

Augustine *Confessions*

BOOK XIII

CHAPTER I 1. I call on thee, my God, my Mercy, who made me and didst not forget me, though I was forgetful of thee. I call thee into my soul, which you didst prepare for thy reception by the desire which you inspired in it. Do not forsake me when I call on thee, who didst anticipate me before I called and who didst repeatedly urge with manifold calling that I should hear thee afar off and be turned and call upon thee, who calls me. For you, O Lord, hast blotted out all my evil deserts, not punishing me for what my hands have done; and you hast anticipated all my good deserts so as to recompense me for what thy hands have done--the hands which made me. Before I was, you were, and I was not anything at all that you should grant me being. Yet, see how I exist by reason of thy goodness, which made provision for all that you made me to be and all that you made me from. For you didst not stand in need of me, nor am I the kind of good entity which could be a help to thee, my Lord and my God. It is not that I may serve thee as if you wert fatigued in working, or as if thy power would be the less if it lacked my assistance. Nor is the service I pay thee like the cultivation of a field, so that you wouldst go untended if I did not tend thee. 506 Instead, it is that I may serve and worship thee to the end that I may have my well-being from thee, from whom comes my capacity for well-being.

506 This is a compound--and untranslatable--Latin pun: *neque ut sic te colam quasi terram, ut sis uncultus si non te colam.*

CHAPTER II 2. Indeed, it is from the fullness of thy goodness that thy creation exists at all: to the end that the created good might not fail to be, even though it can profit thee nothing, and is nothing of thee nor equal to thee--since its created existence comes from thee. For what did the heaven and earth, which you didst make in the beginning, ever deserve from thee? Let them declare--these spiritual and corporeal entities, which you made in thy wisdom--let them declare what they merited at thy hands, so that the inchoate and the formless, whether spiritual or corporeal, would deserve to be held in being in spite of the fact that they tend toward disorder and extreme unlikeness to thee? An unformed spiritual entity is more excellent than a formed corporeal entity; and the corporeal, even when unformed, is more excellent than if it were simply nothing at all. Still, these formless entities are held in their state of being by thee, until they are recalled to thy unity and receive form and being from thee, the one sovereign Good. What have they deserved of thee, since they would not even be unformed entities except from thee? 3. What has corporeal matter deserved of thee--even in its invisible and unformed state--since it would not exist even in this state if you had not made it?

And, if it did not exist, it could not merit its existence from thee. Or, what has that formless spiritual creation deserved of thee--that it should flow lightlessly like the abyss--since it is so unlike thee and would not exist at all if it had not been turned by the Word which made it that same Word, and, illumined by that Word, had been "made light"⁵⁰⁷ although not as thy equal but only as an image of that Form [of Light] which is equal to thee? For, in the case of a body, its being is not the same thing as its being beautiful; else it could not then be a deformed body. Likewise, in the case of a created spirit, living is not the same state as living wisely; else it could then be immutably wise. But the true good of every created thing is always to cleave fast to thee, lest, in turning away from thee, it lose the light it had received in being turned by thee, and so relapse into a life like that of the dark abyss. As for ourselves, who are a spiritual creation by virtue of our souls, when we turned away from thee, O Light, we were in that former life of darkness; and we toil amid the shadows of our darkness until--through thy only Son--we become thy righteousness,⁵⁰⁸ like the mountains of God. For we, like the great abyss,⁵⁰⁹ have been the objects of thy judgments.

⁵⁰⁷Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads*, I, 2:4: "What the soul now sees, it certainly always possessed, but as lying in the darkness. . . . To dispel the darkness and thus come to knowledge of its inner content, it must thrust toward the light." Compare the notions of the initiative of such movements in the soul in Plotinus and Augustine.

⁵⁰⁸Cf. 2 Cor. 5:21.

⁵⁰⁹Cf. Ps. 36:6 and see also Augustine's *Exposition on the Psalms*, XXXVI, 8, where he says that "the great preachers [receivers of God's illumination] are the mountains of God," for they first catch the light on their summits.

CHAPTER III 4. Now what you said in the beginning of the creation--"Let there be light: and there was light"--I interpret, not unfitly, as referring to the spiritual creation, because it already had a kind of life which you could illuminate. But, since it had not merited from thee that it should be a life capable of enlightenment, so neither, when it already began to exist, did it merit from thee that it should be enlightened. For neither could its formlessness please thee until it became light--and it became light, not from the bare fact of existing, but by the act of turning its face to the light which enlightened it, and by cleaving to it. Thus it owed the fact that it lived, and lived happily, to nothing whatsoever but thy grace, since it had been turned, by a change for the better, toward that which cannot be changed for either better or worse. You alone art, because you alone art without complication. For thee it is not one thing to live and another thing to live in blessedness; for you art thyself thy own blessedness.

CHAPTER IV 5. What, therefore, would there have been lacking in thy good, which you thyself art, even if these things had never been made or had remained unformed? You didst not create them out of any lack but out of the plenitude of thy goodness, The abyss he called "the depth of sin" into which the evil and unfaithful fall. ordering them and turning them toward form,⁵¹⁰ but not because thy joy had to be perfected by them. For you art perfect, and their imperfection is displeasing. Therefore were they perfected by thee and became pleasing to thee--but not as if you wert before that imperfect and had to be perfected in their perfection. For thy good Spirit which moved over the face of the waters⁵¹¹ was not borne up by them as if he rested on them. For those in whom thy good Spirit is said to rest he actually causes to rest in himself. But thy incorruptible and immutable will--in itself all sufficient for itself--moved over that life which you had made: in which living is not at all the same thing as living happily, since that life still lives even as it flows in its own darkness. But it remains to be turned to him by whom it was made and to live more and more like "the fountain of life," and in his light "to see light,"⁵¹² and to be perfected, and enlightened, and made blessed.

510Cf. Timaeus, 29D-30A, "He [the Demiurge-Creator] was good: and in the good no jealousy . . . can ever arise. So, being without jealousy, he desired that all things should come as near as possible to being like himself. . . . He took over all that is visible . . . and brought it from order to order, since he judged that order was in every way better" (F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, New York, 1937, p. 33). Cf. Plotinus *Enneads*, V, 4:1, and Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, III, 3. 511Cf. Gen. 1:2. 512Cf. Ps. 36:9.

CHAPTER V 6. See now,⁵¹³ how the Trinity appears to me in an enigma. And you art the Trinity, O my God, since you, O Father--in the beginning of our wisdom, that is, in thy wisdom born of thee, equal and coeternal with thee, that is, thy Son--created the heaven and the earth. Many things we have said about the heaven of heavens, and about the earth invisible and unformed, and about the shadowy abyss--speaking of the aimless flux of its being spiritually deformed unless it is turned to him from whom it has its life (such as it is) and by his Light comes to be a life suffused with beauty. Thus it would be a [lower] heaven of that [higher] heaven, which afterward was made between water and water.⁵¹⁴ And now I came to recognize, in the name of God, the Father who made all these things, and in the term "the Beginning" to recognize the Son, through whom he made all these things; and since I did believe that my God was the Trinity, I sought still further in his holy Word, and, behold, "Thy Spirit moved over the waters." Thus, see the Trinity, O my God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Creator of all creation!

513 In this passage in Genesis on the creation. 514Cf. Gen. 1:6.

CHAPTER VI 7. But why, O truth-speaking Light? To thee I lift up my heart--let it not teach me vain notions. Disperse its shadows and tell me, I beseech thee, by that Love which is our mother; tell me, I beseech thee, the reason why--after the reference to heaven and to the invisible and unformed earth, and darkness over the abyss--thy Scripture should then at long last refer to thy Spirit? Was it because it was appropriate that he should first be shown to us as "moving over"; and this could not have been said unless something had already been mentioned over which thy Spirit could be understood as "moving"? For he did not "move over" the Father and the Son, and he could not properly be said to be "moving over" if he were "moving over" nothing. Thus, what it was he was "moving over" had to be mentioned first and he whom it was not proper to mention otherwise than as "moving over" could then be mentioned. But why was it not fitting that he should have been introduced in some other way than in this context of "moving over"?

CHAPTER VII 8. Now let him who is able follow thy apostle with his understanding when he says, "Thy love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who is given to us"⁵¹⁵ and who teaches us about spiritual gifts⁵¹⁶ and shows us a more excellent way of love; and who bows his knee unto thee for us, that we may come to the surpassing knowledge of the love of Christ.⁵¹⁷ Thus, from the beginning, he who is above all was "moving over" the waters. To whom shall I tell this? How can I speak of the weight of concupiscence which drags us downward into the deep abyss, and of the love which lifts us up by thy Spirit who moved over the waters? To whom shall I tell this? How shall I tell it? For concupiscence and love are not certain "places" into which we are plunged and out of which we are lifted again. What could be more like, and yet what more unlike? They are both feelings; they are both loves. The uncleanness of our own spirit flows downward with the love of worldly care; and the sanctity of thy Spirit raises us upward by the love of release from anxiety--that we may lift our hearts to thee where thy Spirit is "moving over the waters." Thus, we shall have come to that supreme rest where our souls shall have passed through the waters which give no standing ground.⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁵ Rom. 5:5. ⁵¹⁶1 Cor. 12:1. ⁵¹⁷Cf. Eph. 3:14, 19. ⁵¹⁸Cf. the Old Latin version of Ps. 123:5.

CHAPTER VIII 9. The angels fell, and the soul of man fell; thus they indicate to us the deep darkness of the abyss, which would have still contained the whole spiritual creation if you had not said, in the beginning, "Let there be light: and there was light"--and if every obedient mind in thy heavenly city had not adhered to thee and had not reposed in thy Spirit, which moved immutable over all things mutable. Otherwise, even

the heaven of heavens itself would have been a dark shadow, instead of being, as it is now, light in the Lord.⁵¹⁹ For even in the restless misery of the fallen spirits, who exhibit their own darkness when they are stripped of the garments of thy light, you show clearly how noble you didst make the rational creation, for whose rest and beatitude nothing suffices save thee thyself. And certainly it is not itself sufficient for its beatitude. For it is you, O our God, who wilt enlighten our darkness; from thee shall come our garments of light; and then our darkness shall be as the noonday. Give thyself to me, O my God, restore thyself to me! See, I love thee; and if it be too little, let me love thee still more strongly. I cannot measure my love so that I may come to know how much there is still lacking in me before my life can run to thy embrace and not be turned away until it is hidden in "the covert of thy presence."⁵²⁰ Only this I know, that my existence is my woe except in thee--not only in my outward life, but also within my inmost self--and all abundance I have which is not my God is poverty.

⁵¹⁹Cf. Eph. 5:8. ⁵²⁰Cf. Ps. 31:20.

CHAPTER IX 10. But was neither the Father nor the Son "moving over the waters"? If we understand this as a motion in space, as a body moves, then not even the Holy Spirit "moved." But if we understand the changeless supereminence of the divine Being above every changeable thing, then Father, Son, and Holy Spirit "moved over the waters." Why, then, is this said of thy Spirit alone? Why is it said of him only--as if he had been in a "place" that is not a place--about whom alone it is written, "He is thy gift"? It is in thy gift that we rest. It is there that we enjoy thee. Our rest is our "place." Love lifts us up toward that place, and thy good Spirit lifts our lowliness from the gates of death.⁵²¹ Our peace rests in the goodness of will. The body tends toward its own place by its own gravity. A weight does not tend downward only, but moves to its own place. Fire tends upward; a stone tends downward. They are propelled by their own mass; they seek their own places. Oil poured under the water rises above the water; water poured on oil sinks under the oil. They are moved by their own mass; they seek their own places. If they are out of order, they are restless; when their order is restored, they are at rest. My weight is my love. By it I am carried wherever I am carried. By thy gift,⁵²² we are enkindled and are carried upward. We burn inwardly and move forward. We ascend thy ladder which is in our heart, and we sing a canticle of degrees⁵²³; we glow inwardly with thy fire--with thy good fire⁵²⁴--and we go forward because we go up to the peace of Jerusalem⁵²⁵; for I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go into the house of the Lord."⁵²⁶ There thy good pleasure will settle us so that we will desire nothing more than to dwell there forever.⁵²⁷

⁵²¹Cf. Ps. 9:13. ⁵²²The Holy Spirit.

523Canticum graduum. Psalms 119 to 133 as numbered in the Vulgate were regarded as a single series of ascending steps by which the soul moves up toward heaven; cf. The Exposition on the Psalms, loc. cit.

524Tongues of fire, symbol of the descent of the Holy Spirit; cf. Acts 2:3, 4. 525Cf. Ps. 122:6. 526Ps. 122:1.

527Cf. Ps. 23:6.

CHAPTER X 11. Happy would be that creature who, though it was in itself other than you, still had known no other state than this from the time it was made, so that it was never without thy gift which moves over everything mutable--who had been borne up by the call in which you saidst, "Let there be light: and there was light."⁵²⁸ For in us there is a distinction between the time when we were darkness and the time when we were made light. But we are not told what would have been the case with that creature if the light had not been made. It is spoken of as though there had been something of flux and darkness in it beforehand so that the cause by which it was made to be otherwise might be evident. This is to say, by being turned to the unfailing Light it might become light. Let him who is able understand this; and let him who is not ask of thee. Why trouble me, as if I could "enlighten every man that comes into the world"⁵²⁹?

528Gen. 1:3. 529John 1:9.

CHAPTER XI 12. Who can understand the omnipotent Trinity? And yet who does not speak about it, if indeed it is of it that he speaks? Rare is the soul who, when he speaks of it, also knows of what he speaks. And men contend and strive, but no man sees the vision of it without peace. I could wish that men would consider three things which are within themselves. These three things are quite different from the Trinity, but I mention them in order that men may exercise their minds and test themselves and come to realize how different from it they are.⁵³⁰ The three things I speak of are: to be, to know, and to will. For I am, and I know, and I will. I am a knowing and a willing being; I know that I am and that I will; and I will to be and to know. In these three functions, therefore, let him who can see how integral a life is; for there is one life, one mind, one essence. Finally, the distinction does not separate the things, and yet it is a distinction. Surely a man has this distinction before his mind; let him look into himself and see, and tell me. But when he discovers and can say anything about any one of these, let him not think that he has thereby discovered what is immutable above them all, which is immutably and knows immutably and wills immutably. But whether there is a Trinity there because these three functions exist in the one God, or whether all three are in each Person so that they are each threefold, or whether both these notions are true and, in some mysterious manner, the Infinite is in itself its own Selfsame object--at once one and many, so that by itself it is and knows itself and suffices to itself without change, so

that the Selfsame is the abundant magnitude of its Unity--who can readily conceive? Who can in any fashion express it plainly? Who can in any way rashly make a pronouncement about it?

530 Cf. the detailed analogy from self to Trinity in *De Trinitate*, IX-XII.

CHAPTER XII 13. Go forward in your confession, O my faith; say to the Lord your God, "Holy, holy, holy, O Lord my God, in thy name we have been baptized, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." In thy name we baptize, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. For among us also God in his Christ made "heaven and earth," namely, the spiritual and carnal members of his Church. And true it is that before it received "the form of doctrine," our "earth"⁵³¹ was "invisible and unformed," and we were covered with the darkness of our ignorance; for you dost correct man for his iniquity,⁵³² and "thy judgments are a great abyss."⁵³³ But because thy Spirit was moving over these waters, thy mercy did not forsake our wretchedness, and you said, "Let there be light; repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."⁵³⁴ Repent, and let there be light. Because our soul was troubled within us, we remembered thee, O Lord, from the land of Jordan, and from the mountain⁵³⁵--and as we became displeased with our darkness we turned to thee, "and there was light." And behold, we were heretofore in darkness, but now we are light in the Lord.⁵³⁶

531I.e., the Church. 532Cf. Ps. 39:11. 533Ps. 36:6. 534Gen. 1:3 and Matt. 4:17; 3:2. 535Cf. Ps. 42:5, 6. 536Cf. Eph. 5:8.

CHAPTER XIII 14. But even so, we still live by faith and not by sight, for we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope. Thus far deep calls unto deep, but now in "the noise of thy waterfalls."⁵³⁷ And thus far he who said, "I could not speak to you as if you were spiritual ones, but only as if you were carnal"⁵³⁸--thus far even he does not count himself to have apprehended, but forgetting the things that are behind and reaching forth to the things that are before, he presses on to those things that are ahead,⁵³⁹ and he groans under his burden and his soul thirsts after the living God as the stag pants for the water brooks,⁵⁴⁰ and says, "When shall I come?"⁵⁴¹--"desiring to be further clothed by his house which is from heaven."⁵⁴² And he called to this lower deep, saying, "Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."⁵⁴³ And "be not children in understanding, although in malice be children," in order that "in understanding you may become perfect."⁵⁴⁴ "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?"⁵⁴⁵ But this is not now only in his own voice but in thy voice, who sent thy Spirit from above through Him who both "ascended up on high"⁵⁴⁶ and opened up the floodgates of his gifts, that the force of his streams might

make glad the city of God.⁵⁴⁷ For that city and for him sighs the Bridegroom's friend,⁵⁴⁸ who has now the first fruits of the Spirit laid up with him, but who is still groaning within himself and waiting for adoption, that is, the redemption of his body.⁵⁴⁹ To Him he sighs, for he is a member of the Bride⁵⁵⁰; for him he is jealous, not for himself, but because not in his own voice but in the voice of thy waterfalls he calls on that other deep, of which he is jealous and in fear; for he fears lest, as the serpent seduced Eve by his subtlety, his mind should be corrupted from the purity which is in our Bridegroom, thy only Son. What a light of beauty that will be when "we shall see him as he is"⁵⁵¹--and when these tears shall pass away which "have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, 'Where is your God?'"⁵⁵²

⁵³⁷Ps. 42:7. ⁵³⁸Cf. 1 Cor. 3:1. ⁵³⁹Cf. Phil. 3:13. ⁵⁴⁰Cf. Ps. 42:1. ⁵⁴¹Ps. 42:2. ⁵⁴²Cf. 2 Cor. 5:1-4. ⁵⁴³Rom. 12:2. ⁵⁴⁴1 Cor. 14:20. ⁵⁴⁵Gal. 3:1. ⁵⁴⁶Eph. 4:8, 9. ⁵⁴⁷Cf. Ps. 46:4. ⁵⁴⁸Cf. John 3:29. ⁵⁴⁹Cf. Rom. 8:23. ⁵⁵⁰I.e., the Body of Christ. ⁵⁵¹John 3:2. ⁵⁵²Ps. 42:3.

CHAPTER XIV 15. And I myself say: "O my God, where art you? See now, where art you?" In thee I take my breath for a little while, when I pour out my soul beyond myself in the voice of joy and praise, in the voice of him that keeps holyday.⁵⁵³ And still it is cast down because it relapses and becomes an abyss, or rather it feels that it still is an abyss. My faith speaks to my soul--the faith that you dost kindle to light my path in the night: "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted in me? Hope in God."⁵⁵⁴ For his word is a lamp to your feet.⁵⁵⁵ Hope and persevere until the night passes--that mother of the wicked; until the Lord's wrath subsides-- that wrath whose children once we were, of whom we were beforehand in darkness, whose residue we still bear about us in our bodies, dead because of sin.⁵⁵⁶ Hope and endure until the day breaks and the shadows flee away.⁵⁵⁷ Hope in the Lord: in the morning I shall stand in his presence and keep watch⁵⁵⁸; I shall forever give praise to him. In the morning I shall stand and shall see my God, who is the health of my countenance,⁵⁵⁹ who also will quicken our mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwells in us,⁵⁶⁰ because in mercy he was moving over our lightless and restless inner deep. From this we have received an earnest, even now in this pilgrimage, that we are now in the light, since already we are saved by hope and are children of the light and children of the day--not children of the night, nor of the darkness,⁵⁶¹ which we have been hitherto. Between those children of the night and ourselves, in this still uncertain state of human knowledge, only you canst rightly distinguish--you who dost test the heart and who dost call the light day, and the darkness night.⁵⁶² For who can see us clearly but thee? What do we have that we have not received from thee, who madest from the same lump some vessels to noble, and others to ignoble, use? ⁵⁶³

553Cf. Ps. 42:4. 554Ps. 43:5. 555Cf. Ps. 119:105. 556Cf. Rom. 8:10. 557Cf. S. of Sol. 2:17. 558Cf. Ps. 5:3. 559Ps. 43:5. 560Cf. Rom. 8:11. 5611 Thess. 5:5. 562Cf. Gen. 1:5. 563Cf. Rom. 9:21.

CHAPTER XV 16. Now who but thee, our God, didst make for us that firmament of the authority of thy divine Scripture to be over us? For “the heaven shall be folded up like a scroll”⁵⁶⁴; but now it is stretched over us like a skin. Thy divine Scripture is of more sublime authority now that those mortal men through whom you didst dispense it to us have departed this life. And you know, O Lord, you know how you did clothe men with skins when they became mortal because of sin.⁵⁶⁵ In something of the same way, you hast stretched out the firmament of thy Book as a skin--that is to say, you hast spread thy harmonious words over us through the ministry of mortal men. For by their very death that solid firmament of authority in thy sayings, spoken forth by them, stretches high over all that now drift under it; whereas while they lived on earth their authority was not so widely extended. Then you had not yet spread out the heaven like a skin; you had not yet spread abroad everywhere the fame of their death. 17. Let us see, O Lord, “the heavens, the work of thy fingers,”⁵⁶⁶ and clear ⁵⁶⁴Isa. 34:4. ⁵⁶⁵Cf. Gen. 3:21. ⁵⁶⁶Ps. 8:3. away from our eyes the fog with which you hast covered them. In them⁵⁶⁷ is that testimony of thine which gives wisdom even to the little ones. O my God, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, perfect thy praise.⁵⁶⁸ For we know no other books that so destroy man’s pride, that so break down the adversary and the self-defender who resists thy reconciliation by an effort to justify his own sins. I do not know, O Lord, I do not know any other such pure words that so persuade me to confession and make my neck submissive to thy yoke, and invite me to serve thee for nothing else than thy own sake. Let me understand these things, O good Father. Grant this to me, since I am placed under them; for you hast established these things for those placed under them. 18. There are other waters that are above this firmament, and I believe that they are immortal and removed from earthly corruption. Let them praise thy name-- this super-celestial society, thy angels, who have no need to look up at this firmament or to gain a knowledge of thy Word by reading it--let them praise thee. For they always behold thy face and read therein, without any syllables in time, what thy eternal will intends. They read, they choose, they love.⁵⁶⁹ They are always reading, and what they read never passes away. For by choosing and by loving they read the very immutability of thy counsel. Their book is never closed, nor is the scroll folded up, because you thyself art this to them, and art this to them eternally; because you didst range them above this firmament which you made firm over the infirmities of the people below the heavens, where they might look up and learn thy mercy, which proclaims in time thee who made all times. “For thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and thy faithfulness reaches to the clouds.”⁵⁷⁰ The clouds pass away, but the heavens

remain. The preachers of thy Word pass away from this life into another; but thy Scripture is spread abroad over the people, even to the end of the world. Indeed, both heaven and earth shall pass away, but thy words shall never pass away.⁵⁷¹ The scroll shall be rolled together, and the "grass" over which it was spread shall, with all its goodness, pass away; but thy Word remains forever⁵⁷²--thy Word which now appears to us in the dark image of the clouds and through the glass of heaven, and not as it really is. And even if we are the well-beloved of thy Son, it has not yet appeared what we shall be.⁵⁷³ He hath seen us through the entanglement⁵⁷⁴ of our flesh, and he is fair-speaking, and he hath enkindled us, and we run after his fragrance.⁵⁷⁵ But "when he shall appear, then we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."⁵⁷⁶ As he is, O Lord, we shall see him--although that time is not yet.

⁵⁶⁸Cf. Ps. 8:2. ⁵⁶⁹ Legunt, eligunt, diligunt. ⁵⁷⁰Ps. 36:5. ⁵⁷¹Cf. Matt. 24:35. ⁵⁷²Cf. Isa. 40:6-8. ⁵⁷³Cf. 1 John 3:2. ⁵⁷⁴ Retia, literally "a net"; such as those used by retiarii, the gladiators who used nets to entangle their opponents. ⁵⁷⁵Cf. S. of Sol. 1:3, 4. ⁵⁷⁶ 1 John 3:2.

CHAPTER XVI 19. For just as you art the utterly Real, you alone dost fully know, since you art immutably, and you know immutably, and you will immutably. ⁵⁶⁷"The heavens," i.e. the Scriptures. And thy Essence knows and wills immutably. Thy Knowledge is and wills immutably. Thy Will is and knows immutably. And it does not seem right to thee that the immutable Light should be known by the enlightened but mutable creature in the same way as it knows itself. Therefore, to thee my soul is as a land where no water is⁵⁷⁷; for, just as it cannot enlighten itself by itself, so it cannot satisfy itself by itself. Thus the fountain of life is with thee, and "in thy light shall we see light."⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁷Cf. Ps. 63:1. ⁵⁷⁸Ps. 36:9.

CHAPTER XVII 20. Who has gathered the "embittered ones"⁵⁷⁹ into a single society? For they all have the same end, which is temporal and earthly happiness. This is their motive for doing everything, although they may fluctuate within an innumerable diversity of concerns. Who but thee, O Lord, gathered them together, you who saidst, "Let the waters be gathered together into one place and let the dry land appear"--athirst for thee? For the sea also is thine, and you made it, and thy hands formed the dry land.⁵⁸⁰ For it is not the bitterness of men's wills but the gathering together of the waters which is called "the sea"; yet you dost curb the wicked lusts of men's souls and fix their bounds: how far they are allowed to advance, and where their waves will be broken against each other--and thus you make it "a sea," by the providence of thy governance of all things. 21. But as for the souls that thirst after thee and who appear

before thee-- separated from "the society of the [bitter] sea" by reason of their different ends-- you watered them by a secret and sweet spring, so that "the earth" may bring forth her fruit and--you, O Lord, commanding it--our souls may bud forth in works of mercy after their kind.⁵⁸¹ Thus we shall love our neighbor in ministering to his bodily needs, for in this way the soul has seed in itself after its kind when in our own infirmity our compassion reaches out to the relief of the needy, helping them even as we would desire to be helped ourselves if we were in similar need. Thus we help, not only in easy problems (as is signified by "the herb yielding its seed") but also in the offering of our best strength in affording them the aid of protection (such as "the tree bearing its fruit"). This is to say, we seek to rescue him who is suffering injury from the hands of the powerful--furnishing him with the sheltering protection which comes from the strong arm of a righteous judgment.⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁷Cf. Ps. 63:1. ⁵⁷⁸Ps. 36:9. ⁵⁷⁹Amaricantes, a figure which Augustine develops both in the Exposition of the Psalms and The City of God. Commenting on Ps. 65, Augustine says: "For the sea, by a figure, is used to indicate this world, with its bitter saltiness and troubled storms, where men with perverse and depraved appetites have become like fishes devouring one another." In The City of God, he speaks of the bitterness of life in the *civitas terrena*; cf. XIX, 5. ⁵⁸⁰Cf. Ps. 95:5. ⁵⁸¹Cf. Gen. 1:10f. ⁵⁸²In this way, Augustine sees an analogy between the good earth bearing its fruits and the ethical "fruit-bearing" of the Christian love of neighbor.

CHAPTER XVIII 22. Thus, O Lord, thus I beseech thee: let it happen as you hast prepared it, as you give joy and the capacity for joy. Let truth spring up out of the earth, and let righteousness look down from heaven,⁵⁸³ and let there be lights in the ⁵⁸⁴Let us break our bread with the hungry, let us bring the shelterless poor to our house; let us clothe the naked, and never despise those of our own flesh.⁵⁸⁵ See from the fruits which spring forth from the earth how good it is. Thus let our temporal light break forth, and let us from even this lower level of fruitful action come to the joy of contemplation and hold on high the Word of Life. And let us at length appear like "lights in the world,"⁵⁸⁶ cleaving to the firmament of thy Scripture. For in it you made it plain to us how we may distinguish between things intelligible and things tangible, as if between the day and the night--and to distinguish between souls who give themselves to things of the mind and others absorbed in things of sense. Thus it is that now you art not alone in the secret of thy judgment as you were before the firmament was made, and before you divided between the light and the darkness. But now also thy spiritual children, placed and ranked in this same firmament--thy grace being thus manifest throughout the world--may shed light upon the earth, and may divide between the day and night, and may be for the signs of the times⁵⁸⁷; because old things have passed away, and, lo, all things are become new⁵⁸⁸; and because our salvation is

nearer than when we believed; and because "the night is far spent and the day is at hand"⁵⁸⁹; and because "you crown the year with blessing,"⁵⁹⁰ sending the laborers into thy harvest, in which others have labored in the sowing and sending laborers also to make new sowings whose harvest shall not be until the end of time. Thus you dost grant the prayers of him who seeks, and you dost bless the years of the righteous man. But you art always the Selfsame, and in thy years which fail not you prepare a granary for our transient years. For by an eternal design you spread the heavenly blessings on the earth in their proper seasons. 23. For "to one there is given by thy Spirit the word of wisdom"⁵⁹¹ (which resembles the greater light--which is for those whose delight is in the clear light of truth--as the light which is given for the ruling of the day⁵⁹²). But to another the word of knowledge is given by the same Spirit (as it were, the "lesser light"); to another, faith; to another, the gift of healing; to another, the power of working miracles; to another, the gift of prophecy; to another, the discerning of spirits; to another, other kinds of tongues--and all these gifts may be compared to "the stars." For in them all the one and selfsame Spirit is at work, dividing to every man his own portion, as He wills, and making stars to appear in their bright splendor for the profit of souls. But the word of knowledge, scientia, in which is contained all the mysteries⁵⁹³ which change in their seasons like the moon; and all the other promises of gifts, which when counted are like the stars--all of these fall short of that splendor of Wisdom in which the day rejoices and are only for the ruling of the night. Yet they are necessary for those to whom thy most prudent servant could not speak as to the spiritually mature, but only as if to carnal men--even though he could speak wisdom among the perfect.⁵⁹⁴ Still the natural man--as a babe in Christ, and a drinker of milk, until he is strong enough for solid meat, and his eye is able to look into the sun--do not leave him in a lightless night. Instead, let him be satisfied with the light of the moon and the stars. In thy book you dost discuss these things with us wisely, our God--in thy book, which is thy "firmament"--in order that we may be able to view all things in admiring contemplation, although thus far we must do so through signs and seasons and in days and years.

⁵⁸³Cf. Ps. 85:11. firmament. ⁵⁸⁴Cf. Gen. 1:14. ⁵⁸⁵Cf. Isa. 58:7. ⁵⁸⁶Cf. Phil. 2:15. ⁵⁸⁷Cf. Gen. 1:19. ⁵⁸⁸Cf. 2 Cor. 5:17. ⁵⁸⁹Cf. Rom. 13:11, 12. ⁵⁹⁰Ps. 65:11. ⁵⁹¹For this whole passage, cf. the parallel developed here with 1 Cor. 12:7-11. ⁵⁹²In principio diei, an obvious echo to the Vulgate ut praesent diei of Gen. 1:16. Cf. Gibb and Montgomery, p. 424 (see Bibl.), for a comment on in principio diei and in principio noctis, below. ⁵⁹³Sacramenta; but cf. Augustine's discussion of sacramenta in the Old Testament in the Exposition of the Psalms, LXXIV, 2: "The sacraments of the Old Testament promised a Saviour; the sacraments of the New Testament give salvation."

CHAPTER XIX 24. But, first, “wash yourselves and make you clean; put away iniquity from your souls and from before my eyes”⁵⁹⁵--so that “the dry land” may appear. “Learn to do well, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow,”⁵⁹⁶ that the earth may bring forth the green herb for food and fruit-bearing trees. “And come, let us reason together, saith the Lord”⁵⁹⁷--that there may be lights in the firmament of heaven and that they may shine upon the earth. There was that rich man who asked of the good Teacher what he should do to attain eternal life. Let the good Teacher (whom the rich man thought a man and nothing more) give him an answer--he is good for he is God. Let him answer him that, if he would enter into life, he must keep the commandments: let him put away from himself the bitterness of malice and wickedness; let him not kill, nor commit adultery, nor steal, nor bear false witness⁵⁹⁸--that “the dry land” may appear and bring forth the honoring of fathers and mothers and the love of neighbor. “All these,” he replied, “I have kept.” Where do so many thorns come from, if the earth is really fruitful? uproot the brier patch of avarice; “sell what you have, and be filled with fruit by giving to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and follow” the Lord if you would be perfect and joined with those in whose midst he speaks wisdom--who know how to give rightly to the day and to the night--and you will also understand, so that for you also there may be lights in the firmament of heaven-- which will not be there, however, unless your heart is there also. And your heart will not be there unless your treasure is there,⁵⁹⁹ as you have heard from the good Teacher. But “the barren earth”⁶⁰⁰ was grieved, and the briars choked the word.⁶⁰¹ 25. But you, O elect people, set in the firmament of the world,⁶⁰² who have forsaken all that you may follow the Lord: follow him now, and confound the mighty! Follow him, O beautiful feet,⁶⁰³ and shine in the firmament, that the heavens may declare his glory, dividing the light of the perfect ones⁶⁰⁴--though not yet so perfect as the angels--from the darkness of the little ones--who are nevertheless not utterly despised. Shine over all the earth, and let the day be lighted by the sun, utter the Word of wisdom to the day (“day unto day utters speech”⁶⁰⁵) and let the night, lighted by the moon, display the Word of knowledge to the night. The moon and the stars give light for the night; the night does not put them out, and they illumine in its proper mode. For lo, it is as if God were saying, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven”: and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as if it were a rushing mighty wind, and there appeared cloven tongues of fire, and they sat on each of them.⁶⁰⁶ And then they were made to be lights in the firmament of heaven, having the Word of life. Run to and fro everywhere, you holy fires, you lovely fires, for you are the light of the world and you are not to be hid under a peck measure.⁶⁰⁷ He to whom you cleave is raised on high, and he hath raised you on high. Run to and fro; make yourselves known among all the nations!

594Cf. 1 Cor. 3:1; 2:6. 595Isa. 1:16. 596Isa. 1:17. 597Isa. 1:18. 598Cf. for this syntax, Matt. 19:16-22 and Ex. 20:13-16. 599Cf. Matt. 6:21. 600I.e., the rich young ruler. 601Cf. Matt. 13:7. 602Cf. Matt. 97 Reading here, with Knöll and the Sessorianus, in firmamento mundi. 603Cf. Isa. 52:7. 604Perfactorum. Is this a conscious use, in a Christian context, of the distinction he had known so well among the Manicheans--between the perfecti and the auditores? 605Ps. 19:2. 606Cf. Acts 2:2, 3. 607Cf. Matt. 5:14, 15.

CHAPTER XX 26. Also let the sea conceive and bring forth your works, and let the waters bear the moving creatures that have life.⁶⁰⁸ For by separating the precious from the vile you are made the mouth of God⁶⁰⁹ by whom he said, "Let the waters bring forth." This does not refer to the living creatures which the earth brings forth, but to the creeping creatures that have life and the fowls that fly over the earth. For, by the ministry of thy holy ones, thy mysteries have made their way amid the buffeting billows of the world, to instruct the nations in thy name, in thy Baptism. And among these things many great and marvelous works have been wrought, which are analogous to the huge whales. The words of thy messengers have gone flying over the earth, high in the firmament of thy Book which is spread over them as the authority beneath which they are to fly wheresoever they go. For "there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard," because "their sound has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world"⁶¹⁰--and this because you, O Lord, hast multiplied these things by thy blessing. 27. Am I speaking falsely? Am I mingling and confounding and not rightly distinguishing between the knowledge of these things in the firmament of heaven and those corporeal works in the swelling sea and beneath the firmament of heaven? For there are those things, the knowledge of which is solid and defined. It does not increase from generation to generation and thus they stand, as it were, as lights of wisdom and knowledge. But there are many and varied physical processes that manifest these selfsame principles. And thus one thing growing from another is multiplied by thy blessing, O God, who dost so refresh our easily wearied mortal senses that in our mental cognition a single thing may be figured and signified in many different ways by different bodily motions. "The waters" have brought forth these mysteries, but only at thy word. The needs of the people who were alien to the eternity of thy truth have called them forth, but only in thy gospel, since it was these "waters" which cast them up--the waters whose stagnant bitterness was the reason why they came forth through thy Word. 28. Now all the things that you hast made are fair, and yet, lo, you who didst make all things art inexpressibly fairer. And if Adam had not fallen away from thee, that brackish sea--the human race--so deeply prying, so boisterously swelling, so restlessly moving, would never have flowed forth from his belly. Thus, there would have been no need for thy ministers to use corporeal and tangible signs in the midst of many "waters" in order to show forth their mystical deeds

and words. For this is the way I interpret the phrases "creeping creatures" and "flying fowl." Still, men who have been instructed and initiated and made dependent on thy corporeal mysteries would not be able to profit from them if it were not that their soul has a higher life and unless, after the word of its admission, it did not look beyond toward its perfection.

608Cf. Gen. 1:20. 609Cf. Jer. 15:19. 610Ps. 19:4.

CHAPTER XXI 29. And thus, in thy Word, it was not the depth of the sea but "the earth,"⁶¹¹ separated from the brackishness of the water, that brought forth, not "the creeping and the flying creature that has life," but "the living soul" itself!⁶¹² And now this soul no longer has need of baptism, as the heathen had, or as it did when it was covered with the waters--and there can be no other entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, since you hast appointed that baptism should be the entrance. Nor does it seek great, miraculous works by which to buttress faith. For such a soul does not refuse to believe unless it sees signs and marvels, now that "the faithful earth" is separated from "the waters" of the sea, which have been made bitter by infidelity. Thus, for them, "tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to those who do not believe."⁶¹³ And the earth which you hast founded above the waters does not stand in need of those flying creatures which the waters brought forth at thy word. Send forth thy word into it by the agency of thy messengers. For we only tell of their works, but it is you who dost the works in them, so that they may bring forth "a living soul" in the earth. The earth brings forth "the living soul" because "the earth" is the cause of such things being done by thy messengers, just as the sea was the cause of the production of the creeping creatures having life and the flying fowl under the firmament of heaven. "The earth" no longer needs them, although it feeds on the Fish which was taken out of the deep,⁶¹⁴ set out on that table which you prepare in the presence of those who believe. To this end he was raised from the deep: that he might feed "the dry land." And "the fowl," even though they were bred in the sea, will yet be multiplied on the earth. The preaching of the first evangelists was called forth by reason of man's infidelity, but the faithful also are exhorted and blessed by them in manifold ways, day by day. "The living soul" has its origin from "the earth," because only to the faithful is there any profit in restraining themselves from the love of this world, so that their soul may live to thee. This soul was dead while it was living in pleasures--in pleasures that bear death in them--whereas you, O Lord, art the living delight of the pure heart. 30. Now, therefore, let thy ministers do their work on "the earth"--not as they did formerly in "the waters" of infidelity, when they had to preach and speak by miracles and mysteries and mystical expressions, in which ignorance--the mother of wonder--gives

them an attentive ear because of its fear of occult and strange things. For this is the entry into faith for the sons of Adam who are forgetful of thee, who hide themselves from thy face, and who have become a darkened abyss. Instead, let thy ministers work even as on "the dry land," safe from the whirlpools of the abyss. Let them be an example unto the faithful by living before them and stirring them up to imitation. For in such a setting, men will heed, not with the mere intent to hear, but also to act. Seek the Lord and your soul shall live⁶¹⁵ and "the earth" may bring forth "the living soul." Be not conformed to this world;⁶¹⁶ separate yourselves from it. The soul lives by avoiding those things which bring death if they are loved. Restrain yourselves from the unbridled wildness of pride, from the indolent passions of luxury, and from what is falsely called knowledge.⁶¹⁷ Thus may the wild beast be tamed, the cattle subdued, and the serpent made harmless. For, in allegory, these figures are the motions of our mind: that is to say, the haughtiness of pride, the delight of lust, and the poison of curiosity are motions of the dead soul--not so dead that it has lost all motion, but dead because it has deserted the fountain of life, and so has been taken up by this transitory world and conformed to it. 31. But thy Word, O God, is a fountain of life eternal, and it does not pass away. Therefore, this desertion is restrained by thy Word when it says to us, "Be not conformed to this world," to the end that "the earth" may bring forth a "living soul" in the fountain of life--a soul disciplined by thy Word, by thy evangelists, by the following of the followers of thy Christ. For this is the meaning of "after his kind." A man tends to follow the example of his friend. Thus, he [Paul] says, "Become as I am, because I have become as you are."⁶¹⁸ Thus, in this "living soul" there shall be good beasts, acting meekly. For you hast commanded this, saying: "Do your work in meekness and you shall be loved by all men."⁶¹⁹ And the cattle will be good, for if they eat much they shall not suffer from satiety; and if they do not eat at all they will suffer no lack. And the serpents will be good, not poisonous to do harm, but only cunning in their watchfulness-- exploring only as much of this temporal nature as is necessary in order that the eternal nature may "be clearly seen, understood through the things that have been made."⁶²⁰ For all these animals will obey reason when, having been restrained from their death-dealing ways, they live and become good. CHAPTER XXII 32. Thus, O Lord, our God, our Creator, when our affections have been turned from the love of the world, in which we died by living ill; and when we began to be "a living soul" by living well; and when the word, "Be not conformed to this world," which you didst speak through thy apostle, has been fulfilled in us, then will follow what you didst immediately add when you saidst, "But be transformed by the"⁶²¹ This will not now be "after their kind," as if we were following the neighbor who went before us, or as if we were living after the example of a better man--for you didst not say, "Let man

be made after his kind," but rather, "Let us make man in our own image and our own likeness,"⁶²² so that then we may be able to prove what thy will is. This is why thy minister--begetting children by the gospel so that he might not always have them babes whom he would have to feed with milk and nurse as children--this is why he said, "Be transformed by the renewing of your minds, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."⁶²³ Therefore you didst not say, "Let man be made," but rather, "Let us make man." And you didst not say, "After his kind," but after "our image" and "likeness." Indeed, it is only when man has been renewed in his mind, and comes to behold and apprehend thy truth, that he does not need another man as his director, to show him how to imitate human examples. Instead, by thy guidance, he proves what is thy good and acceptable and perfect will. And you dost teach him, now that he is able to understand, to see the trinity of the Unity and the unity of the Trinity. This is why the statement in the plural, "Let us make man," is also connected with the statement in the singular, "And God made man." Thus it is said in the plural, "After our likeness," and then in the singular, "After the image of God." Man is thus transformed in the knowledge of God, according to the image of Him who created him. And now, having been made spiritual, he judges all things--that is, all things that are appropriate to be judged--and he himself is judged of no man.⁶²⁴

611That is, the Church. 612An allegorical ideal type of the perfecti in the Church. 6131 Cor. 14:22. 614The fish was an early Christian rebus for "Jesus Christ." The Greek word for fish, *icquz*, was arranged acrostically to make the phrase *Ihsouz Cristos, Qeou Uioz, Swthr*; cf. Smith and Cheetham, *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, pp. 673f.; see also Cabrol, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne*, Vol. 14, cols. 1246-1252, for a full account of the symbolism and pictures of early examples. 615Cf. Ps. 69:32. 616Cf. Rom. 12:2. 617Cf. 1 Tim. 6:20. 618Gal. 4:12. 619Cf. Eccus. 3:19. 620Rom. 1:20. renewing of your mind." 621Rom. 12:2. 622Gen. 1:26. 623Rom. 12:2 (mixed text). 624Cf. 1 Cor. 2:15.

CHAPTER XXIII 33. Now this phrase, "he judges all things," means that man has dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over all cattle and wild beasts, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. And he does this by the power of reason in his mind by which he perceives "the things of the Spirit of God."⁶²⁵ But, when man was put in this high office, he did not understand what was involved and thus was reduced to the level of the brute beasts, and made like them.⁶²⁶ Therefore in thy Church, O our God, by the grace you hast given us--since we are thy workmanship, created in good works (not only those who are in spiritual authority but also those who are spiritually subject to them)--you madest man male and female. Here all are equal in thy spiritual grace where, as far as sex is concerned, there is neither male nor female, just as there is neither Jew nor Greek, nor bond nor free. Spiritual men, therefore, whether those who are in authority or those

who are subject to authority, judge spiritually. They do not judge by the light of that spiritual knowledge which shines in the firmament, for it is inappropriate for them to judge by so sublime an authority. Nor does it behoove them to judge concerning thy Book itself, although there are some things in it which are not clear. Instead, we submit our understanding to it and believe with certainty that what is hidden from our sight is still rightly and truly spoken. In this way, even though a man is now spiritual and renewed by the knowledge of God according to the image of him who created him, he must be a doer of the law rather than its judge. 627 Neither does the spiritual man judge concerning that division between spiritual and carnal men which is known to thy eyes, O God, and which may not, as yet, be made manifest to us by their external works, so that we may know them by their fruits; yet you, O God, know them already and you have divided and called them secretly, before the firmament was made. Nor does a man, even though he is spiritual, judge the disordered state of society in this world. For what business of his is it to judge those who are without, since he cannot know which of them may later on come into the sweetness of thy grace, and which of them may continue in the perpetual bitterness of their impiety? 34. Man, then, even if he was made after thy own image, did not receive the power of dominion over the lights of heaven, nor over the secret heaven, nor over the day and the night which you called forth before the creation of the heaven, nor over the gathering together of the waters which is the sea. Instead, he received dominion over the fish of the sea, and the fowls of the air; and over all cattle, and all the earth; and over all creeping things which creep on the earth. Indeed, he judges and approves what he finds right and disapproves what he finds amiss, whether in the celebration of those mysteries by which are initiated those whom thy mercy hast sought out in the midst of many waters; or in that sacrament in which is exhibited the Fish itself⁶²⁸ which, being raised from the depths, the pious "earth"⁶²⁹ feeds upon; or, in the signs and symbols of words, which are subject to the authority of thy Book--such signs as burst forth and sound from the mouth, as if it were "flying" under the firmament, interpreting, expounding, discoursing, disputing, blessing, invoking thee, so that the people may answer, "Amen."⁶³⁰ The reason that all these words have to be pronounced vocally is because of the abyss of this world and the blindness of our flesh in which thoughts cannot be seen directly,⁶³¹ but have to be spoken aloud in our ears. Thus, although the flying fowl are multiplied on the earth, they still take their origins from the waters. The spiritual man also judges by approving what is right and reprovng what he finds amiss in the works and morals of the faithful, such as in their almsgiving, which is signified by the phrase, "The earth bringing forth its fruit." And he judges of the "living soul," which is then made to live by the disciplining of her affections in chastity, in fasting, and in holy meditation. And he also

judges concerning all those things which are perceived by the bodily senses. For it can be said that he should judge in all matters about which he also has the power of correction.

625 1 Cor. 2:14. 626 Cf. Ps. 49:20. 627 Cf. James 4:11. 628 See above, Ch. XXI, 30. 629 I.e., the Church. 630 Cf. 1 Cor. 14:16. 631 Another reminder that, ideally, knowledge is immediate and direct.

CHAPTER XXIV 35. But what is this; what kind of mystery is this? Behold, O Lord, you dost bless men in order that they may be "fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." In this art you not making a sign to us that we may understand something [allegorically]? Why didst you not also bless the light, which you called "the day," nor the firmament of heaven, nor the lights, nor the stars, nor the earth, nor the sea? I might reply, O our God, that you in creating us after thy own image--I might reply that you didst will to bestow this gift of blessing upon man alone, if you had not similarly blessed the fishes and the whales, so that they too should be fruitful and multiply and replenish the waters of the sea; and also the fowls, so that they should be multiplied on the earth. In like fashion, I might say that this blessing properly belonged only to such creatures as are propagated from their own kind, if I could find it given also as a blessing to trees, and plants, and the beasts of the earth. But this "increase and multiply" was not said to plants or trees or beasts or serpents--although all of these, along with fishes and birds and men, do actually increase by propagation and so preserve their species. 36. What, then, shall I say, O Truth, O my Life: that it was idly and vainly said? Surely not this, O Father of piety; far be it from a servant of thy Word to say anything like this! But if I do not understand what you mean by that phrase, let those who are better than I--that is, those more intelligent than I--interpret it better, in the degree that you hast given each of us the ability to understand. But let also my confession be pleasing in thy eyes, for I confess to thee that I believe, O Lord, that you hast not spoken thus in vain. Nor will I be silent as to what my reading has suggested to me. For it is valid, and I do not see anything to prevent me from thus interpreting the figurative sayings in thy books. For I know that a thing that is understood in only one way in the mind may be expressed in many different ways by the body; and I know that a thing that has only one manner of expression through the body may be understood in the mind in many different ways. For consider this single example--the love of God and of our neighbor--by how many different mysteries and countless languages, and, in each language, by how many different ways of speaking, this is signified corporeally! In similar fashion, the "young fish" in "the waters" increase and multiply. On the other hand, whoever you are who reads this, observe and behold what Scripture declares, and how the voice pronounces it in only one way, "In the beginning God created

heaven and earth.”⁶³² Is this not understood in many different ways by different kinds of true interpretations which do not involve the deceit of error? Thus the offspring of men are fruitful and do multiply.⁶³³ 37. If, then, we consider the nature of things, in their strictly literal sense, and not allegorically, the phrase, “Be fruitful and multiply,” applies to all things that are begotten by seed. But if we treat these words figuratively, as I judge that the Scripture intended them to be--since it cannot be for nothing that this blessing is attributed only to the offspring of marine life and man--then we discover that the characteristic of fecundity belongs also to the spiritual and physical creations (which are signified by “heaven and earth”), and also in righteous and unrighteous souls (which are signified by “light and darkness”) and in the sacred writers through whom the law is uttered (who are signified by “the firmament established between the waters and the waters”); and in the earthly commonwealth still steeped in their bitterness (which is signified by “the sea”); and in the zeal of holy souls (signified by “the dry land”); and the works of mercy done in this present life (signified by “the seed-bearing herbs and fruit-bearing trees”); and in spiritual gifts which shine out for our edification (signified by “the lights of heaven”); and to human affections ruled by temperance (signified by “the living soul”). In all these instances we meet with multiplicity and fertility and increase; but the particular way in which “Be fruitful and multiply” can be exemplified differs widely. Thus a single category may include many things, and we cannot discover them except through their signs displayed corporeally and by the things being excogitated by the mind. We thus interpret the phrase, “The generation of the waters,” as referring to the corporeally expressed signs [of fecundity], since they are made necessary by the degree of our involvement in the flesh. But the power of human generation refers to the process of mental conception; this we see in the fruitfulness of reason. Therefore, we believe that to both of these two kinds it has been said by thee, O Lord, “Be fruitful and multiply.” In this blessing, I recognize that you hast granted us the faculty and power not only to express what we understand by a single idea in many different ways but also to understand in many ways what we find expressed obscurely in a single statement. Thus the waters of the sea are replenished, and their waves are symbols of diverse meanings. And thus also the earth is also replenished with human offspring. Its dryness is the symbol of its thirst for truth, and of the fact that reason rules over it.

⁶³² Here, again, as in a coda, Augustine restates his central theme and motif in the whole of his “confessions”: the primacy of God, His constant creativity, his mysterious, unwearied, unfrustrated redemptive love. All are summed up in this mystery of creation in which the purposes of God are announced and from which all Christian hope takes its premise. ⁶³³That is, from basic and essentially simple ideas, they proliferate multiple--and valid--implications and corollaries.

CHAPTER XXV 38. I also desire to say, O my Lord God, what the following Scripture suggests to me. Indeed, I will speak without fear, for I will speak the truth, as you inspire me to know what you dost will that I should say concerning these words. For I do not believe I can speak the truth by any other inspiration than thine, since you art the Truth, and every man a liar.⁶³⁴ Hence, he that speaks a lie, speaks out of himself. Therefore, if I am to speak the truth, I must speak of thy truth. Behold, you hast given us for our food every seed-bearing herb on the face of the earth, and all trees that bear in themselves seed of their own kind; and not to us only, but to all the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field and all creeping things.⁶³⁵ Still, you hast not given these things to the fishes and great whales. We have said that by these fruits of the earth the works of mercy were signified and figured forth in an allegory: thus, from the fruitful earth, things are provided for the necessities of life. Such an "earth" was the godly Onesiphorus, to whose house you gave mercy because he often refreshed Paul and was not ashamed of his bonds.⁶³⁶ This was also the way of the brethren from Macedonia, who bore such fruit and supplied to him what he lacked. But notice how he grieves for certain "trees," which did not give him the fruit that was due, when he said, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God, that it be not laid up to their charge."⁶³⁷ For we owe "fruits" to those who minister spiritual doctrine to us through their understanding of the divine mysteries. We owe these to them as men. We owe these fruits, also, to "the living souls" since they offer themselves as examples for us in their own continence. And, finally, we owe them likewise to "the flying creatures" because of their blessings which are multiplied on the earth, for "their sound has gone forth into all the earth."⁶³⁸

634 Cf. Rom. 3:4. 635Cf. Gen. 1:29, 30. 636Cf. 2 Tim. 1:16. 6372 Tim. 4:16. 638Cf. Ps. 19:4.

CHAPTER XXVI 39. Those who find their joy in it are fed by these "fruits"; but those whose god is their belly find no joy in them. For in those who offer these fruits, it is not the fruit itself that matters, but the spirit in which they give them. Therefore, he who serves God and not his own belly may rejoice in them, and I plainly see why. I see it, and I rejoice with him greatly. For he [Paul] had received from the Philippians the things they had sent by Epaphroditus; yet I see why he rejoiced. He was fed by what he found his joy in; for, speaking truly, he says, "I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me has flourished again, in which you were once so careful, but it had become a weariness to you."⁶³⁹ These Philippians, in their extended period of weariness in well-doing, had become weak and were, so to say, dried up; they were no longer bringing forth the fruits of good works. And now Paul rejoices in them--and not just for himself alone--because they were flourishing again in ministering to his needs.

Therefore he adds: "I do not speak in respect of my want, for I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased and how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."⁶⁴⁰ 40. Where do you find joy in all things, O great Paul? What is the cause of your joy? On what do you feed, O man, renewed now in the knowledge of God after the image of him who created you, O living soul of such great continence--O tongue like a winged bird, speaking mysteries? What food is owed such creatures; what is it that feeds you? It is joy! For hear what follows: "Nevertheless, you have done well in that you have shared with me in my affliction."⁶⁴¹ This is what he finds his joy in; this is what he feeds on. They have done well, not merely because his need had been relieved--for he says to them, "You have opened my heart when I was in distress"-- but because he knew both how to abound and how to suffer need, in thee who didst strengthen him. And so he said, "You [Philippians] know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me in regard to giving and receiving, except you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent time and time again, according to my need."⁶⁴² He now finds his joy in the fact that they have returned once again to these good works, and he is made glad that they are flourishing again, as a fruitful field when it recovers its fertility. 41. Was it on account of his own needs alone that he said, "You have sent me gifts according to my needs?" Does he find joy in that? Certainly not for that alone. But how do we know this? We know it because he himself adds, "Not because I desire a gift, but because I desire fruit."⁶⁴³ Now I have learned from thee, O my God, how to distinguish between the terms "gift" and "fruit." A "gift" is the thing itself, given by one who bestows life's necessities on another--such as money, food, drink, clothing, shelter, and aid. But "the fruit" is the good and right will of the giver. For the good Teacher not only said, "He that receives a prophet," but he added, "In the name of a prophet." And he did not say only, "He who receives a righteous man," but added, "In the name of a righteous man."⁶⁴⁴ Thus, surely, the former shall receive the reward of a prophet; the latter, that of a righteous man. Nor did he say only, "Whoever shall give a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink," but added, "In the name of a disciple"; and concluded, "Truly I tell you he shall not lose his reward." The "gift" involves receiving a prophet, receiving a righteous man, handing a cup of cold water to a disciple: but the "fruit" is to do all this in the name of a prophet, in the name of a righteous man, in the name of a disciple. Elijah was fed by the widow with "fruit," for she knew that she was feeding a man of God and this is why she fed him. But he was fed by the raven with a "gift." The inner man of Elijah was not

fed by this “gift,” but only the outer man, which otherwise might have perished from the lack of such food.

639 Phil. 4:10 (mixed text). 640 Phil. 4:11-13. 641 Phil. 4:14. 642 Phil. 4:15-17. 643 Phil. 4:17., 644 Cf. Matt. 10:41, 42.

CHAPTER XXVII 42. Therefore I will speak before thee, O Lord, what is true, in order that the uninstructed⁶⁴⁵ and the infidels, who require the mysteries of initiation and great works of miracles--which we believe are signified by the phrase, “Fishes and great whales”--may be helped in being gained [for the Church] when they endeavor to provide that thy servants are refreshed in body, or otherwise aided in this present life. For they do not really know why this should be done, and to what end. Thus the former do not feed the latter, and the latter do not feed the former; for neither do the former offer their “gifts” through a holy and right intent, nor do the others rejoice in the gifts of those who do not as yet see the “fruit.” For it is on the “fruit” that the mind is fed, and by which it is gladdened. And, therefore, fishes and whales are not fed on such food as the earth alone brings forth when they have been separated and divided from the bitterness of “the waters” of the sea.

⁶⁴⁵ Idiotae: there is some evidence that this term was used to designate pagans who had a nominal connection with the Christian community but had not formally enrolled as catechumens. See Th. Zahn in *Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift* (1899), pp. 42-43.

CHAPTER XXVIII 43. And you, O God, didst see everything that you had made and, behold, it was very good.⁶⁴⁶ We also see the whole creation and, behold, it is all very good. In each separate kind of thy work, when you didst say, “Let them be made,” and they were made, you didst see that it was good. I have counted seven times where it is written that you didst see what you had made was “good.” And there is the eighth time when you didst see all things that you had made and, behold, they were not only good but also very good; for they were now seen as a totality. Individually they were only good; but taken as a totality they were both good and very good. Beautiful bodies express this truth; for a body which consists of several parts, each of which is beautiful, is itself far more beautiful than any of its individual parts separately, by whose well-ordered union the whole is completed even though these parts are separately beautiful.

⁶⁴⁶ Gen. 1:31.

CHAPTER XXIX 44. And I looked attentively to find whether it was seven or eight times that you didst see thy works were good, when they were pleasing to thee, but I found that there was no “time” in thy seeing which would help me to understand in what sense you had looked so many “times” at what you had made. And I said: “O

Lord, is not this thy Scripture true, since you art true, and thy truth doth set it forth? Why, then, dost you say to me that in thy seeing there are no times, while this Scripture tells me that what you made each day you didst see to be good; and when I counted them I found how many 'times'?" To these things, you didst reply to me, for you art my God, and you dost speak to thy servant with a strong voice in his inner ear, my deafness, and crying: "O man, what my Scripture says, I say. But it speaks in terms of time, whereas time does not affect my Word--my Word which exists coeternally with myself. Thus the things you see through my Spirit, I see; just as what you say through my Spirit, I say. But while you see those things in time, I do not see them in time; and when you speak those things in time, I do not speak them in time."

CHAPTER XXX 45. And I heard this, O Lord my God, and drank up a drop of sweetness from thy truth, and understood that there are some men to whom thy works are displeasing, who say that many of them you didst make under the compulsion of necessity--such as the pattern of the heavens and the courses of the stars--and that you didst not make them out of what was thine, but that they were already created elsewhere and from other sources. It was thus [they say] that you didst collect and fashion and weave them together, as if from thy conquered enemies you didst raise up the walls of the universe; so that, built into the ramparts of the building, they might not be able a second time to rebel against thee. And, even of other things, they say that you didst neither make them nor arrange them--for example, all flesh and all the very small living creatures, and all things fastened to the earth by their roots. But [they say] a hostile mind and an alien nature--not created by thee and in every way contrary to thee--begot and framed all these things in the nether parts of the world.⁶⁴⁷ They who speak thus are mad [insani], since they do not see thy works through thy Spirit, nor recognize thee in them.

⁶⁴⁷A reference to the Manichean cosmogony and similar dualistic doctrines of "creation."

CHAPTER XXXI 46. But for those who see these things through thy Spirit, it is you who see them in them. When, therefore, they see that these things are good, it is you who see that they are good; and whatsoever things are pleasing because of thee, it is you who dost give us pleasure in those things. Those things which please us through thy Spirit are pleasing to thee in us. "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so, no man knows the things of God, but the Spirit of God. Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us from God."⁶⁴⁸ And I am admonished to say: "Yes, truly. No man knows the things of God, but the Spirit of God: but how, then, do

we also know what things are given us by God?" The answer is given me: "Because we know these things by his Spirit; for no one knows but the Spirit of God." But just as it is truly said to those who were to speak through the Spirit of God, "It is not you who speak," so it is also truly said to them who know through the Spirit of God, "It is not you yourselves who know," and just as rightly it may be said to those who perceive through the Spirit of God that a thing is good; it is not they who see, but God who see that it is good. It is, therefore, one thing to think like the men who judge something to be bad when it is good, as do those whom we have already mentioned. It is quite another thing that a man should see as good what is good--as is the case with many whom thy creation pleases because it is good, yet what pleases them in it is not thee, and so they would prefer to find their joy in thy creatures rather than to find their joy in thee. It is still another thing that when a man sees a thing to be good, God should see in him that it is good--that truly he may be loved in what he hath made, he who cannot be loved except through the Holy Spirit which he hath given us: "Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us."⁶⁴⁹ It is by him that we see whatever we see to be good in any degree, since it is from him, who doth not exist in any particular degree but who simply is what he is.⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴⁸ 1 Cor. 2:11, 12. ⁶⁴⁹Rom. 5:5. ⁶⁵⁰Sed quod est, est. Note the variant text in Skutella, op. cit.: sed est, est. This is obviously an echo of the Vulgate Ex. 3:14: *ego sum qui sum*.

CHAPTER XXXII 47. Thanks be to thee, O Lord! We see the heaven and the earth, either the corporeal part--higher and lower--or the spiritual and physical creation. And we see the light made and divided from the darkness for the adornment of these parts, from which the universal mass of the world or the universal creation is constituted. We see the firmament of heaven, either the original "body" of the world between the spiritual (higher) waters and the corporeal (lower) waters⁶⁵¹ or the expanse of air-- which is also called "heaven"--through which the fowls of heaven wander, between the waters which move in clouds above them and which drop down in dew on clear nights, and those waters which are heavy and flow along the earth. We see the waters gathered together in the vast plains of the sea; and the dry land, first bare and then formed, so as to be visible and well-ordered; and the soil of herbs and trees. We see the light shining from above--the sun to serve the day, the moon and the stars to give cheer in the night; and we see by all these that the intervals of time are marked and noted. We see on every side the watery elements, fruitful with fishes, beasts, and birds--and we notice that the density of the atmosphere which supports the flights of birds is increased by the evaporation of the waters. We see the face of the earth, replete with earthly creatures; and man, created in thy image and likeness, in the very image and likeness of thee--that

is, having the power of reason and understanding--by virtue of which he has been set over all irrational creatures. And just as there is in his soul one element which controls by its power of reflection and another which has been made subject so that it should obey, so also, physically, the woman was made for the man; for, although she had a like nature of rational intelligence in the mind, still in the sex of her body she should be similarly subject to the sex of her husband, as the appetite of action is subjected to the deliberation of the mind in order to conceive the rules of right action. These things we see, and each of them is good; and the whole is very good!

651 Augustine himself had misgivings about this passage. In the *Retractions*, he says that this statement was made "without due consideration." But he then adds, with great justice: "However, the point in question is very obscure" (*res autem in abdito est valde*); cf. *Retract.*, 2:6.

CHAPTER XXXIII 48. Let thy works praise thee, that we may love thee; and let us love thee that thy works may praise thee--those works which have a beginning and an end in time- -a rising and a setting, a growth and a decay, a form and a privation. Thus, they have their successions of morning and evening, partly hidden, partly plain. For they were made from nothing by thee, and not from thyself, and not from any matter that is not thine, or that was created beforehand. They were created from concreated matter--that is, matter that was created by thee at the same time that you didst form its formlessness, without any interval of time. Yet, since the matter of heaven and earth is one thing and the form of heaven and earth is another thing, you didst create matter out of absolutely nothing (*de omnino nihilo*), but the form of the world you didst form from formless matter (*de informi materia*). But both were done at the same time, so that form followed matter with no delaying interval.

CHAPTER XXXIV 49. We have also explored the question of what you didst desire to figure forth, both in the creation and in the description of things in this particular order. And we have seen that things taken separately are good, and all things taken together are very good, both in heaven and earth. And we have seen that this was wrought through thy Word, thy only Son, the head and the body of the Church, and it signifies thy predestination before all times, without morning and evening. But when, in time, you began to unfold the things destined before time, so that you might make hidden things manifest and might reorder our disorders-- since our sins were over us and we had sunk into profound darkness away from thee, and thy good Spirit was moving over us to help us in due season--you didst justify the ungodly and also didst divide them from the wicked; and you made the authority of thy Book a firmament between those above who would be amenable to thee and those beneath who would be subject to them. And you didst gather the society of unbelievers⁶⁵² into a conspiracy, in order

that the zeal of the faithful might become manifest and that they might bring forth works of mercy unto thee, giving their earthly riches to the poor to obtain heavenly riches. Then you didst kindle the lights in the firmament, which are thy holy ones, who have the Word of Life and who shine with an exalted authority, warranted to them by their spiritual gifts. And then, for the instruction of the unbelieving nations, you didst out of physical matter produce the mysteries and the visible miracles and the sounds of words in harmony with the firmament of thy Book, through which the faithful should be blessed. After this you didst form "the living soul" of the faithful, through the ordering of their passions by the strength of continence. And then you didst renew, after thy image and likeness, the mind which is faithful to thee alone, which needs to imitate no human authority. Thus, you didst subordinate rational action to the higher excellence of intelligence, as the woman is subordinate to the man. Finally, in all thy ministries which were needed to perfect the faithful in this life, you didst will that these same faithful ones should themselves bring forth good things, profitable for their temporal use and fruitful for the life to come. We see all these things, and they are very good, because you see them thus in us--you who hast given us thy Spirit, by which we may see them so and love thee in them.

652 See above, *amaricantes*, Ch. XVII, 20.

CHAPTER XXXV 50. O Lord God, grant us thy peace--for you hast given us all things. Grant us the peace of quietness, the peace of the Sabbath, the peace without an evening. All this most beautiful array of things, all so very good, will pass away when all their courses are finished--for in them there is both morning and evening. 51. But the seventh day is without an evening, and it has no setting, for you hast sanctified it with an everlasting duration. After all thy works of creation, which were very good, you didst rest on the seventh day, although you had created them all in unbroken rest--and this so that the voice of thy Book might speak to us with the prior assurance that after our works--and they also are very good because you hast given them to us--we may find our rest in thee in the Sabbath of life eternal.⁶⁵³

653 Cf. this *requiescamus in te* with the *requiescat in te* in Bk. I, Ch. I: "Thou God hast prompted him, that he should delight to praise thee, for thou hast made us for thyself and restless is our heart until it comes to rest in thee."

CHAPTER XXXVII 52. For then also you shalt so rest in us as now you work in us; and, thus, that will be thy rest through us, as these are thy works through us. But you, O Lord, work evermore and art always at rest. You see not in time, you move not in time,

you rest not in time. And yet you make all those things which are seen in time--indeed, the very times themselves--and everything that proceeds in and from time.

CHAPTER XXXVIII 53. We can see all those things which you hast made because they are--but they are because you see them.⁶⁵⁴ And we see with our eyes that they are, and we see with our minds that they are good. But you saw them as made when you saw that they would be made. And now, in this present time, we have been moved to do well, now that our heart has been quickened by thy Spirit; but in the former time, having forsaken thee, we were moved to do evil.⁶⁵⁵ But you, O the one good God, hast never ceased to do good! And we have accomplished certain good works by thy good gifts, and even though they are not eternal, still we hope, after these things here, to find our rest in thy great sanctification. But you art the Good, and need no rest, and art always at rest, because you thyself art thy own rest. What man will teach men to understand this? And what angel will teach the angels? Or what angels will teach men? We must ask it of thee; we must seek it in thee; we must knock for it at thy door. Only thus shall we receive; only thus shall we find; only thus shall thy door be opened.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵⁴Cf. The City of God, XI, 10, on Augustine's notion that the world exists as a thought in the mind of God. ⁶⁵⁵Another conscious connection between Bk. XIII and Bks. I-X. ⁶⁵⁶This final ending is an antiphon to Bk. XII, Ch. I, 1 above.

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