

Confessions - Book Xiii - Chapter Xxxii

by St. Augustine

Transcript

47. Thanks be to thee, O Lord! We see the heaven and the earth, either the corporeal part--higher and lower--or the spiritual and physical creation. And we see the light made and divided from the darkness for the adornment of these parts, from which the universal mass of the world or the universal creation is constituted. We see the firmament of heaven, either the original \"body\" of the world between the spiritual (higher) waters and the corporeal (lower) waters[651] or the expanse of air--which is also called \"heaven\"--through which the fowls of heaven wander, between the waters which move in clouds above them and which drop down in dew on clear nights, and those waters which are heavy and flow along the earth. We see the waters gathered together in the vast plains of the sea; and the dry land, first bare and then formed, so as to be visible and well-ordered; and the soil of herbs and trees. We see the light shining from above--the sun to serve the day, the moon and the stars to give cheer in the night; and we see by all these that the intervals of time are marked and noted. We see on every side the watery elements, fruitful with fishes, beasts, and birds--and we notice that the density of the atmosphere which supports the flights of birds is increased by the evaporation of the waters. We see the face of the earth, replete with earthly creatures; and man, created in thy image and likeness, in the very image and likeness of thee--that is, having the power of reason and understanding--by virtue of which he has been set over all irrational creatures. And just as there is in his soul one element which controls by its power of reflection and another which has been made subject so that it should obey, so also, physically, the woman was made for the man; for, although she had a like nature of rational intelligence in the mind, still in the sex of her body she should be similarly subject to the sex of her husband, as the appetite of action is subjected to the deliberation of the mind in order to conceive the rules of right action. These things we see, and each of them is good; and the whole is very good!

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