



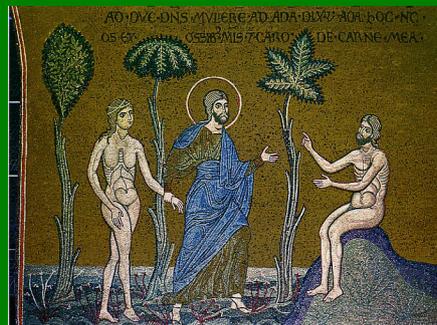
St. Lawrence of Brindisi on Creation and the Fall



A Verse by Verse Commentary on Genesis 1-3

Translated by Craig R. Toth

Edited by Rev. Victor P. Warkulwiz, M.S.S.



About this Book

This work is a translation from Latin into English of St. Lawrence of Brindisi's commentary on the first three chapters of Genesis. It is taken from his *Explanatio in Genesim* (*Explanation of Genesis*), which is the third volume of his complete works as compiled by a commission of Capuchin Fathers. *Explanation of Genesis* is a commentary on the first eleven chapters of Genesis, excluding chapter ten which is strictly genealogical. St. Lawrence is the exemplar for the exegesis of Genesis 1-11 in the Judeo-Christian tradition. It is evident from his commentary on Genesis 1-3 that he took those chapters as an inerrant literal historical account of the beginning of the world and the human species as related by the prophet Moses under divine inspiration. He employs tradition, both Jewish and Catholic, the sciences of his day, and common sense imbued with deep faith. This volume is intended to be an informative work for the liberally educated Catholic layman and not a critical edition for scholars. The translation is colloquial rather than scholarly literal to make it agreeable to the modern ear. It is intended to show how much we can learn about our origins if we accept without reservation the veracity of the text of Genesis.

ST. LAWRENCE OF BRINDISI
ON
CREATION AND THE FALL

E-BOOK



St. Lawrence of Brindisi Celebrating Mass

(Frontispiece of *Explanatio in Genesim*, Vol. III of *Opera Omnia*)

F. Stephanus a Carpio Cap. pinxit a. 1786

In Conventu Cap. Regii Lepidi

ST. LAWRENCE OF BRINDISI
ON
CREATION AND THE FALL

A Verse by Verse Commentary
on Genesis 1-3

Translated by Craig Toth
for The Kolbe Center for the Study of Creation

Edited and Introduction by
Rev. Victor P. Warkulwiz, M.S.S.

The Kolbe Center for the Study of Creation
Mount Jackson, VA

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IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST
AND OF THE GLORIOUS VIRGIN MARY

“Especially pleasing to us is the book *Explanatio in Genesim*, in which Lawrence, employing the doctrine of the Jewish masters, the Fathers of the Church, and that of the schoolmen, examines the divine truth, and as a most severe judge, passes judgment on various opinions and controversies.”

Pope John XXIII
Apostolic letter *Celsitudo ex humilitate*
March 19, 1959

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INTRODUCTION

The debate on origins has been raging ever since Darwin published his *Origin of Species* in 1859. That work promoted the idea that all the kinds of plants and animals on the earth today evolved from one or a few basic created life forms. With that work Darwin led people away from the biblical way of thinking about how and why we are here. In his *Origin of Species* Darwin contradicted Genesis 1 on three points. First, Genesis states that in the beginning God created all the kinds of plants and animals. But Darwin said that God created only one or a few primordial life forms. Second, Genesis states that God created the first of all the kinds of plants and animals immediately, that is, instantly without employing any intervening agents. But Darwin employed slow-acting intervening agents, namely, variation and natural selection. And third, Genesis states that God created all the living species during the six natural days of creation week. But Darwin's process of the evolution of living species requires innumerable years. In his *Descent of Man* (1871) Darwin extended his ideas to the evolution of the human species. In that work he admitted that his verdict about human origins would be "highly distasteful to many." In the twentieth century the notion of evolution was extended far beyond Darwin's biological realm to include the evolution of the stars and galaxies, of the whole universe, starting with the so-called big bang.

St. Lawrence of Brindisi, in his commentary on the beginning of the Book of Genesis, is an outstanding exponent of Catholic belief about origins, which was eroded by Darwin's pernicious influence. To fully appreciate the value of St. Lawrence's work in this area, one must be familiar with the debate on origins as it exists today. The following are the participants in that debate:

1. The first are the atheistic naturalists. Atheistic naturalism categorically rejects the existence of God. It attempts to explain everything about the world in terms of natural causes. It seeks knowledge of the world exclusively from observation of the world. However, it often has to invent theories to explain its observations.

This is where it falls into error, especially when it deals with things not directly observed, as for example, the origin of the universe and of life. The theory of evolution by random processes is a necessary consequence of atheistic thinking. For the atheist only matter and energy exist. Atheistic scientists invest matter-energy with the attributes of God, namely, eternity, indestructibility, and the power to create. According to them, matter has formed itself into the complex structures that we observe in living organisms. But we do not observe it doing so. Therefore it must work very slowly, beyond the range of our perception. It must do it little by little; it can't do it all at once. In other words, it must evolve such complex structures. And since matter is not intelligent, it forms things without purpose. So the evolutionary processes must be random. Rejecting divine creation, atheistic naturalists can conceive of no other way that the world came to be what it is. That's why they insist that evolution is a fact. This is the view that dominates in the communications media and in secular educational institutions.

2. The second are the intelligent design advocates. Intelligent design advocacy focuses on showing that the complexity of structure and operation manifested in living organisms implies the existence of an Intelligent Designer. But they don't say who this Intelligent Designer is. This designer may or may not be the God of Genesis. Intelligence design advocates tend to distance themselves from Genesis to avoid being labeled "fundamentalist." In fact, they tend to avoid using the word "God" to make their arguments palatable to godless secular science. Their Intelligent Designer need not even be the creator of the structures he designs. He may have somehow "programmed" pre-existing matter to form itself into complex structures. Thus, the intelligent design advocate could fall into one of the following four classes of participants, each of which is composed of people who believe in God and that He created or ordered the world.
3. The third are the theistic naturalists. Theistic naturalists accept the existence of God, but they reject, ignore, or misinterpret His account of creation in Genesis. Like their atheistic counterparts,

they seek knowledge about the world only from the world itself and not from divine revelation. They hold to the tenet that the world itself can tell us everything there is to know about it. They dismiss Sacred Scripture with statements like “The Bible is not a science textbook,” “The Bible tells us how to go to heaven, not how the heavens go,” as if the Bible has nothing at all to say about the natural world. Because they so limit themselves, theistic naturalists are subject to most of the same errors as their atheistic counterparts. Theistic naturalists come in Catholic, Protestant and Jewish versions. Among Catholics there are those who might be called “neo-Thomists.” These are those theologians and philosophers that profess to be following in the footsteps of St. Thomas Aquinas but sometimes wrongly adapt his teaching to modern prejudices. A number of twentieth-century neo-Thomists tried to accommodate the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas to biological evolution or cosmic evolution or both. They tried to make evolution something respectable for Catholics to believe. In doing so they fooled themselves into believing that they were showing conformity of Catholic teaching with modern evolutionary theory. Some Thomistic scholars in their enthusiasm went so far as to make the false claim that Thomas was not a creationist and that he anticipated evolutionary theory. Such scholars thought they were serving the Church by showing compatibility between Catholic belief and modern “science.” But their efforts were ill-conceived. In reality they did a great disservice to the Church by compromising the literal truth of the first eleven chapters of Genesis. St. Thomas was not a theistic naturalist. He sought information about the world from both nature and revelation. He strongly believed that Genesis 1-11 speaks the literal truth. For example, Thomas firmly believed that God placed waters above the firmament, as related in Genesis 1, even though the nature of those waters is a mystery. And, although he believed that some living creatures (like, for example, flies) are spontaneously “generated by putrefaction,” he believed that others are generated only by members of the same species. Of such creatures he believed “the first members were immediately created

by God, such as the first man, the first lion, and so forth.” He thus read the Genesis account of the creation of man and animals literally. Further, he explicitly asserted that in the beginning all corporeal creatures were “produced immediately by God.” In contrast, some neo-Thomists are explicit theistic naturalists. They grant ultimate authority on the subject of origins to natural science and not to Sacred Scripture. They hide behind the assertion that Scripture is difficult to understand, as if the opinions of natural scientists are crystal clear and unquestionable. They fail to distinguish scientific fact from scientific opinion. And they do not understand that the assertions of natural scientists can be declared fact only when they deal with the here and now.

4. The fourth are the progressive creationists. The notion of progressive creation is held by those who believe in the veracity of the Bible but still hold on to Charles Lyell’s uniformitarian geology, that is, that the geological features of the earth were produced over eons of time by slow-acting geological forces. They believe that the fossil-bearing rock strata were formed over millions of years and show that new life forms appeared on earth at various times during the course of its history. Progressive creationists hold that God continually intervened in the history of the earth creating new living species. And thus they deviate from the literal-historical interpretation of Genesis 1. They stretch out the six days of creation to millions of years. And they do not preserve the sequence of creation because the fossil sequence of the supposed successive creations does not agree with the Genesis sequence. We don’t find only plants, which were created on the third day, in the lowest level and only water creatures and birds, which were created on the fifth day in the next level, and so on. In fact, the fossil record generally, but with many exceptions, contains invertebrates in the lower strata, fish above them, then amphibians, reptiles and mammals. This is what one would expect if a great worldwide flood produced the fossil record by pouring successive waves of sediment into the sea. Invertebrates that live on the ocean floor would be buried first, then fish, and so on. The creatures would tend to be buried in the order of the elevation of

their habitat and their degree of mobility. Finally, living creatures depend on each other in nature's delicately balanced household. The economy of nature couldn't bear waiting millions of years for new species to come on the scene to do their jobs.

5. The fifth are the biblical creationists. Biblical creationists interpret Genesis 1-11 in a much stricter literal-historical sense than progressive creationists. They believe that God created the world in six natural days about 6000 or so years ago; that God specially created the first plants and animals, that is, He created them immediately, whole and complete, each according to its kind; that God created the first man immediately from the earth and that He created the first woman immediately from the body of the first man; that God destroyed the world that was by a worldwide flood when the world was about 1600 years old; and that all the races of men on earth today descended from the three sons of Noah. They also believe that the first men lived much longer than we do and that God multiplied the languages of man as punishment for sin. Creationist scientists have been very successful at showing that the facts of science, if not the theories, are in accord with a literal rendering of the Genesis account. Their approach to the study of origins is opposed to that of the theistic naturalists. Biblical creationists hold that the data of natural science is to be interpreted in the light of the Genesis 1-11 account, whereas theistic naturalists hold that the Genesis 1-11 account must be interpreted in light of scientific opinion.
6. The sixth are the Catholic creationists. Biblical creationism is basically a conservative Protestant movement. But in its literal rendering of Genesis 1-11 it has a lot in common with traditional Catholicism. The Protestant creationists rely heavily on their own intuition in reading Genesis 1-11. Catholics, however, have the gift of much commentary on Genesis 1-11 by the greatest Christian thinkers that have ever lived—the sainted Fathers and the Doctors of the Church. And they unanimously understood Genesis 1-11 to be a literal-historical document. This does not mean that they had identical interpretations on every issue raised by it. But it does mean that they saw it as a divinely inspired and

perfectly accurate history of the world. They interpreted Genesis 1-11 in accord with a fundamental hermeneutical principle that was clearly expressed by Pope Leo XIII, “not to depart from the literal and obvious sense, except only where reason makes it untenable or necessity requires.” This is the principle that guides the magisterial teaching of the Church. Her pronouncements and decrees strongly uphold the literal-historical interpretation of Genesis 1-11.

This translation into English of the exegesis of Genesis 1-3 by Lawrence of Brindisi, a Catholic creationist *par excellence* and a Saint and Doctor of the Church, is intended to show how genuine Catholic exegesis of Genesis should proceed. That does not mean that everything St. Lawrence says is necessarily accurate. He was limited, like we are, by the sciences of his time. But he does give modern exegetes a model to imitate. And, most important of all, he shows how far exegesis can proceed, how much we can learn about our origins, if we accept without reservation the veracity of the text of Genesis.

*

St. Lawrence of Brindisi was a remarkable person.¹ He was a man of immense intellectual, moral and spiritual stature who also lived a life of swashbuckling adventure. He was born on July 22, 1559 in the Adriatic port city Brindisi, which is located at the southern end of the Appian Way on the “heel” of southeast Italy. His parents, William and Elizabeth Rossi, were descendants of noble families from Venice. They gave him the name Julius Caesar when he was baptized. On February 18, 1575, Julius Caesar became Brother Lawrence in the Order of Capuchins at the order’s novitiate house in Verona. After his profession he pursued studies in philosophy and theology at the University of Padua.

Lawrence had a outstanding memory. He mastered the principal European languages and most of the Semitic tongues. It was said that he

¹ Biographical information was taken from *The 33 Doctors of the Church* by Fr. Christopher Rengers, O.F.M. Cap. (TAN Books, 2000) and *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1914 Edition).

knew the entire original text of the Bible. He was ordained a priest on December 18, 1582.

Father Lawrence was a fiery preacher with a forceful personality who held his listeners in rapt attention. He would adapt his preaching to the spiritual needs of the congregation. He had a good voice, an imposing appearance, personal magnetism, and a photographic memory. He is considered one of the greatest preachers in the history of Christianity. He painstakingly prepared his sermons and would spend three to five hours in prayer before delivering his more formal sermons. So deep was his feeling when he delivered his sermons that he often cried while preaching. His sermons were also fearless. He did not hesitate to speak strongly against those in authority when they neglected to do their duties. He did not hesitate to denounce the vices of the strong and powerful, even when they were present.

During his life, Fr. Lawrence made numerous missionary journeys and evangelized most of the countries of Europe. In 1605 the Pope sent him to evangelize Germany. He confirmed the faith of the German people and brought a great number of them to the practice of virtue. His vast learning and holiness helped him to convert many heretics. He was also a miracle worker. His many miracles helped in the conversion of heretics. His miracles included healings, exorcisms, and even fulfilled curses. In many instances there were a considerable number of witnesses to his miracles.

Pope Clement VIII gave Fr. Lawrence the task of instructing the Jews. Because of his knowledge of Hebrew and his powerful reasoning, he brought a great number of them to recognize the truths of the Catholic faith. His saintliness and kindness further prepared the way for their conversion. Some of the Jews called Father Lawrence “the living Bible.” He was familiar not only with the Old Testament Hebrew text and its Aramaic versions (Targums) but also with commentaries on them by medieval Jewish scholars.

Lawrence held successively all the offices of his order. He was elected vicar general in 1602 and refused a second term in that office.

In 1601 Lawrence was named chaplain of the imperial army. He instilled confidence in the soldiers and led the emperor’s army to victory against the Turks, who outnumbered the emperor’s soldiers by about

three to one. He rode in front of the soldiers on horseback carrying a crucifix in his hand. He led them into the thick of battle, holding the crucifix aloft, and came through unscathed.

St. Lawrence was well-known for his ability to persuade. He successfully completed several diplomatic missions to German princes on behalf of the emperor, and the Pope also sent him on diplomatic missions.

But his life was not one smooth road of successes. He ran into opposition and setbacks. Some of his diplomatic missions failed. Heretics insulted him and physically assaulted him. His life was threatened by political and religious enemies. On one diplomatic mission he traveled in disguise to avoid the clutches of his enemies. He suffered from several physical ailments and sometimes he had to delay a trip because of sickness. A number of times he was sick almost to the point of death. He suffered much from the cold in Germany and feared that the climate there might make him a useless cripple.

Lawrence successfully combined his very active physical and intellectual life with an intense inner life. His practice of religious virtue equaled that of the great saints. He rose to high levels of contemplation, rarely celebrating Mass without falling into ecstasy. His Masses often lasted six to ten hours, the longest taking sixteen hours. One witness observed him levitate three feet above the floor for a hour and a half while celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. He had deep and tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He made pilgrimages to her shrines, attributed his vocation, talents and successes to her, fasted every Saturday in her honor, and worked miracles in her name. The *Mariale*, a collection of 84 of his sermons on Mary, comprises a complete and profound Mariology.

St. Lawrence was a prolific writer. His known writings comprise eight volumes of sermons, two treatises on oratory, commentaries on Genesis and Ezekiel, and three volumes of religious polemics. Some of the works he is known to have written, like for example, the commentary on Ezekiel, have not yet been found. His works were not published until the twentieth century. A commission of Capuchin scholars published his available works between 1928 and 1964. St. Lawrence desired to write commentaries on all the books of the Bible, but he never got beyond the first eleven chapters of Genesis except for his commentary on Ezekiel.

There are, however, some 90,000 quotes from Sacred Scripture in his various works. St. Lawrence is unique among the Doctors of the Church in that he is the only one who makes extensive use of Jewish commentators.

Lawrence died in Lisbon on July 22, 1619. Pope Leo XIII canonized him on December 8, 1881. Pope John XXIII named him a Doctor of the Universal Church on March 19, 1959. He is known as The Apostolic Doctor. His feast is celebrated on July 21.

*

This work is a translation of St. Lawrence's commentary on the first three chapters of Genesis in his *Explanatio in Genesim (Explanation of Genesis)*, which is the third volume of his complete works as compiled by the commission of Capuchin Fathers. *Explanation of Genesis* is a commentary on the first eleven chapters of Genesis, excluding chapter ten which is strictly genealogical. The volume also contains a preface and six preliminary chapters in which he discusses figures of speech, allegories and grammatical structure in Sacred Scripture; the multiple senses of Sacred Scripture; the creation of the world in time; and the principles of things. Hopefully some day those articles and the commentary on Genesis 4-11 will also be translated into English; they would provide informative and interesting reading. The volume also has an alphabetic index and a detailed summary (synthetic-analytic index) written in Latin by the Capuchin editors. The editors also wrote a foreword in Latin.

This translation is intended to be an informative work for the liberally educated Catholic layman and not a critical edition for scholars. The translation is colloquial rather than scholarly literal to make it agreeable to the modern ear. St. Lawrence wrote his commentary in Latin, rendering Hebrew and Aramaic words in Hebrew letters and citations from the Septuagint in Greek letters. In this work Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words are transliterated into Roman letters (with very few diacritical markings) to make them readable to the nonspecialist. The translator tried to retain the flavor of St. Lawrence's academic style while making sure that a careful reader can follow along. (Scholarly Latin has many one-word stylistic shortcuts to refer to antecedent matters that need

a bit of expansion in modern English.) He further tried to preserve some of Lawrence's stylistic and editorial enthusiasm, which was quite common in St. Lawrence's day. The translator reminds the reader to keep in mind that St. Lawrence wrote a technical scholarly work that cannot be simplified in all parts; the redundancies are purposeful, and the language of the style is scholastic. All in all, this translation might be called a scholarly translation for non-scholars. Biblical translations are either direct or from the CCD or Douay-Rheims versions. The numbers in brackets in the text of the translation indicate page numbers in the Capuchin Latin volume.

The Capuchin editors indicated that they inserted a long fragment from elsewhere in the commentary into the commentary on Genesis 2 because they thought it was more appropriate there. That fragment discusses the physiology and anatomy of man to demonstrate "what a wonderful work of God is man." It is essentially a medical summary from a sixteenth-century point of view. Since it is not a part of Lawrence's original commentary on the chapter, the fragment is not included in this translation.

Finally, a reflection on the *Explanatio in Genesim* by the translator, Craig Toth: "I think you'll appreciate St. Lawrence's careful analysis and theological precision. His thorough consideration of every word in the text is impressive and insightful. Especially enlightening is his excursus on Adam's rib: it is a miracle of sane thinking. I hope Catholics can cast aside the irrationality of modern anthropology (a form of mythic thought in itself) in favor of the right reasoning of a truly Catholic intellect guided by the Church's unchanging thought and the principles of Scholastic philosophy."

*

St. Lawrence is the exemplar for the exegesis of Genesis 1-11 in the Judeo-Christian tradition. It is evident from his commentary on Genesis 1-3 that he took those chapters as an inerrant literal historical account of beginning of the world and the human species as related by the prophet Moses under divine inspiration. He realized that Scripture sometimes expresses literal truth in obvious metaphors, just as we do in our everyday speech. But that

did not mean to him that Genesis 1-3 is a string of metaphors, or an allegory, that has to be deciphered by experts, which seems to be the opinion of modern Catholic exegetes. Instead, Lawrence saw that careful study of the language of text uncovers deeper strata of its literal meaning. He employs tradition, both Jewish and Catholic, the sciences of his day, and common sense imbued with deep faith. Modern Catholic scholars, however, following the methods of liberal Protestant critics, study the language of the text to allege authorship and author motivation, a vain and fruitless endeavor that irreverently treats biblical text the same as profane text. Following Catholic Tradition, Lawrence allowed for figurative and allegorical interpretations of that account, but always presupposing its literal truth. He clearly shows that the task of the exegete is to acquire an accurate understanding of the literal meaning of the text and of the spiritual meaning of its superimposed symbolism. He certainly would have found the quibbling, prevalent today, about theories of authorship of Scriptural texts and the supposed partisan motivation of the authors offensive and sterile. Finally, Lawrence draws out rich Trinitarian and Christological implications in the verses and shows how these first three chapters of the Bible give completeness and coherence to the history of salvation.

Rev. Victor P. Warkulwiz, M.S.S., Ph.D.

July 21, 2009

Feast of St. Lawrence of Brindisi, Priest, Doctor

ON GENESIS 1

THE CREATION
OF THE WORLD

CHAPTER 1

VERSE 1

In the beginning.

In Hebrew: *Bereshith.*

[111] The Jews are accustomed to title the books of Sacred Scripture in three ways: (1) by the first words of the book, or (2) by its subject matter, or (3) by its author. Accordingly, they called the Book of Genesis *Bereshith* to the extent that the author, Moses, began the book with that Hebrew word. For a similar reason, they called Exodus *Shemoth*, Leviticus *Wayyiqra*, and so all the books of the Pentateuch got their names from the first words of the text; likewise the book of Lamentations is entitled *Eka*. However, all the books of the Prophets and the first two books of Kings in the Vulgate version—the books of Samuel—are named after their author Samuel, both because they were written in part by him and also because everything that takes place in the parts he did not write refers, as it were, to him. So, too, by chance is the title of the Book of Joshua; although the Jews disagree, still it is very probable that Joshua produced commentaries of his deeds. Finally, some books took their title from the subject matter, as in the Book of Judges, all the books of Solomon, Chronicles and Kings, too. Moses, therefore, who plainly was the author of Genesis and of all the Pentateuch (such is the opinion [112] of all the Jews, and also of St. Basil in his *Homilies on the Hexaemeron*, as well as St. John Chrysostom in his *Homilies on Genesis*, and according to the common and equal agreement of all the Doctors), desiring to pass down the principles of faith that mention the beginnings of creation and the divine covenants with creatures, commenced his work in these words: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*. There are only five words in the Hebrew text, yet they encompass all things and contain divine mysteries and wonderful holy secrets. For this reason, I will comment on each word.

In the beginning.

The Septuagint, Symmachus, and Theodotion translated *bereshith* as *In the beginning*. Aquila rendered it *In the little head*. The Aramaic version has *beqadmin* instead of *bereshith*; however, in Aramaic *qadmin* means the beginning of time. The second Aramaic translation of the Old Testament, called the Jerusalem Targum, rendered the Hebrew as *bechokma*, *In wisdom*. This rendering rebuts the error of the impious founder of Manichaeism (who supposed two beginnings of things: one of good things, a second of bad; one of spiritual things, the other of bodily things) since in Genesis God is said to have created *in the beginning*, i.e. in the Son, the heavens and the earth.

However, this last rendering is more in accordance with the sense than the letter. Moreover, it wonderfully supports Tertullian (in his treatise *Against Praxeas*), Origen, Hilary, and Augustine, who think that the phrase *In the beginning* must be explained as meaning *in wisdom*, i.e., in the Son, Who is the Word and Wisdom of the Father and the beginning of all things, *by whom all things were made* (as is clear in the first chapter of John), Who also says of Himself in John *I am the beginning who also [113] speak unto you*. Also in support of this rendering is what God says of Himself in the Psalms: *In the head of the book it is written of me*, i.e. *in the beginning of Genesis*. In accordance with this reading, the word *bereshith* can be translated (1) *in the beginning* or (2) *with the beginning* and (3) *by the beginning*, because the Hebrew preposition for *in* has three accepted usages. The first is the pre-eminent and most frequent; the second we find in Isaiah 7, *they shall go there with bow and arrows*. The third usage we see in Genesis: *I swear by myself*. However, the sacred theologians assert that God created the world *in His Son* and *with His Son* and *by His Son*. Wherefore, Paul in Colossians says, *For in him were created all things, visible and invisible, whether Thrones, or Dominations, or Principalities, or Powers. All things have been created through and unto him*.

The first Aramaic version is more literal. As a result, we know that in the beginning of time God created the heavens and the earth. It is not that He created them in time, but in the first instant of time, for time in no wise can be spoken of, but only the beginning of time. Just as the beginning of a line is not a line, so the beginning of time is not time.

Thus, the fact is that God created the heavens and the earth beyond the interval of all time, to such an extent that the creation of things was accomplished in less than a moment. St. Basil in his *Hexaemeron* similarly explains the question. St. Ambrose is of the same opinion (in the first book of his *Hexaemeron*). The Jews have the same explanation when they assert that the word must be understood as in Jeremiah's phrases *In the beginning of reign of Sedecia, in the beginning of the reign of Jechonia, in the beginning of the reign of Joakim*. This explanation is in the Hebrew Glossary, to which even Rabbi Ibn Ezra subscribes. This sense of the word refutes the error of Aristotle, who made the world co-eternal with God, asserting that it did not have a beginning at any time and that it will not have an end.

There are also some Greeks, among whom is Theodoret, who so explain *In the beginning* as *in the first things*, or *at first* [114] *God created the heavens*, before He established all else. By this reading, they dispose of the error of those who impiously asserted that God, through the service of the angels and other spiritual creatures, created the heavens and earth and other bodily things. For if He created the heavens and the earth at the first of all time, there were no angels whose service he would employ in the production of bodily things. Otherwise, he would not have created the heavens and the earth first before all else, since spiritual creatures would be first and they would have preceded the bodily things in their own time.

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol² opposes this explanation and holds that *bereshith* does not mean the order of creation by saying that these bodily things came first, because if Moses had intended such a meaning, he would have said *br'snh*, *before* or *first of all*. Along with Ibn Ezra, he says that the word *bereshith* is in the construct state, and thus the phrase must be understood to mean *God in the beginning-of creating the heavens* or *by which God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was* etc. Therefore,

² Translator's Note: Rabbi Solomon or Rabbi Solomon of Spain in St. Lawrence's Latin text is the Neoplatonist (Solomon) Ibn Gabirol, some of whose exegetical comments Ibn Ezra preserved in his great commentary on the Pentateuch. Ibn Gabirol or Gabirol is the name by which this Lawrence's Rabbi Solomon is now commonly known. I added "Ibn Gabirol" to Solomon to preserve Lawrence's reference and to identify the exegete for the interested reader. Gabirol represents a curious introduction of philosophical ideas to the Biblical text.

what they explain by *bereshith* is the beginning of time, as in Jeremiah's idiom: *in the beginning of the reign of Joakim*, etc.

If anyone considers the hidden wisdom within the opening words of Genesis, he will see that in them the entire plan of the creation of the world and of all things is open and unfolded. Inasmuch as from the resolution of these first words into their constituent elements and from the different arrangement of these same words among themselves, the whole utterance in Hebrew is comprised of twelve words: *av bebar reshith shavath bara rosh esh shath rav ish brith tov*, i.e. *The Father in the Son—or by the Son, or in the Son in the beginning and end—created the head, fire, the fundament of a large man in a good covenant*. In the last word, the initial letter teth is changed to taw, which is very common among the Hebrew letters with the same pronunciation.

How wonderfully apparent in this reading of the initial words of Genesis is the first explanation that we considered, viz., that God the Father created the world *in His Son* or *with His Son* or *by His Son*! However, the Son is said to be the *beginning and the end*, or the *repose*, according to Scripture: *I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end*. However, in interpretation above, what does “large man” mean? It means, the world itself. Just as a man is a small universe, so the universe is a large man. Hence, the image advantageously and most fittingly compares the [115] three worlds of the universe—the intellectual, the heavenly, and the corruptible—to the three anatomical regions of the human body. The first is the head, the second extends from the neck to the navel, and from the navel to the feet is the third region. In the head, the brain is the source of thought; in the breast, the heart is the source of motion, life, and heat; and finally in the third part are organs of procreation, the principle of generation. Likewise, in the universe the intellectual part is the highest, since it was created for the purpose of understanding. The second part comprises the heavens, the principle of motion and of life and of heat. The sublunary region is most obviously connected with generation and corruption. Moses called the first part the head, because it is the source of all thought. He called the second *fire* because the heavens are thought to be of a fiery nature. He called the third part the foundation of a large man because by it the entire body of a man is grounded and sustained. Yet since between these parts there is a

covenant of everlasting peace and friendship, He added *in a good covenant*, the covenant of which Jeremiah spoke: *Thus says the Lord: When I have no covenant*, i.e. this covenant of peace and friendship, *with day and night, and I have given no laws to heaven and earth*. That covenant certainly is good, because it is directed toward God, who is good itself.

[116] *He created.*

In Hebrew: *bara*.

In Aramaic: *bera*.

The common opinion of all theologians is that creation is a divine action, by which something is produced from nothing. Some Jews shared the same opinion, which Ibn Ezra relates: “Many commentators say *shehaberiah lehos esh meain*, ‘creation is production from nothing;’ and they cite the cognate difference between the roots *br’*, *ysr*, and *‘sh*, i.e. to *create*, to *form*, and to *make*. To *create*, they say, is to make something from nothing; to *form* is to put a shape on a created being; and to *make* is to order each constituent part. In that manner they explain the verse in Isaiah, *Everyone who is named as mine, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made*, where the original Hebrew uses those three verbs. Ibn Ezra contradicts the careful verbal distinction made by commentators, saying that they forgot that Genesis says that *God created the great sea monsters*, and a little later that *God created man*. In addition, it says in Isaiah, *I form the light, and create the darkness, I make well-being and create woe*.

The Septuagint translates the verb *bara* with the Greek word *epoiesen*, i.e., *he made*. We find the same reading among Greek writers in St. Basil (in his *Hexaemeron*), John Chrysostom (in his *Homilies on Genesis*), Origen, Athanasius, and quite a few others. We also see that reading in the Latin father Ambrose.

St. Augustine, commenting on the above-referenced verse from Isaiah (in the first book of his *Against the Calumniator of the Scriptures*) makes a distinction between *to create* and *to make*, asserting that *to create* is properly to come to be from something but to *make* is to come to be from nothing. Moreover, the Greek word *ktizo* corresponds to the word for creating; it also means “I found,” as when we say that cities are founded.

Cicero calls Romulus the creator and foremost citizen of Rome, as Augustine asserts in the above named book. Additionally, the verb "I create" comes from the Greek word *kreas*, which means *flesh* from which comes *to create* in the sense of to produce or to make flesh. By such a verbal relationship, animals are said to be begotten, and from that [117] also to grow, which not only is said of animals but also of plants and fruits. Thus Cicero writes in *De Finibus* "of all the things that Nature creates and maintains." Universally, then, this word, in Latin as well as in Hebrew usage, means the production of some new thing, either from nothing or from something.

Thus Rabbi David writes in his book *On Roots of Words*, distinguishing between *bara* and *yasar*, "to create" and "to form": the latter word is said of a corporeal thing, which either has being in a body or is susceptible of the powers of the senses, or it is said of the very powers of the senses. However, the former word is said about anything whatsoever or about the alteration of any thing whatsoever that proceeds from non-being to being. Our Vulgate version of the Bible translated the Hebrew verse in the Book of Numbers, *im-beriah yivra*, as *If He create a new thing*.

However, although in the Scriptures the appropriate meaning of the word *br'* is more frequently used for the things that have been produced from something, especially when something is brought forth from another thing by the command of God, just as it is said that He had created man, plants, and any other things by His command, [and] these things came forth from some matter. Nevertheless, in this passage we must understand the meaning to be the production from nothing, whether we use the word *creation* or *making*, since this is the first production that supposes no matter. Indeed physical generation, which is made by a natural power through movement in time and necessarily, supposes a subject. However, hyperphysical generation is what we in this work call creation, which, since it does not happen in time, requires no subject whether or not some change or transmutation intervenes.

Wherefore, John the Grammarian correctly interprets Aristotle, who while he denies that God was the maker of the world in the sense that He did not make it, that is to say, by way of change, but rather that God must be said to be the creator. Indeed, he says in his first book on Aristotle's *De Generatione*:

"It seems Aristotle never claimed that God was the efficient cause of the world, for he asserts that He did nothing other than to bring to light something by a certain way and mode of generating. However, God operates neither in time nor without instantaneous perfection. Therefore, from that fact he denies He made the world, but [118] rather [affirms] that it must be said that He created it."

What John the Grammarian states in this passage seems to be in agreement with our theologians. For when we say that the creation of the world was production from nothing, we do not posit some subject that may be nothing itself, from which something is made, since that is an obvious contradiction. But we understand the phrase "from nothing" in a negative manner, i.e., [it means] "not from something," without any pre-existent material, and we grant it to the infinite power of God, who overcomes every art and all nature by his vast power. Nevertheless, we do not deny that a certain passive potency in creatures themselves can be allowed before they were formed and existed in and of themselves. For they were in God in a certain way, in order that they might be produced and exist as created things outside Him.

We must remark here that by these words [of Scripture] Moses shattered the errors of three Gentile philosophers, insofar as he says that God created, i.e., He produced the world from nothing. First of Plato, who posited three eternal things: God, Ideas, and *hyle*, i.e., matter, and he said that God created the world from such matter. Aristotle asserted that the world was co-eternal with God, but is subject to God, without beginning or end. Epicurus and many others alike posited the void and atoms as the eternal things and supposed that in the beginning Nature turned certain atoms into earth, others into water, air, and fire. For if *Nature created*, i.e., produced from nothing, Nature, therefore, did not make it from uncreated matter, or from eternal atoms and the void; and if done *in the beginning* of time, Nature annulled the world's co-eternity.

God.

In Hebrew: *Elohim*.

In Aramaic: *yeya*.

Wonderful and great holy mysteries are contained in this word. In it, more clearly than light, one can admire the immense power of God, His eternity, His unity of being, and the trinity of the Divine Persons. While Scripture says that in the beginning of time He created the world, for that reason one can see that He existed eternally before time. Moreover, it is evident that He, in the beginning of creation with such speed of action, created the heavens and the earth from nothing. [119] Scripture manifests His omnipotence—for Him, to will something is to do it—so by means of incomprehensible speed of operation the incomprehensible agent finds expression in a word. God completed so great a work in less than a fraction of a moment, in the beginning of time by his own operation, and the effect of his will preceded the sense of time.

Furthermore, it is fitting to know that the name of God, *Elohim*, as written by Moses, is plural, from the root *eloah*, as also *Adonai* came from the root *'dn*. Indeed, the word not only means *God*, but also *angels* and *heroes* (in the sense of princes, judges, or distinguished men), as is clear or explainable in Sacred Scripture. Nevertheless, we never mean an individual angel or man by that name, but rather a group of many such individuals. However, some Jewish and even some Christian scholars say the word is not plural, but they are patently wrong. Very obviously, in all places of Scripture where the word *elohim* does not mean God, it is always with a plural sense, just as in the Psalms: *You have made him a little less than the angels*, where *elohim* stands for the word *angels* in the Aramaic and Septuagint translations. Furthermore, in another Psalm it says, *God arises in the divine assembly; he judges in the midst of the gods*. Here the word stands for *judges*. Elsewhere in Scripture we find *Thou shalt not speak ill of the gods*, and again *I said: you are gods*. However, commentators say that when the word is understood to mean *God*, it cannot have a plural sense, otherwise it would not govern a singular verb, as we have in Genesis: *Elohim bara, He created* and not *they created*.

I, however, take the opposite view. In many passages of the Bible, where the word does mean *God*, I find *Elohim* modified by a plural

adjective and even governing a verb in the singular. In Genesis 20, where the Latin version has *When God brought [120] me out of my father's house*, the original Hebrew has *When the gods brought me*. In 2 Samuel, where it reads *As your people Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people unto himself*, the original Hebrew has *on behalf of whom the gods went*. This cannot be said of Moses and Aaron, for in 1 Chronicles the name of the Lord is represented by the name *Yahweh*. So, too, in the last chapter of Joshua, where it says *You may not be able to serve the Lord for he is a holy God*, the Hebrew text literally reads *for Elohim are themselves holy*. In Isaiah 54, *For he who has become your husband is your Maker; his name is the Lord of hosts*, in Hebrew reads *Your husbands are your makers*. However, there the divine name is *Yahweh*. It is the same in Jeremiah 23, where the Latin Bible has *You pervert the words of the living God*, in Hebrew it reads *of the living Gods* and again we find the name *Yahweh* used. From these passages, it is very plain that the name *Elohim*, even when used for the true God, is considered as a plural, modified by plural adjectives and used with a verb in the plural.

For this reason, Ibn Ezra says the name *Elohim* has a plural sense when it used for God. He says, however, that this is a usage of sacred language, for the sake of reverence and honor, just as in Arabic young people address their elders in the plural. Rabbi David very often says the same of the plural noun *Adonai*. Yet, in Italian, it is the also custom to speak to distinguished personage in the plural. This remark, then, is a contrivance of the Jews' imagination. For if this idiom were used out of the deepest respect for God, then it certainly should be employed at every mention of His name, since we owe Him everlasting honor. Nevertheless, in Sacred Scripture we read that the holiest men also used the divine the name *El*, *Eloah*, *Shaddai*, *Yahweh*, and other names in the singular. Besides if there were no mystery hidden in this word [121], and Moses used it only out of respect, why did he not rather write *Yahweh*, which it much more respectful, and on that account thought to be unpronounceable?

Ibn Ezra fabricated another false notion, that God is expressed in the plural because of the many powers or ideas that exist in that indivisible divine nature. I cannot further discuss his notion, inasmuch as it is an exceedingly irrational jest. For if God is expressed in the plural owing to

His many powers, then those powers of which the rabbi speaks are either a created thing or they are an uncreated thing. They are not created, for then some creature would have created the world, or would have cooperated with God in the world's creation. Yet the rabbis assert that God alone created the world, and based on that belief they affirm that the angels were created on the second day to keep anyone from thinking that the angels were cooperators in the creation of the world if they were created on the first day. But if the powers of God are uncreated, they either proceed from God or they do not. If they do not, there are many entirely diverse powers, and therefore there are many gods—a conclusion that is utterly false. Therefore, if they proceed from God, we have a stretching-out of God.

Accordingly, no man is rightly called *men* because of a plurality of certain powers, because by using the word *men* we understand a plurality of individuals. This applies even less to God Himself, for just as sameness is the reason for unity, so diversity is the reason for plurality and multiplicity. If therefore a man cannot be said to be several men because of a plurality of powers (even though his powers are of a nature different from him), then neither can it be said of God, whose powers are wholly the same with Him, although His nature is absolutely indivisible. Even the Jews admit that.

Furthermore, the Jews say that, because God created the world in wisdom, goodness, and power, which are three divine properties, the author of Genesis therefore wrote *Elohim created*. But this is a fiction, too. For God [122] works through power, wisdom, and goodness or love, just as a craftsman works by means of his craft, for example, by a guiding rule, by the power of changing a material, and by the love of an intended purpose, say, to gain money. Now if God is designated by a plural name because of His wisdom, goodness, and power, then such a designation is much more appropriately applied to a created artificer because these things are more distinct in an artificer than in God. In an artificer, these properties differ by way of a thing that is related to nothing else, a distinction that cannot exist in God.

Inasmuch as Moses, seeing his people inclined to idolatry and instructing them about the unity of God, frequently was on guard against their worshipping many gods (as we read in Deuteronomy: *Hear, O Israel!*

The Lord is our God, the Lord alone; and again *Learn that I, I alone, am God, and there is no other God besides me,* and similarly in several other passages), he would never have expressed the name of God in the plural unless the name contained the mystery of the plurality of the Divine Persons in God. In addition, the name does not represent any kind of plurality but only one of persons, as is well known from other passages of Scripture, when the word is not used for the true God.

Therefore, since Moses, inspired by the Holy Ghost, wrote *bara Elohim*, literally, *the gods he-created* (a plural subject with a singular verb), without doubt we understand the sense of these words: he means plurality of Divine Persons in the word *Elohim* and the unity of essence in the singular verb *he-created*. That is to say, three Divine Persons are not three gods, but the one God. For that reason, the Aramaic version translated the Hebrew as *yeya*, the Septuagint as *theos*, and St. Jerome as *Deus*. Each word is in the singular.

Further, we may cite very conveniently a philosophical maxim. Aristotle teaches that action is concerned with the individual person. In Divine things, there are several persons. However, the external action of all the Divine Persons is one and undivided. Hence, by *Elohim* there are several individual persons, but by a singular verb Moses points out a single action. Wherefore, in Sacred Scripture as often as *Elohim* refers to the true God, it governs a verb, since a verb denotes action. Moreover, the verb is usually written in the singular so that the action (which is absolutely one) and power of the agents do not appear to be done by many. The plural word *Elohim* is modified differently by adjectives. In these cases, Scripture does not care [123] to put the adjective in the plural, since neither action nor power (and accordingly neither substance nor essence) are pluralized by an adjective. Wherefore, we concede that, in the Latin language, we can say three “existings”, three “knowings”, three “eternals,” three “creatings”, but it is different if a noun is modified by an adjective or participle. We do not say there are three Gods or three creators, although the Athanasian Creed uses the plural of the adjective *co-eternal* to explain that nothing was before. Nevertheless, we must read Genesis carefully and with necessary caution because of the false sense resulting from a word expressed in plural form. Certainly if the words in Hebrew are taken substantively, it seems that one can deny that the three Divine Persons are

Gods or Lords. Peter Lombard and almost all theologians appear to admit this, and in Genesis the Divine persons are called “Gods” by Moses. To be sure, if the plural “Gods” does not mean anything other than beings having deity and the word is used for Persons because they are Persons having deity, why therefore may the writer not use the word “Gods”?

Yet if we more closely examine the underlying meaning of the words of the Athanasian Creed, we will see that it does not deny that the three Divine Persons are Gods or Lords, but it says that there are three Gods or Lords. Even if we profess the belief that there are three Divine Persons and that they are Gods, we still do not assert that there are three Gods. That would be the fallacy of combining separate predicates into a compound proposition, which Aristotle demolishes by the following argument. From the proposition *this individual is a harpist and he is a good man*, one cannot infer *therefore the man is a good harpist*. In the first proposition, goodness is predicated of the man as he is a man, but in the second the individual is said to be good not as a man but as a harpist. The same applies to our proposition about the plural form of God’s name. When I assert of the Persons that they are Gods, I utter a true proposition, because the “Gods” are beings possessing deity, and it is true to say of them that they are three, since truly they are three Persons. Nevertheless, such an assertion does not admit that there are therefore three Gods. The reason is that although “three” has been once and separately predicated, the number three pertains to the Persons; but if we should consider the composite proposition “there are three Gods” the same number three now pertains to the deity, and thus deity is pluralized. Still “three Gods” could be asserted if the word *Gods* should stand as an appositive in the following sense: “three, who are Gods.”

I do not deny that one could say *the Gods created*, as one says *the Father and the Son are spirating Persons* or *they spirate* (in referring to the immanent processions of the Son from the Father in the theology of the Trinity). Moses would write similarly later in [124] Genesis 1, *Let us make mankind in our image and likeness*. Elsewhere the name *Elohim* often governs a plural verb but still refers to the true God. However, at the time Moses wrote, there had been an opportunity for the ignorant to be mistaken regarding this mystery. Moses therefore very wisely and vigilantly foresaw every eventuality by writing *bara Elohim*, i.e. *the Gods*

he-created, in order that he might at once (1) express the plurality of Persons in the word *Elohim* and (2) preserve the unity of essence and action in the singular verb *bara*.

Indeed if the mystery of the Trinity had to be mentioned in any passage of Scripture, it was most certainly opportune to do so in the first words of the first book of the Bible, where the general work of the creation of all things is narrated—a labor that the Most Holy Trinity worked conjointly.

The heavens.

In Hebrew: *hash-shamayim*.

In Aramaic: *Shmayya*.

In Greek: *Ouranos*, as if *oranos* (as St. Ambrose says in his *Hexaemeron*) were from the Greek word *horao*, because it was perceptible to the sight and by no means dense, as the water and the dry land.

The word in Hebrew is always plural; the Vulgate version sometimes translates it in the singular as *heaven* and sometimes in the plural as *heavens*. Rabbi Jose ben Hanina and Rabbi Joseph interpret the Hebrew word to be *sh mayim*, as if it were *sham mayim*, i.e. *there are the waters*. On the other hand, others read it as *esh mayim*, i.e. *fire and water*, as though in nature the heavens are somehow between fire and water.

The earth.

In Hebrew: *ha-ares*.

In Aramaic: *ara*.

In Greek: *Ge*, from *go*, that is *chopo*, as if the whole expression were *he panta chorousa*, *having room for all things*.

But in Latin it resembles the word *tetra*, for it is dark. In the opinion of some Jews, *ares*, the earth, come from the root *rws*, which means *to run* because [125] the sphere continually runs upon it. However, it differs from the synonym *tevel*. That word describes habitable and inhabitable regions of the earth; the word used in Genesis 1, however, indicates the habitable earth.

There are three different opinions about what is actually meant by

the terms *heaven* and *earth*: (1) St. Basil, John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose (in his *Hexaemeron*) and many others simply think *heaven* is a bodily creature, i.e. the heavenly body; (2) St. Augustine and Origen understand heaven to be a spiritual creature, i.e. the angels; and (3) the Venerable Bede and Strabo think it means the empyrean heaven, which immediately in the beginning was created filled with the angels who were created along with it. In the noun *heaven*, they understand there are two natures, (1) the bodily, i.e. the empyrean heavens, and (2) the spiritual, i.e. the angels. Accordingly, they assert that at the same beginning moment the heaven and the angels were created.

This last argument is exceedingly appealing. If, according to the first-mentioned opinion, we are to understand in Genesis 1 that *heaven* means heavenly bodies, i.e. the firmament, which it says was made on the second day, then a question remains: Why was no mention made of spiritual creatures (namely, the angels), inasmuch as among creatures they are the most important and special? I am not mistaken in saying that many people accepted that opinion, to the extent that Moses spoke to an uneducated people, who were not capable of understanding spiritual beings. Yet in many passages of the Bible, and in Genesis, too, angels very clearly are mentioned many times. It follows if no mention is directly made of the creation of angels, people might have believed them to be uncreated. But if we should affirm, in accordance with the second opinion, that in Genesis angels ought to be understood by the word *heaven*, someone will ask in rebuttal: Why was no mention made of the most excellent body, the most worthy of all, when other lower forms are mentioned in the sacred text? If, however, we accept the sense of the third explanation, [126] that in Genesis the empyrean heaven was created at the same time as the angels in it, everything is plain and every question arising theretofore is silenced. Thus the first, more powerful, and the highest spiritual and corporal creatures—the angels and the First Heaven (which the Saints called by the Greek word *empyrion*)—are not missing from the catalogue of creation. It is called *empyrion* or “fiery” because of the prominence of the place and the splendor of its light. This explanation, embracing both spiritual and bodily creatures, comprises everything within the other two opinions. It contains the thesis of St. Augustine, who was mindful of only spiritual creation, and it embraces the opinion of St.

Basil, who supposed only a bodily creature.

This opinion was ratified by the Fourth Lateran Council held under Pope Innocent III. The Holy Roman Church professes that, from the beginning, God at once created corporeal creatures (those belonging to the world) and spiritual creatures (the angels). We find the same doctrine in the *Decretals*. Even the original Hebrew text of Genesis seems to be in agreement with this belief, where for *heaven* it reads *hashamayim*, a noun in the dual number, as if there were two kinds of heavens, to wit, a spiritual heaven and a corporeal heaven.

Also, by the term *heavens* not only is the corporeal heaven perceptible, the acceptance of which is very common in Sacred Scripture, but also spiritual creatures are very clearly perceived, as in Deuteronomy where it says, *Give ear, O heavens, while I speak* and the same in Isaiah, where we rightly understand that the inspired author is referring to spiritual inhabitants of the heavens. Job seems to teach the simultaneous creation of the angels in the empyrean heaven with the corporeal heaven when he says, *Where were you when I founded the earth...when the morning stars sang in chorus and the sons of God shouted for joy*. The happy spirits of that most eminent heaven and the brightest and most splendid stars of all of the most excellent empyrean heaven are set there, praising God together in the morning, and this occurred at the beginning of their creation, as St. Gregory notably comments. In the aforementioned Book of Job, *Behemoth*, i.e. the Devil, is said to be *at the beginning of God's ways*. That certainly refers to Lucifer whom God first made when, in the act of creating, He formed all things, and He made him more eminent than all other angels, as Gregory says. In [partial 127] Isaiah we also read the following verse: *How have you fallen from the heavens, O morning star [Latin Lucifer], son of the dawn*.

Nevertheless, it does not escape me that, in the opinion of many holy men of old, the angels were created before the visible world. Sharing that opinion are Gregory of Nazianzus, St. Basil, St. Jerome (in his *Commentary on the Epistle to Titus*), St. Ambrose (in his *Hexaemeron*), and other ancient writers, who all hold that the angels were made well before the visible world. John Cassian, relating the words of Abba Serenus, says that none of the faithful doubts that "God made the spiritual and celestial virtues before the creation of the visible creatures."

Notwithstanding these opinions, the Holy Roman Church determined in the Fourth Lateran Council that the angels along with the creatures of the world were at once created *ex nihilo* from the beginning of time. Nevertheless, I should not be inclined to believe that the aforementioned Doctors thought that the angels were created before every corporeal creature; for at the beginning of time, when the angels were created, the world was completely invisible. This seems to have been St. Gregory's understanding. In his discussion of that verse in Job (viz. *Where were you when I founded the earth...when the morning stars sang in chorus*), he says, "Since the created nature of rational spirits is supposed to be first in time, the morning stars are not without reason called angels. If that is so, while the earth was invisible and unformed, while the darkness was upon the deep, the stars by being visible anticipated the day of the subsequent time that was about to come by means of the light of Wisdom." Therefore, we can say that along with the creatures of the world, the angels were created before the visible world. Thus, returning to the original question, we must understand that the empyrean heaven is with the angels.

Therefore, we assert that these things were created in the beginning of time, i.e. when time began, and time could not begin without motion, since time is the measure of motion and of the motion of the first celestial body. Hence, we say that, [128] since the empyrean heaven is wholly motionless, these things were created at the same time with the *primum mobile* (i.e., the "first movable") and with the crystalline heaven (both of which immediately began their movement from the east to the west and, by their movement, commenced time). In addition, since the first-movable and crystalline-heaven spheres are perceived not by the senses but by reason, they are therefore included with the empyrean, which is far removed from our senses and perceptible to reason alone.

And the earth.

Similarly not everyone has the same opinion about what is understood by *the earth*. St. Basil, John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, Tertullian (in his *Against Hermogenes*) believe the earth consists of matter. Among the Jews, Ibn Ezra and many others argue that in Genesis 1 the noun *earth* means

the earth that we see with our eyes. The very word *earth* itself supports their view, for in many instances Sacred Scripture uses it in that sense, and they say that, in Genesis, Moses included two beginnings of the universe, namely, the highest and the lowest. Between the two are also contained the middle elements, from which other things are generated, and for that reason Moses did not mention them. Yet while the Moses asserts that the heavens and the earth were created in the beginning by God, he understands that they were created at the same time with the things that are in between. For although he said nothing about the work of the waters, we read in Genesis: *Darkness covered the abyss, and the spirit of God was stirring above the waters.*

St. Gregory of Nazianzus (in his *Sermon on the Holy Ghost*), Lactantius (in Book 2 of his *On the Origin of Error*), St. Augustine (in Book 12 of his *Confessions*), the Venerable Bede, and Hugh of St. Victor, too, think that prime matter ought to be understood by the name *earth*; from prime matter, everything contained under the heavens, even to the center of the earth, was then made. The verse below wonderfully supports that viewpoint:

VERSE 2

The earth was waste and void.

In Hebrew: *Wehahes hayethah thohu wavohu.*

The Aramaic version translated the verse as *Weara hayath sadya wereyaqneya*, which is to say, *And the earth was laid waste, or put out of proper form, and empty.*

The Jerusalem Targum renders the verse thus: *Weara hayah thahaya uvahaya*, which is *Void and empty.*

Aquila, the second Greek version after the Septuagint, translated the words as *Kenoma kai outhen*, i.e., *emptiness and nothing*. Symmachus rendered the Hebrew as *Argon kai adiakriton*, i.e., *an inert and disordered thing*, as if it were a mixture of emptiness and privation. Theodotion interprets the words as *Kenon kai outhen*, i.e. *an empty thing and nothing.*

The Vulgate reads *Inanis et vacua*, i.e., *waste and void*.

All these renderings wonderfully express the nature and conditions of prime matter. It also seems to be the opinion of the most eminent Jews. For Rabbi David, explaining in his book *On Roots of Words* the Hebrew roots *thw* and *bhw* (corresponding to the words *thohu* and *[wa]vohu* transliterated above), says they mean *desolation* and *voidness* or *emptiness*. He also alleges that wise men who study the nature of things say the *thw* is a thing to which there is no likeness or shape, but still arranged and prepared so that it can to receive a likeness and shape, what the Greeks call *hyle*. The other root, *bh*, is form itself, that is the thing in which exists the potency for endowing *thw* itself with a likeness and a shape. The world's creation resulted from both *thw* and *bhw* united with the Divine Will. The Book of Wisdom confirms this view, thus speaking to God: *Your almighty hand...made the world from unseen matter, or from formless matter* as St. Augustine quotes from the Greek *ex amorphou hyles*. Now, then, it seems this refers to what the earliest philosophers wrote about *chaos*. Refer to Book 1 of *On False Religion* and Book 2 of *On the Origin of Error*, by Lactantius. Also read the ancient bard Hesiod; Hermes Trismegistus, the theologian of the gentiles; Anaxagoras, Euripides, and many later thinkers, whose opinion Ovid elegantly referred to in these verses:

Before the seas, and this terrestrial ball,
And Heav'n's high canopy, that covers all,
One was the face of Nature, if a face;
Rather a rude and undigested mass:
A lifeless lump, unfashion'd, and unfram'd;
Of jarring seeds; and justly chaos nam'd.

Lactantius makes clear that the ancients understood by the word *chaos*, saying that Hesiod, in his *Theogony* or *Birth of the Gods*, had taken the beginning of the world not from God but from chaos, which is a confused mass of unrefined and unordered matter. Eusebius in his *Preparation for the Gospel* also holds that matter, from which all things were made, was created from the beginning. I submit that this is the opinion of all scholastic theologians.

From these therefore it is clear that prime matter is to be understood

by the word *earth*, and that prime matter is said to be *empty, void, formless, invisible, inert, disordered, and almost nothing*. It is not entirely nothing, but is so-called because it occupies the lowest place among the substances and because of itself it is endowed with no shape or appearance, and it is not entirely without act. Furthermore, if anything is a being or substance in its own act of being (which philosophers call “entitative,” i.e., of the nature of a being, or “of its essence”), it cannot in any way be understood to be deprived of something that should not be lacking. But since the act of this kind of matter is exceedingly imperfect and in potency [131] with respect to certain perfect acts, which are of composite beings existing in themselves, this kind of matter is accordingly said to be *shapeless, void, and empty*.

Nonetheless, we do not say that this matter had been created entirely without any form, but, according to the opinion of St. Augustine, we say it was formless to the extent that it does not have a definite, specific form (from which it might be drawn out to a determined being) and was utterly lacking every definite outward shape. Rather it was clothed with a kind of form, disordered and imperfect, which had the weakest and most imperfect act, with which it could be the common subject to all forms, and in that form there existed the desire to be perfected through the forms in contact with it. We do not deny that God by His power would be able to create matter without any interior form, since matter itself naturally precedes every form and has its own act of being (which they say is of its essence, which is in reality not found apart from existence). Even if it could be separated, it does not follow that matter could exist without form on the grounds that it is separate. For if it has a proper and individual essence, it will doubtlessly have existence, since existence is the act of the essence of the being. Therefore, God, by his power, could produce and preserve matter under such an existence without any form. Therefore, we understand by the name *earth* is matter itself, from which, with God as the author, all things are established.

However, the words *the earth was waste and void* (which in this passage means that the earth that is subject to our senses), can be interpreted *was waste*, i.e. invisible, since it was suffused with darkness everywhere and covered with waters, for it had not yet been adorned with plants and herbs and enriched with minerals. Some Jews, like the Gaon as

Ibn Ezra reports, “said that the root *thw* is the same as *tehom*; but this is not correct since the letter *mem* is part of the root as in *hadom*.” Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol says that “*thw* is *temah weshimamon*, i.e. *admiration* and *astonishment*; but *bhw* is *raqoth wesadu*, i.e. *thin and desolate*.” Ibn Ezra himself defines *thw* just it was translated in the Jerusalem Targum “because there was not anything in it.”

[132] *Darkness covered the abyss.*

In Hebrew: *Wechoshekh al-peney tehom*.

In Aramaic: *Wachashoka al-apey tehoma*, i.e., *The darkness was upon the face of the abyss.*

The Septuagint translated these lines as follows: *Kai skotos epano tes abyssou* i.e. *And the darkness was lay upon the abyss*, omitting *face* as does our version. Hebrew idiom commonly compounds the word *face* with the prepositions *toward* or *upon/above* as in the following verse: *And the spirit of God was stirring above the waters*, which in Hebrew is *above the faces of the waters*. Also, *over the face of the firmament, toward the face of the desert, above the face of the earth, toward the face of the earth*.

We must see what *darkness* and what *abyss* must mean. St. Basil and St. Ambrose hold that in Genesis 1 *darkness* is the overshadowing of a body, since every body has a shadow by which it shades nearby or shorter objects. Therefore that darkness engulfing the world arose on account of the shadow of a heavenly body, for darkness of this kind did not exist according to substance, but is rather a kind of influence, which occurred in the lower atmosphere as a result of the privation of illumination. They believe that the angels were created before the establishment of the word and they indubitably existed in light. Set in front of this light, the heavenly body caused, by means of its shadow, the darkness. Accordingly, St. Basil assigns three concomitant factors bringing about a shadow: light, a body set in front of the light, and a place lacking illumination. On the other hand, St. Augustine and Bede think that *darkness* is simply the lack of light because light had not yet been made. Thus, the darkness is nothing but the absence of light. The absence of light received this name, and the absence itself of light is dark, just as silence is nothing, but where sound is not is called silence. Nakedness is not some thing, but in a body

where there is no covering, it is called nakedness. Again, emptiness is not some thing, but where there is not a body, it is called emptiness. This is the more probable sense.

[133] With respect to the word *abyss*, Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol thinks the *waters* themselves (which were above the earth) must be understood by the name of *abyss*. St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, and Ambrose think it means the abundant mass and depth of the waters lying open to an immeasurable degree, whose depth cannot easily be reached. Rabbi David, in his treatise *On the Roots of Words*, thought the same thing. Sacred Scripture very often employs the word *abyss* in this sense. Thus, following these opinions, *darkness covered the face of the abyss* because whatever the abyss was, it was veiled by the darkness of the waters covering its face of the earth.

St. Augustine thinks that *abyss* means that same prime matter from which, since it was created from nothing, all things were created. Moreover, he asserts that it is called by several names. He says that it is called *heaven and earth* in so far as these things were made of it. It is called *the indivisible and shapeless earth* because among the elements of the world, the earth seems less formed than the others. It is said to be indivisible owing to its darkness, and shapeless because of its utter formlessness. It is called *water* above that which the Spirit of God moved, just as the will of an artisan operates above the handiwork that he will make, for everything that is born on earth, whether animals or plants or anything like them, begin to be formed and nourished by moisture. In addition, as easily workable and ductile, was subject to the operator, so that all things were formed from it. Finally, the *abyss* is said to be dark because of its disorder. It was without shape, and by no outward appearance could it be discerned or touched. These, therefore, are all the terms of that matter, so that something unknown for which there was no known word might be taught to the more inexperienced, and not by one word, but by many, for if it were one word, someone might think it means what men commonly understand by that word. This is St. Augustine's view.

And the spirit of God was stirring above the waters.

In Hebrew: *Weruach Elohim merachepeth al-peney hammayim.*

In Aramaic: *Werucha min-qadam yeya menasheva al-apey mayya. The spirit*

from the sight of God was blowing upon the waters or the face of the waters.
 [134] In Greek: *Kai pneuma theou epephereto epano tou hydatos. And the spirit of God went over the water.*

This verse is similarly explained by diverse interpretations. Some think *spirit* means the air, saying that Moses reckoned it among the parts of the whole world. In Hebrew the root *ruh* means air, wind, spirit, or will. Theodoret firmly avers that, in this verse, the Hebrew word must be read as *wind*, in accordance with the Psalm verse, *He lets his breeze blow and the waters run*. Ibn Ezra thinks the same thing and states that the spirit of God is said to be joined in governance because “it was sent in the will of God to dry out the waters.” The Aramaic Targum favors this viewpoint, for it translates the Hebrew word *merachepeth* as *menasheva*, which means *it blew upon*, which is an action proper to the wind.

St. John Chrysostom gives a similar explanation, stating that a kind of efficacious and vital operation was present in the waters, and the water was not standing motionless. Thus, since that vast expanse of water had a certain vital force, Scripture says, *The spirit was stirring* etc. St. Augustine understands it to be Divine Will, which moved above the waters (i.e. prime matter), just as the will of an artisan operates above the things that he intends to fashion. Yet St. Basil, Jerome, Ambrose, and Diodore of Tarsus emphatically believe that this verse definitely has to refer to the Holy Ghost. The verb *merachepeth*, says St. Jerome, “can be rendered *he lay on*, or *he cared for*, like a bird giving life to its eggs by means of her heat.” From that, we understand the verse does not refer to a wind of the world, but to the Holy Ghost, Who from the beginning is called the giver of life of all things. Diodore says the same: “As a bird cares for its eggs with her wings in order to give them life, so the Holy Ghost moved above the waters in order to make the capable of generating life.” St. Basil says the same thing was told to him by a certain Syrian, [135] and St. Ambrose, in his *Hexaemeron*, references the Syrian language. Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol seems to entirely agree, for he says, “the Throne of Glory remained in the air and lay upon the face of the waters by means of the breath of the mouth of the Lord and by His word, just as a dove lies upon her nest.” In the expository Midrash *Beresbit Rabbah*, the Jews consider this spirit to be the Spirit of the Messiah, as we, too, according to

St. Paul, affirm that the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Christ. The Hebrew word, even though it sometimes means *to lie upon* as in Deuteronomy 32, *As an eagle incites its nestlings forth by hovering over its brood*, where the verb is *racheph*, which more often means *motion* or *stirring up*, as the etymologist Rabbi David says in his book *On the Roots of Words*.

In conclusion, first we may notice how the entire Trinity together brought about the establishment of the whole world. By the word *God*, we understand the Father, who is the beginning of all things, the source and origin of divinity and deity. In the word *beginning*, we understand the Son Himself, who says of himself *I am the beginning who also speak to you*. In the words *Spirit of God*, we understand the third Person of the Trinity, namely the Holy Ghost. Whence it is written: *By the word of the Lord the heavens were made and by the breath of his mouth all their host*.

Second, we can observe that in Genesis 1 the Holy Ghost is called the *ruach Elohim*, i.e. the Spirit of the Gods. *Elohim* is grammatically plural as we showed above, and by the plural, we understand the Father and the Son. The Father alone is not several Persons, but is only one Person. Similarly the Son. Yet, the Father and the Son are several Persons, and hence they may be termed Gods, since there are several Persons possessing deity, which we made clear above. Therefore, the Holy Ghost, although called in Genesis the *Spirit of the Gods*, by dogma proceeds from the Father and the Son, since it is not the *Spirit of the Gods* unless it is a relation of Its origin in the Divine Persons. Otherwise, the *Spirit of the Gods* cannot correctly be applied if it does not proceed simultaneously from the Father and the Son. No one should wonder how the Holy Ghost can be called the *Spirit of the Gods*, when, even though it proceeds immediately from the Father and the Son, it is not such except as it were from one beginning, [136] insofar as the Father and the Son are one spirative beginning of the Holy Ghost in the fecundity of the Will. We wholly believe this. Nevertheless, we affirm that it is not incongruous to speak of the *Spirit of the Gods*. For although the Father and the Son are one spirative beginning of the Holy Ghost in the fecundity of the Will and entirely one Spirator, there are two spirating Persons. It is consistent to say that both Father and the Son are the spirating Persons.

VERSE 3

God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

In Hebrew: *Waiyomer Elohim yehi-or wayehi-or.*

In Aramaic: *Waamar Yeya yehi-nehora wahawah-nehora. God said: Let light be. And light was.*

The Septuagint nevertheless translated the text as *Genetho phos: Let the light be made*; the Hebrew word *or*, means both "light" and "brightness".

We must now see what is understood by the name *light*. Some think that it is the Sun itself that ought to be understood here, to the extent that St. Dionysius seems to so affirm. However, Holy Writ indeed denies this assertion, [for the Bible] says that the Sun itself was created on the fourth day. The Church also confesses such, saying in the Vespers hymn for Wednesdays:

*Thou, on the fourth day establishing
The fiery wheel of the Sun...*

But these authorities claim that the verse does not claim that the Sun was made on the fourth day, rather it is a reminder of what things were found already made on that day. But, indeed, that explanation is unsatisfactory. For as it is said in the verse, *Let the light be made*, likewise was it said in verse 15, *Let the lights be made*. The opinion of all the Church Doctors, Basil, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Augustine, and all the schoolmen is that is that the Sun was created on the fourth day: in this verse, however, they hold that what was produced was not the Sun, but the very brilliance of light, by which all things are illuminated.

When we nevertheless hear in this verse that light was brought forth, let us not think that it was a substance, as some believe; for it is neither a [137] spiritual nor bodily substance, nor the substantial form of some body. For if it were a spiritual substance, it would be wholly invisible to the eye; yet light itself and brightness are perceived; also, spiritual substances themselves are not corrupted as we see brightness itself to be

corrupted.

Neither is it a bodily substance; for it is impermissible for two bodies to retain themselves inwardly in the same place, as light is received in its transparent medium; furthermore, it is not an incorruptible body since it clearly seems to be broken apart; nor is it corruptible, since nothing is generated from its corruption, which, to be sure, would make clear that it was an immeasurably large body.

It is precisely not a substantial form of some body, for such a form is not perceptible to sight; it is not a substance in the body, but an accident in it, as is clear during an eclipse when the Moon is deprived of brightness yet still remains the Moon. In addition, such a form determines some body, and then there would be two bodies at the same time, as is seen in the systematic arrangement of a ray of light. Therefore, by light we understand a certain quality, existing in fact in a body full of light in accordance with which it gives light.

Furthermore, one should not think that light and brightness differ in species, but in their subject, just as heat in fire and heat produced in a medium. For heat is in fire as in a cause and permanently, since it is proper to fire; in a medium; however, it is there as in an effect, and it does not remain. Thus, brightness is said to be light in a proper subject, and they call light the primary principle of perception; but in a medium, brightness is said to be primary and they call light the second principle of perception. Very frequently, the terms mean a ray of light and brilliance; but a ray is the same brightness as proceeds in a straight line from a body full of light. Brilliance, on the other hand, is reflected by some body.

[138] Hence we may remark that brightness is not a certain figurative quality and a species of light itself, as some say, but it rather behooves us to say that it is a real quality, since light and brightness do not differ in species, yet the distinction is between the species and that of which it is the species. Moreover, species of objects are not sensible, but they are that thing by which the object is sensed. However, brightness is seen *per se*, and, in order to see it, we would not need another species if it were a species. But without a doubt it does need one, as long as it is in the solar medium, however the eye is in darkness. Furthermore, brightness itself also brings about something and causes something to pass away, for it warms and produces a substance, yet species themselves can bring about

no such thing.

Thus far: the species themselves are of composed things, not of forms; for species is not of color but of a colored thing; so light, if it were a species not of light, which is a form, but of a thing full of light, would be a species and of a luminous thing, and then through whatsoever brightness the Sun would seem weakened and reflected, as in a mirror, a fact that is not manifest. Therefore, light is a certain quality of a body full of light, according to which it gives light and produces brightness itself in a medium.

Yet sometimes light itself is customarily taken for a body full of light, in accordance with which St. Augustine says: "Light in bodies holds the first place." Therefore, from the common agreement of all theologians, light in verse 3 is created, not as a certain quality distinct *per se* from a thing full of light, but in a thing full of light and as it were a cloud full of light not created from nothing but made from matter already pre-existent, so that it would be light and would have the power of giving off light. We think, along with St. Dionysius, that this very thing is solar light, not of the elements in nature but of the heavens, very delicate and subtle in body. I do not say it is the Sun, but solar light, for the Sun is one thing and solar light is another, as St. Basil cogently notes in his discourse on the Sun. He gives an answer in the form of a question: If the springing up of light anticipated the Sun, why now, in order that it shine upon the earth, is the Sun said to be risen? He posits brilliance and illumination not simply as a quality *per se*, but in place of a very subtle, shining and illuminating substance, as he makes clear in the example below. He posited light in place of brilliance and illumination. His comments do not wholly oppose [139] what we have said about light, for in the one verse, the very nature of light is produced, and in the other, the body of the Sun is formed so that it would be the vehicle of that first-born light. Just as fire and a lamp are very different and not the same thing: fire, for instance, possesses the power of illuminating, while a lamp is made for that purpose, such that it provides a moderate light for those requiring it. Thus, in Basil's theory, the heavenly bodies were now made as a vehicle for the most pure, uncontaminated, and immaterial light.

Hence, it is clear, from the thinking of so great a man, that one thing is solar light and the other is light. We can discover the proof of this thing

from the effects of the Moon, as our saint says. For the Moon in an eclipse and beginning its diminution is not consumed in its whole body. Rather, depositing the light that it had received and again taking it on, it shows us the image of its increase and decrease. Nevertheless, the things that we perceive are by way of clear evidence that the body of the Moon, when it is in eclipse, is by no means consumed. A little later in his *Homily*, St. Basil says that the body of the Moon is one thing and the light by which it shines is another. This is clearly seen in an eclipse of the Moon, where the Moon is deprived of all the light it received from the Sun, but still remains the Moon: “I would have you to know the same theory applies to the Sun, except that it never lays down the light once received and accommodated to it.” For this reason, we think St. Dionysius said that the light (i.e. solar light) had been created unformed on the first day, since light had not yet been accommodated to and deposited in the solar body—placed, as it were, in a very convenient vehicle.

This is also the opinion of St. John Damascene, who says, “The Author of Creation placed the first bright light on heavenly bodies, not as to give one an ineffective light but in order that it might not remain empty, for a heavenly body is not itself light but receptive of light.” This surely seems to be the position of Sacred Scripture, for we read of the Sun in *Sirach* that it is *A wonderful vessel of the Most High*. Therefore, in this verse, by the word *light* we understand that it is not the Sun, nor is it even some quality distinct *per se* from something full of light, since light is the quality of something full of light. Rather we understand some substance full of light, heavenly in nature, made from pre-existing material, which had the power of shedding and by its brilliance illuminated and brightened the universe. That substance is called *light*, just as we call a substance full of light the light of a lamp. We also speak of the light of the Sun just as we speak of the light of a lamp.

[140] There is no common opinion about how this light brought about the day by its brightness and caused night by its absence. St. Basil says that “day came about as a result of the original light diffusing its brightness, and by drawing itself back again, night was made, according to the command of Divine Will for a measure defined by God.” Gregory of Nyssa believes the same thing, as does John Damascene. We read of something like this when *Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and*

there was dense darkness throughout the land of Egypt for three days, when the Sun still shone in our hemisphere, poured out its brilliance in the land of Goshen, and sent forth the rays of its light into other regions. Perhaps a similar phenomenon occurred during the Passion of our Lord, when the Sun was obscured, and *there was darkness over the whole earth*, something done not in Nature by the command of God.

St. Augustine does not share this opinion to the extent that there was no reason for the alternation of emitting and withdrawing rays of light inasmuch as there were no humans or animals for whose use day and night would serve. Furthermore, it is not in the nature of light to withdraw itself and its brightness, except by a miracle. However, in the initial establishment of Nature there were no miracles, just the nature of things. For these reasons, I agree with St. Augustine that this light brought about day and night by its own movement. Since that light-filled substance, which we understand in this verse by the word *light*, was of a celestial nature, it certainly obtained that movement by which the *primum mobile*, made in the beginning, began move itself from east to west by its own nature, for that movement brought about day and night as well as evening, morning, and noontide. Therefore, by such a movement, that light brought about the day by its presence and the night by its absence, while the atmosphere was deprived of its own light. Furthermore, it caused evening, and morning, and noontide just as now the Sun brings about these times of the day, except that now the day shines with simple light, by the agency of the Sun in our hemisphere, and at the beginning it time it shone with the light of which we just spoke.

VERSE 4

God saw that the light was good.

In Hebrew: *Wayyare Elohim eth-haor ki-tov.*

[141] In Aramaic: *Wachaza Yeya yath-nehora arey-tav. And God saw the Light, seeing that [it was] good.*

In Hebrew the word *tov* means *good, beautiful, lovely, delightful*, whence

the Aramaic version sometimes translates it as *shaphir* and *shaphira*, which means *beautiful* and *beauty*. However, all these words wonderfully agree with the nature of light. Light is good, not only in its radiance, but in all its usefulness we see light's loveliness. Indeed, it recommends itself for many reasons. It is delightful, because it pleases by seeing it and serves the power of sight. When seen, it frees us from melancholy and soothes the mind with a kind of soft peacefulness. It is lovely, for it adorns the world with its abundant rays and makes its outward appearance comely. Finally, it is beautiful, on account of the marked brilliance of which every pleasant thing is placed in our sight. The brilliance of its illumination, infused in translucent bodies, by its act makes things perceivable and renders to our eyes every kind of color and visible beauty that before was invisible because it was shrouded in darkness.

And God separated the light from the darkness.

In Hebrew: *Wayyavedel Elohim beyn haor ubeyn hachoshek.*

In Aramaic: *Weapherish yeya nehora ubeyn chashoka. And God separated the light from the dark.*

St. Basil explains the verse in this way. *He separated*, that is he made the nature of these two things unmixed, such that neither of them could be mixed with the other and would be contraries of and opposite to each other. St. Ambrose thinks the same thing, and indeed there is nothing in common between light and darkness.

But this distinction entails something else. *God distinguished the light from the darkness*, to say nothing of the fact that he made them unmixed in nature. Moreover, as St. John Chrysostom says, "He distributed to each its proper place, and He defined a fitting time so that by turns, as the light shines in one hemisphere, the darkness would flee to the other, and the light would dominate in the day time but the night time would be engulfed in darkness." Wherefore in the light-filled substance now made, He established the cause of illumination and the power of shedding light, and he placed the cause of darkness in the opacity of the earth.

VERSE 5

[142] *Calling the light Day and the darkness Night.*

In Hebrew: *Wayyiqra Elohim laor yom welachoshbek qara laylah.*

In Aramaic: *Uqra yeya linhora yemama welachashoka qera leyliya. And God called the light Day and named the darkness Night.*

When light emits the rays of its illumination over our hemisphere and makes everything clearly visible and translucent, it is day; it seems to receive light for all that time in which it shines over the hemisphere. However, when the light has departed from the hemisphere, it becomes dark, which is the absence of light. As long as light is absent, it is dark and that whole time of darkness is called night.

And there was evening and morning, one day.

In Hebrew: *Wayehi-erev wayehi-boqer yom echad.*

In Aramaic: *Wahawah-remash wahawah-sepher yoma had. And there was morning and there was evening, one day.*

Yom in Hebrew sometimes means the *time* in which the solar light is upon the earth, as noted above: *He called the light Day*. Moreover, it is as often joined with *laylah*, night, as it is called *day* and *night*, as below. Sometimes, indeed, it encompasses a day and a night together, which is said to be a natural day contained in the space of twenty-four hours, wherein the Sun travels its circle in relation to the motion of the *primum mobile*. According to this definition, a day must be understood when we read *And it happened evening and morning day one*. For Moses did not unite each of the two by the naming of day and night, but he gave the whole name to the more preeminent word. "Just as a generation of men is reckoned and is understood also of women, because the later are linked to the more powerful, likewise days are counted and nights are considered to be connected." [St. Ambrose, *Hexaemeron*] You may find this convention observed in all Scripture, as: *the days of our years*, and *the days of my life...are few and evil*, and in many other places. Moreover, *evening*, which

designates dusk, that time after sunset, is called *erev*, which in Hebrew signifies a certain admixture, to the extent that at that hour there is a certain confusion of shapes [143] with the result that one thing cannot easily be distinguished from another, as they can be distinguished in bright light. *Morning*, however, *boqer*, derived from *baqar*, which means a kind of search, insofar as in the day's light every thing is searched for. Nevertheless, now and then the word is used for light as we read in the Book of Job, *kokve boqer, the stars of daylight*, likewise *erev* sometimes means darkness.

Thus, the Jews so interpret "night" by the word *evening*, to wit, that entire time of darkness from the beginning of twilight until dawn; by the word *morning* they really understand "day," the entire time that remains until evening. Accordingly, in the time belonging to night and the time belonging to day, an entire natural day is consumed. They say besides that a natural day is reckoned from the beginning of the first night and ends at the start of the following night. Further, they affirm that the day-time was the light, from the fact that the antecedent darkness appears in this verse, inasmuch as previously *darkness* (which is called *night* by God) *was upon the face of the deep*. Soon the light followed, as God said, "Let there be light." Moreover, in Leviticus we read, *from evening unto evening, you will celebrate your Sabbaths*.

Our exegetes, however, think otherwise. For by the word *evening*, they understand the end of the time belonging to the day, and by the word *morning* the end of the time belonging to the night. Thus evening was made before and morning afterwards, since the first day had an evening but did not have a morning; for morning is said to be the end of the preceding day and the beginning of the next, because it is dawn, which does not have full light, yet it does not wholly have darkness. Therefore, since a day had not preceded, which ended at the beginning of the following day, hence the first day did not have a morning. For that reason, especially because with the light appearing, soon day stood over the earth, full and bright, which began not from the dawn but from the bright light, and the morning of the next day was completed. Therefore, with the light setting little by little, and after a space of a day's length, going under the lower parts, evening occurred, just as now it is customary with the usual course of the Sun. However, morning came about with the same light

returning over the earth and beginning another day, and one day of twenty-four hours was completed.

So explains the Venerable Bede, and St. Ambrose [144] more expressly in his *Hexaemeron*, and so, too, St. John Chrysostom explains, saying, "He distinctly named the end of the day and the end of the night one day, in order that He might establish a certain order and succession and that no confusion result." St. Basil thinks the same in his *Hexaemeron*, explaining it identically. Undoubtedly if a day be understood by the name *evening*, then *morning* is night, for indeed anything receives its name rather from its limit and end than from its beginning. Therefore, since evening is the last of the time belonging to the day, and morning is the last of the time belonging to the night, such a morning as that could be labeled *evening*.

I know that other later writers interpret the word differently. For some, understanding night by the word *evening*, assert that Moses thus preferred night to day, because the Sun was brought forth in the other hemisphere, such that in the hemisphere of the Chosen People for whom he wrote, first night, then day appeared. Thus while the light was passing through the day in the former hemisphere, the shadows of night were occupying the latter hemisphere. Others are not lacking who say that from the beginning of the creation of the first creature until the creation of light, twelve hours had passed, which in this verse must be understood by the word *evening*, and for that reason in this verse evening is preferred to day, because in those twelve hours darkness preceded light. These kinds of statements find support in neither reason nor authority.

Yet why did Moses not say *the first day*, but *day one*, where it was more suitable (the order having been asserted with respect to the second, third and fourth day) to call the day that came before all, the *first* day, not *day one*.? Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol replies that *day one* was written "to the extent that God was alone in the universe, inasmuch as the angels were created on the second day (as is explained in the *Bereshith Rabbah*).” However, this has nothing to do with the case.

St. Basil and Ambrose assign another reason of sorts, according to both the literal and the higher meaning of the verse. First, Moses said *day one* in order to delimit the period of day and night and to join the time interval of both, namely of the day and of the night; [145] in order to

define the space of one day in 24 hours, and to add under the meaning of the word for day, the idea of night. Accordingly, even if during the solstices one day or night should be longer than the other, the time period having been defined, the span of each of the two is characterized as though Moses had written four and twenty hours is the period of one day. Also since the revolution of heaven from the same sign to the same sign is completed in one day, therefore, as often as the evening and morning occupy the world in accordance with the circuit of the Sun, the revolution completes its period not over a long time, but in the space of one day. Second, according to Basil:

There is a more cogent reason for calling it day one, which we learn from difficult and abstruse texts. Certainly God, Who created the nature of time, its measures and signs, undoubtedly joined together the intervals of the days and, distributing time to the world by means of the week, He ordained that the week be repeated, thus reckoning the courses and movements of time. In the same way, one day brings about a week by recapitulating itself seven times. However, the day takes on the appearance of a circle, starting from itself and ending on itself, and this feature—of returning to itself and by no means of finding an end—stands as a characteristic mark of its proper time period. Wherefore, Moses called the beginning of time not the first day but day one, in order to apportion, from the name, the earthly time that will come to be. For something that carries, in its own character with respect to all else, the form of a unique and incommunicable principle, is very properly and fittingly called one... According to the Scriptural verse: *Great is the day of the Lord, and exceedingly terrible*, Moses, therefore, called it day one in order lift up our mind and lead it to the life that will come, which is called day one, and to the future condition. That day is the representation of eternity itself, it is the first fruits of days, and is equal in age to light. I say that day is the Lord's holy day, which Lord's Resurrection endowed with a special honor.

This is the two-part explanation of both Basil and Ambrose for the use of the term day one. In his treatment of the term, St. John Chrysostom employed the first explanation.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that one must admit that the phrase "one day" is in line with Hebrew idiom; for among the Jews one is not infrequently used as an ordinal number. Therefore, very often in that language "one" is used for "first." Such a manner of speaking is found in the Gospels, the idiom of which is almost entirely Hebraic. For as Theophylactus and many others explain, *day one of the Sabbath* [146] means the first day of the Sabbath, i.e., the first day of the week, and *one of the month* means the first day of the month.

But from what has been said, the way in which God is characterized brings up a not inconsiderable difficulty. Why is it that *God says*, for Moses writes: *God said, "Let there be light"*? Next, why is it that *God sees the light was good*? Thirdly, why is it that *God calls the light Day and the darkness Night*?

As to the first question, St. Basil says:

In speaking of God, although we refer to His voice, word, and command, you must beware of supposing and thinking that it is a sound that issues from the organs of a voice, and that likewise is a breath articulated and formed by the operation of the tongue. Instead, we think that the moment or the inclination of Divine Will was shaped into the likeness of a command by which a subject, as it were, becomes fluid and is more expressly manifested to the eyes of those being taught.

St. Ambrose entirely agrees, and he says, "The full word *illumination* does not mean the equipment of the ordered universe; rather, the universe is bright by the effect of God's operation. The Creator of Nature spoke and created light. The Word of God is His Will; the work of God is Nature." A little later in his *Hexaemeron*, Ambrose writes: "In the phrase *God said*, the sound of a word did not issue forth through organs of speech, nor did the movement of a tongue form a heavenly utterance, and the sound of words did not strike the air. Rather, He brought forth the knowledge of his Will by the effect of Its operation."

The Gaon, who has the same notion, explained, as Ibn Ezra tells us, that the words mean:

Wayomer kemo wayireseh, which is to say, And He said, it is as both He willed and it was. Thus, it happened that the light

itself was for seeing, according to its obedience, as the Psalm says, *By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made for he commanded, and it stood forth.* In addition, the pronoun in the Hebrew text above is what was not necessary, and it is like the parable of the king and the servant. This light was for decorating the atmosphere.

Therefore, this learned man thinks that God's saying "let there be light" is nothing other than that which He produced in accordance with the command of His Will. In the Hebrew language, *to say* sometimes denotes an internal idea of the mind and will. In Exodus we read *Are you wishing to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?* The literal rendering of Hebrew text reads, *Are you saying [147] to slay me? attah omar,* where our translation renders the sense of the word and substitutes *wishing*.

St. Augustine nevertheless explains this verse in a manner that applies to the nature of the Word,

of which it is written, *In the beginning was the word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* Since it is written that *all things were made by Him,* that is sufficient evidence to prove that light was made by It when God said, *Let there be light.* If that is so, what God says is eternal: *Let there be light,* because the Word of God, God with God, the only Son of God, is co-eternal with the Father, although God the Word said this from eternity, He made creation in time. Therefore God spoke not in a temporal fashion, not with the sound a voice, but in the Word co-eternal with Himself. In other words, outside of time He begot the Word in which He was and He ordered from eternity that creation should come about in time, and it was made in time. We understand that the words *God said, Let there be* were in the Word in order for it to happen. Indeed, when the words *And so it was* are added, we understand that the product of creation did not exceed the limits defined for it.

This is St. Augustine's opinion. However, in order to make the meaning more clear, according to the opinion of scholastic theologians, it will not be unreasonable to find a middle ground.

The theologians and the holy Doctors accept three meanings of the

word *to speak* or *say*. Whenever it is used *essentially*, it thus means *to understand* or *to make manifest*. Following this usage, St. Anselm of Canterbury says in his *Monologion* that “*to speak* or *say* (in reference to the Supreme Spirit) is nothing other than to perceive by thinking.” In another passage, St. Anselm says that in the Holy Trinity, each Person *speaks* of Itself since every Divine Person formally understands Itself and thus formally *speaks* Itself. Moreover, each Divine Person speaks all intelligible things, because, by Its own intelligence, It understands Itself and all things.

The second meaning is understood *notionally* or *personally*, and as such is nothing other than begetting the Word, and it applies solely to the Father, for it is production by means of the intellect, which is only proper to the Father.

The third meaning is usually taken neither *purely essentially* nor *purely personally* but includes each [148] meaning and it is to make manifest everything capable of being manifested by means of knowledge produced from Itself. St. Augustine accordingly says, “Hence as though *speaking Himself*, the Father begat the Son equal in all things to Himself. He would not have spoken himself wholly and perfectly, if anything in His Word were less or greater than in Himself. For the Father in the Word that He begat also makes manifest Himself and all things that are in Him.” Therefore, in this way only the Father *speaks* not just the Word but everything that He makes manifest in the Word begotten by Himself. Thus, the word *to say* or *speak* has two acts, viz. to beget and to make manifest, one is defined only with respect to the Person of the Word, and the other with respect to every thing capable of being manifest that gives light in the Word. Employing this definition, St. Anselm says, “When the Supreme Spirit *speaks* Itself, It speaks of all things that have been made.” For all the things that have been made were in the Word, and they gave light.

It must not be thought that the Father alone worked through the Son alone. As St. Augustine says in his commentary on the Psalm verse *By the word of the Lord the heavens were made; by the breath of his mouth all their host*: the Father works through the His Word and the Holy Ghost, and the external actions of the Divine Persons are undivided and common to all Persons. Although the Father works together with the Son and together

with the Holy Ghost and does nothing without them, nevertheless, since the Father by means of the Son does not complete the work, but by means of the Father, the Son completes the work, and by both the Holy Ghost completes the work, it is therefore said that the Father works through the Son and the Holy Ghost. God works as an artificer, as it says in the Book of Wisdom, God is the *artificer of all things*. However, an artificer works both through the intellect and through the will, for he both wills and understands. Thus God is said to work through the Son, to Whom the intellect is appropriated, since the Son proceeds from the Father by way of the intellect, and through the Holy Ghost, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son by way of the will. Nevertheless, the action at once is common to the three Persons and is not proper to any one. Here it is not taken personally, but conveys a certain understanding of the Divine Persons according to Their practice, together with the divine will helping and preceding. In this verse, properly *to speak* or *say* means *to do*, according to the eternal arrangement of things in the Word and the command of the Divine Will. Since we have established [149] that, in this case, the First Person *speaks* by understanding Itself, and by speaking begets the Son, and by loving Itself and the Son, It spirates the Holy Ghost. The First Person also sees in Himself and His Word that by which He expresses His whole Self, the ideas of all natures, which He sees as natures capable of creation, so that in some way they are outside Him. Therefore, understanding those natures in such a way and foreknowing them in the Word co-eternal with Himself, and by His perfect and eternal Will in the Holy Ghost full of goodness and grace, it has pleased Him that they might exist, i.e., that they would go forth from Him to their own state of being, not by producing them in nature or from the necessity of nature, but as a result of His Pleasure and mere Will. Therefore, willing in this way, He said, “*Let them become,*” i.e., *he ordered them to exist*, bringing these natures forth ineffably by this His own command.

Now that we have thoroughly explained the first clause of the verse, we should address the second, to wit, the part that says *God saw that the light was good*. St. Ambrose explains this clause noting that “God did not see what he was ignorant of, nor did he approve of that which he did not know beforehand or had not seen. Rather it is fitting that good works not lack someone to praise them and when they are seen, they themselves bear

witness to their own excellence.” A little later in the same work, St. Ambrose says, “therefore He expressed the nature of light with appropriate words; light pleases the sight, since it furnishes the means of seeing.” Therefore, God illuminated the light by His countenance and He saw that it was good, not on the part of God, but as a judgment in general.”

St. John Chrysostom says that Moses spoke in a human fashion, saying: “Before light was made, did He not know that it was good, but after it was produced, did the appearance manifest to the craftsman the beauty and goodness of what was produced? And who is it about whom Moses might say such a thing? If a man, who works something by art, knows before he fashions what he wishes to make and before he forms it, the use of the thing which he undertook to elaborate, how much greater then is the Craftsman of all things, who produced all things into being by His word, He knew before He made light that it was good. Why, therefore, did Moses use this expression? The blessed Prophet condescended and spoke all these things according to human custom. Just as men, when they have elaborated something by means of a great effort and put an end to their labors, finally approve of what they have then made and so admire their work with praise, so is the custom in Divine Scripture[150] and now when he condescended to the frailty of our human modes of perception, Moses said, *And God saw*” etc.

St. Augustine, in his book *On Genesis Against the Manichæans*, holds the same view: “the phrase means that which pleased God in his own work as an artificer, and by these words I have not shown that an unknown good thing became apparent to God but that a perfect thing pleased Him.” In his incomplete work *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Augustine says,

And God saw the light etc. By that sentence, it must be understood to mean not the goodwill of something unusual, as it were, but the approval of the work. For what more convenient way is there of describing God, to the degree that men can speak of Him, than using expressions such as *He said*, *it was so*, and *it pleased Him*? Thus in the phrase *He said*, we understand His command; in the phrase *it was so*, we understand His power; in the phrase *it pleased Him*, we understand His kindness, as ineffable things ought to be

expressed in this way by a man to men in order that they be advantageous to all.

Some other scholars understand the phrase *He saw* to mean *He made it be seen*, making us know the goodness of light by its most evident effects. It is clearly visible that God bestows it on as many things as possible (lest I speak to all bodily things). A similar way of speaking is found in many passages of Sacred Scripture, as in *I now know that you fear God*, i.e. *I have made it to be known*, etc. Rabbi Ibn Ezra explains that this word *to see* is in His thought or judgment, i.e. that God judged the created light good. And it is the same opinion.

Accordingly, in this passage, the sense of the phrase *He saw* etc. is as follows: God knew and understood that light pleased Him in the kindness of His Spirit, not as if the light were unknown before and then known after it was created; rather it pleased Him by the same goodness by which He was pleased to create light in order that it might abide as created light, since created light did not exceed or diminish the terms of its kind established in the Word. But it was entirely created just as God already beforehand had disposed in His Word in order to create it. Therefore, this is what he says: *And God saw the light, in that it was good*. This meaning must also be understood whenever one reads the phrase *God saw* etc. in subsequent verses.

Now that I have explained, in my own poor way, the first and second parts, it is opportune for me to explain the third part, which is about *God's* [151] *calling the light Day* etc. St. John Chrysostom says that after the distinction of the light and the darkness, God introduced the names by which they were called. St. Ambrose, however, thinks this pertains to the distinction, so that He distinguished day and night by their very name, just as they are distinguished by nature, place, and purpose.

In his *On Genesis Against the Manichæans*, St. Augustine offers the following explanation of this verse:

All this has been written for our minds. In what language did God name the light Day and the darkness Night? Is it Hebrew, Greek, Latin or some other language? God is pure understanding, without audible speech or a variety of tongues. *He called* means "He made it to be called," because He

distinguished all things in such a manner and ordained that they could be separated and receive names.

In his one unfinished volume *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, he advises, at a lower level of interpretation, that we should not take the words light and darkness as the names of the phenomena given by God because these “are names insofar as they are uttered by a distinct voice to signify things.” When God said *Let there be light*, and *He separated the light from the darkness*, “words were not yet been invented.” Rather, we should regard the words as names for each phenomenon “because the phenomenon, which received that name, could not otherwise be expressed to humans unless by some name.” He then offers another explanation in order that God’s calling may be taken as the distinction itself. For all light is not Day and all darkness is not Night, but light and darkness, as ordered and distinct from each other at certain times, are called by the names of Day and Night. He adds another explanation besides, since he argues by making inquiries, that these words “may mean to us that Moses used the terms light and darkness as though he said: God made the light and *he separated between the light and the darkness*. But I term the light is Day and I term the darkness is Night so that you do not think it is some other light that is not Day and that you not understand some other darkness that is not Night.”

However, in his full book *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, he gives the loftier explanation that *God* named *the light Day and the darkness Night* “because *God called the light Day and the darkness Night* in the Word co-eternal with Himself, i.e. by the internal and eternal designs of unchangeable Wisdom, not by the bodily sound of a voice.” And this suffices for the clarification of this manner of speaking. We now proceed to the work of the second day. [152]

VERSE 6

Then God said, “Let there be [made] a firmament in the midst of the waters.

In Hebrew: *Wayyomer Elohim yehi raqia bethokh hammayim.*

In Aramaic: *Waamar yeya yehi reqia bimçiuth nayya: And God said: Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters.*

And let it divide the waters from the waters.

In Hebrew: *Yihi mavdil beyn mayim lamayim.*

In Aramaic: *Yihi maphereysb beyn mayya lemayya. And let it be dividing between the waters and the waters.*

The Septuagint translated the Hebrew word for firmament as *strpeoma*, and our Latin version followed the Greek version by rendering it *firmamentum*. The Hebrews word is *raqia*, means an extension or a certain spreading out, derived from the verb *raqa*, which means to stretch out and to spread out by hammering out, just as it reads in Exodus, *Wayeraqu athpachey hawwahav: And they hammered out the thin plates of metal or gold leaf*. The heaven is called *raqia* because it is expanded out and extended over the earth. The Jews called the heaven *raqia* as they viewed it as a kind of stretching out or extension or diffusion. But inasmuch as the heavenly body is solid and firm, as we read in Job, *Do you spread out with him the skies, hard as a brazen mirror*. For this reason, I think, the Septuagint translated what the Jews called *raqia* as *stereoma*, from the verb *stereo*, which means “I make firm,” and the Latin version imitated the Greek by the rendering the word *firmamentum*.

There is not a single opinion about what we should understand by the term *firmament*. Some understood the word *firmament* meant that part of the atmosphere wherein the clouds are condensed, and they thought that the certain kind of condensation made then was signified by the word *firmament*. The fact that the great luminaries and the stars are said to have been placed in the firmament of heaven by God militates against that view more than other things: without a doubt, the luminaries and the stars are not in that part of the atmosphere in which there is condensation. St. Basil also criticizes this position [153] in his *Hexaemeron*. Others say that in this verse Moses devotes himself to an explanation of the work and of creation because Scripture (of which God

is the author) has represented the firmament as being above the created and produced heavens. As it were, the result is that in verse 1 (the first day) the whole of the work is briefly comprehended, and in verse 6 (the second day) the quality of the work is ordered through the very appearances of concurring things. Just as a certain skilled craftsman is said to have constructed a home (and the whole work is thereupon linked first to laying the foundations, then to erecting the walls, and finally to putting on a roof), so at first Moses, as if by way of anticipation, proposed a summary of the entire divine work and creation, saying *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*, and by a kind of summary including the existence of the whole out of the two created entities that are at opposite ends of the universe. Very frequently in Sacred Scripture the entire universe is understood by the expression *the heavens and the earth*. They think that in verse 6 Moses devotes himself to the order of the work. And according to the opinion of these scholars who think the heavens was created in the beginning, the heavens are one and the same thing, and in verse 1 they were put in place and in verse 6 they were made in the midst of the waters.

This clearly seems to be what Chrysostom openly thought, and he also constantly affirmed that there is only one heaven, not several bodily heavens put together. Although many thinkers, led more by his authority than by reason, have followed him, in this case we must not accept his opinion, because Scripture, which very often mentions both a *third heaven* and the *heaven of heaven*, also denies his idea. St. Ambrose asserts that the heavens called in verse 6 the *firmament* are different from the heavens in verse 1. St. Basil and John Damascene have the same opinion, and so too do Bede and Strabo. These later scholars understand it to be that which we had discussed relative to the sidereal heavens. According to Augustine, a spiritual creature is understood, i.e. with an angelic nature. However, John Damascene understands a kind of spherical heavens without the stars, of [154] which the philosophers speak of as the ninth heavenly sphere and the first movable, which is moved by daily motion.

Nevertheless, I think that all these are included in the name *firmament*, as I have already explained above; however, almost all thinkers understand that *firmament* means the heaven containing the stars with the orbits of the seven planets, viz. Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Mercury,

Venus, and the Moon. Thus I propose that there are ten heavenly bodies. The first and highest is the empyrean, in which there is rest and eternal life. The second is the watery or crystalline heaven, which is the first movable that uniformly is moved in circular locomotion from east to west in one day. The third is the stellar heavens, adorned with the fixed stars, which is pulled in its daily motion by the force of the higher body—and nonetheless it is not left on its own—from west to east, in which determinate time it is driven in a circle. Below this heaven are the seven heavens or spheres, or rather the orbits of the planets set in their order, as we have placed them in the above discussion.

The ancient astrologers perceived nine spheres that must be moved below the first heaven, which is the first between the bodies, and they predicted by sense observation as far as the eighth. They studied the ninth by means of reason, not by the senses. But above the nine spheres of the heavens is the tenth heaven, remaining fixed and still, by no means believed by us, but some Jews think it exists. Rabbi Isaac proposes ten heavens, and he thinks that the tenth sphere was designated by Ezechieh by sapphire, *like a throne*, so that the color means the splendor of the light of sapphire, and the likeness of his throne means its fixity. Likewise, the rabbi understands the ten spheres to be symbolized by the prophet Zacharia [155] by the golden candlestick divided by seven lights, and the lamp upon the top of it, yet over this lamp are two olive trees. Since the seven lights represent the seven planets, and the lamp represents the eighth sphere gleaming with so many lights, he means for the two olive trees to symbolize the ninth and tenth heavenly spheres., because from the olive trees the oil flows to the lamps and lights as fuel for illumination. From the highest heaven, which is the beginning of all light, it pours out the light nearest to itself from its midst onto the other luminaries.

However, Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra locates the tenth heaven on the *Decalogue*. For the Rabbi says that the first commandment hidden in the tables is *You shall love the Lord, your God* etc. as it is written in Deuteronomy, corresponds to the heaven that we call the empyrean, hidden from our view, which arises from our heart, hidden from all and known to God alone. Then the rabbi follows the order of convenience among the remaining spheres and the commandments following the first. He says that the second commandment, *You shall not have other gods* but

the Lord, your God, etc. corresponds to the first movable, which drives the others along with it. The third commandment, *You shall not take the name*, etc. corresponds to the stellar sphere, in which we find the twelve signs of the zodiac, and so in this sphere lies the 12 powers of the Divine Name. The fourth commandment, *keep holy the Sabbath day*, corresponds to Saturn, because that star ascendant aspects seventh house. The fifth commandment, concerning the honor of one's parents, corresponds to Jupiter, the honorable father of parenthood, who together with life offers honor to those whom he favors. The sixth commandment corresponds to Mars, who presides over wars. The seventh commandment, *You shall not commit adultery*, corresponds to Venus, from which comes all fleshly pleasures. The eighth commandment, *You shall not steal*, corresponds to the Sun, as the eye of God makes known all thefts that occur secretly and, as always beneficent, is the enemy of theft and robbery. The ninth commandment makes known all thefts that occur secretly and, as always beneficent, is the enemy of theft and robbery. The ninth commandment, *You shall not bear dishonest witness*, corresponds to Mercury, who presides over the tongue, by which truth, falsehood, and blasphemy are produced. The tenth commandment, *You shall not covet*, corresponds to the Moon, the womb of the stars, whose characteristic is to covet very much.

[156] Therefore these writers establish the tenth heaven, which the theologians call the empyrean, above the nine heavens. From this fact arises a rather admirable comparative relation with respect to spiritual things. For there are nine choirs of angels, like the movable heavens, yet there is one supreme choir which, immovable itself, contains all choirs: God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Therefore, returning to the proposition, when it says in this verse *Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters*, by *firmament* we understand in this passage the heaven containing the stars with all its remaining contents including the Moon, since the great luminaries and the stars are described as having been placed in the firmament by God. But by the *waters above*, we understand the crystalline heaven which is called the heaven of the waters on account of a kind of likeness by which it resembles water in its transparency and clarity to the extent that like rock crystal it is solid and clear just like water frozen hard into a block of ice. By the *waters below*, we understand the elements, or rather the matter of

the elements, which was spoken of above: *And the spirit of God was stirring above the waters.* To this point in Creation, it had been confused below the orbit of the Moon, a kind of jumbled mass of elements up to the third day, in which Nature distributed the distinction and systematic arrangement in the substance of each thing as well as its position, as required. And in this way there is *the firmament dividing the waters*, since the intermediary crystalline heaven and the other elements were formed.

VERSE 7

God made the firmament, dividing the waters that were below the firmament from those that were above it. And so it was.

In Hebrew: *Wayyaas Elohim eth-haraqia wayyadel beyn hammayim asher mittachath laraqia ubeyn hammayim asher meal laraqia wayehiken.*

In Aramaic: *Waavadh yeya yath-reqia weaphereysh beyn mayya di milra lireqia ubeyn mayya di meal lireqia wahawah-ken. And God made the firmament, he divided the firmament between the waters which are under the firmament and between the waters which are above the firmament. And it was thus.*

By *the waters above the firmament*, some writers understand spiritual [157] creatures and angelic intellects, to the extent that it was written in the Psalms, *And you waters above the heavens, let them praise the name of the Lord.* This is the opinion of Origen.

St. Basil and Ambrose find fault with this opinion for a similar reason, asserting that the waters are said to praise the name of the Lord not because they are spiritual creatures but because the consideration the waters, prudently contemplated more abundantly from aspect of the sense powers, perfects the glorification of the Creator. Otherwise, according to this form of interpretation, the dew, hoar frost, cold, and heat, which in the Book of Daniel were commanded to celebrate with hymns the Creator of all things, would each be a kind of mind that was endowed with intellect and at the same time would be invisible.

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol understands by the words *the waters above the firmament*, the waters suspended in the atmosphere.

Many authors say different things about the nature of the firmament. Aristotle and all the peripatetic philosophers hold that it is a celestial body and is not something from simple bodies that are called elements, and is made up of them, because straight-line motion is proper to simple bodies, the light one tending to move upwards and the heavy one downwards. But moving up and down in a circular period is not the same thing, and this circular movement is peculiar to the heavens. However, the motions are different according to nature, and it is necessary that their essence be different. Besides, that which is composed of corruptible elements must needs be broken down. Yet we observe no change in the heavens, or in its parts, since on the contrary all elements are subject to various changes. On account of these logical necessities, the peripatetic philosophers hypothesized for the constituent matter of the heavens and the stars a kind of fifth essence of a new body that is neither hot or cold, moist or dry. But indeed they say that there the powers of the elements must be considered to be of the highest quality by way of their cause: in the spheres of the elements under the Moon their natures are according to their form; but in composite things they are determined by a kind of participation. Nevertheless, they deny that the very natures of the elements are wholly in the heavens.

Plato, however, and his school affirm that the heavens are made up of four [158] elements and that in the heavens are both the powers and the natures of the elements but that the powers there consist of a certain type by far more excellent than these, and they contain their natures in a most excellent way. The superlative nature of element fire furnishes the heavens with a sensible light, a lively heat and a very quick motion. The nature of the element earth affords a solid and firm stability, and likewise supplies density to the stars, by which they can be seen, and to the Moon as well, whereby it reflects the rays of the Sun. The nature of the element air lends a visible quality, which they call translucency. The nature of the element water adds a very delicate and very uniform mildness, and in the very edges of the spheres, by which they touch each other, the power of cold and moisture is inserted by which happens that there the heat and the separation are not lessened, although owing to the extremely swift

movement they touch each other very rapidly and very violently.

In addition, these philosophers assert that the heavens are truly hot and truly cold, moist and dry since they manifestly produce the qualities of the four basic elements and since the stars, fiery as they are, shine and produce flaming rays by which mortal creatures under the heavens become warm. The Platonists also assert that the heavens bring this condition about through motion. It stands, they say, opposite to our reason and our senses. To senses, because frequently we perceive that bodies near us are moved far more violently and rapidly, and it is not because other bodies grow so warm that they become hot. Moreover, we know that bodies become hot from contact in the summer with the rays of the Sun, which would not happen unless heat were in the ray, and heat would not be in the ray if the heavens did not become warm by their own power. The theory is also opposed to reason since motion, which is the act of some movable thing dependent on a mover, *per se* produces that thing alone toward which the mover by its very nature desires to bring forth a movable thing. Local motion, however, leads to the acquisition of place *per se*, but if from there heat or any other quality follows, it is as a result of an unexpected occurrence. Yet since heat diffused from the heavens preserves everything, nourishes everything, and bestows life to everything, completes the generation of all things, purifies everything, maintains and quickens all, it is foreign to our reason to think that these things from the heavens depend on an unexpected occurrence. Therefore, one must not say that the heavens are not warm but are burning and one must not say that the light of the Sun becomes warm by reflection alone or that it burns by reflection alone. For the reflected beams of the Moon heat nothing, since in it the power of water [159] dominates. However, the rays of the Sun healthfully spread heat on behalf of the fiery and life-giving nature of the Sun.

Let no one claim that the motion of the Moon is more sluggish in order for its beams not to produce heat. Even though the Moon is slower, it is so much nearer to men than is the Sun so that as a result it should nevertheless cause heat in some fashion, if not equally, if heat only originates from the reflection of rays. Let no one adduce that heat is proper to fire, since indeed the less it is mixed with foreign matter, the less it burns. Light, however, is proper to fire; the purer, the brighter, although

not more evident to certain eyes, and it gives off light longer than it heats and before it illuminates, and for a short time light confers heat, with a warmed object preserving heat for a time. However, it does not confer illumination to anything, inasmuch as it is proper to itself, inasmuch as when fire is removed, the illumination disappears. If, therefore, light is in the heavens, there is therefore fire.

The Platonists counter the arguments of the Aristotelians, for instance the first argument drawn from motion, since they say that natural and simple motion is only one thing, namely circular. For straight-line motion is simple, since it is made swifter gradually, and not according to the nature of the element, since it does not correspond to it in its proper place but is rather a kind of return to its nature. For it does not unite individually to a thing produced by force, but outside the proper place designated for the thing that has been put in a place by a force. One must not, therefore, think that the heavens are not made up of a fiery nature from the fact that fire seems to be carried upwards but the heavens are carried in a circle. For insofar as by chance any portion of the heavens be placed in the middle, it immediately ascends in a straight line, to seek its place of origin by means of a shorter route. The path of comets shows that both fire and air are moved in a circle.

The Platonists reply in the same way to the second argument of the Aristotelians, holding that the heavens do not decay owing to the purity of their bodies and because in heavenly substance there is such an effective power for harmonizing everything that qualities and motions, which are contradictory in our world, are not contradictory there. Likewise, because there the elements were immediately reduced at the first birth of the world into the form of the most outstanding element, namely fire, just as by the heavenly movement the four elements on earth are reduced in any birth to one form of a mixed element. Furthermore, the heavens have nothing outside themselves by which they can be damaged. Finally, it is the Will of the Creator, which is the firmer and more indissoluble bond that keeps the heavens from decaying, as Plato says in his *Timæus*.

[160] This is the theory of the Platonists, and indeed the Jews very much approve of it. For Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol says that the heavens are composed of water and fire. He says, in his explanation of the verse concerning the creation of the firmament: “*Let there be a firmament, He*

hardened the firmament because although the heavens were created on the first day, they were still moist or fluid; and on the second day they were congealed or condensed from God's rebuke in His utterance, *Let there be a firmament*. And this is what was written: *The pillars of the heavens tremble*, i.e. on the entire first and second day they were dumbfounded, and stood like a man stupefied from a threat and a fear upon him." And this man understands by the words *Let there be*, not the production of a substantial form but a kind of quality introduced, viz. a hardness and a density and a firmness. Thus *He fixed*, i.e. He made firm, *the earth upon its foundation*. And he says that the word *to fix* in this Psalm verse is the same as in Deuteronomy, *A woman will fix (pare) her nails*, which was said of a female captive who a Jewish man might wish to marry.

Among Christians, St. Ambrose seems to hold the same opinion, asserting that the heavens are composed of elements. St. Basil also rather inclines to this theory, asserting the theory of the quintessence was fabricated and invented by the philosophers themselves. Bede also speaks of this thing in the following way: "Therefore, in the middle of the universe is the firmament and the sidereal heavens, which can be believed to have been made of waters; for a crystalline stone of great hardness and great clarity is made from the waters." Among the Greeks, Theodoret also asserts that the heavens were made up of the flowing nature of waters, and what before was liquid in nature, was made very solid, and for this reason it was called the firmament. Similarly Gennadius asserts that God Himself named the firmament from the work of the thing itself to the extent that, since before it was of sluggish, fluid, soluble nature, it received a solid and by no means fluid compacting. St. Augustine also easily agrees with those who assert that the heavens are of a fiery nature, whence [161] they also conjecture the stars and luminaries were made, viz. of that fiery light into the forms that we perceive in the heavens in a massed and arrayed nature. Hence, from the opinion of so many men, it rather seems that we must assent to this position because reason favors it and it is more in harmony with Sacred Scripture.

As to the words, however, that follow this verse, *And so it was*, Rabbi Ibn Ezra says that they are added there because of what follows afterwards, viz. that *God called the firmament Heaven*.

VERSE 8

God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and morning, the second day.

In Hebrew: *Wayyiqra Elohim laraqia shamayim wayehi-erev wayehi-boqer yom sheni.*

In Aramaic: *Uqera yeya lireqia shmayya wahawah-remash wahawah-çephar yom tinyayn: And God called the firmament Heaven. And it was evening and morning, the second day.*

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol gives three interpretations for the word *shamayim*: “*Sh`mym, shm mym, `shmym*: because, he says, He mixed this in this and from those things, namely water and fire, [and] He made Heaven.” From this time, He thus indicated that the firmament was called the Heaven, which was made of fire and water. Rabbi Ibn Ezra notes that in this chapter God gave names to five things, which are light, darkness, the heaven, the dry land, and Adam, i.e. man, for in Hebrew man is called *adam*.

St. Ambrose explains this passage in this way: “The name of Heaven is common, for Scripture testifies that there are several heavens: the word firmament, however, is unique. Thus, as it appears above, Moses said that the heaven in general was made in the beginning in order for it to include the entire fabric of celestial creation; verse 8, however, refers to the special solidity of this sky above the earth which is called the firmament of heaven as we read in the hymn of the Prophet Daniel *Blessed are you in the firmament of heaven.*” Ambrose thinks that on account of its firmness this heaven was called the firmament, to the extent that it is not weak and slack, and was made firm by the power of God, as it says in Scripture, *Praise him in the firmament of his strength.*

[162] St. Basil offers another reason, that this name for Heaven corresponds with and fits another word and firmament is linked to this word by way of likeness. The name was derived from the Greek noun *ho ouranos*, which comes from the verb *horāsthai*, which means, “to appear.” Whence we have already observed that the atmosphere is called the heaven

because of its clarity, as when Scripture says *The birds of the heaven for the birds of the air*. Origen says that God called the firmament Heaven, giving to it the name of the heaven that he had created beforehand, i.e. he made it worthy of that name since the empyrean itself is more sublime and wholly nobler both on account of its vastness and on account of the things in between that are visible to us.

In this verse, one must note that on the second day Moses did not say *And God said that it was good*. The phrase is not found in the Hebrew text, just as it is not in our Vulgate version. However, I think that the Septuagint has it, or it was added to that translation by someone else inasmuch as St. Basil, John Chrysostom, and Ambrose mention the phrase in their commentaries on Genesis.

Now it remains to explain why Moses did not say *And God saw that it was good* in his narrative of the second day of creation. Some say on account of the use of the grammatical dual number (signifying objects that occur in pairs) in the Hebrew word for heaven, which therefore is considered unseemly inasmuch as it first departs from unity, whence two pairs of unclean animals were brought into Noe's ark. St. Jerome offers this explanation in his book *Against Jovinian*. Nonetheless, others are less satisfied since the mystical ought not to hinder the truth of the thing; for if this was truly good and perfect, what danger did it present in this passage to give the testimony that God saw and approved it?

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol, asking why Moses did not write *And He saw that it was good* in this passage, gives this answer: "Because the work of the waters had not been completed up to the third day and on the third day the work of the waters and another work was finished. Therefore, on the third day Moses twice writes the phrase *That it was good*: the first time for the completion [163] of the work of the second day and the second time for the completion of the third day." The *Gloss on Genesis* supports this explanation, after that of Jerome, saying that *good* is not mentioned in this passage because the division of the waters was not completed in the work of the second day but on the next day.

However, since the particular work of the second day is the firmament, therefore I am more convinced that Moses refrained from saying *That it was good* because the firmament was still imperfect since it was missing the ornament of stars that constitutes its chief beauty.

However, it achieved this perfection on the perfection on the fourth day, and accordingly in that narrative Moses writes *And God saw that it was good.*

VERSE 9

Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear." And so it was.

In Hebrew: *Wayyomer Elohim yiqawu hammayim mittachath hashamayim el-maqom echad wetheraeh hayyabbashah wayyehi-ken.*

In Aramaic: *Wamar Yeya yiyhekkanehun mayya mittechoth shamayya laathar hadh wethithechazey yabbeshetta wahawah-ken. And God said, etc. as above.*

Rabbi Ibn Ezra explains the verb *qwh* by *chbr*, in the hithpael, or reflexive conjugation of the Hebrew verb: the waters gather themselves or heap themselves together or assemble.

St. John Chrysostom explains the gathering together of the waters: "For when all things were completed with respect to the waters, He ordered the multitude of waters to amass in a single body for the dry land to appear." The land was invisible and uncultivated to the extent that it was covered over with the waters. St. Basil and St. Ambrose say the same thing; for they understand by the words waters and dry land the elements that are put in our sight, and that covered the entire earth, which was therefore invisible and infertile. However, by the Lord's command, the water sank down to the hollows and depressions of the earth, and so the land appeared dry, which before have been under the waters.

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol asserts the same thing, saying that "the waters were spread over the entire earth, and were gathered in the ocean, which is the great sea between the seas. Rabbi [164] Ibn Ezra says, "this verse of Scripture is linked to the foregoing verses, since the firmament was not made until the land dried out. The evidence is found in Genesis 2:4, *On the day in which the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.* Note they were made in one day; the thing seen is the hidden word, and

gathering together from a state of dispersion is not creation. This is the sense of the verse, *And God had said: Let the waters be gathered together.* There are a hundred passages in the Law like this. I will give you two instances in Genesis 2. One is the verse *And He put there the man He had formed,* and right afterwards Moses says *And the Lord God made to grow,* even though he had created those growing things before he made man. The second instance is that God commanded the man not to eat *from the tree on the knowledge of good and evil* and afterward it was written: *And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground.*³ The explanation of this is that he had already formed him, and, therefore, the Rabbi says, “The verse *And God saw that it was good* is linked with the work of creation on the second day and the verse *Let the earth bring forth [vegetation]* is the beginning of the third day.”

Nevertheless, St. Augustine above interpreted matter itself for *waters*, and explained it in the same context, saying that if Moses had called a kind of confusion of matter by the word “water,” the this gathering together must be taken as its very formation, so that the outward appearance of water was such as we now see that it is. And the words *Let the dry land appear*, which was placed after the gathering together can be understood as the formation of the earth, so that the earth might have the outward appearance, which we perceive. It had been called *invisible and disarranged* because the outward appearance of matter was lacking up to that moment.

Accordingly, I explain the verse in conformance with Augustine’s interpretation. *Let the waters below the heavens*, i.e. let bodily matter be reduced to a form so that this water be what we observe. For God did not cause the waters to be gathered together, as though were existing beforehand, but as though he was giving them a form and by which they might run together into one place after they took on their nature. *And let the dry land appear*, i.e. let the earth receive a visible appearance and be separated from confusion. For the earth was not commanded to appear as though it existed before hand but as it received its form and nature, by which it could appear and be seen. Thus the waters being gathered

³ Translator’s Note: In this second proof, the first verse comes from Gn 2:16, but the second from Gn 2:7.

together into one place is nothing other than [165] their receiving one appearance and inclination at the same time to the place proper and fitting for their appearance. But since the forms of the waters are in accordance with their existence and inclination toward a site peculiar to themselves, their immediate and proper place is above and around the earth, from the fact that they are the more noble or less heavy element, just as air is located above both since it is light, and fire is placed over air because it is even lighter. If the waters covered the earth in every place, it would harm the greater and more universal good, for the earth could not produce offspring, nor could animals or plants be preserved. God so brought it about that the waters were gathered together into one place, collected in the hollow and deep gulfs and stored as if in a container (to keep them from turning back to cover the earth as well as to allow the dry earth to appear in its higher surfaces.)

It still must not be said that the waters were held there by force and that there were deprived of their proper place, since their proper place is above the earth, so that, if they were sent down from there, they would flow out upon the earth and come back to cover the earth, as if they would to reach the place peculiar to themselves, although, as some say, in the middle of the ocean they are much higher than the land. That, however, is by no means true. For with our eyes we see that the motion of water is always toward a more sloping place. Whence the higher waters flowed down to the shore, if the place is lower. Indeed since it is natural for waters everywhere to direct their course equally to the center; however, the lower places are closer to the center.

Let no one say that the waters were contained by divine power so that they would not flow out, although they are adapted for that and can. Augustine objects to this position, saying that God so manages the things that He created "so that He permits them to make their proper motions." Furthermore, as St. Dionysius eminently teaches, it is not characteristic of God to violate the natures of things, but to regulate them by means of His Wisdom. Therefore, He so governed the natures of the waters that he did not allow them, scattered everywhere, to cover the entire earth and overwhelm it. Nonetheless, he did not wholly leave them alone in their proper and natural place, lest they in some measure overcome the earth. However, by the command of His power, gathering and taking them in

the low hollows of the lowest-lying land and in the deep caves, He gave them a proper place on the earth, insofar as the earth is subordinated with respect to the inner recesses of all waters. [166] Thus He still subjected the earth to the waters, so that the dry land, which He ordered to appear, rise above the surrounding waters, in accordance with the Psalm verse, *He spread out the earth upon the waters*. For the heavier earth is not borne on the lighter waters, but as Augustine brilliantly explains, the earth is said to be founded upon the waters, because it overtops the waters flowing around it. For we always perceive the shores of the seas and the banks of the rivers to be higher than the waters, and if the waters in the midst seem to be stand more highly above, it is not that they raise themselves above the shoreline, but that their containing hollow is deeper and nearer to the center. Nevertheless, the place of the waters is always lower than the dry land especially in the ocean itself whither all waters flow. For if its place were not more sloping, why rather do the rivers run there rather than to another place, if waters always glide down to the lowest places? Hence this thing is also clear: for they are said to descend in their course to the sea, as Rabbi Ibn Ezra observes in this passage, and we find this phrase very often in Scripture, as in the Psalms, *They that go down to the sea in ships* and in the Book of Jona, *But Jona made ready to flee to Tharsis away from the Lord. He went down to Joppe, found a ship*.

Thus again a doubt arises in this verse: how can all the waters be said to be gathered together into one place when there are so many bodies of water. For besides the Ocean, which is the largest of all, there are the Mediterranean Sea, Adriatic Sea, Indian Ocean, Black Sea, Sea of Marmora, the Dardanelles, the Aegean Sea, the Ionian Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, and other bodies of water. However, their course is to one place, i.e. the greatest body of water, to which all these bodies of water are joined. If any large bodies of water seem to be self-contained, they still return to the sea by means of hidden passageways. Well diggers prove this, because the whole earth is filled with invisible waterways, which begin from the sea.

VERSE 10

God called the dry land Earth and the assembled waters Seas. And God saw that it was good.

In Hebrew: Wayyiqra Elohim layyabbashah ereç ulmiqweh hammayim qarayamim wayyare Elohim ki-tov.

In Aramaic: Uqera Yeya leyaveshetta ara uleveith kenishuth mayya qera yemamay wahaz Yeya arey tav.

[167] St. Basil and Ambrose explain this passage as that indeed a dryness, or aridity, or certainly *dry land* is the property that outlines, as it were, and represents the nature of the subject. *Earth*, however, is a kind of bare and weak name for the thing. For instance as it is proper for man to be endowed with reason, the word “man,” however, signifies an animal, for which that term is fitting. Thus aridity is proper and special for the earth. Therefore, as a property, dryness and aridity are suitable to that which is called *earth*, just as the term “capable of neighing” properly and individually fits that thing called a “horse.” *Dry land*, then, is a kind of expression of the earth’s nature. Wherefore, having aridity belongs to the thing that abounds with waters. When the water is removed, the earth begins to be dry, as it is written: *He changed the rivers into a desert, water springs into thirsty ground*, i.e., He made the dry land from the watery earth.

This is so not only in earth but also in the other elements. Each one has its proper quality, by which it is distinguished from the others and by which one knows what kind of element each one is. To be sure, water has rigidity as a proper quality; air has moistness, and fire has heat. These are the principal, proper, and individual qualities for each element, although not one of them is absolutely unique, pure, and simple. However, the earth is indeed dry and cold; water is cold and moist, air is moist and hot, and fire is hot and dry. So by these equal qualities every one of the elements is mixed. For earth, although is of a dry and cold quality, is connected to water by the relationship of the quality of cold. Water is connected to air because air is moist. Therefore, water, as if with two

kinds of arms, one cold the other moist, seems to embrace earth on the one hand (by its cold quality) and air on the other (by its moist quality). Air also is between two opposing elements in nature, i.e. water and fire, but it unites both those elements to itself because it is joined to water by moistness and to fire by heat. Likewise, fire, since it is hot and dry by nature is tied to air by heat; by dryness, however, it is restored to a connected and association with the earth. Accordingly, by this circle of relationships and kind of choral harmony, the elements [168] are united. Whence in Greek they are called *stoicheia*, in our language "elements," because they come together and fit together carefully.

We have progressed to this point because Scripture says that God *called the dry land Earth*, i.e. because God called the property of a nature by the term that is its principle. The natural property of the earth is dryness. This principal special right has been reserved for it. Therefore, dryness also lies at its basis so that it is cold.

And he called the assembled waters Seas.

According to Hebrew idiom, all assembled waters, whether salt water or sweet, are called seas, so the term is not just applied to the ocean. Accordingly, we frequently read in the Gospels about the sea of Galilee or of Tiberias, even though it is a kind of large body of water that Luke called the lake of Genesareth.

Porphyry ignored this idiomatic mode of expression characteristic of Hebrew, and because the Evangelists called a lake the sea, he slanders them for inventing, as he impiously asserts, a miracle for the ignorant in saying that the Lord walked upon the sea. What a fool! Is it no less a miracle to walk upon the rippling waters of a lake than to tread upon the waves of the sea? The miracle lies in having walked upon the streaming surface of a body of water, whether it was the sea's or a lake's.

But a doubt arises, since in the text above the Lord commanded the waters to be gathered into one place., why is it that He calls the assembled waters the *Seas*? Rabbi Ibn Ezra says, "It was so spoken because there is no name for the sea that encircles the whole earth." St. Ambrose answers that "there is one assemblage of waters to the extent that a continuous and unbroken body of water from the Indian Ocean to coast of Cadiz, and

thence into the Red Sea, it includes the whole earth, surrounded by the ocean at the outermost edges of the earth. Also included within this large mass of water are the Adriatic seas in the Mediterranean, and other bodies of waters with different names... Whence there is one general mass, which is called the seas, and many masses which are called seas for the regions in which they exist and from which they take their names. Just as there are many lands as Africa, Spain, Thrace, Macedonia, Syria, Egypt, France and Italy are called by the names of their regions yet there is just one earth, so many seas are called by the names of their places [169] and still just one sea, as the Prophet says in the Psalms: *Yours are the heavens, and yours is the earth; the earth and its fullness you have founded; north and south you created.*

And God saw that it was good.

Rabbi Ibn Ezra says that this verse belongs to the work of creation of the second day. St. Basil and Ambrose relate that this approval of the sea, which is the gathering together of the waters, appeared to God as some pleasing aspect of the sea, and not what the word indicates. The Creator Himself does not see with eyes the beauty of creatures that are made, but He contemplates them with an ineffable wisdom. "First the Seas are good because they necessarily support the lands with moisture, but which it supplies a useful liquid by means of certain hidden channels. The sea is a good thing, insofar as it is a resting place for rivers, a source of rain, a diversion for inundations, a means of transportation by which distant peoples are linked together, by which the dangers of battles are removed, and by which an incursion of barbaric hordes is blocked off. It is a help in necessities, a refuge in dangers, and pleasure in delightful times, a sound place for good health, a passageway for the separated, shortcut for a journey, an escape for laborers, support for income, and a source of food in times of shortage. From the sea, the rains are poured on the lands, since water from the sea is absorbed by the rays of the Sun, and because it is of a delicate nature, it is taken up. Then depending on how highly it rises, it grows cold by the overshadowing of the clouds, and rain is made, which not only tempers the terrestrial dryness but also fertilizes the thirsty fields."

Bede, however, explains the verse as follows: “The earth had not yet sprouted vegetation and had the water brought forth living things, but God still is said to see *that it was good*, with the waters receding, the dry land appeared, because the Evaluator of all creation, foreseeing what things were about to come about, praises it as if it were already accomplished.” This thought very much pleases me, after the waters had been separated, the dry land appeared, so that at this point it may be said that it was good. For the usefulness of the separation is patently clear: it was intended both for the preservation of terrestrial animals as well for the fruits and produce of the earth. Indeed, afterwards it was no longer *waste and void*, but it was rendered accessible to the sight, adorned pleasingly with verdant foliage and plants, and with golden [170] flowers, too, so that made fruitful with its own produce it might render soft fruits and very pleasing sustenance for living things. Wherefore it immediately received its own natural power of germinating from God, the giver of all things, as in the verse below.

VERSE 11

Let the earth bring forth vegetation: seed-bearing plants and all kinds of fruit trees that bear fruit containing their seed. And so it was.

In Hebrew: *Wayyomer Elohim tadshe haareç deshe esev mazeria zera eç peri lemimo asher zareo-bo al-haareç wayehi-ken.*

In Aramaic: *waamar Yeya thadeith area ditheah isebba debar-zareeih mizeddera ilan peyrin abeyd peyrin lizeney di bar-zareeih beih al-area wahawah-ken. And God said: Let the earth bring forth produce, vegetation, seed-making seed, fruit trees making fruits according to its own kind, and whose seed may be in it upon the Earth. And so it was.*

Rabbi David Kimchi distinguishes between the Hebrew words *deshe* and *eshev* as follows: the letters *dsh*’, when written with six additional points to form *deshe*, is “produce” and is so called since it begins to come out of the earth. When it has grown, it is called *eshev* i.e. “herb,” since the word *dsh*’ is the beginning of the work in a plant. Therefore, it is derived from it, a

word signifying the act. Rabbi Ibn Ezra also says that in this passage the word *tadheshe* is like the word *tiçemah*, “Let it spring forth.” Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol also says “*deshe* and *esev* are not the same thing, nor is *deshe-esev*, and it is not characteristic of the language of Scripture, or the Bible, to say *taashiv haareç* since all kinds of *deshin* are separated in their own substance, they are designated as some kind of plant. The explanation for this word is not to say that it is a particular and determined type of vegetation, since the real meaning of *deshe* is as a garment of the earth, as if it were referring to the fullness of the vegetation. Therefore, *let the earth bring forth* means ‘let it be filled, let it be covered’ with the garment of vegetation.” In our language, *deshe* is expressed as *eshev*, “plant.” Very frequently in Scripture *deshe* is taken for *esev* and vice versa, since the two words are very similar in meaning. [171] In the Vulgate version of this verse, the phrase that follows, *seed-bearing plants*, renders the Hebrew that literally means *seed-making seed*. Further on in Genesis 1, the phrase *Let the earth bring forth* renders the Hebrew verb *toçe*, i.e. *let it cause to go forth*, which as in a multitude many other instances, our version very prudently rendered with an idiomatic phrase, just as the Septuagint did in the Greek language, although the Greek version is more felicitous than our version in finding apt verbal correspondences to the Hebrew. Accordingly, the Greek version often comes closer to the Hebrew original than does the Latin version.

Now we must elucidate sense of these words. The text says, *Let the earth bring forth vegetation*, or *produce*. Some explain *let it bring forth* as meaning let it receive and have the force and power of bringing forth. That seems to have been St. Augustine’s opinion. St. John Chrysostom explains it otherwise, saying, “The Lord commanded and immediately the earth, ripening its progeny, incited itself to produce seeds: *And the earth brought forth vegetation etc.*, taking into account here that all things on the earth were made by the word of the Lord,” Others have seen that explanation as by far the more probable, both because the meaning of the words proves it and because they say that God wished to show how He could produce perfectly and in an instant, without middle causes, all the effects of middle causes. Inasmuch as He is all-powerful and acting by His Will and not out of any necessity of nature, just as He willed to fashion man and all kinds of animals by Himself: for it was becoming to do it

perfectly in the beginning.

St. Basil explains this passage in the following way:

“The earth, when the weight of the water was removed from it, as it rested for a while and breathed more freely, it received the command in the order appropriate to nature by which it was bidden to bring forth vegetation as soon as possible, and after that, trees. That is what we see happening on this day of creation. Those words, the first command, like a kind of the law of nature and precept impressed and engraved on the earth, furnish the earth with the faculty of bringing forth vegetation and bearing fruit.

Along with Basil, I think we must not unfittingly understand by this verse of Genesis that this law of bringing forth and bearing fruit for the earth was ordained by this command of God, and along with Augustine [172] I think that the earth received the power of bring forth, and along with Chrysostom I think that the earth produced vegetation and fruits by the order of God without any middle effect of second causes. These things, which we see happening even to this day, prove that the earth received this law of bringing forth and bearing fruit. Clearly apparent reason proves the earth received the power of bringing form, since it shows us the effects. In no way could the earth have produced its offshoots and vegetation unless it had received power from God the bestower of all things. The text that follows below demonstrates that the earth ripened its progeny and brought forth vegetation and fruits.

VERSE 12

The earth brought forth vegetation, every kind of seed-bearing plant and all kinds of trees that bear fruit containing their seed.

In Hebrew: *Wattoçe haareç deshe esev mazeria zera leminehu weeç oseh-
peri asher zareo-bo leminahu.*

In Aramaic: *weppeyqath area ditheah isebba dvar—zareeih mizeddera
lizenohi weilan abeid-peirein devar—zareih beih lizenohi. And the earth*

produced shoots, herb seed-making seed, seed according to its own species, fruit-bearing trees, in them seed of which is according to their own species.

Ibn Ezra explains, “*In them seed of which is according to their own species*, because each seed preserves its own species.” Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol explains the phrase *seed-making seed* as “that which grows in it, viz. herb, its own seed for sowing in another place. He says the phrase *fruit-bearing trees, eç peri*, is “He produced, as it were, trees laden with fruits: for He is not making these things. That *the earth produced trees making fruit* and not fruit-trees must be explained by the fact that when Adam was cursed for his iniquity, the earth was also visited with a curse.” He says the words *in them seed of which* mean that in all fruits there are grains and seeds from which trees spring forth if anybody plants them,” Rabbi Ibn Ezra notes that in this passage it is said that the earth, “*toçe, yishereçu, haareç tedushsha, it brings forth, swarms with, and produced*, and behold He put the power in the earth and the water for making in the command of God, i.e. generation.”

VERSE 13

And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and morning, the third day.”

In Hebrew: *Wayare Elohim ki-tov: wayehi-erev wayhie-boqer yom shelishi.*

In Aramaic: *Wahaza Yeya array-tav: wahawah-remash wahawah-çephar yom telithaei. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.*

This approval of the third day is placed here because of the usefulness of the things born of the earth. Nevertheless, we are obliged to ask why the Lord willed many harmful herbs, thorns, thistles, and thickets, which seem unfruitful, to be brought out of the earth. St. Augustine answers that many such plants are benefits, although they seem useless and harmful to us, who are ignorant of their natures, and they are needed for the beauty

of the universe. Unless by chance we should say that after the Fall of man, as a punishment for sin, the earth, at God's command, brought forth these plants, when the Lord said to Adam, *Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you.*

VERSES 14-15

And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate day from night; let them serve as signs and for the fixing of seasons, days and years; let them serve as lights in the firmament of heaven to shed light upon the earth. So it was.

In Hebrew: *Wayyomer Elohim yehi meoroth beriqia hashshamayim lehavdil bein hayyom uvein hallayelah wehayu leothoth ulmoadim ulyamim weshanim wehayu limeoroth biriqia hashshamayim lehair alhaareç wayehi-ken.* This literally reads *And God said. Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens, for separating between the day and between the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years. And they were for lights in the firmament of the heavens for shining upon the earth. And it was so.*

[175] The Aramaic version translates the passage in this way. *Waamar Yeya yehon nehorin bireqia dishemayyim leapherasha bein yemama uweian leileya wihon leathin ulezimenin uelmimenei-behon yomin ushenin wihon linehorin bireqia dishemayyin leanehara al-area wahawah-bein.* This means: *And God said: Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens, for separating between the day and between the night, and let them be for signs and seasons and for numbering the days and the years. And they were for lights in the firmament of the heavens for shining upon the earth.*

Rabbi Ibn Ezra says that the word *yehi* is *iyeh* although the thing signified is plural, and is the form is actually *yihayah*, viz. for the singular or plural, and even for a feminine subject, as in the original Hebrew phrase in Deuteronomy, which literally rendered says, *If he is a girl virgin* etc. Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol interprets this passage in this way: "The lights were

created on the first day, and on the fourth He commanded them to be suspended in the firmament. Thus the entire coming-to-be of the heavens and earth was created on the first day, but each one was established on its own day, as He had ordained for each. And this is what was written: *eth hashshamayim*, to multiply the coming into being of the heavens, and *eth haareç*, to multiply the coming into being of the earth. He then says that in the word *meeroth*, “luminaries,” the Hebrew letter waw is missing (thus making the word have the same spelling as the Hebrew word for “curses”) because this is the day of the curse so that the quinsy fall upon boys: on this account they fast on the fourth day so that boys do not come down with the quinsy.” *For separating between day and night*: He says this was done

to lay aside the first light: but in the first seven days, light and first darkness governed: the one in the day and the other in the night.” *And let them be for signs*: Since the luminaries are eclipsed, an evil sign is in earthy time, or the world, as its is said in Jeremia, *Have no fear of the signs of the heavens*: and thus in doing the will of God it was not necessary but had to be dreaded by punishment. *And for the seasons*: because of future events, for Israel was yet to be, the seasons, or festivals, are established in advance, and [175] these are numbered at the full Moon. *And the day*: The Sun serves the first half of the say, and the Moon serves its other half. The day is then completed. *And the years*: from the limit of 365 days the planets complete their courses or paths in the 12 signs of the zodiac, and this is the year. In addition, they serve to illuminate the world.

Ibn Ezra at first explains the words as meaning “*for signs* of the points and *for seasons* of the hours; and it exactly fits as *let them be for signs* during an eclipse of the Sun and the Moon and comets, because the luminaries are stars on account of the likeness, or of the sign, that appears. On the word *limeoroth*, he says that “*li*, usually a Hebrew preposition meaning “for,” is an added syllable and is superfluous, meaning nothing.” In explaining the firmament, he adduces the opinion of the Sephardic Rabbi. He says, “The wise and great Sephardi said that the firmament is divided into eight parts—seven stars and the sphere of the signs.” Ibn Ezra does

not agree with this opinion, for he says that this does not square with the facts

since there is no body above the sphere of the signs. For, behold, Scripture says *In the firmament of the heavens*, to teach us that the heavens are above it. And so Scripture speaks of the *Heaven of heavens*, and *Riding on the heights of the ancient heavens*. Moreover, it is clear that in this last cited verse from the Psalms, the Hebrew homonym *qedem* does not mean “east” but “ancient. The Gaon Rabbi Sahadiah (May the memory of the just man be blessed!) does not attempt to explain this passage. In my eyes, it is clear that the Sun and the Moon and all the stars are lights in the firmament because they are visible there.

Ibn Ezra himself, as explained above, holds that the firmament is the atmosphere.

Nevertheless, I explain this passage in a manner that does not deviate from the path of the Holy Fathers: *Let the lights in the firmament of the heavens be made*, i.e. the bodies of the Sun and the Moon, and the stars that are the vehicles of that primary light established on the first day, for as we explained above from the works of St. Basil and St. John Damascene, it is the light of the light and the vehicle of illumination. Therefore the lights from that first light, which made day and night, were determined on the fourth day from the nature of their own sphere, with their parts reduced into a kind of greater density: the star is the denser part of its sphere. It was made by the Divine Hand, i.e. by its power, in the manner of a primary receptive vessel of light.

However, these things were made, as all other things, for the highest glory of God, for *the Lord has made everything for his own ends*, especially for the comfort and use of man, not so that man may worship these things but that they may serve and minister to man. Whence Scripture says, *And when you look up into the heavens and behold the sun or the moon or any star among the heavenly hosts, do not be led astray into adoring them or serving them. These the Lord, your God, has let fall to the lot of all other nations*. Wherefore, in this passage Moses describes the lights as “duties” and “ministries.” First, to *separate the day and night*. For the Sun, spreading round the light in itself, brings about day and, as St. Basil says, no one

would be wrong if he, in defining the day, should say that the atmosphere is illuminated by the Sun or that the day is a certain quantity of time by which the Sun moves along in our hemisphere over the earth. Wherefore, the Sun is said to be created *to rule the day*, but the Moon and stars *to rule the night*. In this passage, night is understood because of the darkness or because of the privation of solar light, just as was night on the first day, for the privation of solar light caused that night. However, by the name night we also understand something positive in this passage, since it has its own lights, which were made *to rule the night*, through which lights there is night. Night obtains certain qualities by means of these lights in order that it serve man. Man cannot always work but sometimes it is necessary for him to rest and night offers this time in which the limbs of the body are relieved and the senses are renewed by pleasant sleep after day has granted the time for working. Therefore, this is the first duty of the lights.

The second, however, is this: The passage reads *Let them serve as signs*, since very often many things are signaled by these lights, such as rain, fair skies, heat, wind, and other things of this kind, which are brought about by them and which farmers, sailors, and physicians commonly know and experience. Many commentators think that the whole phrase, *Let them be for signs and the seasons* should be read as a hendiadys, the figure of speech that splits a thing into two by the addition of a conjunction; this the phrase really means “signs of the seasons,” as St. Augustine relates.

The third purpose is that of the seasons, as the lights bring in variations [177], wherefore Scripture says *And let them be for seasons*. A seasonal time, however, in this passage is not taken as that which is defined by natural philosophers as the number and measure of motion, but some say that a seasonal time is understood according to natural changes, happening because of the placement and influence of the stars. One time is that of the day, another is the time of the night. Thus, a seasonal time demands a variation, such as morning and evening, and so one day then another, one month, then another, a waxing, then a waning Moon. By these changes, the year is divided into spring, summer, fall, and winter. The lights doubtlessly bring about this variation of seasonal times by their closeness to and distance from our hemisphere at the winter or summer solstice.

This is almost the explanation of all the things in this passage, which

I do not venture to criticize, since it is confirmed equally by the authority of very learner and holy men whose ingenuity and holiness is ever to be commended and admired. Nevertheless, fidelity to the original Hebrew seems to entail another understanding of this passage. For where our translation reads *for the seasons*, the Hebrew reads *ulimoadim*. This word does not signify the seasonal time, as above, rather this seasonal notion is explained further on in the text as *for days and years*. In this passage, fixed and solemn days are called *moadim*, which the Jews so name out of testimony and warning or rather from the gathering of a group to celebrate divine solemnities, from the word *yaad*, which designates an assembly and the arrangement of time to celebrate sacred assemblies. Sacred Scriptures frequently mentions these days and their signs are the Sun and the Moon. These days are celebrated and recurrently observed according to the course of the Sun and the Moon. Therefore, the first time is called in Hebrew *eth* but the second is *moad*, or *zeman*, as the Aramaic text has. In addition, the Septuagint does not, in this passage translate the Hebrew by the Greek word *chronos*, which means time, but by *kairos*, which means the occasion for doing things well [178] and the opportunity for actions, which some express as *anthos tou chronou*, i.e., the flower of time, which is the most select and opportune time.

The fourth purpose of the lights is the variation of the seasons, through which temporal things together with their duration and permanence are measured. In this verse, phrase *days and years* immediately follows the word *seasons*, for the days were very clearly made for the circumvolution of the lights, and they are distinguished from each other and multiplied in numbers. However, the Sun and the Moon were established as the chief lights for putting years into motion. The Moon is a producer of the year when she has achieved her 12 cycles (except when, in the Jewish calendar, an additional month is added, which the Moon seems to be in need of in order to achieve the most exact course of the seasons). In antiquity, the Jews and the ancient Greeks once reckoned the year by the lunar cycles. However, the year is solar, since the Sun by its movement returns to the same point, or sign, from which it started.

The fifth and last purpose of the lights is to shine upon the earth is one that also enables us to gather, through the sense of sight, information about many things and the various actions and doings of men as well as to

conduct our affairs., all of which mankind could not do without light. Later on in the verse, we find the words *To shine upon the earth. And so it was*, for all things have never failed to fulfill their purpose after receiving God's command.

VERSES 16-18

God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the smaller one to rule the night, and he made the stars. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to shed light upon the earth, to rule the day and the night and to separate the light from the darkness.

To rule

In Hebrew original *lememsheleth*, literally, *for rule or dominion*.

The Septuagint, wishing to preserve the Hebrew diction, translated the word as *Eis archas tes hemeras*, i.e. "for the dominions of the day"; and *the smaller light: eis archas tes nuktos*, i.e. "for the dominions of the night." Since in Greek the word *arche* not only means rule or dominion but also the beginning of time, many Greek commentators thought that the lights were made [179] for the beginning of the day and night, since they did not take the word *archas* to mean *rule* but rather they understood it to mean *beginning*. Whence they assert that the Moon, because it is said to occur in the beginning of the night, was diametrically opposite the Sun when she was created. However, the Moon does not arise in the beginning of night unless she is *panselenos*, i.e. a full and round Moon, which then appears full to us when it is diametrically opposite the Sun. Whence since both lights were made in the morning, the Sun began to shine from the east. However, when it reached the sign of the west in the evening, the Moon began to appear in the east in the beginning of the night. Indeed this could be the explanation for the phenomenon, and we think it was, but it does not have its basis in this passage of Scripture. For in this verse *arche* does not mean "beginning" but *rule*. The ambiguity is not in the Hebrew original, just the Greek. Accordingly, our translation renders the word better, *to rule the day and the night*. Therefore, St. Augustine, in his incomplete work *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, rejects the Greek

interpretation, because then it begins to number the days in a lunar cycle not from the first day but from the tenth or fifteenth day; instead, he says the Moon was made *to rule*.

Rabbi Ibn Ezra explains these verses as follows:

They are called *two great lights* with respect to the other stars, just as the three sons of Isai were called great with respect to the younger sons, and Eliab, the first born, was great before all Isai's sons. The one body is not larger than the other. *Yesh lo sod*: it is distinguished from it. *For the rule of the day*. The Sun is in the day, and not in the night, since it is not the luminary for the night. The light of the Moon and the stars is not seen in the day. And if anyone asks, Did not wise men, or astrologers, say that Jupiter, *çedeq*, and all the stars except the one called *mekbukhiv* (Mercury) and Venus, are larger than the Moon? Then why was it written that *they*, viz. the *lights*, were *large*? The answer is that the word *large* is not a description of the size of the bodies but rather of their light, and the light of the Moon is doubled because it is closer to the earth, and accordingly it is written that *the lights, he set, or gave, them*. Do not be surprised by the word *wayyitten*, since later in Genesis the original Hebrew says *I gave my bow*, meaning *set my bow*. And *to rule*: the legal day is from sunrise to sunset. [180] and night is from the time when the stars are visible. It was well and justly written in Deuteronomy that *a judicial fact shall be established only on the testimony of three witnesses*. Know that the time when the Sun darkens is evening, up to the first three hours, because it seems as if there is light in the clouds. And so is the first light at sunrise. In the rising of the light of the Sun in the day, and the light of the Moon in the night, they distinguish between the light and the darkness.

Regarding the great lights, Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol believes the following: "The great lights were created equal, but the Moon was made small because she complained or charged that it was impossible for two kings to be devoted to one crown. And He created the stars because He lessened the Moon, and he multiplied their number to complete and fulfill His fame."

I, however, so explain this passage that the Sun and Moon are called *the great lights* by no means just because they are of an almost immense size and because they shine brighter than the other stars but especially relative to their appearance, because they appear larger than the others. Although the lunar body is by far smaller than almost all the other stars, nevertheless, since it is nearer to the earth, it appears larger and has more influence. Accordingly, after the Sun, it surpasses the others in its influence. The lights are still said to be set *in the firmament of the heavens* since these stars are the denser parts of their spheres. For in this verse the firmament is not understood to be the atmosphere, as Ibn Ezra thinks, so that the lights are said to be placed according to their appearance in the firmament, i.e. in the atmosphere since they are visible there. Instead, along with Rabbi Sepharadi we understand that the word firmament used here means the heavens divided into eight parts, i.e. the eighth sphere with the orbits of the planets. We did not approve the idea above because Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol says the Sun and the Moon were by their nature equal in brightness, and that the Moon spoke to God to diminish the light of the Sun, and for that reason the Moon had her light lessened. The stars of the heavens are not bodies endowed with a rational soul and alive such the Moon could have the power of speaking. Before the fourth day, there was no night at any time, but the daytime was continuous if the brightness and splendor of their light was equal even though the Sun illuminated the day but the Moon illuminated the night. At any rate, night would not be night if it shone as the day. But the Moon is called *a great light*, since it appears after the Sun among the stars. [181] However, it is a lesser light with respect to the Sun, which by far exceeds and surpasses it in its greatness of size, brightness of light, and power of influence. And since the Sun illuminates the day but the Moon the night, and at no time is the night illuminated by the Sun or the day by the Moon, therefore, it is said that the *greater light* was made for the rule of the day but the *lesser light* was made for the rule of the night. Many affirm what Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol says, that his opinion pertains to a rather arcane theology and does not mean what it said literally, and thus something esoteric was expressed in parables.

VERSE 19

And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and morning, the fourth day.

God, Bede says, saw "that the things which were to be done were pleasing so they were created, and the made things pleased, so they remained." *And he said...that...good*, since the usefulness of the created lights and stars is wonderful: they are *for signs, seasons, days and years*. They shine upon the earth, rule, govern, influence, produce, and furnish life to all living things and bring about many other good things for the use and comfort of living creatures.

VERSE 20

God also said: Let the waters bring forth the creeping creature having life, and the fowl that may fly over the earth under the firmament of heaven.

In Hebrew: *yishreçu*

There is scarcely a word in the Latin language what corresponds to this Hebrew verb. But *sharaç* means to bring forth in abundance, and is said of these things that come forth in great amounts and move themselves. Our translation of the Bible followed closely the Septuagint, which rendered the verse in these words: *exagageto ta hydata herpeta: Let the waters bring forth creeping things*, and which St. Jerome translated: *Let the waters bring forth the creeping creature*. Although a creeping creature belongs to the land, on which it is to creep, still fish are also said to be creeping things; for they crawl through the waters in almost the same way as creeping things do on dry land.

Rabbi Aben Ezra says that "*sharaç* is a transitive verb, as in the verse from Exodus, *A river will bubble out or bring forth frogs*, and the sense of *yishreçu* is "heightened generation." Furthermore, *the fowl flying over the face of the firmament* was written instead of saying even according to the limit of the firmament. And the Gaon says that *al-penei* means *am-penei*; if it is so, the face of heaven is beneath it; and the first-guttural verb,

yeophēp, is doubled, as the letter nun [the Hebrew name for *n*] in *yekonen*.

[182] Rabbi Solomon says that "the living breath is that in which there is life; and of *sharaç*, because every living thing which is not from the high land is called *sharaç*, in a flying thing such as houseflies; in crawling things, such as ants, caterpillars, or beetles and worms; and in *berioth*, such as a weasel, mouse, snail, or tortoise, which travel like these; and as in all fish."

But we explain this verse in the following way. *Let the waters bring forth the creeping thing*, or *let them cause to creep the creeping thing*, if we transfer *to creep* to things living in the water, this is to say, let the things living in the water bring forth animals in great supply and abundance. Nevertheless it is worthy of observation that the waters were not commanded to bring forth of their own making creeping things, but they received the power from this command of God, in order that fish be generated out of the waters. And they were brought forth not only out the waters; for all elements together furnish a nature to animals, and they share more from earth.; but since the fish live in the waters and are there and are contained therein, thus they are called animals living in the water, as if they take their origin from water. As soon as the divine command is issued, the waters are filled up with fishes and, after the earth and the sky, they received their characteristic and singular furnishing.

But God causes the way in which even the birds originate from the waters, although they are not animals belonging to water, but rather to the air, since they are seen to live in the air. Moreover, He causes this in the Vulgate Version. Indeed, the original Hebrew version resolves any doubt: it reads:: *Weuph yeuphe al-haareç: And let the flying things fly over the earth*. Therefore, flying things are not mixed among the things that have been produced from the waters; but they are mentioned in the verse where these things have been made, namely over the earth; for later on in Genesis birds are numbered among the living things of the earth. For He says: *Therefore... all living things of the earth and all the flying things of the heaven having been fashioned from soil*, etc.; unless perhaps we should say, according to our Latin version of the Bible, for that reason birds are said to come from the waters, because not only is moisture in the waters but also vapor, which, in a certain manner, unites with the nature belonging to the air. However, when the phrase *Under the firmament of heaven* (or

according to the Hebrew reading, *upon the face of the firmament of heaven*) is subjoined to the words *face of the firmament*, we understand the atmosphere. Moreover, by *firmament* we understand all the celestial spheres, from the heaven of the stars to the atmosphere; and the face of this heaven is the atmosphere, which is [183] not infrequently called the sky. For thus they are called the *fowls of the sky*. And so the atmosphere also received its furnishing of birds.

VERSE 21

And God created the great whales, and every living and moving creature, which the waters brought forth, according to their kinds, and every winged fowl according to its kind.

A literal translation from the Hebrew reads: *God created the great serpents, and all the souls of life that creep which the waters swarmed according to their kind, and every fowl of wing according to its kind.*

Regarding the Hebrew word *haromseth* (“that creep”) Rabbi Ibn Ezra says, “the sense of it is like *holik'* (“to go”) and there are those who say than the letter sin is in place of the letter samekh. Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol says that “the Hebrew word *hattanninim* means the large fishes that are in the sea. In the words of the legend, it is leviathan and the son of its spouse, for male and female He created them, and He slays the female and preserves her for the just of a future age: for if that had been fruitful and multiplied, the world would not have stood in the face of them.” He explains the phrase *every living creature* as a soul in which there is life.

I explain the verse as follows. Our Latin version of the Bible translated *hattanninim* as “whales” just as the Septuagint, which reads: *Kai epoiesen ho theos ta kete ta megala*, i.e. *And God made the great whales*, translating the sense rather than the words of the Hebrew. For in this verse the Hebrew word should be taken not for terrestrial serpents but for those belonging to the seas and the waters. Whales and the largest fish in the waters are nothing other than the dragons on the earth. Whence elsewhere in Scripture we read that huge fish are called *dragons*, as in the Psalms: *Ye dragons and all ye depths* (by depths we understand the most

abundant waters and by dragons the largest fish). The word “whales” does not mean just one kind of fish but refers to all the larger species of fish, as Theodoret says. However, that which Rabbi [184] Solomon alleges about fish of this sort is entirely absurd, if we take it literally. The more esoteric theologians, however, assert that his opinion is meant to be taken as a parable.

VERSES 22-23

And God saw that it was good and God blessed them, saying, “Increase and multiply, and fill the waters of the sea; and let the birds be multiplied on the earth. And there was morning and evening, the fifth day.”

The Latin version used the word *Increase*, following the Septuagint, which translated Hebrew original as *auxanesthe*. The Hebrew *peru*, which means *Be fruitful*, comes from the noun *peri*, meaning *fruit*. The sense is the same, for that we use “to be fruitful” for trees and “to grow” for animals. However, as to the words *Fill the waters of the sea*, the water in the seas is in the source, as the Septuagint also reads: *Hydata en tais thalassais*, i.e. the waters in the seas, but the sense does not disagree at all with our translation *the waters of the sea*.

Rabbi Ibn Ezra says, “*Increase and multiply* means ‘you will increase and you will multiply,’ as in Deuteronomy, *Die thou on the mountain*, i.e. “you will die,” because this is not in their power or in their hands.” He further says that “*a living creature* is everything that fire, water, and earth brings forth, even man. *Cattle* are those things which are with the sons of men, for their needs, to ride and to eat. *Crawling creatures* are small animals that walk on the earth, and *wild animals* are those in the countryside where there are no dwellings for men. In the word *Wechayetho*, the last letter is redundant as in the Psalms *Lemayeno mayim, fountains of waters*. Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol says that this blessing is for multiplication “because they (viz. men) diminish their number and hunt or fish for them and eat them. Accordingly, it was necessary that they be blessed. It was even necessary to bless the wild beasts; however, because of the serpent, which would be for a curse, the animals were therefore not blessed so that it could not be in their number.” He also says

that the word *peru* means the same things as *make fruits and multiply*.

I also understand that this blessing especially exists in this, doubtlessly in that power and inclination which God granted to these creatures for procreating in order to preserve their species. Therefore, this blessing for procreation and multiplication is the guidance of an unerring intellect and the decree of God.

VERSES 24-25

God said, "Let the earth bring forth all kinds of living creatures: cattle, crawling creatures and wild animals And so it was. God made all kinds of wild beasts, every kind of cattle and every kind of crawling creature on the ground."

The verb *Let the earth produce*, in Hebrew is *toçe*, *Let [the earth] make to go out*; whence Rabbi Solomon says: "This is what I have explained, that all things were created from the first day, and it was not necessary except to bring them forth or to make them go forth." He explains *living breath* as that in which there is life; and *creeping thing*; *remesh*, which he says "are crawling things which are low lying [in relation to the ground] and crawl [in relation to the ground] and crawl over the earth, and seem to know nothing of walking, as those things that drag themselves. The whole meaning of *remesh* is *sharaç*."

We explain this verse in the following manner. *Let the earth bring forth*, that is, let it receive the power of bringing forth, with other elements joining together for a material beginning. And immediately the earth brought forth that which God commanded of it, by its own directing and producing power, and the earth acquired its furniture of terrestrial animals, namely livestock and crawling things; *and beasts*, which are called terrestrial animals, since they not only consist of the same element, but together from all the elements; but because from that they draw their beginning, there they live their life, they dwell, and take nourishment and are contained, and the same element of the earth prevails; therefore they are called terrestrial. Nonetheless, this verse details the kinds of animals on earth: *cattle, crawling things, and wild animals*. Animals designated for the use of men are called *cattle*, as if for assisting human uses. This term includes all types of livestock in herds. The term *crawling creatures* denotes

all animals with bodies low to the ground, which move themselves not by a thrust but by dragging and which are completely deprived of feet or have feet so small that they cannot lift themselves up on the earth while they walk. Finally, the term *wild beasts* describes those animals which travel with a thrust and progressive motion; they are untamable and always fierce, and by their very nature they do not know how to be tame, but they spend time and dwell in large forests and rage with the claws and mouth.

VERSE 26

[186] *And God saw that it was good and said: "Let us make mankind in our image and likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle, over all the wild animals and every creature that crawls upon the earth."*

The Hebrew text reads: *Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness.*

The Septuagint changed the preposition and translates "in" as *pros*⁴, "to," and as does our Latin version in imitation of the Greek. That fact is not important to our understanding.

Regarding this explanation, Rabbi Ibn Ezra says that "there are those who say that the word *n'sh* should be read *naasah*, the preterite of the nif'al, or reflexive, conjugation, as everything which *naasah* (*He made* rather than the cohortative *Let us make*) was made on the first day. And they say that *in our image and our likeness* are the words of Moses." His own explanation is that

God created man *beçalmo*, in His own image, because the masculine suffix 'o' is converted to man. And they explain it as *in the image of God*, because *God* governs the verb *made*, as if they were to say that God made man in the image. This

⁴ Translator's Note: This may represent a lapse of memory. The preposition in the standard Greek text is *kata* (*kat'eikona*), not *pros*. The large critical apparatus of the 1906 Cambridge *The Old Testament in Greek* does not report the variant *pros* in the chief ancient authorities for the text of the LXX.

explanation is defective since it had been evident at first that it was like this: And God said, and man was made, and so He made him in His own image. Besides the pronominal masculine suffix “o,” how does the word *beçalmo* refer to man? Behold the image of him exists before he exists. What is the reason behind the following verse from Genesis: *Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God man was made?* All living souls also have an image. The Gaon says the explanation is as follows: In our image means according to our likeness. The sense of it is: in the image which appears in wisdom, since it is a good thing, and on account of the honor of man and his union with God. And thus, *they departed from his land, because the Lord’s are the earth and its fullness.* And he says that in the word *naaseh* (if it is first person plural) is the royal “we” or plural of majesty, as in these verses from Scripture: *We shall also give to you this one; We shall say before the king; If I shall be able, we will drive him.* These instances are false inasmuch as *wenittenah*, is in the nif ‘al conjugation, as in Jeremia, *the city will be given* etc. and the waw consecutive renders the verb future, according to the Hebrew rule of tense sequencing of every preterite verb in continuous narration. The sense, then, is that it will be given to you, and the words *we*—Balak and the “we in the verse *we will drive him*, refers to Balak and his army [187]. Perhaps its is the *hapoal* (verb-root form) name, as *weniqqah lo anaqekka* not only because we find *lo nukku*, inasmuch as a conjugation does not occur of which the root name, *hapoal*, is not used, but also because it is from a strong conjugation.⁵

⁵ Translator’s Note: This is an extraordinarily difficult passage, even in the Latin translation and illustrates the problem that Frederick Greenspahn, writing in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* [2004], found with a modern translation of Ibn Ezra’s commentary on Deuteronomy: “As increasing numbers of classical Jewish writings come to be translated into English, one must wonder whether potential readers are equipped to understand these important works. Nowhere is that caveat more germane than in the case of medieval biblical commentaries, for which readers may have to understand the very text being commented on in order to follow the comments that are intended to explain it. It is possible, therefore, that the project of making this rich tradition accessible to a wide audience will reach a point of diminishing returns.”

In his book, Rabbi Moses of Spain erred in interpreting the phrase *Let us speak before the king*, which is written in Aramaic. How would Daniel speak in the plural of majesty in front of Nabuchodonosor who was king of kings? I will now explain it. Bear in mind that all the works of Genesis were created in the command of God for the honor of man, including all the seeds that the earth produced, the waters, all the living things, and the wild animals. Afterward, God said to the angels, *Let us make man!* We, and not the waters or the earth, will give our works in him, and thereafter we know that the Law speaks according to the language of the sons of men, because man is a speaking as well as hearing being, and man cannot speak words higher or lower than himself, but according to the way of the likeness of man, and thus it is said in the original Hebrew, *the mouth of the earth, the hands of the Jordan, and the head of the dusts of the world*. God forbid! God forbid that it be the likeness of God! And on account of this, man was elevated above the things that are not man, on behalf of God he was put in charge of the beasts of the earth. And he is not just a body, but the body of man is the fullness of all things, a little world, as it were—blessed be God—which began in the great and ended in the small. And so says the prophet, who saw the glory of God as if a vision of man, and God is one and the maker of all things, and He is all things.

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol believes the same thing, and he comments as follows:

Let us make man: hence it teaches us the humility of God. For man is in the likeness of the angels, and they might have envied him. For that reason, He consulted them; He consulted His household on account of the judgment of the angels. As we find what Micheas said to Achab: *I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the army of heaven standing by him on the right hand and on the left*. And how is there a right and a left in His presence? Those to the right are to be justified, and those to the left are to be condemned, just as judgment is in the courts of cities and the right of claim is in the word of the holy. And so in His household, He permitted [188] license, saying to them: My

likeness is in higher things: if it is not in lower things, behold, there is envy in the works of creation: *Let us make man*. Although they did not assist Him in the formation of man, Scripture does not fail to teach the way of the earth and the example of humility, that a great being may consult and seek license from a small being. And if it were written, *I shall make man*, it would not tell us that the word is with the house of counsel but with Himself. But Moses wrote afterwards, *He created man*, and not they created *beçalmo, in his own image*, i.e. as a model, type, or form which is to us *in accordance with our image*, for understanding, either in the mind and intellect, and for examining.

These are the explanations of this verse, which the aforementioned learned Jews posit, as we have seen in Rabbi Ibn Ezra and Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol. Let us now analyze certain facts, according to the opinions of the Jews themselves. First, the angels were not creators, because the Jews assert that they were created on the second day in order that we should not think that they were assistants in the creation of the world. Second, in this verse it should be understood that the image and likeness is not according to man's body but according to his soul, mind, and intellect, as Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol and Rabbi Moses in his *More Hanebukim*. I say, then, how does God address the angels, saying *Let us make*, if the angels are not His assistants in creation? You will not say it is according to the body; for it was not the body but the soul that was made in the image and likeness of God, which was created by God in an instant, in accordance with the verse from Zacharia: *Forming the spirit of man within him*. Is not the image and likeness of God and the angels one and the same, that God should say *in our image and likeness*? Furthermore, was not man created in the image and likeness of the angels, and were not the angels created according to that same image according in which man himself was created? If the angels created man together with God, why then did Scripture not add afterwards, *And the gods created man in their image* etc. in the same manner that Scripture wrote *God [189] created man in his image*? The operation of God and the angels is not the same thing.

But Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol says that the angels did not cooperate with God in the creation of man, because Scripture writes *And*

God created man. Nevertheless, by the words *Let us make* etc. He addressed the angels, seeking counsel from them in order that he might create man in His image and likeness, as the likeness of God is in higher creatures, so it might be in lower creatures so that the lower might not envy the higher. To this, I rejoin, Why does God say *in our image and likeness*, since man was created in the likeness of God and not of the angels? For as he says, the likeness of God was already in higher creatures, i.e. in the angels who possess a likeness of God. Then is not God foolish to seek counsel from another? To seek counsel is not an attribute of the wisest and all knowing being but rather of one that does not know what is better and what is more excellent.

However, he says that He did this to teach us humility. What man could He teach if man had not yet been made, yet God was thinking of making him? Would it not have been a much greater, clearer, and more evident an example if God had sometimes consulted men when he proposed to do something? Moses was most certainly God's most faithful servant and friend, and he very often consulted God in doing things. However, we never read that God consulted him in accomplishing anything.

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol's Biblical citation proves nothing. Micheas saw the Lord in a kind of likeness resembling God or formed externally or internally in the prophet. But the host of angels, which he saw standing around Him are not all good angels. And those who do justify the judgment of God, are on the right, but those who stand condemned are said to be on His left. Those on the right are good, but those wicked on the left are said to stand near God, to the extent that in very many things they are the executors of divine justice. In Job we read *Once again the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them.* Certainly, Satan is the spirit who said *I will go forth and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all your prophets*, since he would justify the opinion of God, who asked, *Who [190] shall deceive Achab?* etc; according to Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol, Satan ought to have been set at God's right even though he was wicked. But what is more absurd, how did the wickedest spirits stand on God's right? God did not approve that falsehood when he said *Go and you will prevail*, although he is the chief and highest truth, but he certainly permitted it. For God, by his just

judgment, permits evil men to be deceived by demons who can still do nothing unless they are allowed to do so.

Therefore, it remains for me to bring forth into public view the true and universal sense about the words *Let us make man*. This phrase, as the holiest men and most learned commentators have asserted, references the plurality of the Divine Persons and is the utterance of the Father to the Son and the Holy Ghost inasmuch as the outward operation of all the Divine Persons in one and undivided. The Father says to the Son, *Let us make*, not *let there be*, as we saw God saying in the production of the previous works of creation. Those things were made from original matter and thence their forms were brought out, namely from potency and potentiality. When He came to man, he did not say *Let the earth bring forth* but *Let us make*. Even if the body of man came from original matter, nevertheless his soul, which is the noblest of forms, was not produced from there but by its very nature was created by God. In so far that man is man, he is endowed with a rational soul, and he lives by sense and reason. For this reason, Scripture says, *Let us make man*.

However, man, *Adam* in Hebrew, either comes from *adamah*, i.e. “the earth, or from *adom* “ruddy” because he was made of red earth as Josephus thought. He asserts that man was fashioned in the ground of Damascus and that that soil, from which he had been constructed, was reddish brown. Nevertheless, Sacred Scripture teaches us that Adam [191] is said to come from *adamah*. But if in Latin *homo*, “man,” is said to come from *humus*, “ground,” then it corresponds to the Hebrew etymology and is very apropos that man be named after the earth. Just as the body of man came from and was made out of the earth, so his name was derived from the word for earth.

But, even if man with respect to his body is from the earth, and is therefore so called, as though he belonged to the earth, nevertheless, with respect to his soul he has his heavenly origin from God Almighty, and the whole man consists of soul and body joined together. Therefore, by reason of this joining of two natures, there are two words in the sacred languages to signify the different natures. In Hebrew, not only is *adam* used but also *ish*, just as we find in Latin *homo* (man), which corresponds to *adam*, but also *vir* (man), which corresponds to *ish*. Latin uses *vir* because of the strength of the soul and the force of reason. Also in Hebrew, *enosh* (man,

mankind) is also used after the Fall because the word means “sorrowful” and “grievous” on account of the misery and punishments that he incurred as a result of his sin. In Greek, two words are similarly used: *brotos*, i.e. earth-born and mortal, by reason of man’s body. By reason of his mind, however, the Greeks use *aner*, corresponding to the Hebrew *ish* and the Latin *vir*. By reason of both body and mind, the Greeks use the word *anthropos*, from *ano kai rhepon*, as if he were “inclining or beholding back again” as though he has something from the earth because he is there and something from the heaven, to which he looks and aspires. In addition, man may be termed, as it were, *anathron ha opote*, i.e. one reflecting on what he has seen, as Socrates says in Plato’s *Cratylus*. A property of man is to reflect upon the invisible by perceiving the visible (i.e. by means of the senses, according to which he is earth-bound and sees earthly things), then to take in the visible in order to advance himself again to the understanding of the invisible through the intellect.

One should know that the name *Adam* is not proper to the first man, but it embraces both sexes of the entire human species, just as in Latin the word is *homo* and in Greek it is *anthropos*. Scripture says that *on the day on which God created man, he made him in the image of God; male and female he created them and blessed them and he gave them the name Adam*. Nevertheless, the first man was always called by that name, because of his pre-eminence and excellence. [192] He came forth as the beginning of the human race, and in him all human nature was contained potentially in his seed, and from him the entire human race was propagated. Because of this, St. Augustine, considering such a name a proper to the first man, said, following St. Cyprian, that he was so called because the earth from which the first was compounded and formed had been taken from the four corners of the world, which in Greek are expressed by the four letters of his name: **A**, *Anatole*, east; **D**, *Dysis*, west; **A**, *Arktos*, north; **M**, *Mesembria*, south. Nevertheless, this explanation is not sufficiently certain from the standpoint of the Hebrew language. Still, it can do no harm to believe it, even though it is not true.

Returning to our subject, I affirm that when the Lord said *Let us make man*, by man He understood the first man, and in him all human nature was altogether, as if we were all contained in him, from whom we were to be propagated afterwards. The Lord did not simply say *Let us*

make man, but He added *In our image and likeness*. Whence we must consider how man was created *in the image and likeness of God*.

Some writers, very much off the mark, thought that our soul was of God's substance, and accordingly it was said that the soul was made *in the image and likeness* of God, inasmuch the first and pre-eminent likeness is in the same nature. But this is very foolish thinking. Indeed, the soul was not made from the substance of God, and God does not allow anything outside Himself to have a likeness of the same nature. For it is written in Isaia, *To whom can you liken God* and in the Psalms, *O God, who is like you?* as well as *There is none like you among the gods, O Lord*. No one can find who is like Him.

Now, let us suppose that this likeness is according to a nature. I ask, according to what nature? Generic, specific, or individual? Although God is truly outside and above every species, since His substance is infinite and entirely without parts, as it is absolutely [193] simple and purest act. The manner in which we are likened to Him is not according to genus, or species, or the individual. The likeness must be understood as a kind of analogy.

The insanity of the Anthropomorphites was against the error that the soul was of God's substance. They thought that God had a body and soul, like us. They therefore insisted that man was made in the image and likeness of God, not only according to the soul, but also according to the body. This assertion is equally absurd in the highest degree and, according to true theology, it is ridiculous. From the Gospel of John we know that *God is spirit* and He cannot be circumscribed by any bodily lines or shapes, nor can He be limited. All the holy Doctors assert that this image and likeness of God in man must be understood not according to the body but according to the mind, according to which man by his very nature surpasses non-rational beings. To make that point, Scripture immediately subjoins *And let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the wild animals on the earth*.

Regarding this, the Scholastic theologians, however, carefully take into consideration three things: the footprint or trace, the likeness, and the image. First, the trace. If, for instance, anyone treads upon the ground, he leaves his footprint, or his trace, so that in a certain way one should be able to know that it was a man who passed by and left his footprint. But

by no means will that footprint be said to be the image or likeness of a man. Thus all creatures, to the degree that they are created and share being, are rather like those having in themselves the express footprint of God, which is the beginning, source and origin of all being, so that whatever is some thing or person should be from Him. Besides insofar as every creature takes on its own appearance and beauty, as if it were made before, it represents a certain trace or footprint of the Son, who is the Logos of the Father Almighty, through whom all things were made, and the full rational intellect of all living rational intellects. Furthermore, since in anything whatsoever there is found a certain inclination and a natural, inclined desire whereby the thing is moved either to acquire its own perfection or to communicate itself to another [194]—forasmuch as every good thing is by its own nature communicative and distributive of itself—and for that reason it bears a footprint or trace of the Holy Ghost, which is the mutual love of the Father and the Son, which proceeds from Them, whereby They love Themselves and their creatures and whereby they pour Themselves out into their creatures.

Nevertheless, such footprints do not in themselves possess a likeness of the divine nature. Whereas non-rational creatures are lacking in reason and intellect—albeit they betoken the Supreme Intellect itself since they were made by an unerring intellect—they cannot represent the likeness of that intellect. Just as smoke indicates fire, it still does not make manifest to us the appearance of fire. Only an intellectual nature, as it were, possesses the likeness of God, to the extent it is intellectual, free with respect to will, and capable of power in itself. These conditions are by their very nature in God in a supreme and prominent way.

Therefore, man, to the extent that he manifests God Himself in the world is said to have been made in the likeness of God with respect to his soul. Just as God knows all things, so by his very nature was made capable of knowing all things. Just as God is free to act, so is man. Just as God is one in the world, so is the soul one in the body. Just as God moves all things in the world, yet remains unmoved in Himself, so the soul moves everything in the body. Just as God rules the world, so the soul rules the body. Just as God has no need of food or drink in the world and takes neither food nor drink, neither does the soul in the body. Just as God is all in the whole world and all in each part, so is the soul in the body. Just as

God sees all things and is not seen in the world, so the soul in the body. Just as God is not defiled by the filth of places, even though he is in every place, so the soul in the body. Just as God fills the whole world, so the soul fills the whole body. Just as God, although He is everywhere in the world by potentiality, essence, and presence, but works different things in different parts of the world, so the soul in the body. Just as the operations of God are more perfectly perceived in a blessed location and in heaven, for there God is said to exist, dwell, and reign in a special way, so the soul is better perceived in the head and heart. Finally, just as God rules over things, so does man according to his mind and reason, as it says in the verse *Let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle, and over all wild animals on the earth.*

[195] Nevertheless, the perfect *image* of God does not consist in the foregoing. Although in the aforesaid ways our soul is very similar to God, nevertheless the likeness is thought to be accidental, since each example pertains to the accidentals of the soul. However, they place the image in the substance of the soul and in its natural powers, to wit, memory, intelligence, and will. It is of necessity that the image of God, in which man was made, pertain to these powers. In the same manner that God is one but in three Persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, so our soul, one according to substance, consists of these three powers. For instance, in the memory, the image of the Father is reflected because a fertile memory, along with the act of speaking, produces the word. In the intelligence, the image of the Son is portrayed because the Son is begotten by way of intellect and nature, whence in divine matters the Son is knowledge begotten, by which the Father knows Himself and in that knowing begets another self, namely the Son. Wherefore, the Holy Ghost is none other than the love by which the Father and the Son mutually love each other. Just as the Son is begotten from the Father and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, so intelligence arises from the memory by taking intelligence for potency and act, and the will has its origin from both memory and intelligence by taking the will as much for potency as for act. To be sure, the image of the Divine Trinity, as later theologians opine, does not consist in the first acts alone of the soul but in the first and second acts taken together. For by no means are the distinction, origin, and production of the Divine Persons best reflected in this way,

but also their identity and the unity of divine essence are made manifest.

St. Augustine designates an additional way in which the soul is in the image of God: by the mind, by knowledge or speech, and by love. These also rightly express both the production and distinction of the Divine Persons. For the mind begets the word, and afterward produces love with speech. Thus the mind perfectly represents the Father, speech the Son (the Word), and love the Holy Ghost. They represent the unity of God's essence since all these things are of the one soul. Although this is absolutely true, nevertheless the intellect still cannot rest, because the verse says that Man [196] was made *in the image and likeness of God*, as if beforehand there had been some image according to which man was formed. Therefore, the original Hebrew text has: *naaseh adam beçalmenu kidmuthenu*, *Let us make man in our image, as though in our likeness*. The Aramaic Targum translates as follows: *naebbeid einasha beçalemana kidmuthana*, i.e. *Let us make man in our image, [let us make] just as our likeness*. According to this text, we may understand the same thing by the words *image* and *likeness*, so that the sense is *Let us make man in our image*, i.e. let us impress our image on human nature so that it is somewhat a representation of divinity and exhibits our nature, just as the image of a king or chief of state stamped on a coin (as we read in Matthew, *Whose are this image and this inscription?*) and the features, figure, and image of Cæsar carved in wood or stone or cast in bronze are a kind of representation of the man. So in us is the image of God expressed as a likeness and representation of God. In this way nearly everything that was said above is described as incorporated in these words, but especially that in which it represents God as presiding and governing all things. For this reasons, the text adds immediately, *Let mankind have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle, over all the wild animals of the earth*. In the original Hebrew verb *weyireddu* is plural, *Let them have dominion* because it includes both sexes, and embraces all men, for this is the dignity of the nature.

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol notes of this passage that it was so phrased "because *rydwy* is a "descent" and *rydh* is "presidency" or "dominion" so that man should have dominion over the wild animals and cattle, if he had been worthy or if he had been clean. If he had not been worthy and as he descends into affliction, the result would be that the

wild animals would have dominion over him.”

Nevertheless, I say that dominion of this sort is natural for man. Man is by his nature more eminent, more noble, and more perfect. The more imperfect things [197] are always directed and ordered to the more perfect, as to the purposes and the things they serve: the earth serves plants, plants serve animals, and all these things serve man. Man, adorned with wisdom of the mind and clarity of reason and the most holy image of God, can very fittingly exercise his rule over these things and have dominion over the rest. Even though in virtue of that first fault, the source of everything else that followed, man actually was stripped of the power to have dominion over a number of animals that rage against man and threaten men’s lives, he nonetheless never lost the right of having dominion over all things. Even if in point of fact several animals escape his dominion, nevertheless by nature man is such that he has rights over them, and some subjects them actually subjects them to his power. As St. James says in his Catholic epistle, *For every kind of beast and bird, and of serpents...is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.*

VERSE 27

God created man in his image. In the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them.

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol explains the word *beçalmo* as “*bdpws*, *He made it in his figure or shape*, because all things were created in the of God, and man was created in his hands, as the Psalms say *Thou hast formed me, and hast laid thy hand upon me.*” I think that he is speaking here in the manner of a parable, otherwise what he says is absurd and worthy of laughter:

He was made *bhwtm*, *in a seal*, as on a coin, which is made by a stamp that is called *quniyu*, or *cuneus*, meaning a wedge or stamping die. He was saying: let it be changed as in the material of a seal. *In the image of God he created him.* My explanation is that He formed him in the image prepared for that figure; He formed him, *male and female he created them.* Further on in Genesis it says, *He took one of his ribs.* In the *Midrash Haggadah*,

it says that at the first creation, God created man with two faces, and afterwards divided and extended their covering so that it may not be known that they were both created together. I will not now explain how He formed the creatures; I will do that in another place.”

Rabbi Ibn Ezra does not approve of this explanation, for he says, “I shall not be able to explain that Adam was created in the beginning with two faces, and that they are one and also it is two. And behold he was created in the image of God: *ml’d*: and he was created male and female.”

I explain this verse accordingly, by no means straying from the path of the holiest men: [198] *In the image of God he created him*. It is clear from this that the angels did not create man, but God did. It says, *God created man, and he created him in the image of God*. But if God created him, in the image of which “god” did He create man? St. Augustine thinks it meant man was created somewhat in His own image. However, Origen, Hilary, Cyril, Theodoret, and Jerome (in his commentary *On Ezechiel*) as well as *The Ordinary Gloss* on that same passage affirm that this referred to Christ, who is God, in Whose image man was especially created so that He might form man to that image which the Lord had created by His predetermination, as it is written, *From and the beginning, and before the world, was I created*, and Christ Himself was the archetype of human nature, which is described as in the likeness of the true image of Christ, *who is the image of the invisible God*.

Note here, for the intelligence of this verse, that the Christ was first predetermined in the Divine Mind, as the Psalm says, *In the head of the book it is written of me*, because He is *the firstborn of every creature*. However, the Christ was determined, not according to divine nature, but human nature, because the Divine Mind before everything else conceived the form that the Word-to-be-Incarnate would receive. God, then, created the first man in the image and likeness of that form. Accordingly, Scripture says that *in the image of God*, viz. of the Incarnate, i.e. Christ, Who is God, *he created him*.

Therefore, God created man in the image of the God the Christ, namely in that form and figure which had been predetermined for the Christ, the Son of God, before the formation of all the creatures, Whom St. Paul calls

the firstborn of every creature, in whom were created all things. Man, the noblest creature of the world, was formed and produced according to that pre-formed semblance in the Divine Mind, which the Word would assume. I admit, this explanation is very pleasing. For it most fittingly and admirably seems to express the glorious and perfect sense [199] about all mankind, both according to the body and to the mind—that Christ Himself is the archetype, in Whom we first must be represented both according to the body and the mind, just as we must be configured to Him in everlasting blessedness. The Apostle clearly expressed this when he said, *For those whom he has known he has also predestined to become conformed to the image of his Son* and in another place *Even as we have borne the likeness of the earthly, let us bear also the likeness of the heavenly.* Therefore, man, who was created in the image of Christ, is truly said to be created in the image of God, since *In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*

Male and female he created them.

This verse must be considered as a manner of speaking, for before Scripture said that *He created him*. Now, however, it says *He created them*. We must wholly reject the fiction that some Jews assert about this verse, that male and female were created at the same time joined as it were at their sides and only afterward divided between themselves. (The Jews of today also reject that theory as we have already seen their explanation of Genesis.) If male and female were created joined together, why, I ask, does it say later in Genesis 2, *He took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. An the rib...he made into a woman?* But if you say that the verse should be understood according to the original Hebrew text, *He took one thing from the side of him and he filled flesh in its place.* I hold that the Hebrew word *çela* (translated literally as “side”) primarily and chiefly means “rib.” How did God make that side *into a woman*, if from the beginning the woman had been made attached to the side of the man? How, then, in Genesis 2:20, was there not found a helper like Adam, if the woman very much like him was next to him? Or, how did Adam say, *She now is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called isshah, or Woman, for from man she has been taken.* The woman could no more be

said to have been taken from the side of the man than the man from the side of the woman. I submit that God did not intend to commence human natures from a monstrous work, for something like this is a monster.

Therefore, I explain the verse *Male and female he created them* in this way: the woman was also created in Adam, not that the very woman had already been formed, but that she was to be formed, since she was already determined in the mind of God. Although we may rightly say that the woman is truly said to be [200] created at the same time, since she was already contained as it were in the man, from whose flesh and bones she was to be produced. Therefore, along with St. Basil I can explain what is said to be in the image of God. Although Scripture had written *In the image of God he created him*, we should not think that only the male was formed in the image and likeness of God, because Scripture adds these words immediately: *Male and female he created them*. The woman, indeed, was created in the image of God according to the mind, and similarly in Christ, inasmuch as in Him, as the Apostle says, *there is neither male nor female*. This means there is no distinction such that the male be accepted but the female will be rejected, for she is in the image of God. Nevertheless, I do not deny that it can be said that Moses posited the formation of the woman by way of anticipation, as he was about to explain thereafter the divine blessing for multiplying and increasing the human race. That would come to be through the union of the male and the female. Accordingly, as Moses narrated other events before having mentioned the formation of the woman, he soon recalled that he had to describe her formation, so he recorded the order of her formation after narrating the events subsequent to it.

VERSE 28

Then God blessed them, saying: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth.

The Hebrew original has: *Be fruitful and multiply*: the sense is the same as we said in our discussion above. *And subdue it*: *Wekivshuha*.

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol says that “the waw is missing to teach that man subdues the woman and that she will not sire offspring and to teach besides that it is the man who is directed to do the subjection by the commandment concerning fruitfulness and multiplication., not the woman.” Rabbi Ibn Ezra says that the “words *peru urrevu, be fruitful and multiply*, cannot explain that the blessing in man is as in the creatures of the waters. But it is a commandment, which the ancients conveyed—*zal*, May the memory of them be blessed!—and they put in this verse to record the remembrance.”

Nevertheless, I explain this verse as follows. *And God blessed them* [201] *saying: Increase and multiply*. Indeed, this blessing consists first and foremost in the receipt of the power to propagate, so that the human species be multiplied in the number of persons lest the chief and noblest of species die out. For even if man had not sinned, he would have been able to be never-ending in this first pair of individuals with a human nature. Although God had created them immortal, albeit mortal in nature, so that they could not die and the power of propagating was not necessary for the conservation of the species, nevertheless the propagation had been for the glory of God so that human nature be communicated to many chosen by God beforehand to obtain grace and glory. Whence from the beginning of their formation, the first men had been already blessed by God and had already been endowed with an abundance of the greatest gifts and every perfect good thing belonging both to nature and to grace. They were to propagate, and the men who were born of them were to receive the blessing of such great gifts and were to share in those same blessings since no sin stood in the way.

In that passage, one must note that marriage was made a sacrament because it was blessed by God in order that we consequently understand that grace was given by God to procreate offspring, so that those came henceforth might come forth sanctified. But after the fall of man, the power of propagating was wholly necessary, lest the human species dies out, since man incurred the necessity of dying because of his sin.

I do not deny that this blessing can also be understood in the gift of original justice and grace and all the other virtues, both moral and cardinal as well as theological. Likewise, the blessing may be understood to be in the bestowal of any other spontaneous gifts, chiefly by which, for instance,

the first men were enriched and adorned by the most loving God. But, as we said in the beginning, it even actually chiefly consists in the gift of the procreative power because of the words that follow the blessing: *Increase and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it*. Inasmuch as the earth was to be filled with propagated men, to whom it is said that they may subject it by cultivating it and by demanding fruits from it as though they were due.

From this passage, the Jews argue against those Christians who *have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven* by leading celibate lives [202] and claim that they are violating the divine commandment since by these words man was commanded to marry. Also heretics vehemently rejoice in this verse (to their perdition), finding fault with monks. However, certainly they use this verse against Catholics in vain, because in the words *Increase and multiply* either (1) there is no command but only the concession of the faculty and the blessing in approval of this work or (2) if it is a commandment, which I do not refuse to believe, it is a commandment for the time at the beginning, when the earth was empty. Now the world is very much full. I add that it was not a command to each man but to mankind, and it is sufficiently fulfilled when many comply with it. It is the same with the imperative *And subdue the earth*, undoubtedly by cultivating it, yet each individual is not bound to this commandment.

VERSES 29-30

God also said, "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant on the earth and every tree which has seed-bearing fruit to be your food. To every wild animal of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to every creature that crawls on the earth and has the breath of life, I give the green plants for food." And so it was.

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol says in his commentary on these verses that "God made them equal to cattle and beasts in respect to their food, and He did not give Adam and his wife license to fawn upon creation, or abundance, in order to eat meat. They ate every kind of herb all at once. And when the sons of Noe rested from the flood, God made meat lawful for them, as it is written, *Every creature that moves and lives shall be food for*

you; as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.”

Rabbi Ibn Ezra himself has the same opinion about these verses, for he says “For the sons of men, God made everything lawful to eat, even that in which there was living breath, He made every herb, and fruit of the tree lawful for man, and every herb for beasts and crawling things; He did not make meat lawful for men until after the flood.”

I explain the verses in this way. When He fortified man with the power of propagation for the conservation of the species, He furnished the race of men and the other animals with specific food from the fruits of the earth, which they might eat and with which they might maintain their lives. Nevertheless it must not be [203] thought that the same fruits of the earth were assigned to man which were given to the other animals. That given to man was from the nobler fruits. The more common herbs and fruits were left for the animals. The original Hebrew seems to support this, for it reads *See! I have given to you every plant seed-making seed upon the face of the whole earth and every tree in which there is fruit, tree seed-making seed will be for you for food. But to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heaven and to every crawling thing of the earth in which there is the breath of life, every greenness or herb of grass will be for food.*

VERSE 31

God saw that all he had made was very good. And there was evening and morning, the sixth day. Yom hasshisshi.

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol says that “the letter he is added on the sixth day, when He perfected the work *bereshith* in order to indicate that He made a covenant with them on this condition, that Israel take upon itself the five books of the Law” or the Pentateuch. “In addition, *Yom hasshisshi*: all things hang and stand until the sixth day; waw⁶ is to designate the place for waiting for the Law.”

⁶ Translator’s Note: Here is another instance of the difficulty in reading mediaeval rabbinic commentaries. The letters of the Hebrew alphabet also had numerical values. The Hebrew letter he (h) in *hasshisshi* (“the sixth”) = 5; and the waw (w) in *yom* (“day”) = 6. Note also that *yom* is correctly transliterated *yôm*; the vowel holem (ô) shows that the letter waw in *yom* is written in Hebrew with a superscripted dot.

Rabbi Ibn Ezra believes otherwise. For he says,

There are those who say that *yom* is joined with the following letter he, and the sense or reason is to surround *hasshisshi*, “six,” just as we find in *yom hassheviyi*, the *seventh* day. But this is not true. According to the opinion of men, the sixth day has the approval of the felicities.

However, his explanation is as follows:

The day, [204] which is the sixth with respect to the first day, and so the seventh day. And so we also find in Leviticus, the phrase *a man hayyishreeli, the Israelite* (where the he is grammatically unnecessary). There are many instances of this, as in *firmament, hasshamayim*, heavens, i.e. the firmament that is the heavens.

Leaving these explanations aside, I explain this verse as follows: *And God saw that all he had made was very good* or as the Hebrew original has, *good exceedingly*. In this verse God commends all the works rather than each work *per se*. For each work is *per se* good by its nature, but all things together, insofar as they constitute the universe itself, are, as it were, one and very good, i.e. the best because of the admirable order of the universe. *And there was evening and morning, the sixth day*. The sixth day from the first day, the heaven having now revolved six times in its orbit.

ON GENESIS 2

OUR FIRST PARENTS

CHAPTER 2

VERSES 1-3

So the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the furniture of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done.⁷ And he blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

Rabbi Ibn Ezra says that

Wayekullu (“and were finished”) belongs to the verb conjugation called the pu’al (the passive voice of the pi’el or intensive conjugation) and so is *umishuqalu*, “were weighed out” and *wayekusu*, “all the mountains were covered.” The sense is as follows: *nashulmu*, “be completed” or “perfected,” and the sea, too, was completed because it was, as it were, one mass with the earth. *And God ended on the seventh day.* There are those who say that the days were created, and on the creation of the seventh day, the work was complete. This explanation is foolish and silly. There are those who say that the sense of the preposition *be* (which governs the noun *yom*, “day”) is “before,” not “on,” as in Deuteronomy, *You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out grain.* Truly the day on which He first rested remained. How, then, did He form and perfect this work? It is not a work of creation, and as it was written, He did not make a work. The explanation is as follows: *Wayekal*, i.e., *wayisheveth*,

⁷ Translator’s Note: Here is a good example of why I have sometimes had to use the Douay rather than the CCD version: the Douay is much closer to the Latin text that St. Lawrence knew and, in this case, to the Hebrew text of Ibn Ezra. The CCD reads: *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all their array. On the sixth day God finished the work he had been doing.* The NAB reads “seventh” with the Hebrew, the Douay, and RSV. The critical apparatus in Kittel’s *Biblia Hebraica* indicates that the Samaritan, Septuagint, and Syriac versions read “sixth.” The 1970 New English Bible reads “sixth” on the witness of the Septuagint. The 1968 Jerome Biblical Commentary favors “seventh” over “sixth.” St. Lawrence wonderfully discusses the variant in the text below, deciding that the completion took place on the seventh day.

He ceased. This is the sense: on the seventh day He ceased from all his work in all the creatures that He created.

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol adds to this the explanation of Rabbi Simeon, who said that inasmuch as

flesh and blood, i.e. man, does not know his own time of day and precise moment, or exact period, it is necessary to add from the weekday to the Sabbath of the blessed God, Who knows precisely the time and period on which the Sabbath begins, and just it seems as though He did these things *on the seventh day* etc. Daleth Aleph, another explanation is that since the world was lacking in a rest for the future, He brings about the future Sabbath from His rest and finishes the work.

I, however, explain the verses as follows. *So the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the furniture of them* or as the original Hebrew has it, *And the heavens and all their host were finished or completed.* This is an epilogue or a kind of summary of everything what has already been accomplished in the past six days. *And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made.* The sense of this verse seems to be that on the seventh day, God did some kind of work, and after it was accomplished, all the works of creation were now complete. For St. Jerome says of this verse: “Instead of the sixth day—the Old Latin translation indeed read *shishi* (sixth)—in the Hebrew it has the seventh day. Therefore, we will challenge the Jews, who glory in the rest of the Sabbath, with the fact that already then in the beginning the Sabbath was broken when God works on the Sabbath, completing his works on it.” Some assert that the woman was formed from the rib of the man on the seventh day, since in the works of the six days the events of her formation are not written down, after the [206] aforementioned arrival of the seventh day. However, others understand that He made the seventh day and completed His work in its creation. By that deed, He perfected the measure and number of the days and by means of their cycle, all the ages roll on.

I hold with the opinion that God is said to have completed his work on the seventh day, and that He did not add any new works when all his works had been done in the preceding days, even though he could have

added many more. But he completed his works because he did not add new ones, so that this verse be in accord with the one that follows: *And He rested on the seventh day from all the work that He had accomplished.* Why is it that *He rested*? Was he wearied from working? Rather He rested because He ceased making any new creature. For to rest is said to be to cease, as we read in the Apocalypse: *And they [the four living creatures] did not have rest, saying: Holy, Holy, Holy,* that is, they did not cease to say. Therefore, *He rested*, because He did not further create new things, and he did not add new kinds of creatures, which had already been made. For the power of the Creator is for the sake of maintaining the creature. Whence our Savior says in John 5:17, *The Father works until now and I work*, showing the continuous governance of all creatures. Therefore *He rested* on the seventh day, in order that he might not make a new creature, and *He works until now*, in order that He not cease to control and govern that which he created.

And he blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol says, “He blessed it in manna, because it came down from heaven to them on all workdays of the week, *one gomor for each person*, and on the sixth day the bread ration was doubled, and He made the Sabbath holy in manna, which did not rain down from heaven on that holy day. This verse was written for what was to come to pass.” Rabbi Ibn Ezra explains the verse as follows:

The blessing [207] adds goodness, and on that day the likeness of the power for generation will be renewed in bodies and in animals the power of the great wonder and intellect. And He made it holy so that work not be done on it.” Ibn Ezra explains *which God created and made* as follows: the foundations were in all the species in which he placed the power for making like species. The explanation that the form *laashoth*, *in order that He might make*, should be understood for the text’s *ashah*, *He made*, and that ‘he made’ should be taken for *He created* is incorrect in my opinion. The Gaon said that the blessing of the day and its sanctification passes on to those keeping the Sabbath, who are

blessed and sanctified.”

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol says, “God doubled His efforts and accomplished on the sixth day the work that appeared to have been done on the Sabbath, as is explained in the Midrash on Genesis, the *Beresith Rabba*.”

I, however, explain the verse as follows. *God blessed and sanctified*. Concerning the time of day, this blessing and sanctification consists in and seems to be this moment in time, so that at this time, i.e. on the seventh day, which we call the Sabbath, God especially and greatly wished to be worshiped and sanctified. He set aside this day for divine worship, and commanded that it be held holy and consecrated to the divine service of worship, and kept very far apart from all profane works or anything contrary or alien to the worship of God. Such works are anything that is made for the pleasure, comfort, and service of men. God desired man to sanctify this day by worshiping God, Who is worshiped to the greatest extent in faith, hope, and charity, and on that day man works the works of God so that finally he may become a partaker of the Sabbath.

What then should we say about the words, *Which God created and made*? Some say that *made* refers not to God, but to the work of God so that God created His own work and man chiefly for working, as though for the end that the creature not be idle. Others say *which God created and made* refers to God because God pleased Himself in His work or because creation and refreshment are the two works of God; the works were placed there to distinguish the work of creation from the work of refreshment. [208] Thus *which God created and made* means what He created as He was making, not as He was resting. I am very certain that the clause *which God created and made* refer to the Word, in Which God disposed all things, in Which all things *were* and in Which *they were created*. *Made* refers to the work done external to the Word in the six days of creation.

VERSES 4-5

These are the generations of the heaven and the earth, when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the heaven and the earth: And every plant of the field before it sprung up in the earth, and every herb of the ground before it grew.

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol explains this passage as follows:

These, i.e. what was written before in Genesis, are the generations of the heaven and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made etc. When the Lord God made etc. The verse teaches you that all things were created in the beginning. Another explanation of *at their creation* is that the Hebrew *behibaram* means *beheyod baram*: He created them in the letters he and yod, as if in *Yah* (an abbreviation for Yahweh): *beYah hu cor*: *God formed two worlds* and in these two letters of the name of God, He formed the two worlds. The verse teaches you that the world was created in the letters he yod, as it were, and makes clear that the Lord went down below, as in Genesis 18:21, to see the corruption, just as the Hebrew letter he [h] is closed on all sides and open below in order to go down the path in that place.

Rabbi Solomon also explains the word *terem* (translated above as “not yet”), saying that “it has one meaning: *ad lo*, “before” and “not”: *qadam* (“before”) because it is not customary to use *hatterim* for *haqadim* (“the front”).” He assigns another meaning to the word:

Adin lo, “not up to this point,” as in Exodus 9:30, *ki terem tireun*, literary, *before that you feared*, i.e. *adin lo tieun*, *Up to this point you will not fear*. This will be explained as follows: Up to that point, He was not on earth until the creation of the world was completed on the sixth day, before man was created, and every herb of the field did not yet sprout forth. What was written on the third day, *Let the earth bring forth*, the herbs ceased activity for opening up the sixth day.

Ibn Ezra explains these verses as follows:

These are the generations, has this sense: [209] these are the things that were brought forth, *when they were created*, since the firmament existed and the earth was visible. The phrase *beyom asoth*, literally, *on the day he made*, has been adjusted, and the evidence is the verse from Genesis 18:7, *Waymaher laasoth otho, And he hastened to make [prepare] it*. Thus, *he created it*, and afterwards *he formed it* and then *he made it*. And every *siha* is *ec*, a *tree*, and among flora they are so identified. In my opinion, these are fruit-bearing trees. Behold! *Siha* means a *shrub* or an offshoot. And *niv* means *foliage*⁸, or “straw”; *seif* means *branch* or young shoot. *Bar* means *flax*, and *amir* means the top branch, and *seif* is the *common branch*.

I explain the passage in this manner. *These are the generations of the heaven and the earth*. In the generation of the heaven and the earth, this verse comprehends whatever was said and written above as a kind of epilogue and summary, so that without a doubt, after removing from consideration the outermost parts of the universe (the highest and lowest), the intermediate parts and only all the things that are contained in the scope of heaven and earth ought to be understood. In these verses, however, generation must be understood as creation, again right after we find the words *When they were created*—produced *ex nihilo* by the infinite power of the Artisan *In the day He created*, or as it reads in the original, *In the day the Lord God made the heaven and the earth*. It is very frequent in Sacred Scripture that a singular word is taken in place of a plural, which I think occurred here, such that *in the day* was written for *in the days*. One could perhaps argue differently that, in primordial creatures that received their being on the first day, by a kind of power, whatever was formed in the course of the following days was produced and created together at the same time and was contained in these primordial creatures. Accordingly, for that reason Scripture says *in the day*, and not *days*, *that the Lord God made*.

In this verse, we encounter the very first appearance of the sacred and

⁸ Translator’s Note: *Niv* means “fruit” according to the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew lexicon.

unspeakable name YHWH (Yahweh), which in Greek is called the *Tetragrammaton*, but in Hebrew the *shem mephorash*. Indeed, the reason [210] that some Jews offer to explain why the name appears in this verse and not before is that the perfect name of God appears in the place where the perfect work is described. This is the highest, greatest, and, above all, proper name of God, which was never given to any creature. Indeed, it wonderfully expresses by a certain arcane and most secret mystery the divine essence and whatever is fitting within the divine nature, about which, with God furnishing life and grace at the same time, I will say something in the middle of my commentary on Exodus.

Heaven and earth.

The Hebrew text here puts *earth* before *heaven*, lest from the fact that earlier it placed heaven before the earth we should think that it was built first and the earth later. They were created indeed at one and the same time by the sole and most powerful Word of God, although we cannot make clear in words that they were created at the same time, but we express their creation as one after the other. Nevertheless, since they were made at the same time, since earlier in these verses the text placed the word heaven before the word earth, now it places, in word but not in fact, the earth, which created at the same time, before the heaven.

And every plant of the field before it was... and every herb of the ground before it grew.

In Hebrew, *plant* is *siah*, which the Aramaic paraphrase translated as *ilanei* or *tree*. Rabbi Ibn Ezra explains the word as *eç peri*, fruit-bearing tree. Nonetheless, the word *plant* is not wrongly identified as a tree, for not infrequently it signifies *vegetation*. But what is it *before it was*? How did God produce those things *before they were*? A two-fold understanding can be assigned to this manner of speaking. The first explanation is that, although they did not exist, God already made them entirely, and so He made them *before they were*, i.e. when they did not exist. The second understanding is that God made every plant and herb by His omnipotence *before they existed*, i.e. outside the natural causes that were

suitable for every plant and herb to come into existence, and they were brought forth into being before their natural causes from which they naturally had to be produced. For these plants sprout in the common course of nature from the watery moisture that extends over the earth through rain along with the assistance and order of able men's agriculture, diligence, and skill. But at that time when these things were brought forth, there had been no rain nor [211] man to cultivate the earth. This understanding seems to be the better sense of the Scripture, for the next verse excludes the effects of man and rain:

VERSE 6

For the Lord God had not rained upon the earth and there was not a man to till the earth. But a spring rose out of the earth, watering all the surface of the earth.

Our version has *spring*, which was taken from the Septuagint, which has: *Pege de anebainen ek tes ges: A spring, however, rose from the earth.*

The Hebrew reading is *Weed*, which is *mist* or *clouds*.

The Aramaic translation also translated the text as *anana*, i.e. *clouds*.

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol explains here why *The Lord God had not rained*: "Because there was no man to till the earth, He then considered the goodness of the bodies. When man came, he knew that these things were necessary for the world, and he prayed over them, and the rains came down and trees and vegetation sprouted forth. *H Elohim: The Lord God: H, i.e. YHWH* is His name; *Elohim* is the name of his power and judgment over all things. Thus is this explanation in every occurrence of the words, in accordance with His simplicity: *Lord: YHWH, He Who is God: Elohim.*" *And a mist arose.* Rabbi Solomon says, "a mist rose up because of the creation of man. The deep rose up and watered the clouds to infuse the dust, and man is created, like a baker who adds water and afterward mixes the remains. In this verse, too, He watered the land and afterward formed man." Rabbi Ibn Ezra says, "a mist rose up like smoke

from the earth, and by the power of the lights watered the land and it blossomed. The Gaon even says that the explanation of the verse is this: And a mist did not rise up from the earth.”

However, I explain this verse as follows: Since Moses established that the first production of fruits and all vegetation was made not from natural causes but with the aid and agency of divine power, he rejects the placement of presences of this sort, showing that natural causes of shrubs and fruits were then lacking when these things [212] were made by God, the first author. The watery moisture important and necessary to the earth, the nourishment and origin of creatures produced by generation, did not exist when these things were made. He makes it clear by asserting that up to that point *The Lord God had not rained upon the earth*, and man did not exist to till the earth. Indeed, the things that spring from the earth are much assisted by the industry and effort of farmers, and since man did not exist, they certainly could not receive such assistance.

The words that follow, *But a spring rose out of the earth*, are completely acceptable if they are explained in a negative sense. Otherwise, the phrase runs counter to the account put forward by Moses. For if *a spring rose out of the earth, watering all the surface of the earth*, the earth certainly possessed a watery moisture, whereby it could produce and nourish plants, and therefore the prime natural cause and source of plants would be not lacking. Alternatively, if, in accordance with the Hebrew original, we read here that it was a *mist*, which rose up and watered *all the surface of the earth*, how could it be that thus far *the Lord God had not rained upon the earth*? However, if it is explained negatively, every objection without a doubt ceases and it is absolutely correct that obviously the first production of plants arose from God as their author, since their natural causes were not deep inside. For God had not rained, and so the earth had not been infused with watery moisture, nor was the earth able to be helped to germinate by the effort of farmers, since there was no man to till the earth. Lastly, a mist in the form of a cloud did not rise up from the land such that, condensed into water, it could become rain and water the dry land, and a spring did not rise up to water the earth.

On the other hand, lest I stray too far from the common explanation of everyone, and in order that I not go against the account of the Holy Prophet, I explain the passage affirmatively, but with respect to the future.

The Hebrew original has *And a mist will rise up⁹ and will water all the surface of the earth*. As a result, it does not refer to the production of the plants and fruits that took place on the third day, but to the production that will afterwards take place by the power of Nature. The sense of Moses therefore is that the first production of shrubs and plants was achieved by divine power, but subsequent production will take place through the power of Nature. A mist will ascend [213] and, condensed into water in the clouds of heaven, rain will be made, and it will water the entire surface of the earth. Infusing the earth with watery moisture, the rain will make it fruitful.

VERSE 7

Then the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.

In Hebrew: *Then the Lord God fashioned the man dust from the earth and he breathed into his face or nostrils breath of life, and the man became into a living being.*

The Aramaic paraphrase translates: *The Lord God created man dust from the earth, and man was made in the breath of speaking*, in order that the text should show that man became a living being, with a rational and intellectual life; for by his endowments alone with respect to his intellect, he is capable of speaking.

Regarding the verb *wayyifer* (“and he formed”), Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol says “it signifies two formations: the formation of this world and the formation of the resurrection of the dead. However, in the formation of cattle, which do not rise to judgment, two yods are not written in narrating their formation. *Dust of the ground*: He says:

⁹ Translator’s Note: The Hebrew verb *yā’leh* is parsed as Qal or Hiphil future (called the “imperfect” in Hebrew grammar). Owing to Hebrew syntax (the waw-consecutive), here it is translated as a past, however.

He gathered dust from the whole earth, from the four winds, because every place where man dies is a burial place. Another explanation is that He took the dust of man from the passage in Exodus, which spoke of it: *You will make an altar of earth for me*; and He joined to it a covering, and it was able to stand. *And he breathed into his face*: He made man from lower and higher things: the body from lower things and the soul from higher things. Accordingly, on the first day the heavens and the earth were created; on the second, He created the firmament for the higher things; on the third, the dry land appeared for the lower things; on the fourth, He created the lights for the higher things; on the fifth, the waters came forth for the lower things; on the sixth He joined together the creations in the higher and lower things. There is no envy in the works of creation about many things being above other things since they were all created at once on the first day. *A living being*: both cattle and wild beasts are called a *living being*. However, the life of man, which exists in all men, joins together in him knowledge and reason.

[214] Ibn Ezra says, “The sense of the words *He breathed into his nostrils* is that man lives by them since they remove hot air from the heat of the heart and bring in other air. The sense of *A living being* is that man walked immediately, as the wild beasts and not as infants.” The learned rabbi also says in his remarks on Genesis 15 the location of the ground from which man was created is near the garden of Eden because there are those who say the ground was the land of Israel. Note that they forgot the verse from Genesis 11: *And it came to pass when they moved from the east*. Some Jews distinguish between *neshamah*, *ruach*, and *nephesh*. The first means a “breath,” is a sensible and rational soul, and is located in the *mu'ch*, i.e. in the brain. The second is a spirit having its seat in the hearth, which is the source of life, and it includes sense *hakkaam*, i.e. the irascible power. The third is the soul or the *mithawwah*, i.e. the concupiscible power, having its place in the *kabed*, i.e. in the liver.

However, I explain the verse in this way. *God formed man from the mud of the earth or dust from the ground*, in accordance with what is written in Genesis 3: *For dust you are and unto dust you shall return*. I understand in this verse that God formed or, as I have more significantly

said, fashioned the body of man. In the manner of a potter, God formed the human body from mud, a unique and noble creation that was fashioned by the divine hand. To be sure, of no other creature was it described that God assisted in its formation. In those other instances, Scripture said, *Let the earth bring forth, let the waters abound, let there be a firmament, let there be light, let there be lights.* However, Holy Writ testifies that the body of man was fashioned and molded by the hand of God. It says that *God formed man.* Whence Blessed Job rightly exclaimed, *Your hands have formed me and fashioned me.* Holy David also affirmed likewise in the Psalms: *Your hands have made me and fashioned me.*

I have no doubt whatsoever that God wholly by Himself formed the body of man with absolutely no intervening cause. But he used the [215] ministry of angels. For what is there to prohibit the angels from performing by means of their ministry some things toward which their power and art applies? Indeed, on the Last Day according to Matthew, God will use the service of the angels to re-form the bodies of men; they will gather ashes and form bodies. I have absolutely no doubt that the angels themselves very much desired to assist the creation of man so that they might follow us with a greater love and more vigilantly watch over us, as if the work were in part their own.

And He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, or the breath of lives according to the original Hebrew.

God first fashioned a lifeless body, and as soon as it was formed, he created and infused man's soul into the body. For the soul is not produced in any way whatsoever from the potency of matter and indeed cannot be produced. Rather it is made by God immediately by creation and infused at once as the substantial form of man and the natural act of the body. While not molding the body itself, it is extended to the mass of the body, for it cannot be measured by the quantity of its mass, since it is a spirit. It remains completely undivided and without parts, completely in the whole and complete in every part of the whole.

Why does the original Hebrew say the *breath of lives*? Because man certainly lives by the life of plants in which his limbs and bodily parts are invigorated; he lives by the life of the sense, in which he perceives each

thing whether it is received outwardly or inwardly. He lives by a life characterized by motion and progression whereby he seeks the things necessary for life; lastly, he lives by a rational life and by art whereby he is distinguished from brute animals and excels all things. But the one breath breathed into man by God brings about all these lives, for there are not four souls in man performing these effects, but these are the faculties and powers of one soul only. That which in plants is their soul is in man a power of his soul. That which in brute animals is similarly their soul is in man a power and faculty of his soul. Therefore, the souls of plants and animals—the vegetative, sensitive, and moving according to place—are contained in man’s soul in its faculty and power just as a figure with three angles is in a figure with four angles. That is to say, the soul of man has the faculty and power of producing and causing [216] all these effects in man, which it comprises more nobly and excellently, the vegetative of plants, the sensitive and locomotive of animals, existing in one soul as faculties of all these souls, and accordingly Scripture says *He breathed the breath of lives*.

The original Hebrew says that God breathed this spirit *into his face*, because all senses are perceived to flourish in the face and from there reason and the intellect are noted, and, in the face, internal emotions are manifested. To be sure, since man’s life is one, excellent, and foremost, whereby he lives by reason and art and which is proper to man, Scripture accordingly adds the words, *Man became a living being* or “into a soul of life” rich in art and reason, that is to say, in knowledge. Previously, Scripture said “of lives” but now it uses the phrase “of life” in order to specify only the life that comes from the understanding of things. For that reason, the Aramaic paraphrase translates the phrase as *In the breath of speaking* or “in the speaking breath,” for discourse and speech properly pertains to a rational and intellectual creature. Perhaps *Man became a living being* may mean he became a *living animal*, since after breath was put into a lifeless body that had already been formed, man became a living animal: Neither the body nor the soul is an animal but from the soul and body together (the former informing and the latter capable of being informed, so to speak), this rational animal man exists. *Man*, therefore, *became* as soon as his soul was infused into his body *a living being*, that is, *a living animal*. In Sacred Scripture is very usual for the word *soul* to be

taken for the entire body-soul composite.

(This translation omits the lower third of p. 216 through three quarters of p. 226. The Capuchin editors here inserted a lengthy fragment found in Chapter 5, which discussed in detail the physiology and anatomy of the human body. The editors note that this fragment clearly seems to be an independent composition [p. xv, n. 33: *particulam hanc separatim confectam fuisse manifeste apparet*].)

VERSE 8

[226] *The Lord God planted a paradise of pleasure from the beginning, wherein he placed man, whom he had formed.*

In Hebrew the verse is: *The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, from the east, and he put there the man whom he had fashioned.*

The Aramaic translation: *And he planted aforetime or from old.*

The Septuagint translated the verse as, *Kai ephyteusen ho theos paradeison [227] en Edem kata anatolas: And God had planted a paradise eastward in Eden.*

A great number of different translations have their origin in this verse because two words of the Hebrew text are ambiguous: *Eden* and *qedem*. Very often in Sacred Scripture, *Eden* means delight and pleasure, but sometimes it is the name of a certain place or region. Not infrequently, *qedem* designates priority in time in Scripture, and most frequently stands for *east*. The Latin version uses the former definition of each word, although later on in Genesis it uses the latter meaning of each, as in 4:16 when it says of Cain that *He dwelt at the east side of Eden*. The Jews read these words according to their latter meanings, as Rabbi Ibn Ezra and Rabbi Solomon witness, asserting that God planted the garden in a place called Eden, which is on the eastern part of this place, which the preposition *be* (“in”) indicates.

The literal Hebrew text therefore reads: *The Lord God planted a*

garden in Eden, from the east or “from the eastern area.” Accordingly, Sacred Scripture teaches that the place where God planted the garden (or “paradise” from a Persian word, or rather from the Hebrew word *pardas*, *i.e. paradise*), that is to say, the region Eden, which is so called from the pleasantness and abundance of delights. Then the text clearly specifies the area of the region where it was located, *viz. on the eastern side*.

We may remark that what the verse says about this paradise must not be understood spiritually so much that the sense of history disappears, as St. Augustine rightly warns with these words: “Paradise can be understood in a spiritual sense provided that we believe in the actual truth of the events narrated in the account.” For if paradise is not sensible and corporeal, the spring does not exist. If there is no spring, there is no river. If there is no river, then it was not divided into four [228] branches. There is no Phison, no Gihon, no Tigris, no Euphrates. There were neither fig trees nor leaves that they *sewed together* to make *for themselves coverings*. Eve did not eat from the tree, and living animals did not exist there, which were brought to Adam, and he did not name them. All truth, then, is turned into a fable.

God therefore *planted* a sensible and corporeal *paradise*, a place abundantly full of all delights, filled with all the most pleasant herbs and flowers, where most pleasant trees are found filled with every kind of abundance of fruits that are beautiful to look at and very sweet to taste. There *he placed the man whom he had fashioned* to live a happy and almost blessed life. Just as He had fashioned the man perfect, so He would give a very suitable place for the foremost perfection of the man, and a divine region worthy of the manner of living of man who *was made in the image of God*.

VERSE 9

The Lord God made to grow out of the ground all kinds of trees pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

In Hebrew: *And the Lord God made to grow from the ground every tree desirable to the sight and good for eating and the tree of lives in the middle*

of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The Aramaic translation also uses the word *desirable*. The Hebrew is *kal-eç nechmad*, and the Aramaic has *kal-illan dimraggag*, i.e. *every desirable tree*.

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol says that these words were written because of the paradise. Rabbi Ibn Ezra says (explaining *yaçmach* by *hiçmich*, *he made to grow*, in the hiphil [the active causative conjugation]) that He made every tree to grow in the garden.

In this verse, Moses begins to describe paradise, first making clear how it was planted with every kind of tree, which the Lord brought forth from the ground, pleasant and delectable to the taste and desirable to the sight, so that man might eat them. Before the Fall, it was necessary for the man to eat to preserve his life and not die. The man was made mortal in nature, since he was [229] composed of corruptible elements that by turn act on each other and are acted upon by each other. Everything like this must be corrupted since no violent thing is forever. Therefore, the man, inasmuch as he was made up of elements having in themselves contrariety,¹⁰ was corruptible and mortal in nature. Nevertheless, by the gift of grace he was made immortal, i.e. so that he could not die. For God had provided him with remedies against the power of death so that while he remained in that state in which God had created and placed him, he was not subject to the necessity of dying.

However, at that time the man was even actually able to subject himself to the power of death in three ways: (1) by a contrariety of the elements and an excess of the humors, from which illnesses and death now have the source, and (2) by a lack of sustenance and nourishment, and a loss of his original moisture and a failure of strength, and (3) by a wound from something outside the man. He could be consumed by fire, drowned by water, or crushed by a heavy mass falling upon him, or affected by the injuries of air. Many other things surrounding the man could certainly bring about his death and passing away, things he could not guard against

¹⁰ Translator's Note: This is a scholastic term meaning the state of opposition that lies between extremes in the same class or kind. A contrariety opposes two affirmations or two negations and admits of intermediate degrees. It is not the same as a contradictory.

or which he freely might bring on himself. Against all these threats, the Most Benignant God fortified the man himself so that, had he wished, he could never be taken away from life by death's destructive power.

Indeed, against the first means of death, He had endowed him with original justice, which had preserved forever the powers of the elements in the most equable proportion and the humors in the very balanced proper mixture in which God had fashioned man. By this, the first cause of death was removed. Against the second, He provided man with *every tree lovely to the sight and pleasant to eat*, so that man might preserve his the sense life that requires food. God placed *the tree of life in the midst of paradise*, which would eternally preserve in man the power of moisture, lest at any time man might grow old and end his life because of a loss of original moisture by the action of lost natural heat, the cause of old age and the failure of life. The nourishment on which he fed could not equally restore the lost power of moisture inasmuch as flesh generated by nourishment is always more mixed with foreign matter and weaker in strength. We easily see that condition in old age, in which the fleshly parts are always more adulterated and weaker. That would certainly not be the case if food could restore equally the strength lost by heat, since as much power would be added to moist food as natural heat had consumed. From the tree's power of preservation, it was called the *tree of life* [230], because by its nourishment it would preserve the sense life of man forever and keep him from old age. Wherefore, Augustine rightly says, "Food was available to the man in order not to go hungry; drink, in order not to go thirsty; the tree of life, not to become decrepit from old age." Lastly, against the third cause of death, He had given the man sharp-sighted prudence through which he could beware of the things harmful to himself. From those things that his prudence could not guard against, there was his guardian angel and divine Providence to assist him and forewarn him of the damaging things from without, and they would preserve and protect him from all violence. In order that the air not affect the man with any harm, He placed him in paradise where the air was completely temperate and where his dwelling place was very pleasant.

Therefore, in this paradise *God made to grow every tree beautiful to the sight*, for the solace and pleasure of the man, *and pleasant to eat*, for a delectable taste lest he at any time feel hunger; *the tree of life also*, in order

that old age not weigh him down and in the end finish him. As Bede and Walafrid Strabo witness, “It is thus called the tree of life because it divinely received this power that whoever should eat of its fruit, his body would be made strong with long-lasting health and eternal soundness. Also, he would not slip by illness or by senility into a diminished condition or into death.”

The tree also of the knowledge of good and evil, in order that the man might practice virtue and have merit and know that God is his master. It was called the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, not by its nature, but from the occurrence of what happened afterwards. For man knew good and evil even before he receive it from the tree: he knew good by prudence¹¹ and personal experience, but evil by prudence alone and not through experience. When he tasted the forbidden tree, he knew evil by experience. By eating it, he also learned the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience, which by experience [231] he had not known beforehand. Therefore, that tree is said to be *of the knowledge of good and evil* not because there was in it any power of causing this kind of knowledge, unless perhaps it could come happen dispositively, since the soul gets its understanding and knowledge of things through the organs of the body. This, however, was not the case, unless by accident. It is so called because those who tasted it would know by experience what is good or evil: the good was what they lost was good, and the evil was what they incurred.

VERSE 10

And a river went out of the place of pleasure to water paradise, which from thence is divided into four heads.

In Hebrew: *And a river goes out from Eden to water the garden, and from there it is divided and becomes into four heads.*

The Aramaic version has: *And became into four origins of rivers.*

¹¹ Translator’s Note: This, of course, is ‘Scholastic’ prudence, “the right reason of actions to be done,” whose eight parts (see St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part II-II, Q 48) are *memory, reason, intellect, docility, skill, providence, circumspection, and caution.*

Rabbi Ibn Ezra notes here that before man was created, there was a river watering the garden from every side.

The pleasantness of paradise is described with respect to the flowing of the waters because from that place in which God had planted paradise (called *Eden*) a very large river has its source and it waters and makes fruitful paradise. From there, flowing out of paradise, it is diverted into four principal rivers, which are the original rivers, according to the Aramaic Targum.

VERSES 11-12

The name of the first is Phison, which encircles all the land of Hevila, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx are there.

Ibn Ezra states here that the Gaon says that the *Phison* is a river of Egypt. Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol says that “it is the Nile, the river of Egypt, and accordingly they waters collect, swell, and water or flood the land. It is called the *Phison* as though it came from the verb *pasan*, *they distended*.” That is his explanation but in the opinion of our scholars, some think this river is the Nile while others believe it to be the Ganges. Also [232] they say that the land of Hevila is a certain region of India (so called from Hevila, the son of Jectan), which, they say, was very full of gold, and on that account Scripture says *Gold is there...and it is good*. Also, one finds there bdellium, from the Hebrew *bedolach*, which the Septuagint translates as *anthrax*, i.e. *carbuncle* (although elsewhere they translated the word as *crystal*, which is the meaning the Jews now accept.) The Gaon even has said (as Ibn Ezra reports) that *bedolach* are small, round gemstones, which come out of water and are delicate. Manna is compared to them. In Numbers 11:7 it says that the color of manna was the color of *bedolach*. Manna, however, is like a pearl, so I think that this gemstone is a pearl.

Also one finds there the *onyx stone*, *hashshoham*, which the Septuagint translates as *kai ho lithos ho prasinus*, i.e. the emerald. However, the Gaon, according to Ibn Ezra, says *shoham* is a precious stone, white and clear.

For that reason, he thought the stone was onyx. The Aramaic paraphrase also reads *avney urela*, i.e. onyx. Nonetheless, Ibn Ezra says he does not know the meaning. Wherefore, the Jews do not know what kind of gemstones these are.

In this verse, one must note that there were two men named Hevila, of which the one gave his name to Gaetulia (in North Africa), the other to a region that is near Ophir, from which the gold was transported. The former was a grandson of Ham, the latter came from the line of Sem and was the son of Eber¹² When Scripture says that this river encircles the land of Hevila, I think that the place name should be understood to derive from the second man.

VERSES 13-14

The name of the second river is Gihon, which encircles the land of Chus. The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

[233] There is no small debate about the *Gihon*. For Ibn Ezra says this river is known to be near the land of Israel, since it is thus written, *And bring him to Gihon*. He also says that the river flowed from the east side to the south. The place that he cites is where David ordered his servants to bring Solomon for his anointing. Nevertheless, the Aramaic translation of that verse in 3 Kings 1:33 translates *Gihon* as *Shiloah*, i.e. Siloah, as Nicolas of Lyra explains. Rabbi Joseph Kimchi thinks that the river of Egypt, i.e. the Nile, is so called because it waters the land as it goes out. Almost all Christian scholars think that it is the Nile River. The river is said to water Ethiopia and from there descends to Egypt. Others, however, think that it is another river, near the Tigris and the Euphrates. They say that Chus did not always mean that Ethiopia where the sources of the Nile are supposed to be, but it certainly means Arabia, and that entire region that faces the ocean. For sometimes the Ethiopians are called Madianites, who, nevertheless, were located near Palestine. Even

¹² Translator's Note: Eber had two sons, Phaleg and Jectan. Hevila was the son of Jectan (Gn. 10:29). Perhaps just a memory slip of the author.

Sepphora, the wife of Moses, who nevertheless was from the land of Madian, was called an Ethiopian. Wherefore, even if the Gihon is said to pass through Ethiopia, they are not inclined to believe it comes from the Nile.

These scholars say that the Phison is not the Ganges, but rather another river in Mesopotamia, believing that the land of Hevila, which in this verse the river is said to flow over and pass through, is the region that is called by historians Cabalia or Cabana, which is near Mesopotamia. They also say [234] that there is a certain city of Mesopotamia, which is called Phison, which got its name from the river. I, however, can affirm nothing certain about this.

I have no doubt whatsoever about the Tigris and the Euphrates. Indeed, the Tigris proceeds to the eastern side of Syria, while the Euphrates is the end of the promised land on the eastern side. The *Tigris* is called *Chiddeqel* in Hebrew, because, says Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol, “its waters are simple and light.” The Euphrates is called *Pherath*¹³ “because its waters swell and are multiplied and make man flourish.”

VERSE 15

And the Lord God took man, and put him into the paradise of pleasure, to dress it, and to keep it.

In Hebrew: *The Lord God took the man, and he put him in the garden of Eden to till it and to keep it, viz. the garden.*

Gan (garden) in Hebrew is masculine or feminine, even in the plural, as Ibn Ezra notes. However, in this verse we find feminine verbal suffixes,

¹³ Translator’s Note: The Capuchin editors printed the Hebrew word *Merath*, an obvious printer’s error that I corrected to *Pherath*, the form found in the Hebrew Bible. The etymology (by the way, incorrect by modern standards) adduced by Rabbi Solomon clearly derives the word form the verb *pharach*, to spread, flourish, blossom, hence “*Pb*” not “*M*.” Had *Merath* been a genuine variant in the text, the editors would have supplied a footnote to account for the difference between the St. Lawrence’s reading and that of the Massoretic Text.

whence the pronoun must refer to paradise not to the man.¹⁴

Holy Scripture intimates that the man was formed outside of paradise and then the Lord took him from the place where he was formed and put him in that very delightful paradise to dwell and live peacefully. *To dress it*, i.e. to till the garden, because at that time he worked with kind of placid delight in the exercise of his strength, without sweat or weariness, but rather with eagerness of spirit and every ease. Since he was intended to till the earth, I would not doubt that from the beginning Adam was endowed with knowledge of the stars so that he would already have fully known the earth's potency and the seasonal changes in order to obtain produce in their seasons. *And to keep it*, viz. paradise, says Ibn Ezra, from all the wild animals, in order that they might not gather together and make it foul. Some, however, [235] say that in this verse God forewarned the man that he should keep himself from the twisted serpent Satan lest he should merit being cast out of paradise for the sin of the fall on account of its tricks and deceit.

VERSES 16-17

And the Lord God commanded the man thus, "From every tree of the garden you may eat; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you must not eat; for the day you eat of it, you must die."

The Hebrew text: *And the Lord God commanded the man by saying: From every tree of the garden you will eat; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat from it; for in the day on which you will have eaten from it, you will die in the dying.*

The Aramaic translation: *But of the tree of which those eating its fruits are wise between good and evil, you shall not eat of it.*

¹⁴ Translator's Note: St. Lawrence's grammatical explanation is more meaningful to the Latin reader than to the English reader. Our use of "it" to refer to inanimate objects makes it clear that the reference is to the garden, not to the human. In the Latin, however, *hortus* (garden) or *paradisus* are both masculine like *homo* (man). The same masculine singular objective pronoun *eum* can refer to all three.

As Ibn Ezra avers, in the third chapter of Genesis: “These words, *You must die*, are explained differently by many commentators. Some say they mean “you will be guilty of death.” Others say that death is the punishment, as it says in 2 Samuel 12:5, *The man that has done this is the child of death*. Others say that from that time you will be sick and that you will die.” He also says, “*Yeçaw* (“he commanded”) is an idiom with a negative commandment,” and explains his observation in the following manner:

Although I shall leave for you all the fruits of the trees of the garden, you shall not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. But afterward He said: *Of the tree of the knowledge you will not eat*. Why was it necessary to add the phrase *of it*? Surely, Moses added to his statement what appears to be a redundancy, just as he did in Exodus 2:6, *And she opened and saw him, the child*. Perhaps the sense is, “yea, even a little of it.” Note also that Adam was full of knowledge, for God did not command a man who does not have knowledge. Man did not know only with respect to one thing: the knowledge of good and of evil! Do you or do you not see that he called the names of all the cattle and the birds according to their own kind? Lo, he was vastly wise.

We read in Genesis 1:28 that the man was given by God dominion over the fishes of the sea and the birds of the air, all the wild animals, and the whole earth. At this point, in order that the man might know that he is subject to divine authority and that he also everlastingly has as his sovereign the Being whom he had as his maker, the man receives this command from God: that, although he was given all the trees of paradise for the maintenance of life, he should still never eat *of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. One must not think that this tree was forbidden in any way to the man and that by nature it was evil and harmful. Nonetheless, God prohibited it, both to show by the highest law that he had mastery over man and for the man to observe continually with outstanding merit his holy obedience since he ought not to avoid such a tree unless for the purpose of holy virtue. Even though by nature it was a good thing and something from which he should not withdraw his hand except for the order and command of the sovereign God.

However, because the guilty state of punishment immediately follows

upon the sin of transgression, Moses immediately adds the clause: *for in whatever hour you shall have eaten of it, you will surely die or you will die in the dying*, that is to say, you will be mortal. For as he first ate the forbidden tree, he died by the death of his guilt. In its own time, the death of the body also followed that spiritual death. On that day, he began to be mortal and subject to corruption and he began to head toward death and the last end of life.

One must note further in this verse that the command was not spoken to the woman who was formed afterwards, but only to the man, in whom humans all are comprehended, who are obligated by that same commandment as if they were living. Hence, the woman sinned by eating the forbidden tree because through Adam she had been commanded by God not to eat of it. Indeed, the man had been set as the head of the woman, after the woman had been formed from him.

Above all, one must observe here that the first man was created endowed with a free will to the extent that he could be worthy or be unworthy. Wherefore it is truly said in Sirach:

When God, in the beginning, created man, he made him subject to his own free choice. If you choose, you can keep the commandments: it is loyalty to do his will. There are set before you fire and water; to whichever you choose, stretch forth your hand. Before man are life and death, whichever he chooses shall be given to him. Immense is the wisdom of the Lord; he is mighty in power and all seeing.

VERSE 18

[237] *And the Lord God said: It is not good for man to be alone; Let us make him a help like unto himself.*”

The Hebrew text: *It is not good that Adam is alone; I will make for him a help before him [= in front of him].*¹⁵

¹⁵ Translator’s Note: Most translations render the Hebrew *k’negdo* to mean something like “as his counterpart”, “to suit him,” or “suitable partner.” St. Lawrence, of course, knows this (it is the way the Vulgate rendered the word, too). St. Lawrence by his *coram eo* (*before him, in the presence of him*) demonstrates the accuracy of his knowledge of

The Septuagint still translates *let us make* as does the Latin version, for it has: *Poesomen boethon kat'auton*: i.e. *Let us make a helper suitable for him*. Perhaps the Greek translators took *let us make* from the verse that appeared above (Genesis 1:26).

The Aramaic translation, on the other hand, translates the Hebrew exactly: *I will make a help or a support before him*.

Ibn Ezra explains: "It is not good for the man himself, in accordance with the verse from Ecclesiastes, *Two are better than one*.

I, however, think that the verse refers to marriage since neither a man nor a woman *per se* is sufficient for the procreation of offspring and the begetting of children. The union of both is required. Therefore, since Adam alone was not sufficient for procreating children for the glory of God, He says *It is not good for the man to be alone*. For the propagation and multiplication of human nature was established, which was certainly a great good. In order for men to increase and multiply and fill and subdue the earth, *I will make for him a help* for propagating, and to sustain and nourish the offspring. He rightly says *help*, since the principal agent is not the woman, but it is the man and the chief companion of his union. Therefore, God proposed that a *help like* the man had to be made, i.e., a being of the same nature and form; *like*, not the same thing. For it is necessary that every likeness contain an unlikeness, otherwise it is not likeness but identity. Therefore, the woman is said to be a *help like* the man, for even if she is of the same nature and form, nevertheless there is a difference in her sex. Rather than the word *like*, the Hebrew original reads *what is before him or from his section*, which is something unique in human nature and is not found in beasts.

Hebrew. As Rabbi H.H. Hertz explained in his commentary on *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* (1929), the Hebrew "may mean either 'at his side,' i.e. fit to associate with; or 'as over against him,' i.e. corresponding to him."

VERSE 19

When the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and the birds of the air, he brought them to the man to see what he would call them.

The Hebrew Text: *And the Lord God formed from the ground every beast of the field and every bird of the air and he brought or made them come to Adam, etc.*

[238] The Aramaic version: *And the Lord God created etc.* This formation is that which was above set forth in Genesis 1:24-25, where it is said: *And God made all the beasts of the earth etc.*

Ibn Ezra, having explained that the man was full of knowledge from the fact that he gave names to the animals, says about the bringing and naming of the animals that perhaps it was so. "God did not actually bring his creatures to the man *to see what he would call them*, because man knew from his prior knowledge that it is a beast or a brute. God even showed him the tree of knowledge because, lo, his wife knew what was in the midst of paradise." But I think the animals were actually brought to him physically, not just imaginatively.

Here one must consider that both the beasts of the land and the birds of the air are said to be formed by the Lord from terrestrial matter, although above in Genesis 1:20 God may be seen to have commanded the waters to *bring forth the creeping creature and the fowl... flying under the firmament of heaven*. The reason, says Ibn Ezra, is that the fowl were formed from both elements, viz. water and earth.

And he led them to Adam.

One must not think that the animals were led by God as though He were a man using hands and ropes. Also, they were not led by the ministry of the angels, as some say. He goaded the animals to go to the man, as they should acknowledge their master and be acknowledged by him, and their master should give a name to each species, according to the characteristics

of each one. For that reason, the verse says *to see what he would call them*. It can refer both to God and to Adam himself. If it refers to God, the verse has this sense: *In order that God might see what he* (namely, Adam) *would call them*. It is not as though God were ignorant. Rather, it is a customary manner of speaking in the Scriptures. It means that He caused this to appear so that the man, with God secretly instructing him from within and illuminating his intellect, actually might perceive above all their natures, their diversity of species, and their innermost characteristics from their appearance as they came to him under God's guidance. After having examined and contemplated their natures, he gave them their names, as the nature and characteristics of each one demanded. Thus, *in order that God see*, i.e. that He might make the man himself see and perceive and know what to call them.

VERSES 19-20

[239] *For that which the man called each of them would be its name. The man named all the cattle, all the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.*

The Hebrew text: *And every thing that Adam named to the living creature is its name. And Adam called names to all the cattle and fowl of the air and to every beast of the field.*

Moses wonderfully shows in this verse that Adam, beyond all personal experience, had information of natural things and contemplative knowledge—a fact he clearly shows regarding animals on which, for instance, that knowledge is employed, saying *For that which the man called each of them would be its name*. There he shows that the names were imposed by Adam on things in order to make absolutely clear the natures and characteristics of things. To be sure, by means of natural words, he wonderfully imposes such meanings that the names given to them were expressive and distinctive and had a sense appropriate to the characteristics of the animals. That was achieved not by the nature of the words, but by the will, knowledge, reason, and excellent wisdom of the one imposing the names.

And Adam called names, i.e. their natures, species, and characteristics by appropriately expressive and distinctive words, *to all the cattle*, i.e. all domestic animals, *and fowl of the air and ... beasts of the field*. He leaves out fishes because they were not brought before him, yet he was easily able to understand their natures from other terrestrial creatures. It is most probably believed that this imposition of names on all animals was done by Adam himself in the Hebrew language, and that at that time a very holy and complete language was invented and put to use by Adam and continued in use throughout every [240] generation up to the multiplication languages. Indeed the names that we read in Sacred Scripture up to that time are clearly Hebrew; from that time on, the language remained in the Jewish branch and family, and lasted even unto our times in their descendents who came from Adam according to the flesh through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

But he found no helper like himself.

I have already explained this above. Although Adam in that state was a social animal, in order that he might not lack sweet solace and be deprived of most beloved wedlock, Moses very clearly begins to point out how God provided the man with a *helper like himself*.

VERSES 21-22

The Lord God cast the man into a deep sleep and, while he slept, took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib which the Lord God took from the man, he made into a woman, and brought her to him.
The Hebrew text: *And the Lord God made to fall tardemah*, i.e. *a deep sleep*.

In the Hebrew language, there are three words signifying “sleep”: *tenumah*, *sheynah*, and *tardemah*. The first word is *sheynah belithi chazeqah*, i.e. it is “sleep without strength.” The second word signifies a stronger sleep, while the third indicates the deepest sleep. Ibn Ezra affirms this in his explanation of this verse. The Lord made this fall upon Adam, or over Adam, and he slept.

The Septuagint translates the word as *exstasin*, i.e. a *retreat of the mind* (i.e. trance) and a kind of alienation and privation of the senses.

The Aramaic translation renders it: *And the Lord God introduced or cast a shinetta*, i.e. a *sleep upon Adam: udemuk*, i.e. *he was overcome with sleep*, so that, as it says in Acts, *from one man...the whole human race* might come forth, who was the beginning and origin of all human kind.

[241] Since God wished to make a *help like* the man because he now lacked the comfort of a wife, he took a rib from his side. In order for the man not to feel this removal, the Lord cast upon him a deep sleep. The sleep is rightly said to have been cast upon Adam by God because it was not engendered by the digestion of food or by any other natural cause. But Adam was overcome by sleep according to God's Will so that it is not necessary that the sleep came about as the result of a natural cause. Therefore, when Adam was put to sleep and lulled into slumber by a profound repose, *God took one of his ribs*.

Not a few have had doubts about whether the rib from which the woman was made was an extra one in Adam or a part of bodily structure. For if that rib were superfluous, then the first man God formed with the additional rib was truly monstrous. However, if the rib were not superfluous, then the result is that the first man was rendered deformed and crippled because he was missing a rib that God had removed. Both of these conclusions are unsuitable. The answer to this difficulty, one given by almost every scholar, is that the rib was indeed superfluous for that man in as far as he was a definite individual existing and subsisting by himself. To the extent, however, that the man was the principle from which it was necessary that the entire human race derive its origin and propagate itself, that rib from which the woman was to be produced was by no means superfluous, but necessary. Therefore, the rib was superfluous in the single substance of that man, but nonetheless was not wholly superfluous. Rather it is like a seed, which indeed is superfluous in the constitution of an individual but necessary in the make-up of the species. Indeed, it is a principle like itself for causing the continuation of the species.

At times, this answer has certainly not displeased me. Still, after having maturely considered the matter, it appeared not entirely well founded nor sufficiently consonant with the truth. For truly it is

sufficient, someone will say, in the first man to the extent that [242] he was man so that one may consider it absurd that the rib was superfluous. The consequence of this line of thought is that the first man was monstrous, a fact that must not be said of anything in the first creation of things. And if the rib did not pertain to the man according to the reality of his particular nature, the woman cannot properly be said to have come from the man and from his bones, for the bone in the man was redundant. Also, it cannot quite be said that she was bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh or that God took one of the man's ribs. Precisely why was it necessary for God to fill up flesh for the rib, if it was superfluous? Certainly if God filled up flesh in its place, perhaps the flesh filled up by God had been superfluous and excessive, and, with all that, the man remained monstrous.

The example cited above of the seed is not very apt. For truly seed is natural to a man, taken from his blood and marrow for the purpose of generation. It does not render man monstrous but makes him disposed to reproduction, something very natural in animals. One cannot say this about the rib. However, it seems consistent with truth and reason for us to say that the rib comes from the man's unimpaired and actual nature. Hence, nothing unseemly follows as a consequence of those things that have been pointed out.

But someone will say that he was deformed afterwards, since, for instance, he was missing a rib. Surely, however, there is no reason for such a thought since the Lord filled flesh in for the rib. One must not think that the flesh was not filled in by God with bone, just as no one can affirm that the rib was taken away without flesh, since it is written: *She now is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh*, so that he manifests that not only is the woman bone of his bone, but also flesh from his flesh. Therefore, if from the word "bone," namely the rib that was made into the woman, comes flesh with bone, it is not unsuitable that, conversely, from the word "flesh" bone with flesh is equally understood, above all since Scripture repeatedly calls the whole man by the name *flesh*. Therefore, when Scripture says that God replaced flesh for the rib, [243], one should understand that he did not replace flesh without bone, since flesh alone without bone would be satisfactorily substituted for bone with flesh.

Therefore, during the making of the woman, after Adam was lulled

into a deep sleep, a rib was removed from his side and another substituted, if you will, in its place, the flesh afterward being closed up, *God*, according to the Hebrew, *built* the rib that he had taken *into a woman*. Moses did not use a verb of forming or generating but one of *building*, *And he built it into a woman*, in order that we might understand that the woman was produced not by the process of nature but by the art of God. Therefore, she was not properly the daughter of Adam but a creature of God made immediately by Him.

He who made the woman, however, knows how her body was made from the rib. Nevertheless, it can be said that either He joined other firm matter to her or he created another creature from nothing. Alternatively, from the sole substance of the rib, with nothing added from without, the rib, after being multiplied and increased of itself by the command of God and His all powerful ability, took on larger dimensions, and from it the body of the woman could be shaped by means of that miracle in which later on in Scripture 5,000 men could be fed from five loaves of bread multiplied by the heavenly power of Jesus Christ. I should not doubt that in the formation of the woman, God used the ministry of the angels.

The Lord immediately brought the formed woman to Adam as his companion and wife. Because He formed her from the man's rib and not from his head or foot, God did not give her as a ruler or a servant but as wife and companion. Scripture says that the Lord brought the woman to Adam because it happened under God's intention, Who inspired her mind and urged the woman to come to the man and to approach him from whom she was taken as her husband and inseparable mate and most beloved spouse. Wherefore, God brought the woman to the man as though he were the matchmaker of the man and woman and the groomsman of their union as a pair. The man knew that she had been taken from himself and he fell very much in love and prized her as his most pleasing spouse given to him by God. Whence follow the following verses:

VERSES 23-24

[244] *“She now is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, for from man she has been taken.” For this reason a man leaves his father and mother, and clings to his wife, and the two become one flesh.*

The Hebrew text: *And Adam said: this now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh, and account of this she will be called ishshah, woman or female because she was taken from man or the male.*

Our version translates the verse as *She shall be called Woman, for from man she has been taken*; in Hebrew the word for man is *ish*, and the word for woman is *ishshah*, as woman was brought forth from the man, if you will, so woman’s name was derived from the name of man. This assertion cannot be made in another language because none of the versions has rendered this verse well enough.

The Septuagint rendered the verse in this way: *Aute klethesetai gyne, hoti ek tou andros autes elemphthe: she was called woman because she was taken from the male.* That translation, however, appears not to preserve the same effect.

The Aramaic translation renders this verse as *leda yithegrey iththa arey mivaelah nesiva da: she will be called female because she herself was taken out of man.*¹⁶

Our version, however, drew *woman* from man.

This did not occur as a result of the ignorance of the translators but because different languages cannot exactly represent the Hebrew in this passage. Hence Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol argues that the world was created in the sacred language. Rabbi Ibn Ezra interprets this verse (*this now is bone of my bones*) to mean: “Then he said: in this time I have found my help before me, like me since she is from me.”

I, in fact, interpret the verse differently. *This now is bone*, namely, in

¹⁶ Translator’s Note: I have had to be a little freer in rendering the Greek and Aramaic translations in order to assure that St. Lawrence’s point is clear. Although when he speaks of “our version,” he means the Latin Vulgate, he remarks also apply to the English version, too.

this time only it happens that a help like the man was built from the man alone [245] rather than being born. Afterward propagated spouses will be united from natural seed. At the same time one should note that Adam supernaturally knew that the woman was formed from him. Whereupon he spoke prophetically, for as soon as he said, *She now is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh*—by which we learn not only that the woman was formed from his bone but also from his flesh—*she shall be called Woman, for from man she has been taken*—for it is suitable if the woman was built from the substance and nature of the man that her name be also derived from the name of the man, and the same name is from their same nature. Just as they are different with respect to their sex, so they also have a little difference in their names. Moses adds a revelation: *For this reason a man leaves his father and mother, and clings to his wife*. By these words, God commands and enjoins holy wedlock and the sacrament of marriage. For God is the One Who by the bone of spoke these words, as Christ our Lord said in Matthew 19, *Have you not read that the Creator, from the beginning, made them male and female and said, “For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”?... What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder*.

This must not be understood a dereliction of the duty to love one's parents, for a man must always love and honor his parents. However, the verse must be understood in the light of cohabitation. Wherefore, the Aramaic Targum most accurately translated the verse as *For this reason, a man will leave the bed of his father and mother, and will cleave unto his wife*. For a son, after taking a wife, is not obligated any longer to live with his father, but with his wife, and he must provide the necessities of life for himself and his wife and their common family. Also, if his parents suffer any needs or inconveniences, the man is more obligated to his wife and family than to his parents. If he cannot assist both, he must provide for his wife. Therefore, the duties owed to the wife are thought to be ahead of duties to one's parents, if they cannot be fulfilled and rendered at the same time.

And the two become one flesh, or according to the Hebrew *they will be for one flesh*.

Both Jewish and Latin scholars have interpreted this verse in [246] many different ways. Some Latin writers and Rabbi Solomon have explained it in such a way that offspring are understood by this flesh, for the creation of which man and woman are joined and progeny are made in which their flesh is one. To be sure, others, with whom Ibn Ezra agrees, have interpreted it such that since man will cleave to and be joined with the woman espoused to him by means of marital congress according to the flesh, both are made one flesh in accordance with this duty, just as Adam and Eve were one flesh from the beginning. Thus the sense may be, *He will cleave to his legitimate wife* by carnal union, and from this union it will happen that the two are as one flesh and the marriage ratified and indissoluble. The union from its very nature has these properties as a result of the consent, which God assists, in order to render as one the flesh of two persons, making the bond indissoluble. Whence the Hebrew words *they will be* is the command and injunction of the divine Will so that when by the will of God they legitimately come together joined by God in the sacrament of matrimony, they are inseparable as one flesh and each has a right to that flesh.

However, because the man and woman have been made one flesh, they can never be disjoined or separated from one another or be united to other flesh, for it is most proper to one flesh that its parts ought to support, nourish, and help each another and that they never be severed from each other or joined to the flesh of another. The parts of an individual ought to be incommunicable to another individual. Therefore, it is manifestly clear that in this verse that God does not approve of polygamy but rather prohibits it, and that divorce ought always to be illicit, as the Lord said: *What God has joined together, let no man put asunder*. Nevertheless Moses, because of the depravity and hardness of the Jews, sometimes permitted these things.

One should know besides that even from the natural, carnal union of a man this debt to a woman is incurred and one flesh is made [247] such that it obtains not only in legitimate matrimony but also in adulterous relations and in relations with prostitutes. Those who are so commingled are also made as one flesh, witness the Apostle, who says in Corinthians 6:16: *Do you not know that he who cleaves to a harlot, becomes one body with her? "For the two," it says, "shall be one flesh."* The subject of the verse that

St. Paul quotes is not about commerce and relations with prostitutes. Rather he points out that from its very nature such a union has the same result. Thus that debt is established even with a harlot so that a man who is carnally joined to a prostitute will now be bound that he cannot belong to another since he became one body with her. And again, she cannot belong to him without sin, so far as concerns the intercourse, because God does not approve of the union; he disapproves of it; he does not assist it; he opposes it. Wherefore, the two who are so joined against the law of God incur against themselves several charges. First, that they become one flesh and thus contract a perpetual affinity by any one of them is prohibited from a union with the relatives of the other, lest they commit incest. Second, since God does not assist that sexual union, the man and harlot cannot contract the matrimonial debt (i.e. the right of one to the flesh of the other). Because of this they are understood to be a slave to each other in the work of the flesh so that as often engage in further relations, they sin unless, in fact, by consent they join themselves by the bond of matrimony. Otherwise, they are not truly and legitimately one flesh, as far as this consideration is concerned, but in fact are like thieves and act against God's Will. Nevertheless, under the law they will be considered one flesh inasmuch as by their sexual union they contract a perpetual affinity. Truly, from the force and nature of this affinity, they ought to lose the faculty of all wedlock. However, since there would be a grave danger if these should avoid marriage and be forced to contract marriage with a prostitute, therefore it came about by an indulgence that a fornicator could enter upon a marriage contract, but not with blood relations of their other on account of the affinity they had contacted as a result of their relations, which remains hateful, as canon law teaches. Therefore, the great power of the union of man and woman can be seen in the words of the Lord: He *clings to his wife, and the two become one flesh*. Here I mention the mystery, which the blessed Apostle in Ephesians 5:32 calls *great in reference to Christ and to the Church*; with God's guidance I will dedicate more time to it in its own place.

VERSE 25

[248] *Both the man and his wife were naked, but they felt no shame.*

Rabbi Solomon says, “they did not blush because they did not know the path of shame in order to investigate between good and evil. Even though they had knowledge to name the animals, God did not give them evil concupiscence, wherefore they ate of the tree and in that did evil concupiscence enter, and they knew the difference between good and evil.” Josephus thinks this shamelessness in our first parents came about as a result of their simplicity and lack of knowledge, just like children who are not overcome with the shame of their nudity because they lack the use of reason.

In truth, I believe that Adam had been abundantly filled with all knowledge, especially of natural things, since he gave names to all living creatures. Therefore, this absence of shame resulted not on account of their simplicity but from the condition of the state of innocence and because of the gift of original justice, which God gave to the first parents.

Indeed, I affirm from this verse that the gift existed or was revealed to the greatest extent in the first parents, where two almost incompatible things are juxtaposed, viz. nudity and shamelessness. Nudity naturally gives rise to the feeling of shame in man, just as even now we sense it happens to us, who are deprived of that justice. As a matter of fact, in these members especially there appear the disorder and slackening of that bridle, by which the flesh is checked and restrained from behaving extravagantly against the spirit. However, if perchance those things that are quite rightly called the pudenda are exposed to public view, humans, even if not instructed by another, are obliged to feel shame, recognizing by some power of implanted reason this indignity in them. For it seems that the dishonor and sin hidden in these bodily parts is open to view. Man knows that this is so, even if he does not know why it is so. Indeed, that knowledge restrains man from those actions that in other respects would be lawful and are done without sin. For instance, the marital duty cannot be performed in the open, unless out of outrageous immodesty; rather it takes place in private owing to the modesty inherent in the very unsightliness of the act. There can be no one so disgraceful and immodest

who is able to openly turn away from this instinct of nature.

[249] Therefore, when our first parents in their blessed state saw in their nudity no reason for blushing, then it was truly because their nudity was covered in a wondrous way by the gift of original justice. For it could not happen in any way from a lack of knowledge or ignorance, since they were very knowledgeable. Instead, it was the result of the tranquility, the most blameless purity, and the innocence of the flesh that, in conformance with reason through original justice, in no way opposed the spirit. Although they were naked—not because they lacked clothing but because, not needing clothes in any way, they were not clothed—they *felt no shame*. They were most splendidly clothed in the beauty of justice; had they preserved it forever, they would never have needed clothing to cover their private parts since those parts, which now must cause shame because of sin, did not cause shame at that time. Moreover, they did not need clothes to protect them from the cold or from the intemperateness of the air inasmuch as they could not suffer any harm or injury.

Accordingly, our discourse has reached the point at which it seemed worthwhile to explain some things about the gift of original justice, which wise King Solomon calls *straightness*, saying in Ecclesiastes 7:30, *God, from the beginning, made mankind straight*, i.e. endowed with original justice. In order not to prolong this discussion any further, we must consider three questions. First, what is original justice? Second, in what part of the soul is it situated? Third, what was its chief effect?

In the beginning, however, that gift of God was not the grace that makes the man who receives it pleasing to God, or charity¹⁷, but the undeservedly given grace, separable from charity. I think that my argument is proved from the text Genesis: for when the woman whether by the man or immediately from God received the command not to taste of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, just as she herself testifies in Genesis 3, saying, *Of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil God hath commanded us that we should not eat*. Truly, when she ate of the forbidden tree, she violated His command and lost for herself grace and charity.

¹⁷ Translator's Note: St. Lawrence here refers explicitly to *caritas*, the theological virtue that inclines the will to love God for Himself. The "the grace that makes the man who receives it pleasing to God," or *gratia gratum faciens*, is a technical term, sometimes called charismatic or personal grace by Thomistic theologians.

Nevertheless, she did not lose the gift of original justice until the time when the man, tasting the forbidden tree after her, also violated the divine command. For the gift of original justice even actually makes it very clear that, although they were naked, *they felt no shame*. Therefore, since the woman, having already tasted of the apple, was not aware of her own nakedness and did not feel shame, grace and charity certainly [250] having now been lost by her violation of the commandment, still original justice, although lost by right, yet remained in fact. However, when the man ate the fruit forbidden by God but offered to him by the woman, at that moment both were deprived of that gift and they recognized *that they were naked* and they felt ashamed. Certainly when they lost the gift of original justice, they already were deprived of grace and charity. They lost it by the act of eating. However, after consent was given by an interior act, the will having been disordered and reason turned away from God, they had lost grace even before they had eaten or stretched their hands to the forbidden fruit. Wherefore, one clearly and distinctly perceives that original justice, not the grace that makes the man who receives it pleasing to God or charity, but the undeservedly given grace, was separable from charity and grace. The plain reason for this conclusion is that original justice remained for a little while in our first parents, who were deprived of grace by their perverse consent and the disorder of their will, and it lasted until the completion of sin preconceived by their consent.

Now, as to the second question, regarding the part of the soul where the gift of original justice lies. Some think this gift was located in the higher portion of the soul, since it is called justice, and the lower part is lacking in it; indeed, justice has the will for its subject. However, I think that original justice was situated in the lower portion of the soul. A positive thing and a privative thing¹⁸ have entirely the same thing for their subject. To support my position I cite the disease and evil desire of sin; the

¹⁸ Translator's Note: In Scholastic terminology, *privative* (a synonym of *negative*) is the opposite of *positive*. In common English the phrase essentially means, "opposites have the same subject." By the way, in this passage, St. Lawrence advances an original psychological argument that differs from the teachings of Aquinas and Bonaventure. Also, one of the significations of "subject" is "the *object* of an action, a *faculty*, that concerning which, or about which action takes place, as distinct from the object-motive of an action."

concupiscence of the flesh against the spirit. That body of death, which provokes and burdens the mind and the inner man. The law of the members is warring against the law of the mind; it is certainly in the lower portion of the soul. Accordingly, the bridle of concupiscence, the tranquility of the flesh, the holy law of members, the peace of the flesh with respect to the spirit, and the obedience of the senses and of the outer man to the inner one and his mind come to be located in that portion.

[251] Indeed, this fact strongly causes me to believe that since Adam was endowed by God with this gift, he received it for himself and for all his posterity. Wherefore, had he preserved that most excellent gift, which he lost by his own grave injury (which harmed all of us), every one of his descendents would have been endowed with that gift by some kind of natural hereditary succession, receiving it from their parents, from whom they were generated and from whom they received the natural state as it belongs to a thing existing in reality. Yet truly those things that are located in the higher portion of the soul are received from forefathers and parents not by nature or by inheritance, but they emanate immediately from God through creation and are at once infused into the mind and the reason.

Indeed, it is most worthily called justice since it was the most upright and just law and rule of the members and of the lower powers of the soul, by which the senses and all the lower powers were regulated so as not to rebel or fight against reason or do or wantonly desire anything in opposition to the judgment of the mind and reason. Instead, the mind and reason could happily govern those powers of the soul that in no way were resistant or rebellious to it, and obtain and delight in their submission. Just as now, owing to their rebellion, the mind feels loss, discomfort, and deepest sadness because the soul's powers have been loosened from this kind of bridle and are deprived of that most righteous and just law and rule. Accordingly, as if unbridled and untamed they kick back at the spirit and mind and revolt and fight against it, and also they behave extravagantly against the spirit in continuous warfare in every kind of pool of depraved passions. Unhappy men are we, unless the grace of God through Jesus Christ should deliver us from the body of this death.

As to the third question, one must look at the effect of this justice. The chief and principal effect of original justice, according to the opinion of many, was the ordering of the will to God. That, in fact, is not

sufficiently demonstrated for me. Instead, I think this ordering of the will to God was the effect of the gift of grace that makes the man who receives it pleasing to God and of charity, even as it is now. As a matter of fact, as was also seen above, after the woman already gave her consent to eating the forbidden fruit, already her will, distanced from every doubt, had been disordered and turned away from God. Nevertheless, she did not lose original justice in fact, although she lost it by right, until the time when the man [252] ate of it and realized that *they were naked* and they felt shame. Therefore, before they had lost original justice, they had already lost grace, and they possessed a will disordered and turned away from God and infected and perverted by the stain of most serious sin.

Still one must not say that original justice could continue for some time without this chief effect, for just as presently grace, whose property is to keep the will ordered and pleasing to God, assuredly cannot for an instant of time [abide] with sin and a disorder of the will. Thus, justice is not grace.

Since, therefore, the ordering of the mind and will toward God was the present of a higher, loftier, and more distinguished gift, namely of grace and charity, which rendered the soul dear, pleasing, and friendly to God, I assert that the chief gift or effect of original justice was: (1) to restore perfect tranquility and friendship between the sense and reason; (2) to bridle the law that fights in our members against the law of our mind; and (3) to make certain that the passions not rebel or fight against reason. (Note that the effect was not to make sure that the passions were entirely absent from the soul in respect to its sensitive part.) The reason is that anger and pain, shame and fear, or weariness with dread, and whatever things that completely induce affliction had not existed in that original state.

Therefore, perfect tranquility in the soul with respect to all its powers was the chief and principal effect of original justice, so that the senses and the lower powers would not be inclined to their own pleasures against the judgment of the higher portion, the law of right reason, and established limits. Alternatively, if the appetite were inclined toward something pleasurable, with which it naturally would be delighted, it could have been happily withdrawn from that pleasurable object by the mind and reason without any inward difficulty on the part of the higher portion or sadness

on the part of the lower portion. The reason is that owing to the gift of original justice, the senses and the lower powers would have obeyed the mind and reason and would have been delighted with the law of God according to the inner man.

There is another effect of original justice, and it is special and unique, viz. the immortality of the body, which man obtained by that justice so that, although mortal by nature, he might never taste death as a result of his gift. The effect did not grant him the impossibility of dying, but it did bestow the power of not dying. Original justice clothed man with a perpetual robustness so that he might never be wearied by any illness, worry, lethargy of the sense, or [253] feebleness. It preserved his body from an improper mixture of the humors, and it always adjusted the powers and interactions of the humors together with those of the elements, by a kind of wonderful proportion and most equable and peaceful tempering. Whence all infirmities were kept far at bay, and through the nourishment of the tree of life, it restored even the natural powers of original moisture that were lost or consumed by the force of natural heat so that the body never would suffer decrease in any activity of its powers and would not be affected by hunger or thirst. It would not be wearied by feebleness and would not be burdened by weariness of the sense. By means of original justice, man had become master of that most pleasant terrestrial paradise and of all the abundance of its delights. Both by the providence of God and by the diligent and very prudent watchfulness of the angels, man would have always been safe in all the ways of his life so that death in no wise could come upon him from any outward injurious source. Whence, by the gift of immortality he would have always lived happily and joyously, never subject to any misery or disaster, full of every felicity. This should suffice for my discussion on original justice.

ON GENESIS 3

THE FALL

CHAPTER 3

VERSE 1

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.

The Latin Vulgate renders the verse with the words *more subtile*.

The Septuagint translated it as follows: *Ho de ophis [en] phronimotatos: But the serpent was the most prudent*; but Theodotion and Aquila render the word: *cunning*. Nevertheless, the Hebrew word *arum* means “crafty” and “astute” as well as “wise.”

The Aramaic translation used the same word: *arum*, although some books have *chakim*, which means “wise.”

[254] In the opinion of all exegetes, even Jewish exegetes, in this verse, one must understand by the word *serpent* not only the animal or Satan alone but rather Satan speaking in the animal known as the serpent. However, it was not just an animal because it spoke with the woman, something that belongs to rational and intellectual natures, not brute animals. Ibn Ezra refutes those who affirm that it was only Satan, saying, “They did not look at the end of the chapter, since how does Satan crawl on his belly? Moreover, how will he eat dust? Further, what is the reason for the curse: *She, or he¹⁹ will crush your head*. Wherefore, he holds that, in the opinion of Rabbi Saadiah Gaon, Rabbi Samuel ben Ophni, and Rabbi Solomon of Spain, the serpent did not speak, nor did a she-ass, but an angel spoke through them.

However, for a clearer understanding of this passage, I considered it worth the trouble to write some things beforehand about the nature of the tempter, in as far as he is an angel, and about the fall, in as far as it the tempter is called a crafty and cunning serpent. Since I do not deny that

¹⁹ Translator’s Note: The appropriate pronoun is a famous crux. See commentary on verses 14-15 for St. Lawrence’s full treatment of this.

very often in Sacred Scripture certain spiritual substances are displayed to us, and we call them by the often used word “angels,” one must most firmly hold that these substances were created from the beginning by the Maker of all Things.

However, in the opinion of St. John Damascene, the angel is an incorporeal, intellectual, ever movable substance with a free will, serving God, acquiring immortality by grace, not by nature. By these words, one can clearly see that the substance of an angel lacks a body, its power lies in understanding, [255] acting, and commanding, its duty is in the service of God, and finally its continuance is unending by the gratuitous gift of God.

Truly, Dionysius the Areopagite in his discourse about the angels describes their nature for us in the following manner:

The angel is an image of God and a manifestation of hidden light, a polished mirror, very bright, unstained, uncontaminated receiving unto itself all the beauty, if it is right to say so, of the His appearance and divine figure, and sincerely manifesting with splendor in itself, to the extent it may be possible, the goodness of the secret silence.

By these words, he wonderfully manifests that the angelic nature, i.e. the intellectual nature, exists in its purity as a radiance surrounded by divine light, manifesting intelligibly to intellectual souls the inner chambers of that light. It manifests that the divine sun is perfectly reflected in the angel as though in a highly polished mirror and that in the first, full, and perfect degree, the angel gained a share of goodness and beauty. The result was a kind of super brilliant radiance of divine glory and the perfect image and likeness of God. The more beautifully and excellently that the indelible mark of the divine goodness, appearance, figure, and beauty exists in the angel, the more subtle is its nature.

The whole host of spiritual and intellectual substances received all these qualities in great abundance in the beginning of their creation from the Maker of All Things. God created them together with the empyrean heaven in the beginning, in the empyrean, that most eminent and worthy of all places, as if they were the most splendid and radiant stars of the highest heaven. For so they were called by God, as we read in Job: *Where*

were you...when the morning stars praised me...and all the sons of God made a joyful melody? Indeed, they are called *stars* (1) because of the excellence of their incorruptible nature, (2) because of the eminence of the place, and (3) because of the splendor of their exceedingly bright intellectual light, by which they purify, illuminate, and perfect those lower than they are. Truly, they are *morning stars* because they were made in the beginning; *praising God*, because they knew their Creator, even as they were still not known *face to face*. The *sons* of God direct their course to his because of [256] the supernatural gifts whereby they were wonderfully adorned. They possessed the clearest faith since they had been promised the kingdom of heaven if they had remained steadfast in justice and truth. They possessed hope in order to try to reach the faithful and blessed promises. They possessed charity in order to love the highest good above all things with all the force and effort of their mind. Truly, *rejoicing*, since although they were not created blessed from the beginning, yet they strove for the blessedness that consists in the clear vision of God *face to face*, whence is the purpose for which they were made. Nevertheless, they were happy and blessed in a kind of natural blessedness. Innocent and incapable of suffering, they possessed a kind of perfect state in which there was no punishment or evil of sin. In addition to blessedness, that state was filled with every kind of fruitful and abundant spiritual delights, for the angels were adorned with many of the greatest supernatural gifts for knowing and understanding all things readily and plainly.

However, among these happy spirits was Lucifer, *the beginning of the ways of God*, as the Sun among the stars. He obtained the first and highest place over all, and in whom all the gifts of God shown forth more completely and more brightly. Concerning whom, it is written that Ezekiel prophesied to the king of Tyre:

Thou wast the seal of resemblance, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou wast in the pleasures of the paradise of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, the topaz and the jasper and the chrysolite, and the onyx, and the beryl, the sapphire, and the carbuncle, and the emerald; gold the work of thy beauty: and thy pipes were prepared in the day that thou wast created. Thou a cherub stretched out, and protecting...in the holy mountain of God, thou hast walked in the midst of the

stones of fire.

In that passage, one should note that Lucifer is called the *seal* of divine *resemblance* by antonomasia²⁰, since in him the divine image shone more brightly and more completely. Ezekiel referenced nine kinds of gemstones doubtless because there are nine orders of angels, whom Lucifer possessed as a kind of vesture for his own ornamentation, yet he far surpassed their brightness, being brighter in comparison to them. Whence in another passage of the Book of Ezekiel, the same Prophet, showing his excellence over all others, said to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt:

The cedars in the garden [257] of God were not its equal, nor could the fir trees match its boughs, neither were the plane trees like its branches; no tree in the garden of God matched its beauty. I made it beautiful, with much foliage, the envy of all Eden's trees in the garden of God.

Therefore, since all the angels in that most pleasant paradise, which is above, specifically in the empyrean heaven, very enjoyably possess, apart from supernatural beatitude, a natural happiness and beatitude and strive for supernatural happiness, it is wholly fitting and agreeable with reason that they had received some command to merit supernatural beatitude. Indeed, in some way it does not seem fitting that the blessedness of which we speak, which is the highest reward and prize, was offered to them apart from any ordinance and in fulfillment of no one's commandment. Instead, just as man received the command from God, out of God's good will, so that by observance of the command he might obtain the happiness for which he had been created and ordained as well as the blessedness that is above the powers of nature, so we must think that God did the same for the angels in order for them to acknowledge that they were subject to Him. Actually, beyond those things that nature ordered, it is entirely

²⁰ Translator's Note: A figure of speech that substitutes a descriptive phrase for a proper name or substitutes a proper name for a quality associated with it. For example, "Your Excellency" to address a bishop or Benedict Arnold for a traitor. St. Lawrence, in his *Dissertatio Prima* (p. 13 of the Latin edition), says that antonomasia occurs by reference to mental or spiritual characteristics, bodily characteristics, or characteristics outside the person's physical or bodily attributes.

believable that they had some command that went beyond the limits of the natural law. A command that would continue in God's good will so that they might acquire in a proper way the supernatural happiness that was similarly possessed on account of God's good will.

No man can find out what the command was or what kind of command was given since it was outside of nature and came from nothing but the good will of God. I should have most probably believed that it was the adoration of the human nature in Christ. In order that God might reveal to the angels that He wished to communicate Himself to human creatures in an immeasurable way according to His omnipotence and to assume human nature in order for it to be elevated in God and for it, subsisting in the Person of the Word as if by a kind of marvelous grafting, to become God, He foreshowed to them His Son Jesus Christ in the shape and figure of a man. Then at length he ordered and promulgated the law that they should adore Him as God, the One *in whom* above all He always was *well pleased*, even though He would become a man because of the hypostasis of the Word, and that they render unto Him homage and honor as to God. Whosoever should obey that commandment would be ever happy and would obtain everlasting supernatural [258] blessedness. However, those who would not acquiesce to this command of God would be thrown down and cast out of heaven into eternal darkness.

Let no one think that what I have just stated is without the witness of Scripture. David the Psalmist, speaking of the kingdom of Christ, says in the voice of God: *And let all his angels adore him*. Likewise, the Apostle says in Hebrews 1:6, *And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "And let all the angels of God adore him."* Perchance this is the life everlasting, which the Apostle, writing in Titus 1:2, says was promised *before the ages began*, i.e. forever. Before all ages began, there was no one to whom God could promise the eternal life that exists through Christ except the angels, who when they were created in the first moment of time are said to exist before all ages began.

Accordingly, the angels themselves heard this decree: Only those who *before all ages began* were found receptive to and approving of this promise, to them were salvation and eternal life appointed through Jesus Christ, if they should wish to adore Him as God freely and receive Him with homage. Most holy Michael, without making any interior inquiry,

accepted God's command immediately, as was appropriate. Likewise Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel and very many of the greater angels, whom the innumerable hosts of angels followed.

Lucifer, however, marveling at the revelation, began to think very hard thoughts that God's design was not just enough and indeed was unworthy and unfair. To be sure, he thought that this dignity should instead be granted to an angel, whose nature in the whole extent of its own kind is actually much more sublime than man, and especially much more according to the view of the foremost species of angels, which is the most excellent of all. At that moment, looking at himself and contemplating his beauty, appearance and comeliness as well as his lofty gifts, his virtue, and the excellence of his powers, by which he excelled all the others just as does the Sun amid the stars, he began to desire explicitly that God be united to his nature, which he perceived to be the most excellent of all the angels. That most wicked rival began to desire pressingly for himself the likeness of God and joint seating on the throne at the right hand of God as well as the exaltation of his seat above all the stars of heaven, which from His eternity, God had determined to bestow upon Christ. Wherefore, Isaiah, revealing the thoughts of his heart, quoted these words of Satan [259]: *I will scale the heavens; above the stars of heaven I will set up my throne; I will take my seat on the Mount of the Assembly, in the recesses of the North. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will be like the Most High.* In this way, he saw that it was possible to become God if the divine nature were united to his nature.

As Lucifer was considering these things, his intellect and will were gradually darkened; at the same time, he was perverted with anger and indignation, and he started to envy man of his dignity and to hate Christ violently. He wanted to kill and destroy Him completely. Whence the Lord said, speaking to the Jews in John 8: *The father from whom you are is the devil, and the desires of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has not stood in the truth because there is no truth in him. You are seeking to kill me.* Hence it came to pass that, by a trial and public declaration with a certain violence of spirit, *there was a great battle in heaven, when Michael, who championed the side of God, and his angels battled with the dragon, and Lucifer, now turned from the most beautiful angel into the most hideous dragon owing to his sin, and*

his angels fought. These were angels who never wished to accept the command of God nor learn righteousness; instead, they blasphemed and brought iniquity upon God. However, *they did not prevail, and neither was their place found any more in heaven. And that great dragon was cast down, the ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan.*

Therefore, Lucifer, having too much abused the bounty and patience of God, was cast out of God's paradise. Driven by the goading of a very virulent envy and deadly hatred of mankind, supremely gifted and clever for evil doing, the astute, cunning, crafty, and wicked enemy of the human race with great effort undertook to attempt to bring death to man by his lethal and noxious poison and to bring mankind, exiled from the paradise of delights, into his own power.

Moses demonstrates this fact by these words: *Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field.* He who had been created by God as the most beautiful angel had become by his crime the foulest and most virulent serpent. Coming to tempt man, he walked as one of the serpents of the earth (God permitted him to walk like one) in order to practice his treacheries in that form with which he has some similarity and correspondence.

[260] However, in this passage the Hebrew for *serpent* is *nachash*, a word that not only means serpent but also "sorcerer," a foreboding deceiver, a tempter and a diviner of secret things. Perhaps for this reason, Moses used this term to show perfectly in one word both the tempter Satan and the animal serpent in which he deceitfully exercised his treacheries. The serpent, however, is said to be *cunning*, in the Hebrew *arum*, from the verb *arom*, which means "to ingeniously take counsel about something with shrewdness, take wicked counsel, to act astutely and conduct affairs wickedly." Above all, the word means "nudity," by which we are given to understand how this ancient serpent and most deceitful tempter, already naked and stripped of all his heavenly gifts, filled with envy, armed with all shrewdness, cunning, and foul thoughts, accosted man in order to cast him from happiness and rob him of every heavenly good. Inasmuch as the serpent possesses a strong natural wisdom and cunning (for even the Lord said in Matthew 10:16, *Be wise as serpents, and guileless as doves*), therefore, in order for there to be a perfectly matched analogy between the demon tempter and the instrument which he had to

use to tempt man, Lucifer entered the serpent, filling it with his own spirit.

Nevertheless, one must not think that the Devil chose of his own will the serpent by which he tempted man; and indeed, when he wished to deceive, he could not unless he was permitted to be able to act through that animal. Although the will to harm man came from within himself, the power still came from God. While man was in his original state, the serpent had no power to touch man in any way whatsoever, and could not harm him interiorly in his mind or exteriorly in his body. God certainly does not permit him to do harm according to his own will and anger, although on account of his higher and much more powerful nature, he had a much more potent strength, a power that the body of man could by no means withstand; wherefore he would have been able to wound and torment him violently, just as it now appears in these whom he oppresses and tortures and afflicts by wondrous and more wretched means. The Devil was nevertheless hindered from exercising the power that he had by nature against them. Accordingly, without the use of force he undertakes to deceive man to agree with him; [261] he does not move the lower powers deep within him, either by exciting his sensitive appetite by an illicit movement or by proposing something illicit to the intellect by the power of illusions, for he could infect nothing inordinate on the lower powers of man, unless his reason had been disordered beforehand. However, in the sensible appearance of a serpent, presenting objects exteriorly to the sense, the astute plotter approached man, speaking as follows to the woman:

He said to the woman, "Has God said, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'"

In Hebrew: *Is it so that God has said you shall not eat from every tree of the garden?*

The Aramaic Targum: *Is it in truth that God has said, etc.*

The Septuagint, however, reads: [*Ti*] *hoti eipen ho theos: Why God has said?*

Some explain the Hebrew words *af ki* as *kl-shkn*, *how much more*. Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol explains this phrase as *sm'*, *wherefore, on account of what He has said to you*. Ibn Ezra nevertheless says that "this teaches that

the serpent spoke other words, and then finally asked, *ql wchwmr*, i.e., arguing from the less important to the more important, *Has he said to you: You shall not eat* etc. Moreover, the serpent does not make mention of the glorious and terrible name of the Lord [viz. the Tetragrammaton] because he did not know it." Many Jews have accepted this explanation.

My explanation, however, is as follows. *He said to the woman*: Satan spoke to the woman with articulated speech and in the Hebrew language, moving the tongue of that reptile, just as he now speaks though the frenzied and the demoniacally possessed. He spoke to the woman in this fashion: *Why has God commanded you that you should not eat of every tree of paradise?* Many Jews, including Rabbi Solomon, say that "the serpent saw them eating of the other fruits and he spoke out loud so that they would answer him and he would come to speak about the tree, just as he came at the reply of the woman.

[262] How lethal a venom did that most poisonous serpent inject into the mind of the woman with those words of his! Indeed, at these words, the woman, secretly piercing the meaning of the commandment, began to think about its motive, asking why God forbade them from eating of the fruits of that tree. It is a very dangerous notion, and it easily leads one into sin. By its own nature, the mind, desirous of liberty, rebels when it considers itself fettered by a command. Thus the woman, inquiring about the reason for the command and not knowing how to discover one that she could render to the serpent (since the command was of the type for which no reason of usefulness might be evident except the simple pleasure of giving a command) began to think that the command was neither right nor reasonable. She also began to be annoyed at a command the motive of which she did not discover and the utility of which she did not see, as the liberty of her mind also rebelled. Truly, it was the serpent that injected such venom by its mouth: *Why did God command you?* In order to induce more easily the transgression of the command, he first chose only the woman whom he approached in order to trap her. He hoped to win a victory over her since she was less resolved and less stalwart. Afterward, he would use her after she surrendered to more comfortably overcome the man. However, since he is a liar and the father of lies, as he was about to approach, he begins his task with a lie, asking: *Why did God command you not to eat of every tree of paradise?* For

God had said: *eat of every tree of paradise; however, you shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

Let us look at the literal Hebrew of Genesis 3:1 and examine it with a sharper eye, for perhaps it will show us something rather obscure. As we said, the text reads: *Is it so that God has said you shall not eat from every tree of the garden?* Clearly, this literal rendering seems to indicate that the serpent had said something before he asked this question. Truly, in no way is it suitable that these were his first words. Indeed, the idiom *ki, is it so that*, indicates that something had been said beforehand. Scripture therefore demonstrates that the serpent had spoken beforehand to the woman the following (or similar) words: God does not love you nor does He much esteem you. Instead, He hates and despises you, even though you two are nobler than all the other creatures, since he did not put you in fullest degree of dignity, which is appropriate and fitting for your excellence and the dignity of your nature. Since the woman marveled at these words and did not wholly accept them, he then says by way of alleging the truth [263] of his words: *Has he actually said to you that you should not eat of every tree of paradise?* I certainly see that what I have already said to you is true. Alternatively, as the Aramaic Targum has it: *Is it in truth that He prohibited you from eating from every tree of paradise?* snatching away the liberty due to you by nature since you are endowed with an excellent and freeborn soul.

This addition ought not to seem strange and less suitable to anyone, partly because the *af* always adds something to what is being discussed, partly because it is the custom of Sacred Scripture to render intelligible the beginnings of words from their end, as one can see in the case of the spies that Joshua sent who said (to the woman²¹) *It is so that the Lord has delivered all*

²¹ Translator's Note: In Joshua 2:24 the spies address Joshua, not the harlot Rahab. St. Lawrence's editors noted: "Evidently the saintly author excerpted word-for-word the interpretation of the particle *af* and the explanation that follows, which is found added in the margin of the codex, from David Kimchi's [*Book of Hebrew Roots*], under the entry for the same word, and from Pagnini's *Hebrew Lexicon*, with the exception that he leads us to believe the spies were speaking to the woman, while in that passage of Scripture the spies are speaking in fact to Joshua." The Massoretic text here reads only *ki*, but *af ki* is a

this land into our power; indeed, all the inhabitants of the land are overcome with fear from our face. Indeed, it is not correct that this sentence was the first one spoken (because the particle *ki* accounts for those words that had been spoken beforehand). Truly, Scripture makes the beginning known from the end.

This cunning and crafty serpent slyly weakened the force of the commandment. He did not say *Has God really commanded* but instead *Has He really said*. The serpent quotes Him as *saying*, not *commanding*. He is rather silent about God's glorious and fearful name, the Tetragrammaton, for he did not say *The Lord God*, but only said *God*, partly in order not to introduce into her mind the thought of fear owed at the pronunciation of the Most Holy Name, partly also in order not to appear to disclose to them what he had he sought. If it is our Lord God, they certainly would have been able to reply, "He can rightly command this of us in order to show by his command his dominion and demand our submission. It is entirely fitting that we worship the Lord and keep his commands, since He is our God and by His will he can most justly forbid it and make that that which by nature is good an evil by the fact of His prohibiting it through a command. It is not evil of its own nature; it is evil because it was prohibited." If only the woman had answered in this way, but as she was simple and less prepared, in her deception, she even imprudently answered his words!

VERSES 2-3

[264] *The woman answered the serpent, "Of the fruit of all the trees in the garden we may eat; but 'Of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden,' God said, 'you shall not eat, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"*

The Hebrew Text: *But the woman said to the serpent: From the fruit of the tree of the garden we eat, but from the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, God has said: You shall not eat from it, and you*

common Hebrew idiom that properly means *add to this also that* (Gensenius' Hebrew Grammar, 154, a¹ (c). Also see the Brown, Driver, Briggs *A Hebrew and English Lexicon*).

shall not touch it, lest perchance you die.

The Aramaic translation the same thing entirely, but it translates *you shall not touch* as *you shall not draw near it, lest perchance you die.*

By her reply, the woman truly shows that she offered her ears and assent to the poisoned conversation of the crafty and cunning serpent. Moved by a kind of rising up of her mind by the words of the deadly serpent, she was displeased that she was of a free condition and that a nature superior to all trees was bound by the commandment of the tree forbidden by God. Wherefore, having nearly forgotten divine power and dominion, answering the serpent, whom she should have spurned instead, she does not recognize God rightly as her Lord and master with a right to command of her anything He wished. *God*, she says, not *the Lord God*; and she does not say *God's command*, which He had imposed on her, but His *utterance*. In accordance with the serpent's persuasion, she believed. As the original Hebrew reads, *God has said*, not *has commanded*. Then showing that she was out of spirits, without right or reason she represented God's command as if it were a very hard burden, for she says: *We shall not touch it*, something that God certainly did not command. God forbade tasting it, not touching it. However, the woman, because of her displeasure with the commandment, added another prohibition. Indeed, anyone talking about a commandment imposed on him, which he does not like at all and from which he rather recoils, always seeks to exaggerate it in order to show that it was not imposed fairly or rightly. Unless perhaps we say that by forbidding her from eating God could be seen to prohibit her from touching the fruit because of the danger from touching it, as if that is the thing that would lead to the transgression of His commandment. Nevertheless, that obviously does not appear in the command by which God restrained them, yet the woman exaggerated, as though it were unwarranted and less fair. From there one can also see that she had doubts about the punishment for the transgression when she said: *Lest perchance we die*, certainly something that God absolutely and without a shadow of a doubt did not say. What He said was, *For the day you eat of it, you must die*. Truly, because she considered the command she received [265] from God as unwarranted and less fair (since she was out of

sorts owing to the suggestion of the Devil), she, now deceived, also had doubts about His punishment for the transgression. As the serpent saw this, he then added:

VERSES 4-5

But the serpent said to the woman, “No, you shall not die; for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

The Hebrew Text: *And the serpent said to the woman, not in death will you die, because God knows that on the day on which you shall eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods knowing of good and evil.* However, the phrase *like gods* can be translated *like God*, for it is the same word we discussed earlier: *for God knows: Elohim*, even though this word is a plural form in Hebrew idiom.

The Aramaic Targum translates: *It is revealed before the Lord that in that day on which you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like mighty ones knowing the difference between good and evil.*

Ibn Ezra explains this as *you will be like angels*. Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol explains the verse as follows: “The serpent provoked her further when she reported that God had said, *And you shall not touch it*. He then replied to her, ‘Just as there is no death in touching it, so there is no death in eating it.’ *For God knows* etc. The serpent then replied, ‘Every craftsman despises those who practice the same craft. He ate of the tree, and He created the world. And you will be like gods, creators of worlds.’”

However, I explain the passage as follows. *No, you shall not die*. This liar and father of lies, who *when he tells a lie* (as it says in John 8:44), *he speaks from his very nature*, continues with the weapons of his lies, just as he began. He then calls God—Who is the highest and chief truth and the author and source of every truth—a liar. God most certainly threatened man with death if he ate of the forbidden tree, saying, *For the day you eat of it, you must surely die*. However, the serpent said most untruthfully, *No, you shall not die*. As he saw from her reply that the woman was in doubt

about the consequent death, [266] he immediately claimed that in no way would death result. He even charged the highest and infinitely good God with malice and envy, saying, *God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.* The wickedest of tempters says that God begrudges you from knowing—in the way in which He knows—those things that are very worthy to know so that you would not be gods like Him in knowledge and wisdom.

However, we must consider these words more earnestly, so that we can understand them and see how mendaciously and falsely the ancient and evil serpent spoke. First it seems we should be forewarned that the tree, which is said to be *of the knowledge of good and evil*, was identified in this manner after the event, not before the event, something that many have believed. Even though when God forbade the tree to the man, we read, *From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you must not eat*, I think at any rate that God, in giving His command, did not use the words that the Prophet Moses used in narrating the history. Rather, God designated the tree with another term. The proof is that the woman, replying to the serpent's question, did not say, *But of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,* but instead she said, *But of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God commanded us not to eat.* Truly, since he was about to disclose what tree it was, once the sin was committed, Moses inserted a designation of his own (to wit, *of the knowledge of God and evil*). As a matter of fact, if God had used this designation in his instructions about the tree, without a doubt He would have aided by means of this term the temptation and lie of the serpent.

Actually, in the tree there was no power for understanding, a power by which good and evil could have been known and thereby truly be called the tree *of the knowledge of good and evil* since it was entirely corporeal and could do nothing to a spiritual intellect. Regardless, the woman, deceived by the lying words of the tempter, believed that in the tree there was some power for understanding. When the serpent says, *Your eyes will be opened*, one certainly should understand that he is not talking about corporeal eyes. Instead, it refers to the eyes of the heart, which by these words serpent revealed that they had not been opened [267] to understand good and evil. *Your eyes will be opened and you will be like God.* With these words, he does not promise them divine equality, for he does

not say, “you will be God.” That would have indeed appeared manifestly false and wholly unbelievable, since it is impossible. However, he does assert that a likeness in knowledge and wisdom would come forth in them from eating of the tree. *You will be like God* (or “gods”), *knowing good and evil*. It is not the case that they were unknowing and were not instructed by God, by the law of both nature and grace, in the knowledge of good and evil. Rather, the fact is that knowledge of that kind is much more complete in angels and is perfectly complete in God, who is the highest truth. Because of this, the Devil made an effort to excite in them an inordinate appetite for the knowledge of those who knew at a higher level, more clearly and who more keenly understood and penetrated all things, even those that are the most hidden. *You will be*, he says, *like God* (or “gods”), *knowing good and evil*.

He used the ambiguous word *elohim*, which can be applied to God Himself or to the angels. Thus, *You will know good and evil* as God or as the angels, or certainly as the Aramaic translation most truly translated the verse, *you will be mighty ones knowing the difference between good and evil*, most wisely examining all things, both good and evil. “You,” says the serpent, “are content with your lot since you have accepted all the goods and gifts, although there still are even much more preferable, more important, and more exceptional things that you will neither have nor see because you do not know them, nor are the eyes of your mind opened to see and understand them. Moreover, you do not know evil things since you do not perceive that God envies you. He neither cares much for you, nor does He esteem you. He could have given you much larger, more preferable, and more important things, but He did not wish to do so. He was also jealous because He did not want you to know the things that are most worth knowing in the way in which He and the angels know them. He did not wish to share the things that it was of no importance to Him to retain inwardly. Moreover, so that you either cannot know the more important good things that He denied you and kept for Himself, or the evil things because He denied them to you. Naturally, owing to His malice and animosity toward you, He forbade you from eating of the fruit of that tree, which possessed the chief power to understand good and evil, as even I know for I ate from it and I tell you now the things that I learned from that food. Furthermore, He maliciously and falsely

threatened you with death to frighten you so that you would not eat of it. He did so with envy, for He knows that *when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like angels* and intellectual natures who know everything with the greatest clarity, even as I do, *knowing good and [268] evil*. It is not at all true that if you eat of it, *you must die*. For instance, I, who ascended to the top of the tree, ate of the tree many times, as I now eat of it”—note that this is the opinion of the Jews—“and I am still not dead. Rather by eating the fruit of this tree, I acquired the greatest knowledge of good and evil, as you see that I have. Therefore, you will not die by food of this sort. Instead, you will acquire the knowledge of good and evil.”

These are the words that the evil tempter and cunning serpent, ever the foulest liar, spoke to the woman. The mind of the woman was inflamed by these words to hunger after that kind of loftier knowledge. She indeed believed the words of the serpent, whence she continues:

VERSE 6

Now the woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for the knowledge it would give. She took of its fruit and ate it, and also gave some to her husband and he ate.

The Hebrew Text: *And the woman saw that the tree is good for eating and that it is pleasant to the eyes and desirable for understanding, and she took from the fruit of it and ate and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.*

The Aramaic translation entirely has it altogether in this manner: *And desirable for understanding and she gave also to her husband with her.*

The Septuagint also: *Kai horaion esti tou katanoesai: And it was beautiful in order to understand or to be wise.*

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol explains the verse in this manner:

And the woman saw: She saw the words of the serpent and they

pleased her and she believed him, because it was good that they become like God, and because it was *pleasant to the eyes*, as the serpent had said to her. *And your eyes will be opened; and desirable for understanding*, as he had said to her: *Knowing good and evil*.

Ibn Ezra, however, says

And the woman saw in her heart that the tree was desirable for understanding and enlightenment of the eyes. However, the sense of *with her* is that they ate together and she revealed the secret of the serpent to the man. Note that Adam was not ignorant, and for this reason he was condemned. And many say that the *tree of knowledge* was the fig tree, because they find in verse 7 *so they sewed fig leaves*; yet if this was so, then Scripture would have said *so they sewed together leaves of the tree of knowledge*. Also many say that [269] it was grain. And that is correct in my eyes, because the two trees in the middle of the garden of Eden are not in another place on the whole earth, and there was one tree of knowledge generating an inordinate desire for coitus; accordingly, Adam and his wife covered themselves.

Indeed, I explain it as follows. *Now the woman saw*—not only with corporeal eyes, but also with a certain natural instinct by which we conclude that foodstuffs coming forth from the earth are suitable to our nature and temperament, which we know is also given to other animals—that *the tree was good for food*. Of course, the tree was not evil by nature but was certainly good. However, it was bad for man to the extent that it had been forbidden by God, not because God deprived it of its natural goodness and pleasantness. Indeed, it surely was pleasant to eat; man should not abstain from it except on account of his recognition of God's commanding dominion and power over him, and by reason of the mere will of God. If he were not to keep away from it, the tree that by nature was good, would become an evil for man in consideration of his fault. Moreover, the tree was *pleasing to the eyes*, inasmuch as man takes delight in food and drink, not to say the pleasantness to the taste, but also in its beauty because of its appearance. Besides, it was *pleasant in appearance*, or

according to the Hebrew original, *desirable for understanding*, That attribute is not a real one but is recorded as the opinion of the woman who, being deceived by the words of the serpent, made that judgment about the tree and thus made herself think that her opinion reflected reality. Certainly from the pleasantness of the fruit and the lovely appearance of the tree, she persuaded herself that what the serpent had said to her was true.

The force of the inordinate desire was so strong that the woman, estranged and seduced beyond all limits of reason, created figments of her imagination and told herself things and believed them. She had asserted that she was not to touch the fruit of the tree—something that God had never commanded of her. Not to speak of touching it, she took it, that is to say she plucked the fruit from the tree *and ate it*, violating God's command, and she induced her husband to eat: *And she gave some to her husband* after she ate of it. Indeed, she persuaded her husband and urged him, and held it out for him to eat. *He ate*, not because he believed the words of the tempter and thought he had spoken the truth, and he was not deceived by the demon. As the Apostle Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:14, it was the woman, not the man, who was deceived. Owing to his great love, he was not able to resist the woman as she held out the fruit and persuaded him to eat of it [270], and *ate* in order not to sadden her and let her go away from him without her wish being fulfilled.

VERSE 7

Then the eyes of both were opened, and they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves coverings.

The Hebrew text: *And the eyes of both were opened and they realized that they were naked, and they sewed the leaf of a fig tree and made for themselves loin-coverings.*

Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra says that

The explanation of *yithparu* ("they sewed") is known and it is as in Job 16:15: *I sewed sackcloth over my skin*: seeking loincloths

from worthless things, since in the simple tree they made what was necessary for themselves. And after Adam ate from the tree of knowledge, he knew his wife. The word for this type of knowledge is coitus, and accordingly it is called the tree of knowledge. Thus an adolescent also begins to desire coitus after he knows good and evil. However, it is called the *tree of life*, because it adds life, and Adam lived for many years. The term *olam* is not that which we find in Genesis 3:22 below, meaning a long-lasting period of time with an end, not perpetuity or eternity, or the *ad-olam waed* (“for ever and ever”) that we find in Exodus 21:6, *And he²² shall serve “leolam,” forever*, and in 1 Samuel 1:22 it reads literally, *and he lived there for ever*. There are many other instances of this idiom. Biblical exegetes say of the verse *for the day you eat of it, you must die* that man was not created to with a disposition to die, but when he sinned, he received the death sentence. Many also ask why his seed sinned. These are vain words since there is one spirit in man and beast, which lives and rages in this world. Just as there is the death of the former, so there is the death of the latter, except for the higher part in man by which he excels the beasts. Now a certain physician comes along raising *a-priori* reasons or proofs that it is not fitting that Adam should not have ended his life.

Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol explains as follows:

Then their eyes were opened. Scripture speaks through wisdom, not through something seen personally. The ending of this episode proves this. *And they realized that they were naked.* [271] Even a blind man knows when he is naked. But why is it that *They realized that they were naked?* The command was in their hand, and they were denuded with respect to faith or fidelity.

My explanation is as follows. *And their eyes were opened:* one must not understand this to mean corporeal eyes, but rather that the eyes of the mind had been closed lest they recognize the gifts of God and especially

²² Translator’s Note: The Latin text of St. Lawrence prints the 3rd person plural form. The Hebrew text, the Vulgate version, and the Septuagint all have the 3rd person singular. The Douay, King James, and RSV all translate *he*, not *they*. I chose to use *he* so as not to confuse the reader.

that excellent gift of original justice that resulted in their not being ashamed in spite of their nakedness because they were adorned in its beauty. The gift, however, was taken away from them owing to their violation of the divine command, and they immediately *realized that they were naked* with the result that they were very much ashamed. For at that moment they were naked, but they did not realize that they were naked. Indeed if someone is naked, and he realizes that he is naked, he will be ashamed. They were in fact naked with respect to their body but not with respect to shame, for because of original justice, nudity, offering an unbecoming sight, did not bring about its effect, since lustfulness was held in check by original justice so that an inordinate sensual appetite might not blossom in their unbridled members. After the gift was lost, the flesh began to rebel against the spirit and to desire things in opposition to it as law of the members began to fight against the law of the mind. Perverse desires began to flourish in the members and to stir up violently illicit and pernicious movements. Wherefore, they blushed exceedingly and were overcome with bewilderment. In order to cover their private parts (which beforehand were not a cause for shame), *they sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves coverings*, i.e. *loincloths*. They began to experience a violent bewilderment and shame that they never felt before, and they did not realize what blushing and shame were. Now that they had learned of it through their sin, in order to cover their private parts *they sewed together*, perhaps with some bulrushes or something similar, *fig-leaves*. What an ineffective remedy did these wretches to apply to themselves! However, they did it as a temporary measure out of mere necessity, since at that time nothing else was at hand.

I must note some things in order to understand better, what is being said in this verse. First, note that original justice was not natural to man nor were the gifts that followed from it as well as those which were lost with it. Those things that do not come from the principles of nature cannot be called natural; instead, they come from a gratuitous favor of God and from His provision from without. Whence they were in some way supernatural [272] in regard to the body, although in regard to the innocent and blameless soul, on which no punishment ought to be unjustly inflicted, in some way they were demanded owing to the excellence of its nature and its dignity. These qualities well reconciled the

unequal union of the body with such a soul lest a pitiable sorrow and unhappiness might be found in so great a creature on account of the two natures (viz. the nature of a mortal body and the nature of an immortal soul) fighting continuously against each other and lest the corruptible body burden the soul. By means of these gifts, the body was made subject to the soul, and the lower powers were subordinated to reason. Wherefore, those gifts were due, as it were, to man's nature, for all that especially and chiefly in our first parent who was the first to receive and pass on that nature. Above all, both in him and through him the gifts were, in a secondary way, due to us, who derive all things from that one man. Original justice, consequently, and whatever things that follow it are due to human nature in accordance with a kind of reason in the first man. Since all subsequent generations would receive their nature through that man, it was entirely fitting that his descendents should receive the good things, which in a certain measure followed his nature to render it perfect and whole. Therefore, the first man was adorned with these gifts and received them from God on behalf of all his posterity so that everyone naturally descended from him would obtain these gifts as though by a kind of inheritance.

Second, one must consider this. Since the above-mentioned gifts were not natural as are those that come from the principles of nature, coming instead from the free favor of God (as if by an agreement of nature the gifts were benevolently bestowed by Him Whose *deeds are faultless* and Who above all is devotedly loving, merciful, and good), it was truly good but not equitable that the gift was conferred on us without some meritorious sign of gratitude. Therefore, He established a pact with the first man so that by his obedience to some divine command proceeding from the free will of God and by his subjection to recognize divine power and the commanding sovereignty, the man would preserve those gifts for himself and for us. When God said, *From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you must not eat; for the day you eat of it, you must die*, He established a pact of this sort with the man when His command restrained the man.

The expression of this law and pact must be rigorously considered according to the sense of the words, since pacts and statutes of this kind are, by their own nature, bound [273] in law. In the first place, since these

gifts of human nature were principally preserved in the first man for his descendents, because He entered the pact principally with that man and chiefly commanded him by saying, *You must not eat*. Although through him the woman also received this command (for indeed the beginning is principally with the man), hence it is that, if the woman alone had broken the pact and violated the command, the gifts that had been granted would not have been taken from the man and from human nature. Only she would have lost grace, that is to say, that heavenly gift that renders the soul pleasing and friendly to God and cannot accord with sin. Conversely, however, if Adam alone had sinned, his transgression would have injured even Eve, his spouse, and all his descendents, since they would have lost all the gifts, even as we actually lost them on account of the sole sin of Adam.

Nevertheless, in the second place, one must not think that the human race was liable to lose those gifts because of any sin of Adam. The loss resulted from the eating alone: Adam sinned before he ate by his interior act of granting consent to violate the command by the sin of vainglory and pride. Yet he did not know that he was naked because he was not deprived of original justice until after he ate, in accordance with the word of the Lord God: *For the day you eat of it*. Note that God did not say, *For the day you sin you must die*. He said, *For the day you eat of it*. Indeed, they did not blush until both of them ate of the fruit.

In the third place, one must especially consider that the effect of that primary transgression (namely the stripping of original justice along with its consequent gifts and the ensuing shame resulted neither from the power of the food nor from the nature of the eating. Otherwise the woman, who ate of it first, would have felt the shame and know that she was naked; she felt nothing until after Adam ate of it. Accordingly, it did not happen as a result of the nature of the fruit, but from the force of the pact, which the Lord God had established with the man so that as soon as he had broken the pact and had violated the command, he would lose for himself and for all his posterity all those gifts.

In addition, as a result of the law and pact that existed between God and Adam, it happened that by this crime and transgression the entire human race was corrupted. Inasmuch as by the pact he received those gifts from God, so that through the observance of the command he would

preserve them for himself and for us [274], but through his transgression he would irrecoverably lose them for himself and for us, to his and our greatest loss, with the guilty state even unto a perpetual punishment of bereavement to which the human race was also subject owing to propagation and generation. The guilty state came to us, the children of Adam, from no other source except from that law, just as the fact that one born out of adultery is irregular from his birth has its foundation from no other source except from the law establishing the irregularity. Nevertheless, it was most fitting that just as through the first man we had received the gifts due as it were to nature if he had observed the command, so through him we lost them since he violated the command. Moreover, just as through him we were born children of grace and adorned with every gift and divine bounty, so now through him we also may be born the *children of wrath* and stripped of every good thing.

However, just as the gift of original justice was manifested to a great degree in him because, although they were naked, *they were not ashamed*, so now it is also clearly seen to be removed by the violation of the command. The reason is that when they had eaten of the tree, immediately *the eyes of both were opened* and *they realized that they were naked*, a fact that they did not know before (or more precisely, they did not know the confusion and shame of nakedness). At this realization *the eyes of both were opened* because before they indeed were ignorant that they were naked, they still were not ashamed. Now, however, they were ashamed *so they sewed fig-leaves* to cover their private parts lest they be overcome with so much confusion and shame.

VERSE 8

*And when they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in paradise at the afternoon air, Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord God, amidst the trees of paradise.*²³

The Hebrew Text: *And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in*

²³ Translator's Note: Another instance of the need to use the Douay, not the CCD, to accommodate the exegesis.

the garden at the breeze of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord God in the midst of the trees of the garden.

The Aramaic Targum translates: *at the resting-time of the day.*

The Septuagint: *around evening.* Some Jews say: *at the exhalation of the day.*

Jewish teachers interpret this passage in different ways. Ibn Ezra attributes the walking about to the voice of God [275], just as it is written in Jeremiah 46:22, *Her voice is as a serpent will walk*; and in Exodus 19:16 *walking as the voice of a trumpet*²⁴. The same scholar also reports that Rabbi Ibn Janah²⁵ said that Adam himself was walking in the garden. Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol, however, states that it was God who was walking in the garden. The same teacher explains that *at the breeze of the day* is the west wind because the Sun set there. Rabbi Ibn Janah explains the phrase as *at the exhalation of the day*, i.e. during the time in which there is a breathing out and a cooling of the day, i.e. a cooling of the air. Rabbi David Kimchi says that the phrase can also be explained as “at the blowing wind,” i.e. at the time in which the day declines during which the wind blows.

I, however, explain the passage as follows. *And when they heard the voice of the Lord God.* One must not think that what this verse says about the Lord God should be understood according to His divinity. God has no body from which to utter sound by means of organs and instruments of articulated speech. Furthermore, he has no feet wherewith to walk and move his body from place to place. He is not contained in a place so that he may be walking now where before he was not. He contains and fills every place so that His presence is nowhere absent. Consequently, both God’s speaking and His walking must be understood not according to the

²⁴ Translator’s Note: There is no word in the Hebrew text of Exodus 19:16 that corresponds to “walking as” (*ambulans*). St. Lawrence is probably just recording what he found in his text of Ibn Ezra. Remarkably, his modern editors only give the scriptural reference but do not comment, as they often do, on the discrepancy.

²⁵ Translator’s Note: St. Lawrence calls this scholar Rabbi Jonah. Although that is a variation of his name, modern academic custom refers to him as Ibn Janah.

shape of the deity, for it is entirely believable that it was made in some created likeness representing God and in it God spoke through an angel to the man, just as we read that he appeared and spoke to Abraham, Moses, and many others. Therefore, God, walking through paradise in that shape and likeness *at the afternoon air*, indeed spoke to the man by an angel through the senses and by means of externally articulated speech in an assumed body. However, by Himself he spoke inwardly in His mind through interior inspiration.

God came to Adam and Eve *at the afternoon air*, which means a soft breeze, which was accustomed to blow gently at sundown [276] to provide refreshment from the heat of the day. Whence the Hebrew text is right with its *at the breeze of the day* or *at the exhalation of the day*, because it was a usual occurrence as the day comes to an end. On that account the Aramaic Targum translates the phrase as *at the resting time of the day*, but the Septuagint renders it as *in the evening* or *around evening*. For certain authorities would say that the sin was committed by Adam around midday, at which time Christ also suffered on the cross to take it away. Consequently, around evening and dusk God came to the two on whom the sun of grace and divine light had already set and who now were in the darkness of sin and pitiable confusion. He came, however, in a peaceful breeze, not because He was angry and vengeful, but because He was thinking *the thoughts of peace* so that He might snatch them from the darkness of sin and give them divine light and lost grace.

On the other hand, however, since a wounded conscience makes a man fearful, as Adam sensed the approach of God, Whom he knew he had gravely offended, *Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord God in the midst of the trees of the garden*. That must not be understood to mean the true face of God from which no one can hide. Instead it is certainly the face of the likeness of God, in which He had been accustomed to appear and speak to the man through an angel. Fleeing from Him, Whose approach they heard, Adam and Eve hid themselves. I should most probably believe that, with the gentle and peaceful breeze, He appeared to the man in the shape in which he would later come, merciful and most clement, to redeem and save mankind. Outwardly hearing God's voice, by which He censured them, showed them before their eyes the punishments due, and summoned them to

saving penance so that their might obtain by entreaty mercy from Him, they hid themselves *in the midst of the trees*, i.e. among the middle trees and thick groves of paradise, seeking to escape Him, Who was coming to them in a way that they could perceive by their senses. Indeed, the most merciful God follows them and *had compassion* on them:

VERSES 9-10

But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid."

[277] The Hebrew Text: *And the Lord God called to the man and said to him: Where [are] you?* etc.

Most merciful God, seeing that man had fallen headlong in sin and desiring to lead him out of his sin, spoke to him, saying: Adam, *where are you?* God asks not out of ignorance, as though the One to Whom all things are present would not know where he was. Rather he asked so that Adam would consider where he was, in what state or into what condition he had thrown himself, to what wretched fate he had given himself headlong with all his family and his descendents and thus he might be summoned to penance, acknowledge his sin, and humbly confess, and so from his answer He would rebuke him for his sin. Adam, *where are you, Where are you*, of whom I am mindful because of My infinite goodness, I created you distinguished in nature and almost divine. Visiting you with favor, I enriched and ornamented you with gifts and bounties. I made you *a little less than the angels*. Why do I say *than* the angels? Since I created you as their comrade and fellow citizen, and I made you just a little less than God, and I established you above all the works of my hands. I subjected all things to your feet, *all sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the fishes of the sea, and whatever swims the paths of the seas*. I crowned you *with glory and honor* and I subjected you to the rule of no one else except Me. Adam, *where [are] you?* How did you not understand since you were in honor but subjected yourself to the power of the ancient serpent? Where are those very great gifts with which I adorned

you? Who stripped you of all those good things that I had given to you out of my kindness? How you compared yourself to the beasts *and resemble them*. Adam, *Where [are] you?*

God seems to me to summon man with these words so that he should present himself and give an account of his deed in order that he be advised of the legal proceedings in this matter, which ought not to bring judgment against a guilty man, unless he were legitimately summoned at law, examined judicially, and convicted. However, the man, incapable of furnishing an account of his deed, removed himself and hid. Forced to reply, not knowing where to turn, he said: Lord, *I heard you...and I was afraid because I was naked*. He did not correctly understand the sense of the Lord's words. God asked him where he was, even though He knew, so that through this the man might acknowledge his state, humbly confess his error, and beg pardon. Indeed, he thinks that he was questioned about his place and answers that he was hiding in the midst of the trees, among which [278] he might cover his nakedness to the degree that he was able, lest he should stand before God greatly embarrassed by his nudity.

VERSE 11

Then he [the Lord] said, "Who told you that you were naked? You have eaten then of the tree that I have commanded you not to eat.

The Hebrew Text: *Who told you that you [are] naked? Did you eat from the tree that I had commanded you not to eat from?*

God as yet seems to ask of that that he confess his sin in order to be worthy to receive forgiveness. Who, he says, informed *you that you were naked?* Beforehand you were naked and you were unashamed. Why now is it that you are overwhelmed with such great confusion and shame? What then is it that opened your eyes to realize confusedly and with the utmost shame that you were naked? Did you eat of the tree that I had commanded you not to eat anything thereof? It could not have happened to you in any other way. Did you, then, violate My command?

The Hebrew reading seems to take on this sense: that by His words God wished to elicit a humble confession of the crime from Adam. He did

not charge him with a crime as a fact, even if He knew it well as a fact. Rather, He questions him whether it is a fact. He does not say, by way of giving the reason He had sought regarding his nudity, that *you have eaten of the tree from which I commanded you not to eat* but *Did you eat from the tree that I had commanded you not to eat from?* He does not make a declaration, but he asks in order that the man might confess his sin with his own mouth. By such a confession, he would be worthy of gaining forgiveness, and ignorant of his fault, he might humbly accept and undergo the penance imposed by God. Instantly from the first moment, God demanded of man the humble confession of his sins, and in what a wonderful way does God find that kind of humility pleasing! The man answers the divine question, sensing what God was asking.

VERSE 12

The man said, "The woman you placed at my side gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate."

The Hebrew Text: *The woman, whom you gave with me.*

Adam understands what God was asking of him. Nevertheless, he does not openly confess his sin, but offers a defense for himself. excuses [279] himself, and, as it were, twists *his* error around. *The woman you place at my side*, he says, *gave me fruit and I ate*. At first, he offers an excuse and a defense when he confesses his fault. You, O God (he says) gave the woman to me, who was with me, so that she would be a comfort unto me, of which You Yourself spoke: I shall make *him a helper like himself*. However, this woman has become the cause of my ruin. If she had not existed, I would not have sinned, since indeed I ate of the fruit of the tree from which you had commanded me not to eat. I sinned and I recognize that I sinned. For all that, I did not take of the fruit of the tree, but she brought some of its fruit and she ate it and gave it to me to eat. Persuaded and compelled by her, I ate of it. Nevertheless, You gave her to me, since You said that is was not good for me to be alone and without her. Now, look, she has become my greatest loss.

Notice how, before he openly confessed his fault, he puts forward an

excuse and defense and, in whatever way he can, he is not afraid to accuse her for his crime in front of God, even though beforehand, out of love for her, he dared to violate God's command so that she might not be saddened.

However, he certainly lacked every excuse since it was necessary for him to obey God, not the woman, and keep His command. He did not receive her from God as his overlord but as a companion and a spouse subject to her own overlord. It is only necessary to obey overlords, not companions and subordinates whom one must above all command. If he was persuaded by her to eat, the sin is also turned against the one who allowed himself to be persuaded by her, since otherwise he could have and should have rebuked and reproved her rather than listen to her. Without a doubt, he never should *grieve the Holy Spirit* in order not to cause grief to the woman. If now he accuses her as a guilty party, he should have reproached her beforehand and, when she erred, he should have censured her. No, indeed, he should have forbidden her to eat. She should not be dear to him that he would allow her to sin against the Lord God in order not to make her sad. Moreover, he himself should not commit the same crime on account of her. Therefore, he was an accessory much less by not prohibiting it, but even much more gravely by following it. Wherefore, excusing himself from sin, he involves himself more in sins and adds sin to sin.

[280] God could very sharply reproach that wretch for all these things and then because exalted by Lucifer-like arrogance he had sought after the likeness of God. However, God, merciful and clement, contained by the great spirit of His mercy, spared him who was disturbed by his awareness of his crime, and by the dread of his punishment by the disgrace of his nudity so that he would not be carried headlong into desperation and say, as did Cain, *My punishment is too great to bear!* Next, although he certainly did not confess his sin as he should have, nevertheless his reply, partly true, lifted up his fault, even though it did not remove it completely but was a pressing ground for reproof. Therefore, He had only this from the man, and he directed His address to the woman.

VERSE 13

Then the Lord said to the woman, "Why have you done this?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me and I ate."

The Hebrew Text: *And the woman said: The serpent lifted [me] up or led [me] away.*

The Aramaic Translation: *It made me err.*

The Septuagint: *Ho ophis epatese me, i.e. The serpent deceived me, as our Vulgate version has.*

God does not ask whether it was done, although it is an established fact. Instead, He asks why it was done: *Why have you done this?* He says: You heard the man transferring the blame onto you and attributing everything to you who were given to him for help and made from his flesh and bone to support him with your comfort. However, you became an offense for him for the greatest evil and the pitiable hurling of threats. *Why did you do this?* And why have you become the author of such ignominy for yourself and your husband? Truly terrified, she defends her sin and turns the blame back upon the serpent. *The serpent*, she says, *deceived me*. Just as the man threw the blame on the woman, so, too, the woman, finding no way out, confesses the deed but transfers the fault to the serpent. That wicked beast, she says, brought us our fall; his pernicious advice drove us to this confusion. He *deceived me, and I ate*; he did not compel me, but he *deceived* me. The man does not say that he was compelled, but rather *The woman gave me [fruit] and I ate*. He only said *gave*, not *compelled*, not *forced*. However, she said *deceived*, not *forced*. Nowhere was there mention of necessity or violence, just will and free judgment. The enemy of our salvation employed the service of that evil [281] beast; it gave counsel and *deceived*; it did not use force or compulsion but instead it made its deception complete by harmful advice.

God, however, although he could have in many ways rebutted and very severely rebuked the woman's replies, was content with her words and did not compel her to speak further. After he discovered the author of

the evil, He approaches the serpent and directs the punishment for it.

VERSES 14-15

And the Lord God said to the serpent: Because thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed among all cattle, and beasts of the earth; upon thy breast shalt thou go, and earth shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she²⁶ shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.

The Hebrew Text: *Cursed are you before all livestock and every beast of the field: upon your belly you will go and you will eat dust in all the days etc. I shall place hostilities²⁷ between you and the woman, and between your seed and between her seed. It will crush your head, and you will crush it as to his heel.*

The Aramaic Reading has everything exactly as the Hebrew except the words: *I shall put hostility between you and the woman, and between your son and between her son; you will call to mind what you did to her from the beginning, and you will observe him to the end.*

The Jerusalem Targum relates this prophecy of this last passage to the days of the king, the Messiah.

For a clearer understanding of these verses, one must pay attention to what I also mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, to wit, that by the word *serpent* not only an animal or a demon ought to be understood, but both, that is to say, a demon and a serpent. It is the demon who speaks through the serpent and uses its service to tempt. Indeed, the serpent is the instrument, as it were, through which the demon perpetrated his

²⁶ Translator's Note: I have used the Douay translation here because the CCD does not render this pronoun of the Protoevangelium as it appears in the Vulgate. The CCD, following the Hebrew, prints the 3rd p. s. masc. (*he*), while the Douay, following the Vulgate, prints *she*. See St. Lawrence's discussion on verse 15, which follows later.

²⁷ Translator's Note: The Latin word he used is just usually found in the plural form, and I rendered it plural for the sake of accuracy. It is the same word used in the Vulgate, which the Douay translates as plural.

wicked deeds. Therefore when we read in this passage that God considered punishment for the serpent, [282] we should understand that the penalty was considered against both. Just as we understand the demon by means of the serpent as an animal, because of a kind of proportion and analogy that is found between both, so, too, by the sensible punishments, inflicted on the sensible²⁸ serpent, in the same way we ought to investigate those that were inflicted on the intellectual serpent, the Devil. Even more than that, those things that seem in this verse to be inflicted by God literally on the serpent as an animal, were not directed principally against the animal but against the serpent as devil, even if they truly seem to have been aimed at the animal.

To the serpent, i.e. the Devil, *the Lord* said, *Cursed are you*. The Lord God began by making his inquiry about this crime from the man and in the same way went over to the woman, so that they, recognizing their sin, might confess and receive pardon, since their sin was certainly forgivable and could be removed by penance and humble confession, which they ought to do as they were able. Inasmuch as they were granted *an acceptable time* and *a day of salvation* to be engaged upon the *fruits befitting repentance*. Indeed, after God learns from the woman who the chief author of the evil was, He turns to the serpent, and imposes punishment, as it is no longer worth hearing the reply. The serpent did not come to judgment as a defendant who could offer a defense, for he was already unpardonably resolute in sin and already condemned, judged as the eternal enemy, against whom no other thing is proposed except that he be punished according to his merits.

Whereupon immediately we read the following verse: *Because thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed among all cattle, and beasts of the earth*. When the punishments were also directed against and inflicted on the sensible serpent, it should not seem to be a marvel that the Lord addressed his remarks to a brute animal as though it does not understand what is being said. Elsewhere in Scripture, we read that God spoke to a fish through Jonah. However, speech of this sort signifies an expression of the divine will through outward effects. If you will, take the Hebrew original:

²⁸ Translator's Note: "Sensible" is a scholastic term of art referring to the serpent as an animal, for animals are creatures with sensitive, but not intellectual, souls.

Cursed are you before all livestock and every beast of the field. The serpent as animal, from which we must take a figurative representation for a demon, is clearly viewed before all cattle and beasts of the field as a creature of this kind: cursed, i.e. execrable and detestable, the abhorrent and poisonous betrayer of man. Although the serpent must be cursed by its own nature, [283] nevertheless it is surely fitting to think that He created this curse and malediction for it after the Devil used its tongue to work so great a misdeed. We are not only accustomed to hate the things that harm us but also the instruments with which they do harm. For the Devil, having used the assistance of this animal, brought forth wicked counsel; God therefore considered a punishment for it. Just as a deranged father who slays his favorite son while punishing him destroys the sword and blade by which his son was killed, and he smashes and breaks it into pieces. Accordingly, *Cursed are you... before every beast of the field.*

From this, one may think that the animals were not cursed, for if the serpent was cursed after the sin, not only was he cursed, but cursed before all the beasts of the field and the cattle. These doubtlessly were not cursed before the sin. However, after the sin they were cursed, since there is almost no animal, cattle, or beasts that in some way cannot bring harm to man, as they are subject to the curse so that they—and above all the serpent—must be dreaded, much hated, and feared by man.

But if the serpent, who served as an instrument, experienced so great an indignation, what kind of punishment was given to the Devil? Of him, it is much more truly said: *Because you did this, cursed are you before all cattle and beast of the field.* Nevertheless, the damnation of the Devil is not spoken of now; it is reserved for the last judgment, concerning which the Lord said in Matthew 25:41²⁹: *Depart from me...into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels.* Yet the punishment of which we must take heed is mentioned: *Thou art cursed among all cattle, and beasts of the earth.* No, it says *before all* in the Hebrew. God says that many ferocious, wild animals and very fierce, cruel, and terrible beasts are hostile to man and rage against him: asps, basilisks, dragons³⁰, tigers,

²⁹ Translator's Note: The Capuchin edition misprints the citation as Mt. 23:41.

³⁰ Translator's Note: Although we now consider these animals imaginary, St. Lawrence viewed them as real. Psalm 90 (91):13 of the Vulgate Psalter reads: *super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis et conculcabis leonem et draconem* (you will walk upon the asp and

bears, rapacious wolves, lions, and there are many others cursed against man. Man must loathe, dread, fear, and run far away from them, for they can bring about the end of his mortal life. You, however, before all these *are cursed* with regard to man. You must be much more loathed, detested, dreaded, feared, guarded against, and avoided and even more. With poisoned words and a lethal cup, you brought to him not only the end of his bodily life, by which death came to the whole race of men, but [284] you also rendered him guilty of eternal death and a slave of sin. You offered with your deadly poison an end of spiritual life, which consisted of grace and charity. Wherefore, he ought to curse, detest, dread, and avoid you much more than the face of any extremely poisonous snake or the breath of a pestilential dragon or the gaze of a basilisk. By their poison, these things cause man to lose his temporal life, but you render him utterly expropriated of his spiritual life, which consists in grace and charity, as well as of his eternal life, which consists of blessed glory in the vision and enjoyment of the highest good. If you were permitted to do as you wished, you would also offer much crueller and fiercer punishments, afflictions, and torments, and a much more terrible and savage end of his temporal life, as one clearly sees what any extremely savage and monstrous beast would be able to inflict on him as long as you are allowed to do as you please. Therefore, *cursed are you* with regard to man. Like the cruelest and fiercest lion and the grimmest beast, you go about roaring and seeking to devour man. *Before all cattle and any blood-thirsty beast*, all of which, even those of a much inferior nature, I declare are placed before you with a censure incurred by the very fact of committing a crime. They infallibly preserve that which by their own nature is fit for them, not because of sin, but owing to of the condition of their own nature they make their own state in which I have placed them. As for you, however, whatever you do,

the basilisk; you will tread upon the lion and the dragon). In the 16th century, Conrad Gesner, the celebrated Swiss physician and naturalist, famed for his systematic compilation of information on plants and animals (and considered one of the founders of modern zoology) described dragons in his *Historiae animalium*. (The fifth book of that monumental work, dealing with serpents, was published as late as 1587.) Perhaps the words could have been rendered as “lizards” and “venomous snakes.” However, since St. Lawrence just a few lines later refers to the legend of the deadly effect of the animal’s gaze, I decided to retain basilisk. I kept dragon because the CCD uses it, even when it renders the Vulgate *basilisk* as *viper* in the Ps. 90 (91):13.

you do because of your sin, since from that sublime state of imperishable glory in which I placed you, you were banished by crime and sin and you did not preserve your original state. Therefore, I now put you first: *Cursed are you* before all the cattle and the beasts of the field.

The verse continues: *Upon thy breast shalt thou go, and earth shalt thou eat all the days of thy life*. The serpentine animal that the Devil used is manifestly by its own nature one of this kind and condition. It is absolutely not evident or well established whether the serpent had the same natural appearance before it received the curse as it does now. As we read in the Yalkut Shim'oni, the comprehensive Midrashic catena on the Bible, and as Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol says, Jewish scholars assert that beforehand the serpent indeed had feet. By the Lord's sentence, however, their feet were cut from it so that it would no longer walk on feet but on its breast. St. John Chrysostom also seems to affirm this, namely that the serpent had [285] another bodily shape after the curse. Likewise St. Jerome in his *Hebrew Philological Inquiries on Genesis*. Others think differently, since the serpent did not sin. Why, then, was the punishment inflicted on it? They also think it ridiculous to hold the opinion that the serpent had other means of moving itself before it incurred the curse, since Moses very clearly said that God created reptiles from the beginning.

To be sure, the opinion of the pious appears much more probable to me, namely that, although the serpent committed no sin, and the Devil alone perpetrated that execrable crime through the serpent, nevertheless in consequence of the hatefulness and malediction of the crime, the serpent, which Satan used as an instrument, also underwent such a great indignation. It was punished in the same way in which the Lord in Leviticus 20:15 ordered the destruction of an animal along with the man who committed with the animal the horrid and abominable sin against the laws of nature. We see the same thing also in Deuteronomy 13:14-16, regarding a city led astray from the worship of God, where not only the men are ordered to pay the penalty of death but also the cattle are ordered to be killed and household goods burnt. Similarly in 1 Samuel 15:2-3, in the case of the Amalekites, on account of a sin committed long before by their forefathers, not only were the men ordered to be slain but also women, children and suckling, oxen and sheep and whatever else there was. All these things were ordered in consequence of the hatred,

execration, and horror of the sin, so that together with the sinners these things, too, which were used as instruments for perpetrating the sins, were exterminated. Therefore, why should we wonder whether punishments on this sort are inflicted on the serpent in this verse, when the Devil committed so horrendous and loathsome a crime through it? Therefore, the physical transformation in the serpent's nature came about from God, Who visited it with such a punishment that will last for all time, so that by its appearance it may be an example to all in the future lest that infectious counsel be further heard and lest an opportunity be granted to the grievous snares of the serpent. Furthermore, the change in appearance occurred so that, seeing that the serpent (which the Devil used as an instrument) underwent so great an indignation, we may perceive with our intellect the punishments that were inflicted by God. Whence I believe that Scripture spoke with utmost accuracy when we read: *Upon thy breast shalt thou go, and earth shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.*

[286] In order to expose his craftiness and the cunning of his thoughts, because his every movement was for wickedness and fraud, God says, *Upon thy breast or belly shalt thou go.* By that is meant the Devil's heart in which he fosters the wickedest thoughts with all craftiness and cunning and in turn feeds his foulest desires for enticements to which he wanted to draw everyone to be changed for himself as if into the food that is turned into the substance of the one eating. Therefore, Scripture adds: *And earth shalt thou eat all the days of thy life,* i.e. men of the earth who desire, love, and pursue earthy rather than heavenly things. You yourself shall creep over these men on your breast or belly through the infusion of evil thoughts and by exciting filthy concupiscence by the illicit movement of the sensible appetite.

However, for a clearer understanding of this passage, one must note certain things. First, observe the word that in Hebrew is read as *breast* and is so translated in the Vulgate means "breast" and "belly." For that reason, the Septuagint used both words, viz. *breast* and *belly*, desiring to render one Hebrew word with two in Greek, because the translators thought that the word was used by Moses for both senses. However, since for the benefit of the sensible living creature, in which the breast and belly are both so assigned so that there is almost no difference of the breast in relation to the belly, the expression represents this invisible enemy of ours,

hence by the word *breast*, we understand the drives and thoughts that are there in force. By the word *belly*, however, we must understand the carnal appetites and the foul and illicit movements of filthy concupiscence, which are felt in that place, sustained there, and take their origin from that place. Because our enemy crawls to those whom he wishes to deceive with these pleasures, it is written accordingly: you shall creep on your breast and belly.

Second, one must consider that while the first humans were still innocent, the Devil never had the ability to approach humans with inward temptations, either by proposing wrongful and obscene images or by infusing evil thoughts or even by exciting lust by means of illicit movements. He could only tempt man by proposing delightful objects to the senses. Whence as he first undertook to tempt them, he appeared in a sensible form. However, after he overcame them and, by the law of war and the rights of the warrior, he made them subject to his power—*for*, as it says in 2 Peter 2:19, *by whatever a man is overcome, of this he is the slave*. He had the power of undertaking to lure man not only by external temptations but also by internal ones so that he proposes to the internal senses lewd images and wicked thoughts, inserts perverse feelings, excites carnal concupiscence with forbidden movements, and kindles the fire of impure desire. This is what is meant in this verse: *Upon thy breast and belly shalt thou go*. This is the power granted to him.

Furthermore, in order to eat the earth over which he crawled on his breast and belly, which is to say, in order to devour men knowing earthly things over whom he crawled on his breast (i.e. with wicked thoughts and the impulse of the mind) and on his belly (i.e. with allurements of voluptuousness) so that he unites them to himself and makes them members of his own body.

This is his punishment, namely that he then has those in his power who disdain God's commands. He who overcame all men when the first man was vanquished does not exercise his power over all, but only on the *earth*. For the earth yields to the serpent and receives the imprint of his bodily motion. It does not resist like a stone, notwithstanding the fact that the serpent travels over it, it still receives no impression, because the stone does not yield to it, but rather resists. Thus depraved and wicked men who despise the commands of God are *earth*, since they allow the Devil to

creep over them and they yield to him, because they consent to his temptations and perform whatever evil thing he will have proposed. Not so are the just, who keep the commands of God. They are like the hardest stones on which the heavenly edifice is famed, built, as it is written in Ephesians 2:20, upon *Christ Jesus as the chief cornerstone*. Even if the Devil crawls over them on his breast and belly in accordance with the power he received, which the just cannot avoid, i.e. even if he introduces the temptations of wicked thoughts and hurls the darts of voluptuousness, they nevertheless resist him by the force of their mind and do not yield as a result of the temptations, but they cast them off. Additionally, no trace of the Devil's movement remains, because they make no agreement with him. For this reason, the devil does not devour them, but he does the *earth*, which yields its ground.

He does not exercise this power forever, just *for all the days of his life*. One must not think by that phrase that in some way he will die at any time, since he is not composed of a corporeal nature and is already destined for the eternal punishment of fire, *which is prepared for him [288] and his angels*. Yet Scripture says, *All the days of thy life*, because he is said to live for all the time in which he is permitted to live under that cloudy atmosphere and, as it says in 1 Peter 5:8, to go about seeking *someone to devour*. That time is until the end of the world, before the last judgment, when he will be shut within the eternal prison as though in a tomb, and he will not be allowed to travel or eat further. Wherefore he is rightly said to end his life.

However, before it comes to that, God inflicts another scourge upon him, saying: *I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she³¹ shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel*. Since, according to the Jerusalem Targum, this passage refers to the days of the Messiah, it seemed most fitting to me to interpret this verse with reference to the Christ. First, indeed, it designates the woman who was chosen from the eternal ages as the restorer of our parents, the vivifier of later generations, and most worthy Mother of the Son of God. She was

³¹ Translator's Note: I have used the Douay translation here because the CCD does not render this pronoun of the Protoevangelium as it appears in the Vulgate. The CCD, following the Hebrew, prints the 3rd p. s. masc. (*he*), while the Douay, following the Vulgate, prints *she*. See St. Lawrence's discussion below.

foreknown by the Almighty and Most High Father and made ready for the Son. She was foreshadowed by the Fathers, foretold by the Prophets, and preserved by the angels. She is a woman to be marveled at and the most worthy Virgin with all honor, to whom *the angel was sent*. She is a virgin in her flesh, a virgin in her mind, a virgin by sacred vow, a virgin in body and mind. She is the most holy woman, uniquely to be admired and admirable above all women, wonderfully blessed, who encompassed the man in her womb, the new thing that the Lord promised he would do in Jeremiah 31:22.

Now, however, Scripture says that he will put enmities between the serpent and the woman: *I will put enmities between thee and the woman*. You, He says, conquered one woman, and through her you also gained the man by means of your wicked deceit. I now establish another conflict in which another woman must be overcome by you, if you wish safely to have power over your plunder and to attack more widely this assumed tyranny with your deceptions. She is entirely prepared to snatch away your plunder and she is girded courageously for the conflict. She did not fall in this first battle, she did not lie under the sin common to all others, and she was not found at any time under your power. Therefore, in the second battle I choose her as a champion to fight so that she may fight with you. With this new woman preserved from every spot of sin, I will that you engage in a new conflict to try to see whether you can overcome her.

Nevertheless, a conflict of this type does not end in her. Just as the first battle did not end in the first woman, but you finished it in the vanquished man, so the second conflict ought to end [289] in the man from the seed of this woman. *And thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head*, or, as the Hebrew text has it, *he*, viz. the seed, *shall crush your head*. Both the Vulgate and the Hebrew readings are correct, for the most holy woman crushed the head of the serpent and she reduced to nothing all sorts of suggestions of the Evil One, as much concerning the enticements of the flesh as concerning the pride of the mind. Moreover, Christ—who is said to be the *seed* of this woman and the son of the handmaid of the Lord since he was born of a virgin, not from the seed of a man but rather was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost and was formed out of her most pure virginal blood—broke the head of the crooked serpent. He took away his control and sovereignty over men in the world, He cast the

serpent from the world, and He subjected him to the power of men, to whom He gave power over demons to tread upon serpents, scorpions, and every power of the enemy. What does trampling a serpent under foot mean except to crush its head?

However, the serpent cannot raise itself to His head but lies in wait for His heel: *And thou*, He says, *shalt lie in wait for her heel* or, according to the Hebrew: *You will crush it as to his heel* or *you will bite him in the heel*. The serpent could not crush the head of the seed of this woman but just his *heel*. The reason is that the seed is Christ; however, the head of Christ is God. God says in Proverbs 21:30 that there is no power, *no understanding, no counsel against the Lord. His heel*, however, i.e. it could break His flesh during His Passion on the cross and by means of the scourging, or, rather than break the flesh, it could bite Him. For it is written in John 19:36: *Not a bone of him shall you break*. It bit Him whom Pilate delivered to the Jews to be crucified after his body was thoroughly scourged.

Yet on the cross, the Son of this woman remembered Satan and what he did to Him from the beginning, because He vanquished him on the cross and took away all his weapons with which he was victorious before. He snatched his plunder, which he deceitfully received at first, so that the one who conquered beforehand on the tree “might also be overcome on the tree.” It seems to me that the Aramaic paraphrase rendered this verse very accurately as: *He*, it reads, *will call to mind* or *will remember what you did to him* [290] *from the beginning, and you will observe him in the end*. If, in fact, the Devil observed Christ in the end of his days, as the Jerusalem Targum has, while he spoke to Him through his ministers during His ignominious death, Christ indeed reminded Satan what he had done to Him from the beginning. He took away the sin perpetrated by our first parents who were deceived by the wiles of the Devil. The Devil who vanquished man on the tree and reduced the whole human race to his power was conquered by a man on the tree of the cross and was reduced to the power of men, seeing that God came to the praetorium clothed in human spoils. Because of that, as in 1 Samuel 4:8, all the terrified and fearful demons, *sighing...said: Woe to us: for there was no such great joy yesterday and the day before. Woe to us. Who shall deliver us from the hand of these high gods? These are the gods that struck Egypt with all the plagues.*

Wherefore, the judgment of the world was made on the cross and *the prince of this world* was cast out. As in Luke 11:21-22, the *strong man, fully armed* guarded *his courtyard* and everything that he possessed was in peace, but Christ, the son of the woman, overcomes him. For that reason a stronger man vanquished Satan and took from him all his weapons that he relied upon, and he took away and divided the spoils gained by fraud and deceit in his former victory.

VERSE 16

*To the woman also he said: I will multiply thy sorrows, and thy conceptions: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall have dominion over thee.*³²

The Hebrew Original: *To the woman he said: Multiplying I will multiply your pain and your conception; in pain shall you bring forth children and to your husband shall be your desire and he shall rule you or over you.*

The learned men of the Jews, as Rabbi Abrabanel relates, understood by *sorrows* the “anguish of pregnancy.” By *conception*, they understand the *anguish of pregnancy*. Indeed, he so explains the multiplication of man, because before sin, i.e. if she had not sinned, she would have had only one conception, i.e. she would have conceived only one time. He substantiates this statement by saying that men always had been alive, and if they had produced sons and daughters all their lives, the earth would not have been able to sustain them. But after sin, insofar man became corruptible and mortal, divine wisdom determined that humans should give birth often so that if they were to die, they would not be entirely deficient in number.

[291] The Aramaic translation translates as follows: *Your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you.*

Some books have: *There will be a turning around to the husband.*

The Septuagint translated the verse as: *I will multiply your pains and your groaning, and your turning around [shall be] to your husband.*

³² Translator's Note: The Douay version because the Latin text differs materially from the Hebrew. The CCD is much closer to the Hebrew than to the Latin.

Indeed, in Hebrew the word is *teshuqathek*, to wit, *your longing or desire*. So Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol and David Kimchi explain the word. Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra explains it as *mishmateka*, which is “obedience, so that the sense is: and your obedience will be to your husband, and you will obey all things that he shall command of you, because you are in his power so that you do his will.”

I explain this verse in the following manner.

I will multiply thy sorrows.

Our first parents led a happy and almost blessed life in the most pleasant paradise of delights. They sensed nothing troublesome, nothing uncomfortable, no pain or sorrow and nothing burdensome. In truth, because of sin, they were deprived of happiness, the result being that they were not entirely happy as before. Rather they were wretched and miserable owing to the punishment that God inflicted on them for the crime they perpetrated. Since the woman sinned first, God inflicted the punishment on her first: He said, *Multiplying I will multiply your sorrows*, i.e. I will most certainly and infallibly multiply your pains, and I will not regret it at any time. In the Hebrew, the word for “sorrows” is *icuvon*, a word that means pain, sadness, grief, confusion, and toil. Whence our version expressed the force of this word by *sorrows*, saying *I will multiply your sorrows*, for *sorrow* means misery, calamity, weakness, wearying sickness, and a burdensome toil that cannot be escaped.

And your conceptions.

In Hebrew, this word is *herayon*, which means conception, toilsome pregnancy, the groaning and anguish that a woman endures from conception to child-birth. For that reason, the Septuagint translated the word as *groaning*.

In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children.

Women most manifestly undergo all these things for the punishment of sin. If sin had not [292] occurred, women would have conceived children

without obscenity, filth, and far from every lustful delight. They would have carried to the offspring without every heaviness, toil, and sorrow, and they would have given birth without pain. For just as voluntary custom, not the desire of lust, united the nature of man and woman in order to conceive children, thus conception occurred not because sensory pleasure had corrupted the flesh, but because the will had been set free. Thus there was no painful groaning in giving birth. Instead, a kind of force of nature pleasantly relaxed the womb and birth canal, and if sin had not intervened, women would have felt the same joy in giving birth, which they feel after the child is born, owing to the fact that they no longer remember the distress and pain that they suffered during birth *because* through them *a man is born into the world*, as it says in John 16:21.

And thou shalt be under thy husband's power or to your husband a longing or your desire; and he shall have dominion over thee.

At first, the woman was given to the man as a solace and delight, as a companion and *a helper like himself*, free from servitude. Now, however, she is set under her *husband's power*, so that the man rules over her and reduces her to his power. And since one who is subject to the rule of another ought to follow his master's orders, keep his commands, and behave according to his will, not that he should do whatever the master wishes but that he put into practice what his master desires by ascertaining his will, assenting him, and conforming to his will. *And to your husband shall be your desire*, so that you may not do the things that you wished or desired but that you refer your wishes and desires to your husband and do what he wishes, comply with his wishes, and obey him. The reason for your submission is that *he shall have dominion over thee*, that is to say, I set him as lord over you, and I will you acknowledge his dominion over you and that you always regard your husband as given to you as your master. He will rule, govern, rebuke, correct, reprove, and reproach you when necessary lest living heedlessly and freely outside his control you come to your downfall.

The meaning could be as follows: *And your desire shall be to your husband*, from a natural desire by which the woman desires her husband for her sustenance, defense, protection, companionship, security, and

delight, all of which the woman, as it were, is lacking. This is just as something imperfect always is accustomed to desire the perfect, by which it [293] can be perfected and its defects are about to be satisfied. Still, the previous explanation is more consonant with the literal meaning, although this explanation is very accurate.

To be sure, one must pay attention to what is written: *to the man* (or *husband*), not *to the men* (or *husbands*), since polyandry was always very foul, and one woman was never allowed to be married to many men at the same time. A woman ought to have just one husband, not many, in opposition to those obscene and very foolish heretics who want a woman to be shared by all, a trait that belongs to wild animals, not men.

Nonetheless, it is necessary to understand how this verse expresses a general legal judgment that includes the entire female sex. For many women seem to be delivered from the sorrows of child-birth. These are the unmarried, virgins, and the barren who for whatever reason do not conceive. Many are found to be barren, some from natural causes and some by an act of God. Some of these are barren for God's glory but some are barren as a punishment of some sin. Some in fact are perpetually sterile, but others are temporarily barren. In addition, many are sterile not from nature but by grace. They have no knowledge of sexual intercourse, and they wish never to have coitus. They take a vow of virginity to the Lord, and they preserve it without stain. Whence it happens that they are not hard pressed by the sorrows expressed in this judgment of the Lord. However, one must know that as often as God generally establishes and determines anything, it must truly be understood that the decision or legal determination applies to those who are capable of that which is the matter of the judgment.

Therefore, although the Lord says to the woman: *I will multiply thy sorrows, and thy conceptions: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children.*, His decision cannot apply to the barren, to whom nature has denied the ability to conceive. In addition, it does not apply to girls, who are not yet marriageable, nor to those who have not had intercourse and who never married. These women are united to Jesus Christ and have become one with Him in spirit. They have not cared about the things that pertain to a husband and how to please him. They are solicitous of things of the Lord, how to please God and indeed the eternal spouse Jesus Christ.

Nevertheless, all the women that I have mentioned are not in any way whatsoever [294] free from the sorrows belonging to a woman. Those who are sterile by nature, by the very fact that they are sterile, suffer the greatest sorrows. In nature, sterility is a greater evil than being fertile and all its attendant pains. Wherefore in the Old Law, which follows the nature of things, sterility was abominable and was under a curse, as though the woman who was sterile were marked and cursed by God. Whence Exodus 23:26 includes among the blessings of the people this boon: *No woman in your land will be barren or miscarry.*

Therefore, since sterility is a great evil, it originated from the sin of the woman and very often was also inflicted on women because of sin. Wherefore, in the primeval state sterility had nowhere existed. Nevertheless, the Lord did not wish to memorialize that it was afflicted on account of sin because sterility is not of a universal but rather of a particular nature. Therefore, sterile women who do not suffer from the pains of birthing are thought to be in a worse condition than fertile women with all their sorrows. As it says in John 16:21, *a woman about to give birth has sorrow...but when she has brought forth the child, she no longer remembers the anguish for her joy that a man is born into the world.* Sterile women are deprived of that joy, and they bear a perpetual disgrace.

Wherefore, in Sacred Scripture we read that many women fertile by nature were made sterile as a punishment for some sin. For example, Michol, the wife of David, was made barren because she mocked her husband for playing before the ark of God. In addition, the Lord closed all the wombs of Abimelech's household. As a counter example, God made many barren women fertile because of the outstanding merits of their virtues, just as we read of Lia; although she was disliked by her husband and her sister, when the Lord saw her humility, He heard her and consoled her: *He made her fruitful, while her sister remained barren.* Accordingly, owing to the vast joy and greatest consolations that she felt because of the birth of children, her barren sister envied her, until God, having remembered Rachel, heard her prayer and made her fruitful. Seeing this, completely happy and full of joy, Rachel said, *God has taken away my reproach.* Similarly Sara, the wife of Abraham, Rebecca, the wife [295] Isaac, Anna [or Hannah] the mother of Samuel, Elizabeth, the wife of Zachary [or Zechariah], earned from the Lord the grace of conception

and child-birth on account of the merits of their virtues. Nevertheless, all these women, who attained from the Lord this kind of grace, were not made exempt from the Lord's decree, but they surely gave birth in pain, as Scripture makes perfectly clear about Rachel, when she gave birth to her second son, *By reason of her hard labor she began to be in danger, whence when her soul was departing for pain, and death was now at hand, she called the name of her son Benoni, that is, the son of my pain*³³.

Although virgins are also not entirely included in the decree, since the Lord raised them to a better condition, they are still not free from the womanly pains within. Their *spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak* and very feeble. Wherefore, by the fact that they are virgins, they must endure many heavy passions. The possession of virginity is burdensome; it is a great undertaking to rein in the body, to restrain the incontinence of the flesh, to oppose oneself to sensual pleasures, to engage daily in the most violent war that in no way is to be calmed, to carry always with oneself the enemy whithersoever one goes, an enemy who does not allow one to breathe in the evening, nor at night, nor at dawn, nor at midday. Instead, it always does battle and yields to sensual pleasure, thinking about coitus in order to shut out virtue and bring in fornication. Whence it consumes a virgin every day and every hour, set aflame in the manner of an oven. This being the case, in the following verse the war of enmities is most accurately represented: *I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel*. Just as I described the glorious Virgin Mother of virgins, so must these women be understood, who follow in her footsteps.

Truly, supremely laborious virginity is a most burdensome task. Virginity is such that none of the ancients could preserve it. To the Prophets, it even seemed dreadful. Wherefore, if women suffer heavy sorrows, toils, and pains in the birth of children, virgins endure much more burdensome sorrows in order to preserve their virginal chastity. Only one woman is exempt from this decree: the Most Holy Virgin Mary, [296] the mother of Jesus Christ, the spouse of virgins. She was absolutely immune from all the evils of the decree, not by nature, by an

³³ Translator's Note: The Douay version, because the CCD, following the Hebrew text, does not include the explanatory etymological phrase *That is, the son of my pain*.

extraordinary and singular grace. For she always was a most pure virgin, a virgin in mind, a virgin by vow, a virgin in flesh, a most holy virgin in mind and body. The sorrows that other virgins experience, however, were not multiplied because her virginity was preserved. Never did an obscene or impure thought come creeping into her mind, nor did anyone in any way whatsoever think of violating her virginal purity, and at no time did she ever feel even the smallest movement of lustful concupiscence. Her flesh was the purest and the holiest, formed by the hand of God much more purely and excellently than the first woman in that pristine state of the brightest innocence, where Eve experienced none of these things.

Then, not only was she a virgin most pure, but she was a very fertile woman with the brightness of her virginity—fertile not in the number of offspring but in the excellence of her offspring. Her conceptions were not multiple. She had only one child, in whom, as Paul says, *dwells...the fullness of the Godhead bodily* and in whom *shall all the nations be blessed*. She did not conceive in passion, but she was filled with the grace of the Holy Ghost, and she conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, Who sanctified her in mind and body and was the recipient of her purest virgin blood. From her virginal womb and then from the work the Holy Ghost and from the power of God Most High the Eternal Father, the Word there ineffably attached was made flesh.

Furthermore, she did not give birth to the Son in pain but with a supreme and ineffable joy, as is held by the firmest belief of the universal Church. For Jesus Christ the Eternal Word of God the Father, made flesh in the womb of the Virgin, came forth from his mother's womb, the sealed and untouched cloister of virginity, leaving no sign of his passage. Wherefore, Solomon said in the literal Hebrew text of Proverbs 30:19, His passage was the *way of a man in³⁴ a virgin*, which he confessed he did not understand because of the profundity of the mystery. Accordingly, the Virgin Mary gave birth to a son without feeling pain, remaining a virgin before His birth, during His birth, and after his birth.

She was not in fact under a man's power and no one ruled over her. Her most holy husband, Joseph, was given to her not as a master but as a

³⁴ Translator's Note: St. Lawrence translates the Hebrew preposition used here as "in." Modern translators and exegetes give a decidedly different reading by rendering the Hebrew as "the way of a man with a maid."

servant, so that he would serve the most glorious Virgin as his overlord. Their most holy marriage was not hallowed [297] so that the most holy Virgin, a woman like not other, should be subject to her husband in body and mind. Neither was she helper of a man who did not play the part of a husband in her conception. The truth, indeed, is the opposite: Joseph was made to be the Virgin's helper in respect to the birth, so that she would make use of his support. It is firmly established, therefore, that the most glorious Virgin, in no way, was included under God's judicial decision regarding women.

VERSES 17-19

*And to Adam he said: Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work; with labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth. In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.*³⁵

The Hebrew text differs in a few places, as in: *Cursed be ground on account of you, in pain shall you eat of it and in the hard work*³⁶ *of your countenance will you eat bread until when you return to the earth because you have been taken from it.*

The Aramaic version translates it as: *Because you listened to the word of your wife, cursed is the ground because of you, in toil shall you eat of it.*

The Septuagint, however, translated it as: *Cursed is the ground in your works*, whence the Vulgate, in imitation of the Greek version, translates the verse in the same way.

³⁵ Translator's Note: The Douay version, to accommodate St. Lawrence's discussion below on the difference between the Vulgate translation and that of other versions.

³⁶ Translator's Note: The original Hebrew means "in the sweat," the word coming from a Semitic root that means "to flow." St. Lawrence knows that the meaning is *in sudore*, "in the sweat." See his discussion below.

The reason for the different renderings is that in Hebrew two words are very close in appearance owing to the similarity [in shape] of two Hebrew letters: *'bwr*, the last letter of which is resh (r) in the Hebrew alphabet, and *'bwd*, the last letter of which is daleth (d). If the first word is prefixed by the Hebrew *be*, the phrase means “on account of.” For the second word, however, if it has preposition *be*, it is the infinitive construct, formed from the verb *'bd*, which means “to work, labor.” Thus the Septuagint and the Vulgate versions read word in the vowel-less Hebrew text as *b'bwdk*, “in thy work.” Nevertheless, the correct word in Hebrew is *b'burk* (pronounced with vowels as *baavureka*), i.e. “because of you, on account of you). The right letter is resh, not daleth, just as the Aramaic version renders the word: *cursed is the ground because of you*.

I now come to the explanation of this passage.

Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife.

After God cursed the serpent (who stood as the chief author of the crime) and the woman (who was the middle cause³⁷), He now curses the man, in whom the sin was completely consummated, [298] and He hurls five curses against him, as Rabbi Abrabanel notes about this passage. The first is: *Cursed be ground on account of you*. The second is: *In toil or pain shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life*. The third is: *thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth*. The fourth is *In the sweat or hard work of thy face thou shalt eat bread*. The fifth is: *till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return*. I must explain the curses one by one.

Before God inflicts these curses on him, He gives His reasons for the infliction: *Because*, He says, *thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife*, or according to the Hebrew, *because you obeyed the voice of your wife*. I formed (says God) the woman as a *helper like yourself*, I gave her to you as a companion and wife, and I established you as her husband and her head, not for you to obey her, but for her to obey you always. She was never to command you. Instead, you ought to have commanded her. I did not put

³⁷ Translator's Note: In scholastic philosophy, the middle cause stands between the first or highest cause and the effect.

her over you and I did not give her as your overlord: rather, I put you over her. However, now you have perverted the whole order of things *because you obeyed the voice of your wife*. But why did you obey? *Thou hast eaten of the tree*, He says, *whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat*. I, He says, am your God and Lord. You ought to obey Me and to keep my command. Now, however, you, after ignoring and rejecting my command, *obeyed the voice of your wife*, whom in no way were you supposed to obey, but instead you should have restrained, rebuked, and corrected her from doing what she was persuading you to do. Now I commanded you not to eat from the tree. She persuaded you. You then listened to her advice, and you spurned the command of your God and Lord. Thus you will pay the much deserved penalty and receive the punishment for so great a crime.

Cursed is the earth in thy work or because of you.

After God formed man adorned with the beauty of original justice and with the whitest luster of innocence, He *took* him and *placed him in the Garden of Eden*, so that he might live in delight there. Now however, owing to sin, he surrendered himself to be cast out from there. As he was driven out, the earth, upon which he would dwell, is cursed: *Cursed*, He says, *is the earth in thy work*. The earth is cursed not in the work of tilling the land but in the work of sin, just as it is correctly said in the Hebrew: *Cursed be ground on account of you*, i.e. on account of your sin.

From the beginning, God had given the power of great fruitfulness to the earth so that [299] it would be very fertile and rich, as it is written in the first chapter of Genesis: *“Let the earth bring forth vegetation: seed-bearing plants and all kinds of fruit trees that bear fruit...” And so it was. The earth brought forth vegetation and trees that bear fruit.* All that was done without the work and cultivation of man, since man did exist at that point. Whence the earth would preserve that which it received from the beginning, and it would produce the richest, sweetest, and most lovely fruits without the hard work of cultivation or the burdensome or even the least labor of man, unless it were for delight and enjoyment. As it is written, *God placed man in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it* because it was made for the recreation of his mind. Now, however, the earth is

cursed as the penalty of sin so that it does not produce the finest vegetation or sweet fruits without the greatest industry, burdensome hardship, laborious cultivation, and even painful work. If left uncultivated and undeveloped by men's labors, it yields no sweet and good fruits, no vegetation pleasing to man and suitable for food. In such a state it brings forth thorns, thistles, wild vines, and briars.

Therefore, the first punishment was inflicted on man. The earth was cursed on account of sin, i.e. the pristine, most fruitful power and fertility is taken from it, and it becomes sterile, deserted, and barren, and all its crops, which it produces from itself, are cursed, i.e. they are cursed and hateful for man, serving as a punishment and penalty, not as aid and support.

With labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life.

This is the second punishment that is inflicted, by which man surrendered and subjected to toils in order for him to take from the earth his needed sustenance. Whereas in paradise he had always led a happy and almost blessed life, entirely free from every labor, every sadness, and every pain, and overflowing with all delights and pleasures. Indeed, *God placed man in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it*, but it was given to him for his enjoyment and pleasure and not for work and affliction. Wherefore, there is no mention of pain or toil there, just enjoyments and pleasures. In this verse, *With labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof*, the Hebrew word used here, *içavon*, means "toil," "fatigue," "sadness," and "pain." Since this work that man had to undergo [300] to prepare his sustenance is not easy, delightful, or pleasing, but rather is burdensome, heavy, and irksome, with fatigue, sadness, and pain. It is not brief or short lived, but enduring and perpetual. *All the days of thy life*, He says. For as long as you live, even up to your death, you will never escape these toils.

Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth.

This is the third penalty inflicted through the curse. Because of sin, the earth lost its pristine, very fruitful and fertile power to produce

abundantly. As a result, it brought forth from itself only cursed and detestable crops for men's punishment rather than for their support so that only with the greatest labor after cultivation and hard work on men's part did it bring forth the crops needed for the life of men. In addition, with all these toils and burdens, it still produces thorns and thistles, briars and wild vines for the affliction of man. *Thorns and thistles*, it says, *shall it bring forth to thee*, i.e. for your affliction, annoyance, toil, and fatigue, for your discomfort and to your detriment. For although in the state of our ancient parents before the fall, the earth had produced thorns, caltrops, briars, wild vines, burrs, thistles, wrinkled shrubs, and all manner of plants that are sharp, hard, and prickly, they nevertheless did not injure or harm men. However, the sin that occurred was the reason that the earth brought forth these kind of plants for men's discomfort and detriment. Thus it is written: *Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth*, since, as the Prophet says in Psalms 48 (49):13, *Man, for all his splendor, does not abide; he resembles the beasts that perish*. Owing to sin, man is likened to cattle. As punishment of sin, the wild plants of the field, which at first were created as fodder for cattle, now are given to him as food, so that it might be made clear why it was appropriate for man the sinner (who made himself like senseless beasts) to *eat the herbs of the earth*.

Someone may ask, however, What is it that is inflicted here as punishment for sin? Were not plants given as food earlier when man was in the primeval state? For it is thus written in Genesis 1:29-30: *See, I give you every seed-bearing plant on the earth and every tree which has seed-bearing fruit to be your food and to every wild animal of the earth*. Indeed, it is true that from the beginning the plants were given to man for [301] food, but these were the best plants, not just any plant. As I noted in the first chapter in accordance with the Hebrew original, which most clearly distinguishes between the food for animals and that for men, the best plants were not those that were given to the beasts for food. As we have always indicated in that chapter, the original text reads: *See! I have given to you every plant seed-making seed upon the face of the whole earth and every tree in which there is fruit, tree seed-making seed will be for you for food. But to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heaven and to every crawling thing of the earth in which there is the breath of life, every greenness*

or *herb of grass will be for food*. Observe how clearly the kinds of food for men and brutes are differentiated. Now, however, this is the kind of punishment that is inflicted on man in this passage: The earth, although worked and cultivated, does not produce the pleasing plants and sweet fruits that before it had brought forth without toil and even without cultivation. Instead it produces almost wild plants, unpleasing and without savor, such as it had brought forth beforehand as fodder for cattle. Accordingly, it is written, *Thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth or of the field*, which were made as fodder for senseless beasts.

Nevertheless, I do not think it should be taken with such great strictness that the prohibited plants and the fruits of the trees, which were given from the beginning, may be understood as fitting for the human race. Rather as I have already said, the purpose was to indicate that this thing was appropriate for man the sinner, because, by all means, the plants and fruits that men now eat are not of the perfection, pleasantness, and deliciousness as they were when first given. By far, they are of an inferior quality, such that first were better and finer than these, and these plants and fruits may be compared to those that are given for fodder to cattle. The first plants were delightful to the taste and very pleasant; the fruits were exceedingly lovely and sweet. But now the plants that we eat are without taste and unpleasant and need many condiments lest they produce nausea in us and by their lack of flavor render our taste wholly insipid and annoying.

In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread, or in the toil of your face you shall eat bread.

In that most pleasant and delightful paradise man would have eaten of every tree except one, and done so without toil or affliction. With every delight of peaceful and joyful repose he had possession of all those good things. After sin, he was so given over to well deserved toil that the result was that if he will not work, he will not eat. *In the sweat*, [302] it says, *of thy face thou shalt eat bread*. By the word bread, we ought to understand not only the specific food, which is the principal meaning of that word, but also all food and sustenance. The Hebrew word in this passage, *lechem*, not only means *bread*, although that is as it were the chief and

principal food of man, but also it means food in general and anything that can be eaten. The result being, as in the case of the absence of sin, man would obtain and enjoy all food and sustenance utterly without any toil but instead with delight and pleasure. Thus, when he committed sin, he received nothing to eat except at the expense of pain, sadness, toil, and sweat.

This law was not imposed on a man to the extent that it binds each man one by one by its precept, but it was imposed on Man, i.e. this kind of precept was given to the human race and to whole family of men, not to each individual. For there are many men weak from old age or illness who cannot bear the burdens of physical exercise or work with their hands. In no way must one say that they are bound by this precept since there is no obligation to do the impossible. Wherefore, we should consider that the precept was given to the entire community of men because that which is bidden of the community does not necessarily apply to individuals. As is proper, it is sufficient if it is fulfilled by many. Thus, this precept was sufficiently given to the human race if it is fulfilled by those who can fulfill it and who are not excused from manual labor by a just reason since they do apply themselves to better occupations. Whence one must mark a distinction among the various states and conditions of men. It is not fitting that princes, authorities, and rulers perform manual labor, for they are worthy of being supported by their subjects, for whose sake they undertake their care. Wherefore, the Apostle in Romans 13:6-7 ordered tributes and taxes are to be rendered to them as they serve God in their ministry. But if they worthily exercise and fulfill their office and ministry as is their duty, they too, are worthy of eternal reward.

Those who apply themselves, such as those who day and night attend to spiritual exercises, reading, meditation, prayer, contemplation, *psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*, who on [303] His law meditate day and night and their will is in His law, if they do no manual labor, they could not be rebuked on the law's account, because what they do is better, and, as with Martha's sister Mary, they have chosen the *better part*. Wherefore, we must rebuke, as in the case of Martha, those who take exception and murmur and bark like dogs against these spiritual workers.

For the custom among the Gentiles and the Jews was for other men to support those who meditated day and night on the law and who took

no part in tilling the land. Just as we read in Genesis 47:22, the king of the Egyptians had established a law that foodstuffs be provided to the priests. Moreover, the Lord provided for the Levites from the tithes because they performed the service in the Meeting Tent. Moreover, the Apostle always had a care to send contributions to Jerusalem, i.e., alms for the use and support of the saints. The reason is that the faithful inhabitants after selling everything, laid the price of their things at the feet of the apostles so that it could be distributed to each, according as any one had need. They maintained a very deep poverty that resulted in rich generosity, always applying themselves to spiritual exercises, devoting their time to prayer, and serving the Lord with *psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*. Accordingly, the Apostle exhorted and petitioned the other churches of the faithful to support the need of poor Christians in Jerusalem in temporal matters, and they would be helped by them in spiritual affairs. Thus in Corinthians 2: 14:15 it says: *Your abundance may supply their want... and their abundance may...make up what you lack* in spiritual matters, *thus establishing an equality, as it is written, "He who has much had nothing over, and he who had little had not less."*

Wherefore, those who apply themselves to the better exercises, namely spiritual and divine, are not bound by bodily exercises and human drudgery. These are all sorts of monks and all those who we term "religious" in common parlance, since they serve God by ecclesiastical service and spiritual exercises in holy reading, contemplation, psalms, and hymns. But if we add to these things, preaching and teaching, and [304] managerial care and oversight, the absolute argument of equity is even stronger for them to be provided with food lest they be forced to work with their hands, as the Apostle said in 1 Timothy 5: 17-18. *Let the presbyters who rule well be held worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching. For the Scripture says, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treads out grain,"* In addition, in Corinthians 9:13-14, he says, *The Lord directed that those who preach the gospel should have their living from the gospel and that they who serve the altar, have their share with the altar.*

Whence the heretics, fired with a virulent hatred against religious orders, chatter in vain and scoff at them for their leisure and revile all those who do not work with their own hands to prepare food for

themselves. They cite this verse of Genesis and quote words of St. Paul in Corinthians, where he highly commended manual labor and gave himself as an example, saying: *We toil, working with our own hands*, and in Acts 20:34 where he said, *These hands of mine have provided for my needs*. They also quote his from Thessalonians 1 and 2: *Neither did we eat any man's bread at his cost, but we worked day and night in labor and toil...so that we might make ourselves an example for you to imitate use*. Whence he wrote of manual labor: *We exhort you...working with your hands, as we charged you*. And he also wrote, *If any man will not work, neither let him eat*.

Yet they confuse these quotations and even more they abuse rather than understand St. Paul, whom they quote. For although St. Paul did not wish to make use of the privilege of eating and drinking without having to labor, lest he offer hindrance to the gospel of Christ, he does not by reason of it rebuke those using the privilege. He could have used it, with the grace of Christ being preserved. In 1 Corinthians 16:1-3 he plainly affirms the privilege of the collection for the saints, since he was an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles. As in almost all his epistles, as St. Jerome assures us in his pamphlet *Against Vigilantius*, Paul commands that everyone ought to make a collection on the first day of the week for the solace of the saints.

[305] In these passages that the heretics cite, the Apostle does not enjoin manual labor to all men, but only those who have not the care and duty of applying themselves to better endeavors. He counsels everyone not to be sluggish in leisure. We cannot deny that there are many dedicated voluptuaries who, although they have plenty and are not weighed down by lack of money, lead an active life without any toil, doing utterly nothing neither spiritual nor liberal nor mechanical. Instead, they are engaged in games, music, or any other vanity, and they exhaust all their effort on those pursuits that pertain more to pleasure and delight. But let us return to the words of Moses in the verse that we have been studying:

Till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.

The Lord shows that man is subject to perpetual toils until his death. *Till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken*, or, according to the

Hebrew, *because you have been taken from it.*

Rabbi Abrabanel relates this verse to the curse of the land, from his interpretation of other verses in Genesis: Of course the earth was cursed while Adam was alive; however, after he died, it was not further cursed as it was in his life. As it is written of Noe in Genesis 5:29: *This one shall bring us comfort from our work and from the toil of our hands in the ground which the Lord has cursed.* After the Flood, God said said: *"I will never again curse the ground on account of man."* Moreover, regarding the curse, Ibn Ezra says that "the earth was cursed on account of the first man. It was so because after Adam's death men ate from the fruits of trees, prospered from them and were strengthened in virtue because of the mitigation of the curses. Adam received more curses than the men coming after him because he was the one who sinned and violated God's command, and so it was fitting that he be punished more than his children and his seed." He believes that these words manifest the end of the time of man's pain and toil and that the fifth curse is evidently death.

Man is naturally a debtor of death and of the dissolution of the mass of the bodily flesh. Although man would never have died if sin had not occurred, nevertheless, his immortality would have come about as a gift of grace and not from the condition of nature. The reason is that he is composed of contrary elements [306] that act and react on one another; accordingly, they can decay. Whence, with respect to the condition of nature, nothing consisting of these elements can be eternal and immortal. Thus the verse concludes: *for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return*, i.e. you were put together from muddy dust and you exist according to the flesh and not according to the soul that has its heavenly origin from God. Thus since, as to the flesh, you were joined together out of dust, it is necessary that you be resolved into dust. Therefore, death is natural to man according to his flesh even if he had not died through sin, because from the gratuitous kindness of God, this earthly frame of ours had been preserved from all corruption by that higher part of man, which came from heaven, and lived forever. After sin, however, *it is appointed unto men to die once*, as it says in Hebrews 9:27. Through sin, death entered the world and all men, with the result that not even one man could escape the punishment of death that was inflicted because of sin.

One must very fully note that we should chiefly understand the loss

of spiritual and heavenly goods in the evils that were inflicted on man on account of sin, which seem to be the privation and loss of the temporal and corporal goods that man possessed in paradise. Just as by the temporal goods, which God promised the just as a reward for virtues and good works in the Old Testament, we Christians understand the spiritual goods of grace and glory, so by the evils with which He threatens the impious and the sinners as retribution for vices and evil works, we understand eternal punishments. Since as it is fitting that good works done out of charity cannot worthily be rewarded by temporal goods, which are much inferior, so sins cannot deservedly be punished with temporal evils, since they merit eternal punishments. Thus in this verse we also ought to understand (1) in the loss of goods, the loss of the grace of spiritual goods and glory and (2) in the infliction of evils, the assault and infliction of spiritual evils. In other words, this is the guilty condition of sin and eternal punishment, which applies to us all, until, cleansed by the grace of Christ from all filth, we do not belong to the sin that we bring by our conception with ourselves along with our nature from our mother's womb.

Wherefore, it seems to me most probable and wholly in agreement with reason [307] to say that principally and properly the punishment of the first sin was inflicted for such a state of guilt. The Lord our God Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was to come to destroy the punishment together with sin itself. However, all the evils that we read about and experience are not properly punishments for the sin, but are conditions of a kind of covenant that God established with man after sin had been committed. Indeed, these evils come from sin, were born of it, and take their origin thereof. Insofar as if sin had not occurred, the future evils would not have existed in any way at any time. The Lord would not have placed us in this new state of misery and exile had we remained happy in every part in the previous state.

This very much proves the teaching of our Faith, that when our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God and true God of true God, came to destroy the punishment of the first sin along with sin itself, the original state of guilt of every first sin is removed by His grace that we received in the sacrament of baptism. Truly, we, by the grace of Christ freed both from sin and from the guilty state, are still afflicted by those punishments,

namely toil, sweat, fatigue, hunger, thirst, other innumerable discomforts, and finally death. Therefore, all these evils do not properly belong to the punishment of original sin, but are conditions of the new covenant that God established with man after sin. For just as in the primeval state He had made an agreement with man such that man would gain perpetual immortality and whatever of the goods belonged to that most delightful paradise, if he would not taste of the fruit of that tree, the result being that no matter how much he sinned, he would still never have lost those goods, as long as he had not eaten of the fruit of that tree. Therefore, in like manner, after he sinned and ate *of the tree...of the knowledge of good and evil*, God settled this covenant with him such that, after he was unwilling to be content with his former lot, he would perpetually be subject to the laws of the second covenant, that is to say, that he would lead a life of pain and toil, he would be subject to death, and he would finally die. In addition, no matter how much God gives him of the grace that makes a man receiving it pleasing to God, he would never be released from the laws and conditions of this second covenant nor would he escape them. Rather he would remain perpetually submissive and subject to them.

VERSE 20

[308] *And the man called his wife Eve because she was the mother of all the living.*

The Hebrew Text: *And the man called the name of his wife Chawah because she was the mother of every living being.*

The Aramaic Paraphrase: *Because she was the mother of all the sons of men.*

The Septuagint: *And Adam called the name of his wife Life.*

Although the first man in his primeval state was without a help like himself, the Lord God brought to Adam the woman formed and built from a rib taken during the man's deep sleep so that he should see what to call her. When he saw her and realized that she had been taken from him,

he loved her very much and almost gave her a proper name, saying, *She shall be called Woman, for from man she has been taken*. After sin, however, he placed on her another name and, since they had now received the sentence of death, he calls her *Eve* or *Chawa*, i.e. *life*, because *she was the mother of all the living*. This verse certainly does not seem totally consistent and clear. She should be called Death and the mother of the dying rather than the mother of the living, since now the sentence of death had been brought against the entire human race and, in a certain way, she was the chief cause of the punishable state of death. Why, then, was she named again as soon as it was most appropriate?

The reason, given by many wise Jews, as Rabbi Abrabanel reports in his discussion of this verse, is that

when the woman was first brought to the man and given to him, Adam thought that she was for his companionship and assistance and not as a wife for siring children. Nevertheless, when the woman was told in the curse *I will make great your distress in child-bearing*, Adam then recognized that she was given to him as a wife for the generation of children. Because of this he named her *Chawah* after the curse, so that she would be the *mother of every living being*. It was as though it had been declared that this was her purpose, viz. that she would give birth and *would be the mother of all the living* according to the way in which all living flesh walks. Flesh in these verses refers to the human species, not to [309] other species of animals. For this reason, in the beginning he named her *woman*, as if to express her composition and formation. Now, however, after sin, he names her on account of her child-bearing capabilities.

This, however, is not acceptable. Adam was very wise and knowledgeable and nothing about nature was unknown to him. It was not hidden from him that the power and nature of the woman was intended to produce children and that the woman's purpose was for generation, just as the females of the other animals.

I find this explanation unsatisfactory, so I offer an alternative. *And the man called his wife Eve*, i.e. *Life*, or *living*, even in this wretched and

mortal life, to the extent that she *was the mother of all the living* because after her no one is born or made without a woman. For before her, Adam was formed by God without a woman, and the woman was built by God from the man's rib equally without a woman. But after her no man existed or will exist without a woman. All men who are born into the world in accordance with the usual course of nature come from a man and a woman, with the one exception of Jesus Christ our Lord, who without a man was conceived by a woman alone by means for the divine power and operation of the Holy Ghost. Wherefore, Eve is most fittingly called *the mother of all the living*, even more than Adam might be said to be the father of all the living. For although all men are born from a father and a mother, in accordance with the predetermined ends of the natural law and established decrees, nevertheless, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and true and perfect man, was born of woman only and not through the participation of a man. Whence indeed He had a mother on earth, but he did not have an earthly father but a heavenly one in accordance with His divine nature, not His human nature. Accordingly, since the woman Eve became not only the mother of all other humans, whose father was the first man, but she was also the parent and forbearer of that unique and most singular man, Jesus Christ, she is most worthily said to be *the mother of all the living*.

One must not suppose that the second name was given to the woman to remove the first. Both names fit her. The first [310], indeed, was given in consideration of the manner of her construction, for thus it is written: *She shall be called Woman, for from man she has been taken*. The second was given insofar as the sons of men, i.e. all men, were to descend from her. Whence when she received this name, the reason is immediately given, for Scripture says: *And the man called his wife Eve, i.e. Life, because she was the mother of all the living, i.e. of all the sons of men*.

According to the Targum, this is the truest explanation and is very consistent with the original, which both the Aramaic paraphrase confirms and all the holy Doctors accept.

Nevertheless, I will not omit a certain explanation of this verse, which I read in Rabbi Abrabanel. The interpretation is as follows: *And Adam called his wife Chawah, because she was the mother kal-hay*, But before I explain it, I consider it worthwhile to explain these two Hebrew words.

First is the name of the woman. That name, according to the common opinion, is derived from the root *chyh*, because it denotes life. Otherwise the proper root of the word is *chw*, and it means “to announce,” “to manifest,” “to indicate.” The other word, i.e. *chy*, signifies something “living,” referring to the life of the sense, not of the reason. Whence very often in Sacred Scripture brutes and beasts are signified by that word. Therefore, this learned rabbi accepts these words in their second meaning and explains the verse in this way.

Adam saw every evil that followed upon him as a result of the words of the woman and her persuasiveness, and he was sorry that he had called her *ishshah*, i.e. woman, from the fact that she was like him, who was a man, and he like her. Thus after he was cursed on her account, he called her *Chawah*, i.e. “talking one,” from her speech in showing, manifesting, or announcing knowledge, Wait a little, and I will show you. And Adam said: from this fact there is an inclination in her nature in order that she be compared to animals just as [311] she did in the deception of the serpent, for she wished to eat of the tree just as the serpent ate of it. Highly prizing animals, she was the mother of all animals, which her sons were like. For this reason, she made much of understanding their workings. And if, like an animal she has a share of knowledge, this knowledge is that which animals possess. Truly, although she was of the human species and more glorious and honorable than they, it is right that they serve her and that she was the mother of all living things. This includes all animals, and it is possible to explain it this way since she is the mother of every animal because of her reason. If one should say that Eve was rational to the extent that she had the power of speech, then by this fact she was the more eminent mother of all animals.

This scholar’s explanation is that to the disgrace and everlasting shame of this woman, a name of this kind was given by the man because she spoke according to the thought of the Devil, who showed and made known to her the knowledge of good and evil. The offspring who would come from her would be like beasts, since she wanted to be like the animals.

VERSE 21

The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

The Hebrew Text: *And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of hide or skin and clothed them.*

The Aramaic Paraphrase: *And God made for Adam and his wife clothing of honor upon their skin or the skin of their flesh and clothed them.*

The Septuagint, however, translated the phrase as *leathern garments*.

This verse is variously interpreted by Jewish scholars. Rabbi Hosha'ya in the *Bereshit Rabbah* explains that God made garments of linen for them to cover their skin or flesh and their limbs. Rabbi Samuel says that their clothing was made of rabbit fur or camel hair, and they are called clothing made of skin because they come from the skins of animals. Rabbi Abrananel relates these things but in another way.

However, I explain it in this way, according to the opinion of the Holy Doctors [312] and of many Jews, too. Since as punishment for sin God was about to cast man out of the paradise of delights, the climate of which was most agreeable and temperate, and move him to a place where he would suffer from the climate's harsh effects, He did not dispose to cast him out naked but clothed, so that in whatever way possible, man would be protected from the ill effects of the climate and bad weather. He saw that the coverings that they had sewn together for themselves to avoid the shame and disgrace of their nakedness were worthless and entirely useless both to cover their nakedness and to defend them from the cold and the inclemency of the place into which he was disposed to cast them. Wherefore, He made them garments of skin for clothing. He did not make coverings for them, as they had made for themselves, but garments by which He would cover not only the private parts of the body but the whole body. These were not sewn together from fig-leaves but from the hide and skin of animals. He clothed them in this manner since they did not know by themselves how to be clothed.

In addition, that kind of clothing was made without tools and tailoring because the work was divine. They were simply made in the will of God, just as the things that were made in the beginning of creation and brought to man, as is well expressed in this verse: *The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife*, and He dressed them. They were made by the word and will of God. Unless by chance we might say that God made leathern clothing for the first men by showing and teaching them interiorly to kill brute animals and to make from their hides more seasonable clothing because they had sewn together coverings for themselves from fig-leaves, which were not fit to keep the body from the dangers that were threatening them and from shame. Thus God may be said to have made the garments, because he taught the first men to make them, showed them the materials from which to make them, and advised them to make clothing for themselves since clothing was necessary for them to preserve decency and to protect the body from harm.

Man could not have remained naked after the fashion of the other animals, even if his decency was not violated in so doing. In this respect, animals are said to surpass man in some way because nature provides the things they need, and they do not need other clothing for the protection of the body. The things that nature gave them for coverings are sufficient. Man, however, needs clothing for both [313] decency's sake and the protection of the body. Wherefore, in no way would there have been at any time a need for clothing in the wholeness of the primeval state, if Adam had persisted in his justice and sin had not intervened. Otherwise man would have been in a worse condition than the other animals. Always at hand was his justice (I mean the original justice of which I spoke above) for a covering and for divine assistance, for protection and for warding off every evil. Therefore, the want of clothing and their necessity is signified in the action of God.

However, he dressed them in the skins of dead animals for important and germane reasons. First, so that man should recognize from the kind of clothing he wore what he had done to himself through sin. Since He accommodated to man as clothing those things with which irrational animals are covered, He unquestionably showed that man had been changed into a kind of herd animal because of sin. As Psalm 48:13 says, *Man when he was in honor did not understand; he is compared to senseless*

*beasts, and is become like them*³⁸. Accordingly, after sin He gave man as food the plants of the earth, which were for the fodder of beasts. Second, since the skins were from dead animals, by this act he taught that Adam and all of us, with him and in him, were mortal and destined for death because of sin. In order that we always might remember that we would die at some time, just as the animals, he made their clothing from skins. Third, in this work, *ipso facto*, God Himself showed that any clothing beyond necessity and decency of state, which is concerned with magnificence, splendor, and vanity, is not free from sin. Finally, God clothed them in skins in order that Christ, who was promised to them as their redeemer through the seed of the woman, might be represented as the One who was always foreshadowed in the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament. Through His death, men ought to be dressed with the divine grace, which they had lost, and with justice, and at the end, they ought to be clothed with glory.

However, I think that God, when He taught the first men to kill animals and to dress themselves with their skins, also taught them to sacrifice those animals for a divine offering. Since it is a clearly established fact in Sacred Scripture that animal sacrifice flourished among the first men, which they offered to the Lord as a most sweet savor, just as Noe offered holocausts and we see the offering of the just Abel. He obtained a sacrifice for the Lord in the firstlings of his flock with their fat portions. In these first sacrifices, Christ is chiefly symbolized, prefigured, and immolated for the redemption of the offense of the first man. I also think that it was the kind of sacrifice we call a “holocaust,” such that the entire flesh is burned up by fire and consumed as a divine offering, since at that time the eating of the sacrificed flesh was not permitted to men even up to the time of Noe.

³⁸ Translator’s Note: The Douay version rather than the CCD’s “Man, for all his splendor, does not abide; he resembles the beasts that perish,” because it is closer to the point that St. Lawrence is making.

VERSE 22

And he said, "Indeed! The man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil! And now perhaps he will put forth his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.

The Hebrew Text: *And God said, See! The man has become as one like one of us, to know good and evil; and now, etc. and live forever.*

The Aramaic Paraphrase: *Behold Adam was unique or my only begotten in the world or in eternity from me to know good and evil and let him live forever.*

The Jerusalem Targum³⁹: *Behold Adam is the only rational creature in the midst of the world, just as I am in the heavens above. There will be many men to arise from him; from him will arise people who will know how to distinguish between good and evil; so it is good that he be cast from the garden of Eden before he stretches out his hand and takes from the fruit of the tree of life and live forever.*

My explanation of this verse is as follows, although it may be explained differently by the Jews. "*Indeed! The man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil!*" It alludes ironically to what the serpent had said: *You will be like gods, knowing good and evil.* Wherefore, as we said above, the clause *You will be like gods* can refer to God Himself, or to the Divine Persons, as well as to the angels and every knowing higher intellectual creatures⁴⁰. So

³⁹ Translator's Note: The Jerusalem Targum is now usually called *Pseudo-Jonathan*, and St. Lawrence's more commonly cited Aramaic Paraphrase is commonly known as the Targum Onqelos. The latter often appears to follow the Hebrew text very closely. St. Lawrence's text of *Ps. Jonathan* differs somewhat from the version that scholars use today (cf. the translation of Bowker, printed in *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature: an Introduction to Jewish Interpretations of Scripture* [Cambridge University Press, 1969]).

⁴⁰ Translator's Note: The distinction is made because Angels *per se* are at the bottom of the celestial hierarchy. Belonging to the third hierarchy, which knows Providence in the multiplicity of particular causes, Angels are in charge of particular goods that concern every individual man. Thus their knowledge is less than that of the Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, and Archangels.

now in this verse, the phrase *like one of us* also can refer either to the Divine Persons or to the angels and higher intellectual creatures, as many Jews explain. The irony of the verse was of the bitterest kind, since God had clothed man with the skins of dead animals [315] to show by this act that man by his sin had become like the beasts, then mocking him, He said that man had become one of the gods. *Behold*, He says, *Adam*, who sought to be compared to the gods by the persuasion of the serpent and thus violated my command. What a glorious god has he become! How wise is he, knowing good and evil! Yes, indeed! He who was god and lord of this world, my authoritative representative, the one standing for Me in the world, has become like cattle!

Surely this utterance of God is a serious reproof. Now, however, His utterance has been turned into our greatest joy and consolation, for man is most truly like one of the gods, i.e. he has been made of the Divine Persons in Christ, in Whom man has become God, one person with the Word of God, with the Son of God, with the true God. That fact indeed was not hidden from the first man, but this joy was promised in return to him. Accordingly, he nevertheless patiently endured the reproof, although it was severe, because of his hope of future joy.

However, because he was not yet worthy of such a joy, he had to be cast from that most delightful paradise as punishment for sin. *And now perhaps he will put forth his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.* This passage is distorted and must be understood as the Jerusalem Targum supplies: *Now therefore it is good, or fitting that he be cast out of the paradise of delight, lest perchance he stretch forth his hand*⁴¹. The sentence that follows is very much in agreement with this reading. In these words I think we should see the divine sentence of casting man from paradise mixed together with irony and grave reproach. *Now therefore lest perchance he stretch forth his hand* etc. How could God so fear that man would eat from the tree of paradise and live forever so that owing to this fear He took the trouble to expel man from that place? Would He not have had the power to provide for a remedy other than expulsion? Truly, man was unworthy. He enjoyed the delights and pleasantness and had the

⁴¹ Translator's Note: The Latin of this quotation differs from the Latin of the same passage of the Targum as found above. The translation reflects those differences.

power of a longer life. By an immediate sentence without trial, God commanded man to be expelled from paradise, and He stings him with severe irony: *Now perhaps he will put forth his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever*, because He said that *the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil*, even as We were unwilling and opposed to it. Now extreme care must be taken lest so great a dignity and majesty last forever. Therefore, let Us cast him out from paradise lest with the same boldness with which he stretched forth his hand and took knowledge from the tree he secretly *take* from Us also *of the tree of life and eat, and live* [316] *forever*. Therefore, although in very truth as soon as the immediate sentence was severely, yet justly, executed by these words, the words still must be understood as spoken ironically.

Someone will ask, in opposition to the above interpretation: If the man had eaten of the tree of life, would he not have lived forever? The words seem to suggest this. *Perhaps he will put forth his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever*. I should have certainly thought this was a power of the tree by its own nature (but still out of the loving kindness of God) to keep human life unharmed. Wherefore, since other trees were given as food to our first parents to replace the original moisture lost through the force of heat, this tree was created as a remedy rather than as food. The purpose was this: for those taking of its fruit, the robustness of their species might be strengthened and preserved from every defect, so that by the action of heat, the loss of moisture, and the arrival of moisture from without, the goodness of the original moisture would not be lessened. Heat would not be violently disturbed from the defect of the fodder, and by the power of this fruit, the result was that the good moisture was sufficiently restored as well as lost. Therefore, just as it was a kind of remedy against debilitation that came about by reason of their food, man might carry on his daily life notwithstanding God's sentence on him.

After sin, without any hesitation, I say that, since it had been established for man to die at some time, God's summary judgment against him was that he would return to the earth from which he was taken, because he was dust and he would return to dust. No matter how much he would eat of the tree of life, he still would never have been able to obtain anything from the tree for food in order to live forever and never

die. The reason is that although the food of the tree had to be converted by the force of heat into man's substance, the effect certainly would not have come about without some loss of heat. Inasmuch as in doing an act, every agent by its own nature suffers some loss, especially because, even if it were a most agreeable nourishment to a nature, it was still different in the principle of nutrition, and through the action of heat it had to be wholly assimilated to a substance for nourishment. Nevertheless, in that action, heat had suffered something, albeit just a little. Although it was very wonderfully intact, it was nevertheless deficient. As a result of the food of that tree, owing to its perfection, life still could be extended rather a long time and could become rather long-lasting. That is what is meant by the word *forever* in this verse. Whence the text has in Hebrew: *and live leolam, forever*. For the word here does not properly mean "eternity"; as we have noted above from Ibn Ezra's remarks it means a long-lasting period of time with an end.

VERSE 23

Therefore the Lord God put him out of the Garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.

Adam did not depart from or leave paradise, but he was cast out. *Therefore he put him out*, i.e. *he cast him out* of that very pleasant place filled with an abundance of all delights, into the barren, unfertile, and most toilsome earth, in which he would take no delight as he did in paradise. Instead, he would be pressed down with heaviest toils. *To till the ground from which he was taken*. From this it is evident that man was formed outside of paradise, as I said earlier: *The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground...and placed him in the garden of Eden* so that he would know that he had been made the inhabitant and lord of that very pleasant place not by nature but by grace. Wherefore, after the loss of grace, he is worthily expelled from there and put out to his own natural place to cultivate the earth from which he was formed and always have before his eyes that to which it must return again.

VERSE 24

He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the Cherubim, and the flaming sword, which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

The Hebrew Text: *And he drove out the man and he stationed from the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim and the blades⁴² of a revolving sword to guard the way of the tree of life.*

The Aramaic Translation is in complete agreement with the Hebrew, except that it translates *miqedem, from the east*, as *milleqadamin*, which means “before, prior, formerly, of old.”

The Septuagint assigns what is said of the Cherubim to Adam himself in order to say that he had been established by God in that part of paradise. It has: *And he placed him in the part facing the garden of delight and he employed the Cherubim as a guard for the place⁴³*. Nevertheless, the Hebrew

⁴² Translator’s Note: This reading differs so markedly from the Massoretic text that I would have assumed a printing error in the Capuchin edition. The Hebrew word *lahat* means simply “flame,” with no other connotation or extension in the lexica. Now the printed Latin word *laminas* (“blades”) very easily could have been a misreading for *flammas* (“flames”). However, the same reading appears twice below ([319]) in the quotation from Rabbi Abrabanel. My guess is that St. Lawrence was translating the Hebrew very literally and in so doing has given an interpretation, probably influenced by rabbinic sources. The grammatical structure of the Hebrew *lahat habereb^b* (lit. “the flame of the sword”) is in the construct state (two nouns joined in a genitive relationship), as St. Lawrence’s rendering makes clear. Hebrew has a limited number of adjectives, so it often resorts to the construct state, as Gesenius observes at 128r rem.1, when two nouns can convey an attributive idea before a partitive genitive. Thus *the flame of the sword* = *flaming sword* or *fiery sword*, as usually rendered. St. Lawrence (along with, perhaps, some Jewish commentator) takes the partitive literally, i.e. *the flame of the sword* = metaphorically, *the blade of the sword*. See St. Lawrence’s explanation that follows ([327]).

⁴³ Translator’s Note: My translation is made from the Latin, not the original Greek. Were I translating from the Greek, I would have written: *And he caused him to dwell (or established or settled him) over against (or opposite) the garden (or paradise) of delight, and he stationed (or appointed) the Cherubim...to guard the way of the tree of life*. I don’t know whether St. Lawrence is quoting from memory or just translating on the fly. The

original has what we cited above, to wit, the Cherubim were placed in the eastern part, not Adam.

There are many very different explanations of this verse. Rabbi Abrabanel so explains it that [318] the Cherubim

are, according to the Aramaic Targum, *kerwayya*, i.e. *like a child or children*. The great teacher Rabbi Mor declared that the Cherubim are children from the days of the sons of men. According to this view, Scripture says that when God had cast Adam out from the garden of Eden, he settled the Cherubim in front of paradise, i.e. in the place of his habitation as if one should say that they were wearied in their sons, Cain and Abel, who were born to them, since they are the Cherubim, whom He put in Adam's dwelling place in front of paradise, and the anguish that he saw in his life from his sons, and death and waywardness in his sons and *the blade of the sword revolving about*. Behold, because a great pain or affliction fell over him, *and the flame of the sword revolving about* on every side. On one side, it killed Abel, on the other it killed Cain. All these things came upon him *so as to guard the way of the tree of life*, as if He should speak for the purpose of casting him from the land of the living and to lead him to death.

This is the explanation of this learned man on this passage.

Some others explain the verse differently. They first establish certain things about the locale of paradise. First, they say this paradise cannot exist between the two tropics on the equinoctial line on the table of the Sun⁴⁴, since that region is exceedingly hot because of the Sun. The Sun twice yearly crosses through it, for which reason there is summer and winter. Because of this, it is called the torrid region and owing to its

differences, however, are not major. Usually his translations track the Greek closely, and at times even appear to be calques. This one is just a bit freer in choice of vocabulary e.g., use of the word "place" for the entire phrase "way of the tree of life."

⁴⁴ Translator's Note: The equinoctial line or circle is the celestial equator, the great circle perpendicular to the pole of the celestial sphere; the earth's equator lies in the place of the celestial equator, which passes through well-defined constellations and stars. The sun was considered flat by early cosmographers like Æthicus of Istria, and hence it is called a table (*mensa solis*).

extreme heat, it is uninhabitable. Accordingly, they assert that paradise must be situated outside the tropics. Since the earth on which paradise had been planted by God, was the best and most fertile and produced fruits from itself, they say that it had to be located under the nobler part of heaven, since the nobility and fertility of the earth came from the noble influence of the stars and the appearance of the heaven. [319] Since the southern part of heaven is nobler than the northern part, because the southern hemisphere is the top and head of the world, but the northern is lower, and as a result the southern stars are larger and brighter, nobler, and more perfect and of greater power than the northern stars, whence the southern pole also is larger and brighter than our arctic pole, in the opinion of the natural philosophers who study matters of this kind. Because of this, scholars situate paradise outside the southern tropic, which is called the Tropic of Capricorn, in the eastern part, which is nobler because the east is the right hand of the world, while the west is the left hand. The right is more noble than the left.

Some scholars determine that paradise was located beyond the table of the Sun and beyond the winter tropic in the southern hemisphere, which they strive to prove by using this verse of Genesis: *When Adam had heard the voice of the Lord God walking...in the after-noon breeze.* They explain by the word *noon* (*meridies* in Latin, which may also mean “south”) as the table of the Sun and the torrid region, because that entire part of the earth is called the South. By the word *breeze* they mean the climate of that place which, by reason of its goodness and very gentle temperate and pleasant light is called a breeze. They thus differentiate between the climate and the south, for in the south, the air is illuminated by a very intense light with excessive heat, like that of the tropics. But the breeze is the very gentle and life-giving climate, temperately bright and warm, such as in the southern hemisphere owing to the beneficial inclination of the stars. Therefore, by *noon* we understand the Sun’s table and by *breeze*, the climate of paradise, for Scripture speaks of the *after-noon air*. As a result, we must understand that the verse refers to southern region of the earth, because *after noon* means that the Sun has made its transit through the

meridian and then moves due south.⁴⁵ That was given to our first parents as their dwelling place and their inheritance, from which they were driven out into this valley of misery because of sin, apart from the Tropic of Capricorn, in which paradise was enclosed and walled off from the world. Scholars say that we should understand that the Tropic is the *flaming sword, which turned every way*, forasmuch as the Sun is in the southern constellations and it approaches the opposite of the constellation Draco in the northern sky, fire is generated in that Tropic.

Scholars also say that if sin had not occurred, men would have occupied not only that region but also the whole southern hemisphere [320] inasmuch as the human race would have greatly multiplied since no one would have died. They would have prolonged their very happy lives for the longest time by eating of the tree of life, until they would have been taken to a better life, with no occurrence of death. Therefore, owing to the increase in population, they would have occupied the whole hemisphere. The other part of that hemisphere would not have been habitable since, they say, in that region there are no high mountains, precipices, seas, or marshes, only the four rivers that water the entire area and the garden of delight by their extremely slow course and exceedingly gentle movement. These rivers go underground at the end of the hemisphere near the Tropic. They bubble through underground passageways and flow out by a kind of equilibrium into this northern part of ours. The Tigris and the Euphrates originate in the mountains of Armenia. The Phison, which is said to be the Ganges, from the mountains of India. The Gihon, which is said to be the Nile, from the mountains of Ethiopia. This is the genuine position for those who put paradise in the southern region beyond the Tropic of Capricorn.

I am not yet quite satisfied. First, there is a problem with saying that the region beyond the Tropic of Capricorn is very temperate. It is clear that the Sun is moved always very evenly by its own motion from a tropic to a tropic, and it has the same power in both. Therefore, just as it gets closer to us, it causes fierce summer and violent heat, and as it moves away, it causes winter and intense cold in the northern hemisphere. Thus

⁴⁵ Translator's Note: I have had to add somewhat to St. Lawrence's text in order to make it intelligible to the reader. The Latin literally reads: "...the result is that the southern region is understood, which is *after noon*."

by the same reason at the opposite end, by coming close to the Tropic of Capricorn, it will cause intense and violent heat, and by moving away it will bring about cold and bitter winter. These things deny a temperate climate and place.

The second difficulty arises in that since the planets are moved equally in the two hemispheres, they will cause the same effects in their conjunctions with the other stars and constellations in the other hemisphere as they do in this one. Since in this hemisphere the unfavorable planets cause barrenness, pestilence, and other diseases, they also do the same in the other hemisphere.

A further problem is that it seems unfitting when they say that men would have inhabited that entire hemisphere. For just as the land that lies under the Arctic pole has but one day and one night in the whole year (because during the six months when the Sun in the southern constellations it is always night under the Arctic pole, and as a result it is always day in the Antarctic). So conversely for the other six months, while the Sun is in the northern constellations, it is [321] always day at the North Pole and night at the South Pole. Wherefore, there can be no pleasantness or delight for these inhabitants, as these scholars assert.

Another problem arises from what they have to say about the verse in Genesis: it is not apropos. For, as I explained in my commentary on verse 3:8 above, the Hebrew original has *When they heard the voice of the Lord God walking at the breeze of the day*. The words do not refer to a place but to a time, i.e. after the middle of the day, that is to say, around evening. Furthermore, their assertion that the flaming and revolving sword is the fiery tropic is wrong. The generation of tropical fire is natural, if it is at least fire. But I do not think that is true in this verse, since the fire of the sword is not generated by the approach of the Sun around the Tropic of Cancer. Scripture just says that the sword was stationed in front of paradise after Adam's sin and after he was cast out from there, it does not indicate that it was there in virtue of the nature of the place but by the will of God.

The last problem touches upon what the scholars assert about the rivers that flow out of the Terrestrial Paradise, viz. that they water the region beyond the Tropic of Cancer and then sink near the tropic and bubble through underground passages and flow out by a certain

equilibrium in this our hemisphere. I do not see how this can be. How can they penetrate so many lands, so many mountains to flow forth through immense tracts of lands and appear to have different origins after emerging from these places? What is more difficult, how can they pass through so great an expanse of the Ocean, the deepest and largest sea of all, to break forth into these northern regions? An immense and fathomless sea lies between the regions. Since these things cannot be true, one must find an explanation for this verse elsewhere.

There were there others who do situate paradise on the equinoctial line. They say that the region is very temperate. Since there it is always the equinox, i.e. in the whole year the nighttime is always [322] equal to the daytime, the result being that the presence and absence of the Sun is equal. Through this perfectly balanced alternation results the greatest temperateness of the area and the best conditions for the place. Wherefore, Ptolemy and other geographers⁴⁶ designate many habitable regions in this zone. Moreover, experience leads one to believe that these regions are extremely temperate and very well suited for habitation. The ships from the kingdom of Portugal, which sailed in that region, found on the equinoctial line best and most fertile lands, flowing with milk and honey.

However, to those who say that that region is uninhabitable because of its very violent heat, these scholars reply that it is indeed truly near the tropics. The men inhabiting the land near the tropics are very black and short-lived because of the excessive heat consuming their original moisture. This is not so, however, on the equinoctial line. Wherefore, these geographers understand by the phrase *the flaming sword which turned every way*, the torrid zone between our dwelling place and the equinoctial line, and therefore it is said to be *turning every way* because the Sun, which causes heat that cannot be passed in that area near the tropic, comes near to us in the summer and grows distant in the winter.

Yet this position does not quite satisfy me either. Since that zone is torrid from the nature of the place, which always would have been so even if man had remained in paradise, there is no reason why the sword should

⁴⁶ Translator's Note: In a long and interesting series of notes to this paragraph, the Capuchin editors observe that St. Lawrence appears to refer to the journeys of Christopher Columbus and his arrival at the Orinoco River in Venezuela.

be said to be fiery and revolving. It was placed there by God to guard the place; it was not produced by nature.

Others have put this paradise in the beginning of Cancer, saying that [324] *the flaming sword which turned every way* is a kind of open chasm in a mountain from which fire always spews out, which appears like a sword. But then it would be necessary to suppose the sulfurous parts of the earth, whence the fire would be generated and the fire would be produced naturally, just as on Isola Vulcano and on Mount Etna fire is produced from the sulfurous parts of the earth.

Wherefore, I have another opinion about this. First, however, I must remind you what I explained about the site of paradise in my commentary on Genesis 2:8 in Chapter 2 above, namely *The Lord God planted a paradise of pleasure from the beginning*. As I said before, the Hebrew original has *The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, from the east or eastern area*. Certainly Scripture speaks very clearly and shows the nature of the place. It calls the Terrestrial Paradise a *garden*, lest we should think that it was extended over immense tracts of land and was of a huge size in length and breadth. Next, Scripture reveals the name of the region in which this paradise or *garden* was set, locating it *in Eden*. The region was given this name owing to its pleasantness, delights, and enjoyment, for it was the most pleasurable, delightful, and [325] temperate region as well as one that was very much suited as a dwelling place. Third, Scripture shows what part of the world paradise faces and from what part of the region it had been planted by God, describing it as *From the east or eastern area*. Therefore, we have the locale in which paradise was established.

One must not think that this region, which is called Eden, is outside our world, nor does it touch the stars, as certain people have thought. Also, it is not beyond the Tropic of Capricorn, a region that has always been unknown, nor is it on the equinoctial. It is situated on a place that could be inhabited and was settled and often visited by our first parents and their descendents. When Adam was cast out of paradise, he did not cross the sea or distant tracts of land and sea as far as possible from the place from which he was cast out. Instead, he was settled before the entrance to paradise, not far from the place in the area of paradise from which he was cast out, to till the land, just as the Septuagint translated and just as all the Greek Doctors teach when they discuss this passage,

especially Chrysostom. This assertion is also proved by the testimony of Scripture. For Cain *went out from the presence of the Lord*, and as a wanderer and a fugitive *dwelt...to the east of Eden* with his descendents and there he *was the founder of a city*. One should think that Adam and Seth inhabited the land not far from there, and rather nearby. Otherwise, how could the *sons of God*, i.e. the descendents of Adam through Seth's line (who are so called because of their worship of God), be able to see *that the daughters of men*, i.e. the men who were descendents of Cain, *were fair*, so that they took *for themselves as many as they wished* and very much provoked God to destroy all flesh? Therefore, if Cain dwelt on *the eastern side of Eden*, the region where paradise was located, then Adam, Seth, and all their descendents did not live far from that region. Adam did not live far from the Promised Land, for he is believed to be buried in Hebron *in a double cave*, as it says in Josue 14:15. Abraham and Sara, Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Lia are also buried in that cave.

Whence I think now that the region of Eden was also inhabited and that it was, as we read in Ezechiel, who taking up *a lament over Tyre*, [326] says, among other things, *Haran, Chene, and Eden traded with you*, as he mentions the names of the regions from which the merchants of Tyre came. Therefore, if the merchants came to Tyre (which is near Israel) from Eden, namely the place of paradise, it is clear that the place was inhabited and existed not too far from the land of Israel. No one doubts that Haran (which is called Mesopotamia) is not far from Israel, for Haran is the region between the two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates. For that reason, the Greeks call the area *Mesopotamia*, "the region in the middle of two rivers." Concerning the Phison and Gihon, consult what we said above in Chapter to at verses 2:11-14.

Wherefore, all this makes me very certain that the oft mentioned paradise was planted in the area of Eden, which is not far from Israel, on the eastern side and that the region is now inhabited by men, since paradise was destroyed by the waters of the Flood and so that very pleasant and delightful place collapsed. The waters of the Flood *increased greatly on the earth* and all *the highest mountains were covered* which are *under the heavens*. Wherefore the waters overcame that place and destroyed the lovely trees.

As long as the place lasted, in no way do I doubt that the Cherubim,

the celestial spirits, were placed there, as a guardian of that place, with *the flaming sword, which turned every way*, or with *the blade of the sword, i.e.*, He place a burning and naked sword there, which seemed to disgorge a flame. So great was its splendor! By its appearance it frightened those approaching and inspired a bristling fear. It is said to *turn every way* because it by its terror it closes off every path that leads to the tree of life. Perhaps the Cherubim were so placed there just as the angel of the Lord guarded the way against Balaam, holding in his hand a drawn sword lest he, at the summons of Balac, should come to curse the children of Israel. Alternately, by this sword, the menace of the death penalty is understood, [327] which, in the custom of Scripture, was inflicted by angelic ministry against those presuming to approach that place. Just as the Lord cautioned lest any of the children of Israel, except those bound by religious service, should presume to touch the sacred vessels for divine service or enter the sanctuary or the Holy of Holies. Those who had to perform sacred functions had to be clean and sanctified, under threat of death, which was inflicted by angelic service.

However, it could be that lamps and thunderbolts shone forth there *to guard the way of the tree of life*, and they threatened those who approached. For the word *lama*, which as we said above means *blade*, also means lightning and a lamp, because there it was able to shine like a sword? But after paradise was laid waste, the guard ceased, just as after the Ark of the Covenant and the Holy of Holies were destroyed both the guard and the observance and services that took place there ended.

However, some think that the place remains untouched to this day and Henoah, Elias, and the Apostle John live a blessed life there until Judgment Day. Yet nowhere is it certain that they were taken to the Terrestrial Paradise. Indeed, by the testimony of Scripture, Henoah was taken up, but to where, Scripture does not tell us. Elias was taken up in the same way, but Scripture does not reveal to what place. However, concerning St. John, it is wholly uncertain whether he still lives in the flesh. As to what [328] we read about Elias in Sirach 48:9-13, namely that he was taken aloft or removed to paradise, I say that he was moved to some eminent and lofty place prepared by God for him, and that place is designated by the name "paradise." It is possible for God to keep Elias wherever it pleases Him most. However, that does not necessitate that

God put him in the Terrestrial Paradise. The same must be said about Henoah and St. John.

The question regarding the Cherubim can be how God brought such exalted spirits *to guard the way to the tree of life*. The Cherubim are spirits of the second choir of the highest sacred authority or hierarchy. According to Dionysus the Areopagite, however, these are not usually sent. Usually God sends only the angels of the lowest hierarchy, who belong to the last and next-to-the-last choir. The answer is that sometimes all angels are understood by the word "Cherubim," and thus the word may include angels of the lowest and last choir. Secondly, however, if by chance a duty has been given to the celestial spirits who belong to that choir which is called by the special word "Cherubim," they still carried out the act of guarding through lower-ranking angels, just as the one of the Seraphim did who was sent to purge the lips of Isaia. For as St. Dionysius teaches, the Seraph carried out the duty not by himself but through one of the lower-ranking angels.

As to why the Lord God used the angels as a guard, the reason was made clear earlier. He did it lest men take of the tree of life and live forever, i.e. extend their life for a rather long time. Sinful men would have used that extended life in the worst way. They would have sinned more often and would have remained in their sins for a longer time. Wherefore, it was better to prohibit men from eating of that tree lest it extend their lives for a longer and longer time and lest they multiply even more sins because of it.

Now let us proceed to the fourth chapter.

GLOSSARY

This glossary contains terms, mostly from scholastic philosophy, that may be pertinent for understanding and discussing the text but may or may not have been used, or understood in the same way, by St. Lawrence.

accident: Something that exists in a **subject**, for example, a color, a shape, a texture. Contrast with **substance**.

act: That which already exists is said to be in *act*. God is pure act because He is everything He can be. He has no **potency** to anything. All finite creatures are in act in that they exist, but they are not pure act because they exist in potency to other things. That is, all finite things are subject to change.

alteration: Change in the qualities of a thing.

cause: A **principle** from which something originates with dependence.

cause, efficient: That which unites the **material and formal causes** to produce a thing. Also called the *agent*. The sculptor is the agent in the making of a statue.

cause, final: Also called the *end* or *purpose*. A good for the sake of which something is made. First, there is the end to be achieved by the thing itself. Second, there is the end of the agent for producing the thing. The purpose of a statue may be to honor God, but the purpose of the sculptor may be to earn money.

cause, formal: That which informs matter or a subject and makes a thing what it is. **Substantial forms** and **accidental forms** are *formal causes*. For example, the shape of a statue is its formal cause; it makes it the statue that it is.

cause, instrumental: An instrument or tool used by the agent as a subordinate cause. For example, the hammer and chisel are instrumental

causes employed by a sculptor in producing a statue. The instrument must have the *proper effect* to be a subordinate cause. For example, one cannot cut wood with a hammer because cutting wood is not the proper effect of a hammer. No creature can cooperate with God as an *instrumental cause* in creation because no finite thing can produce something from nothing as its proper effect.

cause, material: That from which or in which something is produced. For example, marble is the *material cause* of a statue.

contingent: That which can be or not be or be other than it is. Contrast with **necessary**.

contradiction: The absolute denial or the complete exclusion of the opposite.

contrariety: The type of opposition that exists between extremes in the same class or kind. It is an opposition in degree or quantity as, for example, hot-cold, tall-short. It is not the same as a **contradiction**.

creatio prima: Creation in the strict sense. St. Thomas defined it as follows: "Creation is the production of a thing in its entire substance, nothing being presupposed either uncreated or created." No creature can create something out of nothing because that is an act of infinite power, which is possessed by God alone. God's creation of matter and His creation of life in matter were acts of *creatio prima*.

creatio secunda: The act of giving form to matter. This is what God did when He formed the earth. Genesis 1:2 says: "*The earth was formless and empty.*" This stage of creation is recalled in Wisdom 11:17, "*For thy all-powerful hand created the world out of formless matter....*"

creation, special: (1) The truth, clearly taught in Genesis, that the heavenly bodies and the progenitors of all living creatures were created in their finished and enduring natures during Creation Week. (2) The creation of the human soul at conception.

emanationism: The doctrine that interprets the origin of the world as a hierarchy of effusions proceeding from the Godhead through intermediate stages to matter.

essence: What a thing is; the internal **principle** whereby a thing is *what* it is. Also called quiddity, from the Latin word *quid* meaning “what.” Both **substances** and **accidents** have essences.

existence, accidental: Existence in a qualified sense. A statue, as *shaped* marble, is said to have *accidental existence*. The marble itself is said to have **substantial existence**.

existence, substantial: Existence in an unqualified sense. For example, a man *is* in the unqualified sense.

Fall, the: The loss of **original justice** by our first parents because of their sin. Accompanied by the loss of the **preternatural gifts**. These losses passed on to their progeny. See **original sin**.

form, accidental: That which *informs* a **subject** to give something **accidental existence**. For example, a statue, as a statue, is said to have an accidental existence because it is composed of preexistent material and an accidental form that inheres in the material.

form, substantial: That which *informs* **prime matter** to complete a **substance** and gives it its **nature**. It actualizes the potency in prime matter. For material substances it exists separately only in the mind, not in reality. The only exception is the human soul, which is the living form of a human being. It can exist separately from the matter (the body) it informs. Angels, which are spiritual substances, are pure substantial forms.

generation: The origination of a living being from a living being of the same nature.

gifts, preternatural: Besides natural gifts like perfect bodies, an abundant variety of food and drink, and pleasant weather, God gave Adam and Eve

certain other gifts. These were the gifts of freedom from suffering, infused knowledge, absence of concupiscence, and bodily immortality. They are called *preternatural gifts* because they are above and beyond the ordinary powers and capacities of human nature. They are also called *gifts of integrity* because they contribute to the uprightness and completeness of the human person. Finally, they are called *relatively supernatural gifts* because they are beyond the nature of man but not beyond created nature in general. For example, infused knowledge is natural for angels, but it is supernatural for human beings.

gifts, supernatural: The *supernatural* (in an absolute sense) transcends the nature of creatures; no created nature has a claim to it. It is superadded to nature by God, and it presupposes a created nature because it exists in one. Therefore, the supernatural is not a **substance** but an **accident**; and it perfects the nature in which it operates because it affects the nature intrinsically by elevating it to the divine order of being and activity. The greatest gift that God bestowed on our first parents was the supernatural gift of sanctifying grace, which is the gift of supernatural life that made them children of God and heirs to heaven. God created Adam and Eve in a state of innocence and holiness, which made them pleasing to God and full of love for Him. In Paradise Adam and Eve enjoyed an intimacy with God that was greater than any prophet, including Moses, was granted. See **original justice**.

justice, original: The establishment of our first parents in a state of sanctifying grace with the **preternatural gifts**. The Council of Trent (1546) affirmed that Adam was “established” in “holiness” and “justice,” but left the question undecided as to *when* he was established in grace. St. Thomas Aquinas and the Dominican school had held that our first parents were established in sanctifying grace at creation. Peter Lombard and the Franciscan school had held that they were first given actual grace to help them prepare themselves for the reception of sanctifying grace. The Church teaches that the justice of Adam was not a consequence of creation or due to nature itself, that God could have created man without supernatural grace, and that to preserve the original state man needed grace. See **supernatural gifts**.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says that the gift of grace influenced every aspect of the lives of our first parents, thus constituting original justice: “The inner harmony of the human person, the harmony between man and woman, (Cf. Gn 2:25) and finally the harmony between the first couple and all creation, comprised the state called *original justice*.” (no. 376)

kind: God created the plants and animals each according to a specific **nature** called a *kind*. The kinds are permanent; they have remained constant throughout the centuries since Creation. See **natural species**.

matter, primal or primordial: This is the formless matter of Genesis 1. It has **substantial form** and **accidental forms**. It is called formless or undifferentiated because it has not yet received its final forms. It must not be confused with **prime matter**.

matter, prime: Matter out-of-which something exists. It is that which is in **potency** to substantial existence. It is pure **potency** because it has the potential to be any material thing. Contrast this with God, who is pure **act**. It is the **principle** of permanence because it perseveres through any change. It exists separately in the mind only. It does not exist separately in reality. It has no form in its rational character, yet it is never stripped away from form in reality. St. Thomas Aquinas in *On the Principles of Nature* points out that *prime matter* is “numerically one in all things.” That is, it “exists without dispositions making it numerically different.” It must not be confused with **primal or primordial matter**.

nature: (1) The **essence** considered as the intrinsic **principle** of activity. For example, an animal behaves according to its *nature*. The nature of a thing is known through its **accidents**, which include its activity (behavior).
(2) The world of material creatures.

necessary: That which must be and be as it is. A thing is *absolutely necessary* if the denial of it produces a contradiction. A thing may also be necessary *by supposition*; if it is supposed some thing is, then some other thing is necessary. Contrast with **contingent**.

negation: The absence of something from a **subject** because it does not belong there by **nature**. Compare with **privation**.

nominalism: The view that there are no universal **essences** or **natures**.

person: A *person* is an individual substance of an intelligent nature. A person is an *individual substance* because he exists in himself and not in anything else, nor is he a part of anything else. Individuality implies that personhood is *incommunicable* because it cannot, like a nature, be shared. The very concept of person excludes the idea of it being communicated to something else or of its being assumed by something else. Peter cannot be transformed into Paul, nor can the actions of Peter be the actions of Paul. Personhood cannot be communicated from the whole to the part, for example, the personhood of a man cannot be communicated to his brain alone. Personhood cannot be communicated from the individual to the universal. The species *man* is not a person. Besides incommunicability, there are other qualifiers that set off personhood. They are the following: *uniqueness* (there is only one Peter), *unrepeatability* (there never was and never could be another Peter), *indivisibility* (there is no half Peter), and *distinctiveness* (Peter is not Paul, is not Mary ...). Other characteristics associated with a person, but which proceed from the intellectual and volitional nature united with a person, are self-knowledge and freedom of choice.

potency: Capacity of something or in something to be, to act, or to receive. That which can-be is said to exist in *potency*. Something may be in potency to **accidental existence** or to **substantial existence**. Contrast with **act**.

principle: That from which something proceeds in any manner whatsoever. The concept of *principle* has a wider application than the concept of **cause**. The former is unqualified but the latter implies dependence. Every cause is a principle but not every principle is a cause. For example, a point is the principle of a line but not the cause. God is the first principle of everything because He is the first being, and He is the first cause of everything because He is the source of all being. St. Thomas

Aquinas said, “[T]hat whence a motion starts is the principle of the motion but not the cause.” He held that **nature** is a principle of the free fall of a body but not the cause.

principle, seminal: A notion proposed by St. Augustine. A seed or **principle** hidden in the elements, implanted by God during Creation and awaiting favorable opportunity for development. In Aristotelian terms, it is a **potency** created during Creation Week waiting for favorable conditions to be reduced to **act**. In Augustine’s words: “Within corporeal things through all the elements of the world there are certain hidden seminal reasons (*seminariae rationes*) by which temporal and causal opportunity presenting itself, various kinds burst forth, distinguished by their own style and purposes.... God, however, is the one and only Creator who implanted the causes themselves and the seminal reasons in things.” Augustine said that angels bring the seminal reasons to fruition just as a farmer causes plants and trees to spring up from seeds. In that way God perfects that which He made imperfect.

privation: The absence of something from where it ought to be. For example, the lack of the power of sight is a *privation* in a human person or a dog because the power of sight belongs to the nature of those creatures. But lack of the power of sight in a tree is a **negation** and not a privation because the power of sight does not belong to the nature of a tree. Evil is the privation of good. St. Thomas Aquinas said that the void is a privation and not a negation. He said that before the creation of the world there was no void because there were no “real dimensions” and no “place.”

revelation, primeval: Truths revealed by God to Adam and passed down from generation to generation.

Scholasticism: The system of philosophy and theology developed by the Schoolmen of medieval Europe. It was based on the teachings of the Fathers of the Church, used the insights of Aristotle and Plato, and conformed to Catholic orthodoxy. St. Thomas Aquinas, following a course set by St. Albert the Great and others, synthesized it into a coherent system that is still in use.

sin, original: The term *original sin* is used in two senses. First, it means the original sin of disobedience committed by Adam; this is sometimes called *originating* original sin. Second, it means the deprivation of grace in the newly created souls of Adam's progeny; this is sometimes called *originated* original sin. *Originated original sin* does not come to us from Eve, but from Adam alone, since God made him representative and head of the whole human race. For St. Paul said, "*sin came into the world through one man.*" The contraction of original sin is connected with the nature and not the person. It is called "sin" only in an analogical sense: it is a sin contracted and not committed—a state and not an act. There is no personal guilt associated with it, except with its originator, Adam. The Church has always insisted that it is passed on by natural generation, by propagation, and not by imitation.

soul: The **principle** of life in a living organism. The **substantial form** of a living organism. The human (rational) *soul* is an incomplete spiritual **substance** that is the seat of the intellect and free will along with the vegetative and sensitive powers. Unlike plant and animal souls, the human soul can exist apart from the body, but it is naturally ordained to the body. It is not a complete **nature** in itself. St. Thomas Aquinas said of the rational soul: "The soul of man is on the boundary line between corporeal and incorporeal being. It dwells, as it were, on the fringes of time and eternity. It approaches the highest by receding from the lowest. When, then, it shall have been separated from the body, it will be perfectly assimilated to the higher [angelic] substances that exist apart, and will receive of their influence abundantly. And so, though the mode of intellection which we presently employ, according to the conditions of our earthly life, is destroyed with the destruction of the body, it will be replaced by another and more perfect mode of understanding" (SCG, Book 2, Chapter 81). See **vitalism**.

species: (1) A class of individuals having the same unique **nature**, for example, the human *species*. (2) A likeness or representation of an object, for example, the image of Caesar on a coin or the image of an object in the mind. (3) **Accidents** or appearances, for example, the Eucharistic *species* of bread and wine.

species, natural: The complete collection of individuals of a certain **kind**. Each *natural species* has a role or roles in the household of **nature**. God built into the natural species the ability to produce a variety of characteristics within fixed limits. This power produces diversity and helps natural species to adapt to different environmental conditions. These individuals form subgroups called *varieties, races, breeds* and *strains*.

subject: Matter in-which something exists. It is that which is in **potency** to accidental existence. For example, the marble that is shaped into a pieta is the *subject* of the pieta. The subject has existence in itself and gives existence to an **accident**. The distinction between subject and accident exists in the mind only. They do not have separate existences in reality. For example, the shape of the statue and its marble are inseparable in reality. Only in the miracle of the Eucharist do accidents (the physical and chemical properties of bread and wine) exist without a subject.

substance: Something that exists in itself. An elephant, an oak tree and a table are examples of material *substance*. An angel is a spiritual or separated substance, one that is completely independent of matter. The human or rational **soul** is an incomplete spiritual substance. It can exist by itself, but it is naturally ordained toward a body. It is not a complete **nature** in itself.

vitalism: A doctrine that holds that biological processes are not explicable by the laws of chemistry and physics alone and that there is a distinct vital **principle** that transcends matter and directs the processes of a living organism. In its Platonic form, the vital principle, or **soul**, is an independent entity. Plato held that the soul is to the body as the pilot is to the ship. His concept of the soul accommodated his belief in the transmigration of souls. Aristotle had a holistic outlook and held that the soul is the form of a living organism, having a unique inseparable relationship with it. Scholastic philosophy, following Aristotle and enlightened by divine revelation, holds that plant and brute souls cease to exist after the death of the organism, whereas the rational human soul does exist after death but as an incomplete substance.

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