Augustine and others, following the Septuagint. Indeed, serpents, being concealed in meadows and in forests, are properly wont to avenge themselves not by an open act but by treachery, and bite the unwary from behind and strike their heel, and from that to cause the whole body to perish with the aid of its poison. So says Rupert of Deutz.

In the same way the devil lies in wait for the heel, i.e., tries by ambush, so to speak, to strike from behind Christ, the Blessed Virgin and Christians; for the Hebrew idiom, an incomplete,

⁵¹⁰ *Allegorical Interpretation II.*

but inchoate, or rather attempted, act of striking is meant in this verse.⁵¹¹ But the devil does not prevail over them as long as they remain the seed of Christ, namely children of God. Moreover, the devil in fact strikes some of this seed, namely those faithful in the Church who are like a heel, i.e., the lowest, base ones attached to the earth.

Again, the head of Christ is divinity; the heel is humanity. While the demon struck and cut down the latter, it itself was undone, for then Christ crushed its head, i.e., He overthrew its pride and subverted its entire assault.

Metaphorically speaking, St. Gregory the Great⁵¹² says, “We crush the serpent’s head when we root out the beginnings of temptation from our hearts, and then it lies in wait for our heel, because it more subtly and more powerfully assaults the aim of a good action.” And St. Augustine⁵¹³ says, “If the devil watches your heel, watch his head. His head is the beginning of evil suggestion. When he begins to suggest evil things, reject them before pleasure arises and consent follows. Therefore, you will avoid his head and thus he will not take hold of your heel.”

Undoubtedly true are the words of the poet Ovid:

*Block a disease at its very first sign: cures readied late fail us,
When through delays a grave illness has grown stronger by far.*

And St. Bernard⁵¹⁴ says, “The head of the serpent is crushed when a fault is corrected where it originates.” Blessed Alcuin of York, or Flaccus Albinus Alcuinus, if you will, gives this point: The devil, he says, lies in wait for our heel because he attacks more fiercely at the end of our life. For this reason, the Saints feared their own end and then more fervently served God. Thus St. Hilarion, in fear at his death, said to himself: “Thou hast served the Lord for almost 70 years, and thou art afraid to die?” As he lay dying, Abbot Pambo of Nitria said, “I now depart from here to my God, as being one who has up to this point barely begun to truly and rightly worship God.” St. Arsenius the Deacon said, “Allow me, O Lord, if Thou wilt, now to begin to live piously.” Near death, St. Francis of Assisi said, “Brothers, until now we have effected little: let us now begin to serve God. Let us return to the beginnings of humility and the novitiate.” According to St. Bonaventure in his biography of the saint, Francis said and did this. And thus St. Anthony said,

⁵¹¹ Fr. Lapidé is referring to the distinction in Hebrew between verbs of hostile endeavor and verbs of hostile achievement.

⁵¹² *Moral Reflections on the Book of Job*, Book I, Chapter 38.

⁵¹³ In his commentary on Psalms 48 and 103.

⁵¹⁴ *The Manner of Good Living, to a Nun*, Chapter 29.

“Today ye believe that ye have taken possession of a religious mode of life.” And St. Barlaam said to St. Josaphat: “Think” every day “that today thou hast begun to serve God, and that today thou wilt meet your end.” Pope St. Agatho had lived a holy life, and yet he used to say, “I shudder at death because the judgments of men are one thing, the judgments of God another.”

Symbolically speaking, St. Philo says the heel is that part of the soul that adheres to its earthly nature, which is inclined toward and prone to slip into the sense appetite and earthly pleasures. The demon lies in wait for this part of the soul, and through it, the demon lies in wait for the mind and will; therefore Christ washed the feet of the disciples at the Last Supper, signifying that the curse of the heel was already washed away, where from the very beginning of things the opportunity of attack offered unimpeded passage to the serpent’s stings.

Allegorically speaking, the enmity between the woman and the serpent signifies the continual hatred and war between the Church and the devil, as St. John teaches in the Apocalypse 12:13, and the Fathers here and there. Some writers, like Jesuit Father James Gordon Huntly⁵¹⁵ literally understand by *woman* the Church and by *serpent* the devil. Truly the word *woman*, rather than a woman as such, signifies in a mystical way the Church. Whence the Apostle, in Ephesians 5:32, calls this a sacrament, or, as it is in the Greek, the *mystery* of Christ and the Church.

Verse 16. I WILL MULTIPLY —

The Hebrew is הרבה ארבה, *harbāh 'arbeh*, “Multiplying I will multiply,” i.e., I will multiply very much and most certainly, for the doubling of the verb signifies both multitude and certainty.

This punishment is inflicted on the woman in a threefold manner on account of her threefold sin. Because she believed the serpent who told her, “You shall be as Gods,” she hears “I will multiply thy sorrows, and thy conceptions;” because she enticed the man, she hears, “Thou shalt be under thy husband's power.” So says Rupert of Deutz.

SORROWS AND CONCEPTIONS —

This means the “sorrows of conceptions,” for the figure of hendiadys [use of two nouns joined by “and” rather than a qualifier and a noun] is frequent in the Hebrew Scriptures, such as this line of the Poet: “It champed at gold and bits,” i.e., it champed at golden bits. These sorrows before conception are stains and the menstrual flow; in conception itself, they are defloration, shame, and pain. After conception, they are uncleanness, foul odor, the retention of the menstrual

⁵¹⁵ *Summary of the Controversies of the Christian Faith Against the Heretics of This Time*, Book I, Chapter 17.

discharge, the incontinence of the appetite, and the weight of the child for nine months, the weariness of contraction, and many dangers, about which Aristotle writes.⁵¹⁶

IN SORROW SHALT THOU BRING FORTH —

Joined with this pain is often a danger to life, both the mother's and the offspring's, and that danger is both of mind and of body. And it is so great that one well-experienced woman said: "in the course of life, I prefer to fight it out under arms ten times than to give birth once." This pain is greater in woman than in any animal on account of the rather difficult wrenching apart caused by continually giving birth, as Aristotle teaches. In the state of innocence, the woman would have escaped this pain through the kindness and providence of God. Behold how the small pleasure of sin, a drop of honey, I say, produced so much gall and so many sorrows for Eve and all her descendants!

THOU SHALT BE UNDER THY HUSBAND'S POWER —

Not as beforehand, voluntarily, willingly, with a marvelous pleasantness and harmony, but often unwillingly, with the greatest annoyance and repugnance. For in this verse the husband received the power of controlling and punishing his wife. Such is the opinion of Luis de Molina.

The Hebrew words just before this sentence are: Unto thy husband תשוקתך, *təšūqātēk*, i.e., thy longing, running to and fro, returning; or as the Septuagint and Aramaic versions have it, he will be thy turning back, thy inclination, which is to say, Whatever thou wilt desire, it will be necessary that thou hast recourse to thy husband to obtain and achieve it. Accordingly, if thou art wise, let thine eyes ever observe thy husband's expression, eyes, will, and propensity so that thou mayest please him, comply with him, and bind him to thyself. If thou art wise, thou wilt know that thou seekest nothing other than that which will be pleasing to thy spouse. If thou lovest peace and rest, thou shalt agree and be in harmony with thy spouse. See that thou dost not buck against the spur. Rupert of Deutz adds a comment to the verse "Thou shalt be under thy husband's power," writing: This is precisely true according to Roman albeit Gentile laws. A wife is not allowed to draw up a last will without her husband's authorization; and because she was under the man's hand, she is said to be one who has had her "head taken away."⁵¹⁷

HE SHALL HAVE DOMINION OVER THEE —

⁵¹⁶ *The History of Animals*, Book VII, Chapter 4.

⁵¹⁷ *Capitis deminutio*, "the loss of the head," is a term under Roman law: *caput* ["head"] referred to the "civil status of a person which implies the legal ability to conclude legally valid transactions" (Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law* [1953]).

In this verse, the husband's dominion, if it is just and moderate, is of the law of nature; if it is domineering and tyrannical, it is exclusive of nature. However, both conditions are a vexation to womankind and a penalty of sin. Therefore, it is contrary to nature, and something that borders on monstrous, if a woman should wish to have dominion over her husband.

Verse 17. BECAUSE THOU HAST HEARKENED —

Because thou obeyed thy wife rather than Me.

CURSED IS THE EARTH IN THY WORK —

Note along with Procopius, Alonso Tostado, and Benedict Pereira that, in this verse, the earth was not absolutely cursed by God, but rather “in thy work,” because, in other words, it will give thee, O Adam, few fruits as thou work it sweating: No indeed! It will often yield thistles and thorns.

Although before sin the earth had naturally produced thorns and thistles (although St. Bede, Rupert, and others deny this, I have all the same shown in Chapter 1, verse 12, that this is the truer interpretation), nevertheless now those thorns and thistles have become sinning man's punishment. The reason is that if Adam had not sinned, he would have effortlessly lived off the fruits of paradise (the delightful place wherein all things would have gratified and refreshed man, and there would have been nothing to hurt him, and consequently no thorns would have been present there). But now working so as to acquire his food, he often sows thorns and thistles, on which he does not feed, but by which he is hurt.

In addition, by this sin of Adam it seems the primeval goodness and fertility of the earth was impeded and diminished, and thus it now produces denser thistles and thorns in more places than it used to produce before sin. To be sure, this happened to the sinner Cain, as it says in Genesis 4:12, and so too, to the Israelites on account of sins. God, through the prophets, threatens a heaven of brass and a ground of iron. And so today God often punishes cities and kingdoms with sterility because of sins. Whence the Aramaic version and Aquila translate this verse as *cursed is the ground on account of thee*, and Theodotion's version renders it *cursed is the earth in thy transgression*, for the root עבר, *‘ābar*, means “to transgress.” In this case, note that the Hebrew editions have בעבורך, *ba‘ābūrekā*, i.e., “on account of thee,” as the Aramaic version and Aquila translate. But the Vulgate, along with the Septuagint, reads בעבודך, *ba‘ābōdekā*, i.e., *in thy work*. (From these two versions, it is clear that the reading *ba‘ābōdekā*, i.e., *in thy work*, is ancient and,

because of that, the truer reading). The Hebrew letters *rēš* ר and *dāleṭ* ד are very similar in form, such that it is an easy slip from one to the other.⁵¹⁸

Figuratively speaking, St. Basil the Great⁵¹⁹ says: “In this verse, the rose was coupled to thorns, appealing to us only with a muffled voice, saying, ‘O Men, those things that are pleasing to you are mixed with sadness.’ For truly in human affairs it has been so arranged that there is nothing unadulterated in them, but instead vexation is immediately cemented to happiness and gaiety, widowhood to marriage, care and anxiety to the upbringing of children, miscarriage to fertility, ignominy to the splendor of life, losses to advantageous successes, satiety to delights, and sickness to health. The rose is, to be sure, in bloom, but it inflicts pain on me. How often when I behold this flower am I reminded of my sin because the earth was condemned to bring forth thorns and thistles.”

WITH LABOUR AND TOIL SHALT THOU EAT THEREOF —

The Hebrew word עֲצָבוֹן, *‘iṣṣāḇōn*, means toil mixed with great vexations, sufferings, and sorrows, such as agricultural work, and it is varied, manifold, and unremitting; whereby man, in spite of his effort, still scarcely acquires food for himself and his family.

Isidoro Chiari notes that in this verse God suitably inflicts their punishments on each one of the guilty parties. Undoubtedly the serpent had arrogantly raised itself up, and therefore it is commanded to creep over the earth. The woman had tasted the delights of the fruit, and thus is commanded to give birth in sorrow. Adam had slothfully yielded to the woman: thus he is ordered to acquire his food with labor and toil. This, therefore, is “the heavy yoke upon the children of Adam, from the day of their coming out of their mother’s womb, until the day of their burial into the mother of all,” Ecclesiasticus 40:1. Under this yoke we all groan.

THEREOF —

In Hebrew, shalt thou eat *it*, namely its produce and fruits.

Verse 18. THOU SHALT EAT THE HERBS OF THE EARTH —

In other words, thou shalt eat not the delights and fruits of paradise, not even partridges, hares, roasted and boiled meats, but simple and paltry herbs of the earth, both for the sake of temperance and penance. Indeed, the Hebrews call the herbs of the earth or field “common and

⁵¹⁸ The Hebrew characters for *rēš* and *dāleṭ* are, respectively, ר, ד.

⁵¹⁹ In his homily *On Paradise*.

lowly” herbs, on which brute beasts as well as human beings feed. Without doubt, through sin man had become like the horse and the mule; therefore, he must necessarily feed on the same food with them.

See the figurative interpretation found in St. John Cassian’s *Conferences of the Desert Fathers*, Book XXIII, Chapter 11.

Verse 19. FOR DUST THOU ART, AND UNTO DUST THOU SHALT RETURN —

The Septuagint has *for earth thou art, and to earth thou shalt return*. Therefore, man after sin is like incurable tuberculosis; that is to say, he toils in the battle of contrary qualities and corruption, which little by little consumes and kills him. The Hebrew עפר, ‘*āpār*, properly means “dust.” However, as I said before, this dust from which Adam was made was mixed with water, and thus it is the clay and mud of the earth, whence after death the corpse of a man is reduced to mud. “Why, then, is earth and ash proud?” (Ecclesiasticus 10:9). Hence it is clear that death is not the condition of nature for man but the punishment for sin. Whence St. Augustine⁵²⁰ insightfully says: “Man was immortal. God willed him to be; he did not lose the fact that he was man, but he lost the fact that he was immortal, and because of the pride of disobedience, the punishment of nature was executed.” The same idea is evident in Romans 5:12 and in Wisdom 2:23. St. John Chrysostom thinks this sentence of death mitigates the earlier one: “With labour and toil thou shalt eat thereof.” Indeed, Rupert of Deutz⁵²¹ learnedly shows how this punishment is useful to us. He says, *first*, “In order for man at least to be watchful with the fear of the moment, God frightens man with the death of his flesh, lest he might be ignorant of the evil death of his soul and sleep carefree in his pleasures until the dawn of the Last Judgment.” And hence *second*, “He wished the day and hour of death to be unknown, which does not allow an always-anxious, always-fearful man to be too proud.” *Third*, in conformity with Plotinus, he teaches that it was by God’s mercy that He made man mortal, lest he be tortured by the sufferings of this life. *Fourth*, God willed that man live in “labour and toil.” Or as Virgil expressed the idea poetically:

... *whetting the minds of men*

With care on care, nor suffering realm of his

⁵²⁰ *Sentences* 260.

⁵²¹ In Book III, Chapters 24 and 25.

*In drowsy sloth to stagnate.*⁵²²

Morally speaking, what, therefore, is man? Listen to the pagans. *First*, says Aristotle, man is the sport of fortune, the image of inconstancy, the mirror of corruption, the plunder of time. *Second*, man is the property of death, a passing wayfarer. *Third*, says Plautus, he is a ball with which God plays. *Fourth*, says Seneca, he is a feeble and easily broken body, naked, defenseless, needing the assistance of another, abandoned to every insult of fortune. *Fifth*, says Hermes Trismegistus, he is a fetter of corruption, a living death, a corpse with sensation, a sepulcher that can be turned around, an opaque veil. *Sixth*, says Sophocles, man is a vision in a dream, a thin shadow. *Seventh*, says Pindar, he is the dream of a shadow. *Eighth*, he is the exile and inhabitant of the wretched world. For what, as a certain philosopher asked, is the world nowadays except a chest of sorrows, a school of vanity, and the marketplace of impostors?

What is man? Listen to the men of faith, the wise, and the prophets. *First*, says St. Bernard, man is a foul seed, a sack of dung, food for worms. *Second*, said Zeno the Isaurian, the Roman emperor, as he was fleeing Constantinople when he heard of the slaughter of his family, man is God's plaything. *Third*, man is a drop in a bucket; he is a locust, the smallest grain of a balance, a drop of the morning dew; he is grass, a flower; he is nothing and vanity, as Isaias says in Chapter 40, verses 6, 15, 17, and 22.⁵²³ *Fourth*, he is all vanity, as the Psalmist says in Psalm 38:6. *Fifth*, he is "a post that runneth on":⁵²⁴ he is a passing ship; he is a bird flying by; he is a released arrow; he is smoke; he is downy facial hair; he is light froth; he is a one-day's guest (Wisdom 5:9). *Sixth*, he is dust and ashes, as Abraham says in Genesis 18:27. *Seventh*, the Book of Job 14:1-2, says, "Man born of a woman, living but for a short time, is filled with many miseries. Who cometh forth like a flower, and is destroyed, and fleeth as a shadow, and never continueth in the same state." Learn, therefore, O Man, to esteem both yourself and the world slightly! Listen to St. Augustine in the last one of his *Sentences*: "You flourish in wealth, and you boast about the nobility of your ancestors, and you exult in your native country, your physical beauty, and the honors that men offer you. Look at yourself and see that you are mortal and that you are earth, and you will go into the earth. Look around at those who before you glowed with similar splendors. Where are they whom the citizens' power embraced? Where are the unconquerable commanders? Where are they

⁵²² Verse translation by J.B. Grenough (1900).

⁵²³ Fr. Lapidé's metaphor "a drop of the morning [lit. "pre-dawn"] dew" is found in Wisdom 11:23.

⁵²⁴ From the Douay translation of the Vulgate's *nuntius praecurrens*.

who convened councils and staged festivals? Where are the magnificent importers of horses? Where are the leaders of armies? Where are the tyrannical satraps? Now all things are dust, now all things are ashes, now the memory of them is in a few verses. Look at graves and see: Who is the slave? Who the master? Who the pauper? Who the rich man? Distinguish, if you can, the conquered from the king, the strong from the weak, the beautiful from the hideous. Therefore, be mindful of nature lest at some time or another you be lifted up. But, indeed, you will be mindful if you will have looked at yourself.”

Thus St. Zosimus, returning the following Easter to the place appointed by St. Mary of Egypt, found her stretched on the ground dead, and these words written on the ground behind her: “Father Zosimus, bury the little body of wretched Mary. Restore earth to earth, and dust to dust.” And since he did not have a spade, there was a lion present, which dug the earth with its claws and made a ditch in which St. Zosimus buried the body of Saint Mary.⁵²⁵

Verse 20. AND ADAM CALLED THE NAME OF HIS WIFE EVE —

“He called,” after he was expelled from paradise, for he was cast out of paradise after his sin and God’s sentence. Therefore, here we have an instance of the rhetorical figure of prolepsis or anticipation.

Eve [Latin form = *Heva*]: in Hebrew it is הוה, *hawwāh*, i.e., *living*, or rather *vivifying*, from the root חי, *hāyāh*, i.e., *she lived*, “because she was the” future “mother of all the living.” Whence the Septuagint renders Eve as ζωή [*zoē*], i.e., “life.” From the Hebrew *hāyāh* or *hāwāh*, i.e. *she lived*, comes the imperative הוה, *haweh*, or *have*, i.e. “Live!” It is an expression of greeting and well-wishing, that is to say in Greek, χαῖρε [*chaîre*, “Hail!”] and ὑγίαινε [*hugíaine*, “Be in good health!”]. Whence the word’s appearance in the comedy *Poenulus* by Plautus: “*Havo!*”⁵²⁶ (I.e. *Hail! Be well!*) From what country are you folks, or from what town?” Thus is the opinion of the Jesuit Nicolaus Serarius.⁵²⁷ For *have*, speakers of Latin say *ave*, and the Phoenicians say *havo*.

⁵²⁵ The details of the narrative of Ss. Zosimus and Mary of Egypt, too lengthy for a footnote, may be found under April 2 in Volume II of *Butler’s Lives of the Saints*, edited by Thurston and Attwater.

⁵²⁶ In English, the title of the play is “The Little Carthaginian.”

⁵²⁷ In the Book of Josue, Chapter II, Question 25.

Note that the rabbis wrongly pointed ⁵²⁸ the word *ḥawwāh*, for it must be pointed and read $\eta\eta\eta$, *ḥēvāh*, or *Heva*, for so read the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and other versions. Similarly the rabbis ignorantly read *kōreš* for *Cyrus* and *dārāyāweš* for *Darius*.

By this name *Eve*, Adam consoled himself and his wife, both of whom God had condemned to death, because through Eve he will beget living descendants, through whom Adam and Eve, although doomed to die, nevertheless as parents will live in their children perpetually.

Hence Eve was a type of Blessed Mary, who is the mother of the living, not in this temporal life but in the spiritual and eternal life in heaven. Such is the opinion of St. Epiphanius of Salamis.⁵²⁹ Mary therefore is the better mother than Eve. Certainly Eve is and can be called the mother of both all the dying and all the living. Whence Nicolas of Lyra and Alonso Tostado say that Eve means the mother — not simply, but wretchedly and miserably — of all those living in this mortal life. Hence some piously consider that she is aptly called *Eva*, as though the name alludes to the crying of small children, deriving from the *Eva* of their ancestors: The reason is that a new-born male says “*a*” when crying, but a female says “*e*,” which is to say, Let as many as will be born from *Eva* say “*e* or *a*.” Again, in Latin, by anastrophe [inversion of order] and apocope [omitting a word’s last syllable], *Eva* is *ve* [“or”]; by anastrophe alone it is *ave*, the expression the Archangel Gabriel uttered to the Blessed Virgin when greeting her.

Verse 21. AND THE LORD GOD MADE FOR ADAM AND HIS WIFE, GARMENTS OF SKINS —

Observe in the verse the different inclination of the devil and of God: The devil trips man up with some trifling pleasure, and thereupon abandons him to lay in the depths of misery and confusion, to present a wretched sight for all who see him. On the other hand, God hastens to the aid of the wretched, even though he is His enemy: He dresses and covers him. In this verse, Origen understands not garments of skins but mortal bodies of flesh with which Adam and Eve were clothed after sin. Origen claims it is ridiculous to say that God was Adam’s tanner and furrier. However, this opinion is a mistake, for these words must be taken historically and literally, as they

⁵²⁸ The Hebrew alphabet at first had only consonants. In the centuries when Hebrew was a spoken language, there was no need for vowel signs to reproduce a correct oral recitation. However, when Hebrew was no longer a living tongue, the pronunciation had to be passed down by tradition. The formal study of this tradition, or *Massôrâ*, developed over time a set of vowel *signs* (not letters) known as the Masoretic system of vowel points. The vowel points are printed under or above the consonants.

⁵²⁹ *Panarion* 78.

sound, as St. Augustine teaches;⁵³⁰ moreover, even Origen⁵³¹ himself wrote: “With such clothing (namely garments of skin), the sinner had to be clothed. They were a mark of his mortality and weakness, which he had received at the first sin.” Theodorus Heracleotes and Gennadius think that in this verse the bark of trees is called skins, and Adam’s clothing was made from that. However, St. Theodoret correctly rebuts this in Question 39 [of *On Providence*]. God did not create these skins *ex nihilo*, as Procopius maintains, but either through the ministry of angels He took them from slain animals (for, as St. Theodoret holds, in the beginning God did not create one pair in each species, but a number of pairs), or He otherwise suddenly changed and shaped them.

Again, in this verse understand that the skins were natural, namely with tufts of hair and fur, for this is what the Hebrew עור, ‘*ōr*, and the Latin *pelliceas* imply. And the reasons for the skins are, *first*, that this clothing would serve Adam and Eve both in the winter and the summer by only turning them inside out. *Second*, because they were not given for adornment but for necessity, undoubtedly to cover their nakedness and to prevent injuries from the environment. *Third*, because this clothing was a symbol not only of modesty but also of frugality, continence, and penance. After sin, God dressed men not in a purple robe, not in fabrics, but in skins like horse-cloth to teach that we ought to be dressed with like simplicity. Hence the Forty Martyrs of Sebastea, stripped naked by the Roman governor and thrown onto a frozen pond so they would be killed by its cold, encouraged themselves with these words: “We did not take off a garment but rather the old man of concupiscence corrupted by a deception. We give Thee thanks, O Lord, because with removal of this garment we are allowed to take off sin at the same time. Seeing that we donned it for the sake of the serpent, we certainly remove it for the sake of Christ.” Thus, almost dead from the cold, they were delivered to the flames, with the angels from heaven showing them their triumphal crowns.⁵³² *Fourth*, these garments, made from the skins of dead animals, warned Adam that he was bound to die. So say St. Augustine,⁵³³ Blessed Alcuin of York and others.

Allegorically interpreted, the clothed Adam was a type of Christ, Who although He was pure and holy, nevertheless willed to be garbed in skins, i.e., to be dressed in our sins, while He, found in appearance as man, was born into the likeness of the flesh of sin. Therefore, why, O Man,

⁵³⁰ *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book XI, Chapter 39.

⁵³¹ *On Leviticus*, Homily 6.

⁵³² The full details of the narrative may be found under March 10 in Volume I of *Butler’s Lives of the Saints*, edited by Thurston and Attwater.

⁵³³ *On Genesis Against the Manichees*, Book III, Chapter 21.

do you glory in silken attire? Indeed, clothing is the mark and stigma of sin. Along the same lines, clothes, like shackles, like either iron or bronze chains, are the symbols and bonds of thieves and evildoers. The clothing of the first Roman senators was like that of our first parents, according to the poet Propertius:

*Once the high Senate house, now with its bright-robed lawgivers gleaming,
Held guileless Fathers of yore, wearing but animal hides.*

Verse 22. BEHOLD ADAM IS BECOME AS ONE OF US —

“This,” says St. Augustine,⁵³⁴ “can be understood in a twofold manner: either ‘one of us,’ even like God Himself, something that belongs to the realm of insult, as we say ‘one of the senators’ to mean insultingly ‘just like a senator’; or, at least, because Adam would be a god, albeit by the generosity of his Creator, not by nature, had he wished to remain under His power, ‘of us’ was thus said in the way someone who is not now a consul or proconsul might say ‘on the part of the consuls or proconsuls.’” St. Augustine adds: “But in what regard did Adam become as ‘one of us’? To be sure, he became ‘one of us’ with regard to the knowledge of distinguishing between good and evil, so that through experience he might learn when he senses the evil that God knew by His wisdom. And by his punishment, he may learn that the Almighty’s power, which he did not wish to endure while he was blessed and in favor, is inescapable.” The first sense is the truer one, for it completes the verb *is become*. The figure of speech, therefore, is irony and sarcasm; in other words, the verse can be read as follows: “Adam wished to become similar to Us by eating the fruit: Now behold how unlike Us he is become! He wanted to know good and evil: Now behold into what a pit of ignorance he has fallen!” Thus also think Gennadius, St. Theodoret, and Rupert of Deutz, who says, “Adam is become as one of Us, so that now We are no longer the Trinity but a ‘quaternity.’ Although not a god with God, yet he will have pretended to be a god against God.” As Oleaster and Alonso Tostado maintain, these are the words of God the Father, not to the angels, but to the Son and the Holy Ghost, as is evident. In addition, Alonso Tostado himself so understands this verse in Chapter XIII, Question 486.

NOW, THEREFORE —

Supply the phrase “one must take heed” or “he must be expelled from paradise.” The figure of speech is aposiopesis [suddenly breaking off in mid-discourse].

⁵³⁴ *On Genesis Against the Manichees*, Book II, Chapter 22.

AND LIVE FOR EVER —

But let him die according to the sentence handed down against him in 2:17: death is the punishment for man; and here is a reduction of the penalties: for it is God's custom, says St. John Chrysostom about this verse, to declare His directive care in relation to us in punishing no less than in conferring benefits. In other words, says Rupert of Deutz, "Since man is wretched, let him also last a short time, and therefore let him be unlike both God and the devil: for God is both eternal and happy; His happiness is eternal, His eternity happy. The devil lost the second of these characteristics, happiness. However, he did not lose eternity; his unhappiness is eternal, his eternity unhappy. 'Let Us spare man,' God says. 'And because he lost happiness and eternity, too, let us forestall unhappy man so that he is as one of us in neither way. We have eternal happiness, a happy eternity. Let him have temporary wretchedness or a wretched temporality, and then let eternity be more opportunely restored to him, when his happiness will have been restored.'"

Verse 23. AND HE SENT HIM OUT —

The Hebrew is *ישלחהו*, *yaš'alləḥēhū*, in the Pi'el conjugation,⁵³⁵ i.e., He threw him out, He expelled him. The Septuagint adds: *and He placed him in the opposite direction of or within sight of* (for this is the meaning of *ἀπέναντι* [*apénanti*]) *paradise*, no doubt so that at the sight of it Adam might continually lament and more sharply regret the lost good.

Note: God sent him out by the agency of an angel, who either led him out by hand, as Raphael led Tobias, or snatched him off, as the angel of the Lord snatched Habacuc from Judæa to Babylon in order to carry a dinner to Daniel. So says St. Augustine and Alonso Tostado, who adds that the angel transferred Adam from paradise to Hebron, where he had been created, and afterwards lived and was buried.

You may ask: On which day did this happen? Alonso Tostado thinks Adam had sinned and was expelled from paradise on the second day from his creation, i.e., on Saturday. Benedict Pereira says it was on the eighth day, and the reason for this span of a week was so that he might, in the meantime, experience the state of blessedness in paradise for a period of several days. Others say the expulsion took place on the fortieth day: whence Christ fasted just as many days for this

⁵³⁵ In Hebrew there are six *common* verb types derived from the simple conjugation, called Qal. Although the precise meaning of each type is sometimes multidimensional, perhaps Gensenius' notion of "eager pursuit of an action" may best convey the fundamental idea of the Pi'el conjugation (*Hebrew Grammar*, §52 g). Thus Qal *šālah*, "to send," in Pi'el is "to send off, send away, dismiss, cast out."

gluttony of Adam's, i.e. for forty days. Others say it was in the thirty-fourth year, just as Christ lived for thirty-four years, and atoned for Adam's sin.

However, the Church Fathers — St. Irenæus, St. Cyril, St. Epiphanius of Salamis, Mar Jacob of Serugh, St. Ephræm the Syrian, Philoxenus of Mabbug, Moses Bar Cephias and Diodorus as cited in Pereira — relate in common that Adam sinned on the same day on which he was created and was expelled from paradise, namely on Friday, precisely at the same hour at which Christ died on the cross outside Jerusalem and restored the thief and all of us to paradise. The narrative of the Scripture favors this opinion, for from verse 8 it is manifest that these events occurred after noon, as the heat was abating and a gentle breeze was blowing. The devil's envy, which did not allow Adam to stay for a long time, also supports this opinion. In addition, the perfection of nature in which Adam was created supports this opinion: On account of his perfection, Adam, like an angel,⁵³⁶ immediately made his decision and chose one of the two sides. In the end, if he had been in paradise for a long while, he would assuredly have eaten of the tree of life.

Therefore, just as Christ willed to be crucified in the same place in which Adam had been buried, namely on Mount Calvary, in the same way He willed to be crucified at that same time of day the sin and our exile occurred in order to discharge and pay for that day's damages.

St. Ephræm the Syrian,⁵³⁷ Philoxenus of Mabbug, and Mar Jacob of Serugh add that Adam was created at the ninth hour of the morning and was expelled from paradise at the third hour of the afternoon, and therefore stayed in paradise for only six hours.

⁵³⁶ As background, St Thomas Aquinas: "In the natural order, perfection comes before imperfection, as act precedes potentiality; for whatever is in potentiality is made actual only by something actual. And since God created things not only for their own existence, but also that they might be the principles of other things; so creatures were produced in their perfect state to be the principles as regards others. Now man can be the principle of another man, not only by generation of the body, but also by instruction and government. Hence, as the first man was produced in his perfect state, as regards his body, for the work of generation, so also was his soul established in a perfect state to instruct and govern others.

Now no one can instruct others unless he has knowledge, and so the first man was established by God in such a manner as to have knowledge of all those things for which man has a natural aptitude. And such are whatever are virtually contained in the first self-evident principles, that is, whatever truths man is naturally able to know. Moreover, in order to direct his own life and that of others, man needs to know not only those things which can be naturally known, but also things surpassing natural knowledge; because the life of man is directed to a supernatural end: just as it is necessary for us to know the truths of faith in order to direct our own lives. Wherefore the first man was endowed with such a knowledge of these supernatural truths as was necessary for the direction of human life in that state. But those things which cannot be known by merely human effort, and which are not necessary for the direction of human life, were not known by the first man; such as the thoughts of men, future contingent events, and some individual facts, as for instance the number of pebbles in a stream; and the like." (ST, I, Q94, A3).

⁵³⁷ As quoted by Moses Bar Cephias in *On Paradise*, end of Book I.

Verse 24. AND PLACED BEFORE THE PARADISE OF PLEASURE CHERUBIM, AND A FLAMING SWORD, TURNING EVERY WAY —

You may ask: Who, in this verse, are the Cherubim, and what is the sword?

First, Tertullian in his *Apologeticus* and St. Thomas Aquinas,⁵³⁸ think the Cherubim and the flaming sword were the earth's torrid zone, which is impassable on account of the heat. Accordingly, God set the zone between our regions and paradise. *Second*, Nicolas of Lyra and Alonso Tostado maintain these phenomena are the fire surrounding paradise on all sides. Many Fathers think the same thing. *Third*, St. Theodoret and Procopius think they are μορμολύκια [*mormolúkia*], what might be called phantoms with a terrifying shape, like scarecrows that are erected in gardens.

However, I say that all these things must be properly taken just as they sound. It is undoubted that angels from the Order of the Cherubim were stationed in front of paradise to keep both men as well as demons from admittance to it, lest actually having entered into paradise they pluck off the fruit of the tree of life, which they would offer to men, promising them immortality in order to allure them in this way to a love and adoration of self. So say St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, Rupert of Deutz, and others.

Note *first*: The custody of paradise was entrusted to the Cherubim rather than to the Thrones, the Virtues, or the Principalities⁵³⁹ because the Cherubim are the most watchful and sharp-sighted. Whence they are called Cherubim from their skill, and thus they are the most suitable protectors of God's omniscience, which Adam had shunned. Hence it is clear that the higher angels are also sent to earth, as I have shown at Hebrews 1, last verse.

Note *second*: For the phrase *a flaming sword*, the Hebrew is להט ההרב, *lahat haḥereḇ*, i.e. "a flame of sword." For this reason, it is uncertain whether the sword in this verse was a flame having the shape and appearance of a sword, or was, on the other hand, a sword in actuality, yet one glowing with fire, flashing, and spewing flames, as it were.

Note *third*: This sword was taken away and ceased activity, as also happened with the Cherubim, when paradise came to an end, namely in the Flood.

⁵³⁸ In II-II, Question 164, last Article.

⁵³⁹ St. Thomas Aquinas: "Dionysius...put in the first Hierarchy the Orders whose names are assigned relative to God, viz., the Seraphim, the Cherubim, and the Thrones. But in the middle Hierarchy he placed the Orders whose names refer to what might be called common government or disposition, viz., the Dominations, the Virtues and the Powers. At the same time, in the third Hierarchy he placed the Orders whose names represent the execution of work, viz., the Principalities, the Angels, and the Archangels" (ST, Ia, Q108, A6).

Allegorically speaking, St. Ambrose⁵⁴⁰ and Rupert of Deutz⁵⁴¹ hold that this flaming sword is the fire of Purgatory, which God had placed in front of the celestial paradise for those dying who had not yet been entirely purged of their sins in this life. And from there the Cherubim, i.e., the angels, led out the purged souls into paradise, namely into heaven. To the contrary, from this verse St. Ambrose, Origen, Lactantius, St. Basil and Rupert of Deutz think a fire was placed in front of heaven, through which all souls have to pass after death, even the souls of St. Peter and St. Paul, in order to be critically examined in it and discovered if they are impure, so that through it they may be cleansed. I spoke of this at 1 Corinthians 3:15.

Morally speaking, note the following: Six punishments were enjoined on Adam along with Eve and his descendants, which fittingly correspond to his six sins. His *first* sin was disobedience. On account of this, he observed the rebellion of the flesh and the sense. The *second* was gluttony, for which he was punished with toil and fatigue. “In the sweat of thy face,” said God, “shalt thou eat bread.” The *third* was the theft of the fruit, for which he was punished with pain of the flesh, namely with hunger, thirst, cold, heat, diseases etc. “I will multiply” says God, “thy sorrows.” The *fourth* was faithlessness, by which he disbelieved God and believed the demon, for which he was punished with death, whereby the soul departs and is separated from the body. The *fifth* was ingratitude, for which he deserved to be deprived of his substance which he had received from God and to be burnt to ashes. “Dust thou art,” says God, “And unto dust thou shalt return.” The *sixth* was pride, and through it he deserved to be deprived of paradise, heaven and heavenly things, and be thrust down into the infernal regions.

From what has been said, it is clear that the sin of Adam, if one should look at the particular and proper form of sin, was not the gravest of all sins, for it was disobedience to God’s positive law. More serious than this, however, are blasphemy, hatred for God, obstinate impenitence, etc. Wherefore Arius, Luther, Judas, and others sinned more gravely than Adam. But if you should look at the losses resulting from this sin, then Adam’s sin was the gravest of all, for by it he lost himself and all his descendants to such an extent that whoever are damned, are damned either immediately or mediately owing to this sin. And for this reason, this sin can be said to be irremissible, because the fault and punishment passes to all his descendants, and in no way can it be remitted or prevented.

⁵⁴⁰ In his exposition of Psalm 118:17, at “Recompense thy servant, enliven me.”

⁵⁴¹ In Book III, chapter 32.