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AUGUSTINE
CONFESSIONS

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AUGUSTINE
CONFESSIONS

BOOKS 9–13

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY
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For Chris Pelling
ἐκτὸς τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐπίσκοπος

PREFACE

I did not originally intend to write a Preface to Volume 2 of the Loeb *Confessions*, having, so I thought, said all the thanks that needed saying in the Preface to Volume 1. Since I finished work on the Latin text and the English translation for Volume 2, however, events have conspired to force a rethink. At the end of 2014 I was diagnosed with an aggressive form of breast cancer, the equally aggressive treatments for which not only made it difficult to complete the writing of the Introduction but also made it uncertain whether I would live long enough to see the work in print. *Quae cum ita sint*, let this second Preface stand as a mark of my gratitude to the people whose love and support have helped to get me through this past year, and to keep my mortality in a broader and happier perspective: my husband and children—Graham, Lizzie, and Jonny; my wider family, especially John and Janice; my friends and colleagues not only at Caius but across the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and in the worldwide catholic Church; and all who have thought of me, prayed for me, and taken care of me (the most impatient of patients) during my illness. And let it also stand as an acknowledgment of the great debt I owe to Augustine—whose honesty and integrity, artistry, and depth penetrated even the

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chemotherapy-intensified fug of my dumb enduring, enabling me to join my voice with his in declaring,

*Non ego vita mea sim: male vixi ex me. Mors mihi
fui: in te revivesco. (Confessions 12.10.10)*

Gonville and Caius College
August 2015

INTRODUCTION

This continuation of *Confessions* completes an intellectually coherent whole in the mind of Augustine the neophyte Christian character, within the text, and likewise in the mind of Augustine the writer, looking upon the events of his earlier life from a privileged authorial perspective, both at the time of composition and later.¹ It is not so easy for a modern reader to see the coherence of that whole. Partly this is a matter of human interest—the “what does a donkey look for in the Bible?” principle.² Many readers are more easily interested in the life story of another human individual than in the meandering, sometimes repetitive, reasonings of a mind trying to interpret the relationship between God and creation. The non-Christian reader, meanwhile, has no spiritual incentive for joining up the personal (Books 1–9) with the impersonal (Books 10–13). Most readers, then, conditioned by expectations of modern literary genres, are likely to assess the value of *Confessions* in terms of its biographical rather than its theological content.

¹ A. states that Books 1 to 10 are “his story” and Books 11 to 13 (marked by a second proem) are theological material (*Retr.* 2.6); but Book 10 is also markedly different in content from Books 1 to 9. See Volume 1 (LCL 26), xv–xvi.

² The answer to the rabbi’s question to his students is “other donkeys.” See Magonet, *A Rabbi’s Bible*, 66–79.

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1. AUDIENCE

The books within this volume cover the following themes: Book 9, a mother and her son; Book 10, the identity of God and the power of memory; Book 11, the nature of time; Books 12–13, exegesis of the first chapter of Genesis. There is a clear change of gear between Book 9 and Book 10, as Augustine brings his personal narrative to a close with a direct reference to the reader and disclosure of one purpose of the text:

So may [Monnica's] last request to me be fulfilled for her more abundantly through many people's prayers—prompted by my *Confessions*—than by my prayers alone. (*Conf.* 9.13.37)

He then begins the next book (after an invocation) by picking up the reference to his text as a document with an intended readership and an explicit focus upon truth:

I want to accomplish truth in my heart, in making my confession openly before you [God]; but with my pen I want to do so before many witnesses. (*Conf.* 10.1.1)

The thought is repeated, using the metaphor of a harvest, to show that Augustine's aim is to benefit Christian believers, those “who are believers, companions in my joy and sharers in the transience of my humanity” (*Conf.* 10.4.6).

Augustine has already disclosed how uncomfortable it makes him to endure the questioning scrutiny of those who turn to him for guidance or to satisfy vain curiosity. They have no objective means of knowing whether what he says is true, while he is always sensitive to the ultimate duality of God and the self, to which only love can bind

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others through the truth: "no one knows what motivates another person, except for the spirit of that person within themselves" (*Conf.* 10.3.3). He is also uneasy about accepting credit for helping others to progress in faith and repeatedly affirms that the praise is due to God and not himself. This dissatisfaction is of a piece with the distaste he showed for the "chair of lies" he had occupied while teaching rhetoric in Milan. There he had scrutinized his self-motivation—whether the account of that process (*Conf.* 9.2.2–3) is "genuine" recollection or literary construct—with an intensity that exposed a moral gap between his skill at persuading and his standards of truth: another skirmish in the long war of rhetoric and philosophy, perhaps. This eventually led to a decision not to abandon the skill³ but to turn it to the service of the truth he was constantly searching for. Eventually he found in the role of Christian teacher (teaching being a principal function of bishops) the ideal marriage of learning, persuasive skill, and noble objective: magisterial Scripture as the foundation, with the Holy Spirit underwriting the morality of the rhetoric, guaranteed his arguments as authoritative. In this way he managed to transfigure the problem of himself being both the source of authority and the effector of conviction.

2. MONNICA

In narrative terms, it is not surprising that Augustine's authoritative Christian voice begins to be heard in the text only after Monnica's death. Like most narrative pro-

³ As with Jane Austen's *Emma*, "It was rather too late in the day to set about being simple-minded and ignorant."

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tagonists, he cannot achieve maturity or fulfillment within the story while his mentor is still a present and active force. She has been his constant advisor, and his “ruler of truth,”⁴ a dominating presence. Yet in terms of the working-out of the “hero” role within the narrative, she must decrease in order for him to increase (cf. John 3:30). In all of his extant works, only at *Conf.* 9.13.37 does Augustine disclose his mother’s name. She was twenty-three years old when Augustine was born; his siblings were Navigius and a sister whose name is not preserved. Augustine gives conflicting snapshots of her as a mother fixed on secular success for her son (*Conf.* 2.3.8), then on winning the Church’s support to intercede for him (*Conf.* 3.12.21), then on advantageous marriage (*Conf.* 6.5.8, 6.11.19–15.25; cf. 4.2.2). When she pushed him into rejecting his concubine, his deference to Monnica’s judgment proved stronger than his attachment to the mother of his son Adeodatus. She was actively involved in the discussions that featured so largely in his brief spell of life withdrawn from worldly business at Cassiciacum (386/7). There Augustine refers to her as a significant participant within the group:

As for my mother, I had already known—both from our daily life together and from careful reflection—that she possessed both talent and a heart on fire for holy things. But then I also observed—based on some significant discussion which took place on my birthday, between myself and my companions (which I turned into a little book)—that her mind

⁴ See *Conf.* 3.11.19.

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was exceptionally well-adapted for pursuing true philosophy. (*Ord.* 2.1.1)⁵

That brief episode of withdrawal from public affairs was partly a fledgling fulfillment of Augustine's hunger for the religious life and partly an expression of the distinctively Roman ideal known as *otium*—a type of leisurely freedom from social and political affairs conducive to the pursuit of wisdom. Augustine did not set out to found a new system of belief there, or a philosophical school. Instead he put his faith in established ways of living the Christian life. It seems to have been characteristic of him to seek out a worthwhile mentor in different directions according to his current beliefs: he records his own pursuit of acknowledgment and guidance from the orator Hierius (*Conf.* 4.14.21), from the Manichaean Faustus (*Conf.* 5.3.3), from the bishop of Milan, Ambrose (*Conf.* 5.13.23–14.25, 6.3.4), and from a later bishop of Milan, Simplicianus (*Conf.* 8.1.1–2.3). This tendency shows up also in the admiration for eremitic monasticism that is evident from his reaction to the life of Antony as a solitary holy man. But he also reacted with admiration to the coenobitic form of monasticism when he learned about communities of Christian brothers both in Egypt and closer to home, even in Milan itself (*Conf.* 8.6.14–15; cf. 6.14.24).⁶

⁵ *Nobiscum erat etiam mater nostra, cujus ingenium, atque in res divinas inflammatum animum, cum antea convictu diuturno et diligenti consideratione perspexeram; tum vero in quadam disputatione non parvae rei, quam die natali meo cum convivis habui, atque in libellum contuli, tanta mihi mens ejus apparuerat, ut nihil aptius verae philosophiae videretur.*

⁶ Cf. Vol. 1, xi.

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Monnica's marriage is described in remarkable detail, but Augustine does not dwell on, and expresses little affection or esteem for, his father, Patricius. Perhaps he felt protective toward his mother because she had been hurt by his father's infidelities while he remained a "pagan." Perhaps it was simply that Augustine's father died when he was only in his teens (370/1), so that his influence was comparatively minor. Frend dismisses him as a "conservative-minded, middling landowner."⁷ In terms of background Augustine was a composite of his mother's Berber blood (Monnica and Adeodatus are both Berber names), whatever Punic (i.e., Phoenician, Semitic) influences had rubbed off on him from his upbringing in the Roman province of North Africa, and the loyalty to Roman ways, which his peerless command of literary Latin evidences from his extant writings. Augustine may have thought of both non-Latin languages (Berber and Punic) as "Punic" because they belonged to the nonelite, the local peasantry; these were the languages of the Donatist resistance to Latin and Roman influence, as much a racial and political as a doctrinal focus of discontent.⁸

In August of 387 Monnica died at Ostia (*Conf.* 9.11.28). As she wished, she was buried there, and not in the grave where she had previously planned to be interred alongside her husband, Patricius (who had died a Christian), back in Thagaste. The belief that one Anicius Auchenius Bassus⁹

⁷ See Frend, "Family of Augustine," 138.

⁸ See Frend, "Berber Background."

⁹ Anicius Auchenius Bassus (7) in Martindale, *Prosopography*, 2:220.

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(consul in 408) composed an inscription in elegiac couplets to mark her tomb¹⁰ soon after her death is based on a medieval record of the inscription. More likely, going by the evidence of a fragment of the inscription found in 1945,¹¹ is a late sixth-century date:¹²

HIC POSVIT CINE<RES GENETRIX CASTISSIMA
PROLIS>
AVGVSTINE, TVI<S ALTERA LVX MERITIS>
QVI SERVANS PA<CIS CAELESTIA IVRA SACERDOS>
COMMISSOS PO<PVLOS MORIBVS INSTITVIS>
GLORIA VOS M<AIOR GESTORVM LAVDE CORONAT>
VIRTVTVM M<ATER FELICIOR SVBOLE>

Here has the mother most pure respecting her
offspring,
another light for your merits, consigned her ashes,
Augustine;
As a priest, keeping the heavenly laws of peace,
you impart your character to the peoples committed
to you.
Glory greater than the praise of your achievements
crowns you both;
A mother of virtues, still more fruitful in her progeny.

¹⁰ "Verses of the former consul Bassus of glorious memory, written on the tomb of Monnica of revered memory, the mother of revered Augustine" (*versus illustrissime memorie Bassi exconsul e scripti in tumulo sce memorie Munice Matris sci Agustini*): Bücheler and Riese, *Anthologia* 1.127-28, no. 670.

¹¹ See Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 399-400.

¹² See Boin, "Late Antique Ostia."

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Monnica's remains were translated to Rome in 1430. The tomb from Ostia is preserved on the north wall of a chapel of the basilica of Sant'Agostino in Rome, while her relics have been enclosed beneath the chapel altar.

3. MYSTICISM, MEMORY, AND MIND

Augustine is more famous as a theologian than as a mystic, but *Conf.* shows repeatedly that he is receptive of moments of vision, though also cautious about affirming them. *Conf.* repeatedly emphasizes a divide between physical and metaphorical sight. The direction of bodily sight upon countless distracting physical stimuli is a weakness tending toward disintegration, while glimpses of God gleaned by the eye of the soul have an integrating power upon the human individual. Throughout *Conf.* he shows that discerning divine truth and divine will, though no easy matter, is not impossible. He describes the discernment process in terms of a distinction between divine revelation (true) and the soul's own imaginings (false). In this, as in so much else, Monnica was his model. She had to exercise discernment using fallible sense perception to tell true from false vision: she recognized her visions concerning Augustine's future marriage as false because of a certain smell (*nescio quis sapor*, *Conf.* 6.13.23) that she associated with delusive phantasms. Her reliance on the physical senses, though not improper, is clearly inferior to the kinds of perception on which Augustine himself came to rely. As he remarks:

We deal more easily and accurately with visible than with intelligible things . . . The former we perceive

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with our bodily senses, the latter with our minds . . .
So let us rely chiefly on the testimony of our eyesight, for it is the highest of the physical senses, and comes closer to the vision of the mind. (*Trin.* 11.1.1-2)¹³

His initial visionary experience is triggered the first time he investigates Scripture with an appropriately receptive attitude: the combination of right intention and authentic subject matter is what, for him, guarantees the reliability of his perceptions. His understanding of what he calls the vision or eye of the heart or soul (including how bodily experience relates to intellect) is worked out in his later writings in terms of its habitual objects—where it invests its energy and attention. It also tracks closely his understanding of physical vision:

I entered deep within myself under your guidance . . . I entered and saw, as it were with the eye of my soul, above that same eye of my soul, above my mind, the unchangeable light . . . Your beams of light reflected back the weakness of my sight, so brightly did they shine upon me, and I trembled with love and awe. (*Conf.* 7.10.16)

Crucial to this interpretation of vision both literal and metaphorical was the understanding of it in terms of rays of light projected from the eyes upon the object of their

¹³ *Facilius et quasi familiarius visibilia quam intellegibilia pertractamus . . . ista sensu corporis sentiamus, illa mente intellegamus . . . Itaque potissimum testimonio utamur oculorum. Is enim sensus corporis maxime excellit, et est visioni mentis . . . vicinior.*

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looking, which then had the capacity to reify the connection between viewer and object.¹⁴ Augustine clarifies this understanding in terms of the relationship between the objects of the mind's attention and the impressions made by those objects and stored in the memory:

The mind combines impressions of physical things, taking what it has made within itself and tearing it away from itself. (*Trin.* 10.5.7)¹⁵

He immediately clarifies this statement by explaining that the boundary between the mind and its perceptions is porous, retaining elements of both objectivity and subjectivity, "for its own substance contributes something to the formation of its perceptions, but it preserves an element by which it freely makes judgments about their nature."¹⁶ This porosity gives a certain flexibility to his exposition of mind and memory.

Book 10 is usually referred to, for brevity's sake, as a book about memory, understood in a broad sense as incorporating imagination and the power of conceiving ideas too. Memory (distinctive and important though it is here) can be rightly understood only in the context within which Augustine sets it: he uses it as a way to ground the "fact" of his mystical experiences of the divine in some reliable truth. How does he come to have a capacity to recognize God's presence? The reader is partly prepared

¹⁴ See Miles, "Vision."

¹⁵ *Imagines eorum convolvit et rapit factas in semetipsa de semetipsa.*

¹⁶ *Dat enim eis formandis quiddam substantiae suae; servat autem aliquid quo libere de specie talium imaginum iudicet.*

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for the change of focus from Book 10 on by the parallel of Book 7, which, like these later books, contains only theological reflection, no biography or narrative. Following his mystical experiences as described in Books 8 and 9, including the exceptional double visionary event with his mother as companion,¹⁷ it is perhaps not surprising that he chooses, after all that careful opening self-deprecation, to use his power with words to give expression to his feelings, as well as his reasoning, about God. The results are lyrical in tone and antiphonal in structure, so that the editor has a choice to make about whether to keep the layout of *scriptio continua* (i.e., normal prose), or to adopt a *per cola et commata* presentation that is more appropriate to poetry¹⁸ and to psalmic or hymnic lyricism addressed to God. *Conf.* 10.6.8 is one example where the reader is led to feel a sense of privileged access to a completely private discourse with God. The most famous example comes later in the book (*Conf.* 10.27.38), where a strong case could be made, on the basis of the text's antiphonal construction, for a *per cola et commata* layout:

¹⁷ The divine voice, *Conf.* 8.12.29; the Ostia vision, *Conf.* 9.10–23.6.

¹⁸ Pioneered by Jerome in the Vulgate for poetic sections of the prophetic books. These sections of *Conf.* are unlikely to have been seen in ancient times as poetry "proper," for that required recognizable genre and appropriate meter. They are more akin to compositions like the fourth-century hymn *Te Deum Laudamus*, which appear to be modeled on the psalms and New Testament canticles. For other possible examples, see also *Conf.* 1.20.31, 4.10.15, 9.10.25 10.6.8, 11.2.3.

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Late have I loved you, O Beauty so old and so new,
late have I loved you!
And look! You were within me, and I was outside
myself,
and it was there that I searched for you.

Another example comes from Book 12 (*Conf.* 12.10.10):

O Truth, light of my heart, do not let my darkness
speak to me!
I have deviated toward earthly things, have fallen into
shadow;
but from here, even from here I have truly loved you.

At the very end of *Conf.* (13.38.53), instead of (antiphonal) doublets, the text has a triple-treble shape (three sets of three clauses), which can hardly be an accidental arrangement:

What human being can give another the power to
understand this?

What angel can give it to another angel?

What angel can give it to a mortal?

We must ask it of you.

We must seek it from you.

We must knock at your door.

This is how it will be received.

This is how it will be found.

This is how it will be opened.

The actual investigation of memory of which Book 10 is often said to consist does not in fact begin until its eighth chapter and must be understood in the context of its analytical frame:

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So I shall transcend even my natural life force, and climb in stages to him who made me. I come to the fields and the grand palaces of my memory¹⁹ where there are treasure-stores of countless impressions²⁰ brought there from every imaginable kind of thing that my senses perceived. (*Conf.* 10.8.12)

It is open to question whether Augustine thought of Book 10 as a *maius opus* marking the shift from personal biography and narrative to theology and exegesis. His own emotions and religious fervor still figure prominently. Perhaps he intended the biographical narrative as the equivalent of Lucretius's honey to sweeten the taste of medicine administered via Books 10 to 13 (*Lucretius*, *DRN* 4.11–16):

Just as doctors, when they try to give sour wormwood as medicine to children, first smear the lip of the cup with the golden sweetness of honey, so that their unsuspecting youth is tricked to the point of tasting:
then they drink to its dregs the bitter drug of gall,
and though they are deceived they are not harmed.

¹⁹ A. describes memory as both container and thing contained, e.g., "the memory of you stayed with me" (*Conf.* 7.17.23); "the vast hall of my memory . . . the treasure chamber of memory" (*Conf.* 10.8.14); "the vast stores of memory" (*Conf.* 10.40.65). GM note the originality of his psychological analysis. OD: "A long drought of scriptural citations here sets in."

²⁰ *Imago* figures largely from here to *Conf.* 10.30.42 as A.'s term for the entities representing in mental terms the experiences and sensations he commits to memory. The meaning of *imago* embraces the literal ("likeness, representation") and metaphorical ("conception, idea").

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In the sixth chapter of Book 10, Augustine concludes from a brief survey of the material world that in his search for God he had “better look to the inner self” (*Conf.* 10.6.9, *melius quod interius*). This conclusion is what prompts him to “climb in stages to him who made me [and] come to the fields and the grand palaces of my memory” (*Conf.* 10.8.12). Thus he isolates memory first of all as a locus for the “inner self” and develops the idea of memory as a form of “storage,” impressions (*imagines*) being placed there and recalled when required. The reader must remember that Augustine had no scientific understanding whatever of memory as an aspect of brain function. His memory, whatever exactly it is, has to be imagined as huge, because of the quantity of impressions stored in it:

There heaven and earth and sea are present to me, together with everything they contain that I have been able to encounter with my senses, except for what I have forgotten. (*Conf.* 10.8.14)

With characteristic acuity, Augustine equates this locus of memory with the sense of selfhood: “this is also the place where I encounter myself.” He returns repeatedly to the idea, for instance when he writes, “O my God, what a powerful force memory is . . . and this is the mind, and this is what I am” (*Conf.* 10.17.26). Not the whole of the self, for he is also sufficiently acute to know that he does not possess complete self-knowledge.²¹ He distinguishes (*Conf.* 10.10.17) between impressions of certain things stored in memory and actual things themselves—concepts

²¹ He has no concept of the psychological “unconscious,” either. See O’Daly, *Augustine’s Philosophy of Mind*, 150.

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and abstracts—that exist only in memory and not in the physical world. He does the same for concepts of number (*Conf.* 10.12.19), locating them all in memory, because they do not “belong” anywhere else. But it is an awkward shift, betraying how closely he sees the function of memory as paralleling the function of intelligent reasoning. The shift has some resemblance to his handling of memories of emotion, which have the capacity to re-create experiences (*Conf.* 10.14.21), as he struggles in this respect to distinguish mind from memory, again hampered (from a modern scientific viewpoint) by his lack of modern scientific knowledge of brain function and psychology. He is, not surprisingly, very much interested in the relationship between impressions (in the memory) and realities (in the material world): a problem analogous to his preoccupation with words as “signs,”²² while the antithesis between memory and forgetfulness evokes an exploration of the latter as the “absence of the former” (analogous to evil as the privation of good). His paradox of remembering forgetfulness may sound frivolous, but that paradoxical character renders it more, not less, intellectually intriguing to Augustine (*Conf.* 10.16.24; cf. 10.19.28).

At *Conf.* 10.20.29 it becomes clear why memory has this central role to play. As a human being Augustine has an impression of the blessed life; but where does it come from? Human origination, the possibility of preexistence, was a topic that captured his neophyte imagination; as he puts it in *On the Magnitude of the Soul*, “I believe that the proper abode and native land of the soul is God himself,

²² On A.’s theory of signs, and words as signs, see *Doctr. Chr.* 1–3; Markus, “Saint Augustine on Signs,” 60–83.

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for he made it" (*Quant. An.* 1.2).²³ Thus the inner self is in some way identifiable with memory, as a space where God can be, but from which he can also be absent, leaving the human soul to its abandoned self. Is it like his memories of Carthage, a place where he has dwelt; or is it something different? Because all people want to be blessed, or enjoy bliss, he argues, they must all have a "memory" of that bliss: "This would not be possible unless the actual phenomenon which we call "bliss" was present in everyone's memory" (*Conf.* 10.20.29). The function of memory as closely tied to mind and reason is further underlined later in Book 10, when he writes, "from the moment I learned of you, there you remain in my memory, and that is where I find you when I call you to mind, and I delight in you" (*Conf.* 10.24.35).

After the climactic ecstasy of "Late have I loved you," Augustine returns to the fretful problem of human physicality, trying to harmonize selfhood with moral responsibility for sensual appetites, and for vain curiosity with its capacity for corrupting such appetites. This transition leads easily back to the question of pleasure being rightly motivated, especially with respect to accepting praise from other people (*Conf.* 10.37.61), and then to his sense of unworthiness, and the greatness of God's redeeming work in Christ. It can be argued that "to conceive of memory as an inner space of the self is something new" in Western philosophy, a distinctive contribution of Au-

²³ *Propriam quamdam habitationem animae ac patriam Deum ipsum credo esse a quo creata est*; written 387/8. Cf. Cic., *Tusc.* 1.24.57–29.70

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gustine.²⁴ He abandons apparently more straightforward ideas of memory, such as *anamnesis*, or the metaphor of writing on a wax tablet (i.e., making “impressions”): for Augustine it matters that not just “impressions” of things (and so imperfect copies) but also the things themselves should be in the memory (in the sense of an entity with a capacity for conceiving ideas, akin to mind). His analysis of memory is ultimately aimed at explaining how human beings in their embodied existence can have perceptions, and attain truths, about God at all.

4. EXEGESIS

The idea that written texts can have more than one meaning, and that they need both expertise and reason to be properly understood, is not tied solely to the emergence of Christianity from its Jewish matrix, nor to Jewish styles of interpretation. The development of classical text-critical principles (which began in Hellenistic times with study of the many versions of Homer) proved equally useful when applied to biblical writings. Not that the task of text-criticism was purely literary: it incorporated moral questions about what was appropriate or fitting for given characters in particular situations. Where this became problematic, as in the case of Homer’s “immoral” depictions of divine behavior (such as the liaison of Ares and Aphrodite in *Odyssey* 8), allegory became a useful tool for defending both the authenticity and the status of the text

²⁴ Cary, *Inner Self*, 128.

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in question. There is evidence of the growth of an analogous interpretative tradition even within the Hebrew Bible,²⁵ as well as between the Old and New Testaments of the Christian Bible, and in the patristic period when the canon of Scripture was closed, creating a body of text with critical boundaries for commentators to tackle. What appeared to be immorality or crude physicality within the text at issue²⁶ could be positivized by sidestepping the narrative meaning²⁷ in favor of different types of figurative interpretation often bracketed together under the heading of *allēgoria* (ἀλληγορία). In the second century AD, the first Christian apologists developed *logos*-christologies—interpretations of the person and work of the Christ²⁸—as part of their defense of Christian belief and praxis to “pagans.” They did so in terms recognizably Stoic in origin: *logos* being both the foundation of the fourth gospel’s christology (John 1:1, 14) and the cosmos-pervading principle of Stoic thought, which gave coherence and meaning to the universe.²⁹ This was first of all an attempt to claim antiquity (virtually synonymous with authority) for Chris-

²⁵ In which primary prophetic writings were developed and interpolated by later hands.

²⁶ Writers like Marcion, later anathematized as gnostic and heretic, argued in the second century for Christians to abandon the entire Old Testament and much of the New, on the grounds of barbarity and/or Jewishness.

²⁷ Sometimes called the plain, historical, or literal meaning, though both these descriptors are potentially misleading; see Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 119–85.

²⁸ A figure not necessarily fully theologically coextensive with the human being Jesus.

²⁹ See Vol. 1, xxx.

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tianity and then to make a statement of its intellectual quality, as a system of thought able to stand comparison with the great schools of "pagan" philosophy. Allegory as an interpretative method was legitimized by the example of Paul in the New Testament (including his use of the relevant verb at Galatians 4:24); it also contributed to the wider understanding of texts as reaching beyond the narrative meaning, thus confirming Christian interpretations of the Old Testament as prefiguring the New. The "fact" that the Bible contained so many examples of prophecy fulfilled was one of its main attractions to would-be Christians; it offered the kind of certainty and security that Augustine was searching for when he experimented with astrology and other forms of prediction.

In his treatise *On Christian Doctrine*, Augustine set out the foundational requirements and intellectual skills necessary for understanding and teaching Scripture correctly (*Doctr. Chr.* 2-3). These included basic matters such as which books were to be treated as canonical; technicalities such as translation from Hebrew and Greek into Latin; clarification of obscurities of language and text (punctuation, pronunciation); methodological questions (adducing parallels, using clear passages to interpret obscure ones); and figurative interpretation, such as allegory. There was no question of Augustine's abandoning the methods of his classical education, only of putting them to a "higher" use. His preconceptions, like those of the great founder of biblical exegesis Origen, prevented him from ever thinking or arguing that Scripture was straightforwardly "wrong." More than a century before Augustine's time, Origen had recognized the vital importance of a single agreed text of the Bible and used classical text-

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critical methods to achieve that end. He also laid the foundation of biblical hermeneutics, in his work *On First Principles* (*Peri Archōn* 4), showing that it is possible for Scripture to have no narrative (or "literal") meaning, as when God makes light before sun and moon or when Scripture prohibits the eating of birds that are never eaten anyway or of animals that do not exist. But, given its divinely inspired status, Scripture could not be held to have no meaning at all. The closest Augustine comes to suggesting the possibility of a multiplicity of valid meanings is when he acknowledges that honest disagreements about meaning can occur: modest as this concession may seem, it is a step forward from the invective-laden rhetoric of scriptural disputes engaged in by many of his contemporaries:

Two types of disagreement can arise when honest reporters relate something in terms of signs:³⁰ one, if there is a disagreement over the truth of the facts, the other, if the disagreement is about the intention of the person relating the facts.³¹ It is one thing to inquire into the truth surrounding the act of creation; and another [to establish] what Moses, that outstanding servant of your faith [cf. Hebrews 3:5], wanted the reader and hearer to understand in the words of Scripture. (*Conf.* 12.23.32)

³⁰ See *De Mag.* 2.4; *Doct. Chr.* 2. A. is concerned here with authorial intention and inherent meaning.

³¹ The idea that authorial intention is important to critical interpretation is also uncommon.

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A little later in Book 12 he adapts a classical motif of literary inspiration—the spring of pure, fresh water—to show that different people can draw different truths from Scripture:

That account will bubble up with currents of clear truth from which each person . . . draws what truth they can about these matters—one person this, another that. (*Conf.* 12.27.37)

The fact that some passages of Scripture are resistant to resolution by these tested hermeneutical methods is answered by Augustine, as previously by Origen, with the argument that difficulty is a divinely intended aspect of Scripture, to encourage effort and dispel boredom:³²

In certain parts of Scripture readers find no meaning they can apprehend, even a false one, because of the extent to which some sayings blanket themselves in a thick fog of obscurity. I am convinced that this is all part of divine providence, to overcome pride by hard work, and to rescue from boredom the intelligent mind, to which anything that is easy to understand seems of little value. (*Doctr. Chr.* 2.7.10)³³

³² The “difficulty hypothesis.”

³³ *Quibusdam autem locis quid vel falso suspicentur non inveniunt, ita obscure quaedam dicta densissimam caliginem obducunt. Quod totum provisum divinitus esse non dubito, ad edmandam labore superbiam, et intellectum a fastidio revocandum, cui facile investigata plerumque vilescunt.*

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It is important to remember, when considering Augustine's approach to scriptural exegesis, that the earlier books of *Conf.* are saturated with scriptural allusions not merely cited but applied to personal circumstances.³⁴ His "autobiography," in other words, provides a methodological paradigm for selecting texts of Scripture and relating them to individual experience and for absorbing and reproducing them as words "owned" by their speaker, as well as by their author. Thus the universal, paradigmatic exegesis in *Conf.* 12–13 needs to be understood in close relation to the intimate, personalized applications of Scripture evident in *Conf.* 1–9. This is another way in which the narrative of an individual human experience interconnects with exploration of the universal, cosmic meaning of human existence.

5. TIME AND HISTORY

Time does not go idly by, nor flow to no purpose through our senses. It does strange things to the mind.

(*Conf.* 4.8.13)

It can be difficult for modern readers to grasp either the nature or the extent of Augustine's puzzlement over the phenomenon of time. Perhaps this is partly because, for more than a century, it has been possible for human be-

³⁴ Examples are legion, ranging from individual word—and phrase—echoes, adaptations, and quotations (noted in the margins of the English text), to complex thematic sequences (*catenae*, e.g., at *Conf.* 13.18.24).

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ings to record, preserve, and replay both sound and motion pictures. This double achievement fixes a great gulf between ancient and modern. In the former, the uttered sound is iconically evanescent, and precise forms of speech-acts and sounds cannot be recreated or recovered. Time past remains recoverable only by recollection and retelling, both of which are vulnerable to the kinds of reprocessing that are characteristic of oral reporting. M. I. Finley encapsulated the difference between a scientific historical understanding of time and a "natural" or uneducated (and premodern) one:

We are in thrall to the highly sophisticated, highly abstract scientific conception of time as a measurable continuum, a conception which is largely meaningless for ordinary human purposes. Time past consists of a number of individual events (including biological transformations and sensual satisfactions); time future consists of anticipated events or satisfactions. Duration of time, if it is a consideration at all, which is not always the case, is not experienced as a measurable quantity but as an associative or emotional quality: time drags, for example.³⁵

Like Aristotle long before him, Augustine never engaged with history as an intellectual discipline in any depth. He acknowledged its value in conventional terms but did not express any interest in tackling it as a subject; "history recounts events in an accurate and pragmatic way"

³⁵ Finley, "Myth, Memory, and History," 293.

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(*Doctr. Chr.* 2.28.44).³⁶ Had he wished to do so, however, he would have had one crucial advantage over the philosopher. The work of Eusebius of Caesarea in constructing a comparative chronology of events in the ancient world³⁷ had given a new influence to the sense of linear temporal progression that is associated with Christian self-interpretation relative to both Judaism and "paganism."³⁸ In wider society, the marking of time by festivals and seasons was more a religious specialism than a matter of diary-keeping, pointing to both time and memory as fluid and pliant phenomena rather than as icons of exactitude. Modern scientific history can be seen as the tracking and analysis of change, and history, as a discipline, as predicated upon change. But as Augustine makes clear from the outset (*Conf.* 1.1.1), change is for him synonymous with decay and inferiority: the truth, or Truth, that is unchanging can have nothing to do with it. His interest in conceptualizing time as a linear progression had less to do with how it opened up the possibility of historiography and more with how it expressed the outworkings of divine Providence.³⁹

³⁶ *Historia facta narrat fideliter atque utiliter.*

³⁷ Eusebius's *Chronicon* (ca. 311) exploited the new *codex* book form to tabulate his *Chronici canones* (translated and updated by Jerome, ca. 380), the first comparative chronology of events in ancient history across different nations.

³⁸ The ideal of sacred history as progressing in a particular temporal direction is underpinned by the arrangement of the books of the Christian Bible.

³⁹ E.g., "human kingdoms are established by divine providence [or 'forethought']" (*De civ. D.* 5.1, *divina providentia regna constituuntur humana*).

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6. CONCLUSIONS

Two overarching themes of Augustine's work as a whole—the characteristic emphasis on love, and the analysis of motivation as the key to right conduct—are rooted in the hard-won wisdom of *Conf.*, even though they do not figure prominently within the text. Both come together in a famous epigram in his analysis of 1 John:

You must accept one simple rule: Love, and do what you want (*dilige et quod vis fac*). . . If you correct, correct out of love (*dilectio*); if you spare, spare out of love: let the root of love (*radix dilectionis*) be within you, for nothing but good can come from that root (*non potest de ista radice nisi bonum existere*).

(Tractate on the first letter of John 7:8)

Proper love, and proper motivation: these are the necessary and sufficient conditions for finding favor with God. Augustine refers to his *Enchiridion*, a manual of fundamental Christian teaching written in 420 at the request of one Laurentius, as “a book on faith, hope, and love” (*Retr.* 2.63). Even his political thought in *De civ. D.* is governed by love as a tool for analysis of human behavior. As for motivation, his reflections on the extent to which a person can be responsible for things that happen in dreams are neither naïve nor simplistic; he intuits connections of thought that have since come to be understood in terms of the “conscious” and the “unconscious” (*Conf.* 10.30.41).

A third characteristic theme can be added—the culmination to which *Conf.* points, even beyond the borders of the text itself. “Trinity,” the “threeness” of God, was both a mystical and theological principle, part of the inner truth

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of Christianity into which the neophyte believer would have been initiated.⁴⁰ Augustine came to recognize trinity as the true nature of the God he was searching for in the first part of *Conf.*; he connects that ultimate Triad with triads that are reflections of the divine essence in human individuals (*Conf.* 13.11.12). His long-extended analysis of the Creation in Genesis I at the end of *Conf.* is not an abortive attempt at writing a biblical commentary in the style of Origen. Together with his other attempts at tackling the subject matter of Genesis, it testifies to a lifelong preoccupation with interpreting the first book of the Bible as emblematic (for him historically as well as morally) of God-humankind relations.⁴¹ It was in his analysis of Genesis at the end of *Conf.* that he found the key to his intuitions about God:

Look! I begin to see in a dark figure that you are
Trinity, O my God. (*Conf.* 13.5.6)

And this is the icon with which he chooses to bring the thirteen books of his confessions to a close, with three sets of three clauses (p. xxii above)—first, three questions; then, three exhortations; and finally, three statements. The very last word, a single Latin verb drawn from the gospel, expresses the hope of the past thirteen books, not only for himself, but also for those who read *Conf.* after him: *aperi-*

⁴⁰ See Vol. 1, xxx.

⁴¹ Twelve books "On the literal meaning of Genesis" (*Gn. Litt.*); one unfinished book "On the literal commentary on Genesis" (*Gn. litt. Imp.*); two books "On Genesis, against the Manichees" (*Gn. c. Man.*); the first book of "Questions concerning the Heptateuch" (*Qu. Hept.*).

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etur, "it will be opened." As often when Augustine quotes Scripture, he expects the reader to respond by remembering the context, in this case a threefold divine promise in which the reader's hope, like Augustine's, is guaranteed fulfillment:

For everyone who asks, receives; and everyone who seeks, finds; and to everyone who knocks, it will be opened. (Matthew 7:8)⁴²

⁴² *omnis enim qui petit accipit, et qui quaerit invenit, et pulsanti aperietur.*

ABBREVIATIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY SUPPLEMENTAL TO VOLUME I

<i>An.</i>	<i>Andria</i>	
<i>c. Ep. Fund.</i>	<i>Contra epistulam quam vocant "fundamenti"</i>	<i>Against the So- Called Funda- mental Epistle</i>
<i>c. Iul.</i>	<i>Contra Iulianum</i>	<i>Against Julian</i>
<i>c. Iul. imp.</i>	<i>Contra Iulianum imperfectum</i>	<i>Against Julian, unfinished</i>
<i>Caes.</i>	<i>Caesar</i>	
<i>Cat. Rud.</i>	<i>De catechizandis rudibus</i>	<i>On Catechizing Beginners</i>
<i>Div. Qu.</i>	<i>De diversis quaestionibus</i>	<i>On Various Ques- tions</i>
<i>Duab. An.</i>	<i>De duabus animabus</i>	<i>Concerning Two Souls</i>
<i>Ling. Lat.</i>	<i>De lingua Latina</i>	<i>The Latin Lan- guage</i>
<i>Mag.</i>	<i>De magistro</i>	<i>The Teacher</i>
<i>Metaph.</i>	<i>Metaphysica</i>	<i>Metaphysics</i>
<i>Nat. B.</i>	<i>De natura boni</i>	<i>On the Nature of Good</i>
<i>Pervig. Ven.</i>	<i>Pervigilium Ve- neris</i>	<i>The Vigil of Ve- nus</i>

ABBREVIATIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

<i>Phys.</i>	<i>Physica</i>	<i>Physics</i>
<i>Quant. An.</i>	<i>De quantitate animae</i>	<i>The Measure of the Soul</i>
<i>Qu. Hept.</i>	<i>Quaestiones in heptateuchum VII</i>	<i>Seven Questions Concerning the Heptateuch</i>
<i>Ser.</i>	<i>Sermones</i>	<i>Sermons</i>
<i>Sol.</i>	<i>Soliloquia</i>	<i>Soliloquy</i>
<i>Suet.</i>	<i>Suetonius</i>	
<i>TLL</i>	<i>Thesaurus Lin- guae Latinae</i>	

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THE CONFESSIONS OF
AURELIUS AUGUSTINE

LIBER IX

1. (1) O domine, ego servus tuus, ego servus tuus et filius ancillae tuae: dirupisti vincula mea, tibi sacrificabo hostiam laudis. laudet te cor meum et lingua mea, et omnia ossa mea dicant,¹ "domine, quis similis tibi?" dicant, et responde mihi et dic animae meae, "salus tua ego sum." quis ego et qualis ego? quid non mali aut facta mea aut, si non facta, dicta mea aut, si non dicta, voluntas mea fuit? tu autem, domine, bonus et misericors, et dextera tua respiciens profunditatem mortis meae et a fundo cordis mei exhauriens abyssum corruptionis. et hoc erat totum, nolle quod volebam et velle quod volebas.

Sed ubi erat tam annoso tempore et de quo imo altoque secreto evocatum est in momento liberum arbitrium meum, quo subderem cervicem leni iugo tuo et umeros levi sarcinae tuae, Christe Iesu, adiutor meus et redemptor meus? quam suave mihi subito factum est carere suavitibus nugarum, et quas amittere metus fuerat iam dimittere gaudium erat. eiciebas enim eas a me, vera tu et

¹ dicant *codd.* *Skut. Ver.*: dicent S Knöll

¹ By the end of the book, these have been transformed into "the bond of faith" (*Conf.* 9.11.36). ² OD: "Here the indicative *sacrificabo* replaces the subjunctive *sacrificem* of 8.1.1."

BOOK IX

1. (1) O Lord, I am your servant, I am your servant and the son of your handmaid: you have torn away my bonds,¹ and I will offer you a sacrifice² of praise. Let my heart and my tongue praise you, and let all my bones declare, "Lord, who is like you?" Let them declare it, then answer me and say to my soul, "I am your salvation." Who am I? And what kind of being am I? What was there that was not evil in my actions? Or if not my actions then my words? Or if not my words then my will? But you, Lord, are good and merciful: your right hand encountered the depth of my death; it drained the pit of corruption from the ground of my heart. This was all there was to it: to stop wanting what I wanted, and to start wanting what you wanted.

Ps 116:16-17

Ps 35:10

Ps 35:3

cf. Ex 34:6;
Pss 86:15,
103:8

But after such a span of years, where was my free will? And from what depth and from what place of utter secrecy was it called forth at that moment, to enable me to submit my neck to your gentle yoke, and my shoulders to your easy burden, O Christ Jesus, my help and my redeemer? How suddenly it became my delight to do without the delights of trivialities;³ now it was my joy to repudiate what once I had feared to relinquish. For it was you who cast

Mt 11:29-30

Ps 19:14

³ An echo of *Conf.* 8.11.26.

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summa suavitas, eiciebas et intrabas pro eis omni voluptate dulcior, sed non carni et sanguini, omni luce clarior, sed omni secreto interior, omni honore sublimior, sed non sublimibus in se. iam liber erat animus meus a curis mordacibus ambiendi et acquirendi et volutandi atque scalpendi scabiem libidinum, et garriebam tibi, claritati meae et divitiis meis et saluti meae, domino deo meo.

2. (2) Et placuit mihi in conspectu tuo non tumultuose abripere sed leniter subtrahere ministerium linguae meae nundinis loquacitatis, ne ulterius pueri meditates non legem tuam, non pacem tuam, sed insanias mendaces et bella forensia, mercarentur ex ore meo arma furori suo. et opportune iam paucissimi dies supererant ad vindemiales ferias, et statui tolerare illos, ut sollemniter abscederem et redemptus a te iam non redirem venalis. consilium ergo nostrum erat coram te, coram hominibus autem nisi nostris non erat. et convenerat inter nos ne passim cuiquam effunderetur, quamquam tu nobis a convalle plorationis ascendentibus et cantantibus canticum graduum dederas sagittas acutas et carbones vastatores adversus linguam subdolam, velut consulendo contradicentem et, sicut cibum adsolet, amando consumentem.

(3) Sagittaveras tu cor nostrum caritate tua et gestabamus verba tua transfixa visceribus. et exempla servorum

⁴ Epic resonances here: cf. Virg. *Aen.* 1.150, *furor arma ministrat*.

⁵ August 23 to October 15. As a recess from legal business, it was formalized by Julius Caesar: cf. Suet. *Caes.* 40.

⁶ The Latin combines the idea of impaling (i.e., piercing) with securing (i.e., fixing): God's words (Scripture) are both making and unmaking A. His symbol in art combines these two images into a flaming heart pierced by an arrow.

BOOK IX

them away from me; and you are the greatest, true delight: you cast them away and in their place you entered, sweeter than every sensual pleasure (but not to flesh and blood), more radiant than any light (but hidden deeper than any mystery), more sublime than any prestige (but not to those who count themselves sublime). At last my mind was free from the gnawing anxieties of ambition and acquisition, and of scratching the itch of physical desire and wallowing in it: and I started to pour out my thoughts to you, my illumination, my riches and my salvation, O Lord my God.

2. (2) In your presence I was determined to withdraw my tongue from its daily work in the marketplace of rhetoric, but gently, rather than abruptly. This was to stop youths who were concentrating on the madness of deceit, and battles in courts of law (rather than your law and your peace) from buying—from my mouth—weapons to assist their violence.⁴ Fortunately there were only a few days to go before the grape-gathering holiday;⁵ I decided to wait for that time, so that I could resign formally, and never, now that you had redeemed me, go back to putting myself up for sale. So our plan was known to you, but not to other people outside our own circle. We agreed not to blurt it out to anyone else, though as we climbed up and out of the valley of sorrow, and sang the song of ascents, you had given us sharp arrows and consuming coals for countering the kind of deceitful tongues that would argue against us while pretending to advise, and consume us like food even as they were expressing their affection.

Ps 52:4

Ps 84:6

cf. Pss 120-134

Ps 120:4

(3) Your arrows had pierced our heart with your love, and so we carried with us your words fixed deep⁶ within.⁷

⁷ A counter to "humanity bearing everywhere its own mortality" (*Conf.* 1.1.1).

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tuorum, quos de nigris lucidos et de mortuis vivos feceras, congesta in sinum cogitationis nostrae urebant et absumebant gravem torporem, ne in ima vergeremus, et accendebant nos valide, ut omnis ex lingua subdola contradictionis flatus inflammare nos acrius posset, non extinguere.

Verum tamen quia propter nomen tuum, quod sanctificasti per terras, etiam laudatores utique haberet votum et propositum nostrum, iactantiae simile videbatur non opperiri tam proximum feriarum tempus, sed de publica professione atque ante oculos omnium sita ante discedere, ut conversa in factum meum ora cunctorum, intuentium quam vicinum vindemialium diem praevenire voluerim, multa dicerent, quod quasi appetissem magnus videri. et quo mihi erat istuc, ut putaretur et disputaretur de animo meo et blasphemaretur bonum nostrum?

(4) Quin etiam quod ipsa aestate litterario labori nimio pulmo meus cedere coeperat et difficulter trahere suspiria doloribusque pectoris testari se saucium vocemque clariorem productioremve recusare, primo perturbaverat me quia magisterii illius sarcinam paene iam necessitate deponere cogebat aut, si curari et convalescere potuissem, certe intermittere.² sed ubi plena voluntas vacandi et videndi quoniam tu es dominus oborta mihi est atque firmata (nosti, deus meus), etiam gaudere coepi quod haec quoque suberat non mendax excusatio, quae offensionem

² intermittere *S O edd.*: intermitterem *C D G*

⁸ *vacatio*, like *negotium*, means a period in which no official business can be transacted.

⁹ A. seems sensitive to the possible criticism that he was driven by convenience, not conviction.

BOOK IX

Examples of your servants whom you had turned from darkness to light, and from death to life, piled up in the recesses of our thoughts and caught fire, and burned off our heavy sluggishness, making it impossible for us to return to the abyss: it kindled such power in us that every breath of opposition from a deceitful tongue made us burn even more fiercely, rather than quenching our enthusiasm.

But because of your name, which you have hallowed over all the earth, our prayer and proposal would certainly attract people's approval: so it seemed too self-aggrandizing not to wait for the vacation⁸ which was about to begin. If I withdrew from my public teaching position (which was open to general scrutiny) instead, consequently attracting everyone's gaze to my action, and if everyone noticed that I wanted to act ahead of the day when the grape-gathering holiday began, there would be plenty of discussion that I was bent on making too much of myself. And what good would it do me to make people think and argue about my state of mind, and so bring the good which had befallen us into disrepute?⁹

(4) What is more, that same summer my lungs had begun to weaken because of my excessive teaching load. I found it difficult to draw breath, and the pains in my chest were clear evidence of physical damage and of my inability to speak clearly or at any length. At first this caused me great anxiety, because circumstances were forcing me to lay down the burden of that teaching position, or at least to take a break if I wanted any chance of being healed and getting well again. When my firm intention to be still and see that you are Lord was aroused and established (you know, my God), I even began to rejoice that this provided a genuine reason to mitigate people's disapproval of my

Ps 46:10¹²

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hominum temperaret, qui propter liberos suos me liberum esse numquam volebant. plenus igitur tali gaudio tolerabam illud intervallum temporis donec decurreret (nescio utrum vel viginti dies erant), sed tamen fortiter tolerabantur quia recesserat cupiditas, quae mecum solebat ferre grave negotium, et ego premendus remanseram nisi patientia succederet. peccasse me in hoc quisquam servorum tuorum, fratrum meorum, dixerit, quod iam pleno corde militia tua passus me fuerim vel una hora sedere in cathedra mendacii, at ego non contendo. sed tu, domine misericordissime, nonne et hoc peccatum cum ceteris horrendis et funereis in aqua sancta ignovisti et remisisti mihi?

3. (5) Macerabatur anxitudine Verecundus de isto nostro bono, quod propter vincula sua, quibus tenacissime tenebatur, deserere se nostro consortio videbat. nondum christianus, coniuge fideli, ea ipsa tamen artiore prae ceteris compede ab itinere quod aggressi eramus retardabatur, nec christianum esse alio modo se velle dicebat quam illo quo non poterat. benigne sane obtulit ut, quamdiu ibi essemus, in re eius essemus. retribuēs illi, domine, in resurrectione³ iustorum, quia iam ipsam sortem retribuisti ei. quamvis enim absētibz nobis, cum Romae iam esse-

³ resurrectione *C D G O Maur. Ver.:* retributione *S Knöll Skut.*

¹⁰ Paronomasia on *liberi* (children) and *liber* (free).

¹¹ Cf. *Conf.* 8.6.13.

¹² He means the monastic model (commonly regarded at that time as "superior"), from which, being married, he was disqualified.

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actions, people who in the interests of their freeborn sons wanted me never to be free.¹⁰ Full of joy as I was, I put up with that space of time until the appointment was at an end (it may have been as many as twenty days). The days were easier to endure because the eagerness for gain that formerly motivated me to put up with the burden of work had now vanished; but I would have remained under pressure had not patience filled the vacancy. Perhaps one of your servants—my Christian brothers—will remark that I sinned by so doing; because with my heart volunteering for your service I still permitted myself to occupy the chair of lies for a single hour. I do not dispute this. But surely, most merciful Lord, you have pardoned this, along with all my other dreadful, deadly sins, in the water of baptism, and have forgiven me?

3. (5) Verecundus¹¹ was tormented with anxiety about this good that had befallen us, for because of his own bonds, which still tightly constrained him, he could see that he was going to lose our friendship. He was not yet a Christian, for his wife (who was a believer) was herself the shackle, tighter than the rest, which was holding him back from making the journey that we had begun. He was declaring that he wanted to be a Christian by one means only; the very one that was denied him.¹² Nonetheless he kindly offered that for as long as we were there, we should stay at his property. You will reward him, Lord, at the resurrection¹³ of the righteous, because you have already bestowed their lot upon him. For though we were absent (as we were now staying in Rome) he was seized by a

Nm 23:10;
Lk 14:14; Ps
125:3

¹³ A.'s text at *En. Ps.* 103.3.10 has *resurrectione*; the noun is tied to the verb *retribuatur* in Lk 14:14^{Vg.}

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mus, corporali aegritudine correptus et in ea christianus et fidelis factus ex hac vita emigravit. ita misertus es non solum eius sed etiam nostri, ne cogitantes egregiam erga nos amici humanitatem nec eum in grege tuo numerantes dolore intolerabili cruciaremur. gratias tibi, deus noster! tui sumus. indicant hortationes et consolationes tuae: fidelis promissor reddis Verecundo pro rure illo eius Cassiciaco, ubi ab aestu saeculi requievimus in te, amoenitatem sempiternae virentis⁴ paradisi tui, quoniam dimisisti ei peccata super terram in monte incaseato, monte tuo, monte uberi.

(6) Angebatur ergo tunc ipse, Nebridius autem conlatabatur. quamvis enim et ipse nondum christianus in illam foveam perniciosissimi erroris incidere ut veritatis filii tui carnem phantasma crederet, tamen inde emergens sic sibi erat, nondum imbutus ullis ecclesiae tuae sacramentis, sed inquisitor ardentissimus veritatis. quem non multo post conversionem nostram et regenerationem per baptismum tuum ipsum etiam fidelem catholicum, castitate perfecta atque continentia tibi servientem in Africa apud suos, cum tota domus eius per eum christiana facta esset, carne solvisti. et nunc ille vivit in sinu Abraham. quidquid illud est quod illo significatur sinu, ibi Nebridius meus vivit, dulcis amicus meus, tuus autem, domine,⁵ adoptivus ex liberto

⁴ virentis *codd.* (*alii autem sine 'sempiternae'*): virtutis S GM

⁵ domine C G O P *edd.*: om. S.

¹⁴ Paronomasia on *egregiam . . . grege*.

¹⁵ An artistic reworking of the scripture. Elsewhere A. identifies the mountain as Christ, *En. Ps.* 67.22^{vg}.

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bodily sickness, and while he was ill he became a Christian, and a believer, and so departed this life. In this way you had mercy not only on him but on us as well—to save us the excruciating torment of thinking of our friend's remarkable kindness toward us yet being unable to reckon him as one of your flock.¹⁴ You are our God, and I thank you! We belong to you. Your encouragement and consolation show it clearly: true to your promise, you reward Verecundus for that country retreat of his at Cassiciacum, where we found rest from the turbulence of daily life, and found it in you: that reward was the delight of your eververdant paradise, for you have put away his earthly sins upon that mountain rich in pasture, your own mountain, a mountain of fruitfulness.¹⁵

Ps 68:15; cf.
Is 2:2

(6) So Verecundus was choked up with worry, whereas Nebridius shared our delight. For when he was not yet a Christian himself, he had fallen into the trap of a deadly error, by believing that the flesh of your Son, who is the truth, was illusory. But he was getting himself clear of that error; even though he was not yet initiated into any of the sacraments of your Church, he was the keenest of seekers after truth. Soon after our conversion and rebirth by your baptism he himself became a catholic believer, and he served you in perfect chastity and self-control among his own people in Africa (for his whole household had become Christian through him): and then you freed him from the flesh. Now he lives in the bosom of Abraham.¹⁶ What does this "bosom" refer to, where my friend Nebridius lives? He who was my dear friend, Lord, and your adopted son, a

Lk 16:22-23

¹⁶ Whether those in this place enjoyed the full glory of heaven or some lesser good was not agreed at this time.

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filius: ibi vivit. nam quis alius tali animae locus? ibi vivit unde me multa interrogabat homuncionem inexpertum. iam non ponit aurem ad os meum sed spiritale os ad fontem tuum, et bibit quantum potest sapientiam pro aviditate sua sine fine felix. nec eum sic arbitror inebriari ex ea ut obliviscatur mei, cum tu, domine, quem potat ille, nostri sis memor.

Sic ergo eramus, Verecundum consolantes tristem salva amicitia de tali conversione nostra et exhortantes ad fidem gradus sui, vitae scilicet coniugalis, Nebridium autem opperientes, quando sequeretur, quod de tam proximo poterat. et erat iam iamque facturus, cum ecce evoluti sunt dies illi tandem. nam longi et multi videbantur prae amore libertatis otiosae ad cantandum de medullis omnibus. tibi dixit cor meum, "quaesivi vultum tuum; vultum tuum, domine, requiram."

4. (7) Et venit dies quo etiam actu solverer a professione rhetorica, unde iam cogitatu solutus eram, et factum est. eruisti linguam meam unde iam erueras cor meum, et benedicebam tibi gaudens, profectus in villam cum meis omnibus. ibi quid egerim in litteris iam quidem servientibus tibi, sed adhuc superbiae scholam tamquam in pausatione anhelantibus, testantur libri disputati cum prae-

¹⁷ Obscure: probably Nebridius is a freedman (*libertus*) in virtue of his conversion having set him free from sin and made him welcome in the household of God (*adoptivus*).

¹⁸ Verecundus' villa was near Milan. ¹⁹ Monnica, Navigius (his brother), Adeodatus (his son); Lartidianus (or Lastidianus) and Rusticus (two cousins); Alypius (his friend); and two pupils, Licentius (son of Romanianus; see Vol. 1, xxi), and Trygetius. ²⁰ *C. Acad., Beata V., Ord.* ²¹ *Sol.*

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former freedman?¹⁷ There he lives still. Where else could such a soul abide? He lives in that place he so often questioned me about—me, a mere inadequate, inexpert creature! No longer does he lay his ear close to my mouth: instead he puts the mouth of his soul to your living water, and drinks in as much wisdom as possible, in keeping with his eager longing, forever in bliss. Not that I think he will become so intoxicated as to forget me; for you, Lord, are the one he drinks in, and you remember us.

cf. Ws 11:4

That was the state we were in; reassuring Verecundus, who was sad about our momentous conversion, that our friendship was unimpaired, and that he should be faithful to the status he had, that of married life; and waiting for Nebridius to decide to follow, which he could do, as he was very close by. He was right on the point of doing so, and look!—the intervening days are over at last. How long they seemed, how many, when set against my longing for freedom with time at ease, for singing praises from the bottom of my heart. My heart has said to you, "I have sought your face; your face, Lord, will I pursue."

Ps 27:8

4. (7) The day came when I was to be formally released from my teaching position in rhetoric: in my mind I was already released from it. And then it was done. You effected the same rescue for my tongue as you had already for my heart, and I blessed you and rejoiced, and set off for Cassiciacum¹⁸ with my whole company.¹⁹ The books that were talked over between those present,²⁰ and the one that was about me only, speaking to you,²¹ bear witness that what I there achieved in writings that were devoted to you, still had a whiff about them of the pride associated with my former profession, like an athlete taking

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sentibus et cum ipso me solo coram te; quae autem cum absente Nebridio, testantur epistulae. et quando mihi sufficiat tempus commemorandi omnia magna erga nos beneficia tua in illo tempore, praesertim ad alia maiora properanti⁹ revocat enim me recordatio mea, et dulce mihi fit, domine, confiteri tibi quibus internis me stimulis perdomueris, et quemadmodum me complanaveris humilitatis⁶ montibus et collibus cogitationum mearum et tortuosa mea direxeris et aspera lenieris, quoque modo ipsum etiam Alypium, fratrem cordis mei, subegeris nomini unigeniti tui, domini et salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi, quod primo dedignabatur inseri litteris nostris. magis enim eas volebat redolere gymnasiorum cedros, quas iam contrivit dominus, quam salubres herbas ecclesiasticas adversas serpentibus.

(8) Quas tibi, deus meus, voces dedi, cum legerem psalmos David, cantica fidelia, sonos pietatis excludentes turgidum spiritum, rudis in germano amore tuo, catechumenus in villa cum catechumeno Alypio feriatu, matre adhaerente nobis muliebri habitu, virili fide, anili securitate, materna caritate, christiana pietate! quas tibi voces

⁶ humilitatis *D*² *G*¹ *O*¹ *S Knöll Skut. Ver.:* humiliatis *C D*¹ *G*² *O*² *Maur.*

²² The sense here is unclear; Campbell and McGuire, *Confessions*: "A., after his conversion, shows by the ostentatious style of the works he was composing, his struggle against the pomp of this world."

²³ Cf. Acts 28:1-5. Snakes symbolize evil from Genesis (3:1) to Revelation (12:9).

²⁴ Cf. Vol. 1, xxv.

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a breather:²² there are letters which record my discussions with Nebridius, who was not present. When shall I ever have enough time to enumerate all the good things you provided for me during that period?—especially now that I am rushing to other things, which are greater still? My memory reminds me (and it delights me to do so, Lord) to confess to you how your goads within me brought me under your complete control, and how you leveled me out, and laid low the mountains and hills of my intellect, and set my waywardness in the right direction, and smoothed my roughness into equilibrium: and how you also set Alypius himself, my heart's brother, under the authority of the name of your only-begotten Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—even though he was initially reluctant to have that name inserted in our writings. For he preferred them to give off the scent of the cedars of the philosophical schools that the Lord already dashed to pieces, rather than the Church's medicinal plants that give protection against snakes.²³

Is 40:4

Ps 29:5

(8) What cries I uttered to you, my God, while I was reading the psalms of David, those songs full of faith, sounds of devotion that shut out the proud spirit! I was clumsy about my love for you, but sincere; I was a catechumen²⁴ in a country house, on holiday with another catechumen, Alypius. My mother²⁵ was staying with us too: a woman in appearance, she had faith strong as a man's; and an elderly person's composure, a mother's love, and a Christian's devotion! What cries I was uttering to you in

²⁵ In *Conf.*, A. names his mother only in the "epitaph" at the end of this book (*Conf.* 9.13.37). The MSS support the spelling *Monnica*.

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dabam in psalmis illis, et quomodo in te inflammabar ex eis et accendebar eos recitare, si possem, toto orbi⁷ terrarum adversus⁸ typhum generis humani! et tamen toto orbe cantantur, et non est qui se abscondat a calore tuo. quam vehementi et acri dolore indignabar manichaeis et miserabar eos rursus, quod illa sacramenta, illa medicamenta nescirent et insani essent adversus antidotum quo sani esse potuissent! vellem ut alicubi iuxta essent tunc et, me nesciente quod ibi essent, intuerentur faciem meam et audirent voces meas quando legi quartum psalmum in illo tunc otio. quid de me fecerit ille psalmus ("cum invocarem, exaudivit⁹ me deus iustitiae meae; in tribulatione dilatasti mihi. miserere mei, domine, et exaudi orationem meam") audirent ignorante me utrum audirent, ne me propter se illa dicere putarent quae inter haec verba dixerim, quia et re vera nec ea dicerem nec sic ea dicerem, si me ab eis audiri viderique sentirem, nec, si dicerem, sic acciperent quomodo mecum et mihi coram te de familiari affectu animi mei.

(9) Inhorruui timendo ibidemque inferbui¹⁰ sperando et exultando in tua misericordia, pater. et haec omnia exhibant

⁷ orbi (terrarum) S^c C D Knöll Skut.: orbe G O Maur. Ver.

⁸ adversus *codd.* Maur. Ver.: adversum S Knöll Skut.

⁹ exaudivit C D G O Maur. Ver.: te, exaudisti S Knöll Skut.

¹⁰ inferbui *codd.* Knöll Skut.: infervui O¹ S Ver.

²⁶ OD notes that this is the first real pity (other than self-pity) A. has shown; cf. *Conf.* 3.3.5.

²⁷ Either the formal sacraments, such as eucharist and baptism, or the Psalms considered mystically, their words being signs of divine truth.

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those psalms, and how they set me ablaze for you, and made me burn to chant them to the whole world, if I could, to challenge the human race's pride. Still they are sung all over the world, and "there is no one who can hide from your heat." What keen and bitter regret I felt in my resentment toward the Manichaeans: though I still pitied them²⁶ for their ignorance of those sacraments,²⁷ those therapies for sickness—and because their madness made them hostile to the remedy which could have restored them to their senses. I wished they could be somewhere nearby (without my being aware of their presence) and could observe my face and hear my words when I read the fourth psalm in that time of repose. "When I called upon him, the God of my righteousness heard me: when I was in trouble you set me at liberty."²⁸ Have mercy upon me, Lord, and hear my prayer":²⁹ if only they could hear what that psalm wrought in me, without my knowing whether they were hearing it, so that they could not assume that it was for their sake I was speaking the words which I interspersed with those from Scripture! It is a fact that I would not have spoken those words, in that way, if I was aware that they were listening to me and watching me. And if I had spoken thus, they would not have understood it as me being in your presence, and speaking to myself, within myself, about the intimate feelings of my mind.

(9) I was quaking with fear, and at the same time feverish with hoping and delighting in your mercy, my Father.

²⁸ Cf. *Conf.* 13.26.40.

²⁹ OD reconstructs A.'s VL text of Ps 4, with apparatus criticus, *ad loc.*; it was to A. a type of his own experience.

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per oculos et vocem meam, cum conversus ad nos spiritus tuus bonus ait nobis, "filii hominum, quousque graves corde? ut quid diligitis vanitatem et quaeritis mendacium?" dilexeram enim vanitatem et quaesieram mendacium, et tu, domine, iam magnificaveras sanctum tuum, suscitans eum a mortuis et conlocans ad dexteram tuam, unde mitteret ex alto promissionem suam, paracletum, spiritum veritatis. et miserat eum iam, sed ego nesciebam. miserat eum, quia iam magnificatus erat resurgens a mortuis et ascendens in caelum. ante autem spiritus nondum erat datus, quia Iesus nondum erat clarificatus. et clamat propheta, "quousque graves corde? ut quid diligitis vanitatem et quaeritis mendacium? et scitote quoniam dominus magnificavit sanctum suum." clamat "quousque," clamat "scitote," et ego tamdiu nesciens vanitatem dilexi et mendacium quaesivi, et ideo audivi et contremui, quoniam talibus dicitur qualem me fuisse reminiscebar. in phantasmatis¹¹ enim quae¹² pro veritate tenueram vanitas erat et mendacium. et insonui multa graviter ac fortiter in dolore recordationis meae. quae utinam audissent qui adhuc usque diligunt vanitatem et quaerunt mendacium: forte conturbarentur et evomissent illud, et exaudires eos cum clamarent ad te, quoniam vera morte carnis mortuus est pro nobis qui te interpellat pro nobis.

¹¹ phantasmatis *S G O Knöll Skut.*: phantasmatibus *C D Maur.*: fallaciis *cf. Ver.* ¹² quae *edd.*: quas *S codd. Ver.*

³⁰ I.e., in tears and words (zeugma).

³¹ A. construes the term "holy one" in the psalm christologically: see *En. Ps.* 4.4.

³² *Jn* 14:16-17. A. usually prefers the Latin translation of this Greek term, *advocatus* (advocate, counselor).

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It was all pouring out from my eyes and my mouth³⁰ when your good Spirit turned to us and said, "Sons of men, why are you so heavy-hearted? Why do you love vanity and pursue falsehood?" I certainly had loved vanity and pursued falsehood, and you, Lord, had already glorified your holy one,³¹ reviving him from the dead and setting him at your right hand—from where he could send forth from on high what you have promised: the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth.³² Now he had sent him already, but I was unaware of it. He had sent him because he was already glorified, after the resurrection from the dead and ascension into heaven: before this, the Spirit had not been bestowed, because Jesus was not yet revealed in glory. So the prophecy cries aloud, "Why so heavy-hearted? Why do you love vanity and pursue falsehood? Be sure that the Lord has glorified his holy one." It cries aloud "How long?" It cries aloud "Be sure!" And for so long in my ignorance I loved vanity and pursued falsehood, and now I have heard and trembled, because that prophecy is spoken to the kind of person I remember once having been myself. The phantasms³³ that I had clung to instead of truth were nothing but vanity and falsehood. Loud and long was my lamenting at the grief of my recollections. If only those who still love vanity and pursue falsehood had heard me! They would have been profoundly disturbed and would have spewed it all out: and then you would have heard them when they cried out to you, because the one who died for us, who was truly dead according to the flesh,³⁴ is the one who intercedes for us.

Ps 4:2

Eph 1:20

Lk 24:49

Jn 7:39

Ps 4:2-3

Rom 5:9

³³ Cf. *Conf.* 3.6.10; Vol. 1, 106n23.

³⁴ Cf. *Conf.* 1.6.7; Vol. 1, 10-11n17.

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(10) Legebam, "irascimini et nolite peccare," et quomodo movebar, deus meus, qui iam didiceram irasci mihi de praeteritis, ut de cetero non peccarem, et merito irasci, quia non alia natura gentis tenebrarum de me peccabat, sicut dicunt qui sibi non irascuntur et thesaurizant sibi iram in die irae et revelationis iusti iudicii tui!

Nec iam bona mea foris erant nec oculis carnis in isto sole quaerebantur. volentes enim gaudere forinsecus facile vanescunt et effunduntur in ea quae videntur et temporalia sunt, et imagines eorum famelica cogitatione lambiunt. et o si fatigentur inedia et dicant, "quis ostendet¹³ nobis bona?" et dicamus, et audiant, "signatum est in nobis lumen vultus tui, domine." non enim lumen nos sumus quod inluminat omnem hominem, sed inluminamur a te ut, qui fuimus aliquando tenebrae, simus lux in te. o si viderent internum aeternum, quod ego quia gustaveram, frendebar, quoniam non eis poteram ostendere, si afferent ad me cor in oculis suis foris a te et dicerent, "quis ostendet¹⁴ nobis bona?" ibi enim ubi mihi iratus eram, intus in cubili ubi compunctus eram, ubi sacrificaveram mactans vetustatem meam et inchoata meditatione reno-

¹³ ostendet *O Maur. Knöll Ver. GM*: ostendit *C D G Skut.*: ostendent *S*

¹⁴ ostendet *G O Maur. Knöll Ver.*: ostendit *S Skut. GM*

³⁵ The Masoretic Hebrew text has "stand in awe and sin not."

³⁶ Cf. *En. Ps.* 4.6, "Be angry with yourself over your past sins, and desist from further sinning" (*irascimini vobis ipsis de praeteritis peccatis, et ulterius peccare desinite*). ³⁷ A remarkable metaphor; those misguided people are hungry for truth but trying to devour mere shadows of it. Cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* 1.6.8.

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(10) I then read, "Be angry, and sin no more,"³⁵ and how I was moved, O my God! For by now I had learned to be angry with myself over my past deeds, and in such a way that I would not sin any longer in other respects³⁶—and to be angry with good reason, because it was not some other nature, from a species of darkness, which was sinning *through* me, as is claimed by those people who fail to be angry with themselves, and so store up a hoard of anger for themselves on the day of anger and of the revelation of your righteous judgment!

Good things were no longer external to me, nor did I seek them with my physical sight in the light of day. For those who are willing to enjoy what is external easily fade away and are dispersed into things that are visible and transitory: and their hungry thoughts cause them to lick those empty images.³⁷ If only they would grow weary of such starvation, and say, "who will show us these good things?"! Then we would say—and they would hear—"we have been sealed with the light of your countenance, O Lord." For it is not we who are the light which enlightens every person; instead you enlighten us, so that we who were once shadows may become light in you. If only they could see the inner eternity, which I—because I had tasted of it—was grinding my teeth in frustration that I could not make clear to them! If only they would bring me their heart (which in their own eyes was external to you) and would say, "who will show us these good things?" For it was where I had grown angry with myself, there within in the bedroom where I had felt repentance, where I had offered up a sacrifice, slaughtering my old self and, by making a start on reflecting upon my regeneration, putting

Ps 4:4^v

Rom 2:5

Ps 4:6

2 Cor 4:18

Ps 4:6

Ps 4:7

Jn 1:9

Eph 5:8

Ps 34:8

Eph 4:22;
Col 3:9

Col 3:10; 2
Cor 4:16

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vationis meae sperans in te, ibi mihi dulcescere coeperas et dederas laetitiam in corde meo. et exclamabam legens haec foris et agnoscens intus, nec volebam multiplicari terrenis bonis, devorans tempora et devoratus temporibus, cum haberem in aeterna simplicitate aliud frumentum et vinum et oleum.

(11) Et clamabam in consequenti versu clamore alto cordis mei, "o in pace! o in idipsum!" o quid dixit? "obdormiam et somnum capiam!" quoniam quis resistet nobis, cum fiet sermo qui scriptus est, "absorpta est mors in victoriam"¹⁵ et tu es idipsum valde, qui non mutaris, et in te requies obliviscens laborum omnium, quoniam nullus alius tecum nec ad alia multa¹⁶ adipiscenda quae non sunt quod tu, sed tu, domine, singulariter in spe constituisti me. legebam et ardebam, nec inveniebam quid facerem surdis mortuis ex quibus fueram: pestis, latrator amarus et caecus adversus litteras de melle caeli melleas et de lumine tuo luminosas, et super inimicis scripturae huius tabescebam.

(12) Quando recordabor omnia dierum illorum feriatorum? sed nec oblitus sum nec silebo flagelli tui asperitatem et misericordiae tuae mirabilem celeritatem. dolore dentium tunc excruciabas me, et cum in tantum ingravesceret ut non valerem loqui, ascendit in cor meum admonere omnes meos qui aderant ut deprecarentur te pro me,

¹⁵ victoriam *codd. Maur. Ver.*: victoria S G Knöll Skut.

¹⁶ multa *om. S*

³⁸ *idipsum*. OD: "For A., a mystical name for God, equated with Exodus 3.14, *ego sum qui sum*, 'I am who I am.'" Cf. *Conf.* 9.10.24.

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my hope in you—there you had begun to grow sweet to my taste, and had put joy in my heart. So I was making a declaration as I read the words outwardly and recognized you within them. I did not want to be rich in worldly goods, both devouring time and being devoured by it: I had a different kind of “corn and wine and oil” in your eternal simplicity. Ps 4:7

(11) At the next verse I began to cry aloud in the deep confusion of my heart, “O for peace! O for true Reality!”³⁸ What has he said? “I will lie down to sleep and take my rest.” So who will stand against us, when it comes to pass, the saying that is written, “death is swallowed up in victory”? And you are surely that Reality, for you do not change, and in you is rest that takes no thought for every kind of toil: for there is none beside you, nor are we to acquire the many other things that are not what you are; but you, Lord, and you alone, have established me in hope. Ps 4:8

I was reading, and I was all aglow, but I could not find out what to do with those deaf, dead people I once belonged with: I had been a plague—snarling, bitter and blind against the writings that were sweet with heavenly honey and illumined by your light. But now I was in despair at the enemies of these scriptures. Ps 139:21

(12) When shall I remember everything about that time of vacation? But I have not forgotten, and I shall not leave out, the harshness of your punishment, and the marvelous swiftness of your mercy. You were tormenting me with toothache; and when it grew so severe that I could not even speak, it came into my heart to tell all my friends who were with me to pray to you for me, for you are the

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deum salutis omnimodae. et scripsi hoc in cera et dedi ut eis legeretur. mox ut genua supplici¹⁷ affectu fiximus, fugit dolor ille. sed quis dolor? aut quomodo fugit? expavi, fa-teor, domine meus deus meus. nihil enim tale ab ineunte aetate expertus fueram, et insinuati sunt mihi in profundo nutus tui. et gaudens in fide laudavi nomen tuum, et ea fides me securum esse non sinebat de praeteritis peccatis meis, quae mihi per baptismum tuum remissa nondum erant.

5. (13) Renuntiavi peractis vindemialibus ut scholasticis suis Mediolanenses venditorem verborum alium providerent, quod et tibi ego servire delegissem et illi professioni prae difficultate spirandi ac dolore pectoris non sufficerem. et insinuavi per litteras antistiti tuo, viro sancto Ambrosio, pristinos errores meos et praesens votum meum, ut moneret quid mihi potissimum de libris tuis legendum esset, quo percipiendae tantae gratiae paratior aptiorque fierem. at ille iussit Esaïam prophetam, credo, quod prae ceteris evangelii vocationisque gentium sit praenuntiator apertior. verum tamen ego primam huius lectionem non intellegens totumque talem arbitrans distuli repetendum exercitator in dominico eloquio.

6. (14) Inde ubi tempus advenit quo me nomen dare oporteret, relicto rure Mediolanium remeavimus. placuit

¹⁷ supplici *codd. edd.*: simplici S P¹

³⁹ There is also a kind of scriptural precedent: see Acts 8:28.

⁴⁰ GM note that A. always found texts focused on the self (Psalms, John) more appealing than the prophets (p. 246).

⁴¹ I.e., apply for baptism. This must have been Lent, so March of 387.

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God of every kind of wellbeing. I wrote it on a wax tablet, and gave it to them to read. As soon as we were knelt down in a suppliant posture, the pain vanished. But what *was* that pain? And where did it go *to*? I admit I was terrified, O my Lord and my God. Never in all my life had I experienced such a thing, and these signs of your will had a deep impact upon me. I rejoiced in my faith and praised your name; but this faith did not allow me to become blasé about my former sins, for they had not yet been forgiven through baptism.

Jn 20:28

5. (13) Once the grape-gathering holiday was over, I formally resigned, which meant that the citizens of Milan would have to provide someone else to market eloquence to their students. I had made my choice to serve you, and in any case I was no longer fit enough for that position, because of my difficulty in breathing, and my chest pain. I wrote to your bishop, that holy man Ambrose, to tell him of my former trespasses and my present intention, and for his advice on which of your books it would be best for me to read, to prepare me and mold me in readiness for receiving that great mark of grace. He directed me to the prophet Isaiah, I think, because he foretells the gospel and the call of the gentiles most clearly of all the prophets.³⁹ But when I first began to read him I did not understand, and I assumed that the entire book would be the same: so I laid it aside, to be taken up again when I was better versed in the Lord's style of speech.⁴⁰

6. (14) Then the time came when I was to hand in my name,⁴¹ so we left the countryside and returned to Milan.

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et Alypio renasci in te mecum iam induto humilitate sacramentis tuis congrua et fortissimo domitori¹⁸ corporis, usque ad Italicum solum glaciale nudo pede obterendum insolito ausu. adiunximus etiam nobis puerum Adeodatum ex me natum carnaliter de peccato meo. tu bene feceras eum. annorum erat ferme quindecim et ingenio praeveniebat multos graves et doctos viros. munera tua tibi confiteor, domine deus meus, creator omnium et multum potens formare nostra deformia, nam ego in illo puero praeter delictum non habebam. quod enim et nutriebatur a nobis in disciplina tua, tu inspiraveras nobis, nullus alius. munera tua tibi confiteor. est liber noster qui inscribitur "de magistro": ipse ibi mecum loquitur. tu scis illius esse sensa omnia quae inseruntur ibi ex persona conlocutoris mei, cum esset in annis sedecim. multa eius alias mirabiliora expertus sum: horrore mihi erat illud ingenium. et quis praeter te talium miraculorum opifex? cito de terra abstulisti vitam eius, et securior eum recordor non timens quicquam pueritiae nec adolescentiae nec omnino homini illi. sociavimus eum coevum nobis in gratia tua, educandum in disciplina tua.

¹⁸ domitori *codd.*: dominatori S

⁴² First steps in asceticism; A. is probably thinking of a contrast with his warmer African home.

⁴³ "Deus creator omnium" is the incipit of a hymn by Ambrose, crucial at *Conf.* 9.12.32.

⁴⁴ Paronomasia on *formare* . . . *deformia*.

⁴⁵ *De Magistro*: 389/90. In *Retr.* 1.12, A. refers to Mt 23:10, "You have one teacher, Christ." ⁴⁶ A.'s pride in his son shows through in *Beata* V. 12, 18; Adeodatus died ca. 389.

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Alypius decided to be reborn in you along with me: he was already clothed with the humility that befits your sacraments, and exercised complete control over his body, even to the extent of walking barefoot over the chilly ground of Italy—an unheard-of enterprise!⁴² He and I added the boy Adeodatus to our number; he was the son I had begotten in my sin, according to the flesh. You had formed him well. He was nearly fifteen, and a quicker intelligence than many grave and learned men of mature years. O Lord my God, you are the creator of all things,⁴³ and abound in power to reform our deformities:⁴⁴ I confess to you your gifts, for apart from my act of sin, I had no part in that boy's formation. As for the fact that we were bringing him up in the knowledge of you, you had inspired us to do so, you and none other. So I confess to you your gifts. There is a book of mine entitled, "On the Teacher":⁴⁵ in it Adeodatus has a conversation with me. You know that all the views introduced there in the character of my interlocutor are really his, when he was sixteen years old. I experienced many attributes of his that were even more remarkable: I was in awe of his intelligence. And who but you can be the craftsman of these amazing talents? You were quick to take his life from this earth, but I am not at all anxious when I remember him, for there is nothing for me to fear from his boyhood, or adolescence, and certainly not from his manhood.⁴⁶ So we made him one of our company, for he was the same age as we were in terms of your grace,⁴⁷ and he needed to be brought up according to your teaching.

Col 3:12

cf. 1 Cor
9:27

⁴⁷ Christian conversion marks a figurative journey from spiritual infancy to maturity (cf. 1 Cor 3:2; Heb 5:13-14; 1 Pt 2:2).

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Et baptizati sumus et fugit a nobis sollicitudo vitae praeteritae. nec satiabar illis diebus dulcedine¹⁹ mirabili considerare altitudinem consilii tui super salutem generis humani. quantum fleui in hymnis et canticis tuis, suave sonantis ecclesiae tuae vocibus commotus acriter! voces illae influebant auribus meis, et eliquabatur veritas in cor meum, et exaestuabat inde affectus pietatis, et currebant lacrimae, et bene mihi erat cum eis.

7. (15) Non longe coeperat Mediolanensis ecclesia genus hoc consolationis et exhortationis celebrare magno studio fratrum concinentium vocibus et cordibus. nimirum annus erat aut non multo amplius, cum Iustina, Valentiniani regis pueri mater, hominem tuum Ambrosium persequeretur haeresis suae causa, qua fuerat seducta ab arrianis. excubabat pia plebs in ecclesia, mori parata cum episcopo suo, servo tuo. ibi mea mater, ancilla tua, sollicitudinis et vigiliarum primas tenens, orationibus vivebat. nos adhuc frigidi a calore spiritus tui excitabamur tamen civitate attonita atque turbata. tunc hymni et psalmi ut

¹⁹ dulcedine *codd. edd.*: dulcitudine S

⁴⁸ In one of the shortest, simplest sentences in *Conf.*, A. records the central action of his life: it took place at the Easter Vigil, April 24–25, 387. Elsewhere A. notes that Ambrose baptized him: *c. Iul.* 1.3.10; *c. Iul. imp.* 1.59, "From that bishop [Ambrose] I received the regenerative water of baptism" (*ab isto episcopo . . . lavacrum regenerationis accepi*; cf. *Conf.* 6.21).

⁴⁹ A fine sustained "liquid" conceit (four verbs).

⁵⁰ Easter Week, 386. Ambrose (*Ep.* 20, to his sister Marcelina) lasted an entire year resisting Justina's attempt to force him to give up a place of worship to the Arians and eventually pre-

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So we were baptized and our anxiety about our past life left us completely.⁴⁸ In those days I could not get enough of the wonderful sweetness of reflecting on the profundity of your plan for the salvation of the human race. How I wept during hymns and songs to you! How acutely was I moved by the voices of your sweet-singing Church! Those voices flowed into my ears, and truth was distilled into my heart: from that, the tenderness of devotion bubbled over, and my tears flowed freely, and shedding them did me good.⁴⁹

7. (15) The Church in Milan had only recently begun to worship using this type of consolation and exhortation; the brothers were very enthusiastic in their communal singing with heart and voice. Certainly it was only a year or so⁵⁰ since Justina, mother of the boy-king Valentinian,⁵¹ had been persecuting your servant Ambrose because she was a heretic who had been led astray by the Arians. The true-believing populace kept vigil in that church, prepared to die along with your servant, their bishop. Your handmaid, my mother, was there; she had a prominent role in the responsibilities and the guard duties, and thrived on all the praying. In those days we were not yet warmed by the heat of your Spirit, but we were still agitated by the bewilderment and uproar in the city. That was when they established the singing of hymns and psalms

vailed. Arians denied the co-equality and co-eternity of the Son with the Father; see Fitzgerald, *Augustine through the Ages*, 59–61. A.'s naming of Justina is the one exception to the rule; see Vol. I, xxi.

⁵¹ Note the use of the morally-loaded Latin word *rex* for the emperor.

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canerentur secundum morem orientalium partium, ne populus maeroris taedio contabesceret, institutum est: ex²⁰ illo in hodiernum retentum multis iam ac paene omnibus gregibus tuis et per cetera orbis imitantibus.

(16) Tunc memorato antistiti tuo per visum aperuisti quo loco laterent martyrum corpora Protasii et Gervasii, quae per tot annos incorrupta in thesauro secreti tui recondendas, unde opportune promeres ad coerendam rabiem femineam sed regiam. cum enim propalata²¹ et effossa digno cum honore transferrentur ad ambrosianam basilicam, non solum quos immundi vexabant spiritus confessis eisdem daemonibus sanabantur, verum etiam quidam plures annos caecus civis civitatisque notissimus, cum populi tumultuante²² laetitia causam quaesisset atque audisset, exilivit²³ eoque se ut duceret suum ducem rogavit, quo perductus impetravit admitti ut sudario tangeret feretrum pretiosae in conspectu tuo mortis sanctorum tuorum; quod ubi fecit atque admovit oculis, confestim aperti sunt. inde fama discurrens, inde laudes tuae ferventes, lucentes, inde illius inimicae animus etsi ad credendi sani-

²⁰ ex (illo) S O Knöll Skut. Ver.: et ex codd. Maur.

²¹ propalata O Maur. Ver. prolata codd. Knöll Skut.

²² tumultuante S D O Knöll Skut. Ver.: tumultuantis C G Maur. GM

²³ exilivit codd. Maur.: exiluit S O Knöll Skut. Ver.

⁵² Fewer than twenty of the many hymns attributed to Ambrose are genuine; A. refers to four: "Deus creator omnium," "Aeterne rerum conditor," Iam surgit hora tertia," and "Veni redemptor gentium."

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in the style of the eastern churches to keep the people from losing heart and becoming exhausted; and this became established, a custom maintained from then until now among many—indeed almost all—of your congregations, and those who followed their example throughout the world.⁵²

(16) Then, in a vision, you revealed to that distinguished bishop of yours where the bodies of the martyrs Protasius and Gervasius lay concealed. For many years you had kept them hidden and undecayed in your secret treasure store, so that at the right moment you could produce them to force back that feminine fury—but royal, nonetheless.⁵³ When they were exposed and excavated with appropriate reverence, they were transferred to the Ambrosian basilica:⁵⁴ then some people who had been troubled by unclean spirits were healed (as those selfsame spirits confessed the truth). What is more, a man who had been blind for several years (a citizen well-known in Milan), when he tried to find out why the people were in an uproar of excitement, and heard the reason, jumped up and asked his guide to take him there. When he arrived, he asked to be allowed in, so that he could touch his handkerchief to the funeral bier of your saints (whose death is precious in your sight): after doing so, he touched the cloth to his eyes, and at once they were opened. Because of this the story spread far and wide; because of this, so did your praises—heartfelt, shining forth; because of this, the hostile intent of that woman who was confronting him

Acts 19:15

Ps 116:15

⁵³ Cf. Ambrose, *Ep.* 22, to his sister Marcellina (June 386).

⁵⁴ The new building from which Ambrose was making his stand against the Arians.

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tatem non applicatus, a persequendi tamen furore compressus est.

Gratias tibi, deus meus! unde et quo duxisti recordationem meam, ut haec etiam confiterer tibi, quae magna oblitus praeterieram? et tamen tunc, cum ita fragraret²⁴ odor unguentorum tuorum, non currebamus post te. ideo plus flebam inter cantica hymnorum tuorum, olim suspirans tibi et tandem respirans, quantum patet aura in domo faenea.

8. (17) Qui habitare facis unanimes in domo, conso-ciasti nobis et Evodium iuvenem ex nostro municipio. qui cum agens in rebus militaret, prior nobis ad te conversus est et baptizatus et relicta militia saeculari accinctus in tua. simul eramus, simul habitaturi placito sancto. quaerebamus quisnam locus nos utilius haberet servientes tibi; pariter remeabamus in Africam.

Et cum apud Ostia Tiberina essemus, mater defuncta est. multa praetereo, quia multum festino: accipe confessiones meas et gratiarum actiones, deus meus, de rebus innumerabilibus etiam in silentio. sed non praeteribo quidquid mihi anima parturit de illa famula tua, quae me parturivit et carne, ut in hanc temporalem, et corde, ut in aeternam lucem nascerer. non eius sed tua dicam dona in

²⁴ fragraret *Maur. Knöll Skut.*: flagraret *codd. Ver.*

⁵⁵ A fine adaptation of Isaiah's image (40:6), "All flesh is grass" (*omnis caro faenum*⁵⁵): the house stands for the human person. Cf. *Conf.* 13.30.45. ⁵⁶ Cf. *Ep.* 158-64. Evodius later became bishop of Uzalis in North Africa, an area incorporating Carthage. ⁵⁷ Cf. Vol. I, 382n29.

⁵⁸ Cf. *Virg. Aen.* 1.13-14; the story resumes at *Conf.* 9.10.23.

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was at least constrained from the madness of persecution, even if it was not turned in the direction of a healthy form of belief.

Thanks be to you, O my God! From where have you drawn my recollections? And where are you directing them to, to have me confess all this to you, even though I had forgotten and left out much that is important? Even then, when the fragrance of your perfumes was delightful, we did not pursue you. As a consequence, I wept all the more while your hymns were being sung: once I sighed for you and at last I was breathing in your fragrance, at least as much as the breeze blows freely in a house of straw.⁵⁵

Sg 1:2-3

8. (17) You are the one who makes those who are of one heart to dwell together in a house; you introduced to our company a young man called Evodius,⁵⁶ from our home town. When he was in military service as a special agent,⁵⁷ he converted to you and was baptized ahead of us: then he put military service behind him and girded himself for your service instead. We were all together, and all together was how we planned to live, according to a holy bond. We were making inquiries as to what location might have most need of us in your service; so together we returned to Africa.

cf. Ps 68:6;
Acts 4:32

While we were at Ostia Tiberina⁵⁸ my mother died. I am leaving a lot out, because I am in a great hurry: receive my confessions, O my God, and thanksgivings about the countless matters I have left unmentioned. But I shall not omit whatever my soul brings to birth concerning that handmaid of yours, who gave birth to me both in flesh, so that I would be born into the light of this earth, and in her heart, so that I would be born into light eternal. I shall not tell of her gifts, but of your gifts to her; for she was not her

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eam, neque enim se ipsa fecerat aut educaverat se ipsam. tu creasti eam (nec pater nec mater sciebat qualis ex eis fieret) et eruditiv eam in timore tuo virga Christi tui, regimen unici²⁵ tui, in domo fideli, bono membro ecclesiae tuae. nec tantam erga suam disciplinam diligentiam matris praedicabat quantam famulae cuiusdam decrepitae, quae patrem eius infantem portaverat, sicut dorso grandiuscularum puellarum parvuli portari solent. cuius rei gratia et propter senectam ac mores optimos in domo christiana satis a dominis honorabatur. unde etiam curam dominicarum filiarum commissam diligenter gerebat et erat in eis cohercendis, cum opus esset, sancta severitate vehemens atque in docendis sobria prudentia. nam eas, praeter illas horas quibus ad mensam parentum moderatissime alebantur, etiamsi exardescerent siti, nec aquam bibere sinebat, praecavens consuetudinem malam et addens verbum sanum: "modo aquam bibitis, quia in potestate vinum non habetis; cum autem ad maritos veneritis factae dominae apothecarum et cellariorum, aqua sordebit, sed mos potandi praevalebit."

Hac ratione praeciendi et auctoritate imperandi frenabat aviditatem tenerioris aetatis et ipsam puellarum sitim formabat ad honestum modum, ut iam nec²⁶ liberet quod non deceret.

(18) Et subreperat tamen, sicut mihi filio famula tua narrabat, subreperat ei vinulentia. nam cum de more

²⁵ unici S O Knöll Skut. Ver.: unici filii codd. Maur.

²⁶ nec (liberet) codd. Ver.: non S Knöll Skut.

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own creator, nor did she bring herself up. You created her (neither father nor mother was aware of what kind of child was coming into being through them) and the rod of your Christ—the guidance of your only Son—taught her to fear you in a believing household, a good member of your Church. Even so, she used to praise the teaching she received from a certain aged servant more than from her own mother's devotion. The servant had carried my mother's father when he was a baby, in the way that quite mature girls often carried little children on their backs. For this reason, and because of her advanced age, and her exemplary character, she was properly honored by her masters in that Christian household. She was therefore entrusted with the nurture of her master's daughters, and carried out her duties conscientiously: if necessary she was strict about disciplining them with a devoted firmness, and with sober caution when it came to teaching them. She would not allow them to drink even water, even if they were burning with thirst, outside the family mealtimes when they had enough to drink: she was taking precautions against bad habits and added this sensible advice, "Now it is water that you are drinking, because you are not able to drink wine. But once you get married and are mistresses over store rooms and larders, water will lose its appeal, but the habit of drinking will remain strong."

Rv 12:5,
19:15

1 Cor 12:14

By this plan of instruction, and her authority for taking control she reined in their youthful greed and kept the girls' actual thirst under a fair degree of control, so that what was unbecoming no longer held any appeal.

(18) All the same, a taste for wine drinking had gradually crept up on her, as your handmaid often used to say to me, her son. For when her parents followed the custom,

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tamquam puella sobria iuberetur a parentibus de cupa vinum depromere, submisso poculo qua desuper patet, priusquam in lagunculam funderet merum, primoribus labris sorbebat exiguum, quia non poterat amplius sensu recusante. non enim ulla temulenta cupidine faciebat hoc, sed quibusdam superfluentibus aetatis excessibus, qui ludicris motibus ebulliunt et in puerilibus animis²⁷ maiorum pondere premi solent. itaque ad illud modicum cotidiana modica addendo (quoniam qui modica spernit, paulatim decedit) in eam consuetudinem lapsa erat ut prope iam plenos mero caliculos inhianter hauriret.

Ubi tunc sagax anus et vehemens illa prohibitio? numquid valebat aliquid adversus latentem morbum, nisi tua medicina, domine, vigilaret super nos? absente patre et matre et nutritoribus tu praesens, qui creasti, qui vocas, qui etiam per praepositos²⁸ homines boni aliquid agis ad animarum salutem. quid tunc egisti, deus meus? unde curasti? unde sanasti? nonne protulisti durum et acutum ex altera anima convicium tamquam medicinale ferrum ex occultis provisionibus tuis et uno ictu putredinem illam praecidisti? ancilla enim, cum qua solebat accedere ad cupam, litigans cum domina minore, ut fit, sola cum sola, obiecit hoc crimen amarissima insultatione vocans "meribibulam." quo illa stimulo percussa respexit foeditatem suam confestimque damnavit atque exiit.

²⁷ animis *codd.* . . . : annis *S Knöll GM*

²⁸ praepositos *codd.*: reprobos *cj. Knöll*

⁵⁹ Cf. *Conf.* 9.13.35: the "medicine" or "healing" is Christ.

⁶⁰ The word is not attested before A. (see *TLL ad loc.*); cf. *C. Iul. Imp.* 1.68. Drunkenness in women was associated with adultery.

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as it were, by sending their abstemious daughter to draw some wine from the cask by dipping in a goblet where it opened at the top, before she poured the neat wine into a flask, she would take a tiny sip with the smallest possible touch of her lips. She could not do more than this, for common sense forbade it. She was not acting out of any drunken desire, just a kind of overflow of the exuberance of youth which bubbles up into playfulness, which older people's authority tends to crush in the minds of their juniors. So she added moderate amounts daily to that first moderate amount (for anyone who scorns moderation gradually succumbs); and fell into a habit of downing practically full cups of neat wine.

Sir 19:1

Where did that leave the wise old woman and her stern warning? Could anything have prevailed against that underlying disease had not your healing⁵⁹ been keeping watch over us? When our father and mother and nurses are not there, you are present: you created us, you call us, you also do some good for the salvation of our souls by the people you set in authority over us. What did you do then, O my God? How did you restore her, how did you heal her? Surely what you did was to provoke a harsh and sharp reproof from another soul, and use it as a surgeon's knife from your secret storehouse; and with one stroke you cut away that rottenness! The maidservant who used to go with my mother to the wine cask had an argument with her young mistress—such things do happen—just the two of them: and she flung an accusation with the maximum possible insolence, and called her “drunkard.”⁶⁰ She was so hurt by the force of this gibe that she considered her own misconduct, condemned it instantly, and was done with it.

Jer 31:28

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Sicut amici adulantes pervertunt, sic inimici litigantes plerumque corrigunt. nec tu quod per eos agis, sed quod ipsi voluerunt, retribuis eis. illa enim irata exagitare appetivit minorem dominam, non sanare, et ideo clanculo, aut quia ita eas invenerat locus et tempus litis, aut ne forte et ipsa periclitaretur, quod tam sero prodidisset. at tu, domine, rector caelitum et terrenorum, ad usus tuos contorquens profunda torrentis, fluxum saeculorum ordinate²⁹ turbulentum, etiam de alterius animae insania sanasti alteram, ne quisquam cum hoc advertit, potentiae suae tribuat, si verbo eius alius corrigatur quem vult corrigi.

9. (19) Educata itaque pudice ac sobrie potiusque a te subdita parentibus quam a parentibus tibi, ubi plenis annis nubilis facta est, tradita viro servivit veluti domino et sategit eum lucrari tibi, loquens te illi moribus suis, quibus eam pulchram faciebas et reverenter amabilem atque mirabilem viro. ita autem toleravit cubilis iniurias ut nullam de hac re cum marito haberet unquam simultatem. expectabat enim misericordiam tuam super eum, ut in te credens castificaretur. erat vero ille praeterea sicut benivolentia praecipuus, ita ira fervidus. sed noverat haec non resistere irato viro, non tantum facto sed ne verbo quidem.

²⁹ ordinate S C D O Knöll Ver.: ordinans G² Maur. Skut.

⁶¹ Cf. *Conf.* 1.16.25 for human history as a flowing river.

⁶² Oxymoron on *ordinate . . . turbulentum*.

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Just as friends can lead those who admire them astray, so enemies who quarrel can often set matters straight again. You reward them, though, not according to what you have brought about through them, but according to their intentions. In a temper, that maidservant had tried to provoke her young mistress, not to heal her: and she did so covertly, either because the quarrel had begun at a time and place when they were alone, or because she did not want to incriminate herself for being so late in reporting the matter. But you, Lord, rule over heavenly and earthly creatures, you convert to your purposes the depths of that flowing river,⁶¹ the unruly cascade of the years in their proper course:⁶² you even used the sickness of one woman's soul to heal another's. This prevents anyone noticing and taking the credit for such a thing themselves, if their words correct someone else whom they want to see corrected.

9. (19) So my mother was brought up to be modest and reasonable, obedient to her parents because of you, rather than obedient to you because of them. When she was old enough to be ready for marriage she was given to a husband and served him "as her lord," doing her best to win him for you, speaking to him of you as befitted her character. By this you made her attractive; to her husband she was respectful, with a loving nature, and deserved his admiration. She put up with marital infidelities, because she did not want any acrimony with her husband on such a topic. She was waiting for your mercy to come upon him so that he would turn to you and reform his adulterous ways. Besides this, he was a distinctly generous man, but quick-tempered too. She knew she must not oppose him when he was angry, not by action, not even by a word.

Eph 5:21

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iam vero refractum et quietum cum opportunum viderat, rationem facti sui reddebat, si forte ille inconsideratius commotus fuerat. denique cum matronae multae, quarum viri mansuetiores erant, plagarum vestigia etiam dehonestata facie gererent, inter amica conloquia illae arguebant maritorum vitam, haec earum linguam, veluti per iocum graviter admonens, ex quo illas tabulas quae matrimoniales vocantur recitari audissent, tamquam instrumenta quibus ancillae factae essent deputare debuisse; proinde memores condicionis³⁰ superbire adversus dominos non oportere. cumque mirarentur illae, scientes quam ferocem coniugem sustineret, numquam fuisse auditum aut aliquo indicio claruisse quod Patricius ceciderit uxorem aut quod a se invicem vel unum diem domestica lite dissenserint, et causam familiariter quaererent, docebat illa institutum suum, quod supra memoravi. quae observabant, expertae gratulabantur; quae non observabant, subiectae vexabantur.

(20) Socrum etiam suam primo susurris malarum ancillarum adversus se inritatam sic vicit obsequiis, perseverans tolerantia et mansuetudine, ut illa ultro filio suo medias linguas famularum proderet, quibus inter se et nurum pax domestica turbabatur, expeteretque vindictam. itaque posteaquam ille et matri obtemperans et cu-

³⁰ condicionis S C: conditionis D G O Knöll Skut. Ver.

⁶³ MSS are divided between *condicionis* (from *condico*, in the sense of "marital state": OD, and cf. *TLL* s.v. *condicio*) and *conditionis* (from *condo*, so Verheijen, giving the meaning "inferior status as a created being"). The confusion is early and persistent; both nouns can convey a similar sense of inferior status.

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Whenever he had become unreasonably angry, she used to wait for the moment when he became calm and peaceable once more, and then explain the reason for her action. Indeed many women married to more gentle husbands appeared with faces disfigured by bruising, and criticized the conduct of their menfolk in conversation. Then my mother would tell them playfully but seriously to hold their tongues, because from the moment they heard the marriage contract (as it is called) formally read aloud, they should think of it as a deed of purchase which consigned them to the category of slaves. From that moment they should be mindful of their married status⁶³ and not be disdainful toward their masters. The wives were amazed at this because they knew what a hotheaded husband she had to put up with. Even so it was unheard of—and there was never any sign—to suggest that Patricius had beaten his wife, or that they had fallen out at home and disagreed with one another even for a single day. So they asked her privately, and she told them of her method, which I have just mentioned. Those who then began to practice it thanked her once they had tried it for themselves. Those who did not start practicing it continued to be subjugated and abused.

(20) At first, her mother-in-law was stirred up against her by the mutterings of spiteful servant girls. But she persisted in her submissive demeanor, with resignation and gentleness, and won her over. As a result her mother-in-law went so far as to denounce the servant girls to her son because *their meddlesome tongues were disturbing the domestic harmony between herself and her daughter-in-law*. She demanded that they be punished. So he bowed to his mother's wishes, secured the good order of the

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rans familiae disciplinam et concordiae suorum consulens proditas ad prodentis arbitrium verberibus cohercuit, promisit illa talia de se praemia sperare debere, quaecumque de sua nuru sibi, quo placeret, mali aliquid loqueretur, nullaque iam audente memorabili inter se benivolentiae suavitate vixerunt.

10. (21) Hoc quoque illi bono mancipio tuo, in cuius utero me creasti, deus meus, misericordia mea, munus grande donaveras, quod inter dissidentesque atque discordes quaslibet animas, ubi poterat, tam se praebebat pacificam ut cum ab utraque multa de invicem audiret amarissima, qualia solet eructuare³¹ turgens atque indigesta discordia, quando praesenti amicae de absente inimica per acida conloquia cruditas³² exhalatur odiorum, nihil tamen alteri de altera proderet nisi quod ad eas reconciliandas valeret.

Parvum hoc bonum mihi videretur, nisi turbas innumerales tristis experirer (nescio qua horrenda pestilentia peccatorum latissime pervagante) non solum iratorum inimicorum iratis inimicis dicta prodere, sed etiam quae non dicta sunt addere, cum contra homini³³ humano pa-

³¹ eructuare *S Knöll Skut. GM: eructare codd. Maur. Ver. OD*

³² cruditas *S C D Maur. Knöll Skut. Ver.: crudelitas G O*

³³ homini *S O edd.: animi G: animo C D*

⁶⁴ Unlike free citizens, slaves were not protected against corporal punishment. John Chrysostom (ca. 347–407) denounces women who beat their female slaves for trivial reasons. He argues that a Christian slave deserves an even higher degree of forbearance from her mistress, "If she is a believer, she is your sister" (*Hom. 15, on Eph 4:31*).

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household, and preserved goodwill among his family: the guilty servants were consigned to his mother's judgment, so he had them beaten.⁶⁴ She declared that anyone who carried tales to her about her daughter-in-law in the belief that this would please her could expect the same severe punishment from her. No one took the risk, so from then on they lived together in a marked cordiality, which arose from the goodwill between them.

10. (21) O God, my mercy, you also entrusted another noble duty to that good servant of yours, in whose womb you formed me: that of behaving as a peacemaker whenever she could, between any souls who were falling out and disputing with one another. Often she used to hear one person's extremely harsh words about another, from one side or the other—the sort of accusations which an angry and dyspeptic altercation spews out when two women friends are together and, in spiteful gossip, one vents the spleen of their animosity behind the back of another friend. My mother would never betray the one woman to the other unless it would help to effect a reconciliation between them. Ps 59:17

I would myself consider this a trivial blessing but for the fact that, sadly, I have so often come across examples of countless altercations⁶⁵ amid a pervasive, ubiquitous epidemic of sin. Not only do people divulge the words of angry enemies to one another, they even make up words that were never spoken. And all this despite the fact that, even if we lack the zeal to snuff out animosities by speak-

⁶⁵ Cf. *Conf.* 6.3.3: arbitration between disputants was a major part of a bishop's role.

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rum esse debeat inimicitias hominum nec excitare nec augere male loquendo, nisi eas etiam extinguere bene loquendo studuerit: qualis illa erat docente te magistro intimo in schola pectoris.

(22) Denique etiam virum suum iam in extrema vita temporali eius lucrata est tibi, nec in eo iam fideli planxit quod in nondum fideli toleraverat: erat etiam serva servorum tuorum. quisquis eorum noverat eam, multum in ea laudabat et honorabat et diligebat te, quia sentiebat praesentiam tuam in corde eius sanctae conversationis fructibus testibus. fuerat enim unius viri uxor, mutuum vicem parentibus reddiderat, domum suam pie tractaverat, in operibus bonis testimonium habebat. nutrierat filios, totiens eos parturiens quotiens abs te deviare cernebat. postremo nobis, domine, omnibus, quia ex munere tuo sinis loqui, servis tuis, qui ante dormitionem eius in te iam consociati vivebamus percepta gratia baptismi tui, ita curam gessit quasi omnes genuisset, ita servivit quasi ab omnibus genita fuisset.

(23) Impendente autem die quo ex hac vita erat exitura (quem diem tu noveras ignorantibus nobis), provenerat, ut credo, procurante te occultis tuis modis, ut ego et ipsa soli staremus, incumbentes ad quandam fenestram unde hortus intra domum quae nos habebat prospectabatur, illic apud Ostia Tiberina, ubi remoti a turbis post longi itineris

⁶⁶ ca. 370/1.

⁶⁷ From Acts 7:59: a regular Christian expression for death.

⁶⁸ The typical layout of an urban Roman house would have a peristyle or colonnaded courtyard enclosing a garden.

⁶⁹ In antiquity Ostia was Rome's harbor on the Tiber estuary; A. and Monnica need to rest before sailing on to Rome itself.

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ing in positive terms, still it is unworthy of our duty as human beings to incite or inflame those animosities between people, by speaking slanderously. This is the kind of person she was, with you as her inmost teacher to instruct her in the school of her heart.

(22) At last she won even her husband for you, when he was come to the very end of this earthly life.⁶⁶ Now that he was faithful to her, she had no cause for distress of the kind she had endured while he was not yet a Christian. She was, moreover, the servant of your servants. Any of them who knew her would praise and respect and greatly esteem your abiding in her, because they were aware of your presence in her heart. The fruits of her holy way of life bore witness to this. She had been "the wife of one husband"; she had "repaid her parents the debt she owed them," she had dutifully managed her household affairs, her "good works were a testament" to her. She had reared her children, laboring over them whenever she saw them departing from your way. Finally, O Lord, of your goodness you let me speak of this: how, before her falling asleep,⁶⁷ when we were all joined together in our common life in you after receiving the grace of baptism, she looked after all of us who were your servants as diligently as if she were the mother of us all, and she waited on us as if she were the daughter of us all.

1 Tm 5:9

1 Tm 5:4

1 Tm 5:10

Gal 4:19

(23) The day was now at hand when she was to depart this life—a day which you already knew, though we were ignorant of it. By your own mysterious ways you brought it about that she and I were standing alone, leaning at a particular window where there was a prospect over the garden within the house⁶⁸ where we were staying at Ostia Tiberina.⁶⁹ We were far away from the crowds, recovering

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laborem instaurabamus nos navigationi. conloquebamur ergo soli valde dulciter et, praeterita obliscentes in ea quae ante sunt extenti, quaerebamus inter nos apud praesentem veritatem, quod tu es, qualis futura esset vita aeterna sanctorum, quam nec oculus vidit nec auris audivit nec in cor hominis ascendit. sed inhiabamus ore cordis in superna fluenta fontis tui, fontis vitae, qui est apud te, ut inde pro captu nostro aspersi quoquo modo rem tantam cogitaremus.

(24) Cumque ad eum finem sermo perduceretur, ut carnalium sensuum delectatio quantalibet, in quantalibet luce corporea, prae illius vitae iucunditate non comparatione sed ne commemoratione quidem digna videretur, erigentes nos ardentiore affectu in idipsum, perambulavimus gradatim cuncta corporalia et ipsum caelum, unde sol et luna et stellae lucent super terram.

Et adhuc ascendebamus interius cogitando et loquendo et mirando opera tua. et venimus in mentes nostras et transcendimus eas, ut attingeremus regionem ubertatis indeficientis, ubi pascis Israhel in aeternum veritate pabulo, et ibi vita sapientia est, per quam fiunt omnia ista, et quae fuerunt et quae futura sunt, et ipsa non fit, sed sic est ut fuit, et sic erit semper. quin potius fuisse et futurum esse non est in ea, sed esse solum, quoniam aeterna est: nam fuisse et futurum esse non est aeternum.

⁷⁰ A reference commonly identified as trinitarian: "Who is the 'source of life' if not Christ?" (*En. Ps.* 35.15^{V^g}); the flow from the spring may be the Holy Spirit (*En. Ps.* 45.8^{V^g}).

⁷¹ This water is for purification as well as drinking.

⁷² Cf. *Conf.* 7.17.23, 9.4.11 with *Ps* 4:8 (4.9^{V^g}): *idipsum* renders *LXX ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό*. *Conf.* 12.7.7 shows that it is a name for God.

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from the stress of a long journey and making ready for the onward voyage. So we were conversing with pleasure, just the two of us, "forgetting the past but rather reaching out to what is to come." In the presence of the Truth (which is who you really are) we were exploring the question of what the eternal life of the saints would be like, which "eye has not seen nor ear heard nor has it entered into the human heart." We opened wide the mouth of our heart to drink deeply of the heavenly waters of your pure spring, the "well of life" which abides with you.⁷⁰ Then we were sprinkled⁷¹ to the limit of our poor ability; and thus began to reflect widely on this great matter.

Phil 3:13

1 Cor 2:9

Ps 36:9

(24) Our conversation concluded that the enjoyment of the physical senses, however great, and however effective in giving earthly enlightenment, is not worthy to be preferred—not even considered—in comparison with the joy of eternal life. We raised ourselves up and with hearts aflame for the One⁷² we made our gradual ascent through the physical world and even heaven itself, where sun and moon and stars shine upon the earth.⁷³

Ps 146:8

And now we were climbing still further by pondering, discussing and marveling at your works. We entered into our own minds and transcended them, to reach that place of unfailing abundance, where you feed Israel for ever with the food of truth. There, life is the wisdom by which all other things come to be, both past and future—wisdom which is not created but rather exists just as it always has been and always will be. In fact it does not have the capacity either to *have* existed, or to *come to* exist. It simply is, because it is eternal.

Ez 34:14

⁷³ For the parallel of Aeneas and Anchises in Virg. *Aen.* 6.679–892, see Bennett, "Conversion."

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Et dum loquimur et inhiamus illi, attingimus³⁴ eam modice toto ictu cordis. et suspiravimus et reliquimus ibi religatas primitias spiritus et remeavimus ad strepitum oris nostri, ubi verbum et incipitur et finitur. et quid simile verbo tuo, domino nostro, in se permanenti sine vetustate atque innovanti omnia?

(25) Dicebamus ergo, "si cui sileat tumultus carnis, sileant phantasiae terrae et aquarum et aeris, sileant et poli, et ipsa sibi anima sileat et transeat se non se cogitando, sileant somnia et imaginariae revelationes, omnis lingua et omne signum, et quidquid transeundo fit si cui sileat omnino (quoniam si quis audiat, dicunt haec omnia, 'non ipsa nos fecimus, sed fecit nos qui manet in aeternum'), his dictis si iam taceant, quoniam erexerunt aurem in eum qui fecit ea, et loquatur ipse solus non per ea sed per se ipsum, ut audiamus verbum eius, non per linguam carnis neque per vocem angeli nec per sonitum nubis nec per aenigma similitudinis, sed ipsum quem in his amamus, ipsum sine his audiamus (sicut nunc extendimus nos et

³⁴ attingimus *S C D Knöll Skut. Ver.:* attingimus *G O P Maur.*

⁷⁴ *ictus* (a beat, strike) can also be taken to mean "strength" or "power." On *attingere* as a verb of mental striving toward the divine, see *Ser.* 117.3.5: "To attain to God in mind in some degree is a great blessing" (*attingere aliquantum mente deum magna beatitudo est*).

⁷⁵ Rom 8:23. A. means that they have had a glimpse of their abiding home in heaven.

⁷⁶ OD: "A single sentence (183 words)."

⁷⁷ A shift from the opening impersonal "someone" (*si cui*) to particularize A. and his mother.

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While we spoke, we also gazed upon wisdom with longing; we reached out and touched it as best we could, with every beat of our heart.⁷⁴ Then we sighed and left behind us, where they belonged, those firstfruits of the Spirit.⁷⁵ We returned to the clamor of our usual kind of speech, in which words have both beginnings and endings. Yet what can compare with your Word, our Lord, who is everlasting, never aging, yet making all things new?

Wis 7:21

(25) So we went on conversing:⁷⁶ "Imagine that someone experiences within themselves the stilling of the commotion of the flesh, the stilling of every image of earth and sea and sky, the stilling even of heaven, and the soul itself. Imagine that dreams grew silent, and symbolic revelations, every tongue, and every sign; and that anything which comes into being through transition grew silent to that person (for all these things make the same declaration, if only one could hear it—'we have not made ourselves, but the One who abides for ever has made us'). Then suppose that those things fell silent after their declaration, because they turned their attention to him who made those things; and then he alone spoke, not through them, but by his own self, so that we heard⁷⁷ his Word not by means of a tongue of flesh,⁷⁸ nor by the voice of an angel⁷⁹ nor by the thundering of a cloud⁸⁰ nor by the mystery of a mental image;⁸¹ so that we heard the Word himself, the one we love in all these things, yet heard him without them, created as they are. In this way my mother and

Ps 99:3^v, Sir
18:1

⁷⁴ A. is thinking of prophets.

⁷⁹ E.g., Gn 16:7, 22:15, 31:11, etc.

⁸⁰ E.g., Pss 77:18, 104:7; Rv 14:2.

⁸¹ E.g., Nm 12:8; 1 Cor 13:12, etc.

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rapida cogitatione attingimus aeternam sapientiam super omnia manentem), si continuetur hoc et subtrahantur aliae visiones longe imparis generis et haec una rapiat et absorbeat et recondat in interiora gaudia spectatorem suum, ut talis sit sempiterna vita quale fuit hoc momentum intelligentiae cui suspiravimus, nonne hoc est: 'intra in gaudium domini tui'? et istud quando? an cum omnes resurgimus,³⁵ sed non omnes immutabimur?"

(26) Dicebam talia, etsi non isto modo et his verbis, tamen, domine, tu scis, quod illo die, cum talia loqueremur et mundus iste nobis inter verba vilesceret cum omnibus delectationibus suis, tunc ait illa, "fili, quantum ad me attinet, nulla re iam delector in hac vita. quid hic faciam adhuc et cur hic sim, nescio, iam consumpta spe huius saeculi. unum erat propter quod in hac vita aliquantum immorari cupiebam, ut te christianum catholicum viderem priusquam morerer. cumulatus hoc mihi deus meus praestitit, ut te etiam contempta felicitate terrena servum eius videam. quid hic facio?"

11. (27) Ad haec ei quid responderim non satis recolo, cum interea vix intra quinque dies aut non multo amplius decubuit febribus. et cum aegrotaret, quodam die defectum animae passa est et paululum subtracta a praesentibus. nos concurrimus, sed cito reddita est sensui et aspexit

³⁵ resurgimus S C D O Knöll Skut. Ver.: resurgemus G Maur.

⁸² *resurgimus*. A good example of MS assimilation of A's text^{VL} to familiar text^{VG}.

⁸³ A loan word from Greek (καθολικός) meaning "universal." Applied to the Church it came to mean "orthodox," or "of the right/majority party."

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I now reached out, and, in the swiftness of our thought, we touched eternal Wisdom which lasts beyond all things. Imagine that all other visions (so greatly inferior) were removed, and that this alone were to remain: would this vision by itself seize us and absorb us and restore the beholder to those inner joys, so that eternal life would be just what that moment of understanding had been (the one for which we sighed)? Surely it means this: 'Enter into the joy of your Lord.' And when will this happen? Surely when we all rise again,⁸² but not all of us will be changed?"

Mt 25:21

1 Cor 15:51

(26) I spoke to this effect, although not in this precise manner or words. In any case, Lord, on that day when we were conversing in this fashion, and the physical world, with all its particular pleasures, became cheap in our eyes as we were speaking, you know what she then said: "My son, for my own part there is no longer anything for me to enjoy in this earthly life. What I am yet to do here, and why I am still here, I have no idea, now that my hope for this earthly age is accomplished. There was only one thing that made me desire to linger in this earthly life a little while longer: namely to see you become a catholic⁸³ Christian before my death. My God showed this to me more fully, so that I might see you too reject earthly pleasures and become his servant. What am I to do here?"

11. (27) I do not properly remember what I said to her in reply, because at about this time, only about five days later (or not much more) she fell ill of a fever. During her illness, there came a day when she fainted and fell unconscious for a short time. We rushed to her bedside but she soon came to her senses and became aware of me and my

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astantes me et fratrem meum, et ait nobis quasi quaerenti similis, "ubi eram?" deinde nos intuens maerore attonitos: "ponitis³⁶ hic" inquit "matrem vestram." ego silebam et fletum frenabam, frater autem meus quiddam locutus est, quo eam non in peregre,³⁷ sed in patria defungi tamquam felicius optaret. quo audito illa vultu anxio reverberans eum oculis, quod talia saperet, atque inde me intuens: "vide" ait "quid dicit." et mox ambobus: "ponite" inquit "hoc corpus ubicumque. nihil vos eius cura conturbet. tantum illud vos rogo, ut ad domini altare memineritis mei, ubiubi fueritis." cumque hanc sententiam verbis quibus poterat explicasset, conticuit et ingravescente morbo exercebatur.

(28) Ego vero cogitans dona tua, deus invisibilis, quae immittis in corda fidelium tuorum, et proveniunt inde fruges admirabiles, gaudebam et gratias tibi agebam, recolens quod noveram, quanta cura semper aestuasset de sepulchro quod sibi providerat et praeparaverat iuxta corpus viri sui. quia enim valde concorditer vixerant, id etiam volebat, ut est animus humanus minus capax divinorum, adiungi ad illam felicitatem et commemorari ab hominibus, concessum sibi esse post transmarinam peregrinationem ut coniuncta terra amborum coniugum terra tegetur.

³⁶ ponitis *codd. GM Ver. OD*: ponetis *C G Maur.*

³⁷ in peregre *S codd. Knöll Skut.*: peregre *G O Maur. Ver.*

⁸⁴ Care and protection of the grave (usually by relatives) were important, hence burial close to surviving family mattered; cf., e.g., *Virg. Aen.* 5.870-71.

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brother standing there and said to us, like someone asking for information, "Where was I?" Then she saw that we were bewildered and distressed, and she said, "Lay your mother to rest in this place." Fighting back my tears, I made no reply. But my brother did say something to the effect that he thought it preferable for her to die not in some foreign place but in her native land. When she heard this her expression grew uneasy and her eyes reproached him for thinking so. So then she looked at me and said, "Look what he is saying!" Shortly after that she said to both of us, "Lay this mortal body to rest wherever you will: do not worry about tending the grave.⁸⁴ All I ask of you is that, wherever you may be, you will remember me at the Lord's altar." When she had explained her wish as best she could, she became silent. Her pain increased as the illness grew worse.

(28) Yet I was pondering your gifts, O God unseen, for you plant them in the hearts of your faithful ones, and from them comes forth a marvelous harvest. I was rejoicing and giving thanks to you, because I recalled something I knew before—how anxious she had once been about her place of burial, which she had planned and made ready beside the grave of her husband.⁸⁵ Because they had lived together in such harmony, she used to desire this one thing more (which shows how the human mind falls short of the divine): to be allowed in addition to that blessing, something other people would remember—namely, that after her travels abroad the mortal remains of husband and wife might be buried side by side.

⁸⁵ I.e., in Africa.

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Quando autem ista inanitas plenitudine bonitatis tuae coeperat in eius corde non esse, nesciebam et laetabar, admirans quod sic mihi apparuisset (quamquam et in illo sermone nostro ad fenestram cum dixit, "iam quid hic facio?" non apparuit desiderare in patria mori). audivi etiam postea quod iam cum Ostiis essemus cum quibusdam amicis meis materna fiducia conloquebatur quodam die de contemptu vitae huius et bono mortis, ubi ipse non aderam, illisque stupentibus virtutem feminae (quoniam tu dederas ei) quaerentibusque utrum non formidaret tam longe a sua civitate corpus relinquere, "nihil" inquit "longe est deo, neque timendum est, ne ille non agnoscat in fine saeculi unde me resuscitet."

Ergo die nono aegritudinis suae, quinquagesimo et sexto anno aetatis suae, tricesimo et tertio aetatis meae, anima illa religiosa et pia corpore soluta est.

12. (29) Premebam oculos eius, et confluebat in praecordia mea maestitudo ingens et transfluebat in lacrimas, ibidemque oculi mei violento animi imperio resorbabant fontem suum usque ad siccitatem, et in tali luctamine valde male mihi erat. tum vero ubi efflavit extremum, puer Adeodatus exclamavit in planctu³⁸ atque ab omnibus nobis coercitus tacuit. hoc modo etiam meum quiddam puerile, quod labebatur in fletus, iuvenali voce³⁹ cordis cohercebatur et tacebat. neque enim decere arbitrabamur funus illud questibus lacrimosis gemitibusque celebrare, quia his plerumque solet deplorari quaedam miseria morien-

³⁸ planctu S O Knöll Skut. Ver.: planctum codd. Maur.

³⁹ voce codd. Skut. Ver.: voce, voce S Knöll Pell.

⁸⁶ oxymoron: *virtus* is the quality associated with being a *vir* ("man").

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I was unaware of when this vain wish had begun to vanish from her heart through the fullness of your goodness. I was surprised and delighted when she made this clear to me, though already in that conversation of ours by the window, when she said "What am I to do any longer in this world?" she seemed not to want her death to take place in her homeland. I heard later that while we stayed at Ostia, one day when I was not there she had spoken confidentially, as a mother might, with some of my friends about her scorn for this life and the blessing of death. When they were astounded at such courage in a woman⁸⁶ (courage which you bestowed upon her) and asked whether she was frightened to let her body rest so far from her own people, she answered, "Nothing is far away from God, and there is no need to fear that when the end of the world comes he will not know where to raise me up!"

So on the ninth day of her illness, when she was fifty-six and I was thirty-three, that devout and faithful soul of hers was set free from the body.

12. (29) I closed her eyes. A measureless grief welled up in my heart and was on the point of overflowing into tears. At the same time, by a tremendous effort of mind my eyes suppressed their flow at its source and remained dry. The struggle to do this was so great that its effect on me was dreadful. At the moment when she breathed her last, my boy Adeodatus cried aloud in his grief and was only checked by a concerted effort from all of us. Likewise, the part of me that was still a child kept slipping into sobs; but the mature voice of my heart checked and silenced it. We were convinced that it was not right to mark the death with tearful lament and cries of sorrow, because these are the customary way to grieve at the wretchedness

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tium aut quasi omnimoda extinctio. at illa nec misere moriebatur nec omnino moriebatur. hoc et documentis morum eius et fide non ficta rationibusque certis tenebamus.

(30) Quid erat ergo quod intus mihi graviter dolebat, nisi ex consuetudine simul vivendi, dulcissima et carissima, repente dirupta vulnus recens? gratulabar quidem testimonio eius, quod in ea ipsa ultima aegritudine obsequiis meis interblandiens appellabat me pium et commemorabat grandi dilectionis affectu numquam se audisse ex ore meo iaculatum in se durum aut contumeliosum sonum. sed tamen quid tale, deus meus, qui fecisti nos, quid comparabile habebat honor a me delatus illi et servitus ab illa mihi? quoniam itaque deserebar tam magno eius solacio, sauciabatur anima et quasi dilaniabatur vita, quae una facta erat ex mea et illius.

(31) Cohibito ergo a fletu illo puero, psalterium arripuit Evodius et cantare coepit psalmum. cui respondebamus omnis domus: "misericordiam et iudicium cantabo tibi, domine." audito autem quid ageretur, convenerunt multi fratres ac religiosae feminae et, de more illis quorum officium erat funus curantibus, ego in parte, ubi decenter poteram, cum eis qui me non deserendum esse censebant, quod erat tempori congruum disputabam eoque fomento veritatis mitigabam cruciatum tibi notum, illis ignorantibus et intente audientibus et sine sensu doloris me esse arbitrantibus.

⁸⁷ Christian theory argued that grief for the dead is inappropriate: cf. Beyenka, *Consolation*.

⁸⁸ Cf. Hor. *Carm.* 3.30.6, *Non omnis moriar* (I shall not altogether die).

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of the dying, or at their complete obliteration.⁸⁷ But her dying did not happen in a pitiable way, and she was not utterly annihilated.⁸⁸ We believed this on the evidence of her manner of life, her unfeigned faith, and our firm convictions.

1 Tm 1:15

(30) What was it, then, that caused such great pain within me? Was it perhaps the fresh wound inflicted by our habitual way of life together, so dear and precious as it was, being suddenly ripped apart? I gave thanks for her words of approval, for in her final illness she had responded to some service I rendered her by caressing me, and calling me a dutiful son; with the tenderness of a deep love she would recall that she had never heard an unkind remark or rude utterance against her from my lips. Yet even so, O Lord my God, who made us both, it is impossible to compare the honor that I duly paid to her with the service that she rendered me! Since, therefore, I was bereft of that great consolation that she provided, my soul was hurt and my life was in torment, for my life and hers had been as one.

(31) After we had checked Adeodatus' crying, Evodius took up a psalter and began to sing a psalm. The whole household responded as one: "I shall sing of your mercy and justice, O Lord." Once people got to hear what was happening, many brothers and holy women gathered. As was customary, those whose duty it was took care of the funeral arrangements, while I withdrew somewhere more appropriate to talk things over properly with friends who thought I should not be left alone. By the remedy of truth I soothed the torment that you knew of—a torment which those who were listening carefully to me, and thought I had no sense of grief, were quite unaware of.

Ps 101:1

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At ego in auribus tuis, ubi eorum nullus audiebat, increpabam mollitiam affectus mei et constringebam fluxum maeroris, cedebatque mihi paululum. rursusque impetu suo ferebatur non usque ad eruptionem lacrimarum nec usque ad vultus mutationem, sed ego sciebam quid corde premerem. et quia mihi vehementer displicebat tantum in me posse haec humana, quae ordine debito et sorte conditionis nostrae accidere necesse est, alio dolore dolebam dolorem et duplici tristitia macerabar.

(32) Cum ecce corpus elatum est, imus, redimus sine lacrimis. nam neque in eis precibus quas tibi fudimus, cum offerretur pro ea sacrificium pretii nostri iam iuxta sepulchrum, posito cadavere priusquam deponeretur, sicut illic fieri solet, nec in eis ergo precibus flevi, sed toto die graviter in occulto maestus eram et mente turbata rogabam te, ut poteram, quo sanares dolorem meum, nec faciebas—credo commendans memoriae meae vel hoc uno documento omnis consuetudinis vinculum etiam adversus mentem, quae iam non fallaci verbo pascitur. visum etiam mihi est ut irem lavatum, quod audieram inde balneis nomen inditum quia graeci balanion dixerint, quod anxietatem pellat ex animo. ecce et hoc confiteor misericordiae tuae, pater orphanorum, quoniam lavi et talis eram qualis priusquam lavissem, neque enim exudavit de corde meo maeroris amaritudo. deinde dormivi et evigilavi, et non parva ex parte mitigatum inveni dolorem meum atque, ut

⁸⁹ *dolore dolebam dolorem: a fine figura etymologica.*

⁹⁰ The sacrament of the eucharist.

⁹¹ A. etymologizes the Greek word for bath, βαλανείον, as from the verb βάλλω (*ballō*, "I throw") and the noun ἀνία (*ania*, "grief"). ⁹² Ps 68:5 (= Vg 67.6).

BOOK IX

And yet in your hearing, where none of them could listen, I reproached myself for the weakness of my feelings, and I restrained the flow of lamentation, and it receded a little. Then once more it attacked me with full force, not to the point of breaking into sobs, nor to a change in my outward expression—but I was aware of what feeling I was crushing in my heart. Also, because I was very disappointed that human concerns had such influence over me (for they must occur, as the duly appointed lot of our human condition) I grieved with a different sort of grief at the fact of my own grief,⁸⁹ and I was torn apart by this twofold distress.

(32) When her body was carried out, we left the house and returned afterward without any tears. Nor did we weep during those prayers that we poured forth to you when the sacrifice of our redemption was being offered for her⁹⁰ beside the tomb, where the body was laid prior to burial (this is the custom there). Not even during those prayers did I shed a tear. Yet all that day I was secretly crushed with grief, and in a turmoil of mind I asked you continually, as best I could, to heal my pain. You did not do so. I believe you were impressing it upon my memory by this single instance that the fetters of all habitual behavior have power even against a mind which is not nourished by deceitful words. It seemed to me that I ought to go to the baths, because I had heard that the noun "bath" derives from the Greeks calling it a "balanion" because it "casts out grief."⁹¹ Yes, I confess before your mercy, Father of the fatherless,⁹² that I bathed—and remained exactly as I had been before. For it did not wash away the bitterness of grief from my heart. But then I slept, and awoke, and discovered that my pain was markedly less-

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eram in lecto meo solus, recordatus sum veridicos versus
Ambrosii tui. tu es enim,

Deus, creator omnium
polique rector vestiens
diem decoro lumine,
noctem sopora⁴⁰ gratia,

artus solutos ut quies
reddat laboris usui
mentesque fessas allevet
luctuque⁴¹ solvat anxios.

(33) Atque inde paulatim reducebam in pristinum sensum ancillam tuam conversationemque eius piam in te et sancte in nos blandam atque morigeram, qua subito destitutus sum, et libuit flere in conspectu tuo de illa et pro illa, de me et pro me. et dimisi lacrimas quas continebam, ut effluerent quantum vellent, substernens eas cordi meo. et requievit in eis, quoniam ibi erant aures tuae, non cuiusquam hominis superbe interpretantis ploratum meum. et nunc, domine, confiteor tibi in litteris: legat qui volet, et interpretetur ut volet, et si peccatum invenerit, flevisse me matrem exigua parte horae, matrem oculis meis interim mortuam quae me multos annos fleverat ut oculis tuis viverem, non inrideat sed potius, si est grandi caritate, pro peccatis meis fleat ipse ad te, patrem omnium fratrum Christi tui.

⁴⁰ sopora *S O Knöll Skut. Ver.:* soporis *G*

⁴¹ luctuque *S G² O Knöll Ver.:* luctusque *C D G¹ Maur. Skut.*

⁹³ Many hymns are attributed to Ambrose; cf. *Conf.* 9.7.15, n. 52; A. confirms the authorship of this one.

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ened. As I lay in bed alone I called to mind those verses of your servant Ambrose, which spoke truly: for you are,

O God, the maker of all things,
You rule the heavens, and you clothe
The day with light magnificent,
The night with drowsy-making grace:

So that a time of ease restores
Our rested limbs to do their work,
Lightens the cares of wearied minds,
And frees our anxious hearts from grief.⁹³

(33) From then on, little by little I began to restore your handmaid to the way I had formerly thought about her; and likewise her behavior, which was devout toward you and dutifully pleasing and compliant toward us. Of all this I had been deprived at a stroke, and it was a comfort to weep about her and for her, about myself and for myself, in your presence. I let flow my tears, which I had until that moment restrained, and let them fall as freely as they would. I made them a bed to rest my heart upon; and it did find rest on them, since my sobs were for your ears only, not for any harsh interpreter to hear. Now, Lord, I make my confession to you in writing. Let anyone read it who will, let them interpret as they will. If they do find fault, let them not be scornful because I wept so briefly for my mother, a mother who was, at least for the present, dead to my sight—and who had wept over me for so many years in the hope that I would come to live in your sight. Instead, if they are rich in charity let them offer a lament themselves for my sins, to you, O Father of all who are brothers of your Christ.

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13. (34) Ego autem, iam sanato corde ab illo vulnere in quo poterat redargui carnalis affectus, fundo tibi, deus noster, pro illa famula tua longe aliud lacrimarum genus, quod manat de concusso spiritu consideratione periculorum omnis animae quae in Adam moritur. quamquam illa in Christo vivificata etiam nondum a carne resoluta sic vixerit, ut laudetur nomen tuum in fide moribusque eius, non tamen audeo dicere, ex quo eam per baptismum regenerasti, nullum verbum exisse ab ore eius contra praeceptum tuum. et dictum est a veritate filio tuo, "si quis dixerit fratri suo, 'fatue,' reus erit gehennae ignis"; et vae etiam laudabili vitae hominum, si remota misericordia discutias eam! quia vero non exquiris delicta vehementer, fiducialiter speramus aliquem apud te locum. quisquis autem tibi enumerat vera merita sua, quid tibi enumerat nisi munera tua? o si cognoscant se homines homines, et qui gloriatur, in domino gloriatur!

(35) Ego itaque, laus mea et vita mea, deus cordis mei, sepositis paulisper bonis eius actibus, pro quibus tibi gaudens gratias ago, nunc pro peccatis matris meae deprecor te. exaudi me per medicinam vulnerum nostrorum, quae pependit in ligno et sedens ad dexteram tuam te interpellat pro nobis. scio misericorditer operatam et ex corde

⁹⁴ Cf. Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:22, 45; Irenaeus *Haer.* 3.19.3, 21.9-10; 5.19.1 on "recapitulation" (*anacephalaiōsis*): the theology that a righteous Christ (the "last" man) undoes the work of sin done in Adam (the first man).

⁹⁵ *Gehenna*, from the Hebrew for the "valley of the sons of Hinnom" (*gey ben-hinnom*), was an archetype of evil; there the pre-Israelite inhabitants practiced child sacrifice. The association with burning comes from later tradition. Cf. 2 Kgs 23:10, 2 Chr 28:3, etc.

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13. (34) These days my heart has been healed of that wound (in which it could be held guilty of affection according to the flesh); so now I pour out to you, our God, a very different kind of tears for her, your servant. They flow from a spirit struck by the thought of the dangers threatening every soul that dies in Adam.⁹⁴ Although she received new life in Christ, and so—even when she was not yet free from the flesh—was determined to live her life in such a way that her faith and conduct would win praise for your name, I do not presume to declare that, from the moment when you remade her in baptism, not a single one of the words which left her lips was against your teaching. Indeed, your Son spoke truly, “if anyone says to a brother, ‘you fool!’ he will be guilty of hellfire.”⁹⁵ Woe betide even people who live praiseworthy lives if you set your mercy aside when scrutinizing them! For you are not zealous in investigating sins, and so we have confidence to hope for a place beside you. After all, if anyone recounts to you their genuine merits, what are they recounting to you but your own gifts? If only humanity would recognize that it is only human! And let the one who boasts, boast in their Lord!

Mt 5:22

Ps 143:2

1 Cor 1:31; 2
Cor 10:17

(35) Now, therefore, O God of my heart, my praise and my life, I am briefly setting aside her good deeds (for which I give you joyful thanks), and instead am praying that you will pardon my mother's sins. Hear me through that medicine⁹⁶ for our wounds which hung upon a tree and came to sit at your right hand to make intercession for us. I know she practiced mercy, and from her heart forgave

Rom 8:34;
Gal 3:13

⁹⁶ *Medicina* here is a metaphor for Christ; cf. *Conf.* 9.8.18, n. 59.

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dimisisse debita debitoribus suis. dimitte illi et tu debita sua, si qua etiam contraxit per tot annos post aquam salutis. dimitte, domine, dimitte, obsecro, ne intres cum ea in iudicium. superexultet misericordia iudicio, quoniam eloquia tua vera sunt et promisisti misericordiam misericordibus: quod ut essent tu dedisti eis, qui misereberis cui misertus eris, et misericordiam praestabis cui misericors fueris.

(36) Et credo, iam feceris quod te rogo, sed voluntaria oris mei approba, domine. namque illa imminente die resolutionis suae non cogitavit suum corpus sumptuose contegi aut condiri aromatis⁴² aut monumentum electum concupivit aut curavit sepulchrum patrium. non ista mandavit nobis, sed tantummodo memoriam sui ad altare tuum fieri desideravit, cui nullius diei praetermissione servierat, unde sciret dispensari victimam sanctam qua deletum est chirographum quod erat contrarium nobis, qua triumphatus est hostis computans delicta nostra et quaerens quid⁴³ obiciat, et nihil inveniens in illo, in quo vincimus. quis ei refundet innocentem sanguinem? quis ei restituet pretium quo nos emit, ut nos auferat ei? ad cuius pretii nostri sacramentum ligavit ancilla tua animam suam vinculo fidei. nemo a protectione tua dirumpat eam; non se interponat nec vi nec insidiis leo et draco. neque enim respondebit illa nihil se debere, ne convincatur et obtineatur ab accusatore callido, sed respondebit dimissa debita

⁴² aromatis S O Knöll Skut. Ver.: aromatibus C D G P Maur.

⁴³ quid (obiciat) C D G O Maur. Ver.: quod S Knöll Skut.

⁹⁷ Cf. *Conf.* 9.11.27.

⁹⁸ OD notes, "This passage encapsulates A.'s doctrine of the atonement in a liturgical setting."

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her debtors their debts. Now, I pray you, forgive her likewise her debts, do not enter into judgment with her. Let mercy triumph over judgment, since your words are true and you have promised mercy to the merciful: you have given them this capacity, you will show mercy on those to whom you have shown mercy already, and you will pity those to whom you have shown pity already.

(36) I believe that you have already done what I beg you to, but still look kindly on the freewill offerings of my mouth. For as the day drew near when she was to be set free, she did not think of her corpse being elaborately laid out or embalmed with spices; she did not crave a fine memorial or yearn for burial in her native land. She gave us no such orders, her only desire was to be remembered at your altar⁹⁷ where she had been devoted to you, never missing a single day. She knew that this was where the holy Victim was distributed, which destroyed the record of debts counting against us:⁹⁸ this completed his triumph over that enemy who does reckon our sins against us and looks for anything to lay to our charge—but who finds no fault in him in whom we are victorious. Who can restore his innocent blood to him? Who can repay the price he paid for us, to carry us away from the enemy? Your handmaid bound her own soul with a cord of faith to this sacrament of our redemption. Let no one tear her away from your protection; let neither lion nor dragon obstruct her, either by force or stealth. She will not reply that she has no debts to pay, so as not to be vanquished and subdued by the crafty Accuser:⁹⁹ instead she will an-

James 2:13

Ps 143:2

Ps 19:9

Mt 5:7

Rom 9:15

Ps 119:108

2 Tm 4:6

Col 2:14

Jn 14:30

Mt 27:4

Ps 91:13

⁹⁹ A translation of the Hebrew term "the Satan"; cf. Jb 1:6, etc.

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sua ab eo cui nemo reddet, quod pro nobis non debens reddidit.

(37) Sit ergo in pace cum viro, ante quem nulli et post quem nulli nupta est, cui servivit fructum tibi afferens cum tolerantia, ut eum quoque lucraretur tibi. et inspira, domine meus, deus meus, inspira servis tuis, fratribus meis, filiis tuis, dominis meis, quibus et corde et voce et litteris servio, ut quotquot haec legerint, meminerint ad altare tuum Monnicae, famulae tuae, cum Patricio, quondam eius coniuge, per quorum carnem introduxisti me in hanc vitam,⁴⁴ quemadmodum nescio. meminerint cum affectu pio parentum meorum in hac luce transitoria, et fratrum meorum sub te patre in matre catholica, et civium meorum in aeterna Hierusalem, cui suspirat peregrinatio populi tui ab exitu usque ad reditum, ut quod a me illa poposcit extremum uberius ei praestetur in multorum orationibus per confessiones quam per orationes meas.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ hanc vitam *codd. edd.*: hac vita *S Knöll*

⁴⁵ meas *S C D Knöll Skut. Ver.*: meas amen *G O*

BOOK IX

swer that her debts have been remitted by him whom no one can repay; who, though he himself owed nothing, paid the price for us.

(37) So may she be at peace with her husband: she had no other husband before or after him. By serving him, she yielded a harvest through forbearance so as to convert him to you as well. Inspire, O my Lord, my God, your servants my brothers, and your sons who are my masters—for I serve them with my heart and voice and writings—inspire them, whenever they read my *Confessions*,¹⁰⁰ to remember at your altar your servant Monnica and her sometime husband Patricius. Through their flesh you brought me into this life; how, I do not know. Let them also remember with dutiful love those who, in this transitory light, were my parents; but who, before you as Father and in our Mother the Church, were my brothers and my fellow citizens in the everlasting¹⁰¹ Jerusalem for which your people on their earthly pilgrimage are sighing from the moment of their departure until their return. So may her last request to me be fulfilled for her more abundantly through many people's prayers—prompted by my *Confessions*—than by my prayers alone.

Lk 8:15

Hb 11:13

¹⁰⁰ The Latin only says *haec*; but A. is about to remark that he wants this work to inspire prayer for Monnica and Patricius.

¹⁰¹ *aeterna*; "heavenly," to contrast with "earthly," would have been more obvious here.

LIBER X

1. (1) Cognoscam te, cognitor meus, cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum. virtus animae meae, intra in eam et coapta tibi, ut habeas et possideas sine macula et ruga. haec est mea spes: ideo loquor et in ea spe gaudeo, quando sanum gaudeo. cetera vero vitae huius tanto minus flenda quanto magis fletur, et tanto magis flenda quanto minus fletur in eis. ecce enim veritatem dilexisti, quoniam qui facit eam venit ad lucem. volo eam facere in corde meo coram te in confessione; in stilo autem meo coram multis testibus.

2. (2) Et tibi quidem, domine, cuius oculis nuda est abyssus humanae conscientiae, quid occultum esset in me, etiamsi nollem confiteri tibi² te enim mihi absconderem, non me tibi. nunc autem quod gemitus meus testis est displicere me mihi, tu refulges et places et amaris et desideraris, ut erubescam de me et abiciam me atque eligam te et nec tibi nec mihi placeam nisi de te. tibi ergo, do-

¹ *Cognitor* can also mean a judge or advocate; A. has these meanings in mind too. ² Cf. *Conf.* 10.43.69.

³ First formal engagement with the purpose of writing *Conf.* in terms of readership. OD suggests the possibility of a *per cola et commata* layout for this section: it is certainly antiphonal—cf. *Conf.* 10.27.38, 12.10.10.

⁴ A. begins to work out the intellectual consequences of his *confessio* and *conversio*, the submission of his will to God's.

BOOK X

1. (1) You know me:¹ let me know you, let me know even as I am known. You are the strength of my soul; enter into it and shape it to your will, so that you keep and possess it without blemish or wrinkle. This is my hope:² so I declare it and rejoice in that hope, because I am rejoicing in a way that does me good. As for the other things of this life, the more people cry over them the less they are actually worth crying over; and more they are worth crying over, the less people actually do. See! You have loved truth, and whoever accomplishes truth comes to the light. I want to accomplish truth in my heart, in making my confession openly before you; but with my pen I want to do so before many witnesses.³

1 Cor 13:12

Eph 5:27

Rom 12:12

Ps 51:6

Jn 3:21; cf.

Eph 4:15

2. (2) After all, Lord, what is there of myself that could stay hidden before you—in whose sight the bottomless pit of human guilt is laid bare—even if I did not want to make confession to you? I could hide you from myself: but I cannot hide myself from you. But now, because my groaning acts as my witness that I am dissatisfied with myself, you shine brightly and are pleased, and loved, and longed-for; and so I blush with shame at myself and abandon myself and choose you and—unless I am in you—I am pleasing neither to you nor to myself.⁴ I am open to you,

Sir 42:18-20

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mine, manifestus sum, quicumque sim. et quo fructu tibi confitear, dixi, neque id ago verbis carnis et vocibus, sed verbis animae et clamore cogitationis, quem novit auris tua. cum enim malus sum, nihil est aliud confiteri tibi quam displicere mihi: cum vero pius, nihil est aliud confiteri tibi quam hoc non tribuere mihi, quoniam tu, domine, benedicis iustum, sed prius eum iustificas impium. confessio itaque mea, deus meus, in conspectu tuo tibi tacite fit et non tacite: tacet enim strepitu, clamat affectu. neque enim dico recti aliquid hominibus quod non a me tu prius audieris, aut etiam tu aliquid tale audis a me quod non mihi tu prius dixeris.

3. (3) Quid mihi ergo est cum hominibus, ut audiant confessiones meas, quasi ipsi sanaturi sint omnes languores meos? curiosum genus ad cognoscendam vitam alienam, desidiosum ad corrigendam suam. quid a me quaerunt audire qui sim, qui nolunt a te audire qui sint? et unde sciunt, cum a me ipso de me ipso audiunt, an verum dicam, quandoquidem nemo scit hominum quid agatur in homine, nisi spiritus hominis qui in ipso est? si autem a te audiant de se ipsis, non poterunt dicere, "mentitur dominus." quid est enim a te audire de se nisi cognoscere se? quis porro cognoscit et dicit, "falsum est," nisi ipse mentiatur? sed quia caritas omnia credit, inter eos utique quos conexos sibimet unum facit, ego quoque, domine, etiam

⁵ Because he is concerned about his right to speak and direct others, he explains the source of his authority.

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Lord, whoever I am. I have already declared the benefits which have brought about my confession to you, and I do not do so with fleshly words and sounds but with the words of my soul and the clamor of my thoughts, which your ear comprehends. When I am bad, confessing to you is nothing more than dissatisfaction with myself: whereas when I am devout, confessing to you is nothing more than not giving myself the credit for it, for you, Lord, are the one who blesses the righteous person, but before you make that person righteous they are ungodly. So my confession to you, O my God, is made silently in your sight, and yet not silently: it is a silence without uproar, but it resounds with affection. And I say nothing to other people on the subject of righteousness unless you heard me say it to you first; and you do not hear anything of that kind from me unless first you said it to me.⁵

Ps 5:12; Rom
4:5

Ps 96:6

3. (3) What have I to do with other people, that they hear my confessions, as if they are going to cure all my weaknesses? They are all inquisitive to know about the lives of others, but lazy when it comes to amending their own. Why do they seek to hear from me who I am, when they do not want to hear from you who they are themselves? And when they hear from me personally about myself, how do they know whether I am telling the truth, since no one knows what motivates another person, except for the spirit of that person within themselves? But if they hear about themselves from you, they will not be able to say, "The Lord is lying." After all, what does hearing from you about themselves *mean*, if not knowing themselves? Indeed does anyone know, and say "it is not true," without telling a lie? But because love believes all things, at any rate among those whom it unites and bonds to itself, I too,

Ps 103:3; Mt
4:23

1 Cor 2:11

cf. 1 Cor
12:3

1 Cor 13:7

Col 3:14

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sic tibi confiteor ut audiant homines, quibus demonstrare non possum an vera confitear. sed credunt mihi quorum mihi aures caritas aperit.

(4) Verum tamen tu, medice meus intime, quo fructu ista faciam, eliqua mihi. nam confessiones praeteritorum malorum meorum, quae remisisti et texisti ut beares me in te, mutans animam meam fide et sacramento tuo, cum leguntur et audiuntur, excitant cor ne dormiat in desperatione et dicat, "non possum," sed evigilet in amore misericordiae tuae et dulcedine gratiae tuae, qua potens est omnis infirmus qui sibi per ipsam fit conscius infirmitatis suae. et delectat bonos audire praeterita mala eorum qui iam carent eis, nec ideo delectat quia mala sunt, sed quia fuerunt et non sunt.

Quo itaque fructu, domine meus, cui cotidie confitetur conscientia mea, spe misericordiae tuae securior quam innocentia sua, quo fructu, quaeso, etiam hominibus coram te confiteor per has litteras adhuc quis ego sim, non quis fuerim? nam illum fructum vidi et commemoravi. sed quis adhuc sim, ecce in ipso tempore confessionum mearum, et multi hoc nosse cupiunt qui me noverunt et non me noverunt, qui ex me vel de me aliquid audierunt, sed auris eorum non est ad cor meum, ubi ego sum quicumque sum. volunt ergo audire confitente¹ me quid ipse intus sim, quo nec oculum nec aurem nec mentem possunt in-

¹ confitente S C D Knöll Skut. Ver.: confitentem G O Maur.

⁶ In the sense of "awareness of sin."

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Lord, will therefore go on confessing to you so that others can hear. I cannot prove to them that I am telling the truth. But as for those whose ears love has made open to me, they believe me.

(4) As for you, doctor of my inner self, clarify for me what will be the harvest of my efforts. For when the confessions of my past misdeeds—which you have forgiven and covered to make me glad in you, changing my soul through faith and your sacrament—are read about and heard, they animate the heart, to stop it sleeping in despair and saying, “I can’t.” Instead it will keep awake in its love of your mercy and the sweetness of your grace, through which everyone who is weak becomes strong when—through grace—they become aware of their own weakness. It delights good people, too, to hear the past misdeeds of those who are now free of them: they delight not because of the misdeeds, but rather because they existed once, but now are no more.

2 Cor 12:9-10

But what good is it, my Lord (when each day my conscience⁶ makes confession to you, more certain in its hope of your mercy than in its own lack of guilt), what good is it, I wonder, that in these writings I also make confession to other people in your presence, not of what I have been, but of what I am now? For I have seen and recorded what good it was. But as for who I am now, at this time of composing my confessions, look! There are plenty of people who want to know that—people who know me and those who do not—who have heard me speak, or heard about me; but their ear is not attuned to my heart, where I truly am whoever I am. They want, therefore, to listen to me confessing what I am deep within, in that place where neither eye nor ear nor mind can penetrate. They want

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tendere; credituri tamen volunt, numquid cognituri? dicit enim eis caritas, qua boni sunt, non mentiri me de me confitentem, et ipsa in eis credit mihi.

(5) Sed quo fructu id volunt? an congratulari mihi cupiunt, cum audierint quantum ad te accedam munere tuo, et orare pro me, cum audierint quantum retarder pondere meo? indicabo me talibus. non enim parvus est fructus, domine deus meus, ut a multis tibi gratiae agantur de nobis et a multis rogeris pro nobis. amet in me fraternus animus quod amandum doces, et doleat in me quod dolendum doces. animus ille hoc faciat fraternus, non extraneus, non filiorum alienorum quorum os locutum est vanitatem et dextera eorum dextera iniquitatis; sed fraternus ille, qui cum approbat me, gaudet de me, cum autem improbat me, contristatur pro me, quia sive approbet sive improbet me, diligit me. indicabo me talibus. respirent in bonis meis, suspirent in malis meis. bona mea instituta tua sunt et dona tua, mala mea delicta mea sunt et iudicia tua. respirent in illis et suspirent in his, et hymnus et fletus ascendant in conspectum tuum de fraternis cordibus, turibulis tuis. tu autem, domine, delectatus odore sancti tem-

⁷ A. uses the pronoun for himself, not as a plural of majesty, but rather to minimize specificity; he seems uncomfortable with making himself the focus or seeming to take credit for others' progress in faith.

⁸ Cf. Vol. 1, 394n42 (*Conf.* 8.9.21) on two "wills"; see also *Duab. An.* 13.19: "So am I not obliged to admit that there are two souls (*duas animas*)? We can make better and much clearer sense (*melius et multo expeditius intellegere*) by recognizing two kinds of good things, neither of which is alienated from God its originator, a single soul exerting influence from different parts of itself, the lower and the higher, or expressing it more precisely, the exterior and the interior."

BOOK X

this, they are ready to believe, but how can they understand me properly? Because love (which makes them good) says to them that I am not telling lies when I make confession about myself; and love itself, in them, believes me.

1 Cor 13:7

(5) What do they want to gain from hearing me confess? Do they long to congratulate me when they hear how close—by your own gift—I came to you? Or to pray for me when they hear how much my own encumbrances held me back? These are the people to whom I shall explain myself. For the harvest is far from meager, O Lord my God, if many people give you thanks through us,⁷ and many pray to you on our behalf. Let a brotherly mind love whatever you show to be lovable in me, and let it regret whatever you show to be regrettable in me. Let the mind that is brotherly act in this way, but not the one that is an outsider, not the minds of “strange children whose mouth has spoken vanity, and whose right hand is a right hand of iniquity”; rather that brotherly mind which rejoices over me when it approves of me, but is sad for me when it disapproves of me. For whether it approves or disapproves of me, it loves me. These are the people to whom I shall explain myself. Let them sigh with relief when I act well, let them sigh with sorrow when I act badly. All the good I do is inculcated by you and given by you; all my wrongdoing is my own fault and your sentence upon me.⁸ Let them sigh with relief at the former, and sigh in sorrow at the latter: let both the hymn and the weeping from brotherly hearts (which are your own censers) rise up into your sight. And Lord, when you have delighted in the sweet

2 Cor 1:11

Ps 144:11

Rv 8:3-4

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pli tui, miserere mei secundum magnam misericordiam tuam propter nomen tuum et nequaquam deserens coepta tua consumma imperfecta mea.

4. (6) Hic est fructus confessionum mearum, non qualis fuerim sed qualis sim, ut hoc confitear non tantum coram te secreta exultatione cum tremore et secreto mae-rore cum spe, sed etiam in auribus credentium filiorum hominum, sociorum gaudii mei et consortium mortalitatis meae, civium meorum et mecum peregrinorum, praecedentium et consequentium et comitum vitae² meae. hi sunt servi tui, fratres mei, quos filios tuos esse voluisti dominos meos, quibus iussisti ut serviam, si volo tecum de te vivere.

Et hoc mihi verbum tuum parum erat si loquendo praeciperet, nisi et faciendo praeiret. et ego id ago factis et dictis, id ago sub alis tuis nimis cum ingenti periculo, nisi quia sub alis tuis tibi subdita est anima mea et infirmitas mea tibi nota est. parvulus sum, sed vivit semper pater meus et idoneus est mihi tutor meus. idem ipse est enim qui genuit me et tuetur me, et tu ipse es omnia bona mea, tu omnipotens, qui mecum es et priusquam tecum sim. indicabo ergo talibus qualibus iubes ut serviam, non quis

² vitae S O Skut. Ver.: viae *codd.* Knöll Maur. Pell.

⁹ Biblical idiom for "human beings."

¹⁰ Later central to A.'s thought in *De civ. D.* Cf. *Cat. Rud.* 19.31: "So the two polities, one of evil people, one of saints, endure from the beginnings of humankind right to the end of time" (*duae itaque civitates, una iniquorum, altera sanctorum, ab initio generis humani usque in finem saeculi perducuntur*).

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scent of your temple, have mercy upon me according to your great mercy, on account of your name: and because you never abandon what you have begun, complete what is incomplete in me. Phil 1:6

4. (6) This is the harvest of my confessions, not as the kind of person I once was, but the person I am now: that I make this confession not only before you in secret exultation combined with trembling, and in secret sorrow combined with hope; but also in the hearing of those sons of men⁹ who are believers, companions in my joy and sharers in the transience of my humanity. These are my fellow citizens¹⁰ and my fellow travelers, who go before me and who follow after, and who have a share in my life. These people are your servants and my brothers: and it is your will that they be your sons and my masters, for you have ordered me to serve them¹¹ if I want to abide with you in accordance with your ways. Ps 2:11

This word of yours would have had too little influence with me if it were merely a matter of speaking, and not one of taking action first as well. I follow that example in my deeds and words;¹² I do so under your wings amid excessive danger but for the fact that my soul is hidden under your wings, and you know how vulnerable I am. I am only a child but my father is eternal, a fit and proper guardian for me. He is the very same who begot me and watches over me and you yourself are all that is good in me, you are almighty; you are with me even before I am with you. To such people as you command me to serve I Jn 13:15
Pss 17:8,
36:7
Ps 61:2
Ps 102:27

¹¹ As bishop. A. is thinking of the present time as he is writing.

¹² I.e., the example of Jesus.

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fuerim, sed quis iam sim et quis adhuc sim; sed neque me ipsum diiudico. sic itaque audiar.

5. (7) Tu enim, domine, diiudicas me, quia etsi nemo scit hominum quae sunt hominis, nisi spiritus hominis qui in ipso est, tamen est aliquid hominis quod nec ipse scit spiritus hominis qui in ipso est. tu autem, domine, scis eius omnia, quia fecisti eum. ego vero quamvis prae tuo conspectu me despiciam et aestimem me terram et cinerem, tamen aliquid de te scio quod de me nescio. et certe videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate, nondum facie ad faciem. et ideo, quamdiu peregrinor abs te, mihi sum praesentior quam tibi et tamen te novi nullo modo posse violari; ego vero quibus temptationibus resistere valem quibusve non valeam, nescio. et spes est, quia fidelis es, qui nos non sinis temptari supra quam possumus ferre, sed facis cum temptatione etiam exitum, ut possimus sustinere. confitear ergo quid de me sciam, confitear et quid de me nesciam, quoniam et quod de me scio, te mihi lucente scio, et quod de me nescio, tamdiu nescio, donec³ fiant tenebrae meae sicut meridies in vultu tuo.

6. (8) Non dubia sed certa conscientia, domine, amo te. percussisti cor meum verbo tuo, et amavi te. sed et caelum et terra et omnia quae in eis sunt, ecce undique mihi dicunt ut te amem, nec cessant dicere omnibus, ut sint inex-

³ donec *codd. edd.* quam diu S

¹³ William Tyndale (ca.1494–1536) renders this, "Now we see in a glasse even in a darke speakeynge." In the ancient world mirrors gave an imperfect reflection, not a clear one.

¹⁴ It is now clear that A. is shifting his focus to the general identity of the human self in relation to God.

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shall explain not who I once was, but the kind of person I now am, and who I shall remain. Even so, I do not judge myself. This is the way I should be heard. 1 Cor 4:3

5. (7) After all, Lord, you are the one who judges me. Even if no human individual knows what is proper to that individual except their spirit (which dwells within them), nevertheless there is a part of each person that not even that person's spirit within them can know. You, though, know everything about that person, Lord, for you made them. Certainly even though I count myself nothing in your sight and consider myself to be earth and ash, I nevertheless know something about you that I do not know about myself. To be sure, now we see through a mirror in an obscure mystery,¹³ not yet face to face. Therefore although I journey away from you, I am more present to myself than to you; and besides, I know you cannot be harmed in any way. But I do not know what temptations I may have the strength to resist, or to which I may succumb. My hope is that you are faithful, and you do not let us be tempted beyond what we are able to endure, but provide—alongside the temptation—a way out of it as well, so that we are able to withstand it. So let me confess what I know about myself, and let me confess what I do not know about myself; since even what I know about myself I know because you enlighten me, and what I do not know about myself I go on not knowing, until my shadows become like the noonday in your sight.¹⁴ 1 Cor 2:11
Gn 18:27; Jb
42:6; Sir 10:9
1 Cor 13:12
2 Cor 5:6
Is 58:10; Ps
90:8

6. (8) I love you, Lord: not with doubtful but with sure awareness. You have struck my heart with your word, and I have fallen in love with you. But as for the heaven and the earth and all that is in them, see!—from every quarter they tell me to love you, and they never stop saying to ev-

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cusabiles. altius autem tu misereberis cui misertus eris, et misericordiam praestabis cui misericors fueris: alioquin caelum et terra surdis loquuntur laudes tuas.

Quid autem amo, cum te amo? non speciem corporis nec decus temporis, non candorem lucis, ecce istis amicum oculis, non dulces melodias cantilenarum omnimodarum, non florum et unguentorum et aromatum suaviolentiam, non manna et mella, non membra acceptabilia carnis amplexibus: non haec amo, cum amo deum meum, et tamen amo quandam lucem et quandam vocem et quandam odorem et quandam cibum et quandam amplexum, cum amo deum meum, lucem, vocem, odorem, cibum, amplexum interioris hominis mei, ubi fulget animae meae quod non capit locus, et ubi sonat quod non rapit tempus, et ubi olet quod non spargit flatus, et ubi sapit quod non minuit edacitas, et ubi haeret quod non divellit satietas. hoc est quod amo, cum deum meum amo.

(9) Et quid est hoc? interrogavi terram, et dixit, "non sum." et quaecumque in eadem sunt, idem confessa sunt. interrogavi mare et abyssos et reptilia animarum vivarum, et responderunt, "non sumus deus tuus; quaere super nos." interrogavi auras flabiles, et inquit universus aer cum incolis suis, "fallitur Anaximenes; non sum deus." inter-

¹⁵ A. encompasses all five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. OD remarks with respect to *Conf.* 10, "This became a structural element in his thought, [a] 'sequence of the senses.'" The place of "the splendor of time" in this scheme is more puzzling: see Avramenko, "The Wound and Salve of Time."

¹⁶ An exception (because A. is quoting Scripture) to the translation of *anima* as "soul." ¹⁷ Of Miletus, 585–528 BC. One of the early Greek philosophers known as the "pre-Socratics," he

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ery person that they are without excuse. But your pity upon those you do pity is the more profound, and you offer mercy to those toward whom you are merciful: otherwise heaven and earth are speaking your praises to those who cannot hear!

Rom 1:20

Ex 33:19;
Rom 9:15

So what is it that I love when I love you? Not the beauty of outward appearance, nor the splendor of time, not the fairness of light (and look how pleasing that is to our eyes), not the dulcet melodies of all kinds of song, not the sweet scent of flowers and salves and perfumes, not manna and honey, not limbs which are fit for bodily embraces.¹⁵ It is not these things that I love when I love my God, and yet I love one particular light and one particular voice, and one particular scent, and one particular food, and one particular embrace when I love my God—the light, voice, scent, food, embrace of my inner being. There, something that no place can contain shines brightly before my soul, and there sound is heard that time does not carry away, and there scent is inhaled that no wind can disperse, and there taste is savored that greed cannot diminish, and there is an attachment that no surfeit can sunder. This is what I love, when I love my God.

(9) And what is this? I asked the earth, and it said, "I am not he." And everything that is upon the earth confessed the same. I asked the sea and the deeps and the swarms of living beings,¹⁶ and they replied "we are not your God; look up above us." I asked the winds that blow; and the whole atmosphere, with all the creatures dwelling there, declared, "Anaximenes¹⁷ is deluded, I am not God."

Gn 1:20

argued that all substances are modifications of a single original matter (which he identified as air).

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rogavi caelum, solem, lunam, stellas: "neque nos sumus deus, quem quaeris," inquit. et dixi omnibus his quae circumstant fores carnis meae, "dicite mihi de deo meo, quod vos non estis, dicite mihi de illo aliquid," et exclamaverunt voce magna, "ipse fecit nos." interrogatio mea intentio mea et responsio eorum species eorum.

Et direxi me ad me et dixi mihi, "tu quis es?" et respondi, "homo." et ecce corpus et anima in me mihi praesto sunt, unum exterius et alterum interius. quid horum est unde quaerere debui deum meum, quem iam quaesiveram per corpus a terra usque ad caelum, quousque potui mittere nuntios radios oculorum meorum? sed melius quod interius. ei quippe renuntiabant omnes nuntii corporales, praesidenti et iudicanti de responsionibus caeli et terrae et omnium quae in eis sunt dicentium, "non sumus deus" et, "ipse fecit nos." homo interior cognovit haec per exterioris ministerium; ego interior cognovi haec, ego, ego animus per sensum corporis mei, interrogavi mundi molem de deo meo, et respondit mihi, "non ego sum, sed ipse me fecit."

(10) Nonne omnibus quibus integer sensus est apparet haec species? cur non omnibus eadem loquitur? animalia pusilla et magna vident eam, sed interrogare nequeunt, non enim praeposita est in eis nuntiantibus sensibus iudex

¹⁸ Perhaps suggesting that the dialogue was mental rather than verbal; cf. S. 241.2, "Ask everything that is earthly, they will all reply to you, 'Behold, see! We are beautiful.' Their beauty is their confession." ¹⁹ Literally, "by my body."

²⁰ Intricate: A. thinks of beams emitted *from* his eyes striking the objects they look at; they are metaphorical ambassadors sent from their place of origin to scout for news. Cf. S. 277.10.

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I asked the heaven, the sun, the moon, the stars: "neither are we the God whom you seek," they say. And I said to all these things that cluster round with access to my physical self, "Tell me about him, as you are not my God, tell me something about him," and they cried aloud with a great voice, "it is he who has made us." My questioning was the scrutiny I gave them, and their replies showed their beauty.¹⁸ Ps 100:3

So I turned my gaze to myself and said to myself, "who are you?" and I replied, "a human being." And look—my body and the soul in me are at my service; one is exterior and the other interior. Which of these two should I have used to seek my God? For by now I had used my senses¹⁹ to look for him from the earth beneath to the heaven above, as far as I could send the beams of my eyes as my emissaries.²⁰ Better look to the inner self. After all, that was where all those physical messengers reported back, as it exercised control and judgment respecting the replies of heaven and earth and all that is in them, saying, "we are not God," and "he made us." My inner self knew these things through the agency of my outer self. I, the inner self, knew these things—I who am a mind by virtue of the sense perceptions of my body—I asked the whole physical structure of the world about my God, and it replied to me, "I am not God, but God made me." Eph 3:16

(10) Surely this beauty is clear to all whose perceptions are sound? So why does it not speak alike to all? Living creatures great and small can see it, but they cannot ask questions because they do not have reason set in command over their senses (which do report the perceptions) Ps 104:25

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ratio. homines autem possunt interrogare, ut invisibilia dei per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciant, sed amore subduntur eis et subditi iudicare non possunt. nec respondent ista interrogantibus nisi iudicantibus, nec vocem suam mutant, id est speciem suam, si alius tantum videat, alius autem videns interroget, ut aliter illi appareat, aliter huic, sed eodem modo utrique apparens illi muta est, huic loquitur: immo vero omnibus loquitur, sed illi intellegunt qui eius vocem acceptam foris intus cum veritate conferunt. veritas enim dicit mihi, "non est deus tuus terra et caelum neque omne corpus." hoc dicit eorum natura. viden?⁴ moles est, minor in parte quam in toto. iam tu melior es, tibi dico, anima, quoniam tu vegetas molem corporis tui praebens ei vitam, quod nullum corpus praestat corpori. deus autem tuus etiam tibi vitae vita est.

7. (11) Quid ergo amo, cum deum meum amo? quis est ille super caput animae meae? per ipsam animam meam

⁴ viden? "*scribendum putavi*" Ver.: vident S G O edd.: videns C D E: videnti A H Maur.

²¹ Truth is apparent in the communicative power of created things, but the act of hearing is the choice of the individual listener.

²² A. adapts the direction of his argument as he goes along, a mark of oral composition.

²³ Cf. *De Mag.* 11.38, "We pay attention to truth which governs our inner minds . . . the one we attend to is Christ, who is said to dwell in the inner man [Eph 3:16] and who teaches us" (*intus ipsi menti praesidentem consulimus veritatem. . . ille autem, qui consulitur, docet, qui in interiore homine habitare dictus est Christus*).

²⁴ OD (of Ver.'s emendation): "the best cure for a long-troublesome problem" (with reference to Virg. *Aen.* 6.779).

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to govern them. Human beings, however, can ask questions: they can observe that the unseen things of God are understood through all that has been made. But their love for created things puts them in subjection—and those who are subjects cannot exercise the power of judgment. As for those created things, they only reply to the questioners who also exercise judgment. They do not silence their own voice (that is, their beauty)²¹ if one person only sees, while another sees and then questions, so that they look one way to one person, but another to the other person. No, their beauty appears in the same way to both, but to the one it is silent, while to the other it speaks. In fact,²² it speaks to all, but only those who compare the voice heard outwardly with the truth within actually understand it.²³ For truth says to me, “your God is not earth and heaven nor every physical thing.” Their inherent nature declares this. Do you see?²⁴ That nature has its own proper bulk, its parts are less than its whole.²⁵ Now I tell you, my soul,²⁶ you are better than this, for you animate the physical frame that is your body and provide it with life, which no one physical entity can provide for another. Your God is the life, however, of your life itself.²⁷

Rom 1:20

7. (11) What do I love, then, when I love my God? Who is that being higher than the highest part of my soul? It is

²⁵ I.e., it conforms to the laws of natural philosophy (physics).

²⁶ On apostrophes to A.s soul, cf. *Conf.* 3.2.3, 4.11.16, 11.15.19.

²⁷ Boulding, *Confessions*, 244n44, notes that this section is not an argument for God's existence (which A. takes for granted) but an explanation of how human capacity for rational judgment is maintained or corrupted.

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ascendam ad illum. transibo vim meam qua haereo corpori et vitaliter compagem eius repleo. non ea vi reperio deum meum, nam reperiret et equus et mulus, quibus non est intellectus, et est eadem vis qua vivunt etiam eorum corpora. est alia vis, non solum qua vivifico sed etiam qua sensifico carnem meam, quam mihi fabricavit dominus, iubens oculo ut non audiat, et auri ut non videat, sed illi per quem videam, huic per quam audiam, et propria singillatim ceteris sensibus sedibus suis et officiis suis: quae diversa per eos ago unus ego animus. transibo et istam vim meam, nam et hanc habet equus et mulus: sentiunt enim etiam ipsi per corpus.

8. (12) Transibo ergo et istam naturae meae, gradibus ascendens ad eum qui fecit me, et venio in campos et lata praetoria memoriae, ubi sunt thesauri innumerabilium imaginum de cuiuscemodi rebus sensis invectarum. ibi reconditum est quidquid etiam cogitamus, vel augendo vel minuendo vel utcumque variando ea quae sensus attigerit, et si quid aliud commendatum et repositum est quod nondum absorbuit et sepelivit oblivio. ibi quando sum, posco ut proferatur quidquid volo, et quaedam statim prodeunt,

²⁸ Not surprisingly A. does not see the sense organs as having "evolved" for their proper purposes, but rather as being appointed to them.

²⁹ A. describes memory as both container and thing contained, e.g., "the memory of you stayed with me" (*Conf.* 7.17.23); "the vast hall of my memory . . . the treasure-chamber of memory" (*Conf.* 10.8.14); "the vast stores of memory" (*Conf.* 10.40.65). GM note the originality of his psychological analysis. OD: "A long drought of scriptural citations here sets in."

³⁰ *imagines* figure largely from here to *Conf.* 10.30.42 as A.'s term for the entities representing in mental terms the experi-

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through that soul of mine that I ascend to him. I shall transcend that force which keeps me attached to my body and saturates its frame with vitality. Not by that force do I find my God, for then a horse and mule, which have no understanding, could find it, as they have the same force, giving life to their bodies too. It is another force, one that does not just make me alive but also makes me aware of my bodily nature, which God has fashioned for me. He commands the eye not to hear, and the ear not to see: instead he tells the eye it is for me to see by, and the ear it is for me to hear by, and one by one he tells the other senses their appropriate roles, according to their proper places and duties.²⁸ As a single mind, I act through them, though they are all different. Even this force of mine I shall transcend, for the horse and mule possess it too: they too experience sense perceptions by means of their body.

Ps 32:9

8. (12) So I shall transcend even my natural life force, and climb in stages to him who made me. I come to the fields and the grand palaces of my memory²⁹ where there are treasure stores of countless impressions³⁰ brought there from every imaginable kind of thing that my senses perceived. Stowed away there is everything we reflect upon either by accentuating or depreciating it or in any way whatever modifying the actual things which our sense apprehended; and anything else that has been preserved and deposited and that forgetfulness has not yet consumed and buried. When I am there, I call for whatever I want to be produced: some things are immediately forthcom-

ences and sensations he commits to memory. The meaning of *imago* embraces the literal ("likeness, representation") and metaphorical ("conception, idea").

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quaedam requiruntur diutius et tamquam de abstrusioribus quibusdam receptaculis eruuntur, quaedam catervatim se proruunt et, dum aliud petitur et quaeritur, prosiliunt in medium quasi dicentia, "ne forte nos sumus?" et abigo ea manu cordis a facie recordationis meae, donec enubiletur quod volo atque in conspectum prodeat ex abditis. alia faciliter atque imperturbata serie sicut poscuntur suggeruntur, et cedunt praecedentia consequentibus et cedendo conduntur, iterum cum voluero processura. quod totum fit cum aliquid narro memoriter.

(13) Ibi⁵ sunt omnia distincte generatimque servata, quae suo quaeque aditu ingesta sunt, sicut lux atque omnes colores formaeque corporum per oculos, per aures autem omnia genera sonorum omnesque odores per aditum narium, omnes sapes per oris aditum, a sensu autem totius corporis, quid durum, quid molle, quid calidum frigidumve, lene aut asperum, grave seu leve sive extrinsecus sive intrinsecus corpori. haec omnia recipit recollenda cum opus est et retractanda grandis memoriae recessus et nescio qui secreti atque ineffabiles sinus eius: quae omnia suis quaeque foribus intrant ad eam et repouuntur in ea. nec ipsa tamen intrant, sed rerum sensarum imagines illic praesto sunt cogitationi reminiscenti eas. quae quomodo fabricatae sint, quis dicit, cum appareat quibus sensibus raptae sint interiusque reconditae? nam

⁵ *ibi codd. edd.: ubi S*

³¹ Cf. *Conf.* 4.15.27, "ears of my heart"; *Conf.* 5.1.1, "hand of my tongue."

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ing; others take longer to look for, and are, as it were, unearthed from more inaccessible places; and yet others cascade out in a rush, and while one particular item is searched and hunted for, they thrust themselves forward en masse as if saying "Can we be the ones?" With the hand of my heart³¹ I drive them away from the forefront of my recollection, until what I am after emerges from obscurity and comes out of hiding into plain sight. Other things are produced in the correct order as required, easily and without any fuss; and the earlier things make way for those that come later, and by making way they return into storage, ready to come forth again whenever I want them. This is exactly what happens when I recite something from memory.

(13) Everything there is preserved separately and in categories, and each has been placed there by means of its own proper access: for example, light and all the colors, and the shapes of bodies, go through the eyes; all kinds of sounds through the ears; all smells through the access of the nostrils; all tastes through the access of the mouth; and, from the sense of touch of the body as a whole, what is hard, and what soft, what is hot or cold, gentle or harsh, heavy or light, inside or outside the body. The vast recesses of memory, and the concealed and indescribable hiding places of one sort or another, receive all this material to be recalled as required and reconsidered: and every bit of it enters the memory by its own access route, and is replaced there. It is not the sensations themselves but the impressions of those sense experiences which are there at hand ready for the person whose thoughts bring them to remembrance. Who can say how these impressions have been formed?—even though it is obvious which of the

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et in tenebris atque in silentio dum habito, in memoria mea profero, si volo, colores, et discerno inter album et nigrum et inter quos alios volo, nec incurrunt soni atque perturbant quod per oculos haustum considero, cum et ipsi ibi sint et quasi seorsum repositi lateant. nam et ipsos poscō, si placet, atque adsunt illico, et quiescente lingua ac silente gutture canto quantum volo, imaginesque illae colorum, quae nihilo minus ibi sunt, non se interponunt neque interrumpunt, cum thesaurus alius retractatur qui influxit ab auribus. ita cetera quae per sensus ceteros ingesta atque congesta sunt recordor prout libet, et auram liliorum discerno a violis nihil olfaciens, et mel defrito, lene aspero, nihil tum gustando neque contrectando sed reminiscendo antepono.

(14) Intus haec ago, in aula ingenti memoriae meae. ibi enim mihi caelum et terra et mare praesto sunt cum omnibus quae in eis sentire potui, praeter illa quae oblitus sum. ibi mihi et ipse occurro meque recolo, quid, quando et ubi egerim quoque modo, cum agerem, affectus fuerim. ibi sunt omnia quae sive experta a me sive credita memini. ex eadem copia etiam similitudines rerum vel expertarum vel ex eis quas expertus sum creditarum alias atque alias, et

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senses apprehended them and put them into safe storage. For even when I abide in darkness and silence I can—if I want to—summon colors to my memory, and I can tell the difference between white and black, and whatever other colors I like, and no sounds burst in to disturb what my eyes have absorbed for me to reflect upon, though sounds too are present and stored secreted in a separate place. Likewise, I can demand these if I choose to, and immediately they are to hand, and though my tongue is silent and no sound comes from my throat, still I sing as much as I wish to. And the impressions of colors, which are still present there, do not intervene or intrude when I am revisiting another kind of treasure, the sort that flows into me through my ears. Likewise I recall at will other impressions that have been introduced and gathered up by means of my other senses; and I can tell the difference between the scents of lilies and violets even when there is no scent for me to smell; and the taste of honey from that of grape syrup, or smooth from rough; without tasting or touching anything but simply by remembering.

(14) These are my internal thought processes in the vast hall of my memory. For there heaven and earth and sea are present to me, together with everything they contain that I have been able to encounter with my senses, except for what I have forgotten. This is also the place where I encounter myself, and recall myself: what I experienced, and when, and where, and—when I did have an experience—how it had an impact on me. There is everything that I remember either trying for myself or believing on trust. From the same store come mental likenesses of the things that either I experienced for myself, or I believed in because of what I had experienced at one time

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ipse contexo praeteritis atque ex his etiam futuras actiones et eventa et spes, et haec omnia rursus quasi praesentia meditor. "faciam hoc et illud" dico apud me in ipso ingenti sinu animi mei pleno tot et tantarum rerum imaginibus, et hoc aut illud sequitur. "o si esset hoc aut illud!" "avertat deus hoc aut illud!" dico apud me ista et, cum dico, praesto sunt imagines omnium quae dico ex eodem thesauro memoriae, nec omnino aliquid eorum dicerem, si defuissent.

(15) Magna ista vis est memoriae, magna nimis, deus meus, penetrabile amplum et infinitum. quis ad fundum eius pervenit? et vis est haec animi mei atque ad meam naturam pertinet, nec ego ipse capio totum quod sum. ergo animus ad habendum se ipsum angustus est, ut ubi sit quod sui non capit? numquid extra ipsum ac non in ipso? quomodo ergo non capit? multa mihi super hoc oboritur admiratio, stupor apprehendit me. et eunt homines mirari alta montium et ingentes fluctus maris et latissimos lapsus fluminum et oceani ambitum et gyros siderum, et relinquunt se ipsos, nec mirantur quod haec omnia, cum

³² The meaning of *sinus* ranges from a fold or hollow in fabric or flesh to a bosom as the place of comfort, refuge, or concealment.

³³ Perhaps recalling Plotinus, *Enn.* 5.1.1: "What is it that that has made souls to forget God the father, and—though part of the Divine and belonging to that world, to be wholly ignorant of God and themselves and it?" (τί ποτε ἄρα ἐστὶ τὸ πεποιηκὸς τὰς ψυχὰς πατρὸς θεοῦ ἐπιλαθέσθαι, καὶ μοίρας ἐκείθεν οὐσας καὶ ὅλως ἐκείνου ἀγνοῆσαι καὶ ἑαυτὰς καὶ ἐκείνον;). Cf. *Enn.* 5.1.2: "If, then, it is having a soul that is to be desired, why does anyone neglect themselves and pursue another? You honor the soul in another, so honor yourself" (εἰ δ' ὅτι ἔμψυχον διωκτὸν ἔσται, τί παρῆς τις ἑαυτὸν ἄλλον διώκει; τὴν δὲ ἐν ἄλλῳ ψυχῇ ἀγάμενος σεαυτὸν ἀγασαι).

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or another. I weave them together with likenesses from the past: and from these I can reflect both on future actions and events and hopes, and on everything of this kind once more, as if it were all there before me. In the same vast shelter³² within my mind, filled with so many and such powerful impressions of things, I say to myself, "I shall do this or that"—and "this" or "that" happens. Or "If only this or that were so"; "God forbid this or that should happen": I say these things to myself, and, when I say them, at once there are the impressions of everything I mention, straight from the same treasure store of memory—and if those impressions were not there, I would surely not be able to say anything about them!

(15) How great is this power of memory, how exceedingly great, O my God, a splendid and inexhaustible heartland. Who has ever penetrated its depths? It is a power of my mind, befitting my nature, yet even I myself do not fully understand what I am. So is the mind too restricted to appraise itself, forcing the question: where is that part of itself which it does not understand? Surely it is not outside the self rather than within the self? So how can it not understand? This evokes all kinds of wonder in me, I am overcome with bewilderment. People go off to marvel at the height of mountains and the great waves of the sea and the broad courses of rivers, and the flow of the ocean, and the circuits of the stars: but they neglect themselves.³³ They are not amazed that when I spoke of all these things I was not looking at them with physical sight; or that I would not be speaking of them at all but for the fact that I was seeing within, in my memory, the mountains and waves and rivers and stars that I have seen in person, and the ocean to which I give credence—and all of them with

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dicerem, non ea videbam oculis, nec tamen dicerem, nisi montes et fluctus et flumina et sidera quae vidi et oceanum quem credidi intus in memoria mea viderem, spatiis tam ingentibus quasi foris viderem. nec ea tamen videndo absorbui quando vidi oculis, nec ipsa sunt apud me sed imagines eorum, et novi quid ex quo sensu corporis impressum sit mihi.

9. (16) Sed non ea sola gestat immensa ista capacitas memoriae meae. hic sunt et illa omnia quae de doctrinis liberalibus percepta nondum exciderunt, quasi remota interiore loco non loco; nec eorum imagines, sed res ipsas gero. nam quid sit litteratura, quid peritia disputandi, quot genera quaestionum, quidquid horum scio, sic est in memoria mea ut non retenta imagine rem foris reliquerim, aut sonuerit et praeterierit sicut vox impressa per aures vestigio quo recoleretur, quasi sonaret cum iam non sonaret, aut sicut odor, dum transit et vanescit in ventos, olfactum afficit, unde traicit in memoriam imaginem sui quam reminiscendo repetamus, aut sicut cibus qui certe in ventre iam non sapit et tamen in memoria quasi sapit, aut sicut aliquid quod corpore tangendo sentitur, quod etiam separatum a nobis imaginatur memoria. istae quippe res non intromittuntur ad eam, sed earum⁶ solae imagines mira celeritate capiuntur et miris tamquam cellis reponuntur et mirabiliter recordando proferuntur.

⁶ earum *codd.*: eorum *S Knöll*

³⁴ See Vol. 1, 179–80 (*Conf.* 4.16.30).

³⁵ In this argument A. parts company with Plotinus.

³⁶ Sound is emblematic of passing time: cf. *Conf.* 11.27.34.

³⁷ Paronomasia on *mira* . . . *miris* . . . *mirabiliter*.

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just as wide a distance between them as if I were seeing them externally. Even so, when I looked at them with my eyes, I did not absorb them into myself by the act of looking at them, and it is not they themselves that abide with me, but impressions of them; and I know which impression was made upon me by which physical sense.

9. (16) The limitless capacity of my memory, though, holds more things than just these. Here too is everything not yet forgotten from what I learned of the liberal arts,³⁴ in some interior place which is not a real physical place at all. In this case I am dealing with the phenomena themselves, not mere impressions of them.³⁵ For whatever I know of what literature is, and skill in public speaking, and different types of inquiries; and the like, it stays in my memory in such a way that it is no mere impression I keep while leaving the realities external to myself. It is not like a voice that makes a sound and then passes away, a voice imprinted through my ears by that trace of sound that makes remembering it possible (as if it were still sounding after it had really ceased to sound).³⁶ Nor is it like a scent, which, while it passes and vanishes into the winds, has an impact on our sense of smell, and transmits an impression of itself into our memory that we can renew when we reflect back on it. Nor is it like food which, once in the stomach, can no longer be tasted, though in the memory taste of a kind remains. Nor is it like something that one feels by physical touch, which can be reimagined in the memory even when it is taken away from us. Indeed such physical sensations have no way in to the memory, but simple impressions of them are taken, with remarkable speed; and they are stored away in remarkable caches, and from there, by being called to remembrance, they are retrieved in a remarkable manner.³⁷

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10. (17) At vero, cum audio tria genera esse quaestionum, an sit, quid sit, quale sit, sonorum quidem quibus haec verba confecta sunt imagines teneo, et eos per auras cum strepitu transisse ac iam non esse scio. res vero ipsas quae illis significantur sonis neque ullo sensu corporis attingi neque uspiam vidi praeter animum meum, et in memoria recondidi non imagines earum, sed ipsas: quae unde ad me intraverint dicant, si possunt. nam percurro ianuas omnes carnis meae, nec invenio qua earum ingressae sint. quippe oculi dicunt, "si coloratae sunt, nos eas nuntiavimus"; aures dicunt, "si sonuerunt, a nobis indicatae sunt"; nares dicunt, "si oluerunt, per nos transierunt"; dicit etiam sensus gustandi, "si sapor non est, nihil me interroges"; tactus dicit, "si corpulentum non est, non contrectavi; si non contrectavi, non indicavi." unde et qua haec intraverunt in memoriam meam? nescio quomodo. nam cum ea didici, non credidi alieno cordi, sed in meo recognovi et vera esse approbavi et commendavi ei, tamquam reponens unde proferrem cum vellem. ibi ergo erant et antequam ea didicissem, sed in memoria non

³⁸ E.g., Cic. *Orat.* 14.45: "The question 'did something happen?' is a matter of evidence; the question 'what happened' is a matter of definition; the question 'what kind of deed was it?' is a matter of right and wrong" (*sitne, signis; quid sit, definitionibus; quale sit, recti pravique partibus*).

³⁹ A. is thinking of abstract concepts and mental processes.

⁴⁰ A Platonic idea, that learning is a form of remembering: "Learning is entirely a matter of remembering" (*τὸ μανθάνειν ἀνάμνησις ὅλον ἐστίν*: Plato, *Meno* 81d). Elsewhere A. eschews the idea of the soul's preexistence: "Learning is simply this: remembering and recalling" (*Quant. An.* 20.34), but he also remarks, "This statement is not to be taken as if it was thus to be

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10. (17) What is more, when I hear that there are three types of question,³⁸ whether something exists, what it is, and what kind of thing it is, I retain the impressions of the sounds of which these words were composed, and I know that those sounds once traversed the air making their noise but no longer exist. But as for the actual things that those sounds signify, I have never touched them with any bodily sense, nor have I seen them anywhere but in my mind; and what I have stored in my memory is not impressions of them but the things themselves.³⁹ Where they came from when they entered into me let them say, if they can: for I have scanned every way in to my physical self and cannot find where they have made their access. Certainly my eyes say, "If they had any color to them, we are the ones who made it known!" My ears say, "If they made a noise, we told of it!" My nostrils say, "If they had a smell, it passed to you through us!" My taste buds say, "If it is not a matter of flavor, don't ask us!" My sense of touch says, "If it has no physical bulk, I have not touched it; if I have not touched it, I have not told you of it." Where from, and how, did these things enter into my memory? I do not know how. For when I learned them, I did not rely on someone else's mind, but recognized them in my own, and agreed that they were true, and entrusted them to my memory as if I were tucking them away ready to be retrieved when I wanted them. So they were in my mind even before I had learned them,⁴⁰ but they were not yet in my memory. Where, then, and how did I recognize

credited that the soul at some time either dwelt here in another body, or dwelt elsewhere either with or without a body" (Retr. 1.8).

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erant. ubi ergo aut quare, cum dicerentur, agnovi et dixi, "ita est, verum est," nisi quia iam erant in memoria, sed tam remota et retrusa quasi in cavis abditioribus ut, nisi admonente aliquo eruerentur, ea fortasse cogitare non possem?

11. (18) Quocirca invenimus nihil esse aliud discere ista quorum non per sensus haurimus imagines, sed sine imaginibus, sicuti sunt, per se ipsa intus cernimus, nisi ea quae passim atque indisposite memoria continebat, cogitando quasi conligere atque animadvertendo curare, ut tamquam ad manum posita in ipsa memoria, ubi sparsa prius et neglecta latitabant, iam familiari intentioni⁷ facile occurrant. et quam multa huius modi gestat memoria mea, quae iam inventa sunt et, sicut dixi, quasi ad manum posita, quae didicisse et nosse dicimur. quae si modestis temporum intervallis recolere desivero, ita rursus demerguntur et quasi in remotiora penetralia dilabuntur, ut denuo velut nova excogitanda sint indidem iterum (neque enim est alia regio eorum) et cogenda rursus, ut sciri possint, id est velut ex quadam dispersione conligenda, unde dictum est cogitare. nam cogo et cogito sic est, ut ago et agito, facio et factito. verum tamen sibi animus hoc verbum pro-

⁷ intentioni *codd. edd.*: intentione S O¹

⁴¹ The etymology follows Varro, *Ling. Lat.* 6.6, "'Cogitate' [*cogitare*] is derived from 'compel,' [*cogere*] the mind 'compels' many things into one, from which it can make selections" (*cogitare a cogendo dictum: mens plura in unum cogit, unde eligere possit*).

⁴² "Compel and cogitate"; "act and agitate"; "do and do often." These are all verbs with a short form, and a longer form called a

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them when they were spoken of, and so remark, "It is so, it is true," unless it was because they were already in my memory, but buried so distant and deep—in the most hidden hollows, as it were—that unless someone's reference to them had dragged them out, I might perhaps not have been able to think them at all.

11. (18) For this reason, we find that learning the kind of things that we do not absorb as impressions by our sense perceptions, but rather discern deep within in themselves exactly as they are, instead of by means of impressions: this is nothing other than using our thought processes to bind together things that our memory contains in a random disorder, and by taking careful note to ensure that they be placed ready to hand in that same memory where once they lay neglected, scattered and ignored, so that they now present themselves easily for ready application. My memory possesses so many things like this: things which have already been found and, as I said, placed ready to hand (as it were)—and we are said to have learned and come to know these things. If I fail to recall things after a limited space of time, they sink back down and slip away into the farther corners: then they must be thought through once more afresh as if completely new (for they have nowhere else to go). Then they must be gathered up again so that they can be known: that is, out of their diffusion they must be bound together: from this comes the term "cogitate."⁴¹ For it is just the same with *cogo* and *cogito*, as *ago* and *agito*, *facio* and *factito*.⁴² The mind, however, has laid

frequentative, i.e., indicating how often or intensely the action is performed (though this frequentative sense can shade into little more than the original verb's meaning).

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prie vindicavit, ut non quod alibi, sed quod in animo conligitur, id est cogitur, cogitari⁸ proprie iam dicatur.

12. (19) Item continet memoria numerorum dimensionumque rationes et leges innumerabiles, quarum nullam corporis sensus impressit, quia nec ipsae coloratae sunt aut sonant aut olent aut gustatae aut contrectatae sunt. audivi sonos verborum, quibus significantur cum de his disseritur, sed illi alii, istae autem alia sunt. nam illi aliter graece, aliter latine sonant, istae vero nec graecae nec latinae sunt nec aliud eloquiorum genus. vidi lineas fabrorum vel etiam tenuissimas, sicut filum araneae, sed illae aliae sunt, non sunt imagines earum quas mihi nuntiavit carnis oculus. novit eas quisquis sine ulla cogitatione qualiscumque corporis intus agnovit eas. sensi etiam numeros omnibus corporis sensibus quos numeramus, sed illi alii sunt quibus numeramus, nec imagines istorum sunt et ideo valde sunt. rideat me ista dicentem qui non eos videt, et ego doleam ridentem me.

13. (20) Haec omnia memoria teneo et quomodo ea didicerim memoria teneo. multa etiam quae adversus haec falsissime disputantur audivi et memoria teneo. quae

⁸ cogitur, cogitari *D O² Maur. Knöll Skut. Ver.*: cogituri cogitari *S O¹*: cogitur cogitare *C A H V*

⁴³ *Illae* (sc. *lineae*).

⁴⁴ A. seems to edge toward a Platonic idea of ultimate number contrasted with individual physical instances.

⁴⁵ Cf. the three kinds of number A. notes in *Mus.* 6.6.13, "One is in memory, the other in sense, and the third in sound"; at *Mus.* 6.11.33 he remarks, "When delight in the rationality of numbers is restored, our whole life is turned to God."

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claim to this word "cogitate" for itself, so that only what is bound together in the mind, and not elsewhere—that is, what is "compelled"—can properly said to be the subject of "cogitation."

12. (19) In a similar way, the memory includes countless principles and laws about number and dimension, none of them an impression from any bodily sense, because none has either color, or sound, or smell, or taste, or any tactile quality. I have heard the sounds of words that signified these concepts when they were under discussion, but the concepts are one thing, and the words used for them are something else. So the words sounds are different between Greek and Latin, but the concepts are not Greek, or Latin, or any other kind of language. I have seen designs drawn by craftsmen, as fine as can be, like spider silk, but the lines of a diagram⁴³ are one thing: they are not the same as the impressions of lines that my physical sight has shown me. Anyone who recognizes them inwardly, without reflecting on any kind of physical object, truly knows them. I have perceived, too, with all my bodily senses, the numbers we use in calculating: but the ones we use for real calculation are something else,⁴⁴ not mere impressions of the numbers we perceive by our senses, and therefore they have authentic existence.⁴⁵ Anyone who does not perceive numbers of this kind may laugh at me for saying these things: and I will pity them while they laugh.

13. (20) All these things I hold in my memory; and how I learned them, that I hold in my memory. I have also heard many criticisms that are completely unfairly made against them: these too I hold in my memory. Even if they

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tametsi falsa sunt, tamen ea meminisse me non est falsum. et discrevisse me inter illa vera et haec falsa quae contra dicuntur, et hoc memini aliterque nunc video discernere me ista, aliter autem memini saepe me discrevisse, cum ea saepe cogitarem. ergo et intellexisse me saepius ista memini, et quod nunc discerno et intellego, recondo in memoria, ut postea me nunc intellexisse meminerim. ergo⁹ et meminisse me memini, sicut postea, quod haec reminisci nunc potui, si recordabor, utique per vim memoriae recordabor.

14. (21) Affectiones quoque animi mei eadem memoria continet, non illo modo quo eas habet ipse animus cum patitur eas, sed alio multum diverso, sicut sese habet vis memoriae. nam et laetatum me fuisse reminiscor non laetus, et tristitiam meam praeteritam recordor non tristis, et me aliquando timuisse recolo sine timore et pristinae cupiditatis sine cupiditate sum memor. aliquando et e contrario tristitiam meam transactam laetus reminiscor et tristis laetitiam. quod mirandum non est de corpore: aliud enim animus, aliud corpus. itaque si praeteritum dolorem corporis gaudens memini, non ita mirum est. hic vero, cum animus sit etiam ipsa memoria—nam et cum mandamus aliquid ut memoriter habeatur, dicimus, “vide ut illud in animo habeas,” et cum obliviscimur, dicimus, “non fuit in animo” et “elapsum est animo,” ipsam memoriam vo-

⁹ ergo om. S

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are false, my remembering them is no falsehood. I remember that I could distinguish between those truths and these falsehoods spoken against them; and I see that I now distinguish those things in one way, but I remember that I once distinguished them in a different way, when I thought about them often. Hence I remember that I understood those things at more than one time; I store up in my memory what I distinguish and understand now, so that later I will remember that I understood it at this moment. So I also remember that I have remembered, just as afterward, because I have been able to remember these things now, if I recall them, it will certainly be by the power of memory that I have this recollection.

14. (21) The same faculty of memory contains my mind's affections, not in the way in which the mind itself contains them when it is actually experiencing them, but in a very different way, the way proper to the power of memory. For even when I am not happy I can remember having been happy before; and I can remember my past unhappiness while not being presently unhappy; and without becoming afraid, I recall my fear on some particular occasion; and I call to mind once wanting something without actually wanting it now. Sometimes, it is the opposite: when I am happy I remember my sadness, and when I am sad, remember my happiness. In physical terms this is not surprising. The mind is one thing and the body is another. Thus if I am full of joy when remembering a past physical pain, it is hardly remarkable. Here, in fact, mind and memory are alike: for when we give orders for something to be remembered, and we say, "make sure that you bear that in mind," and, when we forget something, we say, "I didn't have it in mind," and "it slipped my mind," what we

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cantes animum—cum ergo ita sit, quid est hoc, quod cum tristitiam meam praeteritam laetus memini, animus habet laetitiam et memoria tristitiam laetusque est animus ex eo quod inest ei laetitia, memoria vero ex eo quod inest ei tristitia tristis non est? num forte non pertinet ad animum? quis hoc dixerit? nimirum ergo memoria quasi venter est animi, laetitia vero atque tristitia quasi cibus dulcis et amarus: cum memoriae commendantur, quasi traiecta in ventrem recondi illic possunt, sapere non possunt. ridiculum est haec illis similia putare, nec tamen sunt omni modo dissimilia.

(22) Sed ecce de memoria profero, cum dico quattuor esse perturbationes animi, cupiditatem, laetitiam, metum, tristitiam, et quidquid de his disputare potuero, dividendo singula per species sui cuiusque generis et definiendo, ibi invenio quid dicam atque inde profero, nec tamen ulla earum perturbatione perturbor cum eas reminiscendo commemoro. et antequam recolerentur a me et retractarentur, ibi erant; propterea inde per recordationem potuere depromi. forte ergo sicut de ventre cibus ruminando, sic ista de memoria recordando proferuntur. cur igitur in ore cogitationis non sentitur a disputante, hoc est a remi-

⁴⁶ I.e., the simile is inappropriately physical, but nonetheless apt.

⁴⁷ E.g., from having read Cic. *Fin.* 3.10.35, "All these are under four types: sorrow, fear, desire and the one which Stoics . . . call pleasure, but I prefer the term joy . . ." (*omnesque eae [sc. perturbationes] sunt genere quattuor . . . aegritudo, formido, libido, quamque Stoici communi nomine corporis et animi ἡδονήν appellant, ego malo laetitiam appellare, quasi gesticentis animi elationem voluptariam*).

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are calling "mind" is actually memory. But if this is really the case, why is it that when I happily recall my past sadness, my mind experiences happiness and my memory contains sadness—and that my mind is happy because of the happiness it contains, whereas my memory, despite the sadness which is in it, is not in itself sad? Surely it is not because memory has nothing to do with mind? Who could say such a thing? It is certain, then, that memory is like the mind's stomach, and happiness and sadness are like sweet and bitter food for it. When they are committed to memory, it is as if they were transferred into the stomach to be stored there; they can no longer impart any taste. It is ludicrous to believe these things are comparable with those, and yet they are not entirely dissimilar.⁴⁶

(22) Look—I am producing this from memory when I say that there are four sorts of disturbance to the mind: desire, joy, fear, and sadness.⁴⁷ Whatever I am able to argue about them by dividing them one by one, according to the species of each type, and defining them, it is in my memory that I find what to say and produce it. I am not disturbed by any of the disturbances they produce when I remember them and so recount them. There they were, before I recalled them and reconsidered them. For that reason they could be summoned up through an act of recollection. Perhaps, then, memory brings things back through an act of recollection like food brought back from the stomach when an animal chews the cud. If so, why is the sweetness of joy or the bitterness of grief not tasted in the mouth of their thought⁴⁸ by the person making the

⁴⁶ A striking metaphor; A. tries to tie the sense of metaphorical "taste" to a metaphorical sense organ.

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niscente, laetitiae dulcedo vel amaritudo maestitiae? an in hoc dissimile est, quod non undique simile est? quis enim talia volens loqueretur, si quotiens tristitiam metumve nominamus, totiens maerere vel timere cogemur? et tamen non ea loqueremur, nisi in memoria nostra non tantum sonos nominum secundum imagines impressas a sensibus corporis sed etiam rerum ipsarum notiones inveniremus, quas nulla ianua carnis accepimus, sed eas ipse animus per experientiam passionum suarum sentiens memoriae commendavit aut ipsa sibi haec etiam non commendata retinuit.

15. (23) Sed utrum per imagines an non, quis facile dixerit? nomino quippe lapidem, nomino solem, cum res ipsae non adsunt sensibus meis; in memoria sane mea praesto sunt imagines earum. nomino dolorem corporis, nec mihi adest dum nihil dolet; nisi tamen adesset imago eius in memoria mea, nescirem quid dicerem nec eum in disputando a voluptate discernere. nomino salutem corporis; cum salvus sum corpore, adest mihi quidem¹⁰ res ipsa. verum tamen nisi et imago eius inesset¹¹ in memoria mea, nullo modo recordarer quid huius nominis significaret sonus, nec aegrotantes agnoscerent salute nominata quid esset dictum, nisi eadem imago vi memoriae tenere-

¹⁰ mihi quidem *codd. Maur. Ver.*: mihi S Knöll Skut.

¹¹ inesset *codd.*: esset S

⁴⁹ A vivid metaphor in Latin: "door of the flesh."

⁵⁰ Cf. *Doctr. Chr.* 2.3.4: "All those types of signs [expressed through the senses] which I have briefly touched on, I could describe in words, but there is no way that I could express the words by means of such signs."

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argument (which is to say, the one remembering)? Or is the analogy misleading in this because the comparison is not identical? Who would be willing to talk about such matters if every time we said the word for sadness or fear we had to feel grief or be afraid? And even so, we would not talk about them unless we found in our memory not only the sounds of the words' names, based on the impressions imprinted by our physical senses, but also the concepts of the things themselves. These we did not receive through any physical access,⁴⁹ but the mind itself, feeling through the experience of its own passions, has committed them to memory; or else memory has retained them by itself even though they have not been deliberately entrusted to it.

15. (23) Who can simply tell whether this happens through impressions or not? Certainly I can say the word for "stone," or "sun," when the actual objects are not present to my physical senses: because of course I have impressions of them ready to hand in my memory. I can say the word for "pain" in my body, but while no part of me is hurting, it is not immediately present to me; yet unless the impression of it were still present in my memory, I would not know what to call it nor would I be able, in an argument, to distinguish it from pleasure. I can say the word for "health" of body: when I am in good health myself, the thing itself is present to me. But unless the impression of that phenomenon were also present in my memory, I would have no means of thinking about what the sound of that word might signify.⁵⁰ Likewise people who are unwell would not understand what had been said when the word "health" was used, if they did not keep—through the power of memory—an impression of it, even though

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tur, quamvis ipsa res abesset a corpore. nomino numeros quibus numeramus; en adsunt in memoria mea non imagines eorum, sed ipsi. nomino imaginem solis, et haec adest in memoria mea, neque enim imaginem imaginis eius, sed ipsam recolo; ipsa mihi reminiscenti praesto est. nōmino memoriam et agnosco quod nomino. et ubi agnosco nisi in ipsa memoria? num et ipsa per imaginem suam sibi adest ac non per se ipsam?

16. (24) Quid, cum oblivionem nomino atque itidem agnosco quod nomino, unde agnoscerem¹² nisi meminisssem? non eundem sonum nominis dico, sed rem quam significat. quam si oblitus essem, quid ille valeret sonus agnoscere utique non valerem. ergo cum memoriam memini, per se ipsam sibi praesto est ipsa memoria. cum vero memini oblivionem, et memoria praesto est et oblivio, memoria qua meminerim, oblivio quam meminerim.

Sed quid est oblivio nisi privatio memoriae? quomodo ergo adest ut eam meminerim, quando cum adest meminisse non possum? at si quod meminimus memoria retinemus, oblivionem autem nisi meminisssemus, nequaquam possemus audito isto nomine rem quae illo significatur agnoscere, memoria retinetur oblivio. adest ergo

¹² agnoscerem *codd. edd.*: agnosco rem S

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the thing itself was not present in their body. I say the words for the numbers we use in counting; and look!—they are themselves present in my memory, not as mere impressions but as realities. I say the words for “the impression of the sun,” and it is present in my memory—not an impression of the impression, but the impression itself; it too is present to me through the act of remembering it. I say the word for “memory” and I recognize the thing for which I use this word. And where do I recognize, if not in my memory? Surely memory itself is not present to itself through an impression of itself, but rather through itself directly?

16. (24) Again: when I say the word for “forgetfulness” and in a similar way I recognize what it is that I have a word for, how would I know it unless through the act of remembering? I am not talking about the sound of the word, but of the thing that it signifies. If I had forgotten that thing, I would certainly be incapable of knowing what the meaning of the sound was: So when I remember memory, of itself it is present in itself, at the ready. But when I remember forgetfulness, both memory and forgetfulness are present together, memory being the means by which I remember, while forgetfulness is the object being remembered.

But what is forgetfulness, if not the absence of memory? So how can it be present so that I remember it, since—when it is present—I cannot remember it? Yet if we keep in our memory things that we have remembered, then if we did not retain some memory of forgetfulness, we would find it impossible to recognize the thing that the word “forgetfulness” signified when we heard that word: so forgetfulness is kept in the memory. It is present there,

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ne obliviscamur, quae cum adest, obliviscimur. an ex hoc intellegitur non per se ipsam inesse memoriae, cum eam meminimus, sed per imaginem suam, quia, si per se ipsam praesto esset oblivio, non ut meminissemus, sed ut oblivisceremur, efficeret? et hoc quis tandem indagabit? quis comprehendet quomodo sit?

(25) Ego certe, domine, laboro hic et laboro in me ipso. factus sum mihi terra difficultatis et sudoris nimii. neque enim nunc scrutamur plagas caeli aut siderum intervalla dimetimur vel terrae libramenta quaerimus. ego sum qui memini, ego animus. non ita mirum si a me longe est quidquid ego non sum: quid autem propinquius me ipso mihi? et ecce memoriae meae vis non comprehenditur a me, cum ipsum me non dicam praeter illam. quid enim dicturus sum, quando mihi certum est meminisse me oblivionem? an dicturus sum non esse in memoria mea quod memini? an dicturus sum ad hoc inesse oblivionem in memoria mea, ut non obliviscar? utrumque absurdissimum est. quid illud tertium? quo pacto dicam imaginem oblivionis teneri memoria mea, non ipsam oblivionem, cum eam memini? quo pacto et hoc dicam, quandoquidem cum imprimitur rei cuiusque imago in memoria, prius necesse est ut adsit res ipsa, unde illa imago possit imprimi? sic enim Carthagini memini, sic omnium locorum quibus interfui, sic facies hominum quas vidi, et cete-

⁵¹ A. is apparently enjoying this labored paradox enough to treat forgetfulness as having an actual existence unlike, e.g., darkness, evil, or silence (defined as the absences of light, good, or sound).

⁵² OD refers to Ennius, *Iphigenia* fr. 95 Jocelyn (cit. at Cic. *Rep.* 1.18.30): "No one regards what is before their feet: instead they fix their gaze upon the heavenly regions" (*quod est ante pedes nemo spectat, caeli scrutantur plagas*).

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then, to stop us forgetting what we do forget, when it is present.⁵¹ Or perhaps we are to understand from this that forgetfulness is not of itself present in the memory when we remember it, but only through its impression, because if forgetfulness were present in actual reality, it would have the effect of making us forget, not remember. Finally, who will inquire into this? Who will reach an understanding of how this can be?

(25) I am really struggling over this, Lord, and struggling with myself. To myself I have become a land which is too unyielding, demanding too much sweat. We do not now examine the heavenly regions,⁵² or measure out the distance between the stars or inquire into the weight of the earth. I am a creature who remembers, I am a mind.⁵³ It is not surprising, then, if whatever I am not is separate from me: after all, what is closer to me than my own self? Look! The power of my memory is something I do not understand, because without it I cannot even refer to myself. So what shall I say, given that it is clear to me that I remember forgetfulness? Shall I say that the thing that I remember is not in my memory? Or shall I say that forgetfulness abides in my memory so that I do not forget it? Both answers are ridiculous. What of the third option? How can I say that an impression of forgetfulness is retained in my memory, not forgetfulness itself, when I remember it? And again, how can I say this given that when an impression of something is imprinted on my memory, the first requirement is that the thing itself must be present, so that an impression of it can be taken? For this is how I remember Carthage, and all the places I have been; this is how I remember the faces of people I have seen,

cf. Gn 3:17-
18

⁵³ Not quite *cogito ergo sum*; more like *memini ergo sum*.

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rorum sensuum nuntiata, sic ipsius corporis salutem sive dolorem. cum praesto essent ista, cepit ab eis imagines memoria, quas intuerer praesentes et retractarem animo, cum illa et absentia reminiscerer. si ergo per imaginem suam, non per se ipsam, in memoria tenetur oblivio, ipsa utique aderat, ut eius imago caperetur. cum autem adesset, quomodo imaginem suam in memoria conscribebat, quando id etiam quod iam notatum invenit praesentia sua delet oblivio? et tamen quocumque modo, licet sit modus iste incomprehensibilis et inexplicabilis, etiam ipsam oblivionem meminisse me certus sum, qua id quod meminimus obruitur.

17. (26) Magna vis est memoriae, nescio quid horrendum, deus meus, profunda et infinita multiplicitas. et hoc animus est, et hoc ego ipse sum. quid ergo sum, deus meus? quae natura sum? varia, multimoda vita et immensa vehementer. ecce in memoriae meae campis et antris et cavernis innumerabilibus atque innumerabiliter plenis innumerabilium rerum generibus, sive per imagines, sicut omnium corporum, sive per praesentiam, sicut artium, sive per nescio quas notiones vel notationes, sicut affectionum animi (quas et cum animus non patitur, memoria tenet, cum in animo sit quidquid est in memoria), per haec omnia discuro et volito hac illac, penetro etiam quantum possum, et finis nusquam. tanta vis est memoriae, tanta vitae vis est in homine vivente mortaliter!

⁵⁴ For once, multiplicity is not negative.

⁵⁵ Cf. *Ench.* 64.

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and the perceptions of my other senses, and my body, whether it is well or unwell. When those things were present, my memory took impressions of them—impressions which I scrutinized when they were present, and drew forth from my mind when I recalled them in their absence. So if forgetfulness really is stored in my memory in the form of an impression rather than the thing itself, there must definitely have been a time when it was present, so its impression could be taken. But when it was present, how did it etch an impression of itself on my memory, given that by its very presence forgetfulness obliterates even that which has already been recorded? And yet by some means or other, however unintelligible and mystifying that means may be, I am positive that I remember forgetfulness itself, which consigns whatever I remember to oblivion.

17. (26) O my God, what a powerful force memory is, something awe-inspiring, a deep and boundless complexity!⁵⁴ And this is the mind, and this is what I am. And what is that, my God? What kind of nature am I? A complex and manifold life and one that is utterly incalculable. Look! In the fields and caves and hollows of my memory (which are countless, and teeming with countless things of countless kinds), whether by means of impressions (as of every kind of physical object) or of things actually present (such as everything which has been learned) or through ideas and perceptions (such as the emotions, which the memory preserves even when the mind is not experiencing them, since whatever is in the memory is in the mind): I criss-cross between them and flit from one thing to another, I go as deep as I can, and I find there are no limits. That is how powerful a force memory is, a powerful life force in every living being born to die.⁵⁵

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Quid igitur agam, tu vera mea vita, deus meus? transibo et hanc vim meam quae memoria vocatur, transibo eam ut pertendam ad te, dulce lumen. quid dicis mihi? ecce ego ascendens per animum meum ad te, qui desuper mihi manes, transibo et istam vim meam quae memoria vocatur, volens te attingere unde attingi potes, et inhaerere tibi unde inhaereri tibi potest. habent enim memoriam et pecora et aves, alioquin non cubilia nidosve¹³ repperent, non alia multa quibus adsuescunt; neque enim et adsuescere valerent ullis rebus nisi per memoriam. transibo ergo et memoriam, ut attingam eum qui separavit me a quadrupedibus et a volatilibus caeli sapientiolem me fecit. transibo et memoriam, ut ubi¹⁴ te inveniam, vere bone, segura suavitas, ut ubi te inveniam? si praeter memoriam meam te invenio, immemor tui sum. et quomodo iam inveniam te, si memor non sum tui?

18. (27) Perdiderat enim mulier dragmam et quaesivit eam cum lucerna et, nisi memor eius esset, non inveniret eam. cum enim esset inventa, unde sciret utrum ipsa esset, si memor eius non esset? multa memini me perditam quaesisse atque invenisse. inde istuc scio, quia, cum quaererem aliquid eorum et diceretur mihi, "num forte hoc est?" "num forte illud?" tamdiu dicebam, "non est," donec id

¹³ nidosve *codd. edd.*: non nidosve S: non nidos suos *cj. Knöll*

¹⁴ ut ubi . . . ut ubi O *Knöll Skut. Ver.*: ut ibi . . . ut ibi S G: et ubi . . . et ubi C D *Maur.*

⁵⁶ Cf. *Conf.* 4.12.19, 10.8.12.

⁵⁷ A parallel for the praise/invocation paradox in *Conf.* 1.1.

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So what am I to do, O my true Life, my God? I shall go beyond this power of mine that is called memory, I shall go beyond it so that I can find my way to you, my sweetness and light. What are you saying to me? Look, I make my way upward⁵⁶ through my mind toward you, and you remain high above me: and I shall go beyond that power of mine that is called memory. I want to reach you by whatever pathway allows you to be reached. I want to cleave to you, wherever cleaving to you is open to me. Herds and flocks have memories, or they could never find their way back to the fold or nest, and many other things they are familiar with; and but for memory, no creature would have the capacity to find things familiar. So I shall pass beyond even memory, to reach him who has set me apart from the beasts and made me wiser than the birds of the air. I shall pass even beyond memory, but where may I find you, O true goodness, my sure sweetness, where may I find you? If I find you beyond my memory, I cannot remember you. And how shall I find you, if I have no recollection of you?⁵⁷

Jn 14:6

Ecc 11:7

18. (27) A woman once lost a coin and searched for it with a lamp, but she would not have found it unless she had a memory of it. When she had found it, how would she know whether this was the same one, unless she had a memory of it?⁵⁸ I remember searching for many lost articles and finding them. In addition, I know because when I was looking for one of them and someone said to me, "can this be it?" or "Can it be that?" I kept saying, "No, that's not it" until the thing I was looking for was handed

Lk 15:8

⁵⁸ A. moves from forgetfulness to losing. This scriptural example is not wholly satisfactory: she might have found a different coin of the same design and value.

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offerretur quod quaerebam. cuius nisi memor essem, quidquid illud esset, etiamsi mihi offerretur non invenirem, quia non agnoscerem. et semper ita fit, cum aliquid perditum quaerimus et invenimus. verum tamen si forte aliquid ab oculis perit, non a memoria, veluti corpus quodlibet visibile, tenetur intus imago eius et quaeritur, donec reddatur aspectui. quod cum inventum fuerit, ex imagine quae intus est recognoscitur. nec invenisse nos dicimus quod perierat, si non agnoscimus, nec agnoscere possumus, si non meminimus; sed hoc perierat quidem oculis, memoria tenebatur.

19. (28) Quid, cum ipsa memoria perdit aliquid, sicut fit cum obliviscimur et quaerimus ut recordemur, ubi tandem quaerimus nisi in ipsa memoria? et ibi si aliud pro alio forte offeratur, respicimus donec illud occurrat quod quaerimus. et cum occurrit, dicimus, "hoc est"; quod non diceremus nisi agnosceremus, nec agnosceremus nisi meminissemus. certe ergo obliti fueramus. an non totum exciderat, sed ex parte quae tenebatur pars alia quaerebatur, quia sentiebat se memoria non simul volvere quod simul solebat, et quasi detruncata consuetudine claudicans reddi quod deerat flagitabat? tamquam si homo notus sive conspiciatur oculis sive cogitetur et nomen eius obliti requiramus, quidquid aliud occurrerit non conectitur, quia non cum illo cogitari consuevit ideoque respicitur

⁵⁹ Figurative of the search for God: an impression of God remains within, prompting a person to search for him without.

⁶⁰ OD follows Schmidt-Dengler, "Stilistische Studien," 178, in taking *detruncata* as nominative.

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to me. If I had had no memory of that object, whatever it happened to be, even if it were handed to me I would not be "finding" it, because I would not recognize it. This is how it works when we look for something we have lost, and find it. If, however, it happened that something passed out of sight, rather than out of memory—any kind of physical object, for example—an interior impression of it is preserved, and it is searched for, until it is restored to our sight.⁵⁹ Once it has been found, it is recognized by reference to that interior impression. If we do not recognize it, we do not say that we have found something which had passed away; and we cannot recognize something of which we have no memory. But such an object, though it had passed from our sight, was still preserved in the memory.

19. (28) What about when the memory itself loses something, as when we forget and try to remember? In the end, where else are we to look if not in the memory itself? If the memory is coming up with one thing in place of another, we reject it, until the thing we are looking for crops up. And when it does crop up, we say, "this is it!" We would not say that unless we recognized it, and we would not recognize it unless we remembered it. But we had definitely forgotten it. Or rather, it had not vanished completely: the fraction that remained present went in search of the rest of the whole, because the memory was aware that what it was ruminating upon was not exactly the same as usual, and so, as if its normal shape was mutilated⁶⁰ and it lacked some part of itself, it was insistent that the missing element be restored. Say, for example, that we see a person we know, or call them to mind, but have forgotten their name and try to recollect it: any other name we think of, which is unconnected to them, is rejected, because we

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donec illud adsit, ubi simul adsuefacta notitia non inaequaliter adquiescat. et unde adest nisi ex ipsa memoria? nam et cum ab alio commoniti recognoscimus, inde adest. non enim quasi novum credimus, sed recordantes approbamus hoc esse quod dictum est. si autem penitus aboleatur ex animo, nec admoniti reminiscimur. neque enim omni modo adhuc obliti sumus quod vel oblitos nos esse meminimus. hoc ergo nec amissum quaerere poterimus, quod omnino obliti fuerimus.

20. (29) Quomodo ergo te quaero, domine? cum enim te, deum meum, quaero, vitam beatam quaero. quaeram te ut vivat anima mea. vivit enim corpus meum de anima mea et vivit anima mea de te. quomodo ergo quaero vitam beatam? quia non est mihi donec dicam, "sat, est illic." ubi oportet ut dicam quomodo eam quaero, utrum per recordationem, tamquam eam oblitus sim oblitumque me esse adhuc teneam, an per appetitum discendi incognitam, sive quam numquam scierim sive quam sic oblitus fuerim ut me nec oblitum esse meminerim. nonne ipsa est beata vita quam omnes volunt, et omnino qui nolit nemo est? ubi noverunt eam, quod sic volunt eam? ubi viderunt, ut amarent eam? nimirum habemus eam nescio quomodo. et est alius quidam modus quo quisque, cum habet eam, tunc

⁶¹ One of the Cassiciacum dialogues, *Beata V.*, summarizes, "The person who is blessed is anyone who has God" (*deum habet igitur quisquis beatus est*, 4.34). If translated "happy," the religious connotations of *beatus* and its sense of receptivity to an external good, are obscured. Cf. Ps 1:1, Mt 5:3-11.

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are not in the habit of thinking of that person in connection with such a name: this process of rejection goes on until a name presents itself, which is a proper match for our ingrained knowledge, and satisfies us. Where else does it present itself from, if not our memory? For even when someone else reminds us so that we remember it, it is from the memory that it presents itself. So we do not believe it as if it were something new, but we remember and accept that it is what it was said to be. Whereas if it were completely obliterated from the mind, we would not remember even if reminded. In fact, anything that we remember that we have forgotten, we have not forgotten completely. Therefore we will not be able to search for something we have lost, if we have forgotten it altogether.

20. (29) How, then, am I to seek you, Lord? When I seek you, my God, I am seeking a blessed life.⁶¹ I shall seek you so my soul shall live. My body lives because of my soul, and my soul lives because of you. How, then, do I seek a blessed life? After all, it is not mine until I say, "Enough. It is at hand." Then it is right that I should say how I go about seeking such a life: either through recollection (as if I forgot it once and yet still understand that I have forgotten it); or through an eagerness to learn something new to me (either something I never knew or something I had forgotten so completely that I do not even remember having forgotten). Surely a blessed life is what everyone wants, and absolutely no one does not want? How do they know what it is, so that they can desire it? Where have they seen it, so that they can become enamored of it? So we definitely have some sense of it, I do not know how. Also, there is another kind of way in which each person, on obtaining it, is then blessed, and there are those who are

Ps 69:32

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beatus est, et sunt qui spe beati sunt. inferiore modo isti habent eam quam illi qui iam re ipsa beati sunt, sed tamen meliores quam illi qui nec re nec spe beati sunt. qui tamen etiam ipsi, nisi aliquo modo haberent eam, non ita vellent beati esse: quod eos velle certissimum est. nescio quomodo noverunt eam ideoque habent eam in nescio qua notitia, de qua satago, utrum in memoria sit, quia, si ibi est, iam beati fuimus aliquando, utrum singillatim omnes, an in illo homine qui primus peccavit, in quo et omnes mortui sumus et de quo omnes cum miseria nati sumus, non quaero nunc, sed quaero utrum in memoria sit beata vita. neque enim amaremus eam nisi nossemus. audimus¹⁵ nomen hoc et omnes rem ipsam nos appetere fatemur; non enim sono¹⁶ delectamur. nam hoc cum latine audit graecus, non delectatur, quia ignorat quid dictum sit; nos autem delectamur, sicut etiam ille si graece hoc audierit, quoniam res ipsa nec graeca nec latina est, cui adipiscendae graeci latinique inhiant ceterarumque linguarum homines. nota est igitur omnibus, qui una voce si interrogari possent utrum beati esse vellent, sine ulla dubitatione velle responderent. quod non fieret, nisi res ipsa, cuius hoc nomen est, eorum memoria teneretur.

¹⁵ audimus *codd. Maur. Ver.*: audivimus *S G V Knöll Skut.*

¹⁶ sono *codd. Maur. Skut. Ver.*: solo *S*: solo sono *Knöll*

⁶² Adam. The underlying idea is Pauline recapitulation (Rom 5:12–21; cf. Eph 1:10), which makes the individual and collective human existence coinhere.

⁶³ Originally an Italic tribe in Latium (Lazio) centered on Rome; it gave its name to the Latin language.

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blessed in their hope of it. These latter have a lesser kind of hope than those who are already truly blessed, but they are still in a better state than people who have neither present experience nor future hope of bliss. Such people as these would not even want to be blessed unless they had some grasp of bliss already: and they definitely do want it. Somehow they know it, and so they possess it through some kind of familiarity: I am trying to work out whether this familiarity resides in the memory, because if it is there, we have already been blessed at some time. I am not asking now whether this means all of us individually, or all collectively in that man who first sinned,⁶² and in whom all of us are dead, and from whom all of us were born in such a pitiable condition. What I am asking is whether the blessed life is present in our memory. For we would not love it unless we knew what it was. We hear the word "bliss" and we all admit that we are eager for the thing itself; it is not merely the word that delights us. For when someone Greek hears it in Latin, it causes no delight, because there is no understanding of what has been said. But we delight in it just like a Greek person would if they heard the Greek word for it: after all, bliss itself is not unique to either Greek or Latin, since Greeks and Latin speakers⁶³ and people of every language are hungry to obtain it. Everyone knows it; and if everyone could be asked in a single language whether they wanted to be blessed, they would undoubtedly all answer, "yes." This would not be possible unless the actual phenomenon which we call "bliss" was present in everyone's memory.

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21. (30) Numquid ita ut meminit¹⁷ Carthaginem qui vidit?¹⁸ non. vita enim beata non videtur oculis, quia non est corpus. numquid sicut meminimus numeros? non. hos enim qui habet in notitia, non adhuc quaerit adipisci, vitam vero beatam habemus in notitia ideoque amamus et tamen adhuc adipisci eam volumus, ut beati simus. numquid sicut meminimus eloquentiam? non. quamvis enim et hoc nomine audito recordentur ipsam rem, qui etiam nondum sunt eloquentes multique esse cupiant (unde apparet eam esse in eorum notitia), tamen per corporis sensus alios eloquentes animadverterunt et delectati sunt et hoc esse desiderant: quamquam nisi ex interiore notitia non delectarentur, neque hoc esse vellent nisi delectarentur. beatam vero vitam nullo sensu corporis in aliis experimur. numquid sicut meminimus gaudium? fortasse ita. nam gaudium meum etiam tristis memini sicut vitam beatam miser, neque umquam corporis sensu gaudium meum vel vidi vel audivi vel odoratus sum vel gustavi vel tetigi, sed expertus sum in animo meo quando laetatus sum, et adhaesit eius notitia memoriae meae, ut id reminisci valeam, aliquando cum aspernatione, aliquando cum desiderio, pro earum rerum diversitate de quibus me gavisum esse memini. nam et de turpibus gaudio quodam perfusus sum, quod nunc recordans detestor atque exsecror, ali-

¹⁷ meminit *codd. edd.* memini *S*

¹⁸ vidit *codd. edd.*: vidi *cj. Knöll*

⁶⁴ I.e., a taught skill.

⁶⁵ Eloquence is similar to bliss in being an internal concept not immediately derived from sense perception; but it is still appreciated through sense perception.

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21. (30) Surely one does not remember bliss in the same way as having seen Carthage? Of course not! For the blessed life is not visible to the eye, because it is not a physical object. Surely it is not like remembering numbers either? Of course not! For anyone who is familiar with numbers does not go on seeking to acquire them, but we have our idea of the blessed life, and therefore we love it—and even so we still want to acquire it in order to be blessed. Surely it is not like remembering eloquence?⁶⁴ Of course not. For although when people hear the word “eloquence” they remember the phenomenon itself, even those who are not yet skilled speakers (and many want to be, which proves that they have some idea of the concept), have nonetheless noticed skilled speakers and taken pleasure in them by means of their bodily senses, wanting to be like them. But unless this was down to some inward familiarity they would not be enjoying it: and they would not wish to be like that unless they were enjoying it. We do not encounter the blessed life in other people through physical senses.⁶⁵ Surely it is not like remembering enjoyment? Well perhaps it is, for I can remember enjoyment even when I am sad, just as I have a recollection of the blessed life when I am in a pitiable state, and never have I ever seen, heard, smelled, tasted or touched this enjoyment by means of the physical senses. Despite this I have experienced it in my mind when I was happy, and familiarity with it has stuck fast in my memory, giving me the power to recollect it—sometimes with repugnance, sometimes with longing, in accordance with the diversity of these things which I remember myself enjoying. For I was formerly steeped in a kind of enjoyment which sprang from corruption, which now I abominate and curse when-

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quando de bonis et honestis, quod desiderans recolo, tametsi forte non adsunt, et ideo tristis gaudium pristinum recolo.

(31) Ubi ergo et quando expertus sum vitam meam beatam, ut recorder eam et amem et desiderem? nec ego tantum aut cum paucis, sed beati prorsus omnes esse volumus. quod nisi certa notitia nossemus, non tam certa voluntate vellemus. sed quid est hoc? quod si quaeratur a duobus utrum militare velint, fieri possit ut alter eorum velle se, alter nolle respondeat. si autem ab eis quaeratur utrum esse beati velint, uterque se statim sine ulla dubitatione dicat optare, nec ob aliud velit ille militare, nec ob aliud iste nolit, nisi ut beati sint. num forte quoniam alius hinc, alius inde gaudet? ita se omnes beatos esse velle consonant, quemadmodum consonarent si hoc interrogarentur, se velle gaudere, atque ipsum gaudium vitam beatam vocant. quod etsi alius hinc, alius illinc adsequitur, unum est tamen quo pervenire omnes nituntur, ut gaudeant. quae quoniam res est quam se expertum non esse nemo potest dicere, propterea reperta in memoria recognoscitur quando beatæ vitæ nomen auditur.

22. (32) Absit, domine, absit a corde servi tui qui confitetur tibi, absit ut, quocumque gaudio gaudeam, beatum

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ever I recall it. But sometimes the enjoyment was from good and wholesome things, which I remember with longing, though if they happen not to be present, it is with sadness that I remember my former enjoyment.

(31) Where and when, therefore, did I gain my experience of the blessed life, thus giving me the capacity to recall, love and long for it? It is not just I, or with a few companions,—absolutely every one of us longs to be blessed. And unless we were definitely familiar with it we would not long for it with such a determined will. But what is it? If one were to ask two men whether they would like to be soldiers, one might be willing, and the other might refuse. But if one were to ask the same two men whether they would like to be blessed, they would both declare without hesitation that they would like to. And yet the one would opt for military service, and the other refuse it, for no other reason than that they wanted to be blessed. Can it possibly be that one person finds enjoyment in one thing, and another in something else? Thus all people are agreed that they want to be blessed: in the same way that if they were asked about it they would agree that they wanted to have enjoyment, and they describe such enjoyment as a blessed life. Even if, however, one person pursues it in one direction, and another in some other direction, the thing that everyone strives to win is the same: namely, enjoyment. Since, moreover, enjoyment is something that no one can claim never to have experienced, they discover it in their memory and recognize it when they hear the phrase “the blessed life.”

22. (32) Far be it, O Lord, far be it from your servant's heart—the one who makes his confession to you—far be it from me to think myself blessed in every kind of enjoy-

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me putem. est enim gaudium quod non datur impiis, sed eis qui te gratis colunt, quorum gaudium tu ipse es. et ipsa est beata vita, gaudere ad te, de te, propter te: ipsa est et non est altera. qui autem aliam putant esse, aliud sectantur gaudium neque ipsum verum. ab aliqua tamen imagine gaudii voluntas eorum non avertitur.

23. (33) Non ergo certum est quod omnes esse beati volunt, quoniam qui non de te gaudere volunt, quae sola vita beata est, non utique beatam vitam volunt. an omnes hoc volunt, sed quoniam caro concupiscit adversus spiritum et spiritus adversus carnem, ut non faciant quod volunt, cadunt in id quod valent eoque contenti sunt, quia illud quod non valent, non tantum volunt quantum sat est ut valeant? nam quaero ab omnibus utrum malint de veritate quam de falsitate gaudere. tam non dubitant dicere de veritate se malle, quam non dubitant dicere beatos esse se velle. beata quippe vita est gaudium de veritate. hoc est enim gaudium de te, qui veritas es, deus, inluminatio mea, salus faciei meae, deus meus. hanc vitam beatam omnes volunt, hanc vitam, quae sola beata est, omnes volunt, gaudium de veritate omnes volunt. multos expertus sum qui vellent fallere, qui autem falli, neminem. ubi ergo noverunt hanc vitam beatam, nisi ubi noverunt etiam veritatem? amant enim et ipsam, quia falli nolunt, et cum

⁶⁶ Cf. Vol. 1, 8n5, on *salus*.

⁶⁷ *facies* (cf. Greek *prosōpon*/*πρόσωπον*, Hebrew *paniyim*) in the sense of "person" is biblical idiom.

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ment I rejoice in! There is a kind of enjoyment not granted to the godless but only to those who worship you of their own free will, namely the people for whom you yourself are their joy. And that is the real "blessed life"—rejoicing toward you, about you, because of you. It is the real joy, and there is no other. Anyone who thinks there is another kind is really pursuing a different kind of enjoyment, not true enjoyment itself. At least their will is not turned away from any kind of impression of enjoyment.

23. (33) It is not certain, then, that everyone wants to be blessed, because anyone who does not want to find enjoyment in you (which is the only blessed life) certainly does not desire that blessed life. Or is it that everyone desires this, but because flesh strives against spirit and spirit against flesh the result is that they do not do what they desire, but have recourse to what they can manage and are content with it, because they do not desire that object for which they have not the strength robustly enough to give them themselves the strength to attain it. For I ask everyone whether they prefer to enjoy truth or falsehood. They are as unhesitating in declaring that they prefer truth as they are unhesitating in declaring that they want to be blessed. Certainly a blessed life consists in the enjoyment of the truth. And this means enjoyment of you, who are truth, O God, my light, the salvation⁶⁶ of my person,⁶⁷ my God. Everyone wants this blessed life, the only kind of life that is blessed—everyone wants it. And everyone wants the enjoyment of truth. I have met many who would like to deceive, but no one who would like to be deceived. So where have they known this blessed life if not in the same place where they came to know truth? For they love that too, because they dislike being deceived;

Gal 5:17

Jn 14:6

Pss 27:1,
42:11

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amant beatam vitam, quod non est aliud quam de veritate gaudium, utique amant etiam veritatem, nec amarent nisi esset aliqua notitia eius in memoria eorum. cur ergo non de illa gaudent? cur non beati sunt? quia fortius occupantur in aliis, quae potius eos faciunt miseros quam illud beatos, quod tenuiter meminerunt. adhuc enim modicum lumen est in hominibus. ambulent, ambulent, ne tenebrae comprehendant.

(34) Cur autem veritas parit odium et inimicus eis factus est homo tuus verum praedicans, cum ametur beata vita, quae non est nisi gaudium de veritate, nisi quia sic amatur veritas ut, quicumque aliud amant, hoc quod amant velint esse veritatem, et quia falli nollent, nolunt convinci quod falsi sint? itaque propter eam rem oderunt veritatem, quam pro veritate amant. amant eam lucentem, oderunt eam redarguentem. quia enim falli nolunt et fallere volunt, amant eam cum se ipsa indicat, et oderunt eam cum eos ipsos indicat. inde retribuet eis ut, qui se ab ea manifestari nolunt, et eos nolentes manifestet et eis ipsa non sit manifesta.

Sic, sic, etiam sic animus humanus, etiam sic caecus et languidus, turpis atque indecens latere vult, se autem ut

⁶⁸ An old proverb; quoted by Ter. *An.* 68: "Indulgence spawns friends, but truth spawns hatred" (*obsequium amicos, veritas odium parit*).

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and when they love the blessed life, which is nothing other than enjoyment of the truth, they certainly do love truth as well, and they would not love it unless there were some familiarity with it lodged in their memory. So why do they not enjoy it? Why are they not blessed? Because they are too much preoccupied with other things, and would rather do those things and be pitiable than do that other thing—which they scarcely remember—and be blessed. Still there is a vestige of light in such people. Let them walk, let them walk in it, so that the darkness does not overcome them.

Jn 12:35

(34) Why does truth spawn hatred?⁶⁸ Why does a person who belongs to you, and who foretells what is true, become an enemy of others—even though those other people love the blessed life, which is none other than enjoyment of the truth? It must be because they love truth, but in a way that any of them who love something else still long for the thing that they love to be the truth: and because they do not want to make a mistake, they are unwilling to be convinced that they are in the wrong. So they hate the truth, on account of the thing that they love in place of truth. They love truth when it shines out, but they hate it when it shows them up as being in the wrong. Because they do not want to be deceived, yet are willing to deceive others, they love truth when it shows itself, and they hate it when it shows them up. And so truth will have its revenge upon them. All those who are unwilling for truth to reveal them in their real colors will be exposed perforce: whereas truth will not disclose itself to them.

Jn 8:40; Gal
4:16

Jn 3:20

And so, and so—so the human mind, even though it wants to stay hidden, blind and feeble, shameful and unfit, wants nothing to stay hidden from itself. The very opposite

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lateat aliquid non vult. contra illi redditur, ut ipse non lateat veritatem, ipsum autem veritas lateat. tamen etiam sic, dum miser est, veris mavult gaudere quam falsis. beatus ergo erit, si nulla interpellante molestia, de ipsa—per quam vera sunt omnia—sola veritate gaudebit.

24. (35) Ecce quantum spatiatus sum in memoria mea quaerens te, domine, et non te inveni extra eam. neque enim aliquid de te inveni quod non meminissem, ex quo didici te, nam ex quo didici te non sum oblitus tui. ubi enim inveni veritatem, ibi inveni deum meum, ipsam veritatem, quam ex quo didici non sum oblitus. itaque ex quo te didici, manes in memoria mea, et illic te invenio¹⁹ cum reminiscor tui, et delector in te. hae sunt sanctae deliciae meae, quas donasti mihi misericordia tua, respiciens paupertatem meam.

25. (36) Sed ubi manes in memoria mea, domine, ubi illic manes? quale cubile fabricasti tibi? quale sanctuarium aedificasti tibi? tu dedisti hanc dignationem memoriae meae, ut maneam in ea, sed in qua eius parte maneam, hoc considero. transcendendi enim partes eius quas habent et bestiae cum te recordarer, quia non ibi te inveniebam inter imagines rerum corporalium, et veni ad partes eius ubi commendavi affectiones animi mei, nec illic inveni te. et intravi ad ipsius animi mei sedem, quae illi est in memoria

¹⁹ invenio *S Knöll*: inveni *codd.*

⁶⁹ Cf. *Conf.* 2.6.14.

⁷⁰ *deliciae* unmodified by *sanctae* evoked very different kinds of pleasure.

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is its reward: that the human mind cannot be concealed from the truth, whereas truth itself remains concealed from that mind. Yet even while it is in that pitiful state it prefers the enjoyment of things that are true, rather than falsehoods. So it will be blessed if—without any troublesome interference—it comes to rejoice only in that genuine truth in which all individual truths partake.

24. (35) Look how widely I have ranged in my memory, Lord, in search of you! But I did not find you outside it.⁶⁹ Nor have I found anything about you which I did not keep in mind from the time when I learned about you; for from the time when I learned about you I have not forgotten you. Where I found truth, there I found my God, Truth himself, truth which from the moment I learned of it, I did not forget. And so from the moment I learned of you, there you remain in my memory, and that is where I find you when I call you to mind, and I delight in you. These are my holy pleasures⁷⁰ which in your mercy you have bestowed upon me, for you have seen how poor I really am.

Ps 37:4

25. (36) Where do you abide in my memory, Lord, where in that place do you abide? What kind of resting place have you fashioned for yourself? What kind of sanctuary have you built for yourself? You have done my memory the honor of abiding in it: but I am now going to examine your precise location there. When I thought of you, I went beyond the regions of memory that animals also possess, because I did not find you there among the impressions of physical realities; and I came to the regions of memory where I stored my emotions, and did not find you there either. Then I reached the place where my mind itself resides (a place that it possesses in my memory), for

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mea, quoniam sui quoque meminit animus, nec ibi tu eras, quia sicut non es imago corporalis nec affectio viventis (qualis est cum laetamur, contristamur, cupimus, metuimus, meminimus, obliviscimur et quidquid huius modi est) ita nec ipse animus es, quia dominus deus animi tu es. et commutantur haec omnia, tu autem incommutabilis manes super omnia et dignatus es habitare in memoria mea, ex quo te didici. et quid quaero quo loco eius habites, quasi vero loca ibi sint? habitas certe in ea, quoniam tui memini ex quo te didici, et in ea te invenio, cum recorder te.

26. (37) Ubi ergo te inveni, ut discerem te? neque enim iam eras in memoria mea, priusquam te discerem. ubi ergo te inveni ut discerem te, nisi in te supra me? et nusquam locus, et recedimus et accedimus, et nusquam locus. veritas, ubique praesides omnibus consulentibus te simulque respondes omnibus etiam diversa consulentibus. liquide tu respondes, sed non liquide omnes audiunt. omnes unde volunt consulunt, sed non semper quod volunt audiunt. optimus minister tuus est qui non magis intuetur hoc a te audire quod ipse voluerit, sed potius hoc velle quod a te audierit.

⁷¹ Scriptural allusion is sparse in this part of *Conf.* Here the allusion goes beyond mere phrasing: A. identifies closely with the mental processes of Job. Walking to and from is also a characteristic of Satan (the Adversary) in Job, e.g., 1:7.

⁷² Cf. *Conf.* 6.3.4, "Everywhere you are present, and never confined to one place."

⁷³ Here A. overturns the implication of his previous argument that God must be found within the "self."

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my mind is mindful of itself: but you were not there either. This was because in the same way as you are not a physical impression nor a living person's emotion (such as exists when we enjoy something, grieve, desire, fear, remember, forget, and other such experiences) so too you yourself are not the mind, because you are God and Lord over the mind. And all these things undergo change, but you remain unchangeable over all things, and you have deigned to dwell in my memory, from the time I came to learn of you. Why do I ask in what part of my memory you dwell, as if the regions there are real? Undoubtedly you dwell in my memory, because I remember you from the time I learned of you, and that is where I find you when I think of you.

26. (37) So where did I find you so that I could begin to learn of you? You were not in my memory already, before I learned of you. Where, then, did I find you in order to learn of you, if not in you yourself, far beyond myself? Nowhere was there any place: I went back and forth,⁷¹ but nowhere was there any place.⁷² O Truth, everywhere you rule over all who ask your guidance, and you answer them all at the same time, even when what they ask about is different. You reply clearly, but not everyone hears you clearly. Everyone has something they want to ask about: but they do not always hear what they want to. Your ideal servants are those who no longer look to hear from you the answer that they want, but instead want what they hear from you.⁷³

Jb 23:8

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27. (38)

Sero te amavi, pulchritudo tam antiqua et tam nova,
sero te amavi!

Et ecce intus eras et ego foris, et ibi te quaerebam;
Et in ista formosa quae fecisti deformis inruebam.
mecum eras, et tecum non eram.

Ea me tenebant longe a te, quae si in te non essent,
non essent.

Vocasti et clamasti et rupisti surditatem meam;
Coruscasti, splenduisti et fugasti caecitatem meam;
Fragrasti,²⁰ et duxi spiritum et anhelo tibi;
Gustavi et esurio et sitio;
Tetigisti me, et exarsi in pacem tuam.

28. (39) Cum inhaesero tibi ex omni me, nusquam erit

²⁰ fragrasti *Maur. Knöll Skut.*: fraglasti *S*: flagrasti *C G O Ver.*

⁷⁴ See *Conf.* 4.15.24–25, where “the beautiful” (*pulchrum*) is some way from personified “Beauty” (*Pulchritudo*) as an appellation of God. Cf. *Ps* 96:6 with *En. Ps.* 95.6^{Vs.}: “We love beauty, let us first choose confession, so that beauty may follow” (*amamus pulchritudinem: prius eligamus confessionem, ut sequatur pulchritudo*). Elsewhere he refers to God’s “incorruptible Beauty” (*incorruptibili pulchritudini eius*), *Nat. B.* 7: the adjective distinguishes divine beauty from individual examples of beauty in the mutable created order.

⁷⁵ All five of A.’s senses are transcended in one moment of divine recognition. Of this famous lyrical passage, Burnaby notes, “The happiness which is the aim of human endeavour consists . . . in a relation of knowledge and love which binds the soul to the one immutable Reality” (*Amor Dei*, 49). A.’s terminology for love is much discussed; elsewhere he uses *amor*, *dilectio*, and *chari-*

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27. (38)

Late have I loved you, O Beauty⁷⁴ so old and so new:
late have I loved you!

And look! You were within me, and I was outside
myself: and it was there that I searched for you.

In my unloveliness I plunged into the lovely things
which you created: you were with me, but I was
not with you.

Those created things kept me far away from you: yet
if they had not been in you, they would have not
been at all.

You called and shouted: and broke through my
deafness.

You flamed and shone: and banished my blindness.

You breathed your fragrance on me: and I drew in my
breath and I pant for you.

I have tasted you: and now I hunger and thirst for
more.

You have touched me: and I have burned for your
peace.⁷⁵

28. (39) When I cleave to you with all that I am, I shall

tas interchangeably (*Ench.* 117). Courcelle, *Recherches*, 441-78, surveys the influence of the *sero te amavi* in history; he quotes Nygren's view that A. was original in rescuing the verb *amare* for the vocabulary of Latin spirituality. (Courcelle, *Recherches* 461, quoting Nygren, *Ehrenrettung von "amor,"* 367-73). The rhetorical casting is obvious; but what draws it into the category of "non-prose" (some, but not all, editions print it as such) is not Classical meter or the medieval *cursus* but an antiphonal structure, which renders it akin to psalmody.

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mihi dolor et labor, et viva erit vita mea tota plena te. nunc autem quoniam quem tu imples, sublevas eum, quoniam tui plenus non²¹ sum, oneri mihi sum. contendunt laetitiae meae flendae cum laetandis maeroribus, et ex qua parte stet victoria nescio. contendunt maerores mei mali cum gaudiis bonis, et ex qua parte stet victoria nescio. ei mihi! domine, miserere mei! ei mihi! ecce vulnera mea non abscondo. medicus es, aeger sum; misericors es, miser sum. numquid non temptatio est vita humana super terram? quis velit molestias et difficultates? tolerari iubes ea, non amari. nemo quod tolerat amat, etsi tolerare amat. quamvis enim gaudeat se tolerare, mavult tamen non esse quod toleret. prospera in adversis desidero, adversa in prosperis timeo. quis inter haec medius locus, ubi non sit humana vita temptatio? vae prosperitatibus saeculi semel et iterum a timore adversitatis et a corruptione laetitiae! vae adversitatibus saeculi semel et iterum et tertio a desiderio prosperitatis, et quia ipsa adversitas dura est, et ne frangat tolerantiam! numquid non temptatio est vita humana super terram sine ullo interstitio?

29. (40) Et tota spes mea non nisi in magna valde²² misericordia tua. da quod iubes et iube quod vis: imperas

²¹ non *codd. edd.*: nondum *S*

²² valde *codd. edd.*: om. *S*

⁷⁶ Cf. *Conf.* 10.3.4.

⁷⁷ Paronomasia.

⁷⁸ Even after conversion, A. faces a lifetime of struggle with desire and to achieve self-control; hence the repeated ecphonesis.

⁷⁹ Pelagius took exception to this, as A. notes: "Pelagius could not bear these words of mine, and repudiated them vigorously,

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experience no more pain and toil, and my whole life will be alive, because it is filled with you. But now (given that anyone you fill, you raise up) I am a burden to myself, because I am not filled with you. Joys I ought to weep over are at war with sorrows that I should rejoice in: and which side will gain the victory I have no idea. But sorrows that are corrupt are also at war in me with joys that are good: and which side will gain the victory I have no idea. Pity me, Lord!—have mercy upon me!—Pity me! Look, I cannot conceal my wounds. You are the doctor,⁷⁶ I am the patient: you are full of pity, I am pitiful.⁷⁷ Surely human life on earth is a time of trial? Who would long for troubles and difficulties? You tell us to endure them, not to enjoy them. No one loves the thing they must endure, even if they love the act of enduring. Even though they are glad that they can endure, they would prefer that there was no need for such endurance. When I am in adversity I long for prosperity; when I enjoy prosperity I fear adversity. What is the mean between these two extremes, where human life need not be a trial? To hell with worldly prosperity, once and for all, with its fear of adversity and corruption of delight! To hell with worldly adversity once, and again, and for all, with its longing for prosperity, both because adversity is harsh in itself, and to prevent its breaking down endurance! Surely human life on earth is a time of interminable trial?⁷⁸

Ps 31:9

Jb 7:1^V; Mt
6:13, 26:41,
etc.

29. (40) On your exceedingly great mercy alone rests my entire hope. Give what you command, and command what you will:⁷⁹ you demand of us continence. A certain

practically quarreling with the man who had repeated them" (*Persev.* 20.53).

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nobis continentiam. "et cum scirem," ait quidam, "quia nemo potest esse continens, nisi deus det, et hoc ipsum erat sapientiae, scire cuius esset hoc donum." per continentiam quippe conligimur et redigimur in unum, a quo in multa defluximus. minus enim te amat qui tecum aliquid amat quod non propter te amat. o amor, qui semper ardes et numquam extingueris, caritas, deus meus, accende me! continentiam iubes: da quod iubes et iube quod vis.

30. (41) Iubes certe ut contineam a concupiscentia carnis et concupiscentia oculorum et ambitione saeculi. iusisti a concubitu et de ipso coniugio melius aliquid quam concessisti monuisti. et quoniam dedisti, factum est, et antequam dispensator sacramenti tui fierem. sed adhuc vivunt in memoria mea, de qua multa locutus sum, talium rerum imagines, quas ibi consuetudo mea fixit, et occurrantur mihi vigilantibus quidem carentes viribus, in somnis autem non solum usque ad delectationem sed etiam usque ad consensionem factumque simillimum. et tantum valet imaginis²³ inclusio in anima mea in carne mea ut dormienti falsa visa persuadeant quod vigilantibus vera non possunt. numquid tunc ego non sum, domine deus meus? et tamen tantum interest inter me ipsum et me ipsum intra momen-

²³ imaginis *add.* illius S

⁸⁰ At last an answer to the "dispersion into the multiplicity which is oblivion" (*Conf.* 2.1.1).

⁸¹ OD takes "Love" as an apostrophe to the Holy Spirit, which is associated with the fire of charity; cf. *Conf.* 4.12.19. A.'s reference to the two personifications, *Amor* and *Caritas*, is hard to reproduce in English, which has no effective synonyms for "love."

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writer says, "When I came to know that no one can achieve continence unless God grants it, this was in itself a realization of wisdom, to know whose gift it was." Through continence, in fact, we are joined together and restored to wholeness, from which we trickled away into multiplicity.⁸⁰ Anyone who loves something else as well as you, but does not love it for your sake, loves you the less as a result. O Love, you burn for ever and are never quenched, O Charity, my God, set me on fire!⁸¹ You command continence: give what you command, and command what you will.

Ws 8:21

30. (41) Certainly you command me to restrain myself from desires of the flesh, and desires of the eyes, and worldly ambition. You ordered me to give up illicit sex, and as for marriage itself, you promised something better than your concession to us. Because you granted this, it was accomplished, even before I became a minister of your sacrament. But still in my memory there abide the impressions of those carnal experiences of which I have spoken at length. Force of habit fixed them there, and they besiege me in my waking hours—lacking any real force, it is true. In my sleep, though, the act is almost real enough not only to cause pleasure but even to evoke my consent. The illusion of this impression in my soul has so strong an effect on my body that even when I am asleep these false visions have a power of persuasion beyond that of true visions when I am awake. Surely, O Lord my God, I am still myself when sleeping? But there is such a big difference between my waking self and my sleeping self⁸² in that

1 Jn 2:16; cf.
Mt 5:28

1 Cor 7:1-2

⁸² Literally, "between myself and myself."

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tum quo hinc ad soporem transeo vel huc inde retranseo! ubi est tunc ratio qua talibus suggestionibus resistit vigilans et, si res ipsae ingerantur, inconcussus manet? numquid clauditur cum oculis? numquid sopitur cum sensibus corporis? et unde saepe etiam in somnis resistimus nostrique propositi memores atque in eo castissime permanentes nullum talibus inlecebris adhibemus adsensum? et tamen tantum interest ut, cum aliter accidit, evigilantes ad conscientiae requiem redeamus ipsaque distantia reperiamus nos non fecisse quod tamen in nobis quoquo modo factum esse doleamus.

(42) Numquid non potens est manus tua, deus omnipotens, sanare omnes languores animae meae atque abundantiore gratia tua lascivos motus etiam mei soporis extinguere? augebis, domine, magis magisque in me munera tua, ut anima mea sequatur me ad te concupiscentiae visco expedita, ut non sit rebellis sibi, atque ut in somnis etiam non solum non perpetret istas corruptelarum turpitudines per imagines animales usque ad carnis fluxum, sed ne consentiat quidem. nam ut nihil tale vel tantulum libeat, quantum possit nutu cohiberi etiam in casto dormientis affectu, non tantum in hac vita sed etiam in hac aetate, non

⁸³ A remarkable analysis of the moral locus of sexual activity and even wet dreams (or "nocturnal emissions") in dream states: examined further at *Gn. Litt.* 12.15.31.

⁸⁴ Cf. *Conf.* 6.6.9. A. here begins a survey of the temptations proper to each sense, taking touch first.

⁸⁵ For the soul as separate from the self, cf. the apostrophe at *Conf.* 4.11.16: the contrast between his waking and sleeping self generates the division here.

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moment when I make the transition from here into sleep or back from sleep to here! In this situation what happens to my reason, which when I am awake enables resistance to such insinuations, and when the actual reality obtrudes, remains unhurt? Surely it does not shut down when my eyes shut? Surely it is not lulled to sleep along with my physical senses? For how then is it that we put up resistance even in dreams, remembering our resolve; and even then remain completely undefiled, and allow such allurements no access? And yet there is such a difference between them that, when it happens otherwise, we awaken and return to a peaceful conscience; and because of the actual gap we discover that we did not commit the deed which we nonetheless regret was somehow done "in us."⁸³

(42) Certainly your hand has the power, almighty God, to heal my soul's weaknesses, and to quench my impulses to immorality (even those that come in sleep) with your even more abundant grace? Lord, you will increase your gifts in me more and more, and so my soul will escape the glue trap of physical desire⁸⁴ and follow me to you. Then it will no longer rebel against itself. Even when asleep, it will not only avoid committing such shameful sexual behavior (prompted by sensual impressions) to the point of ejaculation, but will not even admit them.⁸⁵ For it is not difficult for you, the Almighty, who have the power to do beyond what we ask and think, to ensure that nothing of this kind brings more pleasure than can be repressed by your nod,⁸⁶ even in the pure state of mind when one is

Ps 103:3

1 Tm 1:14

Eph 3:20

⁸⁶ A nod, *nutus*, is not a trivial gesture in a religious context; cf. Virg. *Aen.* 9.106, "To his oath [Jupiter] nodded his assent, and all Olympus trembled at his nod."

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magnum est omnipotenti, qui vales facere supra quam petimus et intellegimus.

Nunc tamen quid adhuc sim in hoc genere mali mei, dixi bono domino meo, exultans cum tremore in eo quod donasti mihi, et lugens in eo quod inconsummatus sum, sperans perfecturum te in me misericordias tuas usque ad pacem plenariam, quam tecum habebunt interiora et exteriora mea, cum absorpta fuerit mors in victoriam.

31. (43) Est alia malitia diei, quae utinam sufficiat ei. reficimus enim cotidianas ruinas corporis edendo et bibendo, priusquam escas et ventrem destruas, cum occideris indigentiam satietate mirifica et corruptibile hoc indueris incorruptione sempiterna. nunc autem suavis est mihi necessitas, et adversus istam suavitatem pugno, ne capiar, et cotidianum bellum gero in ieiuniis, saepius in servitute redigens corpus meum, et dolores mei voluptate pelluntur. nam fames et sitis quidam dolores sunt, urunt et sicut febris necant, nisi alimentorum medicina succurrat. quae quoniam praesto est ex consolatione munerum tuorum, in quibus nostrae infirmitati terra et aqua et caelum serviunt, calamitas deliciae vocantur.

(44) Hoc me docuisti, ut quemadmodum medicamenta sic alimenta sumpturus accedam. sed dum ad quietem satietatis ex indigentiae molestia transeo, in ipso transitu mihi insidiatur laqueus concupiscentiae. ipse enim transitus voluptas est, et non est alius, qua transeatur quo transire cogit necessitas. et cum salus sit causa edendi ac

⁸⁷ An unusual way of referring to bodily as well as spiritual resurrection. ⁸⁸ GM note that *calamitas* is the subject of *vocantur*: people think of food and drink as pleasure, but the appetite is in fact a negative.

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sleeping; and not only in my present mode of life but also at the age I am here describing.

Now, though, I have declared to my good Lord what I still am according to my besetting sin. I exult, but with trembling, in what you have given to me; I grieve at being still incomplete; I hope that you will perfect in me your mercies to the point of that fullness of peace which will belong to my outer and my inner self,⁸⁷ when death is swallowed up in victory. Ps 2:11
1 Cor 15:54

31. (43) There is another evil of the daytime, which I wish were sufficient for it. We refresh the daily withering of our bodies by eating and drinking, until the time when you destroy both food and stomach, when you slay our want with your marvelous abundance, and when you clothe what is corruptible with eternal incorruption. At the moment though, I find it a sweet snare, and I do battle with that sweetness, so that I cannot be taken captive by it, and I wage a daily war against it by fasting, and repeatedly bring my body into subjection, and so my pains are dispelled by pleasure. For hunger and thirst are types of pain, they burn and kill us like a fever unless the medicine of food rescues us. Since the comfort of your bounty provides us with food at hand, by which earth, sea, and sky minister to our weakness, our disaster comes to be called delight.⁸⁸ Mt 6:34
1 Cor 6:13
1 Cor 15:53
1 Cor 9:27

(44) You have taught me this: to approach taking food as I do taking medicine. But while I am passing from the discomfort of need to the peace of plenty, the snare of physical desire lies in wait for me in the very act of transition. For the transition itself it a pleasure, and there is no other way for us to cross to where we are compelled to go. And since health is what prompts us eat and drink, a per-

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bibendi, adiungit se tamquam pedisequa periculosa iucunditas et plerumque praeire conatur, ut eius causa fiat quod salutis causa me facere vel dico vel volo. nec idem modus utriusque est: nam quod saluti satis est, delectationi parum est, et saepe incertum fit utrum adhuc necessaria corporis cura subsidium petat an voluptaria cupiditatis fallacia ministerium suppetat. ad hoc incertum hilarescit infelix anima et in eo praeparat excusationis patrocinium, gaudens non apparere quid²⁴ satis sit moderationi valetudinis, ut obtentu salutis obumbret negotium voluptatis. his temptationibus cotidie conor resistere, et invoco dexteram tuam, et ad te refero aestus meos, quia consilium mihi de hac re nondum stat.

(45) Audio vocem iubentis dei mei, "non graventur corda vestra in crapula et ebrietate." ebrietas longe est a me: misereberis, ne appropinquet mihi. crapula autem nonnumquam subrepat²⁵ servo tuo: misereberis, ut longe fiat a me. nemo enim potest esse continens, nisi tu des. multa nobis orantibus tribuis, et quidquid boni antequam orarem accepimus, a te accepimus; et ut hoc postea cognosceremus, a te accepimus. ebriosus numquam fui, sed ebriosos a te factos sobrios ego novi. ergo a te factum est ut hoc non essent qui numquam fuerunt, a quo factum est ut hoc non semper essent qui fuerunt, a quo etiam factum est ut scirent utrique a quo factum est.

²⁴ quid *codd.*: quod *S Knöll*

²⁵ subrepat *codd. edd.*: subrepsit *S*

⁸⁹ The juxtaposition of the terms *crapula* and *ebrietas* in this gospel may have driven the shift of the former from "drunkenness" (its original sense) to "gluttony."

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ilous pleasantness associates itself like a constant attendant, often trying to step in first, so that what I either say or wish I was doing for the sake of health, I am actually doing for the sake of pleasure. It is not the same measure for both: what is enough for health is too little for delight, and often it is unclear whether it is a matter of appropriate care for the body, seeking what it needs, or the sensual deceit of desire, looking to be catered for. Amid this ambiguity the unhappy soul cheers up and prepares a self-justificatory defense, glad that it is not apparent what suffices for maintaining good health, so that on a pretext of health it may conceal a transaction which is really about pleasure. There are the temptations I try to resist daily, and I call upon your right hand, and I bring to you all my passions, because as yet I have formed no resolve on this subject.

(45) I hear the voice of my God commanding me, "do not let your hearts be overloaded with gluttony and drunkenness."⁸⁹ As for drunkenness, I keep it at a distance: you will take pity on me, and not let it come any closer to me. Gluttony, though, has often crept up on your servant; you will take pity on me, and make it distant from me. No one can exercise self-control except by your gift. There are many things you bestow on us when we pray; and whatever good we have received before we prayed for it, it was from you that we received it. Even our realization of this later on was a gift you gave us. I have never been a drunk, but I know drunks who have been made sober by you. So it is your doing that those who never have been drunkards should never become so; and it is your doing that those who were drunkards should not be so for ever; and it is your doing that both groups of people should know whose doing it is!

Lk 21:34

Ws 8:21

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Audivi aliam vocem tuam: "post concupiscentias tuas non eas et a voluptate tua vetare." audivi et illam ex munere tuo, quam multum anavi: "neque si manducaverimus, abundabimus, neque si non manducaverimus, deerit nobis"; hoc est dicere: "nec illa res me copiosum faciet nec illa aerumnosum." audivi et alteram: "ego enim didici in quibus sum sufficiens esse, et abundare novi et penuriam pati novi. omnia possum in eo qui me confortat." ecce miles castrorum caelestium, non pulvis quod sumus. sed memento, domine, quia pulvis sumus, et de pulvere fecisti hominem, et perierat et inventus est. nec ille in se potuit, quia idem pulvis fuit quem talia dicentem adflatu tuae inspirationis adamavi: "omnia possum," inquit, "in eo qui me confortat." conforta me ut possim. da quod iubes et iube quod vis. iste se accepisse confitetur et quod gloriatur in domino gloriatur. audivi alium rogantem ut accipiat: "aufer a me," inquit, "concupiscentias ventris." unde apparet, sancte deus meus, te dare, cum fit quod imperas fieri.

(46) Docuisti me, pater bone, omnia munda mundis, sed malum esse homini qui per offensionem manducat; et omnem creaturam tuam bonam esse nihilque abiciendum quod cum gratiarum actione percipitur; et quia esca nos non commendat deo, et ut nemo nos iudicet in cibo aut in

⁹⁰ I.e., of the Holy Spirit, which inspires his interpretation of the Scriptures.

⁹¹ The context is the moral consequences of eating food offered to idols: "food does not win us favor from God."

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I heard another saying of yours, "Do not pursue your physical desires, and let your pleasure be forbidden." By your gift⁹⁰ I heard another saying, which I really loved, "We shall have no abundance if we do eat; and we shall lack nothing if we do not eat"; in other words, it is not the case that the one thing will make me wealthy, but the other wretched.⁹¹ I heard yet another, "For I have learned to be content whatever my circumstances: I know how to cope with plenty, and I know how to cope with poverty. I can do all things in him who strengthens me." See!—this was a soldier of the celestial host, not dust like us. But remember, Lord, that we are but dust; and you formed humanity out of dust, and humanity was lost and has been found. That man had no power of his own, because he was the same dust, and I loved him so much for his speaking what he did, being stirred by your inspiration. "I can do all things," he said, "in him who strengthens me." Strengthen me so that I have this capability. Give what you command and command what you will. Paul confesses that he has received, and as for boasting, his boasting is only in the Lord. I have heard another person asking for something in such a way that he deserved to receive it, "Take from me," he said, "my appetite for overeating." It is clear from this, O holy one, my God, that you grant requests, when your command is put into effect.

(46) You have taught me, good Father, that to those who are clean all things are clean, but to the person for whom it is an offense to eat it, it is evil. You have also taught that your whole creation is good, and nothing should be rejected which is received with thanksgiving; and that food does not commend us to God; and that no one should judge us in matters of food or drink; and that

Sir 18:30

1 Cor 8:8

Phil 4:11-13

Gn 3:19; Lk 14:32

1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17

Ti 1:15

Rom 14:20

1 Tm 4:4

Col 2:16

1 Cor 8:8

Rom 14:3

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potu; et ut qui manducat non manducantem non spernat, et qui non manducat manducantem non iudicet. didici haec: gratias tibi, laudes tibi, deo meo, magistro meo, pulsatori aurium mearum, inlustratori cordis mei. eripe²⁶ ab omni temptatione. non ego immunditiam obsonii timeo, sed immunditiam cupiditatis. scio Noe omne carnis genus quod cibo esset usui manducare permissum, Heliam cibo carnis reffectum, Iohannem mirabili abstinencia praeditum animalibus, hoc est lucustis in escam cedentibus, non fuisse pollutum. et scio Esau lenticulae concupiscentia deceptum, et David propter aquae desiderium a se ipso reprehensum, et regem nostrum non de carne sed de pane temptatum. ideoque et populus in heremo non quia carnes desideravit, sed quia escae desiderio adversus dominum murmuravit, meruit improbari.

(47) In his ergo temptationibus positus certo cotidie adversus concupiscentiam manducandi et bibendi. non enim est quod semel praecidere et ulterius non attingere decernam, sicut de concubitu potui. itaque freni gutturis temperata relaxatione et constrictione tenendi sunt. et quis est, domine, qui non rapiatur aliquantum extra metas necessitatis? quisquis est, magnus est, magnificet nomen tuum. ego autem non sum, quia peccator homo sum, sed et ego magnifico nomen tuum, et interpellat te pro peccatis meis qui vicit saeculum, numerans me inter infirma

²⁶ eripe S O¹ Skut. Ver.: eripe me C D O² G Maur. Knöll

⁹² John the Baptist: cf. Lv 11:21-24. On clean/unclean as categories of ritual, not hygiene, see Douglas, *Purity and Danger*.

⁹³ A vivid equestrian metaphor.

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the person who eats must not reject the one who does not, while that the person who does not eat must not judge the one who does. This I have learned—thanks be to you, my God, and praises to you, my teacher, for you have knocked at the door of my ears, you have brought light into my heart. Carry me away from every temptation. It is not unclean food I fear, but rather unclean desires. I know that Noah was allowed to eat every kind of flesh that was suitable for food; that Elijah fortified himself with meat for food, that John was endowed with a remarkable control of his appetite, and was not made unclean⁹² by the creatures—namely locusts—which became his food. I also know that Esau was tricked because of his craving for lentils, and David condemned himself on account of his craving for water. And our King too was tempted—not with meat but with bread. Finally, in the desert your people deserved to be condemned, not because of their longing for meat, but because that longing for meat prompted them to muttering together against the Lord.

(47) Set in the midst of these temptations I struggle every day against the physical appetite for eating and drinking. After all, they are not something I can decide to be done with once and for all and have no further contact with—not as I could with sexual intercourse. So the reins of the gullet must be handled by judicious loosening and tightening.⁹³ Is there anyone, Lord, who is never carried beyond the bounds of necessity to some degree? Whoever they may be, they are great indeed: let them magnify your name! I am not that person, because I am only human and a sinner, yet I too magnify your name: and may he who overcame the world intercede with you for my sins, and

Ps 18:29

Gn 9:2–3

Mt 3:4

2 Sm 23:15–17

Mt 4:3

Nm 11:1–20

Lk 1:46; Rv 15:4

Jn 16:33;
Rom 8:34

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membra corporis sui, quia et imperfectum eius viderunt oculi tui, et in libro tuo omnes scribentur.

32. (48) De inlecebra odorum non satago nimis. cum absunt, non requiro, cum adsunt, non respuo, paratus eis etiam semper carere. ita mihi videor; forsitan fallar. sunt enim et istae plangendae tenebrae in quibus me latet facultas mea quae in me est, ut animus meus de viribus suis ipse se interrogans non facile sibi credendum existimet, quia et quod inest plerumque occultum est, nisi experientia manifestetur, et nemo securus esse debet in ista vita, quae tota temptatio nominatur, utrum qui fieri potuit ex deteriore melior non fiat etiam ex meliore deterior. una spes, una fiducia, una firma promissio misericordia tua.

33. (49) Voluptates aurium tenacius me implicaverant et subiugaverant, sed resolvisti et liberasti me. nunc in sonis quos animant eloquia tua cum suavi et artificiosa voce cantantur, fateor, aliquantulum adquiesco, non quidem ut haeream, sed ut surgam cum volo. attamen cum ipsis sententiis, quibus vivunt ut admittantur ad me, quaerunt in corde meo nonnullius dignitatis locum, et vix eis

⁹⁴ *eius*: the psalm text says *meum* according to Vg and most VL versions (a few of the latter have *tuum*).

⁹⁵ The imperfection is not that of Christ but of the members of his body (a metaphor for the Church; see 1 Cor 12:27). A. refers to Peter as an example of one who promises and then denies (*En. Ps.* 138.21 on Ps 139:16^{Vg}).

⁹⁶ OD observes that though this treatment of the senses seems mechanical, A. uses it as "a direct statement of what is most profound about this whole approach to temptation: . . . his own unwillingness to trust himself . . . his insistence that the only certainty is anti-solipsistic."

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count me among the frail members of his body, because your eyes have seen its⁹⁴ imperfection;⁹⁵ and all of them will be written in your book.

Rom 12:5; 1
Cor 12:22
Ps 139:16

32. (48) I am not troubled overmuch by the allurements of scents.⁹⁶ When they are not present I do not seek them out; when they are, I do not reject them: I am always prepared to do without them. This is how I see myself; perhaps I am mistaken. For there is also that deplorable darkness where the capabilities I possess within myself lie hidden from me: and so my mind, questioning itself about its own strength, finding it difficult to trust itself. This is because even what is within it mostly lies hidden, unless it becomes apparent through experience.⁹⁷ No one should be free from anxiety in this life—that is described as “all temptation”—as to whether someone who managed to improve from a worse state might not also, after having improved, get worse again. One hope, one faith, one firm promise—that is your mercy.

Jb 7:1^{VL}

33. (49) The pleasures of sound had captivated and enthralled me more powerfully, but you have released and liberated me. Nowadays, I admit, I find a degree of calm contentment in the sounds that your words bring to life when they are sung in a pleasing and skillful voice—but only to the extent that I can get up when I want to, not enough to hold me captive. But in combination with the actual ideas that give them life (so that they can gain access to me) they seek a place of some honor in my heart, and I

Pss 119:11,
103, 148,
158, 162

⁹⁷ Cf. *Virg.* 44: “Certainly the gifts of God are hidden, and nothing but the challenge evoked by temptation (*interrogatio temptationis*) makes them known even to the person themselves.”

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praebeo congruentem. aliquando enim plus mihi videor honoris eis tribuere quam decet, dum ipsis sanctis dictis religiosius et ardentius sentio moveri animos nostros in flammam pietatis cum ita cantantur, quam si non ita cantarentur, et omnes affectus spiritus nostri pro sui diversitate habere proprios modos in voce atque cantu, quorum nescio qua occulta familiaritate excitentur. sed delectatio carnis meae, cui mentem enervandam non oportet dari, saepe me fallit, dum rationi sensus non ita comitatur ut patienter sit posterior, sed tantum, quia propter illam meruit admitti, etiam praecurrere ac ducere conatur. ita in his pecco non sentiens et postea sentio.

(50) Aliquando autem hanc ipsam fallaciam immoderatus cavens erro nimia severitate, sed valde interdum, ut melos omne²⁷ cantilenarum suavium quibus daviticum psalterium frequentatur ab auribus meis removeri velim atque ipsius ecclesiae, tutiusque mihi videtur quod de Alexandrino episcopo Athanasio saepe mihi dictum commemini, qui tam modico flexu vocis faciebat sonare lectorem psalmi ut pronuntianti vicinior esset quam canenti. verum tamen cum reminiscor lacrimas meas quas fudi ad cantus ecclesiae in primordiis recuperatae fidei meae,

²⁷ melos omne *codd. Maur. Ver.*: melos omnes *S G Knöll Skut.*

⁹⁸ A. is suspicious of the power of music, apart from holy words, to enflame emotion, and of the pagan overtones of music in a religious context. Hymns are an innovation in the fourth-century Church; cf. *Conf.* 9.12.32.

⁹⁹ Genre ruled musical and poetic composition. Certain metrical forms (*modi*) were attached to certain genres.

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find it difficult to assign them one that is suitable.⁹⁸ Sometimes I feel I hold them in a regard beyond what is proper: I am aware that our minds are moved in a more spiritual and passionate way by these actual holy words when they *are* sung, than if they were *not* sung, in that manner. Also all the emotions of our spirit, in accordance with their various types, have their own particular vocal and singing modes that are stimulated by a kind of mysterious kinship.⁹⁹ But the sensual pleasure that affects me physically (I should not surrender my mind to this and thus enfeeble it) often leads me astray: as when sense perception does not accompany reason in such a way as to be content with second place, but (as it was only allowed in because it accompanied reason) tries to get to the front and take the lead. In such cases, therefore, I sin without realizing, and then afterward I do realize.

(50) At other times, though, I make the mistake of becoming too harsh, by being overscrupulous in avoiding this particular error. Sometimes I have actually wished for every tune of those soothing songs that pervade David's Psalter to be expunged from my ears and those of the Church herself. It seems to me that what I remember often having quoted to me about the Alexandrian bishop Athanasius is safer: he made the reader of the psalm intone it with only a slight vocal modulation¹⁰⁰ so that he was more a speaker than a singer. Even so, back when I remember my tears that flowed so freely at your Church

¹⁰⁰ It is not clear here whether this refers to pitch, speed, or volume.

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et nunc ipsum cum moveor²⁸ non cantu sed rebus quae cantantur, cum liquida voce et convenientissima modulatione cantantur, magnam instituti huius utilitatem rursus agnosco.

Ita fluctuo inter periculum voluptatis et experimentum salubritatis magisque adducor, non quidem inretractabilem sententiam proferens, cantandi consuetudinem approbare in ecclesia, ut per oblectamenta aurium infirmior animus in affectum pietatis adsurgat. tamen cum mihi accidit ut me amplius cantus quam res quae canitur moveat, poenaliter me peccare confiteor et tunc mallet non audire cantantem. ecce ubi sum! flete mecum et pro me flete qui aliquid boni vobiscum intus agitis, unde facta procedunt. nam qui non agitis, non vos haec movent. tu autem, domine deus meus, exaudi: respice et vide et miserere et sana me, in cuius oculis mihi quaestio factus sum, et ipse est languor meus.

34. (51) Restat voluptas oculorum istorum carnis meae, de qua loquar²⁹ confessiones quas audiant aures templi tui, aures fraternae ac piaae, ut concludamus temptationes concupiscentiae carnis quae me adhuc pulsant, ingemescentem et habitaculum meum, quod de caelo est, superindui cupientem. pulchras formas et varias, nitidos et amoenos colores amant oculi. non teneant haec animam meam;

²⁸ cum moveor *O Maur. Skut. Ver.:* quod moveor *S Knöll Vega:* commoveor *C D*

²⁹ loquar *C D O Maur. Ver.:* loquor *S G Knöll Skut.*

¹⁰¹ See Raby, *Christian-Latin Poetry*, 20–43.

¹⁰² GM note on *Conf.* 3.1.1: "A. frequently applies to a metaphorical conception language only appropriate to the reality be-

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singing when I first rediscovered my faith, and now when I am moved not by the singing but by the meaning of what is sung (if the singing is in a clear voice and with appropriate modulation), I recognize once again the dominant influence this practice possesses.¹⁰¹

So I am wavering between the dangers of pleasure and my own experience of its wholesome properties. I am more inclined (obviously without giving an irrevocable opinion) to approve the practice of singing in church. Then the delight experienced by the ears will inspire wavering minds toward feelings of devotion. Yet if I have the experience of being moved more by the singing than by the subject matter, I admit that I am sinning and deserve punishment and then would prefer not to listen to the singer. Just look at the state I am in! Weep with me and weep for me, if you have within you any of the goodness from which actions spring. If you do not have this goodness, these things have no impact on you. But you, O Lord my God, listen! Look and see and have mercy and heal me; before your eyes I have become a puzzle to myself, and this itself is my weakness.

Ps 80:14

Ps 103:3; Mt
4:23

34. (51) What remains is the physical pleasure of my eyes, on which subject I shall declare my confessions for the ears of your temple to hear, that is, the devout ears of my Christian brothers.¹⁰² So we may draw to a close the temptations of physical desire that still strike me, while I groan and long to be clothed with my habitation that is from heaven. My eye loves shapes that are varied and beautiful, and bright and pleasing colors. Do not let these

2 Cor 6:16

2 Cor 5:2

hind it, e.g., *medicina quae pependit in ligno* ('the medicine [Christ] which hung on the tree') (*Conf.* 9.13.35)."

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teneat eam deus, qui fecit haec bona quidem valde, sed ipse est bonum meum, non haec. et tangunt me vigilantem totis diebus, nec requies ab eis datur mihi, sicut datur a vocibus canoris, aliquando ab omnibus, in silentio. ipsa enim regina colorum, lux ista perfundens cuncta quae cernimus; ubiubi per diem fuero, multimodo adlapsu blanditur mihi aliud agenti et eam non advertenti. insinuat autem se ita vehementer ut, si repente subtrahatur, cum desiderio requiratur; et si diu absit, contristat animum.

(52) O lux quam videbat Tobis, cum clausis istis oculis filium docebat vitae viam et ei praeibat pede caritatis nusquam errans; aut quam videbat Isaac praegravatis et operitis senectute carneis luminibus, cum filios non agnoscendo benedicere sed benedicendo agnoscere meruit; aut quam videbat Iacob, cum et ipse prae grandi aetate captus oculis in filiis praesignata futuri populi genera luminoso corde radiavit et nepotibus suis ex Ioseph divexas mystice manus, non sicut pater eorum foris corrigebat, sed sicut ipse intus discernebat, imposuit—ipsa est lux, una est et unum omnes qui vident et amant eam.

At ista corporalis, de qua loquebar, inlecebrosa ac periculosa dulcedine condit vitam saeculi caecis amatoribus. cum autem et de ipsa laudare te norunt, deus creator

¹⁰³ Because voices cannot sing perpetually.

¹⁰⁴ A. thinks that rays from the eye strike objects, rendering them (physically) visible.

¹⁰⁵ Plotinus, *Enn.* 2.1.7, touches on visible and transcendent light.

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things possess my soul! Let God possess it, who made these things, and surely made them good—but he himself is my Good, not them! All through the day, while I am awake, they affect me, I get no rest from them such as a solo voice provides,¹⁰³ or sometimes the whole choir, when silence falls. For the very queen of colors, light itself, floods everything we see, wherever I am throughout the day; it glides past me by diverse paths, coaxing me even when I am doing something else, and am not paying attention to it. Yet it infiltrates so forcefully that if it is suddenly removed, we seek it longingly; and if it is absent for a long time, our minds are plunged in gloom.

(52) O Light which Tobit saw, when—his own eyes blinded—he used to teach his son the way to live, and walked ahead of him, never straying, on feet of charity! And Isaac saw it too—though old age had encumbered and clouded his physical eyes—when he was deemed worthy not to bless his sons by the act of recognizing them, but rather to recognize his sons by the act of blessing them. So too did Jacob see it: when the sight of his eyes was hampered by great age, he shed radiance from a heart shining with light upon the tribes of a people yet to come, which was prefigured in his sons.¹⁰⁴ Also with mystical insight he stretched out his hands and laid them upon his own grandsons, the children of Joseph—not in the way their father tried to correct him, outwardly, but as he himself perceived, inwardly. Such is true Light, and it is one, and all who see and love it are one.¹⁰⁵

Tb 2:10, 4:1-21

Gn 27:1-40

Gn 48-9

Gn 48:13-14

Jn 17:22

On the other hand, the physical light of which I was speaking spices up the life of this world with a seductive and perilous allure for those who love it blindly. But when people know how to praise you for the true light, O God,

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omnium, adsumunt eam in hymno tuo, non absumuntur³⁰ ab ea in somno suo: sic esse cupio. resisto seductionibus oculorum, ne implicentur pedes mei, quibus ingredior viam tuam, et erigo ad te invisibiles oculos, ut tu evellas de laqueo pedes meos. tu subinde evelles eos, nam inlaqueantur. tu non cessas evellere (ego autem crebro haereo in ubique sparsis insidiis) quoniam non dormies neque dormitabis, qui custodis Israhel.

(53) Quam innumerabilia variis artibus et opificiis, in vestibus, calciamentis, vasis et cuiuscemodi fabricationibus, picturis etiam diversisque figmentis atque his usum necessarium atque moderatum et piam significationem longe transgredientibus addiderunt homines ad inlecebras oculorum, foras sequentes quod faciunt, intus relinquentes a quo facti sunt et exterminantes quod facti sunt. at ego, deus meus et decus meum, etiam hinc tibi dico hymnum et sacrifico laudem sacrificatori³¹ meo, quoniam pulchra traiecta per animas in manus artificiosas ab illa pulchritudine veniunt quae super animas est, cui suspirat anima mea die ac nocte. sed pulchritudinum exteriorum operadores et sectatores inde trahunt approbandi modum,

³⁰ absumuntur *G O Maur. Skut. Ver.*: adsumuntur *S C D Knöll*

³¹ sacrificatori *S E G Maur.*: sanctificatori *codd. Ver.*

¹⁰⁶ A.'s address to God here is the incipit of Ambrose's hymn, "Deus creator omnium," cf. *Conf.* 9.12.32, which, at the day's end, gives thanks for the gift of *decore lumen*. Night does not deprive them of the true light.

¹⁰⁷ *foras*: cf. *Conf.* 10.27.38, "I was outside myself" (*ego foris*): *Conf.* 10.34.52 (*foris . . . intus*).

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Creator of All Things, that is what they receive through your hymn, and they are not deprived of it when they go to sleep:¹⁰⁶ I want to be like them. I resist visual temptations, so that my feet—which carry me along your way—are not entangled; and I lift the eyes of my spiritual sight to you, so that you can pluck my feet out of the snare. Straight-away you do pluck them out, for they are ensnared. You do not stop plucking them out (though I often get stuck fast in traps which are scattered all around), for you are the one who keeps watch over Israel, and you will neither slumber nor sleep.

Ps 25:15

Ps 121:4

(53) The objects that human beings have contributed with the purpose of providing enticements for our eyes are beyond counting—including various crafts and workmanship, clothing, footwear, pottery and other similar artifacts, paintings too, and different forms of art—and they go far beyond what is necessary in practical terms, and what is proportionate, and has some devout interpretation: apart from their real self¹⁰⁷ they pursue what they themselves create, abandoning what is within, by which they were created, and banishing their original selves. But even for such as these, my God and my glory, I sing a hymn to you, and I offer my sacrifice of praise to the one who offers the supreme sacrifice:¹⁰⁸ for the images of beauty that pass through our souls into the hands of artists originate in that Beauty which is beyond the realm of soul, and my soul sighs for it day and night. From that very source those who create outward beauty and those who then seek it out draw their capacity for appraising it: what they do

¹⁰⁸ A reference to Christ, described at *Conf.* 10.43.69 as “priest and sacrifice” (*sacerdos et sacrificium*).

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non autem inde trahunt utendi modum. et ibi est et non vident eum, ut non eant longius et fortitudinem suam ad te custodiant nec eam spargant in deliciosas lassitudines. ego autem haec loquens atque discernens etiam istis pulchris gressum innecto, sed tu evellis, domine, evellis tu, quoniam misericordia tua ante oculos meos est. nam ego capior miserabiliter, et tu evellis misericorditer aliquando non sentientem, quia suspensius incideram, aliquando cum dolore, quia iam inhaeseram.

35. (54) Huc accedit alia forma temptationis multiplicius periculosa. praeter enim concupiscentiam carnis, quae inest in delectatione omnium sensuum et voluptatum, cui servientes depereunt qui longe se faciunt a te, inest animae per eosdem sensus corporis quaedam non se oblectandi in carne, sed experiendi per carnem vana et curiosa cupiditas nomine cognitionis et scientiae palliata. quae quoniam in appetitu noscendi est, oculi autem sunt ad noscendum in sensibus principes, concupiscentia oculorum eloquio divino appellata est. ad oculos enim proprie videre pertinet, utimur autem hoc verbo etiam in ceteris sensibus, cum eos ad cognoscendum intendimus. neque enim dicimus, "audi quid rutillet," aut, "olefac quam nitteat," aut, "gusta quam splendeat," aut, "palpa quam fulgeat": videri enim dicuntur haec omnia. dicimus autem

¹⁰⁹ See *Conf.* 3.2.2 on "curiosity." ¹¹⁰ Physical desire (*concupiscentia carnis*, experienced through touch) and visual desire (*concupiscentia oculorum*, experienced through sight) are counterparts.

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not draw from that source is a rule for how to handle it. The rule is there but they do not see it. If they did they would need to go no further and could keep their strength for you, rather than squandering it on luxurious dissipation. Even as I say and perceive all this, I am still entangling my progress with these things of beauty; but you tear me away, Lord, you tear me away from them, for your mercy is before my eyes. I am pitifully captivated, but your pity for me makes you tear me away: sometimes I was unaware of it, because I had stumbled only slightly; at other times it caused me pain, because I was stuck fast.

35. (54) In addition to this comes another kind of temptation, far more dangerous in its diversity. Besides physical desire that abides in the enjoyment of all the senses and their pleasures (those who are enslaved to it perish because they set themselves at a distance from you), there is present in the soul—by the same bodily senses—a certain vain and curious craving¹⁰⁹ not for finding enjoyment for the self in what is physical, but of gaining experience through what is physical. It masquerades as a craving for knowledge and understanding. Since it consists in a hunger for knowing things, and the eyes are the principal means of knowing by the senses, in holy Scripture this is called “visual desire.”¹¹⁰ The particular property of eyes is to see things; but we apply the term figuratively to other senses, when we direct them toward understanding things. Nor do we say, “Listen to that redness!” or, “Smell that luster!” or, “How that taste glitters!” or, “Feel that gleam!” All these phenomena are described as being

Ps 59:9

Ps 26:3

1 Jn 2:16

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non solum, "vide quid luceat,"³² quod soli oculi sentire possunt, sed etiam, "vide quid sonet," "vide quid oleat," "vide quid sapiat," "vide quam durum sit." ideoque generalis experientia sensuum concupiscentia (sicut dictum est) oculorum vocatur, quia videndi officium, in quo primatum oculi tenent, etiam ceteri sensus sibi de similitudine usurpant, cum aliquid cognitionis explorant.

(55) Ex hoc autem evidentius discernitur quid voluptatis, quid curiositatis agatur per sensus, quod voluptas pulchra, canora, suavia, sapida, lenia sectatur, curiositas autem etiam his contraria temptandi causa, non ad subeundam molestiam sed experiendi noscendique libidine. quid enim voluptatis habet videre in laniato cadavere quod exhorreas? et tamen sicubi iaceat, concurrunt, ut contristentur, ut palleant. timent etiam ne in somnis hoc videant, quasi quisquam eos vigilantes videre coegerit aut pulchritudinis ulla fama persuaserit. ita et in ceteris sensibus, quae persequi longum est. ex hoc morbo cupiditatis in spectaculis exhibentur quaeque miracula. hinc ad perscrutanda naturae, quae praeter nos est, operta proceditur, quae scire nihil prodest et nihil aliud quam scire homines cupiunt. hinc etiam si quid eodem perversae scientiae fine per artes magicas quaeritur. hinc etiam in ipsa religione deus temptatur, cum signa et prodigia flagitantur non ad aliquam salutem, sed ad solam experientiam desiderata.

³² luceat *G Maur. Skut. Ver.:* lucet *S codd. Knöll*

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"seen." But we do not only say, "See how it glows!" (which only the eyes can appreciate) but also, "See what a noise!" "See what a smell!" "See what a taste!" "See how hard it is!" And so a typical sensory experience is called visual desire, as I have said; because the function of "seeing," in which the eye have pride of place, is claimed by the other senses for their own, by analogy, when they are investigating any kind of knowledge.

(55) This makes it even clearer to discern in what way pleasure and curiosity are functions of physical sensation. Pleasure pursues what is beautiful, melodious, delightful, delicious, polished; but curiosity pursues the opposite of these, purely for the sake of testing boundaries—not because it wants to endure hazards, but because of its craving for experience and understanding. What, after all, is the inherent pleasure in looking at a mangled corpse that revolts you? And yet if one happens to be lying there, people flock to it to be appalled, to turn pale. Then they are afraid that they will see the corpse in their sleep, as if someone had forced them to look at it when they were awake, or some rumor had convinced them that it was a beautiful sight. The same holds for the other senses, but it would be excessive to examine them all in detail. Monstrous sights are paraded in public shows to pander to this disease of desire. This sets in motion investigation into the secrets of nature (which are beyond our ken); it does no good to know these things, and such people want nothing else but to know. This is also what prompts some to use magical arts with the same objective, namely corrupt knowledge. And likewise even in the matter of religion they put God to the test, demanding signs and portents; they long for these not to help their own salvation but rather solely for experience's sake.

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(56) In hac tam immensa silva plena insidiarum et periculorum, ecce multa praeciderim et a meo corde dispulerim, sicut donasti me facere, deus salutis meae. attamen quando audeo dicere, cum circumquaque cotidianam vitam nostram tam multa huius generis rerum circumstrepant, quando audeo dicere nulla re tali me intentum fieri ad spectandum et vana cura capiendum? sane me iam theatra non rapiunt, nec curo nosse transitus siderum, nec anima mea umquam responsa quaesivit umbrarum; omnia sacrilega sacramenta detestor. a te, domine deus meus, cui humilem famulatum ac simplicem debeo, quantis mecum suggestionum machinationibus agit inimicus ut signum aliquod petam! sed obsecro te per regem nostrum et patriam Hierusalem simplicem, castam, ut quemadmodum a me longe est ad ista consensio, ita sit semper longe atque longius. pro salute autem cuiusquam cum te rogo, alius multum differens finis est intentionis meae, et te facientem³³ quod vis das mihi et dabis libenter sequi.

(57) Verum tamen in quam multis minutissimis et contemptibilibus rebus curiositas cotidie nostra temptetur et quam saepe labamur, quis enumerat? quotiens narrantes inania primo quasi toleramus, ne offendamus

³³ facientem *codd. edd.*: faciente S G Knöll Skut.

¹¹¹ *Circumstrepant*, recalling *Conf.* 3.1.1.

¹¹² Cf. *Conf.* 4.2.3. Christian principle forbade it as a form of divination, but it is present in Scripture (Lv 20:27, I Sm 28:3-25).

¹¹³ Satan.

¹¹⁴ Cf. *Ep.* 55.20.37: "As for people who tell the future by using pages from the gospels, even if that is preferable to their

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(56) Look! In this endless forest full of traps and dangers, I have already pruned away much material and driven it from my heart, according to the ability you have given me, O God of my salvation. Even so, when can I presume to say—since such a multitude of trials of this kind surrounds our daily life on every side with uproar¹¹¹—when can I presume to say that nothing of this kind makes me concentrate on looking at things, or preoccupies me with vain concern? The theaters definitely hold no attraction for me any longer; and I have no interest in understanding the movements of the stars, while my soul has never attempted necromancy.¹¹² I abhor all blasphemous rites. But still, even though I owe you humble and single-hearted service, O Lord my God, what a quantity of artifice and insinuation the Enemy¹¹³ uses against me, to make me ask for a sign!¹¹⁴ I beseech you, by our King, and by Jerusalem our home, true and pure: however distant I keep myself from that kind of complicity, keep it far away, and even further away, for ever! When I ask you to save someone, though, my motivation has a quite different goal; you let me—and will go on letting me—follow you gladly, as you carry out your will.

(57) Our curiosity is put to the test every day, in so many mean and petty ways; who can count up how often we fall? Whenever we initially manage to endure people who tell stories with no substance to them (so as not to

Rom 15:1

rushing to consult demons, nevertheless I disapprove of the practice; because it seeks to divert the divine texts, which describe a different kind of life, to the vanity of this earthly life, and to everyday business.” This is qualitatively different for A. from the true sign he was given at *Conf.* 8.12.29.

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infirmos, deinde paulatim libenter advertimus. canem currentem post leporem iam non specto cum in circo fit; at vero in agro, si casu transeam, avertit me fortassis et ab aliqua magna cogitatione atque ad se convertit illa venatio, non deviare cogens corpore iumentum sed cordis inclinatione, et nisi iam mihi demonstrata infirmitate mea cito admoneas aut ex ipsa visione per aliquam considerationem in te adsurgere aut totum contemnere atque transire, vanus hebesco. quid cum me domi sedentem stelio muscas captans vel aranea retibus suis inruentes implicans saepe intentum facit? num quia parva sunt animalia, ideo non res eadem geritur? pergo inde ad laudandum te, creatorem mirificum atque ordinatorem rerum omnium, sed non inde esse intentus incipio. aliud est cito surgere, aliud est non cadere. et talibus vita mea plena est, et una spes mea magna valde misericordia tua. cum enim huiusmodi rerum conceptaculum fit cor nostrum et portat copiosae vanitatis catervas, hinc et orationes nostrae saepe interrumpuntur atque turbantur, et ante conspectum tuum, dum ad aures tuas vocem cordis intendimus, nescio unde inruentibus nugatoriis cogitationibus res tanta praeciditur.

36. (58) Numquid etiam hoc inter contemnenda deputabimus, aut aliquid nos reducet in spem nisi nota misericordia tua, quoniam coepisti mutare nos? et tu scis quanta

¹¹⁵ GM note: "It is precisely this interest in things external—not often found in combination with introspective powers such as his—which makes A.'s style so vivid."

¹¹⁶ On A.'s intellectual approach to the natural world, see Cunningham, *S Austin*, 137–41, with *Doctr. Chr.* 2.23.59–28.72, 45.110–46.114. ¹¹⁷ Cf. *Conf.* 10.3.4.

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shock the weak), we gradually begin to pay attention willingly. I do not watch a hound chasing past a hare when it takes place at the circus; but if it happens in an open field, and I happen to be passing, that pursuit grips my attention and diverts my thoughts from some weighty reflection onto itself. It is not the physical movement of my horse, but my heart's propensity, that forces a change of course. Once my own weakness has been made clear to me, you quickly warn me that unless I use the sight of that spectacle to produce some kind of reflection that helps me to ascend to you (or to dismiss the sight and move on) I become less receptive, a vain creature.¹¹⁵ What about when I am sitting at home and the sight of a lizard catching flies, or a spider entangling anything that blunders into its webs, often has me riveted? Surely the fact that these are small creatures makes no difference to the matter in hand? Indeed I proceed from that to praising you, wonderful Creator, Governor of all things: but my attention does not stem from that. It is one thing to arise swiftly; but another not to fall in the first place.¹¹⁶ My life is full of such moments, and my only hope is your overwhelming mercy. For when our heart is a receptacle for this kind of stuff, and carries a teeming multitude of vanities, our prayers are also frequently interrupted and disturbed: before your eyes, while we are directing the voice of our heart for you to hear, our serious business is cut short by an invasion of trivial thoughts from who knows where.

Ps 86:13

36. (58) Shall we reckon this tendency as one of the things we repudiate? Is there anything that will take us back to our hope, except for your mercy?—for you have begun to change us.¹¹⁷ You know the extent to which you

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ex parte mutaveris, qui me primitus sanas a libidine vindicandi me, ut propitius fias etiam ceteris omnibus iniquitatibus meis, et sanes omnes languores meos, et redimas de corruptione vitam meam, et coronas me in miseratione et misericordia, et saties in bonis desiderium meum, qui compressisti a timore tuo superbiam meam et mansuefecisti iugo tuo cervicem meam. et nunc porto illud, et lene est mihi, quoniam sic promisisti et fecisti; et vere sic erat, et nesciebam, quando id subire metuebam.

(59) Sed numquid, domine, qui solus sine typho dominaris, quia solus verus dominus es, qui non habes dominum, numquid hoc quoque tertium temptationis genus cessavit a me aut cessare in hac tota vita potest, timeri et amari velle ab hominibus, non propter aliud sed ut inde sit gaudium quod non est gaudium? misera vita est et foeda iactantia; hinc fit vel maxime non amare te nec caste timere te, ideoque tu superbis resistis, humilibus autem das gratiam, et intonas super ambitiones saeculi, et contremunt fundamenta montium. itaque nobis, quoniam propter quaedam humanae societatis officia necessarium est amari et timeri ab hominibus, instat adversarius verae beatitudinis nostrae, ubique spargens in laqueis "euge! euge!" ut, dum avidè conligimus, incaute capiamur et a veritate tua gaudium nostrum deponamus atque in hominum fallacia ponamus, libeatque nos amari et timeri non propter te sed pro te, atque isto modo sui similes factos

¹¹⁸ The yoke is a common figure for taming and subjection: as of beasts of burden, so of human beings. By analogy, the neck becomes a figure for pride (as in, e.g., "stiff-necked").

¹¹⁹ Satan again, the Adversary or Enemy.

¹²⁰ Cf. *Conf.* 1.13.21.

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have changed me; for at the outset you cure me of my craving for justifying myself so that you can be forgiving toward all my other sins, and cure all my weaknesses, and redeem my life from corruption, and crown me with mercy and pity, and satisfy my desire with good things; you have used my fear of you to suppress my pride, and schooled my neck to bear your yoke.¹¹⁸ Now I bear it, and its weight is not burdensome to me, for that is what you have promised and accomplished: this was truly how it was, and I did not know it, in the days when I was afraid to bend my neck to it.

Ps 103:3-5

Mt 11:30

(59) Lord, you alone have dominion free from pride, for you are the only true lord, and no one is lord over you: can it be that the third kind of temptation has left me, or ever can leave me in the whole of this earthly life—namely the desire to be revered and loved by other people, not for the sake of something else, but only as a means to the kind of joy which is not joy at all? What a pitiful life is this, and what a vile form of boasting! It is this, perhaps more than anything else, that makes people fail to love you or revere you with integrity; and so you resist the proud, but give grace to the humble. Then you thunder over the world's ambitions, and the foundations of the mountains shake. The one who is hostile to our true bliss¹¹⁹ threatens those of us who must of necessity be loved and revered by other people, on account of the particular roles we play in human society. All around us he scatters plaudits—"Well done! Well done!"¹²⁰—as traps: so when we gather them eagerly we are caught unawares; we set our joy apart from your truth and put it in human deceits instead. Then we enjoy being loved and revered not because of you, but instead of you. In this way the Enemy has us in his grasp,

Is 37:20; Jn 17:3

1 Jn 2:16

Jas 4:6; 1 Pt 5:5; cf. Prv 3:34

2 Sm 22:8; Pss 18:7, 13

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secum habeat, non ad concordiam caritatis sed ad consortium supplicii, qui statuit sedem suam ponere in aquilone, ut te perversa et distorta via imitanti tenebrosi frigidique servirent.

Nos autem, domine, pusillus grex tuus ecce sumus, tu nos posside. praetende alas tuas, et fugiamus sub eas. gloria nostra tu esto; propter te amemur et verbum tuum timeatur³⁴ in nobis. qui laudari vult ab hominibus vituperante te, non defendetur ab hominibus iudicante te nec eripietur damnante te. cum autem non peccator laudatur in desideriis animae suae, nec qui iniqua gerit benedicitur,³⁵ sed laudatur homo propter aliquod donum quod dedisti ei, at ille plus gaudet sibi laudari se quam ipsum donum habere unde laudatur, etiam iste te vituperante laudatur, et melior iam ille qui laudavit quam iste qui laudatus est. illi enim placuit in homine donum dei, huic amplius placuit donum hominis quam dei.

37. (60) Temptamur his temptationibus cotidie, domine, sine cessatione temptamur. cotidiana fornax nostra est humana lingua. imperas nobis et in hoc genere continentiam: da quod iubes et iube quod vis. tu nosti de hac

³⁴ verbum tuum timeatur *codd. edd.*: timeamur S

³⁵ benedicitur *codd. Maur. Knöll Skut.*: benedicetur O S Ver.

OD

¹²¹ Here Hell is imagined, after Isaiah, as a place of cold rather than heat.

¹²² Rhetorical artistry is less prominent in *Conf.* 10 than in earlier books; but here is a tricolon with assonance and rhyme (*vituperante . . . iudicante . . . damnante*). ¹²³ I.e., the speech of others is a form of testing, like gold in a furnace.

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and has made us like him, and not for a union of love, but for a partnership in punishment. He decided to set his throne in the north to make people serve him, in the chill of darkness, as he imitates you with this corrupted and distorted approach.¹²¹ Is 14:13-15

Look, Lord—we are your little flock, take us for your own. Spread your wings, and let us take refuge under them. Be our glory, let us be loved, and let your word be revered in us, for your sake. Anyone who wants to be praised by others when you rebuke them will not be defended by others when you judge them, and they will not be rescued when you condemn them.¹²² At times it is not the case that a sinner is praised for the desires of his soul nor is the wrongdoer blessed, but instead each person is praised because of the particular gift which you have bestowed on them: if someone nevertheless rejoices more at being praised than in possessing that same gift which prompts the praise, then that person is accepting praise in the face of your rebuke. Then even those who offer the praise are better than the person who accepts it—at least their pleasure was in God's gift in another human being; unlike those who preferred what human beings, rather than God, could give them. Lk 12:32
Is 26:13
Ps 10:3

37. (60) Every day, Lord, we are tested by these temptations, ceaselessly we are tested. The human tongue is our daily furnace.¹²³ In this respect also you order us to practice continence.¹²⁴ Give what you command, and command what you will.¹²⁵ On this subject you know how Prv 27:21

¹²⁴ For the range of meaning of this word, cf. *Conf.* 5.10.18, 6.12.21, 8.7.17, 9.3.6, with OD Vol. 3, 44, and below, *Conf.* 10.37.61. ¹²⁵ Cf. *Conf.* 10.29.40.

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re ad te gemitum cordis mei et flumina oculorum meorum. neque enim facile conligo quam sim ab ista peste mundatior, et multum timeo occulta mea, quae norunt oculi tui, mei autem non. est enim qualiscumque in aliis generibus temptationum mihi facultas explorandi me, in hoc paene nulla est. nam et a voluptatibus carnis et a curiositate supervacanea cognoscendi video quantum adsecutus sim posse refrenare animum meum, cum eis rebus careo vel voluntate vel cum absunt. tunc enim me interrogo quam magis minusve mihi molestum sit non habere. divitiae vero, quae ob hoc expetuntur, ut alicui trium istarum cupiditatum vel duabus earum vel omnibus serviant, si persentiscere non potest animus utrum eas habens contemnat, possunt et dimitti, ut se probet. laude vero ut careamus atque in eo experiamur quid possumus, numquid male vivendum est et tam perditae atque immaniter, ut nemo nos noverit qui non detestetur? quae maior dementia dici aut cogitari potest? at si bonae vitae bonorumque operum comes et solet et debet esse laudatio, tam comitatum eius quam ipsam bonam vitam deserere non oportet. non autem sentio, sine quo esse aut aequo animo aut aegre possim, nisi cum afuerit.

(61) Quid igitur tibi in hoc genere temptationis, domine, confiteor? quid, nisi delectari me laudibus? sed amplius ipsa veritate quam laudibus. nam si mihi proponatur

¹²⁶ Cf. *Conf.* 10.30.41.

¹²⁷ A vivid archaic verb, *persentiscere*.

¹²⁸ Some ascetics did court disgust in such a way. A.'s disciple and biographer Possidius (ca. AD 370–ca. 440) notes of his appearance (*Vita* 22.1) that "it was moderate and appropriate, neither too smart nor too humble" (*ex moderato et competenti habitu erant, nec nitida nimium, nec abiecta plurimum*).

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my heart groans to you, and the rivers of tears my eyes have shed. It is difficult for me to gather how far I am cleansed of that disease, and I am very afraid of my secret faults which are clear to your eyes, but not to mine. In respect of other kinds of temptation I have a fair degree of capacity for self-examination, but on this one, practically none. I can observe how much progress I have made in curbing my mind from physical pleasures, and from any idle curiosity for understanding things when I go without those things, either through deliberate choice, or because opportunities for them are lacking. Then I examine myself: how much more or less burdensome was it to go without them? As for riches, which are pursued for the sake of supplying the demands of one, or two, or all three of those desires,¹²⁶ if the mind cannot perceive clearly¹²⁷ whether it can possess riches and at the same time despise them, it is always possible to be rid of them, as a way of testing oneself. As for praise, to do without it and so test what we are capable of, surely we ought not to live in such a base manner, and with such wild depravity, that everyone who knows us loathes us? Surely no greater madness could be uttered or contemplated?¹²⁸ But if praise is usually—and should be—accompanied by a good way of life and good works, we should no more abandon its company than we should abandon that good way of life. But I have no sense of my ability to do without something either with equanimity or difficulty, except when it is actually absent.

(61) Lord, what am I therefore to confess to you concerning this type of temptation? What else but that I take pleasure in being praised! But I delight more in truth itself than in praises. If I were given a choice whether to be out

Ps 38:8

Ps 19:12

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utrum malim furens aut in omnibus rebus errans ab omnibus hominibus laudari, an constans et in veritate certissimus ab omnibus vituperari, video quid eligam. verum tamen nollem, ut vel augeter mihi gaudium cuiuslibet boni mei suffragatio oris alieni. sed auget, fateor, non solum, sed et vituperatio minuit.

Et cum ista miseria mea perturbor, subintrat mihi excusatio, quae qualis sit, tu scis, deus; nam me incertum facit. quia enim nobis imperasti non tantum continentiam (id est a quibus rebus amorem cohibeamus), verum etiam iustitiam (id est quo eum conferamus), nec te tantum voluisti a nobis verum etiam proximum diligere, saepe mihi videor de propectu aut spe proximi delectari, cum bene intellegentis laude delector, et rursus eius malo contristari, cum eum audio vituperare quod aut ignorat aut bonum est. nam et contristor aliquando laudibus meis, cum vel ea laudantur in me in quibus mihi ipse displiceo, vel etiam bona minora et levia pluris aestimantur quam aestimanda sunt. sed rursus unde scio an propterea sic afficior, quia nolo de me ipso a me dissentire laudatorem meum, non quia illius utilitate moveor, sed quia eadem bona quae mihi in me placent iucundiora mihi sunt, cum et alteri placent? quodam modo enim non ego laudor, cum de me sententia mea non laudatur, quandoquidem aut illa lau-

¹²⁹ A. divides ethics between *continentia* (negative: evils not committed) and *iustitia* (positive: goods committed).

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of control and sinful in every way while everyone was praising me, or standing firm and sure in the truth and being criticized by everyone, I am clear which I would choose. And yet I would not want another person's approval to increase my delight in some good which I possess. But I have to admit that not only does approval increase my delight—conversely criticism diminishes it.

So when I am troubled by my pitiful state, an excuse worms its way into me: you know it, O my God, for what it is worth, for it makes me unsure of myself. Not only have you required of us self-control (this means constraining our love for certain things) but also righteousness (this is the means where we direct that love).¹²⁹ You have willed that we should love not only you but also our neighbor; but I often seem to be pleased by the progress made by a neighbor (or the promise of it), when what pleases me is praise coming from someone who clearly understands me. On the other hand I am saddened by such neighbors' failings, when I hear them criticizing something that either they do not understand, or something that is good. I am even saddened at times by the praises I receive: either when whatever is praised is something with which I am discontented in myself, or when modest and trivial achievements are rated more highly than they should be. But again, how do I know if I am influenced on this account, because I do not want the person who praises me to hold a different opinion from mine on the subject of myself—not because I am motivated by that person's well-being, but because the same goods that I am contented with in myself give me more pleasure when others admire them too? In one way, when my opinion of myself is not praised, I myself am not praised, since either those quali-

Dt 6:5; Mt
22:37-39

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dantur quae mihi displicent, aut illa amplius quae mihi minus placent. ergone de hoc incertus sum mei?

(62) Ecce in te, veritas, video non me laudibus meis propter me, sed propter proximi utilitatem moveri oportere. et utrum ita sim, nescio. minus mihi in hac re notus sum ipse quam tu. obsecro te, deus meus, et me ipsum mihi indica, ut confitear oraturis pro me fratribus meis quod in me saucium comperero. iterum me diligentius interrogem. si utilitate proximi moveor in laudibus meis, cur minus moveor si quisquam alius iniuste vituperetur quam si ego? cur ea contumelia magis mordeor quae in me quam quae in alium eadem iniquitate coram me iacitur? an et hoc nescio? etiamne id restat, ut ipse me seducam et verum non faciam coram te in corde et lingua mea? insaniam istam, domine, longe fac a me, ne oleum peccatoris mihi sit os meum ad impingandum caput meum.

38. (63) Egenus et pauper ego sum, et melior in occulto gemitu displicens mihi et quaerens misericordiam tuam, donec reficiatur defectus meus et perficiatur usque in pacem quam nescit arrogantis oculus. sermo autem ore procedens et facta quae innotescunt hominibus habent temptationem periculosissimam ab amore laudis, qui ad

¹³⁰ See *Ser.* 339.1, "On the Day of his Ordination" (*die ordinationis suae*): "I have no wish, indeed I hate, to be praised by those who live immoral lives: it is a pain, not a pleasure to me. But to be praised by those who live righteously, I would be lying if I said I do not want that! But if I say I did want it, I am afraid of being more eager for what is insubstantial than what is real. Conclusion? I neither desire it entirely, nor reject it entirely."

¹³¹ *En. Ps.* 140.13 [v. 5]: "False praise is flattery: the false praise of a flatterer is what the text means by 'the oil of a sinner.'"

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ties which displease me are praised or those which please me less are praised more. Is this the reason why I am unsure of myself in this matter?

(62) Look, O Truth! In you I see that I ought to be affected by praises I receive not for my own sake, but for the sake of my neighbor's wellbeing.¹³⁰ But I do not know whether I am or not. In this matter I know myself less well than I know you. I beg you, O my God, make me clear to myself as well (so that I can confess to my brothers, who will pray for me) what is the wound that I have discovered in myself. Once again I must question myself carefully. If it matters to me, when I am praised, that it does my neighbor some good, why does it matter less to me if some other person is criticized unfairly than if I am criticized myself? Why am I consumed more by an insult hurled at myself than one which is just as unfairly cast at someone else? Do I really not know the answer to this? Or is it in fact the case that I deceive myself, and I do not behave honestly in your presence, either in my thinking or speaking? Make this madness far from me, O Lord, to stop my own mouth from being a sinner's oil for anointing my head.¹³¹

Gal 6:3; 1 Jn 1:8

Ps 141:5

38. (63) I am poor and needy, but I am in a better state when I bemoan the fact in secret, discontented with myself, and seek your mercy until my faults are restored and perfected toward that peace which the eye of the proud does not see. The speech that issues from a person's mouth and the actions that become known to others carry a grave risk because of that love of praise, which wheedles support

Ps 109:22

cf. Is 2:11,
5:15; Ps
18:27

OD notes, "The underlying concern, never closer to the surface than here, [is] for the worthiness of A. himself as bishop."

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privatam quandam excellentiam contrahit emendicata suffragia. temptat et cum a me in me arguitur, eo ipso quo arguitur, et saepe de ipso vanae gloriae contemptu vanius gloriatur, ideoque non iam de ipso contemptu gloriae gloriatur: non enim eam contemnit cum gloriatur.

39. (64) Intus etiam, intus est aliud in eodem genere temptationis malum, quo inanescunt qui placent sibi de se, quamvis aliis vel non placeant vel displiceant nec placere affectent ceteris. sed sibi placentes multum tibi displicent, non tantum de non bonis quasi bonis, verum etiam de bonis tuis quasi suis, aut etiam sicut de tuis, sed tamquam ex meritis suis, aut etiam sicut ex tua gratia, non tamen socialiter gaudentes, sed aliis invidentes eam. in his omnibus atque in huiuscemodi periculis et laboribus vides tremorem cordis mei, et vulnera mea magis subinde a te sanari quam mihi non infligi sentio.

40. (65) Ubi non mecum ambulasti, veritas, docens quid caveam et quid appetam, cum ad te referrem inferiora visa mea quae potui, teque consulerem? lustravi mundum foris sensu quo potui, et attendi vitam corporis mei de me sensusque ipsos meos. inde ingressus sum in reces-

¹³² A. sees no human escape from the circle of doing good leading to being praised, evoking self-satisfaction. On *gloria* as a motivating factor in Roman history and politics, see *De civ. D.* 5.13.

¹³³ The distinctive Latin phrase *socialiter gaudentes* resurfaces in the medieval Bernard of Morlas' long poem *De Contemptu Mundi* ("On Contempt for the World"), part of which (*urbs Syon aurea, patria lactea*) is familiar from J. M. Neale's rendering, "Jerusalem the Golden . . . what social joys are there." See Raby, *Christian-Latin Poetry*, 316-17.

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out of people in order to accrue a personal reputation for greatness. It even puts me to the test when I condemn myself for that very fault in me, because of the fact that I am condemning myself; and in its actual contempt for vainglory it often glories with greater vanity: for anyone who is glorying in it cannot really be condemning it.¹³²

39. (64) Within us, yes within us, there is another evil from the same category of temptations. Some people grow indolent through being pleased with themselves even though other people either do not like them, or actively dislike them, for they make no effort to be liked. But though they are pleased with themselves, they are far from pleasing to you: this is because they not only regard as good things which are not good; they also treat goods which are yours as their own; or, if they do treat them as yours, they still take credit for them; or they treat them as coming by your grace, but still do not share that rejoicing in company with others,¹³³ and instead begrudge that grace to others. In all these examples, and in such dangers and toils you see the trembling of my heart; I am aware that you are healing my wounds, though I continue to inflict them on myself.

40. (65) Is there any place, O Truth, where you have not walked beside me, teaching me what to eschew and what to pursue, when I used to refer to you such meager insights as I was capable of, and when I used to ask your guidance?¹³⁴ I traversed the external world making what use I could of my senses and I looked closely at the life that my body gets from me, and my own senses. Then I

¹³⁴ This section picks up the mysticism of *Conf.* 10.37.48, and recapitulates the Ostia vision of *Conf.* 9.10.24–25.

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sus memoriae meae, multiplices amplitudines plenas miris modis copiarum innumerabilium, et consideravi et expavi, et nihil eorum discernere potui sine te et nihil eorum esse te inveni. nec ego ipse inventor, qui peragravi omnia et distinguere et pro suis quaeque dignitatibus aestimarè conatus sum, excipiens alia nuntiantibus sensibus et interrogans, alia mecum commixta sentiens ipsosque nuntios dinoscens atque dinumerans iamque in memoriae latis³⁶ opibus alia pertractans, alia recondens, alia eruens. nec ego ipse cum haec agerem, id est vis mea qua id agebam, nec ipsa eras tu, quia lux es tu permanens quam de omnibus consulebam, an essent, quid essent, quanti pendenda essent, et audiebam docentem ac iubentem. et saepe istuc facio. hoc me delectat, et ab actionibus necessitatis, quantum relaxari possum, ad istam voluptatem refugio. neque in his omnibus quae percurro consulens te invenio tutum locum animae meae nisi in te, quo conligantur sparsa mea nec a te quicquam recedat ex me.

Et aliquando intromittis me in affectum multum inusitatum introrsus, ad nescio quam dulcedinem, quae si perficiatur in me, nescio quid erit quod vita ista non erit. sed recido in haec aerumnosis ponderibus et resorbeor solitis

³⁶ memoriae latis *S Maur. Knöll Skut. Ver.:* memoriae laetis *C D:* memoria elatis *codd.*

¹³⁵ Cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* 4.8.1, where he describes a similar mystical experience, including "living the best life" (*ζωήν τε ἀρίστην ἐνεργήσας*), but he cannot make the vision endure either.

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penetrated the farthest reaches of my memory, those various dimensions miraculously full of riches beyond counting. Then I examined them closely, and I was dismayed, and I could distinguish nothing of them without you, and I found that none of them was you. Nor was I the originator, though I had traversed all things and tried to demarcate and evaluate each thing in accordance with its particular qualities. I accepted some things just as my senses communicated them and so investigated them; other things I perceived to be inherent in me, and I differentiated the senses as they brought me information, and counted them up, and now in the broad wealth of memory some things I handled, others I hid away, and yet others I forced to the fore. Nor was I myself when I was doing all this (which is to say the ability which enabled me to act) nor were you that ability of mine, for you are everlasting Light, and I asked your guidance on everything—what existed, what things were, what they were worth: and I listened as you taught me and laid commands upon me. I often do this, for it brings me pleasure, and whenever I have time to myself, I abandon matters of business and have recourse to that pleasure. I consult you on every matter in which I busy myself, and I find that there is no safe place for my soul except in you; you bind my shattered self together, and no part of me can fall away from you.

Sometimes you draw me deep within into an experience like no other, to an inexplicable pleasure. If that pleasure were perfected in me, I do not know what could possibly be lacking from such a life, but I am weighed down and encumbered, and fall back into this existence, and I am sucked back into accustomed ways, and am held fast and though I weep much, I am much confined.¹³⁵ So

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et teneor et multum fleo, sed multum teneor. tantum consuetudinis sarcina digna est! hic esse valeo nec volo, illic volo nec valeo, miser utrubique.

41. (66) Ideoque consideravi languores peccatorum meorum in cupiditate triplici, et dexteram tuam invocavi ad salutem meam. vidi enim splendorem tuum corde saucio et repercussus dixi, "quis illuc potest?" proiectus sum a facie oculorum tuorum. tu es veritas super omnia praesidens, at ego per avaritiam meam non amittere te volui, sed volui tecum possidere mendacium, sicut nemo vult ita falsum dicere, ut nesciat ipse quid verum sit. itaque amisi te, quia non dignaris cum mendacio possideri.

42. (67) Quem invenirem qui me reconciliaret tibi? ambiendum mihi fuit ad angelos? qua prece? quibus sacramentis? multi conantes ad te redire neque per se ipsos valentes, sicut audio, temptaverunt haec, et inciderunt in desiderium curiosarum visionum, et digni habitus sunt inlusionibus. elati enim te quaerebant doctrinae fastu exserentes potius quam tundentes pectora, et adduxerunt sibi per similitudinem cordis sui conspirantes et socias superbiae suae potestates aeris huius, a quibus per potentias magicas deciperentur, quaerentes mediatorem per

¹³⁶ A. variously interprets God's "right hand" as a "blessing of grace" (*En. Ps.* 17.36, on Ps 18:35), or as Christ, "We understand that the 'hand of God' is Christ" (*En. Ps.* 108.29, on Ps 109:27). See Knauer, "Psalmenzitate," 121-22n4.

¹³⁷ Not the Christian sacraments but the divination rituals of the Platonists: A. parallels angels ("the angels are those sent to announce the will of God to humanity") with their gods or demons and denounces theurgy (*De civ. D.* 9.23.3, 10.26).

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much for the value of the burden of habit! I have strength enough to exist here on earth, but wish I did not; I want to be in that other place, but have not the strength for it. In both respects I am pitiable.

41. (66) I have now surveyed the weakness of my sins according to this threefold pattern of desire, and I have invoked your right hand¹³⁶ to save me. In my wounded heart I have looked upon your splendor and been thrust back, and I have said, "Who can attain to that?" I have been cast out from before your eyes. You are truth reigning above all things, and in my greed I did not want to lose you, but I wanted to keep hold of falsehood as well as having you—just as conversely no one wants to tell so many lies that they lose their sense of what is true. So I lost you, because you do not consent to be possessed in company with deceit.

Ps 31:22

42. (67) Who could I find to reconcile me to you? Should I go to the angels for support? How would I pray to them? What rites would I use?¹³⁷ I have heard of many who try to return to you and have not sufficient strength in themselves; they then tried out these practices, and sank into a lust for visions to satisfy their curiosity, and so were considered as deserving their delusions. Arrogant as they were they sought you with pride in their learning, puffing up their chests rather than beating their breasts:¹³⁸ they attracted accomplices for themselves through their like-mindedness, and made the powers of the air allies in their pride. By forces of sorcery those powers deceived the people who came seeking a mediator¹³⁹ to cleanse them:

Eph 2:2

¹³⁸ OD: "A Christian gesture." It expresses penitence; cf. Lk 18:13. ¹³⁹ Between divine and human.

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quem purgarentur, et non erat. diabolus enim erat transfigurans se in angelum lucis, et multum inlexit superbam carnem, quod carneo corpore ipse non esset. erant enim illi mortales et peccatores, tu autem, domine, cui reconciliari superbe quaerebant,³⁷ immortalis et sine peccato. mediator autem inter deum et homines oportebat ut haberet aliquid simile deo, aliquid simile hominibus, ne in utroque hominibus similis longe esset a deo, aut in utroque deo similis longe esset ab hominibus atque ita mediator non esset. fallax itaque ille mediator, quo per secreta iudicia tua superbia meretur inludi,³⁸ unum cum hominibus habet, id est peccatum, aliud videri vult habere cum deo, ut, quia carnis mortalitate non tegitur, pro immortalis se ostendet. sed quia stipendium peccati mors est, hoc habet commune cum hominibus, unde simul damnetur in mortem.

43. (68) Verax autem mediator, quem secreta tua misericordia demonstrasti hominibus et misisti, ut eius exemplo etiam ipsam discerent humilitatem, mediator ille dei et hominum, homo Christus Iesus, inter mortales peccatores et immortalem iustum apparuit, mortalis cum hominibus,³⁹ iustus cum deo, ut, quoniam stipendium iustitiae vita et pax est, per iustitiam coniunctam deo evacua-

³⁷ superbe quaerebant *codd. edd.*: volebant S

³⁸ meretur inludi C D O Skut. Ver.: mereretur inludi G Maur.: meretur indui S Knöll.

³⁹ hominibus S G Knöll Skut.: humilibus C D O Maur. Ver.

¹⁴⁰ On *caro* ("flesh"; meaning the earthly, physical, self or selves), see Vol. 1, 10-11n17.

¹⁴¹ Elsewhere A. refers to his having an "aerial body," *corpus aerium* (*Gn. Litt.* 11.13.17).

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but there was none. There was only the Devil, transforming himself into an angel of light; far and wide he seduced proud flesh,¹⁴⁰ for he himself had no fleshly body.¹⁴¹ They were mortal beings, sinners; but you, Lord, are immortal and without sin; and in their pride they were trying to be reconciled to you. It was for the mediator between God and humanity to possess some of God's qualities, and some of humanity's; to preclude his being on both sides like humanity (and so far from God), or being on both sides like God (and so far from humanity)—for then he could not be a mediator. So that false mediator, who—in accordance with your mysterious judgments—made pride to merit mockery, does have one thing in common with humanity. That one thing is sin. Yet there is something else he wants to appear to have in common with God, so that because he is not clothed in the mortality of human flesh, he can parade himself as an immortal. But because the wages of sin is death, he has this in common with humanity, and from this both should be condemned to death together.¹⁴²

2 Cor 11:14

1 Tm 2:5

Rom 6:23

43. (68) In your mysterious mercy, however, you have first made known, and then sent to humanity, the true Mediator; so that by his example they would learn true humility. He is that mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus, who was made visible standing between mortal sinners and immortal righteousness: sharing mortality with humanity, and righteousness with God. Since the wages of righteousness is life and peace, through the righteousness which bound him to God he rendered

1 Tm 2:5

Rom 8:6

1 Cor 15:55
Tm 1:10;
Rom 4:5

¹⁴² For A. God alone has immortality in the sense of never having not existed; cf. *Trin.* 1.1.2.

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mortem iustificatorum impiorum, quam cum illis voluit habere communem. hic demonstratus est antiquis sanctis, ut ita ipsi per fidem futurae passionis eius, sicut nos per fidem praeteritae, salvi fierent. in quantum enim homo, in tantum mediator, in quantum autem verbum, non medius, quia aequalis deo et deus apud deum et simul unus deus.

(69) Quomodo⁴⁰ nos amasti, pater bone, qui filio tuo unico non pepercisti, sed pro nobis impiis tradidisti eum! quomodo nos amasti, pro quibus ille, non rapinam arbitratu esse aequalis tibi, factus est subditus usque ad mortem crucis, unus ille in mortuis liber, potestatem habens ponendi animam suam et potestatem habens iterum sumendi eam, pro nobis tibi victor et victima, et ideo victor quia victima, pro nobis tibi sacerdos et sacrificium, et ideo sacerdos quia sacrificium, faciens tibi nos de servis filios de te nascendo, nobis serviendo. merito mihi spes valida in illo est, quod sanabis omnes languores meos per eum qui sedet ad dexteram tuam et te interpellat pro nobis; alioquin desperarem. multi enim et magni sunt idem languores, multi sunt et magni, sed amplior est medicina tua. potuimus putare verbum tuum remotum esse a conjunctione hominis et desperare de nobis, nisi caro fieret et habitaret in nobis.

⁴⁰ quomodo *codd. edd.*: in quantum S

¹⁴³ This answer to the problem of righteous people before the time of Christ anticipates arguments during the Pelagian controversy.

¹⁴⁴ In *En. Ps.* 87.5, A. remarks, "Who else among mortals is free, except him who, in the likeness of sinful flesh, alone among sinners, is without sin?"

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void the death of sinners now made righteous—that death which he was willing to have in common with them. So he was made known to the saints of old so that they could be saved by their faith in his Passion which was yet to come, just as we are saved by faith in that Passion now that it has taken place.¹⁴³ Only inasmuch as he is human is he a mediator: inasmuch as he is the Word, he is not set in the middle, because he is God's equal, and God with God, and both together are one God.

1 Tm 2:4-5

Phil 2:6

Jn 1:1

(69) How you have loved us, good Father! You did not spare your only Son, but for us—while we were still sinners—you gave him up! How you have loved us! For our sake he did not think it robbery to be your equal, but was made humble, even to the death of the Cross. He alone was free among the dead,¹⁴⁴ he possessed the power to lay down his own life¹⁴⁵ and the power to take it up again, for us he became both victor and victim in your sight, and in fact he became a victor precisely because he was a victim, for us he was both priest and sacrifice before you, and in fact he became a priest precisely because he was a sacrifice. He made us your children instead of your slaves, by being born of you, yet becoming our servant. Deservedly my strong hope is in him, for you will heal all my infirmities through him who sits at your right hand and intercedes with you on our behalf. If it were not so I would be in despair. Many and great are my infirmities, many and great! But your medicine is more abundant still. We could imagine your Word to be far from any kind of union with humanity—and to despair of ourselves—had he not become flesh and dwelt among us.

Jn 10:17-18

Hb 9:28

Hb 7:27

Gal 4:7

Ps 103:3

Rom 8:32

Jn 1:14

¹⁴⁵ *anima* (usually translated "soul").

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(70) Conterritus peccatis meis et mole miseriae meae agitaveram corde meditatusque fueram fugam in solitudinem, sed prohibuisti me et confirmasti⁴¹ me dicens, "ideo Christus pro omnibus mortuus est, ut qui vivunt iam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est." ecce, domine, iacto in te curam meam, ut vivam, et considerabo mirabilia de lege tua. tu scis imperitiam meam et infirmitatem meam: doce me et sana me. ille tuus unicus, in quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae absconditi, redemit me sanguine suo. non calumnientur mihi superbi, quoniam cogito pretium meum, et manduco et bibo et erogo et pauper cupio saturari ex eo inter illos qui edunt et saturantur. et laudant⁴² dominum qui requirunt eum.⁴³

⁴¹ confirmasti *codd. Maur. Ver.:* confortasti *S Knöll Skut.*

⁴² laudant *codd. Maur. Ver.:* laudabunt *S Knöll Skut.*

⁴³ eum *S C D G Knöll Skut. Ver.:* eum. amen. *O Maur.*

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(70) I was petrified because of my sins, and the burden of my own wretchedness. I had been turning over in my heart—and thinking hard about—running away to be alone,¹⁴⁶ but you forbade me, and encouraged me, saying, “For this reason Christ died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him for died for them.” Look, Lord! I cast my care upon you so that I may live; and I shall contemplate the wonderful works of your law. You know how ignorant and weak I am: teach me and heal me. He is your only Son;¹⁴⁷ in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden, and he has redeemed me¹⁴⁸ by his blood. Let not the proud condemn me, because I am thinking about what I cost to ransom; because I eat and drink it;¹⁴⁹ I distribute it; and, poor as I am, I long to be satisfied by him, and be counted among those who eat and are satisfied. And those who seek the Lord do praise him.¹⁵⁰

2 Cor 5:15

Ps 55:22

Ps 119:17-18

Ps 69:5

Pss 25:5, 6:2

Col 2:2-3

Jn 6:54

Lk 16:21

Ps 22:26

¹⁴⁶ This phase of anxiety about his unworthiness may have been immediately after his conversion, or before his baptism, or before his ordination as priest, or his consecration as bishop.

¹⁴⁷ The word “Son” is supplied, because *unicus* (only) so strongly evokes the Apostles’ Creed, *unicum Filium eius Iesum Christum*.

¹⁴⁸ The scriptural metaphor of “buying back” (Ti 2:14, etc.) becomes part of A.’s understanding of atonement, which begins to emerge here.

¹⁴⁹ A reference to the body of Christ (which constituted payment of the ransom) at the eucharist.

¹⁵⁰ Picking up from *Conf.* I.I.I the same psalm quotation, but with a significant change of tense from future to present.

LIBER XI

1. (1) Numquid, domine, cum tua sit aeternitas, ignoras quae tibi dico, aut ad tempus vides quod fit in tempore? cur ergo tibi tot rerum narrationes digero? non utique ut per me noveris ea, sed affectum meum excito in te, et eorum qui haec legunt, ut dicamus omnes, "magnus dominus et laudabilis valde." iam dixi et dicam, "amore amoris tui facio istuc." nam et oramus, et tamen veritas ait, "novit pater vester quid vobis opus sit, priusquam petatis ab eo." affectum ergo nostrum patefacimus in te confitendo tibi miseras nostras et misericordias tuas super nos, ut liberes nos omnino, quoniam coepisti, ut desinamus esse miseri in nobis et beatificemur in te, quoniam vocasti nos, ut simus pauperes spiritu et mites et lugentes et esurientes ac sitientes iustitiam et misericordes et mundicordes et pacifici. ecce narraui tibi multa, quae potui et quae volui, quoniam tu prior voluisti ut confiterer tibi, domino deo meo, quoniam bonus es, quoniam in saeculum misericordia tua.

¹ Recapitulation of *Conf.* 1.1.1. At *Retr.* 2.6 A. states that *Conf.* was intended to arouse the human mind and feelings (*confessionum mearum libri tredecim . . . in eum [sc. deum] excitant humanum intellectum et affectum*); the aim is noted at *Conf.* 1.1.1. (*excitas*) and reprised at *Conf.* 5.1.1 (*excitasti*) as well as here, "stimulate" (*excito*).

² See *Conf.* 2.1.1 (*amore amoris tui facio istuc*).

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1. (1) Because eternity is yours, Lord, can you be unaware of what I am telling you? Can you be within time when you see what happens in time? So why am I regaling you in this way with so many stories about what happened? It is certainly not so that I can make you aware of these events. On the contrary, I stimulate my own feelings, and those of my readers, toward you, so that we can all declare, "great is the Lord and surpassingly worthy of praise."¹ I have said this already, and I shall go on saying it: "I do this because of my love for your love."² After all, in the same way we pray, even though Truth tells us, "Your Father knows what you need, before you ask it of him." So we reveal our feelings toward you by confessing to you our pitiable condition, and your mercies bestowed upon us, so that you complete in us the deliverance you have begun. Thus we shall cease to be pitiable in ourselves, and will become blessed in you, for you have called us to be poor in spirit, and gentle, and sorrowing, and hungry and thirsty for righteousness, and merciful, and pure in heart, and peacemakers. Look! What a lot of things I have told you—what I was capable of and what I wanted—because even before that you wanted me to make my confession to you, Lord my God, because you are good, because your mercy is eternal.

Pss 48:1,
96:4, 145:3

Mt 6:8

Ps 33:22

Mt 5:3-9

Ps 118:1

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2. (2) Quando autem sufficio lingua calami enuntiare omnia hortamenta tua et omnes terrores tuos, et consolationes et gubernationes, quibus me perduxisti praedicare verbum et sacramentum tuum dispensare populo tuo? et si sufficio haec enuntiare ex ordine, caro mihi valent stillae temporum. et olim inardesco meditari in lege tua et in ea tibi confiteri scientiam et imperitiam meam, primordia inluminacionis tuae et reliquias tenebrarum mearum, quousque devoretur a fortitudine infirmitas. et nolo in aliud horae diffuant quas invenio liberas a necessitatibus reficiendi corporis et intentionis animi et servitutis quam debemus hominibus et quam non debemus et tamen reddimus.

(3) Domine deus meus, intende orationi meae et misericordia tua exaudiat desiderium meum, quoniam non mihi soli aestuat, sed usui vult esse fraternae caritati. et vides in corde meo quia sic est. sacrificem tibi famulatum cogitationis et linguae meae, et da quod offeram tibi. inops enim et pauper sum, tu dives in omnes invocantes te, qui securus curam nostri geris. circumcide ab omni temeritate omnique mendacio interiora et exteriora labia mea. sint castae deliciae meae scripturae tuae, nec fallar in eis nec fallam ex eis.

³ A. neatly reverses the metaphor, "my tongue is the pen of a fast-writing scribe" (*lingua mea calamus scribae velociter scribentis*).
⁴ Cf. *Conf.* 4.2.3 on *sacramentum*, a Latin translation of Greek *mysterion* (*μυστήριον*).

⁵ Metaphor from the drips of a water clock (*clepsydra*); GM parallel "the sands of time" from an hourglass.

⁶ A. alerts the reader to the shift in subject matter onto Scripture.

⁷ Cf. *Conf.* 10.4370.

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2. (2) With my pen acting like a tongue,³ when am I up to the task of proclaiming all your encouragements and all your terrors, the consolations and directions, by which you convinced me to preach your word and minister your sacrament⁴ to your people? Even if I am up to the task of proclaiming it all in a proper order, the drops of time are worth a lot to me.⁵ For a long time I have been fired with passion for meditating on your law,⁶ and confessing to you how much I know of it and what ignorance I still possess,⁷ the beginning of your enlightening me, and the last traces of my darkness, until my weakness was consumed by strength. I am reluctant that the hours which I find free from such necessities as bodily refreshment, and mental concentration, and the services I owe to others (or I do not owe the service but I render it nonetheless), should trickle away.

Ps 45:1

1 Cor 4:1

Ps 39:3

Ps 61:1

Ps 10:17

Ps 55:1

Rom 10:12

Ex 6:12; Jer 6:10¹⁸; Gal 5:6

(3) O Lord my God, listen to my prayer and let your mercy pay heed to my desire, for it is not aflame for my own benefit only, but wants to be at the service of brotherly love.⁸ You see in my heart that it is so. Let me offer as a sacrifice to you the obedient service of my mind and tongue, so first bestow what I am to offer to you. I am weak and poor, you are bounteous to all who call upon you; free from care yourself, you take care of our cares. Circumcise my physical lips and my spiritual from all presumption and all deceit.⁹ Your Scriptures are my pure delights,¹⁰ let me neither be deceived in them nor use them to deceive.

⁸ OD points out that 11.2.3-4 is the only part of *Conf.* set out *per cola et commata* in the *Bibliothèque Augustinienne* series (Turnhout, Brepols, 1933-).

⁹ Closest in Scripture to the metaphor here is Dt 10:16.

¹⁰ *castae deliciae* verges on the oxymoronic.

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Domine, attende et miserere, domine deus meus, lux caecorum et virtus infirmorum statimque lux videntium et virtus fortium, attende animam meam et audi clamantem de profundo. nam nisi adsint et in profundo aures tuae, quo ibimus? quo clamabimus? tuus est dies et tua est nox; ad nutum tuum momenta transvolant. largire inde spatium meditationibus nostris in abdita legis tuae, neque adversus pulsantes claudas eam. neque enim frustra scribi voluisti tot paginarum opaca secreta, aut non habent illae silvae cervos suos, recipientes se in eas et resumentes, ambulantes et pascentes, recumbentes et ruminantes. o domine, perfice me et revela mihi eas. ecce vox tua gaudium meum, vox tua super affluentiam voluptatum. da quod amo: amo enim, et hoc tu dedisti. ne dona tua deseras nec herbam tuam spernas sitientem. confitear tibi quidquid invenero in libris tuis et audiam vocem laudis, et te bibam et considerem mirabilia de lege tua ab usque principio in quo fecisti caelum et terram usque ad regnum tecum perpetuum sanctae civitatis tuae.

¹¹ A scriptural echo that begins to resound in the final books of *Conf.*, leading to fulfillment at *Conf.* 13.38.53, *aperietur*. Cf. *Conf.* 11.2.4.

¹² See *Doctr. Chr.* 2.7.10; Vol. 1, xxx.

¹³ The woods in which deer find refuge and refreshment stand for Scripture: the allusion is to Ps 29:9. Vg reads *vox Domini praeparantis cervos*; but A. has VL *perficientis cervos* in mind (cf. *En. Ps.* 28.9; also with "and will reveal the woods," *et revelabit silvas*,^{VL} instead of *et revelabit condensa*^{Vg}): the Lord "perfects" the deer, rather than, as Vg, causing them to "bring forth young" or even possibly "abort their young." Modern versions follow a different text altogether.

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O Lord, listen and have mercy; O Lord my God, you who are light to the blind and strength to the weak, and are established as light to those who see and strength to the strong. Listen to my soul and hear it crying out from the abyss. For if your ears are not there to hear even in the abyss, where shall we go? To whom shall we cry out? The day is yours, and the night is yours; your nod of approval sends the moments of time speeding past. Bestow a portion of them for our meditations upon the secrets of your law, and do not shut it away against those who knock.¹¹ Not without reason have you willed for so many dark secrets to be written within the pages of Scripture.¹² To be sure those woods have deer which belong in them, which retreat to them and find restoration, walking and feeding, reclining and reflecting.¹³ O Lord, perfect me and reveal to me those woods! Look! Your voice is my delight, your voice above the profusion of pleasures. Grant what I love; for I do love, and you have given me this capacity. Do not abandon your gifts, and do not reject your plant which is thirsty.¹⁴ Let me confess to you whatever I find in your books, and let me hear the voice of praise; and let me drink of you; and let me meditate upon the wonders of your law right from the beginning in which you made heaven and earth until the eternal dominion, with you, of the holy city.¹⁵

Ps 27:7; Jer
18:19
cf. Ps 146:8

Ps 130:1

Pss 139:7,
139:12,
74:16

Mt 7:7-8; Lk
11:9-10

Ps 28:9^{VI}

Ps 26:7

Ps 119:18

Gn 1:1

Rv 21:23

¹⁴ God's people as dry grass (Is 40:6-8; cf. Ez 37:2: lack of water is a pervasive negative in Scripture): another scriptural metaphor, but now extended—A. is not merely a dry plant (passive) but a thirsty one (active).

¹⁵ Announcing the new theme of *Conf.* 11-13, but in the context of a life's work of teaching.

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(4) Domine, miserere mei et exaudi desiderium meum. puto enim quod non sit de terra, non de auro et argento et lapidibus aut decoris vestibus aut honoribus et potestatibus aut voluptatibus carnis, neque de necessariis corpori et huic vitae peregrinationis nostrae, quae omnia nobis apponuntur quaerentibus regnum et iustitiam tuam. vide, deus meus, unde sit desiderium meum. narraverunt mihi iniusti delectationes,¹ sed non sicut lex tua, domine: ecce unde est desiderium meum. vide, pater, aspice et vide et approba, et placeat in conspectu misericordiae tuae invenire me gratiam ante te, ut aperiantur pulsanti mihi interiora sermonum tuorum. obsecro per dominum nostrum Iesum Christum filium tuum, virum dexteræ tuæ, filium hominis, quem confirmasti tibi mediatorem tuum et nostrum, per quem nos quaesisti non quaerentes te, quaesisti autem ut quaereremus te, verbum tuum per quod fecisti omnia (in quibus et me), unicum tuum per quem vocasti in adoptionem populum credentium (in quo et me)—per eum te obsecro, qui sedet ad dexteram tuam et te interpellat pro nobis, in quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae absconditi: ipsos quaero in libris tuis. Moyses de illo scripsit; hoc ipse ait, hoc veritas ait.

3. (5) Audiam et intellegam quomodo in principio fecisti caelum et terram. scripsit hoc Moyses, scripsit et abiit, transiit hinc a te ad te, neque nunc ante me est. nam

¹ delectationes *codd. edd.* fabulationes V (et V^g)

¹⁶ On this title of the man Jesus, see Mt 25-6; Mk 2:28, 14.62; Lk 5:24; Jn 1:51, 3:13.

¹⁷ Cf. *Conf.* 10.43.68.

¹⁸ Before the advent of the Higher Criticism, Moses was almost universally credited with authorship of the Pentateuch. A. is frustrated that he cannot converse with the author of Scripture.

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(4) O Lord, have mercy upon me and hear my desire: for I do not think it is concerned with the earth, not about gold and silver and precious stones, or fine clothing, or honors and power, or pleasures of the flesh. Neither is it to do with bodily needs or for this life of pilgrimage we live—yet all of these are given in addition to those of us who seek your kingdom and your righteousness. See, O my God, where my desire originates. The unrighteous have regaled me with stories of pleasures, but they are nothing like your law, Lord. Look—this is where my desire originates. See, Father! Give heed, and see, and approve: let it be pleasing in view of your mercy that I find grace in your presence, so that the deeper truths of your words may be opened to me when I knock. I make my prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, the man standing at your right hand, the Son of Man,¹⁶ whom you established for yourself as mediator between you and us,¹⁷ through whom you sought out those who were not seeking you. You sought them out so that they would seek you; your Word through which you made all things (myself among them), your only Son through whom you have called a population of believers (myself included) to be adopted. I make my prayer through him who sits at your right hand and speaks up on our behalf to you: in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden—and those treasures are what I seek in your books. Moses wrote about him; Christ himself says so, he who is the Truth says so.

Mt 6:33

cf. Ps 119:85

Ps 19:14

Ex 33:13

Ps 80:17

1 Tm 2:5

Rom 10:20

Jn 1:3

Gal 4:5

Jn 5:46

3. (5) Let me hear and understand how it was that in the beginning you made heaven and earth. Moses wrote this,¹⁸ he wrote it and he has departed, he has made the transition from here to you: and he is not now before me.

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si esset, tenerem eum et rogarem eum et per te obsecrarem ut mihi ista panderet, et praeberem aures corporis mei sonis erumpentibus ex ore eius, et si hebraea voce loqueretur, frustra pulsaret sensum meum nec inde mentem meam quicquam tangeret; si autem latine, scirem quid diceret. sed unde scirem an verum diceret? quod si et hoc scirem, num ab illo scirem? intus utique mihi, intus in domicilio cogitationis, nec hebraea nec graeca nec latina nec barbara, veritas sine oris et linguae organis, sine strepitu syllabarum diceret, "verum dicit," et ego statim certus confidenter illi homini tuo dicerem, "verum dicis." cum ergo illum interrogare non possim, te, quo plenus vera dixit, veritas, rogo te, deus meus, rogo, parce peccatis meis, et qui illi servo tuo dedisti haec dicere, da et mihi haec intellegere.

4. (6) Ecce sunt caelum et terra! clamant quod facta sint; mutantur enim atque variantur. quidquid autem factum non est et tamen est, non est in eo quicquam quod ante non erat: quod est mutari atque variari. clamant etiam quod se ipsa non fecerint: "ideo sumus, quia facta sumus. non ergo eramus antequam essemus, ut fieri possemus a nobis." et vox dicentium est ipsa evidentia. tu ergo, domine, fecisti ea, qui pulcher es (pulchra sunt

¹⁹ One Latin verb in different moods of the imperfect tense covers both English meanings.

²⁰ The Latin is epigrammatic and compressed.

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If he were, I would take hold of him and ask him questions and through you I would plead with him to open these matters up to me. Then I would tune the ears of my physical body to the sounds bursting forth from his mouth—but if he spoke in Hebrew, in vain would that sound strike my senses, and nothing of it would touch my mind, whereas if it was Latin, I would know what he was saying. But how would I know whether he was speaking the truth? And even if I did know it was true, surely I would not know it from him? Certainly there is within to me, within in the place where my powers of thought reside, neither Hebrew nor Greek nor Latin nor any foreign language: rather truth without boundaries and the organs of speech, without any racket of syllables, would declare, "He is speaking the truth," and at once I would be convinced and would say with confidence to that man who was your own, "You speak the truth." Since I cannot question him, though, I am asking you (you who filled him so that he spoke the truth), O Truth, my God, I am asking you to pardon my sins. As you gave that servant of yours the capacity to say such things, give me now the capacity to understand them.

4. (6) See—heaven and earth exist! They cry out that they were created, for they change and are mutable. As for anything which has not been created and yet still exists, in it there is nothing that did not exist previously (that is to say, which entails change and mutability). What is more, heaven and earth cry aloud that they did not make themselves, "This is why we exist—because we have been made. We did not exist before we came into being¹⁹ so that we could create ourselves." And their actual evidence is the voice of those created things as they speak.²⁰ So, Lord, you have made them; and you are beautiful (so they are

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enim), qui bonus es (bona sunt enim), qui es (sunt enim). nec ita pulchra sunt nec ita bona sunt nec ita sunt, sicut tu conditor eorum, quo comparato nec pulchra sunt nec bona sunt nec sunt. scimus haec: gratias tibi, et scientia nostra scientiae tuae comparata ignorantia est.

5. (7) Quomodo autem fecisti caelum et terram? et quae machina tam grandis operationis tuae? non enim sicut homo artifex formas corpus de corpore, arbitrato animae valentis imponere utcumque speciem, quam cernit in semet ipsa interno oculo (et unde hoc valeret, nisi quia tu fecisti eam?) et imponit speciem iam existenti et habenti, ut esset, veluti terrae aut lapidi aut ligno aut auro aut id genus rerum cuilibet. et unde ista essent, nisi tu instituisses ea? tu fabro corpus, tu animum² membris imperitantem fecisti, tu materiam unde facit aliquid, tu ingenium quo artem capiat et videat intus quid faciat foris, tu sensum corporis quo interprete traiciat ab animo ad materiam id quod facit et renuntiet animo quid factum sit, ut ille intus consulat praesidentem sibi veritatem, an bene factum sit. te laudant haec omnia creatorem omnium.

Sed tu quomodo facis ea? quomodo fecisti, deus, caelum et terram? non utique in caelo neque in terra fecisti caelum et terram neque in aere aut in aquis, quoniam et

² animum *codd. edd.* animam S GM

²¹ *Anima* is usually "soul," occasionally something closer to "mind," or occasionally "person"; at *De civ. D.* 14.4, "The soul and the body, the parts of which a person consists, can make up the whole person." See O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*, 7-14; Vol. 1, xxxvii.

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beautiful), and you are good (so they are good), and you exist (so they exist). They are neither beautiful nor good nor existent in the same way as you, who are their creator; compared to you they are not beautiful or good or existent. We know these things: thank you for that. For compared to your knowledge our knowledge is only ignorance.

5. (7) How did you make heaven and earth? What device was commensurate with your workmanship? You are not like a human craftsman who forms one body out of another, according to the judgment of a soul²¹ with power to impose a particular shape which it perceives within itself, in its mind's eye. And how would that soul's power exist unless because you made it? That craftsman gives a shape to something that is already present and has its existence, such as earth or stone or wood or gold or any substance of that kind. But where would those substances come from if you had not fabricated them? You made the craftsman's body; you made the mind which governs its limbs; you made the materials from which that body makes whatever it makes; you made the intelligence by which it learns its skill and sees internally what it can make externally; you made the physical senses that translate for it how to transfer what it is making from the mind to the materials (and then to report back to the mind what has been made): the craftsman can then listen to the inner voice of truth which acts as a guide as to whether the object has been well made. All these things praise you who are the creator of all.

But how do you make things? How, O God, have you made heaven and earth? You certainly did not make heaven and earth *in* heaven or in earth, nor in the air nor in the waters of the sea, for these things are related to the

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haec pertinent ad caelum et terram neque in universo mundo fecisti universum mundum, quia non erat ubi fieret antequam fieret, ut esset. nec manu tenebas aliquid unde faceres caelum et terram: nam unde tibi hoc quod tu non feceras, unde aliquid faceres? quid enim est, nisi quia tu es? ergo dixisti et facta sunt atque in verbo tuo fecisti ea.

6. (8) Sed quomodo dixisti? numquid illo modo quo facta est vox de nube dicens, "hic est filius meus dilectus"? illa enim vox acta atque transacta est, coepta et finita. sonuerunt syllabae atque transierunt, secunda post primam, tertia post secundam atque inde ex ordine, donec ultima post ceteras silentiumque post ultimam. unde claret atque eminent quod creaturae motus expressit eam, serviens aeternae voluntati tuae ipse temporalis. et haec ad tempus facta verba tua nuntiavit auris exterior menti prudenti, cuius auris interior posita est ad aeternum verbum tuum. at illa comparavit haec verba temporaliter sonantia cum aeterno in silentio verbo tuo et dixit, "aliud est longe, longe aliud est. haec longe infra me sunt nec sunt, quia fugiunt et praetereunt; verbum autem dei mei supra me manet in aeternum." si ergo verbis sonantibus et prae-

²² *Quomodo* (how?) is a repeated motif in this and the previous section. OD: "The text of Genesis 1.1ff is now rarely far from mind."

²³ Cf. *Io. Ev. Tr.* 1.8, on Jn 1:1, "What kind of Word is it that is spoken and does not pass away?" (*quale ergo Verbum quod et dicitur, et non transit?*)

²⁴ A. probably means the vibration of air; cf. *Doctr. Chr.* 2.4.5, "Because [words] pass away as soon as they have struck the air, and last no longer than they sound, symbols for words were es-

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heaven and earth; and it was not within the universe as a whole that you made the universe as a whole: for before that universe was made, there was nowhere for making such a thing, so that it could exist. You were not holding anything in your hand for making heaven and earth; for where would it come from, this stuff you had not made, so that you could make something of it? Does anything exist, after all, except because of your existence? Therefore you have spoken and things were made and it was in your Word that you made them.

Gn 1:3; Ps
33:9

6. (8) How²² did you speak? Surely not in the same way your voice was made to speak from the cloud and say, "This is my beloved Son"? For that voice was enacted and transacted, it began and ended.²³ The syllables made a noise and passed away, the first followed by the next, the third followed by the fourth and so on in sequence until the final syllable after all the rest—and after the last, silence. This makes it very clear that the action of something created²⁴ expressed it, something that is temporal in itself, and that bows to your will. Physical hearing conveyed these words of yours, created in time, to the sensible mind, while its inner hearing was directed to your eternal Word. That mind compared the words that sounded in time with the silence of your eternal Word²⁵ and said, "It is completely different, completely different. These words are way below me and do not exist because they flee and pass away. But the Word of God is above me and abides for ever." So

Mt 17:5

established, in the form of letters (*instituta sunt per litteras signa verborum*): he points a contrast between transient words and the eternal Word.

²⁵ Oxymoron.

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tereuntibus dixisti, ut fieret caelum et terra, atque ita fecisti caelum et terram, erat iam creatura corporalis ante caelum et terram, cuius motibus temporalibus temporaliter vox illa percurreret. nullum autem corpus ante caelum et terram, aut si erat, id certe sine transitoria voce feceras, unde transitoriam vocem faceres, qua diceres ut fieret caelum et terra. quidquid enim illud esset unde talis vox fieret, nisi abs te factum esset omnino non esset. ut ergo fieret corpus unde ista verba fierent, quo verbo a te dictum est?

7. (9) Vocas itaque nos ad intellegendum verbum, deum apud te deum, quod sempiternae dicitur et eo sempiternae dicuntur omnia. neque enim finitur quod dicebatur et dicitur aliud, ut possint dici omnia, sed simul ac sempiternae omnia; alioquin iam tempus et mutatio et non vera aeternitas nec vera immortalitas. hoc novi, deus meus, et gratias ago. novi, confiteor tibi, domine, mecumque novit et benedicit te quisquis ingratus non est certae veritati. novimus, domine, novimus, quoniam in quantum quidque non est quod erat et est quod non erat, in tantum moritur et oritur. non ergo quicquam verbi tui cedit atque succedit, quoniam vere immortale atque aeternum est. et ideo verbo tibi coaeterno simul et sempiternae dicis omnia quae dicis, et fit quidquid dicis ut fiat. nec aliter quam

²⁶ Not a silly question: sound needs substance for its production.

²⁷ *moritur et oritur*: a jingling rhyme in Latin.

²⁸ Elsewhere A. explains, "The Word of God, by which all things were made, has no beginning nor ending, but being born without beginning in time he is coeternal with the Father" (*Gn. litt. Imp.* 5.19).

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if you declared—in words that sound and then pass away—that heaven and earth were coming into being, and that was how you made heaven and earth, then there was already some physical created thing before heaven and earth, and its changes through time allowed that voice to take its course in time. But no physical thing existed before heaven and earth—or if it did, you must surely have made it without using the voice (which is transitory) in order to create that transitory voice in which you declared that heaven and earth were created. After all, whatever that thing was from which such a voice was created, unless you made it, it would certainly not exist. What kind of word did you use, then, to speak the word that created the substance which gave form to those words?²⁶

7. (9) So it is that you call us to comprehend the Word, Jn 1:1 who is God with you who are God. He is spoken eternally and through him all things are spoken eternally. It is not the case that one thing is spoken and ended, and then something else is spoken, so that all things could be spoken; but rather that everything was simultaneous and everlasting. Otherwise it would be a matter of time and change, entailing no true eternity and no true immortality. I know this, O my God, and I thank you. I confess to you, Lord, that I do know this, and so does anyone who is not ungrateful for assured truth; and we bless you. We know, Lord, we know: for insofar as anything no longer exists that once did exist, and exists when formerly it did not, there is dying and coming into being.²⁷ No part of your Word waxes or wanes, because it is truly immortal and eternal. So it is that you say all that you say by means of the Word, which is simultaneously both eternal and coeternal;²⁸ and whatever you command, it comes into being. Your acts as

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dicendo facis, nec tamen simul et sempiterna fiunt omnia quae dicendo facis.

8. (10) Cur, quaeso, domine deus meus? utcumque video, sed quomodo id eloquar nescio, nisi quia omne quod esse incipit et esse desinit tunc esse incipit et tunc desinit, quando debuisse incipere vel desinere in aeterna ratione cognoscitur, ubi nec incipit aliquid nec desinit. ipsum est verbum tuum, quod et principium est, quia et loquitur nobis. sic in evangelio per carnem ait, et hoc insonuit foris auribus hominum, ut crederetur et intus quaereretur et inveniretur in aeterna veritate, ubi omnes discipulos bonus et solus magister docet. ibi audio vocem tuam, domine, dicentis mihi, quoniam ille loquitur nobis qui docet nos, qui autem non docet nos, etiam si loquitur, non nobis loquitur. quid porro nos docet nisi stabilis veritas? quia et per creaturam mutabilem cum admonemur, ad veritatem stabilem ducimur, ubi vere discimus, cum stamus et audimus eum et gaudio gaudemus propter vocem sponsi, reddentes nos unde sumus. et ideo principium, quia, nisi maneret cum erraremus, non esset quo rediremus. cum autem redimus ab errore, cognoscendo

²⁹ Ponderous but precise; the verbs *incipio* (begin) and *desino* (end) are paired four times in one sentence. *Ratio* (Reason) and *verbum* (Word) are identified, as different aspects of *Logos*; see Vol. 1, xxviii.

³⁰ Ambrose links Jn 8:25 with Rv 1:8 and Prv 8:22 and concludes, "In this 'beginning,' which to say, 'in Christ,' God made heaven and earth" (*Hexameron* 1.4.15).

³¹ See Vol. 1, xxxi, on the theology of the incarnation.

³² In contrast to inner perceptions: because here the incarnate Christ is a human being speaking audible physical sounds.

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creator are done only by speaking, although whatever you bring into being by speaking is neither simultaneous nor everlasting.

8. (10) Please tell me why, O Lord my God! I have some inkling, but I do not know how to express it: unless it is that everything that begins to exist and begins to end actually begins to exist, and begins to end, at the particular time when eternal Reason (where there is no beginning nor ending) knows that it should begin and come to an end.²⁹ That eternal reason is your Word, who is the Beginning, because he also speaks to us.³⁰ That is what he says in the gospel, speaking in his incarnate self,³¹ and it resounded in people's outward³² hearing so that they would also believe it, and seek it within, and find it in eternal Truth, where the one good teacher instructs all his disciples. That is where I hear your voice, Lord, as of one speaking to me; anyone who teaches us, speaks to us; while anyone who, even if they speak, does not teach us, is not truly speaking to us. After all, what is actually teaching us if not the steadfast Word? Even when instruction comes to us from some mutable creature, we are led to your steadfast Truth, where we really learn, when we stand and listen to him and rejoice greatly to hear the Bridegroom's voice, and then we restore ourselves to the source of our being. This is why he is the Beginning: because if he did not stand fast when we went astray, there would be nowhere for us to return to. So when we turn back from our mistakes, it is through recognizing them that we can turn

Gn 1:1; Jn
1:1, 8:25

Mt 19:16,
23:8

Jn 3:29

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utique redimus; ut autem cognoscamus, docet nos, quia principium est et loquitur nobis.

9. (11) In hoc principio, deus, fecisti³ caelum et terram in verbo tuo, in filio tuo, in virtute tua, in sapientia tua, in veritate tua, miro modo dicens et miro modo faciens. quis comprehendet? quis enarrabit? quid est illud quod interlucet mihi et percutit cor meum sine laesione? et inhorresco et inardesco: inhorresco, in quantum dissimilis ei sum, inardesco, in quantum similis ei sum. sapientia, sapientia ipsa est quae interlucet mihi, discindens nubilum meum, quod me rursus cooperit deficientem ab ea caligine atque aggere poenarum mearum, quoniam sic infirmatus est in egestate vigor meus ut non sufferam bonum meum, donec tu, domine, qui propitius factus es omnibus iniquitatibus meis, etiam sanes omnes languores meos, quia et redimes de corruptione vitam meam, et coronabis me in miseratione et misericordia, et satiabis in bonis desiderium meum, quoniam renovabitur iuventus mea sicut aquilae. spe enim salvi facti sumus et promissa tua per patientiam expectamus. audiat te intus sermocinantem qui potest: ego fidenter ex oraculo tuo clamabo, "quam magnificata sunt opera tua, domine, omnia in sapientia fecisti!" et illa principium, et in eo principio fecisti caelum et terram.

10. (12) Nonne ecce pleni sunt vetustatis suae qui nobis dicunt, "quid faciebat deus antequam faceret caelum et

³ deus, fecisti *codd.* Ver. OD: fecit deus S: fecisti, deus *cj.* Knöll

³³ Because "Beginning" (*principium*) like "Word" (*verbum*) is grammatically neuter, there is sometimes ambiguity about

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back; but he teaches us to recognize those mistakes, for he is the Beginning and he speaks to us.³³

9. (11) In this Beginning, O God, you made heaven and earth: in your Word, in your Son, in your Power, in your Wisdom, in your Truth—wondrously speaking, and wondrously creating. Who will understand it? Who will describe it? What is this thing whose light shines through me and strikes my heart without harming it? I am terrified and aflame all at once: terrified in that I am so unlike him; aflame, inasmuch as I am like him. It is Wisdom, Wisdom herself, who shines through me, cleaving my cloud of darkness, which overwhelms me once more as I stumble because of that smoky dark and the obstacle of my torments. My strength is so wasted away in deprivation that I cannot even support what good I do possess: until you, Lord, become lenient toward my evil deeds, and heal all my weakness, for you redeem my life from the corruption of death, and you will crown me with mercy and loving-kindness, and will satisfy my desire with good things, so that my youth will be renewed like an eagle's. We have already been saved in hope; and we patiently await your promises. Let those who can, hear you speaking within them: with confidence I shall declaim from your inspired word: "How excellent are your works, O Lord, in wisdom you have made them all!" That Wisdom is the Beginning, and in the Beginning you made heaven and earth.

1 Cor 1:24

Ps 31:10

Ps 103:3-5;
cf. Is 40:31

Ps 104:24

10. (12) Surely those people who say to us, "What was God doing before he made heaven and earth?" are full of

whether the impersonal quality (it) or the Person of the Trinity (he) is meant; cf. Vol. 1, 322n29.

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terram? si enim vacabat," inquit, "et non operabatur aliquid, cur non sic semper et deinceps, quemadmodum retro semper cessavit ab opere? si enim ullus motus in deo novus extitit et voluntas nova, ut creaturam conderet quam numquam ante condiderat, quomodo iam vera aeternitas, ubi oritur voluntas quae non erat? neque enim voluntas dei creatura est sed ante creaturam, quia non crearetur aliquid nisi creatoris voluntas praecederet. ad ipsam ergo dei substantiam pertinet voluntas eius. quod si exortum est aliquid in dei substantia quod prius non erat, non veraciter dicitur aeterna illa substantia. si autem dei voluntas sempiterna erat, ut esset creatura, cur non sempiterna et creatura?"

11. (13) Qui haec dicunt nondum te intellegunt, o sapientia dei, lux mentium, nondum intellegunt quomodo fiant quae per te atque in te fiunt, et conantur aeterna sapere, sed adhuc in praeteritis et futuris rerum motibus cor eorum volitat et adhuc vanum est. quis tenebit illud et figet illud, ut paululum stet, et paululum rapiat splendorem semper stantis aeternitatis, et comparet cum temporibus numquam stantibus, et videat esse incomparabilem, et videat longum tempus, nisi ex multis praeter-euntibus motibus qui simul extendi non possunt, longum

³⁴ A. has Manichaean polemic in mind and thinks of Rom 6:6, Eph 4:22, Col 3:9: *vetustas*, the "old/former self," is the part of a person tied to the flesh; see Vol. 1, 10n17. Elsewhere he summarizes it thus: "What belongs to the flesh is the old self, but grace is the new self" (*carnalitas vetustas est, gratia novitas est*, S. 267.2).

³⁵ On "light of the eyes," cf. *Conf.* 12.18.27, with Ps 38:10; but in *Conf.*, A. characteristically focuses on the *mind*, e.g., *Conf.*

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their old nature?³⁴ "If he had nothing to do," they say, "and was not effecting anything, why did he not remain like that then and afterward, just as previously he rested evermore from his labor? For if any new impulse in God emerged, and a new will, to form a creation such as he had never formed before, how then would God possess true Eternity, when a will has come into being that did not exist before? The will of God is not something created, but is antecedent to the creation; because nothing would be created unless the creator's will was antecedent to it. So the will of God is part of his very substance. But if something came into being in God's substance which was not there before, then that substance of his cannot rightly be called eternal. But if the will of God, that there should be a creation, was eternal, why is creation not eternal too?"

11. (13) Those who say such things do not yet understand you, O Wisdom of God, Light of our minds.³⁵ They do not yet understand how the things that come into being through you, and in you, actually do come into being. They try to be clever about the eternal, but their heart still flits here and there in the shifting events of past and future: so it remains vain. Who will take hold of it and fix it firmly so that it stands fast a while, and grasps a while the splendor of abiding eternity, and will compare that with the shifting times that are never stable, and will see that there is no comparison? And will see too that a long time, except in consisting of many passing shifts that cannot take place at

7.6.8, 7.11, 11.19.25. The "Light of minds" resurfaces in the hymn for Lauds on the feast of the Transfiguration, "O Jesus, Kindly Light of Hearts" (*Lux alma Jesu mentium*) attributed to Saint Bernard (AD 1091-1153).

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non fieri; non autem praeterire quicquam in aeterno, sed totum esse praesens; nullum vero tempus totum esse praesens; et videat omne praeteritum propelli ex futuro et omne futurum ex praeterito consequi, et omne praeteritum ac futurum ab eo quod semper est praesens creari et excurrere? quis tenebit cor hominis, ut stet et videat quomodo stans dictet futura et praeterita tempora nec futura nec praeterita aeternitas? numquid manus mea valet hoc aut manus oris mei per loquellas agit tam grandem rem?

12. (14) Ecce respondeo dicenti, "quid faciebat deus antequam faceret caelum et terram?" respondeo non illud quod quidam respondisse perhibetur, ioculariter eludens quaestionis violentiam: "alta," inquit, "scrutantibus gehennas parabat." aliud est videre, aliud ridere:⁴ haec non respondeo. libentius enim responderim, "nescio quod nescio" quam illud unde inridetur qui alta interrogavit et laudatur qui falsa respondit. sed dico te, deus noster, omnis creaturae creatorem et, si caeli et terrae nomine omnis creatura intellegitur, audenter dico, "antequam faceret deus caelum et terram, non faciebat aliquid." si enim faciebat, quid nisi creaturam faciebat? et utinam sic sciam quidquid utiliter scire cupio, quemadmodum scio quod nulla fiebat creatura antequam fieret ulla creatura.

⁴ ridere *G O Maur. Knöll Skut.*: est ridere *C D Ver.*: est videre
S

³⁶ *Gehenna*. Cf. *Conf.* 9.13.34, n. 95.

³⁷ This rhetorical figure is called *praeteritio*: A. claims not to be descending to the level of a joke, which he then tells.

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the same time, is not a long time at all? Then it will see that in eternity nothing passes, but everything is in the present; while time, on the other hand, is never completely in the present. And it would see that everything in the past is being driven out by the future, and that everything in the future is following what is past: all that is past and future is being created and issues forth from the one who is always present. Who will take hold of the human heart to make it stay still and see how eternity—which is neither past nor future—stands and prescribes the future and the past? Surely my hand has not the strength for this, or the hand of my mouth the fluency to handle such a lofty theme?

12. (14) Look—this is what I reply to someone who says, “what was God doing before he made heaven and earth?” I do not give the response attributed to a certain person, who playfully sidestepped the force of the question by saying, “He was getting Hell³⁶ ready for people who probe deep matters!”³⁷ Seeing the matter clearly is one thing, and making jokes about it is quite another: so I do not respond like that. I would much rather give a response, “What I don’t know, I don’t know,” than the reply that won a laugh against someone asking about deep matters, and praise for the person who gave a misdirected reply. But I say that you, our God, are the creator of the whole creation; and if the term “heaven and earth” is taken as meaning the whole creation, I can presume to declare, “before God made heaven and earth, he was not making anything.” For if he were making something, what would he be making if not the creation? If only I knew everything I desire to know for my own benefit, as firmly as I know that nothing was created before any part of creation came into being!

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13. (15) At si cuiusquam volatilis sensus vagatur per imagines retro temporum et te, deum omnipotentem et omnificentem et omnitenentem, caeli et terrae artificem, ab opere tanto, antequam id faceres, per innumerabilia saecula cessasse miratur, evigilet atque attendat, quia falsa miratur. nam unde poterant innumerabilia saecula praeterire quae ipse non feceras, cum sis omnium saeculorum auctor et conditor? aut quae tempora fuissent quae abs te condita non essent? aut quomodo praeterirent, si nunquam fuissent? cum ergo sis operator omnium temporum, si fuit aliquod tempus antequam faceres caelum et terram, cur dicitur quod ab opere cessabas? idipsum enim tempus tu feceras, nec praeterire potuerunt tempora antequam faceres tempora. si autem ante caelum et terram nullum erat tempus, cur quaeritur quid tunc faciebas? non enim erat tunc, ubi non erat tempus.

(16) Nec tu tempore tempora praecedis, alioquin non omnia tempora praecederes. sed praecedis omnia praeterita celsitudine semper praesentis aeternitatis et superas omnia futura, quia illa futura sunt, et cum venerint, praeterita erunt. tu autem idem ipse es, et anni tui non deficient:⁵ anni tui nec eunt nec veniunt, isti enim nostri eunt et veniunt, ut omnes veniant; anni tui omnes simul stant,

⁵ deficient *S codd. Knöll Skut.*: deficient *O Maur. Ver.*

³⁸ In Latin a triple anaphora of *omni-* compound adjectives.

³⁹ A resonance of Gn 2:2; but the point here is that God had not started work, rather than that he rested from it afterward.

⁴⁰ See *Gn. Litt.* 6.8.13: "Not only in his preeminence, by which he is the author of causes, but also in virtue of his eternity, God is antecedent to everything that he has made."

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13. (15) If a person lets their passing thoughts ramble among impressions of past time, and is astonished that you, almighty God, the creator and preserver of all,³⁸ the maker of heaven and earth, had—before that great work—nothing to do for countless ages, until you finally created it; that person should wake up and pay attention, because what astounds them is simply not true. Where could these countless passing ages come from, since you had not made them?—although you are the author and founder of all ages! What spans of time could have existed unless you had established them? And how could such times have elapsed, if they never existed? Because you are the maker of all times, if there was some sort of time before you created heaven and earth, why is it said that you were not spending your time working?³⁹ For you were the maker of time itself, so time could not pass before you had created time. But if there was no such thing as time before heaven and earth existed, why do people ask what you were doing “then”? There was no “then,” when there was no such thing as time.

Hb 1:2

(16) Neither is it the case that you precede⁴⁰ time in time, because then you would not be antecedent to all times. Rather, you precede everything that has passed in time by the sublimity of your ever-present eternity, and you reign supreme over all that is to be, because it is all yet to happen, and when it does come, it will then be in the past. You yourself, on the other hand, are always the same, and your years will not fail. Your years do not come and go. Ours do come and go, so that all of them come in succession; whereas because your years continue unchanging, they all continue in the same moment in time:

Ps 102:27

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quoniam stant, nec euntes a venientibus excluduntur, quia non transeunt. isti autem nostri omnes erunt, cum omnes non erunt. anni tui dies unus, et dies tuus non cotidie sed hodie, quia hodiernus tuus non cedit crastino; neque enim succedit hesterno. hodiernus tuus aeternitas; ideo coaeternum genuisti cui dixisti, "ego hodie genui te." omnia tempora tu fecisti et ante omnia tempora tu es, nec aliquo tempore non erat tempus.

14. (17) Nullo ergo tempore non feceras aliquid, quia ipsum tempus tu feceras. et nulla tempora tibi coaeterna sunt, quia tu permanes. at illa si permanerent, non essent tempora. quid est enim tempus? quis hoc facile breviterque explicaverit? quis hoc ad verbum de illo proferendum vel cogitatione comprehenderit? quid autem familiarius et notius in loquendo commemoramus quam tempus? et intellegimus utique cum id loquimur, intellegimus etiam cum alio loquente id audimus. quid est ergo tempus? si nemo ex me quaerat, scio; si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio. fidenter tamen dico scire me quod, si nihil praeteriret, non esset praeteritum tempus, et si nihil adveniret, non esset futurum tempus, et si nihil esset, non esset praesens tempus. duo ergo illa tempora, praeteritum

⁴¹ The coeternity of the Son with the Father was an essential plank in the "orthodox" defense against Arian heresy, according to which the Son was derivative and temporally secondary; cf. *Conf.* 9.7.15, n. 50.

⁴² "Augustine's . . . is without doubt one of the subtlest attempts to analyze the phenomenon in antiquity." See O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*, 152-61.

⁴³ Some philosophers criticize A. for treating the present as a section of time, like past and future, rather than as an intersection

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it is not a case of those that arrive pushing out those that are leaving, because there is no transience. Our years will only be completed when they all exist no longer. Your years are a single day, and your "day" is not "every day" but "today," because your "today" does not give way to tomorrow; neither does it follow on after yesterday. Your "today" is eternity; therefore the one to whom you said, "Today I have begotten you" is begotten coeternally.⁴¹ You have made all times, and you are antecedent to all times: and there was never a kind of "time" when time did not exist.

Ps 90:4; 2 Pt
3:8

14. (17) So there never was a time when you had not created anything, because you had not created time.⁴² No times are coeternal with you, because you abide eternally. But if they were to abide eternally, they would not be times! So what *is* time? Who can explain this simply and briefly? Who can understand it, even by serious thought, sufficiently to express the idea in words? In ordinary speech, what is easier or more familiar for us to talk about than time? And we definitely understand it when we speak of it, and we also understand it when we listen to someone else talking about it. So what is time? If no one is asking me a question about it, I know what it is; but if I want to explain it to the questioner, I do not know how to. Nonetheless, I state firmly that I know this: if nothing were to pass away, there would be no past time; and if nothing were impending, there would be no future time; and if nothing existed there would be no present time.⁴³ So how do those two "times," past, and future, exist, when

between the two latter: Arist. *Phys.* 222a10–b27, on the "succession of time" (*synecheia chronou/συνέχεια χρόνου*).

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et futurum, quomodo sunt, quando et praeteritum iam non est et futurum nondum est? praesens autem si semper esset praesens nec in praeteritum transiret, non iam esset tempus, sed aeternitas. si ergo praesens, ut tempus sit, ideo fit, quia in praeteritum transit, quomodo et hoc esse dicimus, cui causa, ut sit, illa est, quia non erit, ut scilicet non vere dicamus tempus esse, nisi quia tendit non esse?

15. (18) Et tamen dicimus longum tempus et breve tempus, neque hoc nisi de praeterito aut futuro dicimus. praeteritum tempus longum verbi gratia vocamus ante centum annos, futurum itidem longum post centum annos, breve autem praeteritum sic, ut puta dicamus⁶ ante decem dies, et breve futurum post decem dies. sed quo pacto longum est aut breve, quod non est? praeteritum enim iam non est et futurum nondum est. non itaque dicamus, "longum est," sed dicamus de praeterito, "longum fuit," et de futuro, "longum erit."

Domine meus, lux mea, nonne et hic veritas tua deridit hominem? quod enim longum fuit praeteritum tempus, cum iam esset praeteritum longum fuit, an⁷ cum adhuc praesens esset? tunc enim poterat esse longum quando erat, quod esset longum; praeteritum vero iam non erat, unde nec longum esse poterat, quod omnino non erat. non ergo dicamus, "longum fuit praeteritum tempus"; neque enim inveniemus quid fuerit longum, quando, ex quo praeteritum est, non est, sed dicamus, "longum fuit

⁶ dicamus *Ver. OD GM: dicimus codd. Maur.*

⁷ an *codd. edd.: ante S: an ante coniec. Knöll*

⁴⁴ This conclusion highlights the fragility of time-bound humanity for A.

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what is past exists no longer and what is future does not yet exist? As for present time, if it were always present, and did not shift into the past, it would no longer be time at all, but eternity instead. But if the present time, to be time at all, is such on the grounds that it shifts into the past, how can we also state that this entity exists, if the cause of its existence is that it will not exist? So in the end we cannot truly state that time exists, unless it is because it gravitates toward nonexistence.⁴⁴

15. (18) Even so, we talk of a "long time" and a "short time," and we only do so when we talk of what is past or future. For example: we describe a hundred years ago as "long time past," and a hundred years in the future as a "long way off": but a period of time past, such as, say, ten days, we call "short," and such a period of future time we call "short" too. But on what terms is it either long or short, if it is nonexistent? For what is past no longer exists; and what is future does not yet exist. So we should not say, "it is a long time," but rather should say about the past, "it was a long time," and about the future, "it will be a long time."

O my Lord, my light, surely this too makes your Truth laugh mortals to scorn? This long period of time past, was it long when it was already past, or when it was still in the present? For it could then be long, at the time when something existed to be long: but when past it was already nonexistent, therefore it could not be long, because it was altogether nonexistent. So let us not say, "that time past was long"; and we shall not find anything that was long, since from the moment it came to be past, it no longer exists. Rather let us say, "that time was long while it was

Ps 27:1; Mi
7:8

Ps 2:4

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illud praesens tempus," quia cum praesens esset, longum erat. nondum enim praeterierat ut non esset, et ideo erat quod longum esse posset; postea vero quam praeteriit, simul et longum esse destitit quod esse destitit.

(19) Videamus ergo, anima humana, utrum praesens tempus possit esse longum, datum enim tibi est sentire moras atque metiri. quid respondebis mihi? an centum anni praesentes longum tempus est? vide prius utrum possint praesentes esse centum anni. si enim primus eorum annus agitur, ipse praesens est, nonaginta vero et novem futuri sunt et ideo nondum sunt. si autem secundus annus agitur, iam unus est praeteritus, alter praesens, ceteri futuri. atque ita mediorum quemlibet centenarii huius numeri annum praesentem posuerimus. ante illum praeteriti erunt, post illum futuri. quocirca centum anni praesentes esse non poterunt. vide saltem utrum qui agitur unus ipse sit praesens. et eius enim si primus agitur mensis, futuri sunt ceteri, si secundus, iam et primus praeteriit et reliqui nondum sunt. ergo nec annus qui agitur totus est praesens, et si non totus est praesens, non annus est praesens. duodecim enim menses annus est, quorum quilibet unus mensis qui agitur ipse praesens est, ceteri aut praeteriti aut futuri. quamquam neque mensis qui agitur praesens est, sed unus dies. si primus, futuris ceteris, si novissimus, praeteritis ceteris, si mediorum quilibet, inter praeteritos et futuros.

⁴⁵ The apostrophe and the rhetorical questions show A. shifting into lecture-room mode, as if teaching (in a rather labored style). He is not addressing God at this point.

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present," because when it was present, it was long. It had not yet passed away into nonexistence, and so there was something existent that was capable of being long. But after it passed away, all at once it ceased to be long because it ceased to exist at all.

(19) Now, O human soul, let us see whether present time can be long, for it is given to you to be sensitive to moments of time and to measure them. Who will reply to me? Is the current century a long time? First, consider whether a century can be "present."⁴⁵ If the first of those years is running its course, it is itself present, but the other ninety-nine are in the future: so they do not yet exist. But if the second year is under way, one year is already in the past, and a second is in the present, and all the rest are yet to be. Likewise we can posit any intervening year from this total of a century as the present. Before it are the years past; after it are those in the future. For this reason one hundred years cannot all be in the present. At least consider whether the one year that is currently running its course is itself present. If its first month is running its course, the rest are in the future; if the second, then the first has already passed away, and the rest are not yet in being. So the year is not wholly present either as it runs its course; and if it is not wholly present, the year itself is not present. For a year consists of twelve months; and whichever one of its twelve months is running its course is itself present, but the rest are either past or future. Still, neither the month which is running its course is present but only a single day of it: if the first day, then all the rest are in the future, if the last, then all the rest are in the past, if some day in the middle, then it is between days past and days in the future.

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(20) Ecce praesens tempus, quod solum inveniebamus longum appellandum, vix ad unius diei spatium contractum est. sed discutiamus etiam ipsum, quia nec unus dies totus est praesens. nocturnis enim et diurnis horis omnibus viginti quattuor expletur, quarum prima ceteras futuras habet, novissima praeteritas, aliqua vero interiectarum ante se praeteritas, post se futuras. et ipsa una hora fugitivis particulis agitur. quidquid eius avolavit, praeteritum est, quidquid ei restat, futurum. si quid intellegitur temporis, quod in nullas iam vel minutissimas momentorum partes dividi possit, id solum est quod praesens dicatur; quod tamen ita raptim a futuro in praeteritum transvolat, ut nulla morula extendatur. nam si extenditur, dividitur in praeteritum et futurum; praesens autem nullum habet spatium. ubi est ergo tempus quod longum dicamus? an futurum? non quidem dicimus, "longum est," quia nondum est quod longum sit, sed dicimus, "longum erit." quando igitur erit? si enim et tunc⁸ adhuc futurum erit, non erit longum, quia quid sit longum nondum erit. si autem tunc erit longum, cum ex futuro quod nondum est esse iam coeperit et praesens factum erit, ut possit esse quod longum sit, iam superioribus vocibus clamat praesens tempus longum se esse non posse.

⁸ et tunc *S C D Skut. Ver.*: tunc cum *G O*: et tunc cum *Maur.*

⁴⁶ A rare diminutive, *morula*, which A. may have picked up from Cyprian, *Ep.* 11.6.1. ⁴⁷ Even though A. reaches Aristotle's conclusion (cf. n. 37, above) that the present is a juncture not an extent of time, he cannot build on it because of his argument that past and future do not exist.

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(20) Look at present time, which was the only kind we found that should be called "long"; it has shrunk to barely the span of a single day. Now let us break this day apart as well, because not even a single day is entirely in the present. It consists of twenty-four hours in all, some diurnal and some nocturnal: the first hour sets all the rest in the future, the last sets all the rest in the past, any of the intervening ones has those hours that are past ahead of it, and those that are yet to come behind it. Each actual hour consists of fleeting moments. Whatever part of that hour has flown by is in the past; whatever yet remains is in the future. If we can imagine any part of time that cannot be subdivided into even the tiniest fractions of moments, that alone can be called "the present"; though it too speeds rapidly from the future into the past, without even a brief delay.⁴⁶ Even if it has some continuation, it is still divided into past and future: but the present has no extension in time.⁴⁷ So where is this time which we are to call "long"? In the future? We do not say, "it is long" because nothing yet exists to be called long, but we say, "it will be long." So when will it be long? If at that point in time it is still in the future, it will not be long, because nothing as yet exists capable of being long. But if it appears long at the moment when something from the future—which is as yet nonexistent—now begins to come into existence, and is made present (so that it can exist because it has extension in time) immediately the present time cries out (as discussed earlier) that it cannot in itself be long.

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16. (21) Et tamen, domine, sentimus intervalla temporum et comparamus sibimet et dicimus alia longiora et alia breviora. metimur etiam quanto sit longius aut brevius illud tempus quam illud, et respondemus duplum esse hoc vel triplum, illud autem simplum aut tantum hoc esse quantum illud. sed praetereuntia metimur tempora cum sentiendo metimur. praeterita vero, quae iam non sunt, aut futura, quae nondum sunt, quis metiri potest, nisi forte audebit quis dicere metiri posse quod non est. cum ergo praeterit tempus, sentiri et metiri potest, cum autem praeterierit, quoniam non est, non potest.

17. (22) Quaero, pater, non adfirmo. deus meus, praeside mihi et rege me. quisnam est qui dicat mihi non esse tria tempora, sicut pueri didicimus puerosque docuimus, praeteritum, praesens, et futurum, sed tantum praesens, quoniam illa duo non sunt? an et ipsa sunt, sed ex aliquo procedit occulto cum ex futuro fit praesens, et in aliquod recedit occultum cum ex praesenti fit praeteritum? nam ubi ea viderunt qui futura cecinerunt, si nondum sunt? neque enim potest videri id quod non est. et qui narrant praeterita, non utique vera narrant si animo illa non cernerent. quae si nulla essent, cerni omnino non possent. sunt ergo et futura et praeterita.

18. (23) Sine me, domine, amplius quaerere, spes mea; non conturbetur intentio mea. si enim sunt futura et prae-

⁴⁸ Or "tenses."

⁴⁹ Perhaps A. is thinking of his own story in *Conf.* 1-9.

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16. (21) Even so, Lord, we sense intervals of time and we compare them one with another, and we say that some are longer, and others shorter. For we measure how much one time is longer or shorter than another, and we reply that one is double or treble the length, while another is a single length; or that one is the same length as the other. But when we measure units of time as they pass, we do so by our sense perception of them: yet who can measure past times (which exist no longer) and future times (which do not yet exist)?—unless perhaps someone has the presumption to claim that they can measure what is nonexistent! So when time is passing, we can perceive it and measure it; but after it has passed, this is not possible, because it is nonexistent.

17. (22) I am asking questions, Lord, not making statements. O my God, direct and rule me. Who is going to tell me that there are not three times⁴⁸ (as we learned when we were children, and then taught our children)—past, present, and future—but only the present, for the other two do not exist? Perhaps they do exist after all, but time emerges from some hiding place when it turns from future into present; and retires to some other hiding place when it turns from present into past time. How else did bards foresee the future times of which they sang, if those times did not yet exist? It is not possible to see something which does not exist. As for those who tell the stories of the past, they would certainly not be recounting truth if they did not discern those things in their minds.⁴⁹ And if those things did not exist, it would be impossible to discern them. According to this, both future and past do exist.

18. (23) Let me inquire further, O Lord, my Hope; I must keep my concentration undisturbed. For if future

Pss 23:1,
28:9

Ps 71:5

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terita, volo scire ubi sint. quod si nondum valeo, scio tamen, ubicumque sunt, non ibi ea futura esse aut praeterita, sed praesentia. nam si et ibi futura sunt, nondum ibi sunt, si et ibi praeterita sunt, iam non ibi sunt. ubicumque ergo sunt, quaecumque sunt, non sunt nisi praesentia. quamquam praeterita cum vera narrantur, ex memoria proferuntur non res ipsae quae praeterierunt, sed verba concepta ex imaginibus earum quae in animo velut vestigia per sensus praetereundo fixerunt. pueritia quippe mea, quae iam non est, in tempore praeterito est, quod iam non est; imaginem vero eius, cum eam recolo et narro, in praesenti tempore intueor, quia est adhuc in memoria mea.

Utrum similis sit causa etiam praedicendorum futurorum, ut rerum, quae nondum sunt, iam existentes praesentiantur imagines, confiteor, deus meus, nescio. illud sane scio, nos plerumque praemeditari futuras actiones nostras eamque praemeditationem esse praesentem, actionem autem quam praemeditamur nondum esse, quia futura est. quam cum aggressi fuerimus et quod praemeditabamur agere coeperimus, tunc erit illa actio, quia tunc non futura, sed praesens erit.

(24) Quoquo modo se itaque habeat arcana praesensio futurorum, videri nisi quod est non potest. quod autem iam est, non futurum sed praesens est. cum ergo videri

⁵⁰ Cf. *Trin.* 14.11.14, "We can reasonably describe memory as the thing which makes the mind available to itself, so that it can be understood by rational thought about itself, and so that both mind and memory can be united by love of the mind itself" (*memoria sine absurditate dicenda est qua sibi praesto est [mens] ut sua cogitatione possit intellegi et utrumque sui amore coniungi*).

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and past exist, I want to know where they are. But if I am not yet up to the task, I still know that wherever they exist, in that place they are not the future or the past, but the present. This is because if they are also future in that place, they are not actually there; and if they are past in that place, they are no longer there. So wherever they are, whatever they are, they cannot be anything else but present. Although when past events that are true are narrated, what the memory produces is not the actual events that have passed away, but words conceived from impressions of those events, which, in passing, have left traces fixed in the mind by the physical senses. In fact my childhood, which no longer exists, is part of past time, which no longer exists: but when I call to mind the impression of that childhood, and describe it, I am contemplating it in the present moment, because it is still in my memory.⁵⁰

Whether the means by which people predict the future works in the same way—making impressions of events that have not yet taken place appear as if they existed in the present—I confess, O my God, I do not know. But what I do know for sure is that we often plan our future actions in advance, and that the advance planning itself exists in the present, whereas the action being planned does not yet exist, because it is in the future. One we have got it under way, and have begun to put what we were planning into action, then that action will be existent—because it is at that point not in the future but existing in the present.

(24) However this mysterious presentiment of future events happens, it is impossible to see anything unless it actually exists. But what is now existent is not future but present. So when a claim is made about seeing the future,

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dicuntur futura, non ipsa quae nondum sunt, id est quae futura sunt, sed eorum causae vel signa forsitan videntur, quae iam sunt. ideo non futura sed praesentia sunt iam videntibus, ex quibus futura praedicantur animo concepta. quae rursus conceptiones iam sunt, et eas praesentes apud se intuentur qui illa praedicunt. loquatur mihi aliquod exemplum tanta rerum numerositas. intueor auroram, oriturum solem praenuntio. quod intueor, praesens est, quod praenuntio, futurum. non sol futurus, qui iam est, sed ortus eius, qui nondum est; tamen etiam ortum ipsum nisi animo imaginarer, sicut modo cum id loquor, non eum possem praedicere. sed nec illa aurora quam in caelo video solis ortus est, quamvis eum praecedat, nec illa imaginatio in animo meo. quae duo praesentia cernuntur, ut futurus ille ante dicatur. futura ergo nondum sunt, et si nondum sunt, non sunt, et si non sunt, videri omnino non possunt; sed praedici possunt ex praesentibus, quae iam sunt et videntur.

19. (25) Tu itaque, regnator creaturae tuae, quis est modus quo doces animas ea quae futura sunt? docuisti enim prophetas tuos. quisnam ille modus est quo doces futura, cui futurum quicquam non est? vel potius de futuris doces praesentia? nam quod non est, nec doceri utique

⁵¹ GM: "A. suggests a 'mystical' method of prediction, [then] a 'rational' method . . . He guards himself from asserting which was the method of the O. T. prophets."

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it is perhaps not the actual events (which do not yet exist, because they are in the future) but their causes or clues that are seen, because they are existent in the present. So those things are not future but present to those who observe them: they use them to predict future events that they have conceived in their mind.⁵¹ Now these mental conceptions exist; and the people who make predictions about them contemplate them internally as present events. Let the vast quantity of instances impart to me just one example: I observe the dawn, and I predict that the sun is about to rise. What I am observing is in the present; what I am predicting is the future. It is not that the sun is in the future, because it already exists—but its rising, that does not yet exist: unless I imagined its rising in my mind, as I am doing now in speaking of it, I would be unable to predict it. That dawn, however, which I see in the sky is not the rising of the sun, although it precedes the sun; similarly it is not a prefigurement in my mind. Both these phenomena are present and discernible, so that the sunrise, which is yet to be, can be predicted. Future phenomena do not yet exist, and if they do not yet exist they do not exist at all; and if they do not exist at all, they certainly cannot be seen; but they can still be predicted by means of factors in the present, which do now exist and are visible.

19. (25) You, therefore, are the ruler over your creation; by what method do you teach our souls what happens in the future? After all you did teach your prophets. So what is your method for teaching the future—given that to you there is no such thing as future? Perhaps more accurate is that you teach what is in the present yet has a bearing on the future? For it is quite impossible to teach

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potest. nimis longe est modus iste ab acie mea; invaluit: ex me non potero ad illum, potero autem ex te, cum dederis tu, dulce lumen occultorum oculorum meorum.

20. (26) Quod autem nunc liquet et claret, nec futura sunt nec praeterita, nec proprie dicitur, "tempora sunt tria, praeteritum, praesens, et futurum," sed fortasse proprie diceretur, "tempora sunt tria, praesens de praeteritis, praesens de praesentibus, praesens de futuris." sunt enim haec in anima tria quaedam et alibi ea non video, praesens de praeteritis memoria, praesens de praesentibus contuitus, praesens de futuris expectatio. si haec permittimur dicere, tria tempora video fateorque, tria sunt. dicatur etiam, "tempora sunt tria, praeteritum, praesens, et futurum," sicut abutitur consuetudo; dicatur. ecce non curo nec resisto nec reprehendo, dum tamen intellegatur quod dicitur, neque id quod futurum est esse iam, neque id quod praeteritum est. pauca sunt enim quae proprie loquimur, plura non proprie, sed agnoscitur quid velimus.

21. (27) Dixi ergo paulo ante quod praetereuntia tempora metimur, ut possimus dicere duplum esse hoc temporis ad illud simplum, aut tantum hoc quantum illud, et si quid aliud de partibus temporum possumus renuntiare metiendo. quocirca, ut dicebam, praetereuntia metimur

⁵² *contuitus*. OD remarks that it is a particularly resonant and semantically dense word for A., covering a range from ordinary sight to spiritual perception.

⁵³ On inaccuracy in speech, and problems in being understood, see *De Mag.* 13.43: "When someone speaking signifies the same things as he is thinking, but mainly just to himself and certain people, to the person he is addressing, and to certain other people, it does not carry the same meaning at all."

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what does not exist. That method of yours is too distant from my vision: for it is weak. For my own part I cannot attain to it, but with your help, when you grant it, I can—O dearest light of my shadowed eyes.

Ps 139:6
Ps 38:10;
Eccl 11:7

20. (26) What is now patently clear is that neither future nor past events exist, and it is incorrect to say, "there are three times, past, present, and future." Perhaps it would be appropriate to say, "There are three times: the present respecting things past, the present respecting things present, and the present respecting things future." These three things do somehow exist in the soul, and I do not perceive them anywhere else: for the present of things past is memory; the present of things present is paying attention;⁵² and the present of things future is expectation. If I may phrase it so, I see three times and I acknowledge the fact: there are three of them. Let people say, "three times exist, past, present, and future," according to common usage; yes, let them say so. Look—I do not care, I do not try to stop it, I do not criticize it, so long as what they are saying is intelligible (rather than stating that what is in the future, and what is in the past, exist in the present). Very little of what we say is stated accurately; most is inaccurate, but what we mean is understood.⁵³

21. (27) I mentioned just now⁵⁴ that we measure times as they pass, so as to be able to call one length of time double, another simple, or to call one the same length as the other; and anything else we can state about sections of time by measuring them. For this reason, as I was saying, we measure passing times, and if anyone were to say

⁵⁴ Cf. *Conf.* 11.16.21.

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tempora, et si quis mihi dicat, "unde scis?" respondeam, scio quia metimur, nec metiri quae non sunt possumus, et non sunt praeterita vel futura. praesens vero tempus quomodo metimur, quando non habet spatium? metitur ergo cum praeterit, cum autem praeterierit, non metitur; quid enim metiatur non erit. sed unde et qua et quo praeterit, cum metitur? unde nisi ex futuro? qua nisi per praesens? quo nisi in praeteritum? ex illo ergo quod nondum est, per illud quod spatio caret, in illud quod iam non est. quid autem metimur nisi tempus in aliquo spatio? neque enim dicimus simpla et dupla et tripla⁹ et aequalia, et si quid hoc modo in tempore dicimus nisi spatia temporum. in quo ergo spatio metimur tempus praeteriens? utrum in futuro, unde praeterit? sed quod nondum est, non metimur. an in praesenti, qua praeterit? sed nullum spatium non metimur. an in praeterito, quo praeterit? sed quod iam non est, non metimur.

22. (28) Exarsit animus meus nosse istuc implicatissimum aenigma. noli claudere, domine deus meus, bone pater, per Christum obsecro, noli claudere desiderio meo ista et usitata et abdita, quominus in ea penetret et dilucescant allucente misericordia tua, domine. quem percontabor de his? et cui fructuosius confitebor imperitiam meam nisi tibi, cui non sunt molesta studia mea flammanitia vehementer in scripturas tuas? da quod amo; amo enim, et hoc tu dedisti. da, pater, qui vere nosti data bona

⁹ et dupla et tripla *om.* S

⁵⁵ The long form of address for this appeal underlines the urgency of A.'s desire.

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to me, "How do you know?" I would reply that I know because we take measurements, and we cannot measure something that does not exist, and past and future do not exist. How do we measure the present time, since it has no magnitude? It can be measured when it goes past, but once it has gone past it cannot be measured: there will be nothing then existing to be measured. But when it is measured, where does it come from? and by what way? and where is it headed? Where is it from if not the future? By what way if not the present? Where is it headed if not the past? It comes from what does not yet exist, it traverses what has no magnitude, and heads for what no longer exists. What are we measuring, then, if not time which has some spatial dimension? We only speak of single and double and triple and equal times (and anything else we say about time) if we mean passages of time. So in what length of time do we measure passing time? Should it be in the future it came from before it passed away? But because it no longer exists, we do not measure what has no magnitude. What about the past, then, into which it lapses? But we do not measure what no longer exists.

22. (28) My mind has burned to understand this most intricate mystery. O Lord my God, good Father,⁵⁵ through Christ I beg you not to shut my longing out from these matters, which are both familiar and enigmatic, to prevent it from penetrating them so that they shine with dawning radiance as your mercy lightens upon them, Lord. Who shall I ask about these matters? To whom shall I confess my ignorance to good effect if not to you? For you never find the force of my burning enthusiasm for your Scriptures tiresome. Grant what I love; for I do love, and that capacity in me is your gift. Grant me this, O Father, for

Mt 7:11

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dare filiis tuis, da, quoniam suscepi cognoscere et labor est ante me, donec aperias. per Christum obsecro, in nomine eius sancti sanctorum nemo mihi obstrepat. et ego credidi, propter quod et loquor. haec est spes mea, ad hanc vivo, ut contempler delectationem domini. ecce veteres posuisti dies meos et transeunt, et quomodo, nescio. et dicimus tempus et tempus, tempora et tempora: "quamdiu dixit hoc ille," "quamdiu fecit hoc ille" et: "quam longo tempore illud non vidi" et: "duplum temporis habet haec syllaba ad illam simplam brevem." dicimus haec et audimus¹⁰ haec et intellegimur et intellegimus. manifestissima et usitatissima sunt, et eadem rursus nimis latent et nova est inventio eorum.

23. (29) Audivi a quodam homine docto quod solis et lunae ac siderum motus ipsa sint tempora, et non adnui. cur enim non potius omnium corporum motus sint tempora? an vero, si cessarent caeli lumina et moveretur rota figuli, non esset tempus quo metiremur eos gyros et diceremus aut aequalibus morulis agi, aut si alias tardius, alias velocius moveretur, alios magis diuturnos esse, alios minus? aut cum haec diceremus, non et nos in tempore loqueremur aut essent in verbis nostris aliae longae syllabae,

¹⁰ audimus *codd. Maur. Ver.*: audivimus *S Knöll Skut.*

⁵⁶ The verb "open" is here in the future indicative active, *aperias*. In the future indicative passive it is the last word of the whole work, *aperietur* (*Conf.* 13.38.53).

⁵⁷ Cf. *Conf.* 11.27.36. On *obstrepat*, cf. *Conf.* 11.2.3. The scriptural phrase "holy of holies" can consist of two plurals (*sancta sanctorum*, Heb 9:3) or a singular followed by a plural (*sanctum sanctorum*, common in the Pentateuch).

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you know well how to give good gifts to your children; grant it, for I am committed to learning this, and I have a hard task before me until you open it up to me.⁵⁶ Through Christ I pray, in the name of him who is holy of holies—let no one stand in my way.⁵⁷ And I believed, and so I spoke. This is my hope, this is what I live for, to gaze upon the Lord's loveliness. Look! How old you have made my days, and they pass by, and I have no idea how. And we talk of one time and another time, of one span of time and another: "How long ago did he say this?" "How long ago did he do this?" and: "How, in all that long time, did I not see it?" and, "This syllable takes twice the time to pronounce in comparison with that simple one." We say things, and we listen to things: we are understood, and we understand. They are crystal clear and utterly familiar; and then again those same things are all too obscure, and we have to discover them afresh.

Ps 73:16

Ps 116:10

Ps 27:4^{VL}

Ps 39:5

23. (29) I once heard from a certain learned person that the movements of the sun and moon and stars are themselves times; but I did not agree. Why, then, would the movements of all physical objects not be times as well? And moreover, if the lights in the heavens were to fail, while a potter's wheel kept turning, wouldn't there be time by which to measure those rotations, and to state either that they were all the same size fractions of time, or—if some turns of the wheels were slower, and others faster—that some were longer and other shorter in duration? When we said all this, wouldn't we also be speaking in time? And in our words, wouldn't there be some composed of long syllables, others of short—precisely because

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aliae breves, nisi quia illae longiore tempore sonuissent, istae breviorē?

Deus, dona hominibus videre in parvo communes notitias rerum parvarum atque magnarum. sunt sidera et luminaria caeli in signis et in temporibus et in diebus et in annis. sunt vero, sed nec ego dixerim circuitum illius ligneolae rotae diem esse, nec tamen ideo tempus non esse ille dixerit.

(30) Ego scire cupio vim naturamque temporis, quo metimur corporum motus et dicimus illum motum verbi gratia tempore duplo esse diuturniorem quam istum. nam quaero, quoniam dies dicitur non tantum mora solis super terram, secundum quod aliud est dies, aliud nox, sed etiam totius eius circuitus ab oriente usque orientem,¹¹ secundum quod dicimus, "tot dies transierunt" (cum suis enim noctibus dicuntur tot dies, nec extra reputantur spatia noctium)—quoniam ergo dies expletur motu solis atque circuitu ab oriente usque orientem, quaero utrum motus ipse sit dies, an mora ipsa quanta peragitur, an utrumque. si enim primum dies esset, dies ergo esset, etiamsi tanto spatio temporis sol cursum illum peregisset, quantum est horae unius. si secundum, non ergo esset dies, si ab ortu solis usque in ortum alterum tam brevis mora esset quam est horae unius, sed viciens et quater circuiret sol ut expleret diem. si utrumque, nec ille appelleretur dies, si horae spatio sol totum suum gyrum circui-

¹¹ orientem *S Knöll Skut. Ver.:* ad orientem *codd. Maur.*

⁵⁸ *Luminaria:* A. concedes that lights of heaven are for telling the time, as Scripture says, but maintains that they are not time itself.

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the long ones sounded for a greater time, and the shorter ones for less?

O God, let humanity see in this small example the familiar marks of things great and small. In heaven the stars and sun and moon⁵⁸ mark signs and seasons, days and years. This is so, but I still would not say that the rotation of the potter's wooden wheel constituted a day, nor should that learned person have declared that its rotation did not constitute a period of time.

Gn 1:14

(30) I long to know the force and nature of time, by which we measure the movements of bodies and we say, for example, that one movement take double the length of time taken by another. This is my question: since a day is said to be not just the lingering of the sun above the earth (according to this, part is "day" and part is "night") but also its entire course from the east back to the east again, which lets us say, "so many days have passed" (for days are counted so as to include their nights, and the duration of the night is not reckoned a separate thing)—since a day is completed by the movement of the sun and its course from the east back to the east again, I am asking whether it is the movement which constitutes a "day," or the length of time it takes to pass, or both. If the former constitutes a day, it would still be a day even if the sun completed its course in so short a span of time as a single hour. If the latter, it would not count as a day if from one rising of the sun to the next took so short a span of time as a single hour—instead the sun would have to complete twenty-four circuits to make up a day. If it takes both, it could not be called a day if in the space of an hour the sun completed its entire circuit; nor could it if the sun stopped moving

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ret, nec ille, si sole cessante tantum temporis praeteriret, quanto peragere sol totum ambitum de mane in mane adsolet.

Non itaque nunc quaeram quid sit illud quod vocatur dies, sed quid sit tempus, quo metientes solis circuitum dicereimus eum dimidio spatio temporis peractum minus quam solet, si tanto spatio temporis peractus esset, quanto peraguntur horae duodecim, et utrumque tempus comparantes diceremus illud simplum, hoc duplum, etiamsi aliquando illo simplo, aliquando isto duplo sol ab oriente usque orientem circuiret. nemo ergo mihi dicat caelestium corporum motus esse tempora, quia et cuiusdam voto cum sol stetisset, ut victoriosum proelium perageret, sol stabat, sed tempus ibat. per suum quippe spatium temporis, quod ei sufficeret, illa pugna gesta atque finita est. video igitur tempus¹² quandam esse distentionem. sed video? an videre mihi videor? tu demonstrabis, lux, veritas.

24. (31) Iubes ut approbem, si quis dicat tempus esse motum corporis? non iubes. nam corpus nullum nisi in tempore moveri audio: tu dicis. ipsum autem corporis motum tempus esse non audio: non tu dicis. cum enim movetur corpus, tempore metior quamdiu moveatur, ex

¹² tempus *codd. edd.*: *om. S*

⁵⁹ *Distentio*, a problematic term. The resonance is negative, cf. Eccl 8:16 and its only cognate in *Conf.*, 8.10.24, *distendunt*, "divergent inclinations make the heart swell." Any kind of increase (amplification, prolongation, or extension) is potentially destructive of divine immutability: OD cites *Ep.* 187.13.41, "God is present everywhere, but not dispersed across far-distant places

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and enough time passed to make up the period of the sun's complete circumvolution from one morning to the next.

So I am not asking what that thing we call a "day" really is, but what time itself is, that phenomenon by which we could measure the course of the sun, and could declare that it had completed its course in half its usual span of time, if it had reached completion in such a span of time as lasts twelve hours: also whether we could compare the time and say that one took a single amount, and the other twice that; even if sometimes the sun completed its course from east back to east in that single length of time, and sometimes it took twice as long. Let no one tell me, therefore, that the movements of the heavenly bodies are times, because even when a certain character prayed and the sun stood still so that he fought and won his battle, the sun was standing still, but time went on passing. That battle was fought to the finish by means of its own appointed length of time, which proved enough for victory. So I see that time is a particular type of extension.⁵⁹ But do I see it?—or do I merely seem to see it? You will make it clear, O Light, O Truth.

Jo 10:12-13

24. (31) Are you telling me to support anyone who says that time is the movement of a physical object? No, you are not. For you say, and I learn, that no physical body can move except within time. I do not learn that time consists in the actual movement of a physical object, because that is not what you are saying. For when a physical object is

as if by means of some physical amplitude, or extension; rather he is whole, everywhere" (*deum ubique praesentem, et non spatiis distantibus quasi aliqua mole vel distentione diffusum, sed ubique totum*); cf. *Conf.* 7.1.1, 11.29.39, 12.15.22.

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quo moveri incipit donec desinat. et si non vidi ex quo coepit et perseverat moveri, ut non videam cum desinit, non valeo metiri, nisi forte ex quo videre incipio donec desinam. quod si diu video, tantummodo longum tempus esse renuntio, non autem quantum sit, quia et quantum cum dicimus, conlatione dicimus, velut: "tantum hoc, quantum illud" aut: "duplum hoc ad illud" et si quid aliud isto modo. si autem notare potuerimus locorum spatia, unde et quo veniat corpus quod movetur, vel partes eius, si tamquam in torno movetur, possumus dicere quantum sit temporis ex quo ab illo loco usque ad illum locum motus corporis vel partis eius effectus est. cum itaque aliud sit motus corporis, aliud quo metimur quamdiu sit, quis non sentiat quid horum potius tempus dicendum sit? nam si et varie corpus aliquando movetur, aliquando stat, non solum motum eius sed etiam statum tempore metimur et dicimus, "tantum stetit, quantum motum est" aut, "duplo vel triplo stetit ad id quod motum est" et si quid aliud nostra dimensio sive comprehenderit sive existimaverit, ut dici solet plus minus. non¹³ ergo tempus corporis motus.

25. (32) Et confiteor tibi, domine, ignorare me adhuc quid sit tempus, et rursus confiteor tibi, domine, scire me in tempore ista dicere, et diu me iam loqui de tempore,

¹³ non S O¹ Knöll Skut.: non est *codd. Maur. Ver.*

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moved, I can measure in time how long it moves for, from the time it begins to move until the time it stops. If I did not see when it started to move, and it keeps on moving but without letting me see when it stops, I do not have the means to make any measurement except perhaps the time from when I start to watch until I stop watching. But if I watch it for a long time, I can only report that it was a long time, not how long it was: this is because when we say how long something is, we are making that statement in the form of a comparison, "This is as long as that," or, "this is twice the size of that," and so on with matters of this kind. But if we could mark the distances between points in space, where a physical object has come from, and where it is headed (or when certain parts move, such as on a lathe), then we can say how long it takes for the movement of a physical object or its constituent parts from one point to the next to be completed. So because the movement of a physical object is one thing, and our means of measuring it is something else, who can be unaware which of these two phenomena is more properly described as time? For if the physical object were sometimes mobile, and at other times stationary, then we still measure not only its movement but also its immobility in terms of time, and say, "it was immobile for the same length of time as it was stationary," or, "it was stationary for twice or three times as long as it was mobile"; or whatever else our measuring has expressed or estimated, as people commonly say, "more or less." Time is not, therefore, the movement of a physical object.

25. (32) I confess to you, O Lord, that I still do not know what time is, and moreover I confess to you, Lord, that I know I am saying these things in time, and that I

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atque ipsum diu non esse diu nisi mora temporis. quomodo igitur hoc scio, quando quid sit tempus nescio? an forte nescio quemadmodum dicam quod scio? ei mihi, qui nescio saltem quid nesciam! ecce, deus meus, coram te, quia non mentior! sicut loquor, ita est cor meum. tu inluminabis lucernam meam, domine, deus meus, inluminabis tenebras meas.

26. (33) Nonne tibi confitetur anima mea confessione veridica metiri me tempora? itane,¹⁴ deus meus, metior et quid metiar nescio. metior motum corporis tempore: item ipsum tempus nonne metior? an vero corporis motum metirer, quamdiu sit et quamdiu hinc illuc perveniat, nisi tempus in quo movetur metirer? ipsum ergo tempus unde metior? an tempore brevior metimur longius sicut spatio cubiti spatium transtri? sic enim videmur¹⁵ spatio brevis syllabae metiri spatium longae syllabae atque id duplum dicere. ita metimur spatia carminum spatiis versuum et spatia versuum spatiis pedum et spatia pedum spatiis syllabarum et spatia longarum spatiis brevium, non in paginis (nam eo modo loca metimur, non tempora) sed cum voces pronuntiando transeunt et dicimus, "longum carmen est, nam tot versibus contexitur; longi versus, nam tot pedibus constant; longi pedes, nam tot syllabis tenduntur; longa syllaba est, nam dupla est ad brevem." sed neque ita com-

¹⁴ itane *codd. edd.* ita domine S

¹⁵ videmur *codd. edd.*: videmus S Knöll

⁶⁰ Syllepsis or zeugma: the figure is present in Vg and VL too but not the Hebrew. ⁶¹ An archaic unit of measurement, from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger: about eighteen inches.

⁶² See Vol. 1, xxii-xxiii.

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have been speaking about time for some duration, and that this "duration" is only duration by virtue of the interval of time. So how do I know this, given that I do not know what time is? Perhaps I do not know how I should speak of what I do know? Pity me!—for I do not even know what it is that I do not know! Look, O my God, before you I do not lie! As are my words, so is my heart. You will light my lantern, O Lord my God, you will lighten my darkness.⁶⁰

Gal 1:20

Ps 18:28

26. (33) Surely my soul is confessing the truth when it confesses to you that I do measure time? If so, O my God, I am making measurements but do not know what I am measuring. I use time to measure the movement of a physical object: likewise, surely, I am measuring time itself? Could I even measure the movement of a physical object (how long it lasted and how long it took to go from here to there) without measuring the time within which it moved? So how do I measure time itself? Do we use a shorter time to measure a longer one in the same way as we do a cubit⁶¹ to measure a crossbeam? This is apparently how we use the length of a short syllable to measure the length of a long syllable and to describe the latter as double. In the same way we measure the length of poems by the length of lines, and the length of lines by the length of feet, and the length of feet by the length of syllables, and the length of long syllables by the length of short ones. We do not use page length (for then we would be measuring space, not time); but when the words pass away as they are pronounced, we say, "it is a long poem, for it the interweaving of so many lines; they are long lines, for they consist of so many feet; they are long feet, for they are the extension of many syllables; it is a long syllable, because it is twice the length of a short one."⁶² But this does not se-

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prehenditur certa mensura temporis, quandoquidem fieri potest ut ampliore spatio temporis personet versus brevior, si productius pronuntietur, quam longior, si correptius. ita carmen, ita pes, ita syllaba.

Inde mihi visum est nihil esse aliud tempus quam distentionem; sed cuius rei, nescio, et mirum, si non ipsius animi. quid enim metior, obsecro, deus meus? et dico aut indefinite, "longius est hoc tempus quam illud" aut etiam definite, "duplum est hoc ad illud." tempus metior, scio; sed non metior futurum, quia nondum est, non metior praesens, quia nullo spatio tenditur, non metior praeteritum, quia iam non est. quid ergo metior? an praetereuntia tempora, non praeterita? sic enim dixeram.

27. (34) Insiste, anime meus, et attende fortiter. deus adiutor noster: ipse fecit nos, et non nos.¹⁶ attende ubi albescit veritas. ecce puta vox corporis incipit sonare et sonat et adhuc sonat, et ecce desinit, iamque silentium est, et vox illa praeterita est et non est iam vox. futura erat antequam sonaret, et non poterat metiri quia nondum erat, et nunc non potest quia iam non est. tunc ergo poterat cum sonabat, quia tunc erat quae metiri posset. sed

¹⁶ non nos: non ipsi nos *codd. Maur.* (et V^g)

⁶³ *Correptius*. A. may be thinking of "correction," a metrical feature of classical verse that allows for shortening of vowels for the sake of the meter.

⁶⁴ See above, *Conf.* 11.23.30, n. 59.

⁶⁵ GM: "The riddle is out! Cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* 3.7.11"; "We must not take time as something outside the [World-] soul" (δεῖ δὲ οὐκ ἔξωθεν τῆς ψυχῆς λαμβάνειν τὸν χρόνον). A. turns the universal into an individual soul. ⁶⁶ Perhaps an echo of Virg., *Aen.* 4.586, in this vivid verb *albescit*.

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cure a reliable measurement of time either, since it is possible that a shorter verse can be sounded over a more generous length of time, if it is pronounced in a protracted manner, than a longer one if it is pronounced in a more clipped fashion.⁶³ This is true of poems, feet, syllables.

This is why it seems to me that time is nothing other than a form of extension;⁶⁴ but what kind of extension, I do not know, and it would be surprising if it were not an extension of the mind itself.⁶⁵ I beg you to tell me, Lord, what is it that I am measuring? I either say something imprecise, like, "this time is longer than that one," or something precise, like, "this time is double the length of that." I know I am measuring time; but I am not measuring the future (because it does not yet exist), and I am not measuring the present (because it has no amplitude), and I am not measuring the past (because it no longer exists). So what am I measuring? Is it times as they are actually passing, rather than once they have passed? That is what I said earlier.

27. (34) Pay attention, O my mind, and take careful notice. God is our help: it is he who has made us, and not we ourselves. Take heed where Truth begins to dawn.⁶⁶ Look⁶⁷—think of a real physical voice: it begins to make a sound; and it sounds; and it keeps on sounding; and there! It ceases, and now there is silence, and that voice has passed away and there is no voice any longer. Before it sounded, it was in the future, and it could not be measured because it did not yet exist; and now it cannot because it exists no longer. So it could be measured then, while it was still sounding, because then something existed which

Ps 62:8

Ps 100:3

⁶⁷ *Ecce*: three times in *Conf.* 11.27.34—A. is in teaching mode again, rather than solely addressing God.

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et tunc non stabat; ibat enim et praeteribat. an ideo magis poterat? praeteriens enim tendebatur in aliquod spatium temporis quo metiri posset, quoniam praesens nullum habet spatium.

Si ergo tunc poterat, ecce puta altera coepit sonare et adhuc sonat continuato tenore sine ulla distinctione. metiamur eam dum sonat. cum enim sonare cessaverit, iam praeterita erit et non erit quae possit metiri. metiamur plane et dicamus quanta sit. sed adhuc sonat nec metiri potest nisi ab initio sui, quo sonare coepit, usque ad finem, quo desinit. ipsum quippe intervallum metimur ab aliquo initio usque ad aliquem finem. quapropter vox quae nondum¹⁷ finita est metiri non potest, ut dicatur quam longa vel brevis sit, nec dici aut aequalis alicui aut ad aliquam simpla vel dupla vel quid aliud. cum autem finita fuerit, iam non erit. quo pacto igitur metiri poterit? et metimur tamen tempora, nec ea quae nondum sunt, nec ea quae iam non sunt, nec ea quae nulla mora extenduntur, nec ea quae terminos non habent. nec futura ergo nec praeterita nec praesentia nec praetereuntia tempora metimur, et metimur tamen tempora.

(35) "Deus creator omnium": versus iste octo syllaba-

¹⁷ nondum *codd. edd.*: numquam S

⁶⁸ "while . . . sounded" is not in the Latin.

⁶⁹ As already noted repeatedly above.

⁷⁰ From the accentual hymn; cf. *Conf.* 9.12.32. The relationship between word-accent (or "stress") and syllable-quantity (or time-length) in the performance of Latin poetry in this period is controversial: Cicero remarks, "As if to modulate human speech, nature herself has placed on every word a sharp sound, only one, and never further back than the antepenultimate syllable" (Cic.

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could be measured. But even then it was not something steady; it was passing; and then passing away. Or could it be more easily measured then, while it still sounded?⁶⁸ Only in the actual moment of its passing was it extended far enough in time to be measurable, for the present has no amplitude.⁶⁹

If it could be measured, just look!—consider whether one voice begins to sound, and goes on sounding in an unbroken tone without any interruption. Let us measure it while it is sounding. When it stops sounding, it has already passed away, and there will be nothing in existence capable of being measured. So by all means let us measure it and declare how long it is. But it is still sounding, and cannot be measured unless from its beginning, when it started to sound, to its end, at which point it stopped. We can certainly measure the actual interval from whenever it began, to whenever it finishes. Therefore a voice that has not stopped sounding cannot be measured, to say how long or short it is; and it cannot be called equal to something else, or single, or double, or whatever, compared to something else. Once it is finished, it exists no longer. On what terms, therefore, can it possibly be measured? And yet we do measure times, not those that do not yet exist, and not those that exist no longer, much less those that have no dimension in time, or those that are unending. So we measure neither future nor past nor present nor passing time—and yet measure it we do.

(35) Take "O God, the maker of all things":⁷⁰ that line

Orat. 57). Cf. Quint. *Inst. Orat.* 12.10.33, where in accentual terms, "The Greek language is more pleasant (*iucundior*) than Latin."

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rum brevibus et longis alternat syllabis. quattuor itaque breves (prima, tertia, quinta, septima) simplae sunt ad quattuor longas (secundam, quartam, sextam, octavam). hae singulae ad illas singulas duplum habent temporis. pronuntio et renuntio, et ita est quantum sentitur sensu manifesto. quantum sensus manifestus est, brevi syllaba longam metior eamque sentio habere bis tantum. sed cum altera post alteram sonat, si prior brevis, longa posterior, quomodo tenebo brevem et quomodo eam longae metiens applicabo, ut inveniam quod bis tantum habeat, quandoquidem longa sonare non incipit nisi brevis sonare destiterit? ipsamque longam num praesentem metior, quando nisi finitam non metior? eius autem finitio praeteritio est: quid ergo est quod metior? ubi est qua metior brevis? ubi est longa quam metior? ambae sonuerunt, avolaverunt, praeterierunt, iam non sunt. et ego metior fidenterque respondeo, quantum exercitato sensu fiditur, illam simplam esse, illam duplam, in spatio scilicet temporis. neque hoc possum, nisi quia praeterierunt et finitae sunt. non ergo ipsas quae iam non sunt, sed aliquid in memoria mea metior, quod infixum manet.

(36) In te, anime meus, tempora metior. noli mihi obstrepere, quod est; noli tibi obstrepere turbis affectionum

⁷¹ A. is economical with the prosodic realities. The kind of poetry he is investigating relies on predictable patterns of sound; hypothesizing syllable length is a simple matter, even if proving it is not. The next section acknowledges this in terms of "impressions of sounds."

⁷² Homeoteleuton of three verbs, followed by three emphatic monosyllables.

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of eight syllables alternates between short and long syllables. So the four short ones (the first, third, fifth and seventh) have a single time-value, compared to the four long ones (the second, fourth sixth and eighth). The latter group each have twice the time value of the former. I pronounce the line, and announce that this is the case so far as clear sense perception can tell. So as far as sense perception is clear, I measure a long syllable against a short, and find that the long has twice the length. But when they sound one syllable after another, if the short is first and the long follows, how shall I keep a grip on the short, and how shall I apply it to the long in order to measure it, so that I find that it is twice the length—for the long does not begin to sound until the short has ceased to do so? Am I to measure the long syllable while it is sounding? But unless it is finished, how am I to measure it?⁷¹ Its final moment is its passing away: so what is there for me to measure? And where is the short syllable I am using for my measuring? Where is the long syllable that I am to measure? Both have sounded, both have since fled, both have passed away: they are no more.⁷² Still I measure, and reply honestly that, as far as my trained ear is reliable, the one is single, the other double, at least as far as the extent of time is concerned. But I cannot do this unless they have passed away and are at an end. So I am not measuring the sounds themselves (which no longer exist) but instead what remains in my memory, because there is it imprinted and remains.

(36) Within you, O my mind, I measure times. Do not make me stumble me with, "Time exists!" And do not make yourself stumble because of the turmoil of your im-

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tuarum. in te, inquam, tempora metior. affectionem quam res praetereuntes in te faciunt et, cum illae praeterierint, manet, ipsam metior praesentem, non ea quae praeterierunt ut fieret; ipsam metior, cum tempora metior.¹⁸ ergo aut ipsa sunt tempora, aut non tempora metior.

Quid cum metimur silentia, et dicimus illud silentium tantum tenuisse temporis quantum illa vox tenuit, nonne cogitationem tendimus ad mensuram vocis, quasi sonaret, ut aliquid de intervallis silentiorum in spatio temporis renuntiare possimus? nam et voce atque ore cessante peragimus cogitando carmina et versus et quemque sermonem motionumque dimensiones quaslibet et de spatiis temporum, quantum illud ad illud sit, renuntiamus non aliter ac si ea sonando diceremus. voluerit aliquis edere longiusculam vocem, et constituerit praemeditando quam longa futura sit, egit utique iste spatium temporis in silentio memoriaeque commendans coepit edere illam vocem quae sonat, donec ad propositum terminum perducatur. immo sonuit et sonabit; nam quod eius iam peractum est, utique sonuit, quod autem restat, sonabit atque ita peragitur, dum praesens intentio futurum in praeteritum traicit,

¹⁸ cum . . . metior om. S

⁷³ Cf. *Conf.* 10.14.21. GM recognize that the meaning of *affectio* is at the extreme of the lexical range: "‘Impression’ is, perhaps, the best rendering here. The psychological technicality ‘modification of consciousness’ would accurately represent the meaning."

⁷⁴ A.'s point is that actual sound is not necessary for the mind to process time measured by impressions of sounds, as when reciting a poem silently.

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pressions.⁷³ I insist, it is in you that I measure times. What I measure is the actual present impressions produced in you by passing events; and which remains when those events have passed: not the actual present event, not those things which have passed and so let the feeling come into being. That is what I measure when I measure time. Therefore either this is what times really are, or I am not in fact measuring time.

What about when we measure silences, and we say that one silence has lasted as long as another sound? Surely we stretch our power of understanding to measure the sound (as if it were still audible), so that we can produce a report of some sort into the periods of silence within the overall time frame? Without a sound from our voice, our lips, in our minds we scrutinize poems and lines and speech of all kinds, and the shaping of any of their constituent parts: and as far as periods of time are concerned, and how one relates to another, we report that they are exactly the same as if we were speaking them aloud.⁷⁴ Suppose that someone wants to produce a rather long⁷⁵ sound, and determines in advance how long the sound is going to be: surely that person ran through the length of time silently and committed it to memory, and then began to produce that sound, which keeps resonating until it reaches the predetermined finish. In fact the sound has sounded, and will keep sounding; for the part of it that is over certainly did sound, but the part that is still to come, that will sound and then will come to its end. At the same time our present intention draws the future into the past:⁷⁶ as the future

⁷³ *longiusculam*: a very rare diminutive.

⁷⁶ A memorable epigram.

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deminutione futuri crescente praeterito, donec consumptione futuri sit totum praeteritum.

28. (37) Sed quomodo minuitur aut consumitur futurum, quod nondum est, aut quomodo crescit praeteritum, quod iam non est, nisi quia in animo qui illud agit tria sunt? nam et expectat et attendit et meminit, ut id quod expectat per id quod attendit transeat in id quod meminerit. quis igitur negat futura nondum esse? sed tamen iam est in animo expectatio futurorum. et quis negat praeterita iam non esse? sed tamen adhuc est in animo memoria praeteritorum. et quis negat praesens tempus carere spatio, quia in puncto praeterit? sed tamen perdurat attentio, per quam pergat abesse quod aderit. non igitur longum tempus futurum, quod non est, sed longum futurum longa expectatio futuri est, neque longum praeteritum tempus, quod non est, sed longum praeteritum longa memoria praeteriti est.

(38) Dicturus sum canticum quod novi. antequam incipiam, in totum expectatio mea tenditur, cum autem coepero, quantum ex illa in praeteritum decerpsero, tenditur et memoria mea, atque distenditur vita huius actionis meae in memoriam propter quod dixi et in expectationem propter quod dicturus sum. praesens tamen adest attentio mea, per quam traicitur quod erat futurum ut fiat praeteritum. quod quanto magis agitur et agitur, tanto breviata expectatione prolongatur memoria, donec tota expectatio consumatur, cum tota illa actio finita transierit in memoriam.

⁷⁷ A. is still in teaching mode, hence the rhetorical questions.

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diminishes, the past grows, until the future is spent and everything is the past.

28. (37) But how is the future diminished or spent, given that it does not yet exist? And how does the past increase, since it exists no longer?—unless because in the mind which deals with this matter they are three separate things. For that mind looks forward; and is aware; and remembers: so what it looks forward to shifts through what it is aware of into what it remembers. Who can deny that past events no longer exist?⁷⁷ Yet there remains in the mind a memory of past events. And who can deny that the present time has no temporal amplitude, because it passes in a moment? Yet our awareness endures, and through that attention what is in the future presses on to become no more. So it is not a future time which is long, because that does not exist; a “long future” is really a long expectation of the future. Likewise, a time past is not long, because it does not exist; and a “long time past” is really a long-lasting recollection of what is past.

(38) Imagine that I am about to recite a hymn that I know. Before I start, my expectation extends to the hymn as a whole. But once I begin, whatever part of that expectation I have plucked away goes into the past and is retained in my memory: the life force of my performance is in tension between memory (because of what I have already spoken) and expectation (because of what I have yet to say). My awareness is in the present though; and through it what was future crosses over to become the past. The longer the performance continues, the more my expectation is reduced and my memory prolonged, until expectation is entirely exhausted: and once the whole performance of the hymn is finished it shifts into memory.

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Et quod in toto cantico, hoc in singulis particulis eius fit atque in singulis syllabis eius, hoc in actione longiore, cuius forte particula est illud canticum, hoc in tota vita hominis, cuius partes sunt omnes actiones hominis, hoc in toto saeculo filiorum hominum, cuius partes sunt omnes vitae hominum.

29. (39) Sed quoniam melior est misericordia tua super vitas, ecce distentio est vita mea, et me suscepit dextera tua in domino meo, mediatore filio hominis inter te unum et nos multos, in multis per multa, ut per eum apprehendam in quo et apprehensus sum, et a veteribus diebus conligar sequens unum: praeterita oblitus, non in ea quae futura et transitura sunt, sed in ea quae ante sunt non distentus sed extentus, non secundum distentionem sed secundum intentionem sequor ad palmam supernae vocationis, ubi audiam vocem laudis et contempler delectationem tuam nec venientem nec praetereuntem.

Nunc vero anni mei in gemitibus, et tu solacium meum, domine, pater meus aeternus es. at ego in tempora dissilui quorum ordinem nescio, et tumultuosis varietatibus dilaniantur cogitationes meae, intima viscera animae meae, donec in te confluam purgatus et liquidus igne amoris tui.

⁷⁸ Biblical idiom for "human beings."

⁷⁹ A. reverts to addressing God (the Father at this point).

⁸⁰ Cf. *Conf.* 11.23.30 with n. 59, where *distentio* has the sense of "spread" or "amplitude" uppermost; here "confusion" predominates, but it is important to hold the two English terms in the tension of the single Latin idea.

⁸¹ *Distentus*.

⁸² *Palmam*^{VL}: *bravium*^{VE} (prize). A palm branch or wreath was a symbolic prize, a token of victory or success.

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What holds for the whole hymn holds for the individual parts of it too, and the individual syllables, and for the longer performance (of which the hymn is only a part): and in a whole human life, the parts of which consist of all the actions of that human individual; and in the whole age of the children of men,⁷⁸ the parts of which consist of the lives of every human being.

29. (39) Since your⁷⁹ mercy is better than life itself, look and see that my life is a kind of distraction.⁸⁰ Your right hand has supported me in my Lord who as the Son of Man is mediator between you who are One, and us who are many, drawn in many directions by many factors, so that through him I may take as my own the one who has made me his own. Leaving behind my former times, I recollect myself and follow the One. I forget what is past, and instead of being distracted⁸¹ I reach out, not for what is in the future and so transitory, but for those things which are before me: I press forward, going in the right direction, rather than being distracted, to the prize⁸² of my highest calling. There I shall hear the voice of praise and shall contemplate your delight⁸³ which neither comes into being nor passes away.

Ps 63:3

Pss 18:35,
63:6

1 Tm 2:5

Phil 3:12-14

Ps 27:4

Now, though, my years are spent in groaning, and you are my consolation, Lord, for you are my eternal Father. But I became alienated as I entered into time, not knowing the order in which it passes, and my thoughts, the inmost parts of my soul, are ripped apart by turbulent vicissitudes, until I flow back together toward you, purged, and shining with the fire of your love.

Ps 31:10

⁸³ *Delectationem*^{VL} (also *voluptatem*, pleasure; *iucunditatem*, pleasantness): *voluntatem*^{Vg} (will).

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30. (40) Et stabo atque solidabor in te, in forma mea, veritate tua, nec patiar quaestiones hominum qui poenali morbo plus sitiunt quam capiunt et dicunt, "quid faciebat deus antequam faceret caelum et terram?" aut "quid ei venit in mentem ut aliquid faceret, cum antea numquam aliquid fecerit?" da illis, domine, bene cogitare quid dicant, et invenire quia non dicitur numquam ubi non est tempus. qui ergo dicitur numquam fecisse, quid aliud dicitur nisi nullo tempore fecisse? videant itaque nullum tempus esse posse sine creatura et desinant istam vanitatem loqui. extendantur etiam in ea quae ante sunt, et intellegant te ante omnia tempora aeternum creatorem omnium temporum neque ulla tempora tibi esse coaeterna nec ullam creaturam, etiamsi est aliqua supra tempora.

31. (41) Domine deus meus, quis ille sinus est alti secreti tui et quam longe inde me proiecerunt consequentia delictorum meorum? sana oculos meos, et congaudeam luci tuae. certe si est tam grandi scientia et praescientia pollens animus, cui cuncta praeterita et futura ita nota sint, sicut mihi unum canticum notissimum, nimium mirabilis est animus iste atque ad horrorem stupendus, quippe quem ita non lateat quidquid peractum et quidquid reliquum saeculorum est, quemadmodum me non latet cantantem illud canticum, quid et quantum eius abierit ab exordio, quid et quantum restet ad finem.

⁸⁴ Cf. *Conf.* 11.8.10; Truth "stands fast" (*stabilis*).

⁸⁵ A. has in mind here the possible creation of the angels outside time, where "they are said to have existed 'always' because they existed in all time" (*De civ. D.* 12.15.2).

⁸⁶ Knowledge of a hymn serves as a trivial example to compare with the greatness of knowing past and future.

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30. (40) I shall stand fast and be established in you,⁸⁴ in the pattern for my life, which is your truth. I shall not permit questions from people who endure sickness as their punishment and thirst for more than they can hold, and who say, "What was God doing before he made heaven and earth?" Or, "what came into his mind to prompt him to act, when before that he had done nothing?" Lord, let them consider carefully what they are saying; and discover that it is meaningless to say "never" when time does not exist. The fact that they say he never made anything, what does this mean if not that he did not make it at any time? So let them see that no time can exist without the act of creation, and then let them stop talking vanity. Let them even reach out to what is before them, and understand that before all time existed you are the eternal creator of all time; and that no periods of time are coeternal with you, nor any act of creation, even if it takes place beyond any actual times.⁸⁵

Phil 4:1; 1
Thes 3:8

Ps 144:8

Phil 3:13

31. (41) O Lord my God, what is that shelter of your innermost mystery? And how far away from it have the consequences of my sins driven me? Heal my eyes so that I can share in the joy of your light! To be sure, if there exists a mind so strong in sublime knowledge and foreknowledge that is as familiar with all things past and future as I am with a well-known hymn,⁸⁶ that mind is extraordinary and remarkable, and awe-inspiring. This is particularly true given that nothing in past history and nothing in the future ages is obscure to it; in the same way as nothing is obscure to me when I sing that hymn—what proportion of it has passed since its beginning, and what proportion of it yet remains before it is ended.

Ps 51:11

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Sed absit ut tu, conditor universitatis, conditor animarum et corporum, absit ut ita noveris omnia futura et praeterita. longe tu, longe mirabilius longeque secretius. neque enim sicut nota cantantis notumve canticum audientis expectatione vocum futurarum et memoria praeteritarum variatur affectus sensusque distenditur, ita tibi aliquid accidit incommutabiliter aeterno, hoc est vere aeterno creatori mentium. sicut ergo nosti in principio caelum et terram sine varietate notitiae tuae, ita fecisti in principio caelum et terram sine distentione¹⁹ actionis tuae. qui intellegit, confiteatur tibi, et qui non intellegit, confiteatur tibi. o quam excelsus es, et humiles corde sunt domus tua! tu enim erigis elisos, et non cadunt quorum celsitudo tu es.

¹⁹ distentione *C D O Eugipp. Maur. edd. distinctione S G Knöll Skut.*

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But as for you—the Creator of the universe, the Creator of souls and bodies—it can never, never be that you know all things future and past in such a way! Your way is far, far more secret, and far more wonderful.⁸⁷ When someone sings well-known hymns or hears a hymn that is well-known, their emotion fluctuates and their sense perceptions are amplified⁸⁸ by the expectation of words yet to come and the recollection of those already past: but it happens differently in your case, because your eternity is immutable, and you are the truly eternal Creator of minds. Just as you knew heaven and earth in the beginning, then, without any variation in your knowledge, so also you made heaven and earth in the beginning, without any extension in your action.⁸⁹ Let anyone who understands this make confession to you, and those who do not understand, let them make their confession too! O how sublime you are, and yet the humble in heart are your dwelling place. You lift up the fallen and those who have you for their exaltation do not fall.

Ps 138:6; Is
57:15

Ps 145:14

⁸⁷ The double anaphora, “never” (*absit ut*), and triple, “far” (*longe*), marks intense emotion.

⁸⁸ *distenditur*: the terminology of extension/confusion continues, cf. *Conf.* 11.29.39, n. 80.

⁸⁹ Cf. *De civ. D.* 11.21 on divine immutability in creation.

LIBER XII

1. (1) Multa satagit cor meum, domine, in hac inopia vitae meae, pulsatum verbis sanctae scripturae tuae, et ideo plerumque in sermone copiosa est egestas humanae intelligentiae, quia plus loquitur inquisitio quam inventio, et longior est petitio quam impetratio, et operosior est manus pulsans quam sumens. tenemus promissum: quis corrumpet illud? si deus pro nobis, quis contra nos? "petite et accipietis, quaerite et invenietis, pulsate et aperietur vobis. omnis enim qui petit accipit, et quaerens inveniet, et pulsanti aperietur." promissa tua sunt, et quis falli timeat cum promittit veritas?

2. (2) Confitetur altitudini tuae humilitas linguae meae, quoniam tu fecisti caelum et terram: hoc caelum quod video terramque quam calco, unde est haec terra quam porto, tu fecisti. sed ubi est caelum caeli, domine, de quo audivimus in voce psalmi: "caelum caeli domino, terram autem dedit filiis hominum"? ubi est¹ caelum quod non²

¹ est *codd. edd.*: es S Knöll, GM ² non *codd. edd.*: nos S

¹ This confirms that Book 12 is principally directed to the second person of the Trinity, the Son, the Word, the Christ. Books 10 and 11 have been the theological foundation for the exegesis of Gn 1, which begins now. As Book 12 opens with Mt 7:7-8, Book

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1. (1) My heart is smitten by the words of your holy Scripture, and is preoccupied with many matters, Lord, in this poverty-stricken life of mine. Thus the paucity of human understanding is mainly apparent from its torrent of words: because seeking requires more talk than finding does; and asking takes more time than obtaining does; and the hand that knocks must work harder than the hand that takes. We hold fast to what was promised: who can bring it to ruin? If God is for us, who is against us? "Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and everyone who seeks will find, and to the one who knocks, it will be opened." These are your promises, and who fears being cheated when Truth itself is making the promise?²¹

Lk 10:40-42

Rom 8:31

Mt 7:7-8; Jn 16:24

Jn 14:6

Rom 14:11

Gn 3:19

Ps 115:16

2. (2) The lowliness of my tongue makes confession to your sublimity, for you have made heaven and earth: this heaven that I see, and this earth on which I tread (from which comes this earth that I bear with me), is your making. But where, Lord, is that heaven of heavens that we have heard of from the words of the psalm: "the heaven of heaven belongs to the Lord, but he has given the earth to

13 closes with it, making of the final two books another internal coherence.

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cernimus, cui terra est hoc omne quod cernimus? hoc enim totum corporeum non ubique totum ita cepit speciem pulchram in novissimis, cuius fundus est terra nostra, sed ad illud caelum caeli etiam terrae nostrae caelum terra est. et hoc utrumque magnum corpus non absurde terra est ad illud nescio quale caelum quod domino est, non filiis hominum.

3. (3) Et nimirum haec terra erat invisibilis et incomposita, et nescio qua profunditas abyssi, super quam non erat lux quia nulla species erat illi, unde iussisti ut scriberetur quod "tenebrae erant super abyssum." quid aliud quam lucis absentia? ubi enim lux esset, si esset, nisi super esset eminendo et inlustrando? ubi ergo lux nondum erat, quid erat adesse tenebras nisi abesse lucem? super itaque erant tenebrae quia super lux aberat, sicut sonus ubi non est, silentium est. et quid est esse ibi silentium nisi sonum ibi non esse? nonne tu, domine, docuisti hanc animam quae tibi confitetur? nonne tu, domine, docuisti me quod, priusquam istam informem materiam formares atque distingueres, non erat aliquid, non color, non figura, non corpus, non spiritus? non tamen omnino nihil: erat quaedam informitas sine ulla specie.

² Cf. *Conf.* 11.29.38, n. 78. The Hebrew says, "The heavens are heavens belonging to the Lord" (*hashamayim shamayim la-donai*); but the phrasing of VL (and Vg) suggests to A. a second heaven, beyond the visible one. Ps 115:15 refers to "the Lord who made heaven and earth"; i.e., an intra-scriptural exegesis of Gn 1:1.

³ *species*, close to *forma* in meaning. Giving shape, appearance, form, to matter is a distinctive action of the Word as active in Creation. A. may be borrowing terms from Cicero, who uses

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the children of men."² Where is this heaven that we do not see, in contrast to which all that we see is earth? All this physical world (which is not completely everywhere) has been given a beautiful appearance in its furthest parts: the foundation of this is our earth; but the heaven that belongs to our earth counts as mere earth in comparison with that heaven of heavens. And both of these great physical entities quite reasonably count as earth in comparison with that inconceivable heaven which belongs to the Lord, not to the children of men.

3. (3) Undoubtedly this earth was invisible and lacking all structure, an unfathomably deep abyss. Above it there was no light because light had not yet any visible form:³ this is why you caused it to be written, "above the abyss was darkness." What is darkness if not the absence of light? For if light had existed, where would it have been if not on high, conspicuous and shining forth? So when light did not yet exist, surely the presence of darkness was simply the absence of light? So darkness was above it because there was no light above it; just as when there is no sound, there is silence. And what does silence in a place consist of, if not the absence of sound from that place? Surely you, Lord, have taught this soul which makes confession to you?—surely you, Lord, have taught me that before you gave shape and distinct identity to that formless material, there was nothing—no color, no shape, no body, no spirit? Even so it was not completely nothing: there was a certain shapelessness, without definite form.

Gn 1:1

Gn 1:2

cf. Ws 11:17

species (and *forma*) to translate the Platonic "form" (*ἰδέα*): see Cic. *Orat.* 3.10.

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4. (4) Quid ergo vocaretur, quo etiam sensu tardioribus utcumque insinuaretur, nisi usitato aliquo vocabulo? quid autem in omnibus mundi partibus reperiri potest propinquius informitati omnimodae quam terra et abyssus? minus enim speciosa sunt pro suo gradu infimo quam cetera superiora perlucida et luculenta omnia. cur ergo non accipiam informitatem materiae, quam sine specie feceras unde speciosum mundum faceres, ita commode hominibus intimatam ut appellaretur "terra invisibilis et incomposita," 5. (5) ut,³ cum in ea quaerit cogitatio quid sensus attingat et dicit sibi, "non est intellegibilis forma sicut vita, sicut iustitia, quia materies est corporum, neque sensibilis, quoniam quid videatur et quid sentiatur in invisibili et incomposita non est," dum sibi haec dicit humana cogitatio, conetur eam vel nosse ignorando vel ignorare noscendo?

6. (6) Ego vero, domine, si totum confitear tibi ore meo et calamo meo, quidquid de ista materia docuisti me, cuius antea nomen audiens et non intellegens, narrantibus mihi

³ ut cum *S V G Maur.*: et cum *C D P.*: cum *Ver.*

⁴ From here to the end of 12.5.5 is punctuated as a single—unwieldy—sentence by GM and OD, following Knöll; V has a sentence break at the start of 12.5.5. On paragraphing, see Knöll, *CSEL* edition (1898), vi n2: the book divisions are original; the chapter numbering was added by Amerbach (1506) and the paragraphs by the Maurists (1679).

⁵ Paronomasia on *specie . . . speciosum*.

⁶ Cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* 2.4.10: "A definite concept of the indefinite could exist, while what it is applied to is still indefinite"

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4. (4) What should this stuff be called? Under what meaning could it be somehow introduced to those of slower intellect—unless by some familiar term? In every corner of the world, what can be found that is closer to complete formlessness than “earth” and “abyss”? For they are more amorphous, in accordance with their inferior position, than other, higher, material things that are all translucent, filled with light. So⁴ why will I not accept that the formlessness of the matter that you had made without any ordered arrangement, and from which you made the world in its ordered beauty,⁵ has been imparted to humanity in such a fitting way that it is proper to call it “earth invisible and lacking all structure”? 5. (5) And in such a way that when rational thought searches in it for something to which sense perception can relate, it says to itself, “this is not an intelligible construct in the same way as life, or as justice, because matter is a concept associated with physical objects, nor is it something which sense perception can grasp: because there is nothing to be seen or felt in what is invisible and lacking in structure.” While rational human thought says these things to itself, can it attempt either to understand this through accepting that there are things it does not know, or to be in a state of not knowing based on the things that it does understand?⁶

6. (6) If I am to confess the whole to you, Lord, both in speech and writing, whatever you have taught me about this kind of matter (I had heard what it was called and did not understand it, because the people who told me about

(λόγος μὲν οὖν γένοιτο ἂν περὶ τοῦ ἀορίστου ὠρισμένος, ἢ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐπιβολὴ ἀόριστος).

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eis qui non intellexerent, eam cum speciebus innumeris et variis cogitabam et ideo non eam cogitabam. foedas et horribiles formas perturbatis ordinibus volvebat animus, sed formas tamen, et informe appellabam non quod careret forma, sed quod talem haberet ut, si appareret, insolitum et incongruum aversaretur sensus meus et conturbaretur infirmitas hominis. verum autem illud quod cogitabam non privatione omnis formae sed comparatione formosiorum erat informe, et suadebat vera ratio ut omnis formae qualescumque reliquias omnino detraherem, si vellem prorsus informe cogitare et non poteram. citius enim non esse censebam quod omni forma privaretur quam cogitabam quiddam inter formam et nihil, nec formatum nec nihil, informe prope nihil. et cessavit mens mea interrogare hinc spiritum meum plenum imaginibus formatorum corporum et eas pro arbitrio mutantem atque variantem, et intendi in ipsa corpora eorumque mutabilitatem altius inspexi, qua desinunt esse quod fuerant et incipiunt esse quod non erant, eundemque transitum de forma in formam per informe quiddam fieri suspicatus sum, non per omnino nihil.

Sed nosse cupiebam, non suspicari. et si totum tibi confiteatur vox et stilus meus, quidquid de ista quaestione enodasti mihi, quis legentium capere durabit? nec ideo

⁷ GM: "Until he met Ambrose he does not seem ever to have come into contact with any Christian of much education or mental grasp."

⁸ Plotinus, *Enn.* 2.4.2, states that experiences of change give rise to the concept of matter.

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it⁷ did not understand it either) I for my part understood it to be something that took countless different forms—in other words, I did not actually understand it at all. My mind revolved around gross and terrifying shapes in a disarranged state, but still they did have shape. I spoke of “shapelessness,” but it was not really shapeless. Instead it had the kind of shape that—if it appeared—my feelings would revolt from as incongruous and bizarre, something to throw human weakness into turmoil. But in fact what I was trying to understand was not shapeless in virtue of its complete lack of shape, but only in comparison with things that were better shaped: and pure reason began to convince me that I should exclude completely all vestigial traces of shape if I wanted to form concepts devoid of any notion of shape. But I could not. I could sooner decide that no such thing existed as was lacking shape of any kind, than I could understand a something between shape and nothingness, something neither shaped nor nothingness, so lacking in shape as to be almost nonexistent. Then my mind stopped interrogating my spirit, which was full of impressions of physical objects of definite shape, and which kept changing and shifting them at will, and I turned my gaze upon the physical objects themselves, and looked deeper at their mutability (which makes them stop being as they once were and become what once they were not) and I speculated whether this same shift from one shape to another passes through a stage of formlessness rather than through absolute nothingness.⁸

But I wanted knowledge, not merely speculation. So if my speech and writing are confessing to you what you have disentangled for me on this subject, who among my readers will hang on long enough to grasp this? Even so, my

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tamen cessabit cor meum tibi dare honorem et canticum laudis de his quae dictare non sufficit. mutabilitas enim rerum mutabilium ipsa capax est formarum omnium in quas mutantur res mutabiles. et haec quid est? numquid animus? numquid corpus? numquid species animi vel corporis? si dici posset "nihil aliquid" et "est non est," hoc eam dicerem; et tamen iam utcumque erat, ut species caperet istas visibiles et compositas.

7. (7) Et unde utcumque erat, nisi esset abs te, a quo sunt omnia, in quantumcumque sunt? sed tanto a te longius, quanto dissimilius, neque enim locis. itaque tu, domine, qui non es alias aliud et alias aliter, sed idipsum et idipsum et idipsum, sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, dominus deus omnipotens, in principio, quod est de te, in sapientia tua, quae nata est de substantia tua, fecisti aliquid et de nihilo. fecisti enim caelum et terram non de te. nam esset aequale unigenito tuo ac per hoc et tibi, et nullo modo iustum esset, ut aequale tibi esset quod de te non esset. et aliud praeter te non erat unde faceres ea, deus, una trinitas et trina unitas, et ideo de nihilo fecisti caelum et terram, magnum quiddam et parvum quiddam, quoniam omnipotens et bonus es ad facienda omnia bona, magnum caelum et parvam terram, duo quaedam, unum prope te,

⁹ Note the variation in rhetorical figure from polysyndeton ("same") to asyndeton ("holy"): the double triple anaphora is evocative of the Trinity.

¹⁰ Cf. *Conf.* 11.8.10. Beginning and Wisdom allude to the second Person of the Trinity.

¹¹ A. wants to avoid heresy, either of suggesting emanation from the divine origin (gnosticism) or of positing all good things to be part of divine substance (Manichaean dualism).

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heart will not stop ascribing honor to you, and a hymn of praise for those themes for which ordinary speech is inadequate. The mutability of mutable things itself embraces all the shapes into which mutable things can change. And what is this mutability? Surely not the mind? Nor the body either? Nor the form of the mind or body? If it could be called "a something-and-nothing" and an "is-and-is-not," I would call it so: but somehow or other it existed, so as to be able to take such visible and structured forms.

7. (7) How could it somehow or other exist, unless through you, since you are the source of everything, to whatever degree it exists? The further things are from you, the more unlike you they become—and not in terms of physical distance. So you, Lord, are not one entity in one place and another somewhere else, but you are the same and the same and the same—holy holy holy,⁹ Lord God almighty; in that Beginning¹⁰ which is from you, in your Wisdom, which was born of your substance, you made from nothing—something. For you made heaven and earth, but not from your own self.¹¹ For then what you made would be equal to your only-begotten Son, and through him equal to yourself as well: it would not be right at all that anything should be your equal which was not from your own self. Apart from you there was nothing existing from which you could make these things, O Trinity¹² in unity and unity in Trinity. Therefore you made heaven and earth from nothing, something great and something small. For you are almighty and good in making all things good, the great heaven and the small earth: two entities, one near to

Rom 11:36

Is 6:3; Rv 4:8

Prv 8:22

Phil 2:6

¹² The first mention of the Trinity in *Conf.*; see OD *ad loc.*

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alterum prope nihil, unum quo superior tu esses, alterum quo inferius nihil esset.

8. (8) Sed illud caelum caeli tibi, domine; terra autem, quam dedisti filiis hominum cernendam atque tangendam, non erat talis qualem nunc cernimus et tangimus. invisibilis enim erat et incomposita, et abyssus erat super quam non erat lux, aut tenebrae erant super abyssum, id est magis quam in abysso. ista quippe abyssus aquarum iam visibilium etiam in profundis suis habet speciei suae lucem utcumque sensibilem piscibus et reptantibus in suo fundo animantibus. illud autem totum prope nihil erat, quoniam adhuc omnino informe erat; iam tamen erat quod formari poterat. tu enim, domine, fecisti mundum de materia informi, quam fecisti de nulla re paene nullam rem, unde faceres magna, quae miramur filii hominum. valde enim mirabile hoc caelum corporeum, quod firmamentum inter aquam et aquam secundo die post conditionem lucis dixisti, "fiat" et sic est factum. quod firmamentum vocasti caelum, sed caelum terrae huius et maris, quae fecisti tertio die dando speciem visibilem informi materiae, quam fecisti ante omnem diem. iam enim feceras et caelum ante omnem diem, sed caelum caeli huius, quia in principio feceras caelum et terram. terra autem ipsa quam feceras informis materies erat, quia invisibilis erat et incomposita, et tenebrae super abyssum. de qua terra invisibili et incomposita, de qua informitate, de quo paene nihilo faceres haec omnia quibus iste mutabilis mundus

¹³ Cf. *Conf.* 12.2.2, n. 2.

¹⁴ I.e., the ocean.

¹⁵ I.e., a vault or dome, a support structure.

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you, the other near to nothing. You alone would be greater than the one, while nothing would be lesser than the other.

8. (8) The heaven of heaven¹³ belongs to you, O Lord: but the earth, which you have given to the children of men to look upon it and touch it, was not the same as what we now look upon and touch. It was invisible and without structure, an abyss over which no light existed; or there was darkness above the abyss, in other words a darkness more profound than the abyss itself. This abyss of waters that now we can see¹⁴ has even in its depths the light that is proper to its kind, in one way or another perceptible to fish and teeming creatures in their own deep element. But the whole of it was virtually nonexistent, since it was still altogether without form: but now there was something that could be given a form. For you, Lord, made the world from formless matter: and you made that almost-nonexistent stuff from wholly nonexistent stuff, so as to make great things for us children of men to marvel at. For this material heaven is truly remarkable, because on the second day, after the creation of light, you said of the firmament,¹⁵ "let it be," and so it was made. This firmament you called "heaven," namely the heaven that belongs to this earth and sea, which you made on the third day by giving visible shape to shapeless matter, which you made before days began to exist. You had already made a heaven before days began to exist, but that was the heaven over this heaven of ours, because you made heaven and earth in the beginning. But that earth which you had made was shapeless matter, because it was invisible and without structure, and darkness was over the abyss. From this invisible, unstructured earth, from this shapelessness, from this almost-nothingness, you were to create all these

Gn 1:20-22;
Ps 104:25

Gn 1:6

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constat et non constat, in quo ipsa mutabilitas apparet, in qua sentiri et dinumerari possunt tempora, quia rerum mutationibus fiunt tempora dum variantur et vertuntur species, quarum materies praedicta est terra invisibilis.

9. (9) Ideoque spiritus, doctor famuli tui, cum te commemorat fecisse in principio caelum et terram, tacet de temporibus, silet de diebus. nimirum enim caelum caeli, quod in principio fecisti, creatura est aliqua intellectualis. quamquam nequaquam tibi, trinitati, coaeterna, particeps tamen aeternitatis tuae, valde mutabilitatem suam praedulcedine felicissimae contemplationis tuae cohibet et sine ullo lapsu ex quo facta est inhaerendo tibi excedit omnem volubilem vicissitudinem temporum. ista vero informitas, terra⁴ invisibilis et incomposita, nec ipsa in diebus numerata est. ubi enim nulla species, nullus ordo, nec venit quicquam nec praeterit, et ubi hoc non fit, non sunt utique dies nec vicissitudo spatiorum temporalium.

10. (10)

O veritas, lumen cordis mei: non tenebrae meae
loquantur mihi!
defluxi ad ista et obscuratus sum:
sed hinc, etiam hinc adamavi te.
erravi: et recordatus sum tui.

⁴ terra S G Maur. Knöll Skut.: terrae C D O Ver.

¹⁶ Paradox.

¹⁷ Moses, who was accepted as the author of Genesis.

¹⁸ I.e., with the faculty of reason; A. is thinking of the angels.

¹⁹ Cf. *Conf.* 13.24.36. ²⁰ Cf. *Conf.* 2.10.18, picking up the language of *defluxi* and *erravi*.

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things of which this mutable world consists so inconsistently;¹⁶ from which its mutability becomes apparent, the means by which we are aware of time and measure it, because times are created by changes in things, as the forms of things (which consist of the invisible earth already mentioned) fluctuate and alter.

9. (9) So when the Spirit, your servant's¹⁷ teacher, records that in the beginning you made heaven and earth, he says nothing about time, mentions nothing about days. The heaven of heaven that you made in the beginning is surely some kind of intellectual creation.¹⁸ Although by no means coeternal with you, the Trinity, it nonetheless became a sharer in your eternity; it certainly holds its mutability in check for the sake of the sweet delight of that greatest joy, contemplating you. Without any backsliding from its moment of creation, by cleaving to you it rises above all the whirling fluctuation of time. Not even that very shapelessness—the earth invisible and unstructured—is reckoned in the counting of days. Where there is no shape, no structure, there nothing comes or goes; and where this does not happen there are undoubtedly no days, and no progression in periods of time.

Ps 73:28

10. (10)

O Truth, light of my heart:¹⁹ do not let my darkness
speak to me!

I have deviated²⁰ toward earthly things, have fallen
into shadow:

but from here, even from here I have truly loved you.

I wandered from the path: and then remembered
you.

Ps 119:176

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audivi vocem tuam post me, ut redirem:
et vix audivi propter tumultus impacatorum.
et nunc ecce redeo aestuans et anhelans ad fontem
tuum,
nemo me prohibeat: hunc bibam et hinc⁵ vivam.
non ego vita mea sim: male vixi ex me.
mors mihi fui: in te revivesco.
tu me alloquere, tu mihi sermocinare:
credidi libris tuis, et verba eorum arcana valde.

11. (11) Iam dixisti mihi, domine, voce forti in aurem
interiorem, quia tu aeternus es, solus habens immortalita-
tem, quoniam ex nulla specie motuve mutaris nec tem-
poribus variatur voluntas tua, quia non est immortalis
voluntas quae alia et alia est. hoc in conspectu tuo claret
mihi et magis magisque clarescat, oro te, atque in ea mani-
festatione persistam sobrius sub alis tuis.

Item dixisti mihi, domine, voce forti in aurem inte-
riorem, quod omnes naturas atque substantias quae non
sunt quod tu es et tamen sunt, tu fecisti (et hoc solum a te
non est, quod non est, motusque voluntatis a te, qui es, ad
id quod minus est, quia talis motus delictum atque pecca-
tum est), et quod nullius peccatum aut tibi nocet aut per-

⁵ hinc G² Maur.: hunc S G¹ O Knöll Skut. Ver.: tunc C D

²¹ Cf. *Lib. Arb.* 2.53: "If the will turns away from the immu-
table and universal good, and turns instead to its own good,
whether it be to some external or some inferior good, it sins."

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I heard your voice behind me, calling me to come home: Ez 3:13

but I only just heard it over the outcry of the unquiet
And now, look!—I am returning, hot and thirsty to drink at your fountain, Ps 119:7

Let no one stand in my way: let me drink from it, and hereafter let me live.

Let me not be my own life: from my own self I have lived badly.

To myself I was death: but in you I begin to come to life again.

Converse with me, commune with me:

I have believed in your holy books, and their words are full of mystery.

11. (11) Now, Lord, your voice sounds strongly to my inward ear, telling me that you are eternal, that you alone have immortality, because you are not changed by any kind of shape or movement, and your will is not modified over time—for no will is immortal that is first one thing, then another. In your sight this is clear to me; let it grow ever clearer, more and more, I beg you; and when it is discloses itself I shall remain steadfast and vigilant beneath your wings. 1 Tm 6:16

Yes, Lord, your voice has sounded strongly to my inner ear, telling me that you are the maker of all the natural beings and substances that are not the same as you and yet exist: the only things that do not derive from you are those that are nonexistent. Our movements of will away from you (who are existent) toward lesser objects are, by virtue of that movement from good to bad, failings and sins.²¹ Yet no one's sin either harms you or discomposes the orderli-

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turbat ordinem imperiî tui vel in primo vel in imo. hoc in conspectu tuo claret mihi et magis magisque clarescat, oro te, atque in ea manifestatione persistam sobrius sub alis tuis.

(12) Item dixisti mihi voce forti in aurem interiorem, quod nec illa creatura tibi coaeterna est cuius voluptas tu solus es, teque perseverantissima castitate hauriens mutabilitatem suam nusquam et numquam exerit, et te sibi semper praesente, ad quem toto affectu se tenet, non habens futurum quod expectet nec in praeteritum traiciens quod meminerit, nulla vice variatur nec in tempora ulla distenditur. o beata, si qua ista est, inhaerendo beatitudini tuae, beata sempiterno inhabitatore te atque illustratore suo! nec invenio quid libentius appellandum existimem "caelum caeli domino" quam domum tuam contemplantem delectationem tuam sine ullo defectu egrediendi in aliud, mentem puram concordissime unam stabilimento pacis sanctorum spirituum, civium civitatis tuae in caelestibus super ista caelestia.

(13) Unde intellegat anima, cuius peregrinatio longinqua facta est, si iam sitit tibi, si iam factae sunt ei lacrimae suae panis, dum dicitur ei per singulos dies, "ubi est deus tuus?" si iam petit à te unam et hanc requirit, ut inhabitet in domo tua per omnes dies vitae suae²² et quae vita eius

²² I.e., the heaven of heavens.

²³ I.e., the fountain of living water, cf. *Conf.* 12.10.10, above, and *Rv* 22:1, 22:17.

²⁴ *Distenditur*. Cf. *Conf.* 11.23.30 and n. 59.

²⁵ *Civitas*. A.'s last major work, *De civ. D.*, explores the nature of this abode of the blessed (esp. 11-22).

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ness of your rule, either first or last. Yes, this is clear to me in your sight, and let it grow ever clearer, more and more, I beg you; and when it is discloses itself I shall remain steadfast and vigilant beneath your wings. Ps 19:14

(12) Yes indeed, your voice has sounded strongly to my inward ear, saying that not even that created domain of yours²²—of which you are the sole delight—is coeternal with you. With unswerving purity it drinks of you²³ and nowhere vaunts itself, nowhere: you are always present to it, and it cleaves to you with utter devotion, having nothing in the future to await, and not consigning what it remembers to the past. It is always untouched by change, and never diverges²⁴ into any space of time. O how blessed a creature, if there be such—blessed by its cleaving to your blessedness, blessed by your continual indwelling, and your enlightenment! I can find no better name to call the heaven of heavens belonging to the Lord than “your house,” which contemplates your loveliness without the blemish of abandoning it for something else: it is the pure intelligence of holy and spiritual beings, who are the citizens of your city²⁵ that is in heaven (above this visible heaven), harmoniously at one upon a foundation of peace.²⁶ Ps 115:16
Ps 27:4
Eph 4:3

(13) How can the soul understand, at the end of its long journey, if it still thirsts for you, if its tears have become its bread, while day after day people say to it, “Where is your God?”; if it is seeking one thing from you, and requiring it, that it may dwell in your house all the days of its life? And what does its life consist of, if not you? And what Ps 42:2-3
Ps 27:4

²⁶ GM notes that “intelligence” (*mentem*) is in apposition with “house” (*domum*).

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nisi tu? et qui dies tui nisi aeternitas tua, sicut anni tui, qui non deficiunt, quia idem ipse es? hinc ergo intellegat anima quae potest quam longe super omnia tempora sis aeternus, quando tua domus, quae peregrinata non est, quamvis non sit tibi coaeterna, tamen indesinenter et indeficienter tibi cohaerendo nullam patitur vicissitudinem temporum. hoc in conspectu tuo claret mihi et magis magisque clarescat, oro te, atque in hac manifestatione persistam sobrius sub alis tuis.

(14) Ecce nescio quid informe in istis mutationibus rerum extremarum atque infimarum,⁶ et quis dicet mihi, nisi quisquis per inania cordis sui cum suis phantasmatis vagatur et volvitur, quis nisi talis dicet mihi quod, deminuta atque consumpta omni specie, si sola remaneat informitas per quam de specie in speciem res mutabatur et vertebatur, possit exhibere vices temporum? omnino enim non potest, quia sine varietate motionum non sunt tempora, et nulla varietas ubi nulla species.

12. (15) Quibus consideratis, quantum donas, deus meus, quantum me ad pulsandum excitas quantumque pulsanti aperis, duo reperio quae fecisti carentia temporibus, cum tibi neutrum coaeternum sit: unum quod ita formatum est ut sine ullo defectu contemplationis, sine ullo intervallo mutationis, quamvis mutabile tamen non mutatum, tua aeternitate atque incommutabilitate perfruatur; alterum quod ita informe erat ut ex qua forma in

⁶ infimarum *M P*²: infirmarum *codd. edd.*

²⁷ See. Vol. 1, 108n26 (*Conf.* 3.6.10).

²⁸ Cf. *Conf.* 11.2.3-4, n. 11; *Conf.* 11.22.28, n. 57; 12.1.1; 12.12.15.

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are your days if not your eternity, which are like your years which do not fail, because you are always the same? So then let the soul understand as far as it is able, how far beyond all time you are eternal: for even though your house, which has never journeyed to another place, is not coeternal with you, still by cleaving to you unyieldingly and perpetually it admits of no progression of time. This is clear to me in your sight, and let it grow ever clearer, more and more, I beg you; and when it is discloses itself I shall remain steadfast and vigilant beneath your wings.

Ps 102:27

(14) Look! There is a certain shapelessness about the changes undergone by the farthest and lowest elements of creation. Who can explain it to me—except someone who meanders through their own heart's follies and becomes entangled in all their personal phantasms?²⁷ Who but such a person can explain to me that when every kind of shape is exhausted and consumed, if all that remains is that shapelessness through which that particular thing changed from one form into another, it can still reveal shifts in time? This is absolutely impossible, because without changes of movement there are no times, and where there is no distinction of form there is no change.

12. (15) In the light of these reflections—how much you give me, O my God, how much you encourage me to knock, and open when I do so²⁸—I find that there are two things that stand apart from time, although neither is coeternal with you. The one has been structured in such a way that it can enjoy your eternity and changelessness without any interruption of its contemplation, never changing at any moment (although it is changeable it has never changed). The other was so lacking in structure of any kind that it had no capacity for changing from one shape to

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quam formam vel motionis vel stationis mutaretur, quo tempori subderetur, non haberet.

Sed hoc ut informe esset non reliquisti, quoniam fecisti ante omnem diem in principio caelum et terram, haec duo quae dicebam. "terra autem invisibilis erat et incomposita, et tenebrae super abyssum": quibus verbis insinuat in-formitas, ut gradatim excipiantur qui omnimodam speciei privationem nec tamen ad nihil perventionem cogitare non possunt,⁷ unde fieret alterum caelum et terra visibilis atque composita et aqua speciosa et quidquid deinceps in constitutione huius mundi non sine diebus factum commemoratur, quia talia sunt ut in eis agantur vicissitudines temporum propter ordinatas commutationes motionum atque formarum.

13. (16) Hoc interim sentio, deus meus, cum audio loquentem scripturam tuam: "in principio fecit deus caelum et terram. terra autem erat invisibilis et incomposita, et tenebrae erant super abyssum," neque commemorantem quoto die feceris haec. sic interim sentio propter illud caelum caeli, caelum intellectuale, ubi est intellectus nosse simul, non ex parte, non in aenigmate, non per speculum, sed ex toto, in manifestatione, facie ad faciem; non modo hoc, modo illud, sed quod dictum est nosse simul

⁷ possunt *codd. edd.*: posset S: possent *coniec. Knöll*

²⁹ At *Conf.* 13.6.7, A. quotes the same non-Vg version of Gn 1:2; cf *Gn. Litt. Imp.* 4.11. Vg has "empty and void" (*inanis et vacua*).

³⁰ *Speciosa* is difficult to translate. This adjective is not directly associated with water in Scripture; and the connotations of large bodies of water are generally negative, e.g., Rv 21:1. But see Gn 1:10; Sir 25:36; with *Conf.* 12.22.31, below.

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another either by movement or remaining still (which would make it subject to time).

But you did not leave the latter in its unstructured state, for before each day existed, in the beginning, you made heaven and earth, these two objects that I have mentioned. "But the earth was invisible and unorganized,²⁹ and there was darkness over the abyss": these words introduce the concept of lack of structure in such a way that they incorporate, bit by bit, any people who cannot conceive of any total absence of shape without ending up at nothingness. From this the second heaven and the visible, structured earth came into being, and water in its beauty:³⁰ and whatever is recorded next as being made within the passing of days,³¹ in the making of this world. Then the nature of these things is such that they are subject to the progression of time, according to the changes of movement and shape that have been appointed to them.

13. (16) For the time being, O my God, this is what I infer³² when I hear your scripture saying, "in the beginning God made heaven and earth; but the earth was invisible and unorganized, and there was darkness over the abyss," but not recording the day on which you made them. This is what I infer for the time being, first because of that heaven of heavens, the realm of intellect, where understanding means knowing things immediately, not in part, nor in riddles, not in a mirror, but completely, in total clarity, face to face. It is not a case of one fact one moment, and another fact the next, but—as was men-

Dt 10:14; Sir
16:18

1 Cor 13:9,
12; Gn 32:30;
Ex 33:11

³¹ I.e., after time came into being.

³² A. emphasizes that his conclusions are provisional by repeating *interim sentio*.

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sine ulla vicissitudine temporum, et propter invisibilem atque incompositam terram sine ulla vicissitudine temporum, quae solet habere modo hoc et modo illud, quia ubi nulla species, nusquam est hoc et illud.

Propter duo haec, primitus formatum et penitus informe, illud caelum, sed caelum caeli, hoc vero terram, sed terram invisibilem et incompositam, propter duo haec interim sentio sine commemoratione dierum dicere scripturam tuam, "in principio fecit deus caelum et terram." statim quippe subiecit quam terram dixerit, et quod secundo die commemoratur factum firmamentum et vocatum caelum, insinuat de quo caelo prius sine diebus sermo locutus sit.

14. (17) Mira profunditas eloquiorum tuorum, quorum ecce ante nos superficies blandiens parvulis, sed mira profunditas, deus meus, mira profunditas! horror est intendere in eam, horror honoris et tremor amoris. odi hostes eius vehementer: o si occidas eos de gladio bis acuto, et non sint hostes eius! sic enim amo eos occidi sibi, ut vivant tibi. ecce autem alii, non reprehensores sed laudatores libri Geneseos: "non" inquit "hoc voluit in his verbis intellegi spiritus dei, qui per Moysen famulum eius ista conscripsit, non hoc voluit intellegi quod tu dicis, sed aliud

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tioned—knowing things immediately, without any progression of time. Second, because of the invisible and unorganized earth, which also lacked any progression of time (usually marked by one thing one moment, and another the next), for where there is no form, there is no such thing as “this first, then that.”

On account of these two elements, that which had a form from the beginning, and that which was inherently formless, the one a heaven, but the heaven of heavens; the other earth, but “earth which was invisible and unorganized”: on account of these two, this is what I infer for the time being—that your Scripture said, without keeping a record of days, “in the beginning God made heaven and earth.” Indeed it immediately added what earth it was referring to; while the fact that the record states how on the second day the firmament was made, and was called “heaven,” suggests the kind of heaven it was referring to before the beginning of days.

14. (17) What extraordinary depth there is in your eloquent words! And look—right in front of us is a surface meaning to charm the immature, but still what extraordinary depth, O my God, what extraordinary depth! It is terrifying to look into that depth, but it is a terror born of reverence, and a trembling born of love. How fiercely I hate scripture’s enemies! If only you would slay them with a two-edged sword, that there be no more enemies! How I love them being slain to themselves so that they live to you! But look!—there are others, not critics but supporters of the book Genesis. They say, “the Spirit of God, who has written these things by the hand of Moses his servant, did not intend this to be the meaning of these words. No, he did not want your reading of them to be understood,

Ps 139:21-22

Ps 149:6; Hb
4:12

cf. Rom 6:4-
8; Gal 2:20,
5:24

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quod nos dicimus." quibus ego, te arbitro, deus omnium nostrum, ita respondeo.

15. (18) Num dicetis falsa esse, quae mihi veritas voce forti in aurem interiorem dicit de vera aeternitate creatoris, quod nequaquam eius substantia per tempora varietur nec eius voluntas extra eius substantiam sit? unde non eum modo velle hoc modo velle illud, sed semel et simul et semper velle omnia quae vult, non iterum et iterum, neque nunc ista nunc illa, nec velle postea quod volebat aut nolle quod volebat prius, quia talis voluntas mutabilis est et omne mutabile aeternum non est: deus autem noster aeternus est.

Item quod mihi dicit in aurem interiorem, expectatio rerum venturarum fit contuitus, cum venerint, idemque contuitus fit memoria, cum praeterierint. omnis porro intentio quae ita variatur mutabilis est, et omne mutabile aeternum non est: deus autem noster aeternus est.

Haec conligo atque coniungo, et invenio deum meum, deum aeternum, non aliqua nova voluntate condidisse creaturam nec scientiam eius transitorium aliquid pati.

(19) Quid ergo dicetis, contradictores? an falsa sunt ista? "non" inquirunt. quid illud? num falsum est omnem naturam formatam materiamve formabilem non esse nisi ab illo qui summe bonus est quia summe est? "neque hoc

³³ Another shift into teaching mode. OD notes the theme of *Conf.* 12 from this point as "the polysemy of scripture and licit plurality of interpretation."

³⁴ An elegant triad of temporal adverbs (*semel . . . simul . . . semper*).

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but rather another reading, the one which we declare." With you to judge us, God of all humanity, my response to such people is as follows:³³

15. (18) You will surely not declare false the facts that truth speaks in a firm voice to my inward hearing concerning the true eternity of the Creator: that his substance does not change in the slightest over time, and his will is inseparable from his substance? For this reason he does not will one thing at one moment, and another the next, but whatever he wills, he wills it once and for all and for ever,³⁴ not now and again, or these things one day, and those the next; nor does he will at a later time what he previously was unwilling to, or begin to be unwilling about something he previously willed. This is because a will like that would be mutable, and everything that is mutable is not eternal: but our God is eternal.

Ps 48:15

Another thing that he speaks to my inward hearing is that the anticipation of future events becomes a direct view of them once they have arrived; and likewise the direct view becomes memory, once they have passed away. Furthermore, any kind of attention that shifts in such a way is mutable, and whatever is mutable is not eternal: but our God is eternal.

I gather these facts and combine them, and I find that my God, the eternal God, did not create the world prompted by some new will, and that his knowledge does not allow modification of any kind.

(19) What have you to say, my adversaries? Are these facts untrue, then? They answer, "no." Surely it is not untrue that every natural being that has its given shape, and every material capable of being molded into shape, exists only because it comes from him who is supremely

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negamus" inquit. quid igitur? an illud negatis, sublimem quandam esse creaturam tam casto amore cohaerentem deo vero et vere aeterno ut, quamvis ei coaeterna non sit, in nullam tamen temporum varietatem et vicissitudinem ab illo se resolvat et defluat, sed in eius solius veracissima contemplatione requiescat, quoniam tu, deus, diligenti te, quantum praecipis, ostendis ei te et sufficis ei, et ideo non declinat a te nec ad se?⁸ haec est domus dei non terrena neque ulla caelesti mole corporea, sed spiritalis et particeps aeternitatis tuae, quia sine labe in aeternum. statuisti enim eam in saeculum et in saeculum saeculi; praeceptum posuisti et non praeteribit. nec tamen tibi coaeterna, quoniam non sine initio, facta est enim.

(20) Nam etsi non invenimus tempus ante illam—prior quippe omnium creata est sapientia, nec utique illa sapientia tibi, deus noster, patri suo, plane coaeterna et aequalis⁹ et per quam creata sunt omnia et in quo principio fecisti caelum et terram, sed profecto sapientia quae creata est, intellectualis natura scilicet, quae contemplatione luminis lumen est; dicitur enim et ipsa, quamvis creata, sapientia, sed quantum interest inter lumen quod

⁸ ad se *codd. Skut. Ver. Pell.*: a se *S Knöll GM Vega*

⁹ aequalis *codd. edd.*: coaequalis *S V*

³⁵ *In saeculum saeculi*: another traditional translation would be "for ever and ever." The phrase is also found in the textual variant that provides the *sphragis* to the Lord's Prayer after Mt 6:13.

³⁶ Introduces anacoluthon; *etsi* (although) is repeated later in *Conf.* 12.15.20.

³⁷ Plotinus considers soul, heaven, and reflected light using the phrase "light from light" (*φῶς ἐκ φωτός*: *Enn.* 4.3.17; cf. 6.4.9). A. H. Armstrong [LCL 443 (Cambridge, MA, 1984), 88-

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good, because he supremely exists. "We do not deny this either," they reply. What, then? So do you deny that there exists a creation so sublime, cleaving to the true and truly eternal God with such pure love that although it is not coeternal with him, it never disintegrates and descends away from God into any changes and progressions of time: instead it finds repose in the perfect contemplation of God alone? And that this is because you, O God, disclose yourself to those who love you in accordance with your bidding, and you are their fulfillment, and so they neither turn away from you nor turn toward themselves? This is the house of God that is not earthly, nor consisting of any physical heavenly structure: rather it is spiritual, and a sharer in your eternity, since it is flawless for ever. For you have established it for ever and world without end;³⁵ you have laid down your decree, and it will never pass away. Yet this is not coeternal with you, because it has a moment of origin, for it was created.

Jn 14:8, 21

Pss 37:27,
148:6

(20) Although³⁶ we do not find time existing before that created realm—for certainly wisdom was created before everything else, not of course that Wisdom which is clearly coeternal and equal with you, our God and his Father, through whom everything was created and in whom you made heaven and earth in the beginning, but actually the wisdom that was created: this surely has a rational character that consists in light, because of its contemplation of light. So it too is called wisdom, even though it has been created, but just as there is a great difference between Light that produces light and a light that reflects it,³⁷ so

89] notes the irony of terminology that is subordinationist in Plotinus being absorbed into the anti-subordinationist Nicene Creed.

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inluminat et quod inluminatur, tantum inter sapientiam quae creat et istam quae creata est, sicut inter iustitiam iustificantem et iustitiam quae iustificatione facta est (nam et nos dicti sumus iustitia tua; ait enim quidam servus tuus, "ut nos simus iustitia dei in ipso").

Ergo quia prior omnium creata est quaedam sapientia quae creata est, mens rationalis et intellectualis castae civitatis tuae, matris nostrae, quae sursum est et libera est et aeterna in caelis (quibus caelis, nisi qui te laudant caeli caelorum, quia hoc est et caelum caeli domino?), etsi non invenimus tempus ante illam, quia et creaturam temporis antecedit, quae prior omnium creata est, ante illam tamen est ipsius creatoris aeternitas, a quo facta sumpsit exordium, quamvis non temporis, quia nondum erat tempus, ipsius tamen conditionis suae.

(21) Unde ita est abs te, deo nostro, ut aliud sit plane quam tu et non idipsum. etsi non solum ante illam sed nec in illa invenimus tempus, quia est idonea faciem tuam semper videre nec uspiam deflectitur ab ea (quo fit ut nulla mutatione varietur). inest ei tamen ipsa mutabilitas, unde tenebresceret et frigesceret nisi amore grandi tibi cohaerens tamquam semper meridies luceret et ferveret ex te. o domus luminosa et speciosa, dilexi decorem tuum et locum habitationis gloriae domini mei, fabricatoris et possessoris tui! tibi suspiret peregrinatio mea, et dico ei qui fecit te ut possideat et me in te, quia fecit et me. erravi

³⁸ Picking up the uncompleted *etsi* from the beginning of *Conf.* 12.15.20.

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there is a difference between Wisdom that creates and the wisdom that is created. There is the same difference between Righteousness that effects a righteous state in people, and righteousness that is the outcome of that act of making people righteous. Even we have been declared to be "your righteousness"; so said a certain servant of yours, "so that in him we might be the righteousness of God."

2 Cor 5:21

So because a certain Wisdom was created before all other created things as the rational thinking mind belonging to your pure city, our mother, which is above, and free, and eternal in heaven: and what can that heaven be but the heaven of heavens that praise you? For it is also the heaven of heavens belonging to the Lord. Although³⁸ we find that time did not exist before this wisdom (which was created before everything else) because it was antecedent to the creation of time, nevertheless the eternity of the Creator himself existed before that wisdom. When he made wisdom it took up its inception: not in time as yet, for time did not yet exist, but the inception of its own creation.

Sir 1:4

Gal 4:26; 2
Cor 5:1

Ps 148:4

Ps 115:16

(21) So, our God, it derives from you in such a way that it is clearly a separate being, and not you yourself. Still we do not find time either before it or even in it, because its proper role is to look upon your face continually, and it is never distracted from it in any way (hence it allows no change or alteration). Despite this, it retains the capacity for mutability, by which it could darken and grow chill but for its cleaving to you in its great love, as if it were always shining with noonday light and blazing with your fire. O house of light and beauty, I have loved your grace and the dwelling place of the glory of my Lord your maker and master! My whole pilgrimage is a sighing after you, and I tell him who made you that he may take possession of me

Mt 18:10

cf. Is 58:10

Ps 26:8

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sicut ovis perdita, sed in umeris pastoris mei, structoris tui, spero me reportari tibi.

(22) Quid dicitis mihi, quos alloquebar contradictores, qui tamen et Moysen pium famulum dei et libros eius oracula sancti spiritus creditis? estne ista domus dei, non quidem deo coaeterna sed tamen secundum modum suum aeterna in caelis, ubi vices temporum frustra quaeritis, quia non invenitis? supergreditur enim omnem distentionem et omne spatium aetatis volubile, cui semper inhaerere deo bonum est. "est" inquit.

Quid igitur ex his quae clamavit cor meum ad deum meum, cum audiret interius vocem laudis eius, quid tandem falsum esse contenditis? an quia erat informis materies, ubi propter nullam formam nullus ordo erat? ubi autem nullus ordo erat, nulla esse vicissitudo temporum poterat; et tamen hoc paene nihil, in quantum non omnino nihil erat, ab illo utique erat a quo est quidquid est, quod utcumque aliquid est. "hoc quoque" aiunt "non negamus."

16. (23) Cum his enim volo coram te aliquid conloqui, deus meus, qui haec omnia, quae intus in mente mea non tacet veritas tua, vera esse concedunt. nam qui haec negant, latent quantum volunt et obstrepant sibi: persuadere conabor ut quiescant et viam praebeant ad se verbo tuo. quod si noluerint et reppulerint me, obsecro, deus meus, ne tu sileas a me. tu loquere in corde meo veraciter;

³⁹ See *Conf.* 11.24.31, n. 59.

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too, in you; for he made me also. I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost: but I hope that I shall be carried back to you on the shoulders of my Shepherd, the one who built you.

Ps 119:176;
Lk 15:4-5;
Jn 10:11

(22) So what do you reply to me, you people whom I called my adversaries—though you too believe that Moses was a faithful servant of God, and his books are faithful reports of the sayings of the Holy Spirit? Is this the house of God, not indeed coeternal with God but still, according to its own way of being, eternal in the heavens—where you seek for changes in time in vain, because you find none? Those who find it good to cleave to the Lord always transcend any kind of extension³⁹ and all the fluctuating course of time. “It is,” they answer.

So which of the things my heart proclaimed to my God (when it heard the voice of his praise deep within), which of them, finally, do you insist is false? Is it my point that matter existed without shape, when—because it had no form—there was no order? Where there was no order, there could not be any progressions of time; and yet this almost-nothing (insofar as it was not altogether nothing), in whatever particular way it did exist, certainly came from him from whom comes everything that does exist. “This also,” they answer, “we do not deny.”

16. (23) I want to have a discussion, O my God, in your presence with those who admit that all the things that your Truth never stops proclaiming deep in my mind are true. As for those who deny them, let them yap away as much as they like and make themselves a racket: I shall try to persuade them to be quiet, and to open up a way to themselves for your Word. But if they are unwilling, and reject me, I beg you, O my God, do not keep silence toward me. You speak truth in my heart: you are the only one who does

Ps 28:1

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solus enim sic loqueris. et dimittam eos foris sufflantes in pulverem et excitantes terram in oculos suos, et intrem in cubile meum et cantem tibi amatoria, gemens inenarrabiles gemitus in peregrinatione mea et recordans Hierusalem extento in eam sursum corde, Hierusalem patriam meam, Hierusalem matrem meam, teque super eam regnatorem, inlustratorem, patrem, tutorem, maritum, castas et fortes delicias et solidum gaudium et omnia bona inefabilia, simul omnia, quia unum summum et verum bonum. et non avertar donec in eius pacem, matris carissimae, ubi sunt primitiae spiritus mei, unde ista mihi certa sunt, conligas totum quod sum a dispersione et deformitate hac et conformes atque confirmes in aeternum, deus meus, misericordia mea.

Cum his autem qui cuncta illa quae vera sunt falsa esse non dicunt, honorantes et in culmine sequendae auctoritatis nobiscum constituentes illam per sanctum Moysen editam sanctam scripturam tuam, et tamen nobis aliquid contradicunt, ita loquor. tu esto, deus noster, arbiter inter confessiones meas et contradictiones eorum.

⁴⁰ An ironic contrast to God breathing life into the first human being. *De civ. D.* 13.24 (on Gn 2:7), "God formed a human being, dust from the earth, and blew, or breathed, upon his face the breath of life" (*infixit deus hominem pulverem de terra et insufflavit sive inspiravit in faciem eius spiritum vitae*). Vg has *de limo terrae*, "from the mud of the earth"; A.'s preference for *pulvis* (dust) here is influenced by the metaphor; it was a matter of debate whether the substance of humankind's making contained water or mist (Gn 2:6).

⁴¹ Liturgical. A. uses this fragment from the *sursum corda* (cf. Cyprian, *de Oratone* 31, "And so before the actual prayer, the

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so. I shall send away the people who puff out their breath onto dust and stir up specks of earth into their eyes:⁴⁰ I will go into my chamber and sing songs of my love for you, uttering in groans what I cannot put into words as I continue my pilgrimage. There I call to mind the heavenly Jerusalem and lift up my heart⁴¹ as it yearns for her—Jerusalem my native land, Jerusalem my mother: and above her you hold sway, you enlighten her, her Father, protector, spouse, her pure and powerful delight, her unshakable joy, and all good things beyond description, and all these things at once because you only are the highest and true good. And I shall not turn aside until you bind up all that I am, from this disintegrating and misshapen state, into the peace of our most dear mother, where now the firstfruits of my spirit⁴² are (this is what makes these things certain to me); and refashion me, and establish me for ever, O my God, my mercy.

Mt 6:6

Rom 8:28

Gal 4:26

Rom 8:23

Even though they dissent from us in some respects, I do have conversation with the people who do not declare all those truths to be false, who have respect for that holy Scripture of yours, written by Moses your holy one, and who—like us—place it in the highest rank of authority which requires obedience. Judge, O God,⁴³ between my confessions and their disputations.

priest speaks a preface . . . saying: 'Up with your hearts!' so that the people reply, 'We have them to the Lord'") as a shorthand for the actual eucharist, to which *disciplina arcani* makes more detailed reference improper.

⁴² Cf. *Conf.* 9.10.24. A. associates these *primitiae* with mystical experience.

⁴³ Cf. *Conf.* 13.23.33, n. 82.

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17. (24) Dicunt enim, "quamvis vera sint haec, non ea tamen duo Moyses intuebatur, cum revelante spiritu diceret, 'in principio fecit deus caelum et terram.' non caeli nomine spiritalem vel intellectualem illam creaturam semper faciem dei contemplantem significavit, nec terrae nomine informem materiam." quid igitur? "quod nos dicimus," inquit, "hoc ille vir sensit, hoc verbis istis elocutus est." quid illud est? "nomine" aiunt "caeli et terrae totum istum visibilem mundum prius universaliter et breviter significare voluit, ut postea digereret dierum enumeratione¹⁰ quasi articulatim universa quae sancto spiritui placuit sic enuntiare. tales quippe homines erant rudis ille atque carnalis populus cui loquebatur, ut eis opera dei non nisi solaabilia commendanda iudicaret."

Terram vero invisibilem et incompositam tenebrosamque abyssum, unde consequenter ostenditur per illos dies facta atque disposita esse cuncta istaabilia quae nota sunt omnibus, non incongruenter informem istam materiam¹¹ intellegendam esse consentiunt.

(25) Quid si dicat alius eandem informitatem confusionemque materiae caeli et terrae nomine prius insinuatam, quod ex ea mundus isteabilis cum omnibus

¹⁰ enumeratione *G O Knöll Skut. Ver.*: enumerationem *S C D*

¹¹ materiam *codd. Maur. Ver.*: materiem *S Knöll Skut. (TLL s.v. material, materies 8.0.448.30).*

⁴⁴ This dialogic exchange again reflects A. the teacher.

⁴⁵ *carnalis*: "fleshly" is biblical language (e.g., Rom 8:13, Gal 5:17, etc.) for the earthly part of human substance, tied to physical appetites, in contrast with the spiritual element. See Vol. I, 10n19 (*Conf. I.6.7*).

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17. (24) They say, "Although these things are true, Moses was not contemplating the two of them when the Spirit's disclosure led him to say, 'In the beginning God made heaven and earth.' The term 'heaven' did not signify that spiritual or intellectual creation that contemplates the face of God eternally; nor did the term 'earth' signify formless matter."⁴⁴ What, then? They go on, "What we say is what that writer thought, and what he declared in the words quoted." So what is that? They reply, "By using the terms 'heaven' and 'earth,' God wanted initially to signify the entirety of the visible world in a succinct and comprehensive way; then afterward, by keeping a count of the separate days, he could reckon up point by point, as it were, every single item which the Holy Spirit prompted him to record. The folk he was addressing in those days were a rough and unspiritual⁴⁵ people, and so he determined that they could only be entrusted with God's visible works." Mt 18:10

As for the invisible and unorganized earth, and the dark abyss, it is related next that throughout those days,⁴⁶ all the visible things with which everyone is familiar were made from them⁴⁷ and set in order. The objectors agree that it is not inappropriate to understand that matter as formless.

(25) What if someone were to say that this very formlessness and disorder of matter was first introduced under the terms "heaven and earth," because from it this visible world was created and perfected, with all the creatures

⁴⁶ Meaning the Hexaemeron, or "six days of Creation."

⁴⁷ *Unde*: virtually equivalent to *de quo*. See Arts, "Syntax," 62.

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naturis quae in eo manifestissime apparent, qui caeli et terrae nomine saepe appellari solet, conditus atque perfectus est? quid si dicat et alius caelum et terram quidem invisibilem visibilemque naturam non indecenter appellatam, ac per hoc universam creaturam quam fecit in sapientia, id est in principio, deus, huiuscemodi duobus vocabulis esse comprehensam; verum tamen quia non de ipsa substantia dei sed ex nihilo cuncta facta sunt, quia non sunt idipsum quod deus, et inest quaedam mutabilitas omnibus, sive maneant, sicut aeterna domus dei, sive mutantur, sicut anima hominis et corpus, communem¹² omnium rerum invisibilium visibiliumque materiem adhuc informem, sed certe formabilem, unde fieret caelum et terra, id est invisibilis atque visibilis iam utraque formata creatura, his nominibus enuntiatam, quibus appellaretur terra invisibilis et incomposita, et tenebrae super abyssum, ea distinctione ut terra invisibilis et incomposita intellegatur materies corporalis ante qualitatem formae, tenebrae autem super abyssum spiritalis materies ante cohibitionem quasi fluentis immoderationis et ante illuminationem sapientiae?

(26) Est adhuc quod dicat, si quis alius velit, non scilicet iam perfectas atque formatas invisibiles visibilesque naturas caeli et terrae nomine significari, cum legitur, "in principio fecit deus caelum et terram," sed ipsam adhuc

¹² communem *O Knöll Skut. Ver.:* commune *S C D G*

⁴⁸ This supposition is phrased in the Latin as a single complex sentence completing the section. ⁴⁹ OD calls this suggestion (that "heaven and earth" includes the invisible and visible creation together) "increasingly hypothetical."

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that are so clearly apparent in it, and this world is often referred to by the term, "heaven and earth"? And what if someone else said⁴⁸ that "heaven and earth" was a perfectly proper term for the invisible and visible nature, and that through these two terms could embrace the entire creation that God made in his wisdom, which is to say, "in the beginning"?⁴⁹ But all these things were not made of the very substance of God—rather they were made out of nothing; and because those things are not the same thing as God, and they are all inherently mutable, whether they are abiding (such as the eternal dwelling place of God) or whether they are subject to change, (like the soul and body of a human being): because of all this, the matter common to all things visible and invisible is still formless. It certainly can acquire a form, however, from which heaven and earth might come into being, that is the invisible and the visible creation together, both with their proper form, and each referred to by those names by which the invisible and unorganized earth is called, and the shadows over the abyss: but with this difference—that the invisible and unorganized earth be understood as physical matter before it acquired the property of form, while the shadows over the abyss should be understood as spiritual matter before its ungoverned flow came under restraint, and before the enlightenment of wisdom.

Ps 104:24

(26) There is a further point to be made, if someone else wanted to: that when we read, "in the beginning God made heaven and earth," it was not perfected and formed natures, both visible and invisible, that the term "heaven and earth" referred to. Rather, the words referred to the

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informem inchoationem rerum formabilem creabilemque materiam his nominibus appellatam, quod in ea iam essent ista confusa, nondum qualitibus formisque distincta, quae nunc iam digesta suis ordinibus vocantur caelum et terra, illa spiritalis, haec corporalis creatura.

18.^o (27) Quibus omnibus auditis et consideratis, nolo verbis contendere; ad nihil enim utile est nisi ad subversionem audientium. ad aedificationem autem bona est lex, si quis ea legitime utatur, quia finis eius est caritas de corde puro et conscientia bona et fide non ficta; et novi¹³ magister noster in quibus duobus praeceptis totam legem prophetasque suspenderit.

Quae mihi ardentem confitenti, deus meus, lumen oculorum meorum in occulto, quid mihi obest, cum diversa in his verbis intellegi possint, quae tamen vera sint? quid, inquam, mihi obest, si aliud ego sensero quam sensit alius eum sensisse qui scripsit? omnes quidem qui legimus nitimur hoc indagare atque comprehendere, quod voluit ille quem legimus, et cum eum veridicum credimus, nihil quod falsum esse vel novimus vel putamus audemus eum existimare dixisse. dum ergo quisque conatur id sentire in scripturis sanctis quod in eis sensit ille qui scripsit, quid mali est si hoc sentiat quod tu, lux omnium veridicarum

¹³ novi *S G O Ver.*: novit *C D Maur. Knöll Skut. Pell.*

⁵⁰ "The law and the prophets" is a common way of referring to the Old Testament Scriptures or Jewish Bible. It may not include the third category of Jewish sacred texts ("the writings"). The book of Psalms is interstitial, counted among the writings, but having the status of prophecy on the grounds of Davidic authorship (King David having the role of a prophet).

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as yet unformed inception of things, to matter that could be given form and existence—because in it those things were as yet in no proper order, not yet discrete in their properties and forms. But they are set in order now, each in their proper place, and are called “heaven and earth,” the former referring to the spiritual, the latter to the physical creation.

18. (27) After hearing these arguments and weighing them up, I have no wish to dispute over words, the only purpose of which is to overwhelm those who listen. But the law is good for building us up if we use it lawfully, because its goal is love from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned; and I know what were the two commandments on which our Teacher hung all the Law and the prophets.⁵⁰

2 Tm 2:14

1 Tm 1:8

1 Tm 1:4-5,
8

Mt 22:40,
23:10

O my God, light to my eyes in dark places, what is there to prevent me ardently confessing these things, when different interpretations of these words are possible, which may still be true? What, I ask again, is there to prevent me—even if I think the meaning to be something different from what another person thought the writer was thinking? All of us who read it try to investigate and interpret in accordance with the wishes of the author we are reading,⁵¹ and since we believe that the writer is speaking the truth, we do not presume to judge that the writer said anything that we either know or suspect to be false. So while all people are trying to think, in the holy scriptures, what the author was thinking, what harm is it if they think something that you, the light of every truthful mind, show

Ps 38:10

⁵¹ See the Introduction to this volume on scriptural exegetical principles in this period, xxvii–xxxii.

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mentium, ostendis verum esse, etiamsi non hoc sensit ille quem legit, cum et ille verum nec tamen hoc senserit?

19. (28) Verum est enim, domine, fecisse te caelum et terram. et verum¹⁴ est esse principium sapientiam tuam, in qua fecisti omnia. item verum est quod mundus iste visibilis habet magnas partes suas caelum et terram, brevi complexione factarum omnium conditarumque naturarum. et verum est quod omne mutabile insinuat notitiae nostrae quandam informitatem, qua formam capit vel qua mutatur et vertitur. verum est nulla tempora perpeti quod ita cohaeret formae incommutabili ut, quamvis sit mutabile, non mutetur. verum est informitatem, quae prope nihil est, vices temporum habere non posse. verum est quod, unde fit aliquid, potest quodam genere locutionis habere iam nomen eius rei quae inde fit: unde potuit vocari caelum et terra quaelibet informitas unde factum est caelum et terra. verum est omnium formatorum nihil esse informi vicinius quam terram et abyssum. verum est quod non solum creatum atque formatum sed etiam quidquid creabile atque formabile est tu fecisti, ex quo sunt omnia. verum est omne quod ex informi formatur prius esse informe, deinde formatum.

20. (29) Ex his omnibus veris de quibus non dubitant, quorum interiori oculo talia videre donasti et qui Moysen,

¹⁴ et verum *C D G O Maur. Ver.:* verum *S Knöll Skut.*

⁵² For A., Scripture is never "wrong"; if there appears to be a conflict, the weakness must lie in the exegete, not the text.

⁵³ "It is true" is stated ten times in this paragraph.

⁵⁴ *Abyssus* here stands for the great ocean beyond the Mediterranean *koine*.

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them is true?—even if the writer they are reading did not think this, though he too was thinking something true, just not the same truth.⁵²

19. (28) It is true, Lord, that you made heaven and earth.⁵³ And it is true that your Wisdom, in which you made all things, is the Beginning. Likewise it is true that this visible world consists of two vast sectors, namely heaven and earth, a phrase which succinctly embraces all the natural beings which have been formed and created. It is also true that every thing that is mutable suggests to us the idea of a kind of shapelessness, out of which that thing can either take a shape or be changed and altered. It is true that anything that clings so closely to an unchanging form that it does not change (though it is capable of changing), is not subject to time of any kind. It is true that shapelessness, which is close to nothingness, cannot admit shifts in time either. It is true that any substance from which something is made can—in a figure of speech—take the name of the thing that emerges from it: thus that undefined shapelessness from which heaven and earth were made could itself be called “heaven and earth.” It is true that of all creatures that have some shape to them, none come closer to shapelessness than the earth and the deep.⁵⁴ It is true that you have not only made whatever has been created and given shape, but also whatever has the capacity to be created and take shape, for all things come from you. It is true that every thing that takes shape after being without shape was shapeless first, and shaped afterward.

Ps 104:24;
cf. Prv 8:22

1 Cor 8:6

20. (29) As for all these truths, those on whom you have bestowed the ability to see with the inner eye have no doubts about them. They believe that Moses your servant

Jn 14:17

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famulum tuum, in spiritu veritatis locutum esse immobiliter credunt, ex his ergo omnibus aliud sibi tollit qui dicit, "in principio fecit deus caelum et terram," id est in verbo suo sibi coaeterno fecit deus intellegibilem atque sensibilem vel spiritalem corporalemque creaturam; aliud qui dicit, "in principio fecit deus caelum et terram," id est in verbo suo sibi coaeterno fecit deus universam istam molem corporei mundi huius cum omnibus quas continet manifestis notisque naturis; aliud qui dicit, "in principio fecit deus caelum et terram," id est in verbo suo sibi coaeterno fecit informem materiam creaturae spiritualis et corporalis; aliud qui dicit, "in principio fecit deus caelum et terram," id est in verbo suo sibi coaeterno fecit deus informem materiam creaturae corporalis, ubi confusum adhuc erat caelum et terra, quae nunc iam distincta atque formata in istius mundi mole sentimus; aliud qui dicit, "in principio fecit deus caelum et terram," id est in ipso exordio faciendi atque operandi fecit deus informem materiam confuse habentem caelum et terram, unde formata nunc eminent et apparent cum omnibus quae in eis sunt.

21. (30) Item quod attinet ad intellectum verborum sequentium, ex illis omnibus veris aliud sibi tollit qui dicit, "terra autem erat invisibilis et incomposita, et tenebrae erant super abyssum," id est corporale illud quod fecit deus adhuc materies erat corporearum rerum informis,

⁵⁵ The first of these five possible interpretations accords with A.'s at *Conf.* 12.8.8.

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spoke unshakably in a spirit of truth, so from all these truths one person adopts a single interpretation by saying, "in the beginning God made heaven and earth." This means that in his Word (which was coeternal with himself) God fashioned a creation that was intellectual and sense-perceptible, or spiritual and physical. Someone else takes the statement, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth" to mean that in his Word (coeternal with himself) God made that universal mass in which this physical world consists, together with all the familiar and unmistakable natural beings within it. Or another takes "in the beginning God made heaven and earth" to mean that in his Word (coeternal with himself) he made the formless matter of which the spiritual and physical creation exists. Or another takes "in the beginning God made heaven and earth" to mean that in his Word (coeternal with himself) God made the formless matter of the physical creation, when heaven and earth were still undifferentiated, though now we apprehend them as separated and shaped into the mass that is this world. Or another takes "in the beginning God made heaven and earth" to mean that right at the beginning of his work of creation, God made formless matter containing heaven and earth undifferentiated, and from this they are now plain for all to see in their proper shape, clearly visible together with all that is in them.⁵⁵

21. (30) The same applies to the understanding of the words that follow: from all these true statements someone adopts one, and says, "but the earth was invisible and unstructured, and there was darkness over the abyss"—this means that the physical substance that God made was still shapeless matter of which physical objects would be com-

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sine ordine, sine luce; aliud qui dicit, "terra autem erat invisibilis et incomposita, et tenebrae erant super abyssum," id est hoc totum quod caelum et terra appellatum est adhuc informis et tenebrosa materies erat, unde fieret caelum corporeum et terra corporea cum omnibus quae in eis sunt corporeis sensibus nota; aliud qui dicit, "terra autem erat invisibilis et incomposita, et tenebrae erant super abyssum," id est hoc totum quod caelum et terra appellatum est adhuc informis et tenebrosa materies erat, unde fieret caelum intelligibile (quod alibi dicitur caelum caeli) et terra, scilicet omnis natura corporea, sub quo nomine intellegatur etiam hoc caelum corporeum, id est unde fieret omnis invisibilis visibilisque creatura; aliud qui dicit, "terra autem erat invisibilis et incomposita, et tenebrae erant super abyssum," non illam informitatem nomine caeli et terrae scriptura appellavit, sed iam erat, inquit, ipsa informitas quam terram invisibilem et incompositam tenebrosamque abyssum nominavit, de qua caelum et terram deum fecisse praedixerat, spiritalem scilicet corporalemque creaturam; aliud qui dicit, "terra autem erat invisibilis et incomposita, et tenebrae erant super abyssum," id est informitas quaedam iam materies erat unde caelum et terram deum fecisse scriptura praedixit, totam scilicet corpoream mundi molem in duas maximas partes superiorem atque inferiorem distributam cum omnibus quae in eis sunt usitatis notisque creaturis.

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posed, lacking structure, lacking light. Someone else takes "but the earth was invisible and unstructured, and there was darkness over the abyss" to mean that the entirety of what is called heaven and earth was still dark and unshaped matter, and from it the physical heaven and physical earth together with all the physical entities that they contain would become perceptible to the senses. Another person takes "but the earth was invisible and unstructured, and there was darkness over the abyss" to mean that that the entirety of what is called heaven and earth was still dark and unshaped matter, and from it emerged the rational heaven (what is referred to elsewhere as the "heaven of heavens") and the earth consisting of all nature that is physical (a description which is also understood to include this physical heaven)—this is what the whole creation, visible and invisible consists in. Yet another takes "but the earth was invisible and unstructured, and there was darkness over the abyss" like this: scripture did not call that shapelessness of matter by the names "heaven" and "earth"; but, they say, the actual shapelessness that it called "earth invisible and unstructured and the dark abyss" already existed. Out of this shapelessness scripture had already said that God made heaven and earth, which undoubtedly means the spiritual and physical creation. Another takes "but the earth was invisible and unstructured, and there was darkness over the abyss" to mean that the shapelessness was already a kind of physical matter from which scripture had just said that God made heaven and earth, and this was certainly the entire physical mass of the world, divided into two immense sectors, an upper and a lower, together with all the familiar and well-known creatures which they contain.

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22. (31) Cum enim duabus istis extremis sententiis resistere quisquam ita temptaverit: "si non vultis hanc informitatem materiae caeli et terrae nomine appellatam videri, erat ergo aliquid quod non fecerat deus, unde caelum et terram faceret; neque enim scriptura narravit quod istam materiem deus fecerit, nisi¹⁵ intellegamus eam caeli et terrae aut solius terrae vocabulo significatam cum diceretur, 'in principio fecit deus caelum et terram,' ut id quod sequitur, 'terra autem erat invisibilis et incomposita,' quamvis informem materiam sic placuerit appellare, non tamen intellegamus nisi eam quam fecit deus in eo quod praescriptum¹⁶ est: 'fecit caelum et terram,'" respondebunt assertores duarum istarum sententiarum quas extremas posuimus aut illius aut illius, cum haec audierint, et dicent, "informem quidem istam materiam non negamus a deo factam, deo, a quo sunt omnia bona valde, quia, sicut dicimus amplius bonum esse quod creatum atque formatum est, ita fatemur minus bonum esse quod factum est creabile atque formabile, sed tamen bonum: non autem commemorasse scripturam quod hanc informitatem fecerit deus, sicut alia multa non commemoravit, ut cherubim et seraphim, et quae apostolus distincte ait, 'sedes, dominationes, principatus, potestates,' quae tamen omnia deum fecisse manifestum est.

¹⁵ nisi *S O Knöll Skut. Ver.*: nisi ut *C D G*

¹⁶ praescriptum *C D O Maur. Ver.*: perscriptum *S G Knöll Skut.*

⁵⁶ A. here allows his imaginary collocutors a lengthy argument before he responds.

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22. (31) Perhaps someone may try to dispute with the last two of these opinions as follows: "If you do not want this shapelessness of matter to be called 'heaven' and 'earth,' there must have been something that God had not made, something from which he made heaven and earth. Scripture has not recorded that God made this primal matter, unless we understand the terms 'heaven and earth' or just 'earth' as a reference to it, when it was said, 'in the beginning God made heaven and earth.' In that case although it was convenient to describe what comes next ('the earth was invisible and unstructured') as shapeless matter, we should understand it only as what God made it in the previous phrase, 'he made heaven and earth.'" The people who have put forward those last two interpretations that we posed (either one or the other) will hear the objections and say, "we do not deny that the shapeless matter was made by God, God from whom comes all that is very good; because just as we declare that things that are created and have shape are more good, so too we must concede that what is merely capable of being created and given shape is less good, but still there is an element of goodness.⁵⁶ True, scripture does not record that God made shapelessness, but then there are many other things it does not record, such as the cherubim⁵⁷ and seraphim,⁵⁸ and what the apostle clearly stated, 'throne, dominations, principalities, authorities,' and yet it is obvious that God made them all. Gn 1:31

⁵⁷ See Gn 3:24, Is 37:16; with Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 300). Cherubim are angelic beings who attend God's presence.

⁵⁸ See Is 6:2, 6. Seraphim means "fiery ones." Col 1:16

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“Aut si eo quod dictum est, ‘fecit caelum et terram,’ comprehensa sunt omnia, quid de aquis dicimus super quas ferebatur spiritus dei? si enim terra nominata simul intelleguntur, quomodo iam terrae nomine materies informis accipitur, quando tam speciosas aquas videmus? aut si ita accipitur, cur ex eadem informitate scriptum est factum firmamentum et vocatum caelum neque scriptum est factas esse aquas? non enim adhuc informes sunt et invisae quas ita decora specie fluere cernimus. aut si tunc acceperunt istam speciem cum dixit deus, ‘congregetur aqua, quae est sub firmamento,’ ut congregatio sit ipsa formatio, quid respondebitur de aquis quae super firmamentum sunt, quia neque informes tam honorabilem sedem accipere meruissent nec scriptum est qua voce formatae sint?”

“Unde si aliquid Genesis tacuit deum fecisse, quod tamen deum fecisse nec sana fides nec certus ambigit intellectus, nec ideo ulla sobria doctrina dicere audebit istas aquas coaeternas deo, quia in libro Geneseos commemoratas quidem audimus, ubi autem factae sint non invenimus, cur non informem quoque illam materiam, quam scriptura haec terram invisibilem et incompositam tenebrosamque abyssum appellat, docente veritate intellegamus ex deo factam esse de nihilo ideoque illi non esse coaeternam, quamvis ubi facta sit omiserit enuntiare ista narratio?”

23. (32) His ergo auditis atque perspectis pro captu

⁵⁹ See above, *Conf.* 12.12.15, n. 29.

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“If everything were incorporated in that saying, ‘he made heaven and earth,’ what do we say about the waters over which the Spirit of God was moving? If they are understood as included whenever ‘earth’ is mentioned, how does the word ‘earth’ include shapeless matter when we see the waters have a beautiful form?⁵⁹ Or if we do accept this, why is it written that from the same shapelessness the firmament was made and called heaven, but it is not written that waters were created? They are not still shapeless and unseen, when we watch them flowing in such beautiful patterns. If they took that form when God said, ‘let the water beneath the firmament be gathered together,’ and so the gathering-together itself became their formation, what will be the reply on the subject of the waters that are above the firmament? They would never have deserved to receive such a seat of honor while still in a shapeless state, and it is not written that a word was spoken to give them shape.

Gn 1:9

Gn 1:7

“From all this, if Genesis said nothing about God making something—something which neither sound faith nor clear reasoning doubts that he did make—then no sensible teaching will presume to state that those waters are co-eternal with God, just because in the book of Genesis we find them recorded, but we do not find there the statement that they were created. And why, with the Truth as our teacher, should we not also interpret that shapeless matter (which this verse of scripture calls the invisible and unstructured earth, and the dark abyss) as made by God out of nothing, and therefore not coeternal with him—even though the narrative has omitted to mention the moment when it was made?”

Jn 14:6

23. (32) Now that I have listened and scrutinized all

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infirmittatis meae, quam tibi confiteor scienti deo meo, duo video dissensionum genera oboriri posse cum aliquid a nuntiis veracibus per signa enuntiatnr: unum, si de veritate rerum, alterum, si de ipsius qui enuntiat voluntate dissensio est. aliter enim quaerimus de creaturae conditione quid verum sit, aliter autem quid in his verbis Moyses, egregius domesticus fidei tuae, intellegere lectorem auditoremque voluerit. in illo primo genere discedant a me omnes qui ea quae falsa sunt se scire arbitrantur; in hoc item altero discedant a me omnes qui ea quae falsa sunt Moysen dixisse arbitrantur. coniungar autem illis, domine, in te et delecter cum eis in te qui veritate tua pascuntur in latitudine caritatis, et accedamus simul ad verba libri tui et quaeramus in eis vountatem tuam per voluntatem famuli tui, cuius calamo dispensasti ea.

24. (33) Sed quis nostrum sic invenit eam inter tam multa vera quae in illis verbis aliter atque aliter intellectis occurrunt quaerentibus, ut tam fidenter dicat hoc sensisse Moysen atque hoc in illa narratione voluisse intellegi, quam fidenter dicit hoc verum esse, sive ille hoc senserit sive aliud? ecce enim, deus meus, ego servus tuus, qui vovi tibi sacrificium confessionis in his litteris et oro ut ex misericordia tua reddam tibi vota mea, ecce ego quam fidenter dico in tuo verbo incommutabili omnia te fecisse, invisibilia et visibilia. numquid tam fidenter dico non aliud quam hoc attendisse Moysen, cum scriberet, "in principio fecit deus caelum et terram," quia non, sicut in tua veritate hoc

⁶⁰ See *De Mag.* 2.4; *Doct. Chr.* 2. A. is concerned here with authorial intention and inherent meaning.

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this to the best of my poor ability (which I confess to you, my God) I see that two types of disagreement can arise when honest reporters relate something in terms of signs:⁶⁰ one, if there is a disagreement over the truth of the facts, the other, if the disagreement is about the intention of the person relating the facts. It is one thing to inquire into the truth surrounding the act of creation; and another to inquire into what Moses, that outstanding servant of your faith, wanted the reader and hearer to understand in the words of scripture. Regarding the first type, I want nothing to do with all those who think that they know things which in fact are false. Regarding the second, I want nothing to do with those who think Moses recounted things that are untrue. But as for those who feed upon your truth in the wideness of your love, let me join myself, Lord, with them in you, and find delight with them in you. Let us approach the words of your book and seek in them your will, expressed through the will of your servant, by whose pen you have disseminated those words.

cf. Hb 3:5

cf. Eph
3:18-19

24. (33) Among the many truths in those words that occur to inquiring minds in different ways, who among us has identified your will so surely that they can state, "Moses meant this," and "Moses wanted this to be understood in his narrative," as firmly as they state "this is true," whether Moses meant this or something else? Look, O my God, I am your servant; I have vowed to you this sacrifice of confession in this work of mine, and I beg that by your mercy I may fulfill my vows to you: look how confidently I declare that in your immutable Word you made everything, both visible and invisible. Surely I can do no other now than to declare confidently that when Moses wrote, "in the beginning God made heaven and earth," this is what he intended? Through your Truth, I see that state-

Ps 116:18

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certum video, ita in eius mente video id eum cogitasse cum haec scriberet? potuit enim cogitare, "in ipso faciendi exordio," cum diceret: "in principio"; potuit et caelum et terram hoc loco nullam iam formatam perfectamque naturam sive spiritalem sive corporalem, sed utramque inchoatam et adhuc informem velle intellegi. video quippe vere potuisse dici quidquid horum diceretur, sed quid horum in his verbis ille cogitaverit, non ita video, quamvis sive aliquid horum sive quid aliud quod a me commemoratum non est tantus vir ille mente conspexerit, cum haec verba promeret, verum eum vidisse apteque id enuntia-
visse non dubitem.

25. (34) Nemo iam mihi molestus sit dicendo mihi, "non hoc sensit Moyses quod tu dicis, sed hoc sensit quod ego dico." si enim mihi diceret, "unde scis hoc sensisse Moysen, quod de his verbis eius eloqueris?" aequo animo ferre deberem et responderem fortasse quae superius respondi vel aliquanto uberius, si esset durior. cum vero dicit, "non hoc ille sensit quod tu dicis, sed quod ego dico," neque tamen negat quod uterque nostrum dicit, utrumque verum esse, o vita pauperum, deus meus, in cuius sinu non est contradictio, plue mihi mitigationes in cor, ut pa-

⁶¹ A possibility addressed by Basil, *Hexaemeron* 1.6 (he notes that instead of ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν some versions have ἐν κεφαλαίῳ ἐποίησεν); and Ambrose, *Hexaemeron* 1.4.16: "Some versions have written 'at the top,' meaning that in a tiny, brief moment the chief of the task was completed. Some people take 'beginning' in a non-temporal sense, but rather as pre-temporal" (*alii [sc. codices] dixerunt, ἐν κεφαλαίῳ quasi in capite, quo significatur in brevi et in exiguo momento summa operationis impleta. Sunt ergo et qui principium non pro tempore accipiant, sed ante tempus*).

⁶² A. is aware of a tendency to impatience and harshness: to Manichaeans he remarks, "I ought now to deal as patiently with

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ment as certain, but I cannot likewise see in Moses' mind that this was what he was thinking when he wrote those words. He could have meant, "at the actual start of creating"⁶¹ when he said, "in the beginning"; he could also have wanted to understand heaven and earth at that point as nature not yet given shape or perfection either spiritual or physical, but both unfinished and still without shape. To be sure, I see that whichever of those views is stated, it could be stated truthfully. But which of the two Moses intended in what he wrote, that I cannot see. All the same, I do not doubt that he saw the truth and expressed it appropriately, whether it was one of the above-mentioned readings, or some other which I have not recorded, which this great man saw in his mind when he pronounced these words.

25. (34) Let no one cause me problems by telling me, "Moses did not mean what you say; he meant what I say." If someone were to say to me, "How do you know Moses intended the meaning that you are propounding from his words?" I would have to put up with it calmly and reply perhaps as I replied earlier or at somewhat greater length, if the person proved intransigent. But if they say, "He did not mean what you say, but what I say," and does not deny what either of us says, whether both statements are true, then, O Life of the poor, O my God, in whose bosom is no disagreement, then let a gentling rain drop down upon my heart so that I bear such people patiently.⁶² They say this

Gal 6:17

Jn 14:6

cf. Is 45:8

you, as those close to me did with me, when I wandered blind and senseless in your teachings" (*ita nunc debeo sustinere, et tanta patientia vobiscum agere, quanta mecum egerunt proximi mei, cum in vestro dogmate rabiosus et caecus errarem: c. Ep. Fund. 3*).

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tienter tales feram. qui non mihi hoc dicunt, quia divini sunt et in corde famuli tui viderunt quod dicunt, sed quia superbi sunt nec noverunt Moysi sententiam sed amant suam, non quia vera est, sed quia sua est. alioquin et aliam veram pariter amarent, sicut ego amo quod dicunt quando verum dicunt, non quia ipsorum est sed quia verum est: et ideo iam nec ipsorum est, quia verum est. si autem ideo ament illud quia verum est, iam et ipsorum est et meum est, quoniam in commune omnium est veritatis amatorum.

Illud autem quod contendunt non hoc sensisse Moysen quod ego dico, sed quod ipsi dicunt, nolo, non amo, quia etsi ita est, tamen ista temeritas non scientiae sed audaciae est, nec visus sed typhus eam peperit. ideoque, domine, tremenda sunt iudicia tua, quoniam veritas tua nec mea est nec illius aut illius, sed omnium nostrum quos ad eius communionem publice vocas, terribiliter admonens nos ut eam nolimus habere privatam, ne privemur ea. nam quisquis id quod tu omnibus ad fruendum proponis sibi proprie vindicat, et suum vult esse quod omnium est, a communi propellitur ad sua, hoc est a veritate ad mendacium. qui enim loquitur mendacium, de suo loquitur.

(35) Attende, iudex optime, deus, ipsa veritas, attende quid dicam contradictori huic, attende. coram te enim dico et coram fratribus meis, qui legitime utuntur lege

⁶³ *audaciae*: in the terminology of Latin moral evaluation, mostly but not entirely negative.

⁶⁴ It is debatable whether the noun *communio*, unmodified, is as yet synonymous with the eucharist.

⁶⁵ *Figura etymologica*, playing on *privatam* . . . *privemur*.

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to me not because they are godlike and have seen in the heart of your servant Moses the things that they say, but because they are proud and do not know Moses' view, and love their own instead (not because it is true but because it is theirs). Otherwise they would be equally enamored of someone else's view which was true, just as I love what they say when they say something true—not because it is their view but because it is true: and in fact it is not "theirs" at all, because it is true. But if they were to love that because it is true, then it belongs both to them and to me, because it is shared equally among all who love the truth.

But when they argue that Moses did not mean what I say, but what they say, I cannot accept it, cannot warm to it, because even if it is so, still their presumption betrays arrogance,⁶³ not knowledge. It is born of pride, not vision. So, Lord, your judgments are formidable, since your Truth does not belong to me, or to this person or that; but to all of us whom you call to communion⁶⁴ openly with him: and you warn us in fearsome terms not to keep the Truth as private, lest we be deprived of it.⁶⁵ For anyone who lays claims for themselves alone to something that you bestow on everyone to enjoy—and wants to keep for themselves what is really common property—is ejected from the group, and left to themselves: which is a movement from truth to lies. For the one who speaks a lie speaks of himself.⁶⁶

Jn 14:6

Jn 8:44

(35) Listen—O Judge supreme, O God, yourself the Truth—listen to my answer to my adversary; listen! For I am speaking before you and my fellow-Christians who use

1 Tm 1:8, 5

⁶⁶ The Scripture reference is to Satan, the Father of Lies: such a weight does A. place upon truth over deceit.

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usque ad finem caritatis. attende et vide quid ei dicam, si placet tibi. hanc enim vocem huic refero fraternam et pacificam: "si ambo videmus verum esse quod dicis et ambo videmus verum esse quod dico, ubi, quaeso, id videmus? nec ego utique in te nec tu in me, sed ambo in ipsa quae supra mentes nostras est incommutabili veritate. cum ergo de ipsa domini dei nostri luce non contendamus, cur de proximi cogitatione contendimus, quam sic videre non possumus ut videtur incommutabilis veritas, quando, si ipse Moyses apparuisset nobis atque dixisset: 'hoc cogitavi,' nec sic eam videremus, sed crederemus? non itaque supra quam scriptum est unus pro altero infletur adversus alterum. diligamus dominum deum nostrum ex toto corde, ex tota anima, ex tota mente nostra, et proximum nostrum sicut nosmet ipsos. propter quae duo praecepta caritatis sensisse Moysen, quidquid in illis libris sensit, nisi crediderimus, mendacem faciemus dominum, cum de animo conservi aliter quam ille docuit opinamur. iam vide quam stultum sit, in tanta copia verissimarum sententiarum quae de illis verbis erui possunt, temere adfirmare quam earum Moyses potissimum senserit, et perniciosis contentionibus ipsam offendere caritatem propter quam dixit omnia, cuius dicta conamur exponere."

26. (36) Et tamen ego, deus meus, celsitudo humilitatis meae et requies laboris mei, qui audis confessiones meas et dimittis peccata mea, quoniam tu mihi praecipis ut diligam proximum meum sicut me ipsum, non possum minus credere de Moyse fidelissimo famulo tuo quam mihi opta-

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the law properly for love's purposes. Listen and see what I shall say to him, if you approve. For the words of my reply to him are brotherly and peaceable: "If we both see that what you say is true, and we both see that what I say is true, then where, may I ask, do we see this? Certainly not I in you, or you in me, but both of us see it in that same immutable truth that transcends both our minds. Since, then, we do not dispute over the actual light of our Lord God, why are we disputing about what our neighbor is thinking, which is something we cannot see in the way that immutable truth is visible?—when if Moses himself had appeared to us and said, 'this is what I thought,' we still would not see his thought, but we would believe him. So let us not go beyond what is written, being puffed up in support of one person and against another. Let us love the Lord our God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves. Unless we believe that, in those holy books of his, Moses meant whatever he did mean in terms of the double commandment to love, we shall make God out to be a liar, by having an opinion about the mind of a fellow-servant at odds with what he taught. Look how foolish it is, amid all this abundance of completely true opinions which can be plucked from those writings, to presume to assert which of them Moses believed most strongly, and with destructive arguments to offend against the very love on account of which he whose words we are trying to explain said it all."

1 Cor 4:6

Mt 22:37-39

1 Jn 1:10,
5:10

26. (36) O my God, you are sublimity to my humility, and rest for my labor; you hear my confessions and forgive my sins. Since you direct me to love my neighbor as myself, I still cannot believe it of Moses, your most faithful servant, that you gave him a lesser gift than I would have

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rem ac desiderarem abs te dari muneris, si tempore illo natus essem quo ille eoque loci me constituisses, ut per servitutem cordis ac linguae meae litterae illae dispensarentur quae tanto post essent omnibus gentibus profuturae et per universum orbem tanto auctoritatis culmine omnium falsarum superbarumque doctrinarum verba superaturae. vellem quippe, si tunc ego essem Moyses (ex eadem namque massa omnes venimus; et quid est homo, nisi quia memor es eius?), vellem ergo, si tunc ego essem quod ille et mihi abs te Geneseos liber scribendus adiungeretur, talem mihi eloquendi facultatem dari et eum texendi sermonis modum ut neque illi qui nondum queunt intellegere quemadmodum creat deus, tamquam excedentia vires suas, dicta recusarent et illi qui hoc iam possunt, in quamlibet veram sententiam cogitando venissent, eam non praetermissam in paucis verbis tui famuli reperirent, et si alius aliam vidisset in luce veritatis, nec ipsa in eisdem verbis intellegenda deesset.

27. (37) Sicut enim fons in parvo loco uberius est pluribusque rivis in ampliora spatia fluxum ministrat quam quilibet eorum rivorum qui per multa locorum ab eodem fonte deducitur, ita narratio dispensatoris tui sermocinaturis pluribus profutura parvo sermonis modulo scatet fluentia liquidae veritatis, unde sibi quisque verum quod de his rebus potest, hic illud, ille illud, per longiores loquellarum anfractus trahat.

⁶⁷ "To be sure . . . same terms": an unwieldy, somewhat anacoluthic sentence. A. imagines achieving what Moses had: composing text capable of embracing primary and secondary layers of meaning, according to the readers' ability.

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wanted and chosen for myself—if I had been born in the same era as he, and you had set me in the same place, so that it was by the service of my heart and tongue that those writings were to be disseminated, which so much later would do good to all the nations, and which, by their crowning authority, would overcome the words of all false and proud teachings. To be sure, if I were Moses back in those days—after all, we are all made of the same stuff, and what are mortals, unless you are mindful of them?—I would want, if I then were what he was, and if upon me were enjoined the task of writing the book of Genesis, yes, I would want to be endowed with such a talent for eloquence, and such an art of weaving my speech, that those who are as yet incapable of grasping how God acts as Creator would not reject my words (as if too demanding for their capacities), while as for those who can already grasp it, whatever true meaning they had reached by reasoning they would find it not neglected in your servant's modest words. And if someone else had seen another meaning in the light of truth, that too would not fail to be comprehensible in the same terms.⁶⁷

Rom 9:21

Ps 8:4

27. (37) Just as a spring, though in a small place, flows more abundantly, and directs its waters by many channels into a broader spread than any one of the individual channels (each of which traverses many places but has its source in the same spring), so the account related by your trusted servant will be useful to many preachers, even in the modest scope of its discourse. That account will bubble up with currents of clear truth from which each person, through long and circuitous discussions, draws what truth they can about these matters—one person this, another that.

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Alii enim cum haec verba legunt vel audiunt, cogitant deum, quasi hominem aut quasi aliquam¹⁷ molem¹⁸ immensa¹⁹ praeditam²⁰ potestate²¹ novo quodam et repentino placito extra se ipsam tamquam locis distantibus, fecisse caelum et terram, duo magna corpora supra et infra, quibus omnia continerentur, et cum audiunt, "dixit deus: fiat illud, et factum est illud," cogitant verba coepta et finita, sonantia temporibus atque transeuntia, post quorum transitum statim existere quod iussum est ut existeret, et si quid forte aliud hoc modo ex familiaritate carnis opinantur. in quibus adhuc parvulis animalibus, dum isto humilissimo genere verborum tamquam materno sinu eorum gestatur infirmitas, salubriter aedificatur fides, qua certum habeant et teneant deum fecisse omnes naturas quas eorum sensus mirabili varietate circumspicit. quorum si quispiam quasi vilitatem dictorum aspernatus extra nutritorias cunas superba inbecillitate se extenderit, heu! cadet miser et, domine deus, miserere, ne implumem pullum conculcent qui transeunt viam, et mitte angelum tuum, qui eum reponat in nido, ut vivat donec volet.

¹⁷ aliquam S C D G Knöll Ver.: aliqua O A H

¹⁸ molem *codd. edd.*: mole S O

¹⁹ immensa S C D O: immensam *codd. al.*

²⁰ praeditam S C D G: praedita O

²¹ potestate *codd.*: potestatem S D² G O Knöll GM Ver.

⁶⁸ These two adjectives together encapsulate the sense of *carnis* ("flesh": see, e.g., Rom 8:9). ⁶⁹ The Latin adjective *animalis* is a literal rendering of the Greek ψυχικός (*psychikos*, natural/worldly-minded. Cf. 1 Cor 2:14). It contrasts with *spiritalis/pneumatikos* (πνευματικός, spiritual).

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Some people, when they read or hear these words of scripture, think of God as some kind of human being, or some other colossal authority, endowed with new power, which made a sudden and unexpected decision to make heaven and earth outside of itself, as if in regions distant from itself—two vast bodies, one below and one above, containing all that is. Then when they hear, “God spoke: let such and such be made: and it was made,” they think of his words as begun and ended, sounding and passing away in time; and after their passing, what had been commanded to exist immediately did exist, and so did anything else of this kind that they think of in earthly, physical⁶⁸ terms. Such worldly beings⁶⁹ are still in their infancy, while their weakness is nestled in the simplest kind of language as if brooded by their mother. But their faith is being built up in a healthy way, to help them grasp and hold firm the fact that God made all the natural phenomena, in their wondrous variety, which their sense perceptions see all around them. If any of them were to scorn the words of scripture as too humble, and to lean forward out of their nurturing⁷⁰ nest in all the weakness of their pride,—alas! poor creatures, they will fall. Lord God, have mercy, do not let those passing on their way trample your chicks when they are still unfledged; send your angel to restore them to the nest, to live there till they fledge.

1 Cor 3:1-3

⁷⁰ *nutritorias*: a rare word, but resonant for A. Cf. *Ser.* 25.1 (on Ps 34:8), “The Lord’s grace is sweet and nurturing” (*gratia eius . . . dulcis et nutritoria est*). For the Church as a nest, see *Conf.* 4.16.31; elsewhere, at S. 51.5.6, A. remarks, “I was pitiable; I left the nest, and fell before I could fly” (*ego . . . miser . . . reliqui nidum; et prius cecidi, quam volarem*).

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28. (38) Alii vero, quibus haec verba non iam nidus sed opaca fructecta sunt, vident in eis latentes fructus et volitant laetantes et garrunt scrutantes et carpunt eos. vident enim, cum haec verba legunt vel audiunt tua, deus aeternae, stabili permansione cuncta praeterita et futura tempora superari, nec tamen quicquam esse temporalis creaturae quod tu non feceris, cuius voluntas, quia id est quod tu, nullo modo mutata vel quae antea non fuisset exorta voluntate fecisti omnia, non de te similitudinem tuam formam omnium sed de nihilo dissimilitudinem informem, quae formaretur per similitudinem tuam recurrens in te unum pro captu ordinato, quantum cuique rerum in suo genere datum est, et fierent omnia bona valde, sive maneant circa te sive gradatim remotiore distantia per tempora et locos pulchras mutationes²² faciant aut patiantur. vident haec et gaudent in luce veritatis tuae, quantum hic valent.

(39) Et alius eorum intendit in id quod dictum est, "in principio fecit deus," et respicit²³ sapientiam, principium, quia et loquitur ipsa nobis. alius itidem intendit in eadem verba et principium intellegit exordium rerum conditarum et sic accipit "in principio fecit" ac si diceretur "primo

²² mutationes *cf.* *OD* (cf. *REAug* 35 [1989], 128): variationes *Maur. Knöll Skut. Pell. Ver.*: narrationes *codd.*

²³ respicit *codd. Maur. Knöll Skut. Pell.*: respiscit *S O¹ D¹*

⁷¹ An allusion to Plotinus; see *Enn.* 3.8.10 ("reversion to the One," ἡ ἀναγωγὴ ἐφ' ἑν).

⁷² Another complex train of thought mirrored in sentence structure. A. sees positive value in both the lower and the higher

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28. (38) For other people, the words of scripture are not a nest but a shady thicket. They spy fruits concealed in it and they dart about happily, nattering while they explore it and pluck the fruits. What they see, O eternal God, when they read or hear these words of yours, is all time past and future overcome by an abiding steadfastness. In it there is no part of your creation, subject to time, which you did not create; and your will, which is the same as your own self, made everything, not through any kind of change, nor by the emergence of a new will that did not exist before. Not from your own essence did you make the likeness of yourself the pattern for everything, but instead you made, from nothing, a shapeless lack of resemblance to you, which could be shaped according to your likeness as it reverted to you, the One,⁷¹ in conformity with its appointed capacity (as much as is given to each and every thing according to its kind). And all things would become "very good," whether their abiding was close about you, or whether, further and further off by degrees through time and space, they were effecting or allowing beautiful diversity.⁷² People see these things and rejoice in the light of your truth, at least to the modest extent possible here on earth.

Gn 1:31

(39) Another of these readers pays attention to the saying, "in the beginning God made," and regards Wisdom as the Beginning, because Wisdom herself is the one who speaks to us. In the same way, another focuses on the same words but interprets Beginning as the starting point

Jn 8:25

parts of Creation, and even here in mutability, *mutationes* (here translated "diversity": but the emendation is not universally agreed).

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fecit." atque in eis qui intellegunt "in principio" quod in sapientia fecisti caelum et terram, alius eorum ipsum caelum et terram, creabilem materiam caeli et terrae, sic esse credit cognominatam, alius iam formatas distinctasque naturas, alius unam formatam eandemque spiritalem caeli nomine, aliam informem corporalis materiae terrae nomine. qui autem intellegunt in nominibus caeli et terrae adhuc informem materiam, de qua formaretur caelum et terra, nec ipsi uno modo²⁴ id intellegunt, sed alius, unde consummaretur intellegibilis sensibilisque creatura, alius tantum, unde sensibilis moles ista corporea sinu grandi continens perspicuas promptasque naturas. nec illi uno modo, qui iam dispositas digestasque creaturas caelum et terram vocari hoc loco credunt, sed alius invisibilem atque visibilem, alius solam visibilem, in qua luminosum caelum suspicimus et terram caliginosam quaeque in eis sunt.

29. (40) At ille qui non aliter accipit "in principio fecit" quam si diceretur "primo fecit" non habet quomodo veraciter intellegat caelum et terram, nisi materiam caeli et terrae intellegat, videlicet universae, id est intellegibilis corporalisque, creaturae. si enim iam formatam velit uni-

²⁴ modo *codd. edd.*: more *S*

⁷³ *creabilis*: a very rare word.

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for creating everything and so takes "in the beginning he made" as if what was said was, "first he made." Among those who interpret "in the beginning" in terms of your having made heaven and earth in Wisdom, one believes that the actual phrase "heaven and earth" is a reference to that formless matter which has the capacity to be created⁷³ as heaven and earth; another that their natures are already shaped and clear-cut, and another that one nature had then been shaped and that nature was spiritual and was designated "heaven," while the other nature, shapeless, made of physical matter, was designated "earth." But as for those who interpret the terms "heaven" and "earth" as standing for matter that was at that point still unshaped, but from which heaven and earth were going to be constituted, even they do not all interpret in the same way. One sees it as the stuff from which both the rational and physical aspects of creation would be brought to perfection; another only as that from which that material, physical mass containing in its colossal embrace the natural beings now visible and apparent to us. Not even those who believe that created entities, already distributed and separated, are given the names "heaven" and "earth" in this passage actually agree: one takes it to mean both invisible and visible creation; another, only the visible creation, in which we look upon the sky full of light and the darksome earth and all that is in them.

29. (40) Anyone who takes "in the beginning he made" only as if what was said was, "at first he made" has no way, then, of interpreting the words "heaven" and "earth" truly, except to interpret them as the matter of which heaven and earth consist, which is to say the universe—in other words, the rational and physical creation. If they incline to

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versam, recte ab eo quaeri poterit, si hoc primo fecit deus, quid fecerit deinceps, et post universitatem non inveniet ac per hoc audiet invitus, "quomodo illud primo, si postea nihil?"

Cum vero dicit primo informem, deinde formatam, non est absurdus, si modo est idoneus discernere quid praecedat aeternitate, quid tempore, quid electione, quid origine: aeternitate, sicut deus omnia; tempore, sicut flos fructum; electione, sicut fructus florem; origine, sicut sonus cantum. in his quattuor primum et ultimum quae commemoravi difficillime intelleguntur, duo media facillime. namque rara visio est et nimis ardua conspiceri, domine, aeternitatem tuam incommutabiliter mutabilia facientem ac per hoc priorem.

Quis deinde sic acutum cernat animo, ut sine labore magno dinoscere valeat quomodo sit prior sonus quam cantus, ideo quia cantus est formatus sonus et esse utique aliquid non formatum potest, formari autem quod non est non potest? sic est prior materies quam id quod ex ea fit, non ea prior quia ipsa efficit, cum potius fiat, nec prior intervallo temporis. neque enim priore tempore sonos edimus informes sine cantu et eos posteriore tempore in formam cantici coaptamus aut fingimus, sicut ligna, qui-

⁷⁴ A. here confronts priority, perhaps with Aristotelian categories in mind (e.g., Arist. *Metaph.* 1018b31-34): "Universals have priority in terms of formulation, particulars in terms of sense perception" (κατὰ τὸν λόγον τὰ καθόλου πρότερα κατὰ δὲ τὴν αἴσθησιν τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα). Aristotle's list does not correspond exactly to A.'s.

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the universe being already shaped, one may properly ask of them, if God made this "at first," what did he do next? And they will find nothing that followed after the entire universe, and as a result will not want to hear the question, "How could that come first, if nothing came after it?"

When they say that at first creation was shapeless, and later acquired a shape, they are not being foolish—provided that they have the capacity to distinguish what goes first in eternity, and in time, and in choice, and in origin:⁷⁴ in eternity, as God precedes all things; in time, as flower precedes fruit; in choice, as fruit precedes flower; in origin, as sound precedes song. In these four, the first and last that I have mentioned are hardest to interpret, while the second and third are very easy. For contemplative vision is both rare, and enormously demanding, Lord—to behold your eternity, which immutably creates mutable things and is, accordingly, prior to them.

Next, who has such mental acuity that they can discern without any great effort how sound is temporally prior to song? For song is sound that has been given structure:⁷⁵ and certainly something that has not been given shape can still exist, whereas how can what does not exist be given shape? So matter is prior to what is made from matter. It is not prior because it is itself the maker; instead it is itself created. Nor is it prior in terms of time-intervals: For we do not first in time produce shapeless sounds without song, and at a later time adapt those sounds into the shape of a hymn, nor do we mold them like wood (to make a

⁷⁵ The verb is *formare* (elsewhere translated "shape"); the shaping in this case is not the same as physical molding of stuff into objects.

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bus arca, vel argentum, quo vasculum fabricatur. tales quippe materiae tempore etiam praecedunt formas rerum quae fiunt ex eis, at in cantu non ita est. cum enim cantatur, auditur sonus eius, non prius informiter sonat et deinde formatur in cantum. quod enim primo utcumque sonuerit, praeterit, nec ex eo quicquam reperies quod resumptum arte componas. et ideo cantus in sono suo vertitur, qui sonus eius materies eius est. idem quippe formatur, ut cantus sit. et ideo, sicut dicebam, prior materies sonandi quam forma cantandi. non per faciendi potentiam prior: neque enim sonus est cantandi artifex, sed cantanti animae subiacet ex corpore, de quo cantum faciat; nec tempore prior: simul enim cum cantu editur; nec prior electione: non enim potior sonus quam cantus, quandoquidem cantus est non tantum sonus verum etiam speciosus sonus. sed prior est origine, quia non cantus formatur ut sonus sit, sed sonus formatur ut cantus sit.

Hoc exemplo qui potest intellegat materiam rerum primo factam et appellatam caelum et terram, quia inde facta sunt caelum et terra, nec tempore primo factam, quia formae rerum exserunt tempora, illa autem erat informis iamque in temporibus simul animadvertitur, nec tamen de illa narrari aliquid potest, nisi velut tempore prior sit, cum pendatur extremior, quia profecto meliora sunt formata

⁷⁶ A. does not address God; he is in teaching mode again.

⁷⁷ Because they initiate change.

⁷⁸ *extremior*: unusual usage, something like "lower down" or "further behind."

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chest) or silver (to make a vessel). Such materials as these are undoubtedly temporally prior to the shaped forms of things which are made from them. But with song, it is not so. When singing happens, the sound of it is heard; there is not an unstructured noise first from which a song is then constructed. Whatever makes a sound first, passes away; and you will not find anything of it left for you to recover and use your skill to make into a composition.⁷⁶ And so song consists in its own sound, and that sound is the matter of which the song consists. Indeed that matter is given shape, to create song. And so, as I was saying, the matter of sound comes before the structure of song. It is not prior by virtue of its capacity for creativity; for sound is not the author of the singing. It is provided by the body to the soul doing the singing, from which it creates song: but it is not prior in time: for it is produced at the same time as the song. Nor is it prior in terms of choice: for sound is not more powerful than song, because song is not just sound, but rather sound beautifully structured. It is, however, prior in terms of origin because song is not formed into sound, but sound is formed into song.

By this example, let anyone who is able understand that primal matter was first made and called "heaven" and "earth," because from it heaven and earth were made; but this matter was not made first in temporal priority, because it is the shapes of things that give rise to the phenomenon of time,⁷⁷ whereas matter was without shape; but now that time exists, both are discernible at the same time. Still nothing can be reported concerning this kind of matter without making it seem to be prior in time; even though it is given a lower⁷⁸ value—because anything that has a shape is definitely better than something without

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quam informia, et praecedatur aeternitate creatoris, ut esset de nihilo, unde aliquid fieret.

30. (41) In hac diversitate sententiarum verarum concordiam pariat ipsa veritas, et deus noster misereatur nostri, ut legitime lege utamur, praecepti fine, pura caritate. ac per hoc, si quis quaerit ex me quid horum Moyses, tuus ille famulus, senserit, non sunt hi sermones confessionum mearum si tibi non confiteor, "nescio." et scio tamen illas veras esse sententias (exceptis carnalibus, de quibus quantum existimavi locutus sum—quos tamen bonae spei parvulos haec verba libri tui non territant alta humiliter et pauca copiose), sed omnes quos in eis verbis vera cernere ac dicere fateor, diligamus nos invicem pariterque diligamus te, deum nostrum, fontem veritatis, si non vana sed ipsam sitimus, eundemque famulum tuum, scripturae huius dispensatorem, spiritu tuo plenum, ita honoremus, ut hoc eum te revelante, cum haec scriberet, attendisse credamus quod in eis maxime et luce veritatis et fruge utilitatis excellit.

31. (42) Ita cum alius dixerit, "hoc sensit quod ego," et alius, "immo illud quod ego," religiosius me arbitror dicere, "cur non utrumque potius, si utrumque verum est, et si quid tertium et si quid quartum et si quid omnino aliud verum quispiam in his verbis videt, cur non illa om-

⁷⁹ See *Conf.* 12.27.37.

⁸⁰ Double oxymoron.

⁸¹ *parvulos.*

⁸² *bonae spei:* cf. *Conf.* 1.16.26. On these unspiritual readers, cf. *Conf.* 12.27.37.

⁸³ OD: "The emphasis in this book on allowing the plurality of views to thrive [is] an embodiment of the command to love one's neighbor."

⁸⁴ Moses.

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shape. And it is preceded by the eternity of the Creator, which means that the shapeless matter, from which things were made, was itself made out of nothing.

30. (41) Let Truth itself bring forth harmony amid such a variety of true opinions; and let our God have mercy upon us, so that we make proper use of his law, of the objective of that commandment, namely pure love. Because of this, if anyone asks me which of these did Moses, that servant of yours, intend, these are no true reports of my confessions unless I confess to you, "I do not know." And yet I do know that they are true opinions. I am setting aside those who are unspiritual, fleshly; on that subject I have said as much as I thought proper,⁷⁹ and these words of your book, humble in its sublimity, generous in its brevity,⁸⁰ do not frighten those who are young in the faith⁸¹ but promising.⁸² But as for all of us who, I acknowledge, perceive and speak the truth in scripture, let us love one another, and likewise let us love you, our God,⁸³ the well-spring of truth—if we are thirsty for that truth, and not for vanities. And let us likewise so honor that same servant of yours,⁸⁴ the good steward of your scriptures, filled with your Spirit, that we believe that when he wrote these things, as you revealed them to him, he intended the meaning which in the text most excels both in the light of truth and in the yield of profit.

Ps 67:1

1 Tm 1:5

1 Cor 3:1

Mt 22:37-39

31. (42) So when one person says "Moses meant what I mean," and another says, "by no means! He meant what I mean," I think that the more Christian response is, "why not both instead, if both are true, and if anyone sees in these words some third, or fourth, or any number of other true meanings, what is wrong with believing that he saw all these meanings, since through him the one God has

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nia vidisse credatur, per quem deus unus sacras litteras vera et diversa visuris multorum sensibus temperavit?"

Ego certe, quod intrepidus de meo corde pronuntio, si ad culmen auctoritatis aliquid scriberem, sic mallet scribere ut quod veri quisque de his rebus capere posset mea verba resonarent, quam ut unam veram sententiam ad hoc apertius ponerem, ut excluderem ceteras quarum falsitas me non posset offendere. nolo itaque, deus meus, tam praeceps esse ut hoc illum virum de te meruisse non credam. sensit ille omnino in his verbis atque cogitavit, cum ea scriberet, quidquid hic veri potuimus invenire et quidquid nos non potuimus aut nondum potuimus et tamen in eis inveniri potest.

32. (43) Postremo, domine, qui deus es et non caro et sanguis, si quid homo minus vidit, numquid et spiritum tuum bonum, qui deducet me in terram rectam,²⁵ latere potuit, quidquid eras in eis verbis tu ipse revelaturus legentibus posteris, etiamsi ille per quem dicta sunt unam fortassis ex multis veris sententiam cogitavit? quod si ita est, sit igitur illa quam cogitavit ceteris excelsior. nobis autem, domine, aut ipsam demonstra²⁶ aut quam placet alteram veram, ut sive nobis hoc quod etiam illi homini

²⁵ terram rectam *codd. edd.*: terra recta S Knöll

²⁶ demonstra C D G O² Maur.: demonstras S O¹ Knöll Skut. Ver.

⁸⁵ Cf. *Doctr. Chr.* 3.27.38, "In terms of sacred eloquence, what could the divinity have bestowed more generously or fruitfully than the possibility of interpreting the same words in different ways?" (*quid in divinis eloquiis largius et uberius potuit di-*

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adapted the sacred writings to the capacities of many people who would see things in them that were true and different together?"⁸⁵

Certainly if I were writing something to the highest standard of authority—I declare this fearlessly, from the heart—I would prefer to write in such a way that my words would communicate whatever truth each person could take on these subjects, rather than laying down a single true opinion about the subject quite openly, so as to exclude other opinions (though there was no falsehood in them such as might cause me to take offense). So I do not want, O my God, to be so hasty as to believe that Moses did not enjoy your approval. When he was writing these words,⁸⁶ he explicitly meant and thought in them whatever truth here we have been able to discover, and whatever we have not been able to, or have not yet discovered; and it can still be found there in scripture.

32. (43) Lord, you are our God, and not flesh and blood; if finally humanity had less insight, surely nothing could escape the notice of your good Spirit, who will lead me into an upright land—whatever there was in those words that you yourself were going to reveal to readers yet to come, even if that man through whom they were spoken perhaps had only one of the many meanings in mind? If this is so, that meaning that he held is superior to the rest. Either show us, Lord, that same meaning or some other true one you decide upon. Then whether you disclose to

Mt 16:17

Ps 143:10

vinitus provideri, quam ut eadem verba pluribus intelligantur modis).

⁸⁶ A. is thinking now of the opening words of Genesis again.

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tuo sive aliud ex eorundem verborum occasione patefacias, tu tamen pascas, non error inludat.

Ecce, domine deus meus, quam multa de paucis verbis, quam multa, oro te, scripsimus! quae nostrae vires, quae tempora omnibus libris tuis ad istum modum sufficient? sine me itaque brevius in eis confiteri tibi et eligere unum aliquid quod tu inspiraveris verum, certum et bonum, etiamsi multa occurrerint, ubi multa occurrere poterunt, ea fide confessionis meae ut, si hoc dixero quod sensit minister tuus, recte atque optime (id enim conari me oportet), quod si adsecutus non fuero, id tamen dicam quod mihi per eius verba tua veritas dicere voluerit, quae illi quoque dixit quod voluit.

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us the same as you did to Moses your servant or some other (based on the same words), still you are feeding us, rather than error making fools of us.

Look, O Lord my God, how much we have written about so few words of scripture—please, look and see how much! Is our strength enough, is there time enough, to treat all your books at such length? So allow me to confess to you more briefly while immersed in them, and choose one meaning that you have inspired as true, sure and good (even if many meanings present themselves, where multiple meanings are possible), in the faith of my confession: so, if I say what your servant meant, in the best, most proper way (it is my duty to aim for this), but I do not succeed, I shall still say what your Truth wills to speak to me through Moses' words; for to him also your Truth spoke whatever he willed.

LIBER XIII

1. (1) Invoco te, deus meus, misericordia mea, qui fecisti me et oblitum tui non oblitus es. invoco te in animam meam, quam praeparas ad capiendum te ex desiderio quod inspirasti¹ ei. nunc invocantem te ne deseras, qui priusquam invocarem praevenisti et institisti crebescens multimodis vocibus, ut audirem de longinquo et converterer et vocantem me invocarem te. tu enim,² domine, delevisti omnia mala merita mea, ne retribueres manibus meis, in quibus a te defeci, et praevenisti omnia bona merita mea, ut retribueres manibus tuis, quibus me fecisti, quia et priusquam essem tu eras, nec eram cui praestares ut essem, et tamen ecce sum ex bonitate tua praeveniente totum hoc quod me fecisti et unde me fecisti. neque enim eguisti me aut ego tale bonum sum quo tu adiuveris, dominus meus et deus meus, non ut tibi sic serviam quasi ne fatigeris in agendo, aut ne minor sit potestas tua carens

¹ inspirasti ei *Skut.*: inspirasti *S Knöll*: inspiras ei *codd. Maur. Ver.*: inspiras et *C D*

² tu enim *codd. Maur. Ver.*: etenim *S Knöll Skut.*

¹ Answering the puzzle of *Conf.* 1.1.1; see Vol. 1, 3.

² The noun/adjective collocation *bonitate praeveniente* suggests a theological principle: divine initiative is antecedent to

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1. (1) O my God, my mercy, I invoke you in prayer, for you made me, and when I forgot you, you did not forget me.¹ I invoke you to enter my soul, which you are making ready to receive you by means of the desire that you have breathed into it. Now that I am invoking you, do not abandon me: prior to my invocation you went before me and pressed me with increasing frequency, by all kinds of arguments, to hear you from afar and to be converted, and to invoke you when you called me. For you, Lord, have abolished all the evils that I deserved, so as not to recompense the work of my hands in which I forsook you; and have anticipated all the good things that I have deserved, so as to recompense the work of your hands, with which you made me: because even before I began to exist, you existed; I did not exist for you to grant existence to me—and yet look! I exist, this whole being that you have made me out of your goodness going before me,² and from which you have made me. For you had no need of me. Nor am I such a good thing as to be of assistance to you, my Lord and my God, to help you—as if preventing your becoming exhausted by activity; or as if your power would be dimin-

Ps 59:17

Ps 58:10

Ps 18:20

human action. The verb *praevenisti* (twice in 13.1.1, translated “go/went before”) has a less metaphysical resonance.

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obsequio meo, neque ut sic te colam quasi terram, ut sis incultus si non te colam, sed ut serviam tibi et colam te, ut de te mihi bene sit, a quo mihi est ut sim cui bene sit.

2. (2) Ex plenitudine quippe bonitatis tuae creatura tua substitit, ut bonum quod tibi nihil prodesset nec de te aequale tibi esset, tamen quia ex te fieri potuit, non deesset. quid enim te promeruit caelum et terra, quas fecisti in principio? dicant quid te promeruerunt spiritalis corporalisque natura, quas fecisti in sapientia tua, ut inde penderent etiam inchoata et informia quaeque in genere suo vel spiritali vel corporali, euntia in immoderationem et in longinquam dissimilitudinem tuam, spiritale informe praestantius quam si formatum corpus esset, corporale autem informe praestantius quam si omnino nihil esset, atque ita penderent in tuo verbo informia, nisi per idem verbum revocarentur ad unitatem tuam et formarentur et essent ab uno te summo bono universa bona valde.

Quid te promeruerant, ut essent saltem informia, quae neque hoc essent nisi ex te?

(3) Quid te promeruit materies corporalis, ut esset saltem invisibilis et incomposita, quia neque hoc esset nisi quia fecisti?³ ideoque te, quia non erat, promereri ut esset

³ fecisti *S O Knöll Skut. Ver.: fecisti eam codd. Maur.*

³ Paronomasia. The verb *colam/incultus* (four times in this sentence) means "offer worship" (of deities) as well as "tend, cultivate, make fruitful" (of land).

⁴ GM note that *de te* (from you) refers to emanation, whereas *ex te* (by your doing) refers to origin by creation.

⁵ "merit . . . have": the verb *promeruit* appears repeatedly in *Conf.* 13.2.2-4.

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ished without my service to you. I was not tending your cult as one cultivates land (because you would be uncultivated if I offered you no cult). Rather, I was serving you and tending your cult, so that good may come to me from you, because it comes from you that I am capable of receiving good.³

2. (2) Clearly it is because of the fullness of your goodness that your Creation has stood firm. So a good that could not benefit you, and was not your equal by virtue of its being made from you,⁴ nonetheless lacked nothing, because its existence was your doing. What good did heaven and earth, which you made in the beginning, deserve before you?⁵ Let spiritual and physical nature, which you made in your wisdom, declare what good they have deserved before you, that on your wisdom even incomplete and unshapen beings depended, each according to their kind, either spiritual or physical. And those beings were moving toward abandoning restraint and becoming utterly unlike you: the spiritual, even in a shapeless state, is preferable to a physical entity that does have shape—but the physical, in a shapeless state, is still preferable to complete nonexistence. Thus these entities would have been dependent upon your Word in their shapeless state, had not the same Word called them back to your unity, and given them shape, making them “very good,” through you, the one supreme all-encompassing Good.

Phil 2:6

Ps 104:24

What credit did they have from you, to deserve even their shapeless state?—and even that was only by your gift!

(3) What good did physical matter deserve from you, even to be “invisible and unstructured,” given that it only existed in even this lowly form because you made it? For this reason, because it was nonexistent, it could not de-

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non poterat. aut quid te promeruit inchoatio creaturae spiritalis, ut saltem tenebrosa fluitaret similis abyssus, tui dissimilis, nisi per idem verbum converteretur ad idem a quo facta est atque ab eo inluminata lux fieret, quamvis non aequaliter tamen⁴ conformis formae aequali tibi⁵ sicut enim corpori non hoc est esse quod pulchrum esse (alioquin deforme esse non posset), ita etiam creato spiritui non id est vivere quod sapienter vivere: alioquin incommutabiliter saperet. bonum autem illi est haerere⁵ tibi semper, ne quod adeptus est conversione aversione lumen amittat et relabatur in vitam tenebrosae abyssus similem. nam et nos, qui secundum animam creatura spiritalis sumus, aversi a te, nostro lumine, in ea vita fuimus aliquando tenebrae et in reliquiis obscuritatis nostrae laboramus, donec simus iustitia tua in unico tuo sicut montes dei. nam iudicia tua fuimus sicut multa abyssus.

3. (4) Quod autem in primis conditionibus dixisti, "fiat lux, et facta est lux," non incongruenter hoc intellego in creatura spiritali, quia erat iam qualiscumque vita quam inluminare. sed sicut non te promeruerat ut esset talis vita quae inluminari posset, ita nec cum iam esset prome-

⁴ tamen *codd. edd.*: et tamen S

⁵ haerere *codd.* Skut. Ver.: adhaerere S Knöll

⁶ The paronomasia, juxtaposing *conversio/aversio*, is untranslatable into good English. In Vg the antonym of *conversio* is *aversio*, i.e., turning away from God, which the King James Version renders "backsliding."

⁷ Cf. *En. Ps.* 35.9-10, where A. notes, "'Abyss' means the deep darkness of sinners" (*abyssum dicit profunditatem peccatorum*), whereas the mountains evoke Christ and the apostles.

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serve of you the good of existing. And what about the beginning of the spiritual creation? Did it deserve from you at least a state of flux in darkness like the abyss, and unlike you?—unless it was converted by the same Word to the one who made it; and was enlightened by him, and became a light itself (although not equal, nonetheless still conformed to that form which is equal with you). Just as, for a body, being is not the same as being beautiful (otherwise being ugly would be impossible) so too for a created spirit living is not the same as living wisely (otherwise it would be immutably wise). But for such a being it is good to cleave to you constantly, so that it does not lose, by backsliding, the light that it has gained by conversion,⁶ reverting to a life like the shadowy abyss. Even we who are a spiritual creation in respect of our souls, have turned away from you, our Light; and in that previous life we have been sometimes shadows toiling in the remnants of our own darkness, until, in your only Son, we become your righteousness like the mountains of God: for once we were your judgments, like the great abyss.⁷

3. (4) I think it is not inappropriate to your spiritual creation, that declaration of yours in the first moments of creation, "let there be light, and there was light."⁸ For there was already a certain kind of life, for you to enlighten. But just as it did not deserve from you the kind of life that could receive enlightenment, neither—now that it had such a life—did it deserve from you such enlighten-

Phil 2:6;
Rom 8:29

Jn 8:12
Eph 5:8
2 Cor 5:21

Ps 36:6

Gn 1:3

⁸ This may be the first extant Scripture text to be cited by a "pagan" writer, pseudo-Longinus, *On the Sublime* 9.9.

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ruit te ut inluminaretur. neque enim eius infirmitas placeret tibi si non lux fieret, non existendo sed intuendo inluminantem lucem eique cohaerendo, ut et quod utcumque vivit et quod beate vivit non deberet nisi gratiae tuae, conversa per commutationem meliorem ad id quod neque in melius neque in deterius mutari potest. quod tu solus es, quia solus simpliciter es, cui non est aliud vivere, aliud beate vivere, quia tua beatitudo es.⁶

4. (5) Quid ergo tibi deesset ad bonum, quod tu tibi es, etiamsi ista vel omnino nulla essent vel informia remanerent quae non ex indigentia fecisti sed ex plenitudine bonitatis tuae, cohibens atque convertens ad formam, non ut tamquam tuum gaudium compleatur ex eis? perfecto enim tibi displicet eorum imperfectio, ut ex te perficiantur et tibi placeant, non autem imperfecto, tamquam et tu eorum perfectione perficiendus sis. spiritus enim tuus bonus superferebatur super aquas, non ferebatur ab eis tamquam in eis requiesceret. in quibus enim requiescere dicitur spiritus tuus, hos in se requiescere facit. sed superferebatur incorruptibilis et incommutabilis voluntas tua, ipsa in se sibi sufficiens, super eam quam feceras vitam. cui non hoc est vivere quod beate vivere, quia vivit etiam fluitans in obscuritate sua; cui restat converti ad eum a quo facta est, et magis magisque vivere apud fontem vitae, et

⁶ *es codd. edd.: tu es codd. al. Maur.*

⁹ Or perhaps "integrity"; what matters is oneness: see Plotinus, *Enn.* 5.4.1, "There must be something antecedent to all other things; and this thing is simplicity" (*ἀπλοῦν τοῦτο*).

¹⁰ *perfecto*: encapsulates completeness wholeness, integrity.

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ment. Its shapelessness would not have been pleasing to you unless it was made light—not just in virtue of its existing, but because of its contemplating the light that was enlightening it, and cleaving to it. And it owed the fact that it was alive at all, and the fact that it was living a life of bliss, to your grace alone, after being converted by a change for the better toward that being which can never be changed either for better or for worse. You alone are like this (because you alone are absolute simplicity⁹): to you, it is not one thing to live, and another to live in bliss—because you are bliss itself.

4. (5) What, then, would be lacking to the Good that you are to yourself? Even if all those things never came into being, or remained unshaped (the things that you made, not because you needed to, but out of the fullness of your goodness, holding them together and changing them by giving them definite shape), it was not as if your joy could be fulfilled by them. Because you are perfect,¹⁰ their imperfection is displeasing to you, and so you perfect them and then they do please you. It was not that you were imperfect and were perfecting yourself by perfecting them. Your good Spirit was itself moving over the waters; it was not being supported by the waters as if resting upon them. After all, when we say that your Spirit rests upon people, it means that he makes them rest in himself. But your incorruptible and unchangeable will, which is itself sufficient in itself, for itself, was moving over the life that you had created. To that life, living is not the same as living in bliss, because it lives in a state of flux, in its own darkness. It is left to be converted to him who made it, and to live more and more closely to the wellspring of life, and in

Gn 1:2

1 Pt 1:4, 23

Ps 36:9

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in lumine eius videre lumen, et perfici et inlustrari et beari.

5. (6) Ecce apparet mihi in aenigmate trinitas quod es, deus meus, quoniam tu, pater, in principio sapientiae nostrae, quod est tua sapientia de te nata, aequalis tibi et coaeterna, id est in filio tuo, fecisti caelum et terram. et multa diximus de caelo caeli et de terra invisibili et incomposita et de abyssio tenebrosa secundum spiritalis informitatis vagabunda deliquia, nisi converteretur ad eum a quo erat qualiscumque vita et inlustratione fieret speciosa vita et esset caelum caeli eius, quod inter aquam et aquam postea factum est. et tenebam iam patrem in dei nomine, qui fecit haec, et filium in principii nomine, in quo fecit haec, et trinitatem credens deum meum, sicut credebam, quaerebam in eloquiis sanctis eius, et ecce spiritus tuus superferebatur super aquas. ecce trinitas deus meus, pater et filius et spiritus sanctus, creator universae creaturae.

6. (7) Sed quae causa fuerat—o lumen veridicum, tibi admoveo cor meum, ne me vana doceat; discute tenebras eius et dic mihi, obsecro te per matrem caritatem, obsecro

¹¹ Cf. *Gn. Litt.* 1.4.9, "In the words of Scripture—'God said, let there be'—we comprehend an incorporeal utterance (*dictum*) of God in the substance of his co-eternal Word that calls back to itself the imperfection of creation, so that is it no longer shapeless, but shaped." OD: "N. B. *magis magisque* ['more and more']: conversion as continuing process (a lingering-out sweet skill: G. M. Hopkins), not once-for-all lightning stroke."

¹² GM refer to Ambrose, "We agree with the opinion of the saints and the faithful, and accept the Holy Spirit, so that in the governance of the world the working of the Trinity may shine forth" (*Hexaem.* 1.8.29).

¹³ See *Conf.* 12.2.2, n. 2.

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his light to see light, and to be completed and enlightened and blessed.¹¹

5. (6) Look! I begin to see in a dark figure that you are Trinity,¹² O my God. In the beginning of our wisdom (which is your Wisdom, born of you, equal and coeternal with you), namely in your Son, you, Father, made heaven and earth. We have already spoken at length of the heaven of heavens,¹³ and the earth invisible and unstructured, and the abyss, darkened by the unsteady flux of its spiritual shapelessness until it converted to him who gave it such existence as it had: and by a process of enlightenment it became a beautiful life and was that heaven of heavens that was made between the upper and lower waters. I had already grasped that "Father" was a name for God who made these things, and that "Son" was a name for the "Beginning" in whom he made these things; and believing that my God was Trinity (as indeed I did believe), I began to look among his holy sayings, and look—there was your Spirit, moving upon the face of the waters! Look! My God is Trinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, creator of the whole creation! 1 Cor 13:12
Gn 1:6

6. (7) But what had been the reason? O truth-telling Light, I turn my heart to you to stop it teaching me vanity. Disperse its shadows and tell me, I pray you, through Love, our mother:¹⁴ I pray you, tell me what was the rea-

¹⁴ "The Holy Spirit is something common to the Father and the Son, whatever it is; or it is their actual communion, which is consubstantial and coeternal. It may be helpful to call this 'friendship,' but 'love' (*caritas*) is a better name" (*Trin.* 6.5.7). See also *En. Ps.* 147.14 (on Ps 147:13), "Those holy children now praise and rejoice; for love, their mother, labored and gave birth to them; and they are embraced by love that binds." Cf. *Cat. Rud.* 15.23.

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te, dic mihi, quae causa fuerat, ut post nominatum caelum et terram invisibilem et incompositam et tenebras super abyssum tum demum scriptura tua nominaret spiritum tuum? an quia oportebat sic eum insinuari, ut diceretur superferre? non posset hoc dici nisi prius illud commemoraretur cui superferri spiritus tuus posset intellegi. nec patri enim nec filio superferebatur nec superferri recte diceretur, si nulli rei superferretur. prius ergo dicendum erat cui superferretur, et deinde ille quem non oportebat aliter commemorari nisi ut superferri diceretur. cur ergo aliter eum insinuari non oportebat, nisi ut superferri diceretur?

7. (8) Iam⁷ hinc sequatur qui potest intellectu apostolum tuum dicentem quia caritas tua diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis, et de spiritalibus docentem et demonstrantem supereminentem viam caritatis et flectentem genua pro nobis ad te, ut cognoscamus supereminentem scientiam caritatis Christi. ideoque ab initio supereminens superferebatur super aquas. cui dicam, quomodo dicam de pondere cupiditatis in abruptam abyssum et de sublevatione caritatis per spiritum tuum, qui superferebatur super aquas? cui dicam? quomodo dicam? neque enim loca sunt quibus mergimur et emergimus. quid similius et quid dissimilius? affectus

⁷ Iam *om.* S

¹⁵ OD: "A.'s texts waffle between 'love of knowledge' (*scientiae caritatem*) and 'knowledge of love' (*scientiam caritatis*)." In Eph 3:19 the idea is "the love of Christ that transcends knowledge" (in both Greek and Vg); A. gives a different reading, as translated here.

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son why only after the naming of heaven, and the earth invisible and unstructured, and the darkness over the abyss, that your Scripture finally named your Spirit? Was it because he had to be introduced carefully, to be depicted as "moving above"? This could not be stated until something else was described first, something for your Spirit to be understood as moving above. He was not moving above the Father or the Son, and it would make no sense to say that he was "moving above" if nothing was in existence for him to be moving above it. So it was first necessary to state what he was moving above, and only then to mention the Spirit himself—and it was not appropriate to record him in any other way than as "moving above." But why would it be inappropriate to introduce him in any other way than by saying he was "moving above"?

Gn 1:1-2

7. (8) Now let those with the capacity to understand follow your apostle who says that love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us, and who teaches us in spiritual matters, and shows the supreme way of love, and kneels before you on our behalf, praying that we may come to understand the overwhelming knowledge that is the love of Christ.¹⁵ So from the beginning he was moving supreme above the waters. Whom shall I tell? How shall I tell of desire dragging us down into the precipitous abyss, and about love carrying us back up by your Spirit as it moved over the waters? Whom shall I tell? How shall I tell them? For they are not actual places where we are submerged, and from which we emerge: what could be more like, and yet more unlike? They are emotions, they are loves: first the impu-

Rom 5:5

1 Cor 12:31

1 Cor 12:1
Eph 3:14

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sunt, amores sunt, immunditia spiritus nostri defluens inferius amore curarum et sanctitas tui attollens nos superius amore securitatis, ut sursum cor habeamus ad te, ubi spiritus tuus superfertur super aquas, et veniamus ad supereminentem requiem, cum pertransierit anima nostra aquas quae sunt sine substantia.

8. (9) Defluxit angelus, defluxit anima hominis et indicaverunt abyssum universae spiritalis creaturae in profundo tenebroso, nisi dixisses ab initio, "fiat lux," et facta esset lux, et inhaereret tibi omnis oboediens intelligentia caelestis civitatis tuae et requiesceret in spiritu tuo, qui superfertur incommutabiliter super omne mutabile. alioquin et ipsum caelum caeli tenebrosa abyssus esset in se; nunc autem lux est in domino. nam et in ipsa misera inquietudine defluentium spirituum et indicantium tenebras suas nudatas veste luminis tui, satis ostendis quam magnam rationalem creaturam feceris, cui nullo modo sufficit ad beatam requiem quidquid te minus est, ac per hoc nec ipsa sibi. tu enim, deus noster, inluminabis tenebras nostras: ex te oriuntur vestimenta nostra, et tenebrae nostrae sicut meridies erunt. da mihi te, deus meus, redde mihi te. en amo et, si parum est, amem validius. non pos-

¹⁶ *Sursum corda*, from the introductory formula from the liturgy of the eucharist; cf. *Conf.* 12.16.23, n 41.

¹⁷ *Aquas . . . substantia*: Vg has the equally puzzling "proud water" (*aquam intolerabilem*). The Hebrew (*zēydoniyim*) means "raging."

¹⁸ *defluxit*: the same verb is translated as "discharging downward" in *Conf.* 13.7.8 and "is the downward flux" later in *Conf.*

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urity of our spirit discharging downward because of our love for being preoccupied, and then the holiness which is proper to you lifting us up above, through the love of freedom from cares. And then let us lift up our hearts¹⁶ to you, where your Spirit is moving above the waters; and let us come to that supreme rest when our soul has passed through the insubstantial waters.¹⁷ Ps 124:5

8. (9) Down fell the angel, down fell¹⁸ the human soul: and showed the abyss there for the whole spiritual creation in that deep darkness—had you not said from the beginning, “let there be light,” and there was light, and then every obedient intelligence in your heavenly city cleaved to you, and found rest in your Spirit, who moves unchangingly above all that is subject to change. Otherwise even the actual heaven of heavens would be a dark abyss in itself; whereas now it is light in the Lord. For in that wretched restlessness that is the downward flux of spirits revealing their own shadows, once they are stripped of your clothing of light, you prove how remarkable and rational a creation you have made; for it finds nothing less than you at all adequate to provide blessed rest, and so not even itself. But you, our God, will lighten our darkness: from you originates our clothing of light¹⁹ and even our darkness will be bright as the noonday. Give yourself to me, O my God, give yourself back to me. You see, I do love you, and if it is too little, let my love become stronger. I Eph 5:8 Is 58:10

13.8.9. No English verb so combines downward direction, fluid composition, and moral negativity.

¹⁹ Picking up the “clothing of light” from the previous sentence. Cf. Mt 17:2, Rv 7:13, etc.

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sum metiri, ut sciam quantum desit mihi amoris ad id quod sat est, ut currat vita mea in amplexus tuos, nec avertatur donec abscondatur in abscondito vultus tui. hoc tantum scio, quia male mihi est praeter te non solum extra me sed et in me ipso, et omnis mihi copia quae deus meus non est egestas est.

9. (10) Numquid aut pater aut filius non superferebatur super aquas? si tamquam loco sicut corpus, nec spiritus sanctus; si autem incommutabilis divinitatis eminentia super omne mutabile, et pater et filius et spiritus sanctus superferebatur super aquas. cur ergo tantum de spiritu tuo dictum est hoc? cur de illo tantum dictum⁸ est quasi locus ubi esset, qui non est locus, de quo solo dictum est quod sit donum tuum?

In dono tuo requiescimus: ibi te fruimur. requies nostra locus noster. amor illuc attollit nos et spiritus tuus bonus exaltat humilitatem nostram de portis mortis. in bona voluntate pax nobis est. corpus pondere suo nititur ad locum suum. pondus non ad ima tantum est, sed ad locum suum. ignis sursum tendit, deorsum lapis; ponderibus suis aguntur, loca sua petunt. oleum infra aquam fustum super aquam attollitur, aqua supra oleum fusa infra oleum demergitur; ponderibus suis aguntur, loca sua pe-

⁸ dictum *codd. edd.*: dictus *S*

²⁰ Cf. *Trin.* 15.18.32, "The love (*dilectio*) that is from God, and that is God, is rightly the Holy Spirit, and through it the love (*caritas*) of God is shed abroad (*diffunditur*) in our hearts, that love through which the whole Trinity dwells in us; so the Holy Spirit, although it is God, is very properly called the gift of God."

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cannot measure it, to know how much I fall short of a proper degree of love, such that my life hurries right into your embrace, and does not deviate until it is hidden in the hiding place that is your presence. But this I do know: things go badly for me apart from you, both within me and without, and whatever rich abundance I possess that is not my God is nothing but poverty.

Ps 31:20

9. (10) Were not both the Father and the Son also "moving above the waters"? If this means like bodies in a physical space, then neither was the Holy Spirit; but if the unchangeable supremacy of the divine nature transcends all that is mutable, then Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit were all moving above the waters. Why then is this said only of the Holy Spirit? Why is this only predicated of him, as though it was a place where he was to be found—though in truth it is not a place, and of him alone is it predicated that he is your gift?²⁰

Acts 2:38,
8:20

We find rest in that gift of yours, and there we enjoy you. Our rest is where we belong. Love sublimates us to that place, and your good Spirit lifts up our lowliness from the gates of death. In having goodwill²¹ do we find peace. Under its own weight a body gravitates to its proper place; that gravitation is not always downward, but rather to that proper place. Fire's natural path is upward, that of stone is downward: they have their own gravitational impetus, they make for their proper place. When oil is poured under water, it rises above the water's surface; when water is poured onto oil, it sinks below the oil: they have their own gravitational impetus, they make for their proper place.

Ps 143:10

Ps 9:13

Lk 2:14

²¹ Some take the "goodwill" as God's, here and at the end of this section, rather than humanity's.

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tunt. minus ordinata inquieta sunt; ordinantur et quiescunt.

Pondus meum amor meus; eo feror, quocumque feror. dono tuo accendimur et sursum ferimur; inardescimus et imus. ascendimus ascensiones in corde et cantamus canticum graduum. igne tuo, igne tuo bono inardescimus et imus, quoniam sursum imus ad pacem Hierusalem, quoniam iucundatus sum in his qui dixerunt mihi, "in domum domini ibimus." ibi nos conlocabit⁹ voluntas bona, ut nihil velimus aliud quam permanere illic in aeternum.

10. (11) Beata creatura quae non novit aliud, cum esset ipsa aliud, nisi dono tuo, quod superfertur super omne mutabile, mox ut facta est attolleretur nullo intervallo temporis in ea vocatione qua dixisti, "fiat lux," et fieret lux. in nobis enim distinguitur tempore, quod tenebrae fuimus et lux efficimur;¹⁰ in illa vero dictum est quid esset; nisi inluminaretur, et ita dictum est, quasi prius fuerit fluxa et tenebrosa, ut appareret causa qua factum est ut aliter esset, id est ut ad lumen indeficiens conversa lux esset.

Qui potest intellegat, a te petat. ut quid mihi molestus est, quasi ego inluminem ullum hominem venientem in hunc mundum?

⁹ conlocabit *codd. edd.*: conlocavit G O V P Maur.

¹⁰ efficimur *codd. edd.*: efficiemur S

²² The Holy Spirit is associated in Scripture with fire, as well as love (e.g., Acts 2:3).

²³ "Song of ascents" is a title given to Psalms 120–34, probably as pilgrim hymns for those climbing up to the holy city.

²⁴ Hebrew nouns are not declined if quoted in Latin; *Hierusalem* here would be genitive.

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What is out of its proper place is restless; once in its proper place it finds rest.

My love is my gravitational force; wherever I am carried, it is love that carries me. By your gift we are enkindled and borne upward, we begin to glow with fire, and up we go.²² We climb the steps in our heart and we sing a song of ascent.²³ By your fire, your good fire, we begin to glow with fire, and up we go, for we are climbing upward to the peace of Jerusalem;²⁴ for I was glad at those who said to me, We shall go into the house of the Lord. There a good will shall find us a home, so that we have nothing to wish for other than to remain there for ever.

Ps 84:5^{vs}

Ps 122:1

Ps 61:7

10. (11) Blessed is the created realm²⁵ that knew nothing else, although it might have been something else but for your gift, the Spirit, which moved above all that is changeable. As soon as it was made, with no passage of time, it was sublimated by your calling, and saying, "Let there be light," and it became light. In our case there was a shift in time, for we were once darkness, and now we are made light. But in the case of the creation, it was stated what it would be if it had not been enlightened; and it was stated in such a way—as if formerly it had been darksome and in flux—to make clear why it was made to be different: that is, so that it would be converted to the never-failing light, and would itself be light.

Let those who can, understand this; let them ask you questions. Why do they trouble me as if I were able to enlighten any human being who comes into the world?

Gal 6:17

Jn 1:9

²⁵ The "heaven of heavens." The question at the end of this paragraph shows that A.'s struggles to understand match the reader's.

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11. (12) Trinitatem omnipotentem quis intellet? et quis non loquitur eam, si tamen eam? rara anima quae, cum¹¹ de illa loquitur, scit quod loquitur. et contendunt et dimicant, et nemo sine pace videt istam visionem. vellem ut haec tria cogitarent homines in se ipsis: longe aliud sunt ista tria quam illa trinitas, sed dico ubi se exercent et probent et sentiant quam longe sunt. dico autem haec tria: esse, nosse, velle. sum enim et scio et volo. sum sciens et volens, et scio esse me et velle,¹² et volo esse et scire. in his igitur tribus quam sit inseparabilis vita et una vita et una mens et una essentia, quam denique inseparabilis distinctio et tamen distinctio, videat qui potest. certe coram se est; attendat in se et videat et dicat mihi. sed cum inveniit in his aliquid et dixerit, non iam se putet invenisse illud quod supra ista est incommutabile, quod est incommutabiliter et scit incommutabiliter et vult incommutabiliter.

Et utrum propter tria haec et ibi trinitas, an in singulis haec tria, ut terna singulorum sint, an utrumque miris

¹¹ quae cum *O Maur. Ver.*: quaecumque *S G Knöll Skut.*

¹² velle *codd. edd.*: ut sim *add. C D G P*

²⁶ Concise to the point of obscurity. Cf. *Conf.* 1.4.4.

²⁷ OD notes this as an "explicit statement within *Conf.* of A.'s doctrine of triadic reflection of God in creature." Cf. *De civ. D.* 11.26: "We recognize in ourselves the image of God (nothing God has made comes closer in nature), that is the supreme Trinity; still awaiting reformation to perfect it, to make it the closest resemblance of it."

²⁸ GM list psychological triads used by A., most notably *Trin.* 14.12.15, "This trinity of the mind is not the image of God be-

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11. (12) Who can understand the almighty Trinity? Who does not speak of it—if it is actually the Trinity that is spoken of?²⁶ There are not many souls that know what they are talking about when they talk of the Trinity. Still they dispute and do battle; yet no one devoid of peace beholds that vision. I wish people would meditate upon the triad within themselves:²⁷ such a triad is far removed from that Trinity, but I am stating it as a topic for them to occupy themselves and investigate and feel how far from it they are. This is the triad I mean: to be, to know, and to will.²⁸ For I am, and I know, and I love. I exist knowingly and willingly. I know that I exist and have a will; and I am willing to exist and to know. Let those who can, see how there is in these three an indissoluble life: and one life, and one mind, and one being²⁹—in conclusion an distinctness that is inseparable, yes, but still distinct. Surely it is self-evident to people: let them scrutinize themselves and observe, and tell me. But when they find something of the kind therein, and say so, they must not think that they have found that which is on high and unchangeable: which exists unchangeably, and knows unchangeably, and wills unchangeably.

As for whether this triad³⁰ is the foundation of that Trinity; or whether the triad exists in each of the Three,

cause the mind remembers itself, and comprehends, and loves itself, but because it can also remember, and comprehend, and love the one who made it.”

²⁹ *Essentia*: the word is very rare until western Christian writers adopt it for theological purposes as equivalent to the Greek *ousia* (οὐσία). Cf. *Conf.* 13.16.19.

³⁰ Being, knowledge, will.

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modis simpliciter et multipliciter infinito in se sibi fine, quo est et sibi notum est et sibi sufficit incommutabiliter idipsum copiosa unitatis magnitudine, quis facile cogitaverit? quis ullo modo dixerit? quis quolibet modo temere pronuntiaverit?

12. (13) Procede in confessione,¹³ fides mea; dic domino deo¹⁴ tuo, "sancte, sancte, sancte, domine deus meus, in nomine tuo baptizati sumus, pater et fili et spiritus sancte, in nomine tuo baptizamus, pater et fili et spiritus sancte," quia et apud nos in Christo suo fecit deus caelum et terram, spirituales et carnales ecclesiae suae. et terra nostra antequam acciperet formam doctrinae invisibilis erat et incomposita, et ignorantiae tenebris tegebamur, quoniam pro iniquitate erudisti hominem, et iudicia tua sicut multa abyssus. sed quia spiritus tuus superferebatur super aquam, non reliquit miseriam nostram misericordia tua, et dixisti, "fiat lux"; "paenitentiam agite, appropinquavit enim regnum caelorum."

"Paenitentiam agite"; "fiat lux." et quoniam conturbata

¹³ confessione *codd. edd.*: confessionem G

¹⁴ deo *om. S*

³¹ Who indeed? A very compressed sentence, ending with an oxymoron (*copiosa . . . magnitudine*).

³² Here the exegesis of Genesis is seen as imaging the action of the Spirit in the Church.

³³ The switch between singular and plural first-person address mirrors A. thinking of himself as an individual, and as part of the body of Christ.

³⁴ Cf. A. *Gn. Litt.* 2.4, "[In Scripture] the terms 'heaven' and 'earth' often signify the spiritual and carnal persons in the

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so that each of the Persons possesses all three; or whether both are true in an extraordinary way, of them as individual Persons and as a complexity, because of the boundary within themselves which is yet unbounded in respect of itself—so that the Trinity exists, and knows itself, and is sufficient in itself as being unchangeably the same, by reason of the abundant breadth of diversity in its unity: who can easily grasp that?³¹ Who can find a way to speak of it? Who will presume to make any kind of pronouncements about it?

12. (13) Proceed to your confession, my faith:³² say to the Lord your God, "Holy, holy, holy, O Lord my God, in your name we have been baptized, Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, in your name we administer baptism, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."³³ This is because God has made heaven and earth among us by his Christ; that is, the spiritual and carnal people of his Church.³⁴ The earth of which we are made was invisible and unstructured before it received its shape through instruction; and we were shrouded in shadows of ignorance, because you imparted teaching to people, and your judgments are like the great abyss. But because your Spirit was moving over the water, your mercy did not abandon us in our wretchedness, and you said, "Let there be light"; "repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."³⁵

"Repent." "Let there be light." Because our soul was

Church" (*coeli et terrae nomine saepe in Ecclesia spirituales carnalesque significantur*).

³⁵ The first verse quoted represents Creation in the beginning, the second represents re-creation, through baptism and the incarnate Word. Cf. Heb 6:4 for baptism as enlightenment.

Is 6:3; Rv 4:8

Mt 28:19

Ps 39:11^{VL}

Ps 35:7

Gn 1:2-3

Mt 3:2, 4:17

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erat ad nos ipsos anima nostra, commemorati sumus tui, domine, de terra Iordanis et de monte aequali tibi sed parvo propter nos, et displicuerunt nobis tenebrae nostrae, et conversi sumus ad te, et facta est lux. et ecce fuimus aliquando tenebrae, nunc autem lux in domino.

13: (14) Et tamen adhuc per fidem, nondum per speciem: spe enim salvi facti sumus. spes autem quae videtur non est spes. adhuc abyssus abyssum invocat, sed iam in voce cataractarum tuarum. adhuc et ille qui dicit, "non potui vobis loqui quasi spiritalibus, sed quasi carnalibus," etiam ipse nondum se arbitratur comprehendisse, et quae retro oblitus, in ea quae ante sunt extenditur et ingemescit gravatus, et sitit anima eius ad deum vivum, quemadmodum cervi ad fontes aquarum, et dicit, "quando veniam?" habitaculum suum, quod de caelo est, superindui cupiens, et vocat inferiorem abyssum dicens, "nolite conformari huic saeculo, sed reformamini in novitate mentis vestrae," et, "nolite pueri effici mentibus, sed malitia parvuli estote, ut mentibus perfecti sitis," et, "o stulti Galatae, quis vos fascinavit?"

Sed iam non in voce sua; in tua enim, qui misisti spiritum tuum de excelsis per eum qui ascendit in altum et aperuit cataractas donorum suorum, ut fluminis impetus laetificarent¹⁵ civitatem tuam. illi enim suspirat sponsi

¹⁵ laetificarent *codd.* Knöll *GM Ver:* laetificaret *G O² P V Maur*

³⁶ The contrast is between the eternal Word (Phil 2:6) and the incarnate Christ. In *Div. Qu.* 61.6, A. notes, "Christ is frequently called a mountain in Scripture" (e.g., Is 2:2).

³⁷ This paragraph is a virtual panegyric of Paul.

³⁸ Not the primeval abyss. A. interprets this abyss elsewhere as the human heart (*En. Ps.* 41.13.8): "Deep calls to deep" means

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troubled within us, we remembered you, Lord, from the land of Jordan and from the mountain that is your equal but small for our sakes.³⁶ and we were displeased with our darkness, and we were converted to you, and there was light. And look! Once we were darkness, but now we are light in the Lord.

13. (14) Yet all this is still by faith, not sight; for we have been saved by hope.³⁷ But hope that is seen is not hope. Nevertheless deep calls to deep³⁸ but now in the voice of your waterfalls. And even he who says, "I could not address you as spiritual people, but only as carnal," even he considers that he does not yet understand. Instead, forgetting what is behind, he reaches out to what is ahead of him; he groans under his burdens, and his soul thirsts for the living God, like deer at the water springs, and he says, "When shall I arrive?" He is eager to be clothed in his heavenly habitation; he calls out to the deep that is below him, saying, "do not be conformed to this age, but be reformed by the renewing of your minds," and, "do not become children in mind, but rather be as little ones where malice is concerned, so that your minds may be perfected," and, "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?"

But he³⁹ is no longer speaking with his own voice. He is speaking with yours, for you sent your Spirit from on high through him who ascended on high and opened the floodgates of his gifts, so that the torrent of the river would bring gladness to your city. This man, the Bridegroom's

one person calls to another. Thus wisdom is learned, thus faith is learned, when 'deep calls to deep.'" (*Abyssus abyssum invocat, homo hominem. Sic discitur sapientia, sic discitur fides, cum abyssus abyssum invocat*).

³⁹ Still Paul.

Ps 42:6

Ps 51:13

Eph 5:8

2 Cor 5:7

Rom 8:24

Ps 42:7

1 Cor 3:1

Phil 3:13

2 Cor 5:3

Ps 42:1-2

2 Cor 5:2

Rom 12:12;
1 Cor 14:20;
Gal 3:1

Ws 9:17

Gn 7:11; Ps
46:4; Mal
3:10

Jn 3:29

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amicus, habens iam spiritus primitias penes eum, sed adhuc in semet ipso ingemescens, adoptionem expectans, redemptionem corporis sui. illi suspirat (membrum est enim sponsae) et illi zelat (amicus est enim sponsi); illi zelat non sibi, quia in voce cataractarum tuarum, non in voce sua, invocat alteram abyssum, cui zelans timet ne sicut serpens Evam decepit astutia sua, sic et eorum sensus corrumpantur a castitate quae est in sponso nostro, unico tuo. quae est illa speciei lux? cum videbimus eum sicuti est, et transierint lacrimae, quae mihi factae sunt panis die ac nocte, dum dicitur mihi cotidie, "ubi est deus tuus?"

14. (15) Et ego dico, "deus meus ubi es?"¹⁶ ecce ubi es. respiro in te paululum, cum effundo super me animam meam in voce exultationis et confessionis, soni festivitatem celebrantis. et adhuc tristis est, quia relabitur et fit abyssus, vel potius sentit adhuc se esse abyssum. dicit ei fides mea, quam accendisti in nocte ante pedes meos, "quare tristis es, anima,¹⁷ et quare conturbas me? spera in domino." lucerna pedibus tuis verbum eius. spera et persevera, donec transeat nox, mater iniquorum, donec transeat ira domini, cuius filii et nos fuimus aliquando tenebrae, quarum residua trahimus in corpore propter peccatum mortuo, donec aspiet dies et removeantur umbrae. spera in domino; mane astabo et contemplantor; semper confitebor illi.

¹⁶ es *Ver.*: est *S Knöll*

¹⁷ anima *add.* mea *codd. edd.*

⁴⁰ I.e., the Church.

⁴¹ A. sees in this a form of mystical striving upward; cf. *En. Ps.* 41.8.5. Vg substitutes "in" for "above."

⁴² Slight paraphrase; the Latin is elliptical.

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friend, sighs for Christ, and already has the firstfruits of the Spirit within him; but still within himself he groans, as he awaits the adoption, which is the redemption of his body. He sighs for him (for he is a member of her who is the bride⁴⁰), he is jealous for him (for he is the Bridegroom's friend); he is jealous for Christ, not for himself, because he calls to the other deep in the voice of your waterfalls, not in his own voice. He is jealously protective of those who are there, for fear that as the serpent deceived Eve by its cunning, their senses will be corrupted from that pure state which is proper to our Bridegroom, your only Son. What is this light of beauty, when we shall see him as he is? As for the tears which have been my bread day and night, while they daily say to me, "Where is your God?"—those tears have passed away.

14. (15) I too say, "Where are you, O my God?" but look—here you are. In you I recover myself a little, when I pour out my soul above myself ⁴¹ in a voice of rejoicing and confession, the sound of someone celebrating a festival. But still my soul is sad, because it relapses and becomes an abyss once more—or rather it feels that it still remains an abyss. My faith, which you kindled in the nighttime to light the way before my feet,⁴² says to it, "Why are you sad, O soul, and why do you trouble me? Put your hope in the Lord. His Word is a lantern for your feet. Hope and endure, until the night passes (night is the mother of evildoers), until the Lord's anger passes; we are children of that anger, but once we were darkness, and we bear the marks of it on our bodies, which are dead because of sin, until the day dawns and the shadows are dispelled. Hope in the Lord; in the morning I shall stand before him and gaze upon him, I shall make confession to him for ever."

Rom 8:23

Rv 21:2, 9

2 Cor 11:3

1 Jn 3:2

Ps 42:3

Jb 32:20

Ps 42:4^{VL}

Ps 42:4

Ps 42:5

Is 26:20

Eph 2:3

Rom 8:10

Sg 2:17

Ps 5:3

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Mane astabo et videbo salutare vultus mei, deum meum, qui vivificabit et mortalia corpora nostra propter spiritum, qui habitat in nobis, quia super interius nostrum tenebrosum et fluvidum misericorditer superferebatur. unde in hac peregrinatione pignus accepimus, ut iam simus lux, dum adhuc spe salvi facti sumus et filii lucis et filii diei, non filii noctis neque tenebrarum, quod tamen fuimus. inter quos et nos in isto adhuc incerto humanae notitiae tu solus dividis, qui probas corda nostra, et vocas lucem diem et tenebras noctem. quis enim nos discernit nisi tu? quid autem habemus quod non accepimus a te, ex eadem massa vasa in honorem ex qua sunt et alia facta in contumeliam?

15. (16) Aut quis nisi tu, deus noster, fecisti nobis firmiter auctoritatis super nos in scriptura tua divina? caelum enim plicabitur ut liber et nunc sicut pellis extenditur super nos. sublimioris enim auctoritatis est tua divina scriptura, cum iam obierunt istam mortem illi mortales per quos eam dispensasti nobis. et tu scis, domine, tu scis, quemadmodum pellibus indueris homines, cum peccato mortales fierent. unde sicut pellem extendisti firmiter auctoritatis libri tui, concordet utique sermones tuos, quos per mortalium ministerium superposuisti nobis. namque

⁴³ *vultus*: "face" stands for the person, or character.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Conf.* 12.8.8, n. 14.

⁴⁵ Cf. the iteration of "I do not know" in the next paragraph.

⁴⁶ Thinking figuratively. The sky stands for Scripture; the stretched-out skins (as in the process of tanning animal hides) signify the extension of the Scriptures through time and space. Cf. *En. Ps.* 103.1.8, "Jeremiah is dead, and all the prophets are dead; and because the words of those dead prophets were not

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In the morning I shall stand before him, and I shall behold the salvation of my countenance,⁴³ that is, my God; and he will bring life to our mortal bodies by the Spirit who dwells in us, because in its mercy it moved over the darksome flux which is our inner selves. As a result, on our pilgrim journey we have received a pledge that we are now light, while as yet we have been saved in hope, and are children of light, and children of the day, not children of night and shadow, as we were before. You alone distinguish between the children of darkness and us, since the state of human knowledge is still so unreliable; you delve into our hearts, and you call the light "day" and the shadows, "night." After all, who can judge between us if not you? What do we possess which is not your gift—vessels for honorable use from the same lump of clay from which other vessels are also formed, but for ignominious use?

Ps 43:5

Rom 8:11

2 Cor 1:22,
5:5

Rom 8:24

1 Thes 5:5

1 Cor 4:7

Rom 9:21

15. (16) Again, who if not you, our God, made for us an authoritative firmament⁴⁴ above us in the form of your holy Scripture? For heaven will be rolled up like a book, though now it is stretched out above us like a skin. Your holy Scripture has a higher authority, since those mortals you used as channels for bestowing it on us have submitted to death. And you know, Lord, you know⁴⁵ how you have clothed humanity in skins when—by reason of their sin—they became subject to death.⁴⁶ So, like a skin, you stretched out the firmament that is your book, your words to us that are in perfect concord, which you have set in authority over us through the ministry of mortal beings.

Gn 1:7

Is 34:4

Ps 104:2

Jn 21:15-17

Gn 3:21

their own but were delivered through them, though they belonged to him who 'stretched out the heaven like a skin,' their words remain for generations yet to come."

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ipsa eorum morte solidamentum auctoritatis in eloquiis tuis per eos editis sublimiter extenditur super omnia quae subter sunt, quod, cum hic viverent, non ita sublimiter extentum erat. nondum sicut pellem caelum extenderas, nondum mortis eorum famam usquequaque dilataveras.

(17) Videamus, domine, caelos, opera digitorum tuorum; disserena oculis nostris nubilum quo subtexisti eos. ibi est testimonium tuum sapientiam praestans parvulis. perface, deus meus, laudem tuam ex ore infantium et lactantium.¹⁸ neque enim novimus alios libros ita destruentes superbiam, ita destruentes inimicum et defensorem resistantem reconciliationi tuae defendendo peccata sua. non novi, domine, non novi alia tam casta eloquia, quae sic mihi persuaderent confessionem et lenirent cervicem meam iugo tuo et invitarent colere te gratis. intellegam ea, pater bone, da mihi hoc subterposito, quia subterpositis solidasti ea.

(18) Sunt aliae aquae super hoc firmamentum, credo, immortales et a terrena corruptione secretae. laudent nomen tuum, laudent te supercaelestes populi angelorum tuorum, qui non opus habent suspicere firmamentum hoc et legendo cognoscere verbum tuum. vident enim faciem tuam semper, et ibi legunt sine syllabis temporum quid velit aeterna voluntas tua. legunt eligunt et diligunt; semper legunt et numquam praeterit quod legunt. eligendo

¹⁸ lactantium *codd. edd.*: lactentium G M Maur.

⁴⁷ Continuing the metaphor; A. means, "let us understand the Scriptures." ⁴⁸ A. takes these as a figure for the angels as not needing Scripture.

⁴⁹ *sine syllabis temporum*: elliptical.

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By their very death the firm foundation of authority in your scriptures—which they produced—was extended on high, above all that is below. This was because it was neither so sublime nor so all-embracing while they still lived. You had not yet stretched out the heavens like a skin; nor had you yet spread the fame of their deaths far and wide.

(17) Let us behold the heavens, Lord, the works of your fingers.⁴⁷ Clear away from our eyes the cloud under which you have hidden them. There is your evidence, which equips little ones with wisdom. From the mouths of babes and sucklings, O my God, bring your praise to perfection. We know of no other books so capable of bringing down pride, of bringing down the enemy, the defender who—by defending his own sins—refuses to give in and be reconciled to you. I do not know, Lord, I do not know any other writings of such purity that they could persuade me into confessing, and make my neck submit to your yoke, and appeal to me to worship you with no thought of reward. Let me understand these scriptures, good Father, grant this to me (even though I am far beneath them), because you have made them strong for the sake of those of us who dwell below.

Ps 8:3

Ps 18:8^{vs}

Ps 8:2

Ps 8:2

(18) There are other waters above this firmament,⁴⁸ I believe; they are immortal and set apart from earthly corruption. Let them praise your name, let them praise you—your hosts of angels above the heavens, who have no need to look up to this firmament, and learn, from reading it, to recognize your Word. For they always behold your face, and without spoken syllables taking time to pronounce,⁴⁹ that is where they read what your eternal will decides. There they read, they make their choice, and they love: they read eternally, and what they read never passes away,

Ps 148:1-5

Mt 18:10

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enim et diligendo legunt ipsam incommutabilitatem consilii tui. non clauditur codex eorum nec plicatur liber eorum, quia tu ipse illis hoc es et es in aeternum, quia super hoc firmamentum ordinasti eos, quod firmasti super infirmitatem inferiorum populorum, ubi suspicerent et cognoscèrent misericordiam tuam temporaliter enuntiantem te, qui fecisti tempora. in caelo enim, domine, misericordia tua et veritas tua usque ad nubes. transeunt nubes, caelum autem manet. transeunt praedicatores verbi tui ex hac vita in aliam vitam, scriptura vero tua usque in finem saeculi super populos extenditur. sed et caelum et terra transibunt, sermones autem tui non transibunt, quoniam et pellis plicabitur et faenum super quod extendebatur cum claritate sua praeteriet, verbum autem tuum manet in aeternum. quod nunc in aenigmate nubium et per speculum caeli, non sicuti est, apparet nobis, quia et nos quamvis filio tuo dilecti sumus,¹⁹ nondum apparuit quod erimus. attendit per retia carnis et blanditus est et inflammavit, et currimus post odorem eius. sed cum apparuerit, similes ei erimus, quoniam videbimus eum sicuti est. sicuti est, domine, videre nostrum, quod nondum est nobis.

16. (19) Nam sicut omnino tu es, tu scis solus, qui es incommutabiliter et scis incommutabiliter et vis incommutabiliter, et essentia tua scit et vult incommutabiliter,

¹⁹ sumus *C D G O Ver.*: simus *S A P V Maur. Knöll Skut.*

⁵⁰ On *codex* (modern-style book with spine and pages) and *liber* (book in scroll form, also *volumen*) see Vol. 1, 242–43 (*Conf.* 6.3.3).

⁵¹ Still Scripture.

⁵² Against Manichaeism's claim of complete direct access to

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for, by choosing and loving, they read the very changelessness of your resolution. Their book is never closed, and their scroll is never rolled up: for you yourself are their book and their scroll for ever.⁵⁰ You have given them a place above this firmament that you established over the weakness of the peoples dwelling below, so that they could look up and recognize your mercy and your truth declaring your existence in time—you, who made time itself! For your mercy, Lord, abides in heaven and your truth reaches up to the clouds. The clouds pass away; but heaven abides. The preachers of your word pass from this life to another life; and still your Scripture is stretched out over your peoples, to the end of the age. Both heaven and earth shall pass away, but your words will not pass away: the skin⁵¹ will be rolled up, and the grass over which it was stretched out will pass away, together with all its bright splendor, but your Word abides eternally. He now appears to us clouded in mystery, and in the reflection from heaven's mirror, not as he really is;⁵² because although we are the beloved of your Son, it has not yet been revealed what we shall be. He gazes through the lattice of our flesh, and encourages us, and sets our hearts on fire, and we run after his sweet fragrance. But when he does appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he really is. Then, Lord, our seeing will be in full reality; but this is not for us just yet.

Is 34:4

Ps 36:5

Mt 24:35

Is 40:6-8

1 Cor 13:12;
cf. 1 Jn 3:2

1 Jn 3:2

Sg 2:9^{VL}

Sg 1:3

1 Jn 3:2

16. (19) You alone know yourself completely as you are, for you exist unchangingly, and know unchangingly, and will unchangingly; your being knows and wills unchang-

God, A. remarks, "Unless you want to betray utter madness, you must admit that here on earth we do not see God face to face" (*C. Faust.* 32.18).

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et scientia tua est et vult incommutabiliter, et voluntas tua est et scit incommutabiliter, nec videtur iustum esse coram te ut, quemadmodum se scit lumen incommutabile, ita sciatur ab inluminato commutabili. ideoque anima mea tamquam terra sine aqua tibi, quia sicut se inluminare de se non potest, ita se satiare de se non potest. sic enim apud te fons vitae, quomodo in lumine tuo videbimus lumen.

17. (20) Quis congregavit amaricantes²⁰ in societatem unam? idem namque illis finis est temporalis et terrenae felicitatis, propter quam faciunt omnia, quamvis innumerabili varietate curarum fluctuent. quis, domine, nisi tu, qui dixisti ut congregarentur aquae in congregationem unam et appareret arida sitiens tibi, quoniam tuum est et mare²¹ et tu fecisti illud, et aridam terram manus tuae formaverunt? neque enim amaritudo voluntatum sed congregatio aquarum vocatur mare. tu enim coherces etiam malas cupiditates animarum et figis limites, quousque progredi sinantur aquae ut in se comminuantur fluctus earum, atque ita facis mare ordine imperii tui super omnia.

(21) At animas sitientes tibi et apparentes tibi alio fine distinctas a societate maris occulto et dulci fonte inrigas,

²⁰ amaricantes *codd. edd.* amaricantem (*om. in*) *S Knöll*

²¹ et mare *C D G O Maur. Ver.:* mare *S Knöll Skut.*

⁵³ In *En. Ps.* 35.15.10, A. identifies light and the water of life: "On earth, water is one thing, and light another: in heaven, it is not so. What is water is there also light." Cf. *Io. Ev. Tr.* 13.5.

⁵⁴ Sinners. Cf. *En. Ps.* 5.15, "They brought bitterness (*amaricaverunt*) to God, descending into sickness by sinning, so

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ingly; your knowledge exists and wills unchangingly; and your will exists and knows unchangingly. It does not seem right in your presence that the unchanging Light should be known, in the same way it knows itself, by the changeable being it casts light on. Therefore my soul is like a waterless land before you, for just as it cannot illuminate itself by its own power, so it cannot drink its fill from its own resources. As the wellspring of life dwells with you, so in your light shall we see light.⁵³

Ps 143:6

Ps 36:9

17. (20) Who has gathered embittered peoples⁵⁴ into a single community? They all have the same goal—a worldly, earthly happiness; and everything they do is to that end, though they are driven hither and thither by countless diverse anxieties. Who else but you, Lord?—for you told the waters to gather themselves together into a single mass, so that dry land appeared, thirsty for you—for the sea also is yours and you made it, and your hands molded the dry land. But what we call “sea” is not bitterness of wills in conflict but the gathering together of waters.⁵⁵ For you constrain the evil desires of souls, and you fix limits, as to how far the waters are allowed to advance so that their waves break upon themselves, and this is how you make the sea—by the command of your authority over all things.

Gn 1:9

Ps 95:5

Jb 38:10-11

(21) As for the souls that thirst for you and appear before you, who are set apart from the community of the sea by a kind of boundary, you water them from your hid-

Ps 63:1

that they cannot tolerate the food of truth . . . which delights healthy souls.”

⁵⁵ Cf. *En. Ps.* 64.9, “Sea is used as a figure for this present age, bitterness being signified by salt, and turbulence by storms.”

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ut et terra det fructum suum. et dat fructum suum et te iubente, domino deo suo, germinat anima nostra opera misericordiae secundum genus, diligens proximum in subsidiis necessitatum carnalium, habens in se semen secundum similitudinem, quoniam ex nostra infirmitate compatimur ad subveniendum indigentibus similiter opitulantes, quemadmodum nobis vellemus opem ferri, si eodem modo indigeremus, non tantum in facilibus tamquam in herba seminali, sed etiam in protectione adiutorii forti robore, sicut lignum fructiferum, id est beneficium²² ad eripiendum eum qui iniuriam patitur de manu potentis et praebendo protectionis umbraculum valido robore iusti iudicii.

18. (22) Ita, domine, ita, oro te, oriatur, sicuti facis, sicuti das hilaritatem et facultatem, oriatur de terra veritas, et iustitia de caelo respiciat, et fiant in firmamento luminaria. frangamus esurienti panem nostrum et egenum sine tecto inducamus in domum nostram, nudum vestiamus et domesticos seminis nostri non despiciamus. quibus in terra natis fructibus, vide quia bonum est, et erumpat temporanea lux nostra, et de ista inferiore fruge actionis in delicias contemplationis verbum vitae superius obtinentes appareamus sicut luminaria in mundo, cohaerentes

²² beneficium O Maur. Skut. Ver.: beneficium S G C D V Knöll

⁵⁶ GM: "The earth emerging . . . and bringing forth fruit is interpreted to mean the Church."

⁵⁷ The two plants, grass and tree, stand for the two kinds of help, easy and tough.

⁵⁸ Vg has "like the dawn" (*quasi mane*) instead of *temporaneum* (cf. LXX, *proimon*/*πρόιμον*, "early").

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den spring of fresh water, so that the earth may also bring forth its fruit.⁵⁶ And the earth does bear fruit; and when you, the Lord its God, give the command, our soul begins to blossom its works of mercy according to their kind, showing love to a neighbor by offering help for their bodily needs. For our soul has within itself the seed of similar neediness; from our weakness we have compassion that prompts us to help those in need and to offer them relief: in the same way as we would want to receive help ourselves, if we were to find ourselves in a similar situation of need. This is true not only in easy situations comparable with seed-bearing grasses, but also in preserving the power to help by means of enduring strength—such as a fruit-bearing tree that provides help in rescuing someone who suffers injury from the hand of an oppressor, and by offering them a protective refuge through the enduring strength of righteous judgment.⁵⁷

Ps 85:12

Gn 1:11

Mt 19:19,
22:39

18. (22) So, Lord, so, let there arise, I pray—as indeed you do, just as you bestow happiness and capacity—let Truth arise from the earth, and let righteousness look down from heaven, and let there be lights in the firmament. Let us break our bread for the hungry and lead the poor who have no home into our own house; let us clothe the naked, and not look down upon those of our own household, our own blood. As for the fruit that the earth brings forth, see that it is good, and let our light break out at an opportune time⁵⁸ as we move from that lesser fruit of active works to the delights of contemplation: then let us lay hold of the Word of life above, and appear as lights in the world, cleaving to the firmament

Ps 85:11

Gn 1:14

Is 58:7-8

Is 58:8¹⁷

1 Jn 1:1

Phil 2:15-16

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firmamento scripturae tuae. ibi enim nobiscum disputas, ut dividamus inter intellegibilia et sensibilia tamquam inter diem et noctem vel inter animas alias intellegibilibus, alias sensibilibus deditas, ut iam non tu solus in abdito diiudicationis, sicut antequam fieret firmamentum, divides inter lucem et tenebras, sed etiam spiritales tui in eodem firmamento positi atque distincti manifestata per orbem gratia tua luceant super terram et dividant inter diem et noctem et significant tempora, quia vetera transierunt, ecce facta sunt nova, et quia propior²³ est nostra salus quam cum credidimus, et quia nox praecessit, dies autem appropinquavit, et quia benedicis coronam anni tui, mittens operarios in messem tuam, in qua seminanda alii laboraverunt, mittens etiam in aliam sementem, cuius messis in fine est.

Ita das vota optanti et benedicis annos iusti, tu autem idem ipse es et in annis tuis, qui non deficiunt, horreum praeparas annis transeuntibus. aeterno quippe consilio propriis temporibus bona caelestia das super terram, (23) quoniam quidem alii datur per spiritum sermo sapientiae tamquam luminare maius propter eos qui perspicuae veritatis luce delectantur tamquam in principio²⁴ diei, alii autem sermo scientiae secundum eundem spiritum tamquam luminare minus, alii fides, alii donatio curationum, alii operationes virtutum, alii prophetia, alii diiudicatio

²³ propior C² D² G² Maur. Knöll Skut. Ver.: propior S G¹ O C

²⁴ in principio *codd.* Maur. Knöll Skut.: principio Ver.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Conf.* 13.15.16, n. 44.

⁶⁰ A fine scriptural *catena*.

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that is your scripture.⁵⁹ That is where you deliberate with us how we are to distinguish between matters of intellect and matters related to physical senses, as if between day and night; or between souls that sometimes incline to the intellectual, and other times to the physical. Then you are no longer alone in the secret place of your judgment—as you were before the firmament was made—dividing between light and darkness: for there are your spiritual souls too, each in their proper place in the same firmament; and once your grace has been made manifest throughout the world, they shine above the earth and divide day from night and indicate the seasons. This is because the former things have passed away, and look! new things have come into being; and because our salvation is nearer than when we came to faith; and because the night has passed and the day has drawn nigh, and because you bless the crown of your year, sending out workers into your harvest, which others did the work of sowing—and also sending them to another sowing, the harvest of which will come at the end.⁶⁰

2 Cor 5:17

Rom 13:11-12

Ps 65:11

Mt 9:38

Jn 4:38

So you grant the requests of any who pray to you, and you bless the years of life of the righteous, for you yourself are the same, and in your years, which do not fail, you are preparing your granary for the passing years. To be sure, by your eternal counsel, and at the due time, you give heavenly blessings upon the earth: (23) thus to one person is given words of wisdom by the Spirit, like the greater light that was for the benefit of those who delight in the brightness of translucent truth like the dayspring; another receives words of knowledge by the same Spirit, like the lesser light; some receive faith, some the gift of healing, some the working of mighty acts, some prophecy, some

Ps 102:27

Gn 1:16

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spirituum, alteri genera linguarum, et haec omnia tamquam stellae. omnia enim haec operatur unus atque idem spiritus, dividens propria unicuique prout vult et faciens apparere sidera in manifestatione ad utilitatem.

Sermo autem scientiae, qua continentur omnia sacramenta quae variantur temporibus tamquam luna, et ceterae notitiae donorum, quae deinceps tamquam stellae commemorata sunt, quantum differunt ab illo candore sapientiae quo gaudet praedictus dies, tantum in principio²⁵ noctis sunt. his enim sunt necessaria, quibus ille prudentissimus servus tuus non potuit loqui quasi spiritalibus, sed quasi carnalibus, ille qui sapientiam loquitur inter perfectos. animalis autem homo tamquam parvulus in Christo lactisque potator, donec roboretur ad solidum cibum et aciem firmet ad solis aspectum, non habeat desertam noctem suam, sed luce lunae stellarumque contentus sit. haec nobiscum disputas sapientissime, deus noster, in libro tuo, firmamento tuo, ut discernamus omnia contemplatione mirabili, quamvis adhuc in signis et in temporibus et in diebus et in annis.

19. (24) "Sed prius lavamini, mundi estote, auferte nequitiam ab animis vestris atque a conspectu oculorum meorum, ut appareat arida. discite bonum facere, iudicate pupillo et iustificare viduam, ut germinet terra herbam pabuli et lignum fructiferum. et venite, disputemus," dicit

²⁵ principio *G*² *S Maur. Knöll Skut.*: principia *C D G*¹ *O Ver.*

⁶¹ Cf. *Gn.litt. Imp.* 13.40, "'The start of the day' and 'the start of the night' he explains by saying, 'they rule over the day and the night'" ("initium diei" et "initium noctis" *exponit dicendo, praesint diei et nocti. Ergo "initium illud principatum intelligere debemus"*).

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discernment between spirits, some different tongues: all of these are like stars. It is all the work of one and the same Spirit, who according to his will divides up what belongs to each person, and makes the stars appear clearly for the common good. 1 Cor 12:7-11

As for the words of knowledge, which consist of all the sacred mysteries that vary with the seasons like the moon, and the other gifts that I listed as being like stars—to the extent that they differ from that brightness of wisdom in which the day just mentioned rejoices, they are only rulers of the night.⁶¹ But they are essential for those whom the wisest of your servants (who does speak wisdom among those who are perfected) could not address as spiritual beings, only as physical, earthly beings. Anyone who is earthly minded is like a little child in Christ, still drinking milk; until they mature and take solid food, and their gaze is strong enough to look at the sun, they should not abide their night devoid of any brightness, but be satisfied with the light of moon and stars. In perfect wisdom, O our God, you deliberate⁶² with us upon all these subjects in your book (of which the firmament is a symbol), so that we can distinguish between all things in a marvelous contemplation, though still in signs and seasons and days and years. Gn 1:16
1 Cor 2:6
1 Cor 3:1

19. (24) "First be washed, be clean; remove from your souls, and from the sight of my eyes, all that is worthless, so that dry land can appear. Learn to do good, judge in favor of the orphan and act justly toward the widow, so that the earth buds into grass for food and trees which bear Is 1:16-18

⁶² As in *Conf.* 13.8.22, the verb *disputo* suggests active dialogue between God and the believer; cf. Is 1:18.

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dominus, "ut fiant luminaria in firmamento caeli, et luceant super terram." quaerebat dives ille a magistro bono quid faceret ut vitam aeternam consequeretur; dicat ei magister bonus, quem putabat hominem et nihil amplius (bonus est autem, quia deus est), dicat ei ut, si vult venire ad vitam, servet mandata, separet a se amaritudinem malitiae atque nequitiae, non occidat, non moechetur, non furetur, non falsum testimonium dicat, ut appareat arida et germinet honorem matris et patris et dilectionem proximi. "feci," inquit, "haec omnia." unde ergo tantae spinae, si terra fructifera est? vade, extirpa silvosa dumeta avaritiae, vende quae possides et implere frugibus dando pauperibus, et habebis thesaurum in caelis, et sequere dominum si vis esse perfectus, eis sociatus inter quos loquitur sapientiam ille qui novit quid distribuatur diei et nocti, ut noris et tu, ut fiant et tibi luminaria in firmamento caeli. quod non fiet, nisi fuerit illic cor tuum; quod item non fiet, nisi fuerit illi thesaurus tuus, sicut audisti a magistro bono. sed contristata est terra sterilis, et spinae offocaverunt²⁶ verbum.

(25) Vos autem genus electum, infirma²⁷ mundi, qui dimisistis omnia ut sequeremini dominum: ite post eum et confundite fortia, ite post eum, speciosi pedes, et lucete

²⁶ offocaverunt *C D O Maur. Ver.:* suffocaverunt *S G P Knöll Skut. (V⁶)* ²⁷ infirma *codd. edd.:* in firmamento *S Knöll*

⁶³ OD: "This paragraph is especially beautiful and direct. Virtually every word is scriptural, but the creative interweaving of texts makes a new whole."

⁶⁴ Scriptural context supplies the sense, "Who preach the gospel of peace." The feet symbolize Matthew, Mark, Luke, and

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fruit. And come, let us deliberate," says the Lord, "so that there may be lights in the firmament of heaven, and that they shine upon the earth." There was a rich man who asked the good teacher what to do to obtain eternal life: that man thought the teacher was a man, nothing more, though in fact he is "good" because he is God. Let the good teacher say to him that if he wants to come to life, he must keep the commandments, detach himself from the bitterness of malice and wickedness—not kill, not commit adultery, not steal, not give false witness. Then the dry land will appear, and blossom into honoring his mother and father and loving his neighbor. "I have done all these things," said the man. So where are all those great thorns from, if your land is fruitful? Go, root out the thorny thickets of greed, see what you possess, and be satisfied with a harvest of giving to the poor; and you will have treasure in heaven, and follow the Lord if you want to become perfect, one of the company among whom he speaks wisdom, he who knows what to apportion to the day, and what to the night; so that you may know it too, and so lights are made in the firmament for you also. This will not happen unless your heart is in it; which will not be the case unless your treasure is there also, just as the good teacher told you. But the barren ground was saddened, and thorns choked the Word.⁶³

Mt 19:16-22

1 Cor 5:8

1 Cor 2:6

Mt 6:21

Mt 13:7; Lk
18:23

1 Pt 2:9

1 Cor 1:27

Is 52:7; Rom
10:15
Ps 19:1

(25) But you are a chosen people, the weaklings of this world, who have abandoned everything in order to follow the Lord: so go on after him, and confound the mighty, go on after him, you beautiful feet⁶⁴ and shine as lights in the

John; cf. *En. Ps.* 51.9, "Who are the Lord's feet? The four evangelists."

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in firmamento, ut caeli enarrent gloriam eius, dividentes inter lucem perfectorum, sed nondum sicut angelorum, et tenebras parvulorum, sed non desperatorum. lucete super omnem terram, et dies sole candens eructet diei verbum sapientiae et nox luna lucens annuntiet nocti verbum scientiae. luna et stellae nocti lucent, sed nox non obscurat eas, quoniam ipsae inluminant eam pro modulo eius.

Ecce enim tamquam deo dicente, "fiant luminaria in firmamento caeli," factus est subito de caelo sonus, quasi ferretur flatus vehemens, et visae sunt linguae divisae quasi ignis, qui et insedit super unumquemque illorum, et facta sunt luminaria in firmamento caeli verbum vitae habentia. ubique discurrite, ignes sancti, ignes decori. vos enim estis lumen mundi nec estis sub modio. exaltatus est cui adhaesistis, et exaltavit vos. discurrite et innotescite omnibus gentibus.

20. (26) Concipiat et mare et pariat opera vestra, et producant aquae reptilia animarum vivarum. separantes enim pretiosum a vili facti estis os dei, per quod diceret, "producant aquae" non animam vivam, quam terra producet, sed "reptilia animarum vivarum et volatilia volantia super terram." repererunt enim sacramenta tua, deus, per opera sanctorum tuorum inter medios fluctus temptationum saeculi ad imbuendas gentes nomine tuo in baptismo tuo. et inter haec facta sunt magnalia mirabilia tamquam

⁶⁵ A.'s VL version differs markedly from Vg: *et factus est repente de caelo sonus tamquam advenientis spiritus vehementis et replevit totam domum ubi erant sedentes et apparuerunt illis dispersitae linguae tamquam ignis seditque supra singulos eorum.*

⁶⁶ A. means the four evangelists, as the theme here is the spreading of the gospel.

⁶⁷ Cf. *Conf.* 11.2.2, n. 5, with Vol. 1, 136n8 (*Conf.* 4.2.3).

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firmament, so that the heavens proclaim his glory. Make a distinction between the light of those who have been made perfect but who are not yet like the angels, and the darkness of the little children who are not yet beyond hope. Shine out over all the earth: let day, glowing with sunshine, declare to day the Word of wisdom; and let night, bright with moonlight, announce to night the word of knowledge. The moon and stars illuminate the night: but the night does not blot them out, for they themselves illuminate the night to the best of their capacity.

Gn 1:14

1 Cor 12:8

Look—it is as though God were saying, “let there be lights in the firmament of heaven,” and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as if a powerful wind were introduced,⁶⁵ and there appeared divided tongues like fire, which settled on each and every one of them and made them into lights in the firmament of heaven, for they possess the Word of life. Run in every direction, you holy fires, you beauteous fires. For you are the light of the world, you do not belong beneath a bushel basket. He whom once you clung to has now become exalted, and he has exalted you. Run, then, in every direction, and make it known to all peoples.

Acts 2:2-3

Phil 2:15-16

Mt 5:14-15

Mt 28:19

20. (26) Let the sea also conceive and bring forth your works, and let the waters produce swarms of living creatures. When you separate what is precious from what is worthless you have become the mouth of God⁶⁶ by which he said, “let the waters produce”—not a living soul, such as the earth will produce, but “swarms of living creatures and birds that fly over the earth.” By the works of your saints, O God, your sacraments⁶⁷ have wormed their way into the midst of the turbulent temptations of this world, to instill your name in the nations through your baptism. Amid all this, great and wonderful creatures were created,

Gn 1:20; Ps 104:25

Jer 15:19

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ceti grandes et voces nuntiorum tuorum volantes super terram iuxta firmamentum libri tui, praeposito illo sibi ad auctoritatem, sub quo volitarent quocumque irent. neque enim sunt loquellae neque sermones quorum non audiantur voces eorum, quando in omnem terram exiit sonus eorum et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum, quoniam tu, domine, benedicendo multiplicasti haec.

(27) Numquid mentior aut mixtione misceo neque distinguo lucidas cognitiones harum rerum in firmamento caeli et opera corporalia in undoso mari et sub firmamento caeli? quarum enim rerum notitiae sunt solidae et terminatae sine incrementis generationum tamquam lumina sapientiae et scientiae, earundem rerum sunt operationes corporales multae ac variae, et aliud ex alio crescendo multiplicantur in benedictione tua, deus, qui consolatus es fastidia sensuum mortalium, ut in cognitione animi res una multis modis per corporis motiones figuretur atque dicatur. aquae produxerunt haec, sed in verbo tuo. necessitates alienatorum ab aeternitate veritatis tuae populorum produxerunt haec, sed in evangelio tuo, quoniam ipsae aquae ista eiecerunt, quarum amarus languor fuit causa ut in tuo verbo ista procederent.²⁸

²⁸ procederent *S codd. Maur. Knöll Skut.*: producerent *O¹ Ver.*

⁶⁸ For the association of this psalm verse with Pentecost, see *En. Ps.* 18.5, "Read the Acts of the Apostles, how the Spirit came upon them and they were all filled with it." ⁶⁹ Chadwick, *Confessions*, 288, describes this section as "among the most opaque in *Conf.*," and concludes, "Allegorical exegesis is the sacramental principle applied to scripture." ⁷⁰ *Io. Ev. Tr.* 80.3: "The word is added to the element [water] and becomes a sacrament, itself even a kind of visible word."

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such as huge whales; and the voices of your messengers soaring above the earth close to the firmament that is your holy book—for the firmament of scripture had been set in a position of authority over them, and under it they were to fly wherever they went. For there is no speech nor language the sound of which they do not hear, when their sound has gone out into all lands, and their words to the ends of the earth,⁶⁸ for by blessing them you, Lord, have increased their numbers. Ps 19:3

(27) Surely I am not telling lies, and jumbling things into confusion, and failing to distinguish clear understandings of these matters in the firmament of heaven, and of material works in the turbulent sea and under the firmament of heaven?⁶⁹ The concepts of such phenomena as the enlightenment of wisdom and knowledge are fixed and determined; they do not develop over successive generations. But the actual material workings of such phenomena are many and various, one thing increasing from another, and being multiplied as they are blessed in you, O God: for you provided relief for mortal senses (so prone to fatigue), so that what is one thing in our mind's understanding can be imaged and referred to in many ways by physical motions. The waters produced these things, but they did so at the prompting of your Word.⁷⁰ The needs of peoples alienated from your eternal Truth produced them, but through your gospel, since the waters themselves expelled them, and their bitter lethargy was the reason why those sacraments advanced through your Word.⁷¹

⁷¹ Human weakness demands signs, a higher spirituality looks beyond the material realm; cf. Jn 4:48, Mt 16:4.

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(28) Et pulchra sunt omnia faciente te, et ecce tu innarrabiliter pulchrior, qui fecisti omnia. a quo si non esset lapsus Adam, non diffunderetur ex utero eius salsugo maris, genus humanum profunde curiosum et procellose tumidum et instabiliter fluvidum, atque ita non opus esset ut in aquis multis corporaliter et sensibiliter operarentur dispensatores tui mystica facta et dicta (sic enim mihi nunc occurrerunt reptilia et volatilia), quibus imbuti et initiati homines corporalibus sacramentis subditi non ultra proficerent, nisi spiritaliter vivesceret anima gradu alio et post initii verbum in consummationem respiceret.

21. (29) Ac per hoc in verbo tuo non maris profunditas, sed ab aquarum amaritudine terra discreta eicit non reptilia animarum vivarum et volatilia, sed animam vivam. neque enim iam opus habet baptismo, quo gentibus opus est, sicut opus habebat cum aquis tegetur. non enim intratur aliter in regnum²⁹ caelorum ex illo quo instituisti ut sic intretur, nec magnalia mirabilium quaerit quibus fiat fides. neque enim nisi signa et prodigia viderit, non credit, cum iam distincta sit terra fidelis ab aquis maris infidelitate amaris, et linguae in signo sunt non fidelibus sed infidelibus.

²⁹ regnum *codd. edd.*: regno S Knöll

⁷² GM: "A remarkable example of catachresis"; OD (of GM): "Understatement." Adam has a figurative womb in that he stands for all humanity. At the time of writing *Conf.*, A. held that Adam and Eve had no sexual liaison or offspring before the "Fall." See *Gn. Litt.* 9.4.8, 10.16, but compare also Barr, *Garden of Eden*, 66-73.

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(28) All these things are lovely with you as their Maker, and look!—you have made all things, and you are indescribably lovelier. If Adam had not fallen away from you, the bitter brine of the sea would not have poured forth from his womb;⁷² that is, the human race—so insistently inquisitive, so vehemently proud, so fickle and so lax. Thus there would be no need for your ministers to perform the actions and words of the sacrament in many waters both physically and perceptibly. This is what I would take the reptiles and birds to stand for, because even human beings washed and initiated, and having submitted to the physical signs of the sacraments, would be unable to go further unless their souls began to grow in the Spirit on a different level after the words of initiation, and turned their gaze toward their perfecting.

1 Cor 4:1

Sg 8:7

Hb 6:1

21. (29) By your Word, then, it was not the depth of the sea but the earth, separated from the bitterness of the waters, that cast forth not a multiplicity of creatures alive and crawling or flying, but a single living soul. It no longer has the same need of baptism as the pagans do, and as it did itself when it was beneath the waters. For there is no other way in to the kingdom of heaven since the time when you established baptism as the means of entry; and it seeks no mighty wonders to bring it to faith. Nor does this living soul fail to believe without seeing signs and marvels; it is already believing earth,⁷³ separate from the waters of the sea, which are bitter faithlessness. Likewise tongues are for a sign to unbelievers, not believers.⁷⁴

Gn 1:24

Jn 3:5

1 Cor 1:22

1 Cor 14:22

⁷³ *terra fidelis*: a very striking image for the human being ('adam in Hebrew) created from earth.

⁷⁴ "Tongues": specifically speaking in tongues, or "glossolalia."

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Nec isto igitur genere volatili, quod verbo tuo produxerunt aquae, opus habet terra quam fundasti super aquas. immitte in eam verbum tuum per nuntios tuos, opera enim eorum narramus. sed tu es qui operaris in eis, et³⁰ operentur animam vivam. terra producit eam, quia terra causa est ut haec agant in ea, sicut mare fuit causa ut agerent reptilia animarum vivarum et volatilia sub firmamento caeli, quibus iam terra non indiget, quamvis piscem manducet levatum de profundo in ea mensa quam parasti in conspectu credentium; ideo enim de profundo levatus est, ut alat aridam.

Et aves marina progenies, sed tamen super terram multiplicantur. primarum enim vocum evangelizantium infidelitas hominum causa extitit, sed et fideles exhortantur et benedicuntur eis multipliciter de die in diem. at vero anima viva de terra sumit exordium, quia non prodest nisi iam fidelibus continere se ab amore huius saeculi, ut anima eorum tibi vivat, quae mortua erat in deliciis vivens, deliciis, domine, mortiferis, nam tu puri cordis vitales deliciae.

(30) Operentur ergo iam in terra ministri tui, non sicut in aquis infidelitatis annuntiando et loquendo per miracula et sacramenta et voces mysticas, ubi intenta fit³¹ ignorantia mater admirationis in timore occultorum signorum

³⁰ et S G O V Knöll: ut P Maur: et ut G²

³¹ fit codd. Ver Knöll: sit G edd.

⁷⁵ A reference to the acrostic ICHTHYS (ΙΧΘΥΣ), standing for "Jesus Christ the Son of God, Savior" (*Iesus Christos Theou Huios Sōter*/Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτήρ). "Fish" and "table" both allude figuratively to the eucharist.

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The earth that you built above the waters has no need of the kind of creatures that fly, which the waters produced through your Word. By your messengers, send your Word to the earth, for we are telling of their actions. But you are the one who is at work in them, that they may produce a living soul. The earth produces it because the earth is the cause of their making these things in the soul, just as the sea was the cause of their making living creatures which crawl and fly under the firmament of heaven. The earth has no need of them, although it eats the fish⁷⁵ drawn up from the deep onto that table which you have prepared in the sight of all believers: so he is raised up from the deep so that he can nurture the dry land. Ps 23:5

Birds too are the sea's offspring; but they now breed upon earth. Human faithlessness was what brought the voices of the evangelists into being, but the faithful are also encouraged and blessed by them in all kinds of ways from day to day. Yet the living soul takes its origin from the earth, because it does no good to any but the faithful to restrain themselves from the love of this passing world, so that their soul may be alive to you; for it was dead whist it lived among earthly pleasures—pleasures, Lord, which in fact were deadly, for you only are the life-giving pleasure of a pure heart. Ps 96:2

(30) Let your ministers do their work on earth, but not as they were amid the waters of faithlessness, when they declared and proclaimed through miracles and sacraments and mystical voices. There ignorance, the mother of wonderment, becomes fixated upon the awe attached

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(talīs enim est introitus ad fidem filiis Adam oblitis tui, dum se abscondunt a facie tua et fiunt abyssus), sed operentur etiam sicut in arida discreta a gurgitibus abyssi et sint forma fidelibus vivendo coram eis et excitando ad imitationem.

Sic enim non tantum ad audiendum sed etiam ad faciendum audiunt, "quaerite deum et vivet anima vestra, ut producat terra animam viventem; nolite conformari huic saeculo, continete vos ab eo." evitando vivit anima, quae appetendo moritur. continete vos ab immani feritate superbiae, ab inertī voluptate luxuriae, et a fallaci nomine scientiae, ut sint bestiae mansuetae et pecora edomita et innoxii serpentes. motus enim animae sunt isti in allegoria; sed fastus elationis et delectatio libidinis et venenum curiositatis motus sunt animae mortuae, quia non ita moritur ut omni motu careat, quoniam discedendo a fonte vitae moritur atque ita suscipitur a praetereunte saeculo et conformatur ei.

(31) Verbum autem tuum, deus, fons vitae aeternae est et non praeterit. ideoque in verbo tuo cohibetur ille discessus, dum dicitur nobis, "nolite conformari huic saeculo," ut producat terra in fonte vitae animam viventem, in verbo tuo per evangelistas tuos animam continentem imitando imitatores Christi tui. hoc est enim secundum genus, quoniam aemulatio viri ab amico est: "estote," in-

⁷⁶ *scientiae*: in Greek, the word (*gnōsis/γνῶσις*) carries negative connotations associated with heretical and semi-Christian sects.

⁷⁷ In this Pauline context, imitation carries a positive value instead of its negative Platonic one.

⁷⁸ A. uses this in two senses: here, it echoes Gn 1:21; in *Conf.* 13.22.32 it has the sense of "according to the likeness" (of God).

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to secret symbols: this was all the access available to the offspring of Adam once they forgot you, while they hide from your face and become an abyss themselves. Now, though, let them do their work as if on the dry land separated from the maelstrom of the abyss, and let them be set an example for the faithful by living among them and inspiring them to emulate that example. Gn 3:8
1 Thes 1:6-7

Then their act of hearing is not a matter of hearing only, but of acting upon it, "seek God and your soul shall live, so that the earth brings forth a living soul. Do not be conformed to this world, but keep yourselves apart from it." By such avoidance the soul stays alive, but if it seeks it out, it dies. Restrain yourselves from the grotesque passion of pride; from idle longing for self-indulgence; and from what is misleadingly termed "knowledge":⁷⁶ then wild animals will be gentled, and livestock brought under control, and snakes rendered harmless. These are an allegory for the operations of the soul: but pride in self-aggrandizement, and delight in excessive sexual appetite, and toxic curiosity are operations of a soul that is dead—not dead in the sense that it is utterly inert, but because it departs from the wellspring of life and is adopted by this passing age and is conformed to it. Gn 1:24
Ps 69:32;
Rom 12:2
1 Tm 6:20
Jer 2:13
Rom 12:2

(31) Your Word, O God, is the wellspring of eternal life and does not pass away. In your Word, therefore, there is no backsliding, while we are told, "Do not be conformed to this world," so that the earth can bring forth a living soul in the wellspring of life. This means a being that remains in your Word with the help of your evangelists, by imitating the imitators of your Christ.⁷⁷ This is to be "according to its kind,"⁷⁸ because striving to match one another is characteristic of friends: "be as I am," Paul says, "just as I Ps 36:10; Jn
4:14, 6:69;
Mt 24:35
1 Cor 4:16,
11:1
Gn 1:21
Gal 4:12

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quit, "sicut ego, quia et ego sicut vos." ita erunt in anima viva bestiae bonae in mansuetudine actionis. mandasti enim dicens, "in mansuetudine opera tua perfice et ab omni homine diligeris." et pecora bona neque si manducaverint, abundantia, neque si non manducaverint, egentia, et serpentes boni non perniciosi ad nocendum, sed astuti ad cavendum et tantum explorantes temporalem naturam, quantum sufficit, ut per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciatur aeternitas. serviunt enim rationi haec animalia, cum a progressu mortifero cohibita vivunt et bona sunt.

22. (32) Ecce enim, domine deus noster, creator noster, cum cohibitae fuerint affectiones ab amore saeculi, quibus moriebamur male vivendo, et coeperit esse anima vivens bene vivendo, completumque fuerit verbum tuum quo per apostolum tuum dixisti, "nolite conformari huic saeculo," consequetur et³² illud quod adiunxisti statim et dixisti, "sed reformamini in novitate mentis vestrae," non iam secundum genus, tamquam imitantes praecedentem proximum nec ex hominis melioris auctoritate viventes. neque enim dixisti, "fiat homo secundum genus," sed, "faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram," ut nos probemus quae sit voluntas tua.

Ad hoc enim dispensator ille tuus generans per evangelium filios, ne semper parvulos haberet quos lacte nutri-

³² et om. S Knöll Skut.

⁷⁹ Oxymoron.

⁸⁰ OD: "forma is the external fact of 'shape' etc., imago is the internal co-relative in the mind." Cf. *Conf.* 7.1.2.

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became like you." Then the wild beasts within the living soul will be good and gentle in their behavior. This was your command, when you said, "do all your works in gentleness and you will be loved by everyone." The livestock too will be good, and when they feed it will not be to excess, and when they do not they feel no sense of lack. Even the snakes will be good, not vicious and intent on harm, but careful and cautious in exploring the nature of this world enough to be sure that eternity is evident, and open to comprehension, through created things. These living creatures are obedient to reason, when they are kept away from the course that leads to destruction, and live, and are good.

Sir 3:17

Rom 1:20

cf. Mt 7:13

22. (32) Look, O Lord our God, our Creator! When our emotions have been kept away from love of this world, in which we were dying by living badly;⁷⁹ and when our soul began to be alive by living well; and when your word has been fulfilled, by which you said through your apostle, "do not be conformed⁸⁰ to this world": there will follow what you immediately added, saying, "instead, be reformed by the renewing of your mind." This does not mean "according to your kind," in the sense of people who follow the example of their neighbors, nor is it living according to the influence of those who are more worthy. After all, you did not say, "let there be human beings according to their kind," but "let us make a human being after *our* image and likeness,"⁸¹ so that we could learn what your will may be.

Gn 1:21

Gn 1:26

That is why your steward—who raised up children through the gospel, but not to keep them as little ones

1 Cor 4:1

1 Cor 3:2

⁸¹ A. takes the plural of majesty as evidence of the Trinity in action: who but himself can God be addressing?

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ret et tamquam nutrix foveret, "reformamini," inquit, "in novitate mentis vestrae ad probandum vos quae sit voluntas dei, quod bonum et beneplacitum et perfectum." ideoque non dicis, "fiat homo," sed, "faciamus," nec dicis, "secundum genus," sed, "ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram." mente quippe renovatus et conspiciens intellectam veritatem tuam homine demonstratore non indiget ut suum genus imitetur, sed te demonstrante probat ipse quae sit voluntas tua, quod bonum et beneplacitum et perfectum, et doces eum iam capacem videre trinitatem unitatis vel unitatem trinitatis. ideoque pluraliter dicto "faciamus hominem," singulariter tamen infertur, "et fecit deus hominem," et pluraliter dicto "ad imaginem nostram," singulariter infertur, "ad imaginem dei." ita homo renovatur in agnitione dei secundum imaginem eius, qui creavit eum, et spiritalis effectus iudicat omnia, quae utique iudicanda sunt, ipse autem a nemine iudicatur.

23. (33) Quod autem iudicat omnia, hoc est, quod habet potestatem piscium maris et volatilium caeli et omnium pecorum et ferarum et omnis terrae et omnium reptantium quae repunt super terram. hoc enim agit per mentis intellectum, per quem percipit quae sunt spiritus dei. alioquin homo in honore positus non intellexit; comparatus est iumentis insensatis et similis factus est eis. ergo in ecclesia tua, deus noster, secundum gratiam tuam, quam dedisti ei, quoniam tuum sumus figmentum creati in operibus bonis, non solum qui spiritaliter praesunt sed

⁸² Twice in this paragraph A. calls God "our God" (*deus noster*); it expresses a sense of intimate connection, but translating the phrase exactly does not work. Cf. *Conf.* 12.16.23.

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perpetually for him to feed with milk and tend like a nurse —said, “be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may learn what the will of God is, what is good and pleasing and perfect.” For that reason you do not say, “let there be a human being,” but “let us make one,” and you do not say, “according to their kind” but, “in our image and likeness.” After all, once they are renewed in mind, and can see the rationality of your Truth, they have no need of another human being to show them how to imitate their own kind. With you to show them, they learn what your will is—what is good and pleasing and perfect, and you teach them, now they are able, to behold the Trinity in unity or the unity in Trinity. That is why it is said in the plural, “let us make a human being,” but a singular is inferred, “and God made a human being”; and another plural, “in our image,” where the singular is inferred, “in the image of God.” So human beings are renewed in their knowledge of God, according to the likeness of him who created them: once they become spiritual beings they judge everything which clearly deserves judgment, but they themselves are judged by no one.

23. (33) What does it mean, this “judging everything”? It means this: that human beings have power over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, and all livestock and wild beasts, and all the land, and every crawling thing that crawls over the earth. They do so by reason of their mental acuity, which enables them to discern what is from the Spirit of God. Otherwise “those in positions of honor have no understanding: they are compared to senseless cattle, and become like them.” So in your Church, O God,⁸² according to your grace that you have given to her (for we are formed by you and made for good works) not only

1 Thes 2:7
Rom 12:2

Col 3:10

1 Cor 2:15

Gn 1:26

1 Cor 2:14

Ps 49:12

Eph 2:10^{VL}

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etiam hi qui spiritaliter subduntur eis qui praesunt (masculum enim et feminam fecisti hominem hoc modo in gratia tua spiritali, ubi secundum sexum corporis non est masculus et femina, quia nec Iudaeus neque graecus neque servus neque liber)—spiritaliter ergo, sive qui praesunt sive qui obtemperant, spiritaliter iudicant, non de cognitionibus spiritalibus, quae lucent in firmamento (non enim oportet de tam sublimes auctoritate iudicare); neque de ipso libro tuo, etiam si quid ibi non lucet, quoniam summittimus ei nostrum intellectum certumque habemus etiam quod clausum est aspectibus nostris recte veraciterque dictum esse (sic enim homo, licet iam spiritalis et renovatus in agnitione dei secundum imaginem eius qui creavit eum, factor tamen legis debet esse, non iudex); neque de illa distinctione iudicat, spiritalium videlicet atque carnalium hominum, qui tuis, deus noster, oculis noti sunt et nullis adhuc nobis apparuerunt operibus ut ex fructibus eorum cognoscamus eos, sed tu, domine, iam scis eos et divisisti et vocasti in occulto, antequam fieret firmamentum; neque de turbidis huius saeculi populis quamquam spiritalis homo iudicat—quid enim ei de his qui foris sunt iudicare, ignoranti quis inde venturus sit in dulcedinem gratiae tuae et quis in perpetua impietatis amaritudine remansurus?

(34) Ideoque homo, quem fecisti ad imaginem tuam, non accepit potestatem luminarium caeli neque ipsius

⁸³ This entire paragraph is rightly punctuated as a single sentence (*sententia*). Tracking the syntactic movement closely cannot yield good English.

⁸⁴ See *Conf.* 13.5.6, with 12.2.2, n. 2.

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those who wield spiritual authority, but also those under their spiritual direction, are spiritual beings, and whether they command or obey they exercise spiritual judgment.⁸³

This is how you made humanity—male and female in your spiritual grace; in this realm there is no male nor female in terms of physical gender, just as there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free. This judgment is not aimed at the spiritual intellects that shine in the firmament, for it is inappropriate to pass judgment on such exalted authority. Nor is it aimed at your book, because even if something in it is opaque we submit our understanding to it: and we are sure that anything that is cut off from our sight is still rightly and truly spoken. This is because even those who are already spiritual beings, made new in their recognition of God, and according to the likeness of their Creator, are supposed to be doers of the law, not judges. Neither do they pass judgment concerning the clear distinction between spiritual and carnal human beings, though they are manifest, O God, in your sight. As yet they have not shown their true selves by any works, so that we might know them by their fruits. But you already know them, Lord, and you have made your demarcation, and have called them in secret before the firmament was made. Neither, finally, do such persons, however spiritual, pass judgment on the chaotic peoples of this world—why should they pass judgment on those who are outsiders, when they cannot tell who is going to enter into the sweetness of your grace, and who will remain in the perpetual bitterness of the godless?

(34) As a consequence, human beings, though made in your image, did not receive power over the lights of heaven, nor over that hidden heaven of heavens,⁸⁴ nor

Gal 3:28

Col 3:10

Jas 4:11

Mt 7:20

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occuli caeli neque diei et noctis, quae ante caeli constitutionem vocasti, neque congregationis aquarum, quod est mare, sed accepit potestatem piscium maris et volatilium caeli et omnium pecorum et omnis terrae et omnium reptantium quae repunt super terram. iudicat enim et approbat quòd recte, improbat autem quod perperam invenerit, sive in ea sollemnitate sacramentorum quibus initiantur quos pervestigat in aquis multis misericordia tua, sive in ea qua ille piscis exhibetur quem levatum de profundo terra pia comedit, sive in verborum signis vocibusque subiectis auctoritati libri tui tamquam sub firmamento volitantibus, interpretando, exponendo, disserendo, disputando, benedicendo atque invocando te, ore erumpentibus atque sonantibus signis, ut respondeat populus, "amen."

Quibus omnibus vocibus corporaliter enuntiandis causa est abyssus saeculi et caecitas carnis, qua cogitata non possunt videri, ut opus sit instrepere in auribus. ita, quamvis multiplicentur volatilia super terram, ex aquis tamen originem ducunt. iudicat etiam spiritalis approbando quod rectum, improbando autem quod perperam invenerit in operibus moribusque fidelium, elemosynis tamquam terra fructifera et de anima viva mansuefactis affectionibus, in castitate, in ieiuniis, in cogitationibus piis de his

⁸⁵ Oblique reference to baptism: "sacraments" is plural because baptism is the means of access to the other sacraments.

⁸⁶ Metonym for "humanity"; cf. Gn 2:7, 3:19. The reference to the eucharist is also oblique: details about the praxis of sacraments are for initiates only. Cf. *Conf.* 13.21.29, n. 75.

⁸⁷ Perhaps a simple prayer for divine goodwill, perhaps a consecration, as in the eucharist.

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over the day and night which you called into being before you established this heaven, nor over the gathering of the waters (which is to say, the sea); but they did receive power over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, and all flocks and herds, and all the land, and all the crawling things that crawl over the earth. They act as judges, and they approve whatever they find to be right, and disapprove what is wrong: they do so either by celebrating the sacraments into which those whom your mercy searches out in the great waters are initiated;⁸⁵ or by celebrating how that fish which was raised up from the deep is made manifest for the faithful earth⁸⁶ to consume; or in the meanings and expressions of words under the authority of your book as the birds are under the firmament of heaven. They interpret, explain, describe, argue, bless,⁸⁷ and invoke you—as the meanings burst and resound from their lips, so that the people can respond, “Amen.”

Ps 18:16

The reason why all these words have to be physically spoken aloud is the abyss of this world and the blindness of our flesh, which mean that thoughts cannot be perceived, and thus need to be dinned into our ears. Thus although the birds increase in number above the earth they still have their origin in the waters.⁸⁸ So spiritual persons pass judgment by approving what is right and disapproving what they find to be wrong in the actions and character of the faithful (such as their charitable acts, like fruitful earth); and in the living soul with its emotions rendered tranquil by chastity, fasting, and devout thinking

Gn 1:20

2 Cor 6:5-6

⁸⁸ An image to contrast soaring with plodding, perhaps. GM interpret thus: “The sluggishness of men renders necessary the stimulus of preaching.”

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quae per sensum corporis percipiuntur. de his enim iudicare nunc dicitur, in quibus et potestatem corrigendi habet.

24. (35) Sed quid est hoc et quale mysterium est? ecce benedicis homines, o domine, ut crescant et multiplicentur et impleant terram. nihilne nobis ex hoc innuis, ut intellegamus aliquid? cur non ita benedixeris lucem quam vocasti diem nec firmamentum caeli nec luminaria nec sidera nec terram nec mare?

Dicerem te, deus noster, qui nos ad imaginem tuam creasti, dicerem te hoc donum benedictionis homini proprie voluisse largiri, nisi hoc modo benedixisses pisces et cetos, ut crescerent et multiplicarentur et implerent aquas maris, et volatilia multiplicarentur super terram. item dicerem ad ea rerum genera pertinere benedictionem hanc quae gignendo ex semet ipsis propagantur, si eam reperirem in arbustis et fructibus et in pecoribus terrae. nunc autem nec herbis et lignis dictum est nec bestiis et serpentibus, "crescite et multiplicamini," cum haec quoque omnia sicut pisces et aves et homines gignendo augeantur genusque custodiant.

(36) Quid igitur dicam, lumen meum, veritas? quia vacat hoc, quia inaniter ita dictum est? nequaquam, pater pietatis; absit ut hoc dicat servus verbi tui. et si ego non intellego quid hoc eloquio significes, utantur eo melius meliores, id est intellegentiores quam ego sum, unicuique

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about what is apprehended by sensory experience. It can now be said that such persons are to pass judgment on all matters, over which they also have the power of correction.

24. (35) But what exactly is this? What kind of sacred mystery? See, Lord, you bless human beings, so that they increase and multiply and fill the earth. Are you taking this to intimate something to us? Are we meant to understand something? Why did you not likewise bless the light which you called day, and the firmament of heaven and the sun and moon and stars and earth and sea? Gn 1:28

I would have said, given that you created us in your image, O God, I would have said that you wanted to bestow this gift of blessing on humanity alone—but for the fact that you likewise blessed the fish and sea creatures, so that they too would increase and multiply and fill the waters of the sea; and so that the birds would multiply above the earth. Similarly, I would have said that this blessing was applicable to those particular types of being which are generated and reproduce from their own kind, if only I had found it among woods and orchards and livestock on earth. But as it is, this is not said to the plants or trees, or to the wild beasts and snakes, “increase and multiply”: even though all these things reproduce and increase in numbers, and so perpetuate their species—just like the fish, and birds, and human beings.

(36) So what am I to say, O Truth, my Light? That it is meaningless, that it was spoken to no purpose? Surely not, O faithful Father; far be it from me, the servant of your Word, to speak so! Even if I do not understand what you mean by this sentence of Scripture, let better readers (that is, people more intelligent than I am, in accordance with Rom 12:3; 1
Cor 3:5

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quantum sapere dedisti. placeat autem et confessio mea coram oculis tuis, qua tibi confiteor credere me, domine, non incassum te ita locutum, neque silebo quod mihi lectionis huius occasio suggerit. verum est enim, nec video quid impediatur ita me sentire dicta figurata librorum tuorum. novi enim multipliciter significari per corpus, quod uno modo mente intellegitur, et multipliciter mente intellegi, quod uno modo per corpus significatur. ecce simplex dilectio dei et proximi, quam multiplicibus sacramentis et innumerabilibus linguis et in unaquaque lingua innumerabilibus locutionum modis corporaliter enuntiat! ita crescunt et multiplicantur fetus aquarum. attende iterum quisquis haec legis: ecce quod uno modo scriptura offert et vox personat, "in principio deus fecit caelum et terram," nonne multipliciter intellegitur, non errorum fallacia, sed verarum intellegentiarum generibus? ita crescunt et multiplicantur fetus hominum.

(37) Itaque si naturas ipsas rerum non allegorice sed proprie cogitemus, ad omnia quae de seminibus gignuntur convenit verbum "crescite et multiplicamini." si autem figurate posita ista tractemus (quod potius arbitror intendisse scripturam, quae utique non supervacue solis aquatiliam et hominum fetibus istam benedictionem attribuit),

⁸⁹ I.e., not to be taken literally, especially when a literal reading renders them nonsensical; cf. *Doctr. Chr.* 3.5.9. *TLL* 6.1.743.50, s.v. *figuro* notes, *usus est Christianorum proprius* (the use of the verb in this sense [allegorizing] is characteristic of Christians).

⁹⁰ OD remarks of this paragraph: "So central, and so difficult." Most of the Creation narrative A. takes as figurative of the life of God's people on earth.

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the wisdom you bestow on each of us) handle it better. But let my confession also be pleasing in your sight, by which I confess to you, Lord, that I believe you did not say this to no purpose; and I shall not keep silent as to what the opportunity of reading this passage suggests to me. It is true, after all, and I do not see what is to stop me from supposing that the sayings in your books are figurative.⁸⁹ I know that there can be manifold meaning in what is corporeal, wherein the mind interprets only a singularity; and likewise the mind can interpret meaning as manifold, wherein the corporeal interpretation is singular. Look at the love of God and neighbor, so simple in itself: we use all kinds of sacramental rites and countless languages and—within a single language—countless styles of speaking to express it in physical terms. In the same way the offspring of the waters increase and multiply. And again, just consider, you who are reading this: in one style Scripture suggests and the voice calls aloud, “in the beginning God made heaven and earth”—surely the meaning of this is interpreted in all kinds of ways, and not from mistakes and misunderstanding but because there exist schools of thought with different true interpretations? This corresponds to how human offspring increase and multiply.

(37) If, therefore, we consider the actual natures of things not allegorically but in literal terms, the phrase, “increase and multiply” is proper to every kind of thing which grows from seed.⁹⁰ But if we treat those things as being established in figurative terms—and I am inclined to determine that this was the intention of Scripture, which definitely did not attribute that blessing to the offspring of sea creatures and human beings alone without there being any meaning in the fact—we do indeed find

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invenimus quidem multitudines et in creaturis spiritalibus atque corporalibus tamquam in caelo et terra, et in animis iustis et iniquis tamquam in luce et tenebris, et in sanctis auctoribus per quos lex ministrata est tamquam in firmamento quod solidatum est inter aquam et aquam, et in societate amaricantium populorum tamquam in mari, et in studio piarum animarum tamquam in arida, et in operibus misericordiae secundum praesentem vitam tamquam in herbis seminalibus et lignis fructiferis, et in spiritalibus donis manifestatis ad utilitatem sicut in luminaribus caeli, et in affectibus formatis ad temperantiam tamquam in anima viva: in his omnibus nanciscimur multitudines et ubertates et incrementa. sed quod ita crescat et multiplicetur, ut una res multis modis enuntietur et una enuntiatio multis modis intellegatur, non invenimus nisi in signis corporaliter editis et rebus intellegibiliter excogitatis. signa corporaliter edita generationes aquarum propter necessarias causas carnalis profunditatis, res autem intellegibiliter excogitatas generationes humanas propter rationis fecunditatem intelleximus.³³ et ideo credidimus utrique horum generi dictum esse abs te, domine, "crescite et multiplicamini." in hac enim benedictione concessam nobis a te facultatem ac potestatem accipio et multis modis enuntiare quod uno modo intellectum tenerimus, et multis modis intellegere quod obscure uno

³³ intelleximus *codd. Ver. Knöll GM*: intellegimus *C D P Maur.*

⁹¹ Multiplicity of meaning and interpretation, an allegorization of the physical multiplication of living things.

⁹² Cf. *Conf.* 13.17.20.

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“multiplicity”⁹¹ in both spiritual and physical beings (corresponding to heaven and earth); and in righteous and unrighteous minds (corresponding to light and darkness); and in holy authorities who were ministers of the law (corresponding to the firmament which was established between the waters); and in the company of peoples in bitter alienation⁹² (corresponding to the sea); and in the zeal of faithful souls (corresponding to the dry land); and in the actions of mercy according to this present life (corresponding to the seed-bearing plants and fruit-bearing trees); and in the spiritual gifts revealed in order to do good (corresponding to the sun and moon in the sky); and in emotions directed toward self-control (corresponding to the living soul).⁹³ In all these things we find multiplicity and fertility and increase. But when it comes to what increases and multiplies in such a way that one thing can be stated in many ways, and one statement can be understood in many ways, we have not found this except in signs given physical form and in conceptions open to intellectual interpretation. We have interpreted these “signs given physical form” to be the reproductive fecundity of the waters, caused by the coercive drives of physical desire; whereas we understand “conceptions open to intellectual interpretation” to mean human reproductive fecundity, caused by the fertility of our reasoning mind. So we believed that you spoke, Lord, to both kinds when you said, “increase and multiply.” In this blessing that you granted to us, I accept the ability and the power you have given us both to state in various ways what we have held to be understood intel-

1 Cor 12:7

⁹³ The correspondences are not as obvious to A.'s modern readers as they seem to have been to himself.

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modo enuntiatum legerimus. sic implentur aquae maris, quae non moventur nisi variis significationibus,³⁴ sic et fetibus humanis impletur et terra, cuius ariditas apparet in studio, et dominatur ei ratio.

25. (38) Volo etiam dicere, domine deus meus, quod me consequens tua scriptura commonet, et dicam nec verebor. vera enim dicam te mihi inspirante quod ex eis verbis voluisti ut dicerem. neque enim alio praeter te inspirante credo me verum dicere, cum tu sis veritas, omnis autem homo mendax, et ideo qui loquitur mendacium, de suo loquitur. ergo ut verum loquar, de tuo loquor.

Ecce dedisti nobis in escam omne faenum sativum seminans semen quod est super omnem terram, et omne lignum quod habet in se fructum seminis sativi. nec nobis solis sed et omnibus avibus caeli et bestiis terrae atque serpentibus; piscibus autem et cetis magnis non dedisti haec. dicebamus enim eis terrae fructibus significari et in allegoria figurari opera misericordiae, quae huius vitae necessitatibus exhibentur ex terra fructifera. talis terra erat pius Onesiphorus, cuius domui dedisti misericordiam, quia frequenter Paulum tuum refrigeravit et catenam eius non erubuit. hoc fecerunt et fratres et tali fruge

³⁴ significationibus *codd. edd.*: significatibus S Knöll

⁹⁴ I.e., physical humanity needs stimulation by signs.

⁹⁵ I.e., human ideas and conceptions.

⁹⁶ For knowledge.

⁹⁷ See Gn 1:28. GM: "Allegorically, reason rules in the earth (representing the Church) in contrast with the carnal mind of 'the waters' (the world), which requires signs." Cf. *Conf.* 13.17.20-21, where "dry land" is equated with "souls thirsting after you."

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lectually in a single way; and to understand intellectually in various ways what we have found stated in our reading in a way which is simple—but arcane. Thus the waters of the sea are filled, for they are stirred only by a variety of meanings⁹⁴—and thus the earth also is filled with human progeny,⁹⁵ though its dryness is apparent in their eager thirst,⁹⁶ and reason rules over them.⁹⁷

Gn 1:22

25. (38) I also want to say, O Lord my God, what the following verse of your Scripture advises me, and I will say it, and will not be afraid.⁹⁸ For I will speak truth when you inspire me with what you wanted me to say about those words. Also, I do not believe that I can speak the truth if anyone but you inspires me, for you are Truth—whereas all of humanity are liars, so that anyone who speaks a lie, speaks of themselves. If I am to speak the truth, therefore, I must speak of what is proper to you.

Ps 116:11

Jn 8:44

Look! You have given us every fertile grass that is on all the earth, scattering its seed, and every tree that bears its fruit containing fertile seed. They were not just for us but for all the birds of the air and the animals and snakes upon earth: but you did not give these things for the fish and the great sea creatures. We were saying earlier⁹⁹ that these fruits of the earth symbolized and represented allegorically works of mercy that are produced from the fruitful earth for this life's needs. Loyal Onesiphorus was just such an "earth"; you bestowed mercy upon his house because he often refreshed your servant Paul and was not ashamed by his being in prison. His Christian brothers did

Gn 1:29

2 Tm 1:16

2 Cor 11:9

⁹⁸ A. reflects here on his role as a minister and his model, Paul.

⁹⁹ *Conf.* 13.17.21.

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fructificaverunt qui quod ei deerat suppleverunt ex Macedonia. quomodo autem dolet quaedam ligna quae fructum ei debitum non dederunt, ubi ait, "in prima mea defensione nemo mihi adfuit, sed omnes me dereliquerunt: non illis imputetur." *esca*³⁵ enim debetur eis qui ministrant doctrinam rationalem per intelligentias divinorum mysteriorum, et ita eis debetur tamquam hominibus. debetur autem eis (sicut animae vivae) praebentibus se ad imitandum in omni continentia. item debetur eis tamquam volatilibus propter benedictiones eorum, quae multiplicantur super terram, quoniam in omnem terram exiit sonus eorum.

26. (39) Pascuntur autem his *escis* qui laetantur eis, nec illi laetantur eis, quorum deus venter. neque enim et in illis qui praebent ista, ea quae dant fructus est, sed quo animo dant. itaque ille qui deo serviebat non suo ventri, video plane unde gaudeat, video et congratulor ei valde. acceperat enim a Philippensibus quae per Epaphroditum miserant; sed tamen unde gaudeat, video. unde autem gaudet, inde pascitur, quia in veritate loquens "gavisus sum," inquit, "magnifice in domino, quia tandem aliquando repullulastis sapere pro me, in quo sapiebatis; taedium autem habuistis." isti ergo diuturno taedio marcuerant et quasi exaruerant ab isto fructu boni operis, et gaudet eis, quia repullularunt, non sibi, quia eius indigentiae subvenerunt. ideo secutus ait, "non quod desit aliquid

³⁵ *esca* . . . debetur *Ver.* [OD: "Verheijen's best moment"]: ista . . . debentur *codd. Maur. Knöll Skut.*

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likewise, and yielded a similar fruitful harvest, when they supplied from Macedonia what he lacked. How distressed he is at certain trees which failed to yield the fruit they owed him, when he says, "At my first prosecution I had no one beside me, but they all deserted me: let it not be counted against them." Those who minister rational instruction through their understandings of the divine mysteries deserve to be fed, and they so deserve in virtue of their humanity. But it is due to them as to living souls because they offer themselves as examples for imitation in every kind of self-restraint. Similarly, it is due to them as to birds because their blessings are multiplied over the earth, because their sound has gone out into every land.

2 Tm 4:16

Gn 2:7

Ps 19:4

26. (39) Those who enjoy this food are nourished by it; those who do not enjoy it are people whose god is their belly. As for those who provide the food, it is not the provision they give that is the fruit, but their intention in giving. So as for the man who served God, and not his own belly, I understand clearly the source of his rejoicing, I understand and I heartily congratulate him. For he had received from the Philippians all that they had sent through Epaphroditus: but I understand the real source of his joy. What he rejoiced in was what he fed upon; because he spoke truly when he said, "I rejoice greatly in the Lord, because at last you once flourished in your appreciation of me—that appreciation you used to show formerly, but then you grew tired of it." Those Philippians had withered through longstanding weariness, and were, so to speak, too dried up for those fruits of a good work: and yet because they had flourished once more he is delighted with them—not delighted with himself because they had aided him in his moment of need. Next he goes

Phil 3:19

Rom 16:18

Phil 4:18

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dico; ego enim didici in quibus sum sufficiens esse. scio et minus habere, scio et abundare; in omnibus et in omni imbutus sum, et satiari et esurire et abundare et penuriam pati: omnia possum in eo qui me confortat."

(40) Unde ergo gaudes, o Paule magne? unde gaudes, unde pascaris, homo renovate in agnitione³⁶ dei secundum imaginem eius qui creavit te, et anima viva tanta continentia et lingua volatilis loquens mysteria? talibus quippe animantibus ista esca debetur. quid est quod te pascit? laetitia. quod sequitur audiam: "verum tamen," inquit, "bene fecistis communicantes tribulationi meae." hinc gaudet, hinc pascitur, quia illi bene fecerunt, non quia eius angustia relaxata est, qui dicit tibi, "in tribulatione dilatasti mihi," quia et abundare et penuriam pati novit in te, qui confortas eum. "scitis enim," inquit, "etiam vos, Philippenses, quoniam in principio evangelii, cum ex Macedonia sum profectus, nulla mihi ecclesia communicavit in ratione dati et accepti nisi vos soli, quia et Thessalonicam et semel et iterum usibus meis misistis." ad haec bona opera eos redisse nunc gaudet et repullulasse laetatur tamquam revivescente fertilitate agri.

(41) Numquid propter usus suos, quia dixit, "usibus meis misistis," numquid propterea gaudet? non propterea. et hoc unde scimus? quoniam ipse sequitur dicens, "non quia quaero datum, sed requiro fructum." didici a te, deus meus, inter datum et fructum discernere. datum est res

³⁶ agnitione *G O Ver.*: agnitionem *S C D Maur. Knöll Skut.*

¹⁰⁰ Oxymoron (the Latin adjective *paulus* means "small").

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on, "I do not say that anything is lacking; for I have learned to be content in every circumstance. I know how to cope with less, I know also how to enjoy abundance. In any and all situations I am prepared—to be full and to be hungry, to have plenty and to suffer lack. I can do all things in him who strengthens me." Phil 4:11-13

(40) What is the source of your joy, O mighty Paul?¹⁰⁰ What is the source of your joy, what do you feed upon? You are a man made new in your recognition of God according to the image of him who created you, and a living soul with such self-restraint and a tongue of such soaring eloquence to declare holy mysteries! To living beings such as this that food is due. What is it, then, that nourishes you? Joy. Let me hear what comes next: "But you did well by sharing in my difficulties." This is what he rejoices in, this is what he feeds on, the fact that they have done well, not because his predicament was solved—this man who says to you, "when I was hard-pressed you gave me space," because he knows how to cope with abundance and with lack, for you strengthen him. "For you know," he says, "even you Philippians, that since at the start of my evangelism when I set out from Macedonia, no church shared anything with me when it came to the business of giving and receiving, excepting you alone, because you sent to Thessalonica first once and then again to assist with my needs." So now he rejoices that they have returned once more, like a cultivated field recovering its fertility. Col 3:10
1 Cor 14:2
Ps 4:1
Phil 4:15-16

(41) Why did he really rejoice? Surely not because of his own needs (given that he said, "you sent me money for my needs"). For he goes on to say, "it is not because I am asking for a gift, but because I am expecting fruit." From you, O my God, I have learned to tell the difference be- Phil 4:17

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ipsa quam dat qui impertitur haec necessaria, veluti est nummus, cibus, potus, vestimentum, tectum, adiutorium. fructus autem bona et recta voluntas datoris est. non enim ait magister bonus "qui susceperit prophetam" tantum, sed addidit "in nomine prophetae"; neque ait tantum "qui susceperit iustum," sed addidit "in nomine iusti"; ita quippe ille mercedem prophetae, iste mercedem iusti accipiet. nec solum ait "qui calicem aquae frigidae potum dederit uni ex minimis meis," sed addidit "tantum in nomine discipuli," et sic adiunxit, "amen dico vobis, non perdet mercedem suam." datum est suscipere prophetam, suscipere iustum, porrigere calicem aquae frigidae discipulo; fructus autem in nomine prophetae, in nomine iusti, in nomine discipuli hoc facere. fructu pascitur Helias a vidua sciente quod hominem dei pasceret et propter hoc pasceret; per corvum autem dato pascebatur. nec interior Helias sed exterior pascebatur, qui posset etiam talis cibi egestate corrumpi.

27. (42) Ideoque dicam quod verum est coram te, domine, cum homines idiotae atque infideles, quibus initiandis atque lucrandis necessaria sunt sacramenta initiorum et magnalia miraculorum, quae nomine piscium et cetorum significari credidimus,³⁷ suscipiunt corporaliter refi-

³⁷ credidimus *G O C D Ver.*: credimus *S Maur. Knöll Skut.*

¹⁰¹ *Amen*: from the Hebrew verb, "confirm," used adverbially in the sense of "truly." Preserved in LXX, Vg, and good English versions of Scripture.

¹⁰² A. ends a train of thought that began at 13.26.39. At *En. Ps.* 103.3.11, A. epigrammatizes Elijah and the raven as "Nature serving the needs of the servant of God."

¹⁰³ Cf. *Conf.* 13.20.26, 21.29.

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tween gift and fruit. A gift is the actual thing that someone gives when providing us with necessities, for example cash, food, drink, clothing, shelter, help. Whereas fruit consists in the good and fitting intention of the giver. Our good teacher did not simply say, "who receives a prophet," but added, "in the name of a prophet"; nor did he say only, "who receives someone righteous," but added, "in the name of someone righteous." So the one will surely receive a prophet's reward, and the other the reward of the righteous. Nor, for that matter, does he only say, "whoever gives a cup of cold water to one of my little ones for them to drink," instead he adds, "just in the name of a disciple," and so he added, "Amen¹⁰¹ I say to you, they will not lose their reward." A gift consists in receiving a prophet, or someone righteous, or offering a cup of cold water to a disciple; whereas fruit consists in doing these things because the person is a prophet, or righteous, or a disciple. Elijah was fed by fruit that came from a widow who knew that it was a man of God she was feeding, and who fed him for that reason: but the food he ate from the raven was a gift. And Elijah was not fed in his interior self, but only in his exterior self, that part of him which might perish for want of such food.¹⁰²

27. (42) So shall I say what is true in your presence, Lord? For their induction and conversion, people who are ignorant unbelievers require the sacraments of initiation and the mighty wonders,¹⁰³ which we believe are signified by the terms "fishes and whales." Such people receive your servants¹⁰⁴ to offer them refreshment for their bodies, or

Mt 10:41-42

1 Kgs 17:6,
10-15

1 Cor 14:23

Gn 1:21

¹⁰⁴ *pueri*: can mean "children" or "servants" according to context. Here the sense of "those who do the Lord's will" is uppermost.

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ciendos aut in aliquo usu praesentis vitae adiuvandos pue-
ros tuos, cum id quare faciendum sit et quo pertineat³⁸
ignorent, nec illi istos pascunt nec isti ab illis pascuntur,
quia nec illi haec sancta et recta voluntate operantur nec
isti eorum datis, ubi fructum nondum vident, laetantur.
inde quippe animus pascitur, unde laetatur. et ideo pisces
et ceti non vescuntur escis quas non germinat nisi iam
terra ab amaritudine marinorum fluctuum distincta atque
discreta.

28. (43) Et vidisti, deus, omnia quae fecisti, et ecce
bona valde, quia et nos videmus³⁹ ea, et ecce omnia bona
valde. in singulis generibus operum tuorum, cum dixisses
ut fierent, et facta essent, illud atque illud vidisti quia
bonum est. septies numeravi scriptum esse te vidisse quia
bonum est quod fecisti; et hoc octavum est quia vidisti
omnia quae fecisti, et ecce non solum bona sed etiam
valde bona tamquam simul omnia. nam singula tantum
bona erant, simul autem omnia et bona et valde. hoc di-
cunt etiam quaeque pulchra corpora, quia longe multo
pulchrius est corpus quod ex membris pulchris omnibus
constat quam ipsa membra singula quorum ordinatissimo
conventu completur universum, quamvis et illa etiam sin-
gillatim pulchra sunt.

29. (44) Et attendi, ut invenirem utrum septies vel
octies videris quia bona sunt opera tua, cum tibi placue-

³⁸ pertineat *G Maur. Knöll Skut. Ver.*: pertineant *S O C D*

³⁹ videmus *codd. edd.*: vidimus *P Maur.*

¹⁰⁵ As previously, not only right action but right motivation
(*voluntas*) is key. ¹⁰⁶ Cf *Conf.* 7.12.18.

¹⁰⁷ *longe multo*: two adverbs, "a curious pleonasm" (GM).

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to help in some practical matter of earthly living. But since they do not know why they should do so, and what it means, those people are not feeding your servants, neither are they fed by them, because they are not performing these functions at the prompting of a holy and righteous will; nor do your children rejoice in what they give them, where they do not yet see any fruit. So indeed the mind is fed by what it rejoices over.¹⁰⁵ For this reason, the fish and whales are not nourished by foods which the earth only brings into growth once it is separate and distinct from the bitterness of the sea's waves.

28. (43) O God, you saw everything that you made, and look!—it was very good.¹⁰⁶ Now we too see it all, and look!—all of it is very good. In each category of thing that you created, when you had said that it should come into being, and it was made, you saw that one thing and then the next was good. I have counted seven times when it is written that you saw that what you made was good; and it was on the eighth time that you saw everything that you made, and look!—it was not only “good” but “very good” when taken together as a whole. Taken individually, they were merely “good,” but taken all together they were both good and very much so. Every kind of beautiful body tells the same story. This is because a body that consists of parts, all of which are beautiful, is itself far more¹⁰⁷ beautiful taken as a whole than the parts can be when taken individually—parts which, even though they are beautiful individually, come together to accomplish an even more attractive whole.

29. (44) I concentrated on working out whether it was seven times or eight that you saw your works were good, when they pleased you: but I found that there was no time

Gn 1:31;
Sir 39:21

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runt, et in tua visione non inveni tempora per quae intellegerem quod totiens videris quae fecisti, et dixi, "o domine, nonne ista scriptura tua vera est, quoniam tu verax et veritas edidisti eam? cur ergo tu mihi dicis non esse in tua visione tempora, et ista⁴⁰ scriptura tua mihi dicit per singulos dies ea quae fecisti te vidisse quia bona sunt, et cum ea numerarem, inveni quotiens?"

Ad haec tu dicis mihi, quoniam tu es deus meus et dicis voce forti in aure interiore servo tuo, perrumpens meam surditatem et clamans: "o homo, nempe quod scriptura mea dicit, ego dico. et tamen illa temporaliter dicit, verbo autem meo tempus non accedit, quia aequali mecum aeternitate consistit. sic ea quae vos per spiritum meum videtis ego video, sicut ea quae vos per spiritum meum dicitis ego dico. atque ita cum vos temporaliter ea videatis, non ego temporaliter video, quemadmodum, cum vos temporaliter ea dicatis, non ego temporaliter dico."

30. (45) Et audivi, domine deus meus, et elinxi stillam dulcedinis ex tua veritate, et intellexi quoniam sunt quidam quibus displicent opera tua, et multa eorum dicunt te fecisse necessitate compulsam, sicut fabricas caelorum et compositiones siderum, et hoc non de tuo, sed iam fuisse alibi creata et aliunde, quae tu contraheres et compaginares atque contexeres, cum de hostibus victis mundana moenia molireris, ut ea constructione devincti⁴¹ ad-

⁴⁰ ista *codd. edd.*: ita S Knöll

⁴¹ devincti S P Knöll Skut.: devicti *codd. Ver.*

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *Conf.* 10.27.38.

¹⁰⁹ OD: "The speech draws together the three last books."

¹¹⁰ Manichees.

¹¹¹ Powerful alliteration—*mundana moenia molireris.*

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subsistent in your act of seeing such as would allow me to make sense of how you repeatedly "saw what you made." Then I said, "O Lord, surely this scripture of yours is true, for you are truthful and, being Truth itself, you have brought it into being? So why then do you tell me that no times exist in your act of seeing, when that scripture of yours tells me that day after day you looked at the things that you made because they are good? And why, when I counted them, was I able to establish a certain number?" Jn 3:33, 14:6

You tell me in reply that you are my God, and you speak with a strong voice to my inner ear, for I am your servant: you break through my deafness¹⁰⁸ and cry: "O humanity¹⁰⁹—of course what my scripture says is what I say! Nevertheless it speaks in a way that is subject to time; whereas my Word is untouched by time, for it exists with me in coeternity. So what you see by my Spirit is what I see, just as what you say through my Spirit is what I say. This is why, when you see things in a way that is subject to time, that is not how I see them; and in the same way, when you say things in a way that is subject to time, that is not how I say them."

30. (45) I did hear you, O Lord my God, and I licked up a drop of sweetness from your truth, and I understood that there are people of a certain type¹¹⁰ who are displeased with your works, and they say that you were constrained by necessity when you made many of them, for example the construction of the heavens and the arrangement of the stars; and that this was not your work but had already been created somewhere else, and by some other being. They say that you did the assembling, the joining, and the covering; that from the defeat of your enemies you built the walls of this world,¹¹¹ so that this structure of

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versus te iterum rebellare non possent; alia vero nec fecisse te nec omnino compegisse, sicut omnes carnes et minutissima quaeque animantia et quidquid radicibus terram tenet, sed hostilem mentem naturamque aliam non abs te conditam tibi que contrariam in inferioribus mundi locis ista gignere atque formare. insani dicunt haec, quoniam non per spiritum tuum vident opera tua nec te cognoscunt in eis.

31. (46) Qui autem per spiritum tuum vident ea, tu vides in eis. ergo cum vident quia bona sunt, tu vides quia bona sunt, et quaecumque propter te placent, tu in eis places, et quae per spiritum tuum placent nobis, tibi placent in nobis. quis enim scit hominum quae sunt hominis, nisi spiritus hominis qui in ipso est? sic et quae dei sunt nemo scit nisi spiritus dei. "nos autem," inquit, "non spiritum huius mundi accepimus, sed spiritum, qui ex deo est, ut sciamus quae a deo donata sunt nobis."

Et admoneor ut dicam, "certe nemo scit quae dei sunt, nisi spiritus dei. quomodo ergo scimus et nos quae a deo donata sunt nobis?" respondetur mihi quoniam quae per eius spiritum scimus etiam sic nemo scit nisi spiritus dei. sicut enim recte dictum est, "non enim vos estis, qui loquimini," eis qui in dei spiritu loquerentur, sic recte dicitur, "non vos estis, qui scitis," eis qui in dei spiritu sciunt. nihilo minus igitur recte dicitur, "non vos estis, qui videtis," eis

¹¹² Cf. Is 40:6, "All flesh (sg.) is grass" (*omnis caro faenum*).

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yours would defeat them and they would be unable to rebel against you any more. They also say that there are other things that you neither made nor framed in any way whatever: all creatures,¹¹² even the smallest living beings and whatever clings to the earth by its roots. Instead they say that a mind at war with yours, and with an alien nature—not created by you, and at odds with you—generated and shaped those creatures in the lower regions of the world. The people who say this are out of their minds, because they do not see your works through your Spirit, and do not recognize you in them.

31. (46) As for those who see these things through your Spirit, really it is you seeing in them. So when they see that things are good, it is you who are seeing that things are good; and whatever things they take pleasure in because of you, you are the one evoking pleasure in them; and whatever things give us pleasure through your Spirit, gives you pleasure in us. What human being knows what is proper to humanity, except the human spirit which is indwelling? So also no one knows what is proper to God except the Spirit of God. “But we have not received the spirit of this world,” it says, “but the Spirit which is from God, so that we can know what God has given to us.”

1 Cor 2:11

1 Cor 2:12

I am reminded to say, “surely no one knows what comes from God, except the Spirit of God. How, then, can we also know what are the gifts God has given to us?” The answer comes to me: whatever we know by his Spirit, no one actually knows except the Spirit of God. Just as it was rightly said to those who were speaking in the Spirit of God, “it is not you who are speaking,” so it is rightly said to those who have knowledge in the Spirit of God, “it is not you who have knowledge.” Equally, it is rightly said to

Mt 10:20

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qui in spiritu dei vident. ita quidquid in spiritu dei vident quia bonum est, non ipsi sed deus videt, quia bonum est.

Aliud ergo est ut putet quisque malum esse quod bonum est, quales supra dicti sunt; aliud ut quod bonum est videat homo quia bonum est, sicut multis tua creatura placet, quia bona est, quibus tamen non tu places in ea, unde frui magis ipsa quam te volunt; aliud autem ut, cum aliquid videt homo quia bonum est, deus in illo videat quia bonum est, ut scilicet ille ametur in eo quod fecit, qui non amaretur nisi per spiritum quem dedit, quoniam caritas dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis, per quem videmus quia bonum est, quidquid aliquo modo est: ab illo enim est qui non aliquo modo est, sed est est.

32. (47) Gratias tibi, domine! videmus caelum et terram, sive corporalem partem superiorem atque inferiorem sive spiritalem corporalemque creaturam, atque in ornatu harum partium, quibus constat vel universa mundi moles vel universa omnino creatura, videmus lucem factam divinsamque a tenebris. videmus firmamentum caeli, sive inter spirituales aquas superiores et corporales inferiores, primum corpus mundi, sive hoc spatium aeris, quia et hoc vocatur caelum, per quod vagantur volatilia caeli inter aquas, quae vaporaliter ei superferuntur et serenae etiam

¹¹³ *est est*: an echo of Ex 3:14 (*ego sum qui sum*^{Vg}).

¹¹⁴ *videmus*: vivid present tense, repeated eight times, in this emphatic position as first word of each sentence—a passage more lyrical than exegetical.

¹¹⁵ See *Retr.* 2.6. A. remarks on only two elements in *Conf.* with which he is unhappy: this is the second. He says, "This remark was inadequately scrutinized; for the matter is extremely arcane" (*non satis considerate dictum est; res autem in abdito est valde*).

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those who see things in the Spirit of God, "it is not you who are doing the seeing." Whatever they see as being good, therefore, in the Spirit of God, it is not they but God who sees that it is good.

It is a different matter when someone considers something to be bad, when in fact it is good, as was mentioned earlier. And it is a different matter again for people to see what is good and recognize its goodness—as, for example, your creation, which delights many by its goodness—but in that creation they find no pleasure in you, for creation is what they want to enjoy, rather than you. It is different again that when people see that something is good, it is God within them who sees that it is good, so that God is certainly loved in what he has made, and he would not be loved except by the Spirit which he has given, since the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us: through it we see that whatever exists, to some degree, is good; for its existence comes from him who is not existent to some degree, but is existence itself.¹¹³

Rom 5:5

32. (47) Thank you, Lord! We see¹¹⁴ heaven and earth, whether the corporeal part (both higher and lower), or the spiritual and corporeal creation together: in the adornment of these parts, which make up the bulk of the world whole and complete, or the whole creation altogether, we see the light that was made and divided from darkness. We see the firmament of heaven: whether between the spiritual waters above and the corporeal waters below,¹¹⁵ the primordial frame of the world, or this expanse of air which is also called heaven, through which the birds in the sky make their way between waters which pass above them

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noctibus rorant, et has quae in terris graves fluitant. videmus congregatarum aquarum speciem per campos maris et aridam terram vel nudatam vel formatam, ut esset visibilis et composita, herbarumque atque arborum materiem.⁴² videmus luminaria fulgere desuper, solem sufficere diēi, lunam et stellas consolari noctem atque his omnibus notari et significari tempora. videmus umidam usquequaque naturam piscibus et beluis et alitibus fecundatam, quod aeris corpulentia, quae volatus avium portat, aquarum exhalatione concrescit. videmus terrenis animalibus faciem terrae decorari hominemque ad imaginem et similitudinem tuam cunctis inrationabilibus animantibus ipsa tua imagine ac similitudine, hoc est rationis et intelligentiae virtute, praeponi, et quemadmodum in eius anima aliud est quod consulendo dominatur, aliud quod subditur ut obtemperet, sic viro factam esse etiam corporaliter feminam, quae haberet quidem in mente rationalis intelligentiae parem naturam, sexu tamen corporis ita masculino sexui subiceretur, quemadmodum subicitur appetitus actionis ad concipiendam de ratione mentis recte agendi sollertiam. videmus haec et singula bona et omnia bona valde.

⁴² materiem *codd. edd.*: mater S O Knöll Skut. Ver.

¹¹⁶ GM: "There is a Virgilian ring in this stately phrase." OD points to *Pervig. Ven.* 20 (*serenis astra rorant noctibus*).

¹¹⁷ Cf. *Conf.* 12.12.15, n. 30.

¹¹⁸ Allusion to Virgil, *Aen.* 10.214 (*campos salis*).

¹¹⁹ GM: "A poetic touch." The idea of moon and stars as comforting recurs at *Gn. Litt.* 2.13.27, *En. Ps.* 146.9.

¹²⁰ Cf. Gn 1:20—the birds originate from such waters.

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like vapor and fall as dew on nights when air is still,¹¹⁶ and those which surge and flow in power here on earth. We see the beauty of the massed waters¹¹⁷ across the calm surface of the sea,¹¹⁸ and the dry land emerging unclothed and taking shape, to become visible and constituted so as to provide a substrate for plants and trees. We see the lights of heaven shining from on high: the sun making provision for the day, the moon and stars bringing comfort to the night¹¹⁹—and all of them marking out and indicating time. We see the natural realm of water on every side, made fruitful with fish and sea creatures, and birds on the wing as well (because the physical density of air that raises up the birds' flight is increased by evaporation from the waters).¹²⁰ We see the face of the earth endowed with land animals: and humanity, in your image and likeness, set in authority over all irrational creatures, by virtue of your actual image and likeness (which means in virtue of humanity's reason and understanding). Just as in the soul one part is in control and makes decisions, and another is in subjection to it and is obedient, so too in physical terms woman was also made for man, having an equal nature in terms of her mental capacity for reason and understanding, but as far as her physical sexual identity as a woman is concerned, she is in subjection to the sexual identity of a man. Likewise, an urge to take action is in subjection to such mental understanding as produces the skilled knowledge to act rightly.¹²¹ We see these things and all of them are good, and all together they are very good.

Gn 7:3, etc.

Gn 1:31

¹²¹ A. accepts hierarchy, domination, and subjection as written into the fabric of the created natural order. Corroboration for this was ubiquitous in his social milieu, however alien to modern readers.

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33. (48) Laudant te opera tua ut amemus te, et amamus te ut laudent te opera tua. habent initium et finem ex tempore, ortum et occasum, profectum et defectum, speciem et privationem. habent ergo consequentia mane et vesperam, partim latenter partim evidenter. de nihilo enim a te, non de te facta sunt, non de aliqua non tua vel quae antea fuerit, sed de concreata, id est simul a te creata materia, quia eius informitatem sine ulla temporis interpositione formasti. nam cum aliud sit caeli et terrae materies, aliud caeli et terrae species, materiem quidem de omnino nihilo, mundi autem speciem de informi materia, simul tamen utrumque fecisti, ut materiam forma nulla morae intercapedine sequeretur.

34. (49) Inspeximus etiam propter quorum figuratorem ista vel tali ordine fieri vel tali ordine scribi voluisti, et vidimus quia bona sunt singula et omnia bona valde in verbo tuo, in unico tuo, caelum et terra,⁴³ caput et corpus ecclesiae, in praedestinatione ante omnia tempora sine mane et vespera. ubi autem coepisti praedestinata temporaliter exequi, ut occulta manifestares et incomposita nostra componeres (quoniam super nos erant peccata nostra et in profundum tenebrosum abieramus abs te, et spiritus

⁴³ terra *cj.* *OD:* terram *codd. edd.*

¹²² If *species* is beauty in the sense of form, *privatio* here means the lack of such form. ¹²³ Cf. *Qu. Hept.* 5.23, "It is not to no purpose that the Father calls the Lord not 'an only child' but 'the only one of his kind,' which in Latin is *unigenitus*, or its synonym *unicus*" (*non frustra Dominus non dicitur a Patre μονότοκος sed μονογενής, id est unigenitus, quod est unicus*).

¹²⁴ Only elsewhere in *Conf.* at 5.9.17.

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33. (48) Your works praise you in such a way that we love you, and we love you in such a way that your works praise you. From time comes their beginning and end, their rising and setting, their growth and decay, their beauty and its loss.¹²² Thus they have their succession of morning and evening, part obscure, part evident. They were made not from you, but by you, out of nothing: not from some substance not your own which already existed, but from material created together, that is, material created by you in that moment, because you gave shape to its shapelessness without so much as a fraction of time having elapsed. Because the material of which heaven and earth are made is one thing, while the form of heaven and earth is something else, you made the matter out of absolutely nothing, but the form of the world you made from unshapen matter: and you did both at the same time, so that form would follow matter without so much as a moment's delay.

34. (49) We have also investigated these things in terms of a figurative mode of interpretation, whether you wished them to take place in that particular order, or to be written down in that particular order. We have seen that all these things individually are good, and collectively are very good in your Word, your only-begotten¹²³—heaven and earth, Col 1:18
the head and body of the Church, in its predestination¹²⁴
before all times, before morning and evening came into Gn 1:5
being. But when, in time, you began to set in action what
you had predestined, so as to make plain what was for- Ps 51:6
merly hidden and to modulate our chaotic nature (for our Ez 33:10
sins were weighing us down, and we had strayed from you
into the deepest darkness, and your good Spirit was mov- Ps 32:6

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tuus bonus superferebatur ad subveniendum nobis in tempore opportuno), et iustificasti impios et distinxisti eos ab iniquis et solidasti auctoritatem libri tui inter superiores, qui tibi dociles essent, et inferiores, qui ei⁴⁴ subderentur, et congregasti societatem infidelium in unam conspiracyem, ut apparerent studia fidelium, ut tibi opera misericordiae parerent, distribuentes etiam pauperibus terrenas facultates ad acquirenda caelestia.

Et inde accendisti quaedam luminaria in firmamento, verbum vitae habentes sanctos tuos et spiritualibus donis praelata sublimi auctoritate fulgentes; et inde ad imbuedas infideles gentes sacramenta et miracula visibilia vocesque verborum secundum firmamentum libri tui, quibus etiam fideles benedicerentur, ex materia corporali produxisti; et deinde fidelium animam vivam per affectus ordinatos continentiae vigore formasti, atque inde tibi soli mentem subditam et nullius auctoritatis humanae ad imitandum indigentem renovasti ad imaginem et similitudinem tuam, praestantique intellectui rationabilem actionem tamquam viro feminam subdidisti, omnibusque tuis ministeriis ad perficiendos fideles in hac vita necessariis ab eisdem fidelibus ad usus temporales fructuosa in futurum opera praeberi voluisti.

Haec omnia videmus et bona sunt valde, quoniam tu ea vides in nobis, qui spiritum quo ea videremus et in eis te amaremus dedisti nobis.

⁴⁴ ei [sc. libro] *G O Ver.*: eis *S C D Maur. Knöll Skut.*

¹²⁵ A term derived from *Vg*, referring to all nations apart from the Jewish people. ¹²⁶ Cf. *Conf.* 13.15.16. ¹²⁷ A. returns to the sensitive matter of payment for ministry; cf. *Conf.* 13.25.38.

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ing over us to help us at the right time), you then made sinners righteous and set them apart from the transgressors, and reinforced the foundational power of your book among the higher beings (who were obedient to you) and among the lower beings (who were subject to the book). Then also you gathered together the throng of unbelievers into a body with a common purpose, to highlight the zeal of the faithful—so that they would bring forth works of mercy for you, such as giving to the poor from their earthly wealth so as to secure wealth in heaven.

Next you lit those particular lights in the firmament, your holy ones who have the Word of life, and who shine with the transcendent authority conferred by spiritual gifts. Then, to teach the unbelieving Gentiles,¹²⁵ out of physical matter you devised sacraments, and visible wonders, and sounds of words in accordance with the firmament that is your book:¹²⁶ and they proved to be a blessing to the faithful also. Then you formed the living soul of those who were believers, through emotions regulated by a strong impulse toward self-control; and next you renewed their mind in your image and likeness, making it obedient to you alone, with no need to imitate any human authority. You made rational action subject to intellect's supreme control, as woman is subject to man. You also willed that the faithful should offer support (which will bear fruit in the life to come) to all your ministers for their daily needs; ministers who are vital to the perfecting of the same faithful believers in this present life.¹²⁷

We see all these things and they are very good because you see them in us, for you have given us the Spirit to help us see them, and love you through them.

Gn 1:15

Jn 6:68

1 Cor 12:7

8

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35. (50) Domine deus, pacem da nobis (omnia enim praestitisti nobis), pacem quietis, pacem sabbati, pacem sine vespera. omnis quippe iste ordo pulcherrimus rerum valde bonarum modis suis peractis transiturus est. et mane quippe in eis factum est et vespera.

36. (51) Dies autem septimus sine vespera est nec habet occasum, quia sanctificasti eum ad permansionem sempiternam, ut id, quod tu post opera tua bona valde, quamvis ea quietus feceris, requievisti septimo die, hoc praelequatur nobis vox libri tui, quod et nos post opera nostra ideo bona valde, quia tu nobis ea donasti, sabbato vitae aeternae requiescamus in te.

37. (52) Etiam tunc enim sic requiesces in nobis, quemadmodum nunc operaris in nobis, et ita erit illa requies tua per nos, quemadmodum sunt ista opera tua per nos. tu autem, domine, semper operaris et semper requiescis, nec vides ad tempus nec moveris ad tempus nec quiescis ad tempus, et tamen facis et visiones temporales et ipsa tempora et quietem ex tempore.

38. (53) Nos itaque ista quae fecisti videmus, quia sunt, tu autem quia vides ea, sunt. et nos foris videmus quia sunt, et intus quia bona sunt; tu autem ibi vidisti facta, ubi vidisti facienda. et nos alio tempore moti sumus ad bene faciendum, posteaquam concepit de spiritu tuo cor nostrum; priore autem tempore ad male faciendum movebamur deserentes te: tu vero, deus une bone, numquam cessasti bene facere. et sunt quaedam bona opera nostra

¹²⁸ OD: "There is no direct exegesis of the seventh day of creation, but that text is implicitly on the table from here to the end." Cf. *De civ. D.* 9.17, 22.30.

¹²⁹ See *De civ. D.* 11.8 for how A. metaphorizes God's "resting."

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35. (50) Lord God, grant us peace (for you have bestowed everything on us), the peace of rest, the peace of the sabbath, peace where evening never comes.¹²⁸ Surely the whole order of things that are very good, however beautiful, will pass away once its proper span is completed—for in them “there was morning and there was evening.”

Nm 6:26; Is
26:12; 2
Thes 3:16
Gn 2:2

Gn 1:31

36. (51) But the seventh day has no evening and no sunset, because you have sanctified it to abide eternally. As a result, the voice of your book would tell us that after your works of creation that were “very good” (even though you did them in a state of repose) you still truly “rested on the seventh day,”¹²⁹ as a promise that we too, after our works (likewise “very good” because you bestowed them on us), should rest in you in the Sabbath of eternal life.

Gn 2:2

37. (52) Even then you will rest in us, as now you are at work in us; and so that rest of yours will pervade us just as those works of yours pervade us now. But you, Lord, are always at work and always in repose: you do not see in time, act in time, rest in time; but yet you create our seeing in time, and time itself, and rest in time.

38. (53) And so we see those things that you have made, that they exist; but as for you, it is because you see them that they exist at all. Outwardly we see that they exist, and inwardly we see that they are good: but you saw them made in the very place where you saw that they needed to be made. At one time, we had the impulse to do good, after our heart conceived by your Holy Spirit; in former times we were being impelled to do evil, while we abandoned you. But you, O God, the One, the Good, you never ceased to act well. There are works we have done that are

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ex munere quidem tuo, sed non sempiterna: post illa nos requieturos in tua grandi sanctificatione speramus. tu autem bonum nullo indigens bono semper quietus es, quoniam tua quies tu ipse es.

Et hoc intellegere quis hominum dabit homini?
Quis angelus angelo?
Quis angelus homini?
A te petatur,
In te quaeratur,
Ad te pulsetur:
Sic, sic accipietur,
Sic invenietur,
Sic aperietur.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ aperietur *S Knöll Skut. Ver.:* aperietur. amen *G O C D Maur.*

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good—by your gift—but they are not everlasting: after them, we hope to repose in your immeasurable hallowing. You are the Good, you need no good thing, you are always at rest, since you yourself are your own rest.

What human being can give another the power to understand this?

What angel can give it to another angel?¹³⁰

What angel can give it to a mortal?

We must ask it of you.

We must seek it from you.

We must knock at your door.

This, this, is how it will be received.

This is how it will be found.

This is how it will be opened.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Knauer, "Psalmenzitate," 156n2, identifies this as the angel of Rv 22:6.

¹³¹ The closing section is a re-presentation of Mt 7:7–8, a "kind of refrain" (GM) picking up *Conf.* 12.1.1 and answering its questioning. OD notes the shift from subjunctive to indicative, marking the surety of the promises.



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