

be disentangled also from this their error. For it is blasphemy to believe or to say (even before it can be understood) that any other than God is creator of any nature, be it never so small and mortal. And as for the angels, whom those Platonists prefer to call gods, although they do, so far as they are permitted and commissioned, aid in the production of the things around us, yet not on that account are we to call them creators, any more than we call gardeners the creators of fruits and trees.

begin 25. *That God alone is the Creator of every kind of creature, whatever its nature or form*

For whereas there is one form which is given from without to every bodily substance—such as the form which is constructed by potters and smiths, and that class of artists who paint and fashion forms like the body of animals—but another and internal form which is not itself constructed, but, as the efficient cause, produces not only the natural bodily forms, but even the life itself of the living creatures, and which proceeds from the secret and hidden choice of an intelligent and living nature—let that first-mentioned form be attributed to every artificer, but this latter to one only, God, the Creator and Originator who made the world itself and the angels, without the help of world or angels. For the same divine and, so to speak, creative energy, which cannot be made, but makes, and which gave to the earth and sky their roundness—this same divine, effective, and creative energy gave their roundness to the eye and to the apple; and the other natural objects which we anywhere see, received also their form, not from without, but from the secret and profound might of the Creator, who said, “Do not I fill heaven and earth?”⁴⁴ and whose wisdom it is that “reacheth from one end to another mightily; and sweetly doth she order all things.”⁴⁵ Wherefore I know not what kind of aid the angels, themselves created first, afforded to the Creator in making other things. I cannot ascribe to them what perhaps they cannot do, neither ought I to deny them such faculty as they have. But, by their leave, I attribute the creating and originating work which gave being to all natures to God, to whom they themselves thankfully ascribe their existence. We do not call gardeners the creators of their fruits, for we read, “Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.”⁴⁶ Nay, not even the earth itself do we call a creator, though she seems to be the prolific mother of all things which she aids in generating and bursting forth from the seed, and which she keeps rooted in her own breast; for we likewise read, “God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body.”⁴⁷ We ought not

⁴⁴ Jer. xxiii. 24. ⁴⁵ Wisdom, viii. 1.

⁴⁶ 1 Cor. iii. 7. ⁴⁷ 1 Cor. xv. 38.

even to call a woman the creatress of her own offspring; for He rather is its creator who said to His servant, "Before I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee."⁴⁸ And although the various mental emotions of a pregnant woman do produce in the fruit of her womb similar qualities—as Jacob with his peeled wands caused piebald sheep to be produced—yet the mother as little creates her offspring, as she created herself. Whatever bodily or seminal causes, then, may be used for the production of things, either by the co-operation of angels, men, or the lower animals, or by sexual generation; and whatever power the desires and mental emotions of the mother have to produce in the tender and plastic foetus, corresponding lineaments and colours; yet the natures themselves, which are thus variously affected, are the production of none but the most high God. It is His occult power which pervades all things, and is present in all without being contaminated, which gives being to all that is, and modifies and limits its existence; so that without Him it would not be thus or thus, nor would have any being at all.⁴⁹ If, then, in regard to that outward form which the workman's hand imposes on his work, we do not say that Rome and Alexandria were built by masons and architects, but by the kings by whose will, plan, and resources they were built, so that the one has Romulus, the other Alexander, for its founder; with how much greater reason ought we to say that God alone is the Author of all natures, since He neither uses for His work any material which was not made by Him, nor any workmen who were not also made by Him, and since, if He were, so to speak, to withdraw from created things His creative power, they would straightway relapse into the nothingness in which they were before they were created? "Before," I mean, in respect of eternity, not of time. For what other creator could there be of time, than He who created those things whose movements make time? ⁵⁰

26. *Of that opinion of the Platonists, that the angels were themselves indeed created by God, but that afterwards they created man's body*

It is obvious, that in attributing the creation of the other animals to those inferior gods who were made by the Supreme, he meant it to be understood that the immortal part was taken from God Himself, and that these minor creators added the mortal part; that is to say, he meant them to be considered the creators of our bodies, but not of our souls. But since Porphyry maintains that if the soul is to be purified, all entanglement with a body must be escaped from; and at the same time agrees with Plato and the Platonists in thinking that those who have not spent a temperate and honourable life return to mortal bodies as their punishment (to bodies of brutes in Plato's opinion, to human

⁴⁸ Jer. i. 5.

⁴⁹ Compare *de Trin.* iii. 13-16. ⁵⁰ See Book xi. 5.

BOOK THIRTEENTH

ARGUMENT

IN THIS BOOK IT IS TAUGHT THAT DEATH IS PENAL, AND HAD ITS
ORIGIN IN ADAM'S SIN.

1. *Of the fall of the first man, through which mortality has been contracted*

HAVING disposed of the very difficult questions concerning the origin of our world and the beginning of the human race, the natural order requires that we now discuss the fall of the first man (we may say of the first men), and of the origin and propagation of human death. For God had not made man like the angels, in such a condition that, even though they had sinned, they could none the more die. He had so made them, that if they discharged the obligations of obedience, an angelic immortality and a blessed eternity might ensue, without the intervention of death; but if they disobeyed, death should be visited on them with just sentence—which, too, has been spoken to in the preceding book.

2. *Of that death which can affect an immortal soul, and of that to which the body is subject*

But I see I must speak a little more carefully of the nature of death. For although the human soul is truly affirmed to be immortal, yet it also has a certain death of its own. For it is therefore called immortal, because, in a sense, it does not cease to live and to feel; while the body is called mortal, because it can be forsaken of all life, and cannot by itself live at all. The death, then, of the soul takes place when God forsakes it, as the death of the body when the soul forsakes it. Therefore the death of both—that is, of the whole man—occurs when the soul, forsaken by God, forsakes the body. For, in this case, neither is God the life of the soul, nor the soul the life of the body. And this death of the whole man is followed by that which, on the authority of the divine oracles, we call the second death. This the Saviour referred to when He said, "Fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."¹ And since this does not happen before the soul is so joined to its body that they cannot be separated at all, it may be matter of wonder how

¹ Matt. x. 28.

the body can be said to be killed by that death in which it is not forsaken by the soul, but, being animated and rendered sensitive by it, is tormented. For in that penal and everlasting punishment, of which in its own place we are to speak more at large, the soul is justly said to die, because it does not live in connection with God; but how can we say that the body is dead, seeing that it lives by the soul? For it could not otherwise feel the bodily torments which are to follow the resurrection. Is it because life of every kind is good, and pain an evil, that we decline to say that that body lives, in which the soul is the cause, not of life, but of pain? The soul, then, lives by God when it lives well, for it cannot live well unless by God working in it what is good; and the body lives by the soul when the soul lives in the body, whether itself be living by God or no. For the wicked man's life in the body is a life not of the soul, but of the body, which even dead souls—that is, souls forsaken of God—can confer upon bodies, how little soever of their own proper life, by which they are immortal, they retain. But in the last damnation, though man does not cease to feel, yet because this feeling of his is neither sweet with pleasure nor wholesome with repose, but painfully penal, it is not without reason called death rather than life. And it is called the second death because it follows the first, which sunders the two cohering essences, whether these be God and the soul, or the soul and the body. Of the first and bodily death, then, we may say that to the good it is good, and evil to the evil. But, doubtless, the second, as it happens to none of the good, so it can be good for none.

3. *Whether death, which by the sin of our first parents has passed upon all men, is the punishment of sin, even to the good*

But a question not to be shirked arises: Whether in very truth death, which separates soul and body, is good to the good? ² For if it be, how has it come to pass that such a thing should be the punishment of sin? For the first men would not have suffered death had they not sinned. How, then, can that be good to the good, which could not have happened except to the evil? Then, again, if it could only happen to the evil, to the good it ought not to be good, but non-existent. For why should there be any punishment where there is nothing to punish? Wherefore we must say that the first men were indeed so created, that if they had not sinned, they would not have experienced any kind of death; but that, having become sinners, they were so punished with death, that whatsoever sprang from their stock should also be punished with the same death. For nothing else could be born of them than that which they themselves had been. Their nature was deteriorated in proportion to the greatness of the condemnation of their sin, so that what

² On this question compare the 24th and 25th epistles of Jerome, *de obitu Lea*. and *de obitu Blesillæ filia*. Coonæus.