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Bonaventure's Inception Address as Regent Master at Paris: *Omnium Artifex*

Inception as Master and the *Principium in Aula*

After nineteen years of study at the University of Paris—six in the study of Arts (1235–1241), two lecturing in the Arts (1241–1243), five as *auditor theologiae* (1243–1248), two as a *baccalarius biblicus* and as a *lector biblicus* for the Franciscans (1248–1251), two as a *baccalarius sententiarius* (1251–1253), and one as a *baccalarius formatus* (1253–1254)—Bonaventure of Bagnoregio was incepted as *magister regens* (regent master) around Easter (12 April) in 1254 to replace William of Middleton in the Franciscan chair at the University of Paris.¹

At that time, the inception ceremonies for an incoming regent master consisted of several parts. On the appointed day, the candidate would be officially received by the chancellor of the university in the ceremonial hall, the *aula*, of the bishop before the assembled faculty and students of the university. The previous evening would have been spent responding to bachelors and masters in a complex series of “disputed questions.”² But on the morning of the next day, the presiding master would have stood and placed on Bonaventure’s head a biretta and said aloud: “I place on you the magisterial biretta in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” After birettas had been distributed to the other masters to place on their own heads, the gathered company sat down to hear the new master deliver his inaugural lecture, the *principium in aula*.

According to University regulations, the *principium* address was to be a praise of sacred Scripture, and although it was one of the high

¹ I am following the dating from Jay M. Hammond’s scrupulously researched and argued article “Dating Bonaventure’s Inception as Regent Master,” *Franciscan Studies*, 67 (2009): 179–226.

² Several prominent scholars have proposed that at least some of the *Quaestiones disputatae de scientia Christi* were used during Bonaventure’s inception ceremonies. See J. F. Quinn, “Chronology of St. Bonaventure (1217–1274),” in *Franciscan Studies* 32 (1972): 180–181; J. G. Bougerol, “Saint Bonaventure et Saint Anselme,” in *Antonianum* 42 (1972): 333–61, esp. 339 and 348. Both Bougerol and Quinn argue that the first four questions “On the Knowledge of Christ” derive from Bonaventure’s inception ceremonies. Quinn argues more specifically that the fourth question would have been the principal question disputed on that occasion. See also Hammond, “Dating,” 218.

points in the inception ceremony, the inception address was supposed to be delivered “briefly” (*breve*) and “quickly terminated” (*celeriter terminato*).³ When Friar Thomas Aquinas incepted in 1256, two years after Bonaventure, his *principium* address was completed in about ten minutes. Brother Bonaventure’s *principium*, a translation of which follows this introduction, would require about forty minutes or more to read out loud. But then, as Aquinas himself might have said, “briefly” can be said in several ways.⁴ A study of earlier *principium* addresses by other masters shows, moreover, that the length of these addresses varied from master to master.⁵

The *Principium* in *Aula* and the *Sermo Modernus* Style

The earliest records we have of masters who incepted at Paris reveal that their inception *principia* addresses were always delivered in the contemporary style of preaching, the so-called “*sermo modernus*” or “modern sermon” style. There is no need for our present purposes to trace the development of the *sermo modernus* style, other than to say that its origins lie in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, and that it had become highly developed, with numerous preaching manuals and reference materials to help preachers master its forms, by the time Thomas and Bonaventure were incepted as masters at Paris, in 1256 and 1254 respectively.⁶

³ Cf. James Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas d'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Works* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1983), 99. Fr. Weisheipl is quoting from the earliest account we have of the inception ceremony “secundum usum Parisiensem,” which is contained in a Bologna manuscript published in *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, ed. H. Denifle, and E. Chatelet, vol. 2 (Paris: 1891), no. 1188, 691–695. See esp. 693–694. This passage can be found in the last line of 693.

⁴ For the Latin text of Bonaventure’s *principium*, see Joshua Benson, “Bonaventure’s Inaugural Sermon at Paris,” *Collectanea Franciscana* 82 (2012): 517–562. The text of Bonaventure’s *principium* in Latin is some fifteen pages in length, from p. 537 to 552. Thomas’s *principium* in the same font would run about four pages. This Latin text is the one used to make the translation that follows.

⁵ A good place to begin such a study would be with the invaluable dissertation by Nancy Spatz, *Principia: A Study and Edition of Inception Speeches Delivered Before the Faculty of Theology at the University of Paris, ca. 1180–1286* (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1992).

⁶ To get a sense of the development, see the descriptions in the following essays, all of which can be found in the invaluable volume edited by Beverly Kienzle, *The Sermon, Typologie des sources du Moyen Age occidental*, Fasc. 81–83 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000). Compare (a) Thomas N. Hall, “The Early Medieval Sermon,” 203–269; (b) Mark Zier, “Sermons of the Twelfth Century Schoolmasters and Canons,” 325–362, and (c) Nicole Bériou, “Les Sermons Latin après 1200,” 363–447. For a good sense of the changes in the late twelfth century, see in particular, Zier, “Twelfth Century Schoolmasters,” 340–344. For a good comparison of original sermon material, compare Gregory the Great’s *Homilia XXIX in Evangelia* (Kienzle, 248–265), delivered in AD 593; English trans. David Hurst, *Gregory the Great: Forty Gospel Homilies* (Collegeville, MN: Cistercian, 1990), 226–235 –

In brief, three things were especially characteristic of these thirteenth century *sermo modernus* style sermons: (1) the *thema*, a biblical verse, usually from the day's readings that the preacher would use to lend structure and order to the entire sermon; (2) the *divisio* of the *thema*, and (3) the *dilatatio* of each of the parts created by this opening *divisio*.⁷

The *thema* verse served as a structuring device which provided an outline of the topics to be covered in the sermon. When the sermon was preached, the *thema* verse also served as a mnemonic device to help the listeners identify their place within the progress of the whole and then recall the contents of the sermon after it was finished. To recall the contents of the sermon, one merely had to bring to mind the opening *thema* verse, and each word would suggest the topics the preacher had associated with it.⁸

So, for example, in the *principium* address Bonaventure delivered at his inception as master, Bonaventure took as his opening *thema* a verse from Wisdom 7:1, *Omnium artifex docuit me sapientia* ("The maker of all things has taught me wisdom"). For the purposes of his *principium in aula* address, he divided that verse into these four parts:

with Peter Comestor's *Sermo LV primus de adventu domini* (Kienzle, 353–362), delivered in the late twelfth century, with any of Thomas or Bonaventure's "academic" sermons; for which, see either *Thomas Aquinas: The Academic Sermons*, trans. Mark-Robin Hoogland (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010) or *The Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure*, trans. Timothy J. Johnson, *Works of St. Bonaventure* 12 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2008). For another good comparison, see J. P. Bonnes, "Un des plus grands prédicateurs du XIIe siècle: Geoffrey du Louroux, dit Geoffrey Babion," *Revue bénédictine* 56 (1945–1946): 174–215, who juxtaposes two sermons based on the same *thema* verse—Psalm 81:1, *Deus stetit in synagoga deorum, in medio autem deos dii dicat*—the first composed by Geoffrey Babion (d. 1158) and the second by Peter Comestor (d. ca. 1179).

⁷ For more on thirteenth century sermons, see G. R. Evans, "Introduction," in Alan of Lille, *The Arts of Preaching*, 5–6; Nicole Bériou, *L'avènement des maîtres*, vol. 1, 134–169; David d'Avray, *Preaching of the Friars*, 163–180; James J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of the Rhetorical Theory from Saint Augustine to the Renaissance* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001), 269–355; Étienne Gilson, "Michel Menot et la Technique du Sermon Medieval," *Les Idées et les Lettres*, (Paris: J. Vrin, 1932), 93–154; and Randall Smith, *Reading the Sermons of Thomas Aquinas: A Beginner's Guide* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Press, 2016), esp. ch. 2. For an excellent general introduction to Bonaventure's preaching, see Timothy J. Johnson, "Bonaventure as Preacher," in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay Hammond (Leiden, Brill, 2013), 403–434.

⁸ For a discussion of the difference between "memory" and "recollection" and on their importance for appreciating the *sermo modernus* style, see *Reading the Sermons of Thomas Aquinas*, 11–19. For a fuller treatment of the arts of memory in the Middle Ages, see Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990). See also D'Avray, 193–194, who in response to the objection that university preaching would have been quite different from popular preaching, mentions in passing that, "A schematic framework of rhythmic divisions and subdivisions would be easy to fix in the mind. Guibert de Tournai, discussing the *originale principium* of division (in his huge work called *Erudimentum doctrine*), states that its purpose is to avoid confusion and help the memory (*ut cesset confusio et adiuvetur memoria*). This could have been true for popular as well as for learned preaching."

1. *artifex* ("the maker")
2. *omnium* ("of all things")
3. *sapientia* ("wisdom")
4. *docuit me* ("he has taught me")

No matter how the preacher ultimately decided upon his *thema* or how he decided to divide it, "the most important thing a preacher had to bear in mind when selecting it," says University of Toronto scholar Michèle Mulcahey, "was that it should contain latent within it the whole of the sermon he imagined, to be drawn out through a complex yet organic development."⁹

The various parts created by the opening *divisio* could be subdivided and then subdivided again if the preacher wished. In *Omnium artifex*, Bonaventure sub-divides each of the four parts of his original division into four more sub-divisions for a total of sixteen. Since there are obviously many ways to divide a single sentence, medieval preaching manuals provided elaborate rules about how these divisions were to be done.¹⁰

After making what was known as a "declaration of the parts" at the beginning of the sermon, in which he would set forth the basic division of his opening *thema* verse, the preacher then would develop the material in each of the parts in a process known as *dilatatio*, a Latin term which is variously translated in English as "amplify" or "expand," both of which are acceptable, but I prefer the term "dilation," because it is closer to the Latin. To those unaccustomed to the style, a preacher's "dilation" of a word or group of words will often seem motivated by nothing more than an oblique association of words. But there were in fact many creative ways of dilating upon a word or a group of words recommended by the preaching manuals of the day.

This style of preaching, based upon the division and development of a single Bible verse, was the form thirteenth century medieval masters used in all their sermons and in all their early prologues, whether to their biblical commentaries or to their commentaries on the books of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. As we have seen, it was the form they used when they delivered their *principium in aula* address during their inception as master. And it seems also to have been the form used when they delivered the first lecture each term (also known as a *principium*) when they lectured on a book of the Bible.¹¹ When those lectures were sent to the

⁹ Michèle Mulcahey, *First the Bow is Bent in Study: Dominican Education Before 1350* (Toronto: P.I.M.S., 1998), 404.

¹⁰ For more on the various methods of *divisio*, see Smith, *Reading*, 49–112.

¹¹ See Mariken Teeuwen, *The Vocabulary of Intellectual Life in the Middle Ages*, Études sur le vocabulaire intellectuel du Moyen Âge 10, Comité international du vocabulaire des institutions et

stationer and published, that first lecture, the *principium*, would serve as what we would call the "prologue" of the book. The *sermo modernus* style was thus a constant presence in the life of a bachelor of sacred doctrine during his studies at the University of Paris, both as a bachelor *biblicus* and later as a bachelor *sententiarum*. It was a "form" that had become so commonly accepted at Paris by the middle of the thirteenth century that it seems to have been treated as a formal requirement.¹²

Bonaventure, Master of the Modern Style

Bonaventure's works, even from early on, show evidence of his superb literary education at Paris. Bonaventure was so proficient at the *sermo modernus* style, in fact, his peers took his preaching to be a model of the style at its best. The wonderful collection of sermons for each Sunday of the liturgical year, found in English translation in *The Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure*, were likely collected to serve as a manual of "model sermons" from which other preachers could learn.¹³

Thomas Aquinas, for example, by contrast, though a clear and penetrating thinker, rarely showed the literary skills we see in evidence in Bonaventure's preaching. Although the content in Thomas's sermons is always edifying, there are places where, at least according to the standards of the *sermo modernus* style, his preaching technique lacks polish and precision. In his *principium in aula*, for example, Thomas says that the students of sacred doctrine should be, like the earth, "low" in humility (*infimi per humilitatem*), "firm" in the rectitude of sense (*firmi per sensus rectitudinem*), and "fecund," so the words of wisdom they hear may bear fruit in them (*fecundi, ut percepta sapientiae verba in eis fructificent*). According to the rules of the *sermo modernus* style, those three Latin clauses

de la communication intellectuelles au Moyen Âge (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), esp. 315: "The term *principium* is generally used, in the context of the medieval university, for the inaugural lecture of a course. In the context of a student's career an inaugural lecture of this kind marked the transitions from one phase to another, and was, usually, a solemn and public occasion. Bachelors of Theology, who were first allowed to teach on the Bible and then on Peter of Lombard's *Sententiae*, held *principia* or inaugural lectures on each of these occasions, in which they eulogized the texts and gave short analyses or introductions."

¹² So, for example, all of Thomas Aquinas's earliest prologues, even the prologue to his *Commentary on Boethius's De Trinitate*, were written in this style. Later, after Thomas left Paris, he stopped adhering to its formal requirements as stringently in his prologues, although he used it in all his extant sermons. When he returned to Paris years later for his second Parisian regency and lectured on the Gospel of John, he reverted to the formal requirements of the *sermo modernus* style, suggesting that, although this formal style was not always required at Orvieto or in Rome, it was expected, perhaps even required, when a master of sacred doctrine was commencing a series of *lectiones* at Paris.

¹³ *The Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure*, trans. Timothy J. Johnson (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2008).

should be parallel. Thomas *mostly* observes this rule, but on occasion, he does not.

Bonaventure, by contrast, never makes this mistake. He never fails to make his clauses match, even though they are often quite complicated. Consider, for example, how Bonaventure in his *principium in aula* divides his opening *thema* verse from Wisdom 7.21: *Omnium artifex docuit me sapientia* ("The maker of all things taught me wisdom"). These words, he says, show "the fourfold cause" [of the Scriptures]: namely, "the excellence of the author from the sublimity of the principle" (*auctoris excellentiam ex sublimitate principia*); "the contents of the matter from the utility of the sign" (*materiae continentiam ex utilitate signi*); "the evidence of the form from the singularity of the mode" (*formae evidentiam ex singularitate modi*); and "the sufficiency of the end from the uncommon teachability of the good" (*finis sufficientiam ex docibilitate boni*). Note the complexity of the parallel constructions as compared to Thomas's.

R.-A. Gauthier once described the difference between Bonaventure's style and Thomas's as moving "from the luxuriance of a virgin forest to a French garden."¹⁴ A better image might be the comparison between an elaborate, well-sculpted French palace garden (Bonaventure) and a somewhat disorganized but beautiful Italian garden. Either way, Bonaventure would have been recognized at the time as having a very "high" style, whereas Thomas's was much simpler.

Consider also, for example, Bonaventure's use of authorities. Thomas mentions Pseudo-Dionysius and Augustine in the first paragraph of his *principium in aula* but makes not one non-biblical reference thereafter. Bonaventure, by contrast, often considered less "scholastic," begins the first paragraph of his *principium* with a complex series of references to Aristotle's *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, and the *Prior Analytics*, after which the breadth of the authorities he "chains" together as he dilates each section is simply exhausting: Augustine, Ambrose, Aristotle, Seneca, Cicero, Gratian, Cassiodorus, Jerome, Gregory the Great, Pseudo-Dionysius, Fulgentius, an author he thinks is John Chrysostom, Avicenna, Boethius, and Richard and Hugh of St. Victor.

Not only is the number of authors he cites astounding, the breadth of the works cited is similarly impressive. His favorite authority by far other than the Bible is St. Augustine, whom he cites some forty times in a text with twenty-nine sections. The list of Augustine's works from which he cites includes: *De trinitate*, *De libero arbitrio*, *Contra Faustum*, *De civitate dei*, *De vera religione*, *De genesi ad litteram*, *De baptismo*, *De doctrina christiana*, *Contra Academicos*, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, *Confessiones*, *In*

¹⁴ *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia*, 25.1, *Quaestiones quodlibetales* (Paris: Edita Leonis XIII, 1984), 81. Translated from the French original.

Iohannis evangelium tractatus and a wide selection from Augustine's letters. The breadth of learning he exhibits is simply amazing.

A Brief Overview of the *Principium*

To repeat, the *principium* address was to be written as a praise of sacred Scripture. Bonaventure, as we have seen, makes a fourfold division of his opening *thema*:

Omnium / artifex / docuit me / sapientia

With each of these four, he associates one of the four Aristotelian causes:

- A. *artifex* (the maker) with the efficient cause or author of the Scriptures;
- B. *omnium* (of all things) with the material cause of subject matter of the Scriptures;
- C. *sapientia* (wisdom) with the formal cause of the Scriptures; and
- D. *docuit me* (has taught me) with the final cause, goal, or end of the Scriptures.

Bonaventure argues for the excellence of the Scriptures over any other book because of the excellence of each of these causes. The excellence of the author is shown because the authority of the Scriptures arises from its author, who is God, the creator or *maker* of all creation. The excellence of the subject matter is shown because of the breadth of the Scriptures: it covers *all things*. The excellence of the form is shown because the Scriptures contain not only the certitude of truth, but also the highest *wisdom*. And finally, the excellence of the end of the Scriptures is shown from its preeminent ability to *teach* the good. All of this is associated with the opening *thema* verse: "the maker of all things has taught me wisdom."¹⁵

Now, as I mentioned above, Bonaventure sub-divides each of these four divisions into four further sub-divisions and dilates each. To get a sense of the whole, the reader might wish to glance at one or both of the outlines I have provided below either before or after reading the *principium* itself. Seeing clearly the structure of the *principium* will not only help keep the parts clear, it will also help in recalling the content. To the extent that the reader can associate each of the four discussions with one of the words in the opening *thema* verse, simply calling that verse to mind —

¹⁵ There is an extended discussion and analysis of Bonaventure's *principium* in Randall Smith, *Aquinas, Bonaventure, and the Scholastic Culture at Medieval Paris: Preaching, Prologues, and Biblical Commentary* (Cambridge University Press, 2021), see esp. ch. 10.

“the maker of all things has taught me wisdom” — will help the reader recollect more than would otherwise be expected.

The trick to any mnemonic device is to have an easy system of storage and retrieval. It is difficult to remember a long list of items. It is much easier to recollect that list if the parts have been associated with a shorter list of items that are easy to call to mind, such as the letters in a word — such as HOMES to remember the five Great Lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior — or the words in a simple phrase, such as Every Good Boy Does Fine to remember the lines on the treble clef in music. Remember “the maker of all things has taught me wisdom,” and you will be well on your way to recollecting the content of Bonaventure’s *principium*.

Notes about the Translation

In the 1974 celebration commemorating the seventh centenary of Bonaventure’s death, Bonaventure scholar Ignatius Brady bemoaned the fact that two important texts of Bonaventure’s had not yet been discovered: his *principium biblicum* and what he (Brady) called his “*principium magisteriale* or *aulicum*, which he described as a “*recommendatio s. scripturae* or *recommendatio sacrae doctrinae* given in brief form by the doctorandus in the aula/hall of the bishop and repeated at length soon after his promotion.”¹⁶ Brady went on to lament that, although we possess these lectures for other great medieval theologians such as John of La Rochelle and Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure’s remained missing.

Since Brady gave that address, scholars have clarified that the *recommendatio s. scripturae* or *recommendatio sacrae doctrinae* given in brief form by the doctorandus in the aula/hall of the bishop was not repeated. Rather, the new master delivered a second address at his *resumptio* which contained another “commendation” of Sacred Scripture, this second one containing a *divisio textus* of all the books of the Bible, which is what Brady may have been referring to by the term “*principium biblicum*.” Most importantly, since Brady’s address, Bonaventure scholar Joshua Benson was able to identify a manuscript containing Bonaventure’s inaugural *principium* and *resumptio* addresses.¹⁷ Hence the Latin text used

¹⁶ See Ignatius Brady, “The Opera Omnia of Saint Bonaventure Revisited,” in *Proceedings of the Seventh Centenary Celebration of the Death of Saint Bonaventure*, ed. Pascal Foley (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1975), 47–59; quoted from Joshua C. Benson, “Identifying the Literary Genre of the *De reductione artium ad theologiam*: Bonaventure’s Inaugural Lecture at Paris,” *Franciscan Studies* 67 (2009): 149–150.

¹⁷ See Joshua Benson, “Bonaventure’s *De reductione artium ad theologiam* and Its Early Reception as an Inaugural Sermon,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 85, no. 1 (2011): 7–24.

for the English translation below was the one found in Joshua Benson's "Bonaventure's Inaugural Sermon at Paris," in *Collectanea Franciscana* 82 (2012), 517–562. This is, in fact, the *only* readily available Latin text of Bonaventure's *principium*, and we owe Professor Benson a great debt of gratitude for unearthing it after all these years.

Some notes are in order, however, about my approach to the translation. Bonaventure was a master of parallelism. When he created a threefold or fourfold list, he always used the same grammatical forms in the same order. He says, for example, in section 29 below, that the Scripture has a fourfold utility to help its faithful readers can attain the goal of happiness. Its fourfold utility includes: (a) a cognition of truth (*cognitio veritatis*), (b) the argumentation of falsity (*argumentatio falsitatis*), (c) the correction of iniquity (*correptio iniquitatis*), and (d) the erudition of charity (*eruditio caritatis*). A smoother translation might have said that the fourfold utility of Scripture included: (a) the knowledge of truth, (b) arguments against falsehood, (c) correction of iniquity, and (d) the building-up of charity. But I have tried, in most cases, to maintain Bonaventure's parallelism in English as much as possible, even when it caused some oddity in English. I have included the Latin in parentheses to show the original parallel and to indicate places where the parallel phrases may often have sounded as odd in Latin as they do in English.

Sometimes Bonaventure simply creates his own words to make them fit the pattern. A good example can be found in section 18 below, where Bonaventure declares that the Scripture is "deiform in inspiration" (*deiformis inspiratione*), "luciform in erudition" (*luciformis eruditione*), "multiform in signification" (*multiformis significatione*), and "pulchriform in representation" (*pulchriformis representatione*). The words *luciformis* and *pulchriformis* cannot be found in any Latin dictionary, but the meaning seems fairly clear from the context: the Scriptures illuminate our learning in multiple ways, and they are expressed in multiple forms of beauty. Bonaventure made up the words *luciformis* and *pulchriformis* much the same way the poet E. E. Cummings created the word "manunkind" in his poem, "pity this busy monster, manunkind."

"Pulchriform in representation" is admittedly an ugly translation in English, but I have left it to keep the parallelism, especially since the alternative would have been to say that the Scriptures (a) are inspired by God, (b) teach by means of multiple lights, (c) use multiple forms of signification, and (d) manifests itself in multiple forms of beauty—a nice, clear translation, but one that overlooked the parallelism entirely.

One of the most startling discoveries was that the text we have traditionally come to now as the *De reductione artium ad theologiam* had been, in its original version, with a different opening paragraph, Bonaventure's *resumptio*.

In many instances in his *principium* when Bonaventure seems to be quoting, he is in fact only paraphrasing. In other places, however, he quotes his source precisely, word-for-word. When Bonaventure's quotation of a text varied from the original significantly, I footnoted the original Latin and Bonaventure's version. When Bonaventure's quotation was exact or varied in trivial ways, I did not include the two versions in a footnote.

I have rectified citations. If the manuscript has "8 *De civitate* XI," but the text quoted can actually be found *De civitate* 8.10, then I have translated with the correct reference. There are also occasions when the references in the manuscript are wrong. By this, I do not mean that Prof. Benson's edition was wrong; rather the reference in the original manuscript was inaccurate for some reason. Until we find more manuscript evidence, we cannot know with any degree of certainty whether it was Bonaventure's mistake or a scribal error. Either way, the correct reference can always be found in the footnote.

The literalist approach I have taken to translating Bonaventure's Latin, along with my insistence on making all the references to Bonaventure's sources clear, have made for a somewhat clunky translation filled with a lot of footnoted text. I assume others will make smoother translations with shorter notes, and I welcome all such efforts. This translation and its accompanying notes were produced keeping in mind those who would want to get as close to Bonaventure's original Latin as possible and to get as clear a picture as possible of how he quoted and used his sources and authorities.

Since Bonaventure's *principium* was delivered employing the structure and methods of the *sermo modernus* style of preaching, I have included two outlines of the text. The first is shorter and is meant to reveal the basic divisions and sub-divisions in the text. The second is longer and is meant to show (or remind the reader of) the dilations Bonaventure used to develop the content suggested by the divisions and sub-divisions of his opening *thema* verse: *Omnium artifex docuit me sapientia* ("Wisdom, the maker of all things, has taught me"). The numbering of the paragraphs in my translation follow the numbering of the paragraphs in Prof. Benson's Latin original. I have also added sub-titles in my translation to help identify the different sections of the *principium*.

Randall B. Smith
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Bonaventure's Inception Address at Paris: An Outline and Translation

Outline

Thema: *Omnium artifex docuit me sapientia* (Wisdom 7:21):
"Wisdom, the maker of all things taught me."

Brief Outline:

Four Causes:

A) *artifex* (maker): author

God is the highest maker, who through His Word makes all creation and then makes the Scriptures; thus his authority is the highest.

B) *omnium* (of all things): matter

God is the principle of the universe, disposing things according to their proper natures and places: through the Word all things were made, made in number, weight and measure.

The Scriptures contain every truth: physics, ethics, logic; every truth, every good

The Scriptures contain all things and are the most useful

C) *sapientia* (wisdom): form

Clearest, most certain, truth

D) *docuit me* (taught me): end

Most useful for teaching the good and reaching the end

More Detailed Outline:

Four Causes:

A) *artifex* (maker): The excellence of the author is shown from the sublimity of the principle — height of authority

Fourfold privilege:

1. superiority of reason: clear, certain truth
2. priority of edition: "This is the law which stands eternally" (Baruch 4.1); also more ancient than any other

3. majority of correction: architectonic principle
 4. stability of adhesion: not from the certitude of reason, but of authority
- B) *omnium* (of all things): The fullness of the matter is shown from the utility of the sign — breadth of generality
- Fourfold utility follows from unity:
1. utility of comprehension: everything necessary for end: creation, fall, manner of reparation, fruit of repayment
 2. totality of perfection: consummation; confirmed in Christ
 3. principle of attribution, by which all things contained in it, it refers into God
 4. uniformity of consideration: since other sciences consider singular things under reason, by which in proper being they are it, that they are; these nevertheless it uniformly considers all things under the ratio of vestige by participation in the divine being, so that according to the vestige in them they lead, by which, under mode, species, and order that are it that they are.
- C) *sapientia* (wisdom): The evidence of the form is shown from the uniqueness of the mode — certitude of truth: Not only science, but wisdom

From the excellence of the form, which we call wisdom itself, a fourfold dignity follows because it is:

1. highest in principles: which by supernatural light are naturally above things known: articles of faith, inspired and revealed by God
2. most certain in opinions
3. most profound in mysteries, which it contains under mystical figures to exclude the infidel, lead the faithful by the hand, exercise the seeking, restore the understanding
 - a) the first cause of this profundity is the multiplicity of signification, namely: "of voices, of things, of properties," as Hugh teaches in the first book of *De sacramentis*; from this he concludes that "all the arts are servants of this wisdom."
 - b) The second cause is the infinity of understanding
 - c) The third cause is the multiformity of senses, sub ratio deed, believed, bearing, and hoping. The four senses:
 - i) History: bull (simplicity): contains precepts, counsels, miracles, examples
 - ii) Allegory: lion (authority): turns about humanity

assumed, glorious Virgin, church militant

iii) Tropology: man (civility): negotiated concerning spiritual grace, spiritual life, spiritual warfare, Church spiritual

iv) Anagogy: eagle (sublimity) respects uncreated essence, exemplary wisdom, angelic sublimity, church triumphant

4. most plain in necessary things

D) *docuit me* (taught me): The sufficiency of the end is shown from its preeminent ability to teach the good. Thus it has a plentitude of utility: the end of Scripture is doctrine (teaching). From the end, we can also grasp the fourfold means to attain the fruit of the end, namely happiness:

1. cognition of the truth
2. argumentation against falsity
3. reproof of iniquity,
4. building up of charity.

2 Tim 3: teaching, arguing, reproof, and building up: teaching every truth; arguing against every falsity; for reproof every perversity; and for building up in all holiness: the blessed life

Thema: "Wisdom the maker of all things taught me" (*Omnium artifex docuit me sapientia*), Wisdom 7:21.

(1) Since the things which are learned *from* principles (*ex principiis*) are first known in a certain way *in* principles (*in principiis*); thus "the principles of things must be sought, so that knowledge of them might be had more abundantly," as it says at the beginning of the *Gloss on the Epistles*.¹ For it is necessary "to understand (*intelligere*) and to know (*scire*) about principles and causes," as it says in the first book of the *Physics*, "because we are judged to know each thing, when we learn the causes of it,"² as is said there and in the first book of the *Posterior Analytics*.³ The reason for this is because "the disposition of a thing is the same in being (*esse*) and in truth (*veritate*)," as is said in the second book of the *Metaphysics*.⁴ And "the principles of being (*essendi*) and the principles of knowing (*cognoscendi*) are the same," as is said in the third book of the same work.⁵ Hence Hugh [of St. Victor] says in the prologue to the first book of *On the Sacraments*: "It is necessary to the one approaching for the knowledge of the Scriptures to consider first the subject matter, comprehending under the subject matter all the causes."⁶

Division of the *Thema*

(2) To provide a fuller knowledge of Sacred Scripture, therefore, the Holy Spirit shows clearly in the aforementioned words from the Book of Wisdom its fourfold cause, namely: the excellence of the author from the sublimity of the principle (*auctoris excellentiam ex sublimitate principii*), when it says "the maker" (*artifex*); the contents of the subject matter from the utility of the sign (*materiae continentiam ex utilitate signi*) when it adds "of all things" (*omnium*); the evidence of the form from the singularity of

¹ Peter Lombard, *Collectanea in omnes Pauli apostolicas epistolas*, pref. (PL 191:197a): "Principia rerum requirenda sunt prius, ut earum notitia plenior haberi possit. Tunc enim demum facilius poterit causae ratio declarari, si ejus origo discatur." Bonaventure: "Principia rerum requirenda sunt, ut earum notitia plenius possit haberi."

² Cf. *Physics* I.1 (184a, 12–14).

³ Cf. *Posterior Analytics* I.2 (71b).

⁴ Cf. *Metaphysics* II.1 (993b).

⁵ Cf. *Metaphysics* III.2 (996a): "Unius quidem enim scientie quomodo erit non contraria existentia principia cognoscere?" Bonaventure: Eadem autem sunt principia essendi et cognoscendi."

⁶ Hugh of St. Victor, *De Sacramentis* prologue: "Quisquis ad divinarum Scripturarum lectionem erudiendus accedit, primum considerare debet quae sit materia, circa quam versatur earum tractatio; quia, si rerum illarum de quibus scriptura facta est notitiam habuerit, facilius postmodum dictorum ejus veritatem sive profunditatem perspiciet." Bonaventure: "Accedenti ad notitiam Scripturarum, necessarium est prae cognoscere materiam, omnes causas sub materia comprehendens."

the mode (*formae evidentiam ex singularitate modi*) when it says "wisdom" (*sapientia*); the sufficiency of the end from its ability to teach the good (*finis sufficientiam ex docibilitate boni*) when it adds "it taught me" (*docuit me*).⁷ From the excellence of the author, it has a height of authority; from the contents of the material, a breadth of generality; from the evidence of the form, the certitude of truth; and from the sufficiency of the end, a plenitude of utility. Therefore it says: "Wisdom, the maker of all things, taught me."

***Artifex* (the Maker): Efficient Cause**

(3) With regard to the efficient cause, which is signified by the word *artifex*, we ought to note that the praise of the maker is deduced from the condition of the work, and vice versa. As Ambrose says in the first homily of his *Commentary on the Six Days of Creation*: "You wonder at the work, and you seek the maker."⁸ But if, as Seneca says, "The praise is greater to the maker who works in more difficult material,"⁹ the highest praise is to the maker who works from nothing (*ex nulla*). And on the art of this maker the arts of the secondary makers depend. Hence in the same place, Ambrose speaks of: "That art, the principle of all art, from which the operation of a succession of diverse artists begins."¹⁰ Therefore, "Works shall be praised for the hand of the makers" (Ecclesiasticus 9:24).

(4) The highest maker, the eternal Father, expressed Himself in the eternally begotten Word. How great the expression of art from knowledge is the generation of the Son from the Father! Augustine, *De trinitate* 6.10: The Son "is the art of the almighty God, full of all living immutable essences," etc.¹¹ This [expression of art] more than enough suffices for the one who has seen it objectively; for the full knowledge of the emanation of the persons, the production of creatures, the distribution of graces,

⁷ Bonaventure is dividing his *thema* verse in a common way according to the four Aristotelian "causes": efficient, material, formal, and final. These provide the author, the subject-matter, the form or order, and the purpose of the text.

⁸ Ambrose, *In Hexameron* I.3.9: "miraris opus, quaeris operatorem." Bonaventure: "miraris opus, quaeris artificem."

⁹ Seneca, *Ad Lucilium epistulae morales*, ep. 52.4: "maior est laus idem effecisse in difficiliore materia." Bonaventure: "Laus maior est artificis operari ex difficiliore materia."

¹⁰ Ambrose, *In Hexameron* I.4.12: "Est et principium artis ars ipsa, ex qua artificum diversorum deinceps coepit operatio." Bonaventure: "Ars illa, principium omnis artis, ex qua diversorum artificum deinceps operatio coepit."

¹¹ Augustine, *De trinitate* 6.10.11: "ars quaedam omnipotentis atque sapientis dei plena omnium rationum uiuentium incommutabilium, et omnes unum in ea sicut ipsa unum de uno cum quo unum." Bonaventure: "Filius est ars omnipotentis Dei, plena omnium rationum uiuentium incommutabilium, etc."

and the inspiration of the Scriptures is contained here. This art is written in this book; indeed, this book is Christ, concerning which Hugh of St. Victor in the second book of *On the Ark of Noah* says: "This is the book whose origin is eternal, whose essence is incorruptible, whose knowledge is life, whose scriptures are indelible, whose face is desirable, whose teaching is easy, whose knowledge sweet, whose profundity is impenetrable, whose words are innumerable and all are one in Him."¹² So whatsoever we see in whatever way, "let us see in it and judge the things seen through it," as Augustine suggests in book 9 of *De Trinitate*.¹³ And yet we do not yet easily contemplate with the contemplation "which is promised to us as the end of all actions."¹⁴

(5) The highest maker also expresses himself in the word of the produced creature, which is, as it were, a kind of mirror crafted of the first art, which in itself is "the unchangeable maker of changeable things," according to Augustine in his fifth letter to Volusianus¹⁵; and through all things similar to itself the maker of dissimilar things.¹⁶ Thus according to Hugh of St. Victor in *On the Celestial Hierarchy*: "The beauty of the divine goodness is variously distributed in single things, so that the perfect is in the whole all together at once."¹⁷ With these nods of agreement, as it were (*quasi quibusdam nutibus*), this maker is intimated to us. According to Augustine, *On the Free Choice of the Will*: "O wisdom, the sweetest light of a purified mind.... For you do not cease to tell us what and how great you are, and the entire beauty of created things is a nod to

¹² Hugh of St. Victor, *De archa Noe* 2.11.

¹³ The reference here is obscure. Bonaventure's Latin text has: "Sed quia licet, aliquantulum quicquid videmus, in illa videamus et de visis, per illam iudicemus." The manuscript cites the source as Augustine, *De trinitate* 9.5, but the closest one comes to a passage suggesting the point Bonaventure is making here is in *De trinitate* 9.6.9, where Augustine says: "Unde manifestum est, aliud unumquemque videre in se, quod sibi alius dicenti credat, non tamen videat; aliud autem in ipsa veritate quod alius quoque possit intueri." (Hence it is manifest, that each sees a thing in himself, in such way that another person may believe what he says of it, yet may not see it; but another [sees a thing] in the truth itself, in such way that another person also can gaze upon it.) Augustine's point is that we have one sort of knowledge from our senses and another which is based on eternal truth itself. The former should be judged according to the latter; that is to say, our corporeal knowledge should be evaluated and judged in light of eternal truth. This seems to be the point Bonaventure is making here as well; that whatever we know should be judged in light of the eternal truth contained in "the book" of God's Eternal Word. The next sentence adds the caveat that humans do not easily achieve this contemplative "vision" of God's Eternal Word.

¹⁴ Augustine, *De trinitate* 1.8.17.

¹⁵ Augustine, *Epistulae* 138.1.5: "immutabilis mutabilium, sicut creator." Bonaventure: "immutabilis factrix est mutabilium." Letter 138 is actually addressed to Marcellinus, but it refers back to an earlier letter to Volusianus (*Epistulae* 137).

¹⁶ The manuscript lists the reference here as "22 Contra Faustum," but neither I nor the editor of the critical edition has been able to find the reference in Augustine's text.

¹⁷ Hugh of St. Victor, *Expositio in Hierarchiam Coelestem* 2.1.

you (*nutus tui omne creaturarum decus*).¹⁸ And Hugh of St. Victor again, at the beginning of *On the Celestial Hierarchy*, says: "One work and one Maker, one ruler and one rector, one prince and one republic."¹⁹ Because "for by the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby" (Wisdom 13:5); and "the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (Romans 1:20). And yet for many persons, creatures are made "into a snare," deception, and trap (cf. Wisdom 14:11), and thus "they serve creatures rather than the Creator" (Romans 1:25). Hugh, in the prologue to *On the Celestial Hierarchy*, writes: "For nature, made to serve, demonstrated the Creator and was a likeness to His excellence and dominating majesty."²⁰

(6) The highest maker also expresses himself in the word of revealed Scripture, which is, as it were, a singular work of skill and an inerrant vestige, so that God may be grasped by man in knowledge and love. "But all men are vain, in whom there is not the knowledge of God: and who by these good things that are seen, could not understand him that is, neither by attending to the works have acknowledged who was the maker" (Wisdom 13:1). This is the transcript of the work from the art of the highest maker; as it says in Daniel 10:21: "I will announce to you what is expressed in the scriptures of truth."

(7) With regard to this work, therefore, "greater is the authority of this Scripture than all the perspicacity of human genius," as Augustine says in the second book of his *Literal Commentary on Genesis*²¹; and in the same place: "This is truth, what divine authority says rather than what human infirmity infers."²² But this maker had secondary makers, for, as it is written: "certain ones he made apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors" (Ephesians 4:11). For as Augustine says in the eleventh book of the *City of God*, chapter 3: "For after having spoken what He judged sufficient, first through the prophets, then from His own lips, and afterwards through the apostles, He produced the Scripture, which is called canonical and of preeminent authority,"²³ which because it was not produced "by the fortuitous

¹⁸ A "nutus" is a nod of agreement, so that it can also mean command. Bonaventure is developing his comment in the previous sentence that all creation is a nod to (in agreement with; due to the command of; and/or a sign of) its Creator.

¹⁹ Hugh of St. Victor, *Expositio in Hierarchiam Coelitem* 1.2.

²⁰ Hugh of St. Victor, *Expositio in Hierarchiam Coelitem* 1.1.

²¹ Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 2.5.9: "maior est quippe Scripturae huius auctoritas, quam omnis humani ingenii capacitas." Bonaventure: "maior est huius Scripturae auctoritas, quam omnis humani ingenii perspicacitas."

²² Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 2.9.21.

²³ Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 11.3. Bonaventure's text is missing one word in Augustine's original: "Hic prius per Prophetas, deinde per se ipsum, postea per Apostolos, quantum satis esse iu-

motions of souls, but plainly by the ordering of highest providence over all, excelling by divine authority all classes of human genius, has made subject to itself the writings of all the nations," as is said in the beginning of the same book of the *City of God*.²⁴

(8) Therefore the Sacred Scripture has from the excellence of the author a height of authority, from which a fourfold privilege is allotted: a superiority of reason (*superioritatem rationis*), a priority of edition (*prioritatem editionis*), a majority of correction (*maioritatem correctionis*), and a stability of adhesion (*stabilitatem adhesionis*).

(9) It has, first, a *superiority of reason*. For Augustine, in *On True Religion*, shows "reason is not entirely absent from authority, for [we have to consider] whom we ought to believe"²⁵ because authority is clear and certain truth; and truth, when it is right, is not contrary to truth, but is conformed to it, just as right is not contrary to right. "For all true things harmonize," as it says in the first book of the *Ethics*.²⁶ Thus, where authority is impugned by reason, then according to *The City of God*: "If reason cannot refute, faith ought to mock"; and Augustine also says: "If reason cannot refute, faith should smile."²⁷ Hence also Augustine says in *On the Baptism of Infants*: "Now although I (he is speaking) may not be able myself to refute the arguments of these men, yet I see how necessary it is to adhere closely to the clearest statements of the Scriptures, in order that the obscure passages may be revealed by these."²⁸ But just as reason gives way to the authority of a clear understanding, so where the sense of authority is not yet determined openly, it does not prejudge of the truth of reason. Whence Augustine, in a letter to Marcellinus, says: "For if reason be found contradicting the authority of Divine Scriptures, it only deceives by a semblance of truth, however acute it be, for it cannot be true. On the other hand, if the authority of the Sacred Scriptures be set against the most manifest and certain testimony of reason, he who does this does not understand either the sense of those Scriptures, which he was unable to penetrate, but rather opposes his own (interpretation)

dicavit, locutus, etiam Scripturam condidit, quae canonica nominatur, eminentissimae auctoritatis." The phrase makes more sense with the missing word restored.

²⁴ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 11.1.

²⁵ Augustine, *De vera religione* 24.45: "Quamquam neque auctoritatem ratio penitus deserit, cum consideratur cui sit credendum." Bonaventure: "Auctoritatem ratio non deserat, sed cui credendum sit."

²⁶ Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098b 10–11. The Latin text Bonaventure likely had in his possession contained this: "Vero quidem enim omnia consonant existencia, falso autem cito dissonat verum." Here he writes: "Vera enim omnia consonant."

²⁷ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 18.17.2.

²⁸ Augustine, *De baptismo parvulorum* 3.4.7.

to the truth."²⁹ He provides an example at the beginning of the second book of *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*: "One ought to avoid," he says, "using the verse *He established the earth above the water* against the people engaged in subtle discussions about the weight of the elements, lest the testimony of the Scriptures be judged by that."³⁰

(10) [Scripture] has, secondly, a priority of edition (*prioritatem editionis*). This is "the most perfect law," handed on from the first and the last in certain faith; for no other precedes or succeeds it. Baruch 4:1: "This is the law which stands in eternity." This is the "eternal Gospel" (Revelation 14:6). Therefore it is not only greater in dignity, but in antiquity prior. The ones who handed on this canon preceded the philosophers of the world, not only the Greeks, but also the Egyptians, as Augustine taught in *The City of God* and concluded: "Therefore no nation could vaunt itself over our patriarchs and prophets by any vanity for the antiquity of its wisdom, since not even Egypt, accustomed to falsely and vainly glorying in the antiquity of her doctrines, did not, whatever their wisdom, precede in time the wisdom of our patriarchs."³¹ And from the primacy of the exemplar of this sort, the [others] borrowed the form and manner of their eloquence. Hence Cassiodorus in *On the Psalms*, says: "Every splendor of rhetorical eloquence, all modes of poetic locution, whatever variety of decorated pronunciation, they took their beginning from the divine Scriptures."³²

(11) [Scripture] has, third, the sublimity or superiority of correction (*sublimitate vel maioritatem correctionis*). For grace is its architectonic principle (*sui gratia principalis architectonica*), and hence it is above all other texts and all others are under it, because it rests on undarken-

²⁹ Augustine, *Epistulae* 143.7: "Si enim ratio contra divinarum Scripturarum auctoritatem redditur, quamlibet acuta sit, fallit veri similitudine; nam vera esse non potest. Rursus si manifestissimae certaeque rationi velut Scripturarum sanctarum obicitur auctoritas, non intelligit qui hoc facit, et non Scripturarum illarum sensum, ad quem penetrare non potuit, sed suum potius obicit veritati, nec quod in eis, sed quod in seipso velut pro eis invenit, opponit." Bonaventure: "Si ratio contra divinarum scripturarum auctoritatem redditur, quantumcumque acuta sit, vera esse non potest. Rursus, si verae manifestaeque rationi obiciatur auctoritas, qui hoc facit, non intelligit nec scripturarum illarum sensum, ad quem penetrare non potuit, sed suum potius veritati opponit."

³⁰ Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* 2.1.4: "Hic occurrit admonere cavendum errorem, quem in libro primo cavendum monui, ne forte quia scriptum est in Psalmis: Fundavit terram super aquam; arbitretur aliquis nostrum, adversus istos de ponderibus elementorum subtiliter disserentes, isto testimonio Scripturarum esse nitendum." Bonaventure: "Cavendum est ne ex eo, quod dictum est *fundavit terram super aquas* contra subtiliter disserentes de ponderibus elementorum, illo testimonio Scripturarum arbitrantur esse utendum."

³¹ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 18.39: "Nulla igitur gens de antiquitate suae sapientiae super Patriarchas et Prophetas nostros [quibus divina inerat sapientia] ulla se vanitate iactaverit, quando nec Aegyptus invenitur quae solet falso et inaniter de suarum doctrinarum antiquitate gloriari, qualicumque sapientia sua Patriarcharum nostrorum tempore praecessisse [praevenisse] sapientiam." The material in brackets is in Augustine's original, but not in Bonaventure's text.

³² This passage is not to be found in Cassiodorus's *Super Psalmos*.

light (*luci ineffuscabili*), unjudgeable law (*legi iniudicabili*), unbendable art (*arti inobliquabili*), because it pertains to it to judge and regulate others, that it might condemn the condemnable and approve the approvable. Whence Augustine at the end of book two of *On Christian Doctrine* says: "Whatever man may have learned elsewhere, if useful, is found there; if harmful, it is condemned there."³³ And in the second book of his treatise *Against Cresconius*, he writes: "By salutary vigilance the ecclesiastical canon was instituted, to which all the books of the prophets and apostles pertain, which we altogether do not dare to adjudicate and according to which we freely judge about other books, either of the faithful or the unfaithful."³⁴ Hence Jerome writes in a letter: "I have learned to grant this honor only to the books of the Scriptures, which are called canonical, that I believe no author of them to have erred in anything. But I read other books so that, however much they may influence me with the sanctity of their teachings, I do not reckon them true, merely because they think something."³⁵

(12) [Scripture] has, fourth, the stability of adhesion (*stabilitatem adhesionis*), not from the certitude of reason but from the certitude of the author. For "faith does not have merit if human reason provides proof," says Gregory.³⁶ And "faith will totter if the authority of Scripture begins to shake," as Augustine says in the first book of *On Christian Doctrine*. Augustine also explains this firmness of adhesion most beautifully in his treatise *Against the Letter of the Manichees*: "Not to speak of the purest wisdom of the Catholic Church ... there are many other things which most justly keep me in her bosom. The consent of peoples and nations keeps me in the Church; so does her authority, inaugurated by miracles, nourished by hope, enlarged by love, established by age. The succession of priests keeps me, beginning from the very seat of the Apostle Peter, to whom the Lord, after His resurrection, gave it in charge to feed His sheep, down to the present episcopate. And so, lastly, does the name itself of Catholic, which, not without reason, amid so many heresies, the Church alone has thus retained; so that, though all heretics wish to be called Catholics, yet when a stranger asks where the Catholic Church meets, no heretic will venture to point to his own

³³ Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* 2.42.

³⁴ Augustine, *Contra Cresconium* 2.31.39.

³⁵ Neither I nor the editor of the critical edition have been able to find this passage in Jerome's letters. The editor makes this notation: "Cf. Augustinus, *Epistulae* 82, par. 3." In that letter to Jerome, Augustine seems to be responding to a passage such as the one quoted above. But the text there is different from the one Bonaventure is quoting here.

³⁶ Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in evangelia* 26.1.

chapel or house."³⁷ Thus writes Augustine.

Omnium (Of All Things): Material Cause

(13) With regard to the material cause (whose association is taken from the division of the *thema* where *omnium* is added³⁸), it ought to be noted that the one and only God is fittingly called the maker of all makers, in their proper natures, appropriate to the places they have been deposited, handed on in the Sacred Scriptures.³⁹ Ecclesiasticus 42:16: "The sun giving light has looked upon all things." And as Dionysius says in the *Divine Names*, just one is the principle of the numbers, the center is the principles of circles, and the sun is the principles of its rays, so God is the principle of the whole world.⁴⁰ For just as the sun is the father of the plants, the lord of the planets, the ornament of the stars, so the sun of justice produced all things, he distinguished them, he described them: he *produced* them from the beginning, because "through the Word all things were made" (John 1:3); he *distinguished* them in order, because all things he constituted in number, weight, and measure (Wisdom 11:21); he *described* them in the divine law because "he poured her [wisdom] out upon all his works" (Ecclesiasticus 1:10).⁴¹ Thus the Scripture

³⁷ Augustine, *Contra epistolam Manichaei quam vocant fundamenti* 4. "[In catholica enim Ecclesia], Ut omittam sincerissimam sapientiam ecclesiae catholicae [ad cuius cognitionem pauci spirituales in hac vita perveniunt, ut eam ex minima quidem parte, quia homines sunt, sed tamen sine dubitatione cognoscant: ceteram quippe turbam non intellegendi vivacitas, sed credendi simplicitas tutissimam facit: ut ergo hanc omittam sapientiam, quam in Ecclesia esse catholica non creditis]; multa sunt alia quae in eius gremio me iustissime teneant. Tenet consensus populorum atque gentium: tenet auctoritas miraculis inchoata, spe nutrita, caritate aucta, vetustate firmata: tenet ab ipsa sede Petri apostoli, cui pascendas oves suas post resurrectionem Dominus commendavit, usque ad praesentem episcopatum successio sacerdotum: tenet postremo ipsum Catholicae nomen, quod non sine causa inter tantas haereses et tam multas sic Ecclesia sola obtinuit [quod non sine causa inter tam multas haereses sic ista Ecclesia sola obtinuit], ut cum omnes haeretici se catholicos dici velint, quaerenti tamen peregrino alicui, ubi ad Catholicam conveniatur, nullus haeticorum vel basilicam suam vel domum audeat ostendere." The material italicized and in brackets is in Augustine's original text, but was either left out or altered by Bonaventure.

³⁸ I take it the referent here is to the "sign" established by the opening *thema* verse. When he made his *divisio* of the verse, Bonaventure associated the material cause with the word *omnium*.

³⁹ Above Bonaventure spoke of the "makers" made by God makes as referring specifically to the Apostles and prophets who wrote the Scriptures and handed them down to us. I take it his point here is that God made each one of these inspired authors in his proper nature at the proper time and place, just as he has with every other created thing.

⁴⁰ Neither the editor nor I have been able to locate this reference in the works of Pseudo-Dionysius.

⁴¹ It may help to understand the context of the verse in Ecclesiasticus 1:10. It begins (v. 5): "The word of God on high is the fountain of wisdom, and her ways are everlasting commandments" (*mandata aeterna*). Bonaventure likely has this verse in mind when he says that God described the works of creation *in the divine law*. It continues a few lines further on (vv. 8–9): There is one most

contains every truth; here is, according to Augustine in his *Third Letter to Volusianus*, physics, ethics, and logic,⁴² for all philosophy can be reduced to these three, as Plato teaches and Augustine repeats in *The City of God* 8.10.⁴³ Hence Ambrose says, in his *Commentary on Luke*: "The divine Scripture evacuates the disciplines of worldly wisdom; if anyone seeks the things they find marvelous in the discourses [of the philosophers], they will find them in the divine Scriptures."⁴⁴ Not only does it contain every truth, but every good as well. Wisdom 7:11–12: "She is the mother of all good things." For "where there is no knowledge of the soul, there is no good" (Proverbs 19:2); but without this [the Scripture] there is no knowledge of the soul, and without this knowledge [of the soul], there is no knowledge of the good. Therefore either nothing at all is good, or in it [the Scripture] is every good. This knowledge [of the good obtained in the Scriptures] has, with regard to the material cause, a community of utility. And because something is more useful to the extent it is more unified, hence its unity follows upon a fourfold utility: namely, a [unity] of useful comprehension (*utilis comprehensionis*), of total perfection (*totalis perfectionis*), of principle attribution (*principalis attributionis*), and of uniform consideration (*uniformis considerationis*).

(14) The first unity is the unity of useful comprehension, which is filled with whatever is necessary for us with respect to the end, namely all precepts, counsels, miracles and examples. As Fulgentius writes in a sermon: The divine writings are devoted wholly to considering the salvation of all; here is that which is adapted to every age, that which is appropriate to every profession; here we hear the precepts of what we must do; here we come to know the rewards for which we hope; [here is the command which teaches us through the letter and instructs us so that we may have knowledge; here is the promise which draws us by grace and leads us to glory].⁴⁵ For it [the Scripture] contains the source of creation, the fall of

high Creator Almighty, and a powerful king, and greatly to be feared, who sits upon his throne and is the God of dominion. He created her in the Holy Ghost, and saw her, and numbered her, and measured her." Note the echo of Wisdom 11:21 and its reference to God creating all things in "number, weight, and measure." Which brings us, finally, to verse 10 which he quotes above: "And he poured her" — that is, wisdom — "out upon all his works."

⁴² Augustine, *Epistula* 137.17.

⁴³ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 8.10.

⁴⁴ Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam*, prol.: "Licet Scriptura divina mundanae evacuet sapientiae disciplinam, quod maiore facuta verborum ambitu quam rerum ratione subnixa sit; tamen si quis in Scripturis divinis etiam illa quae miranda illi putant, quaerit, inveniet." Bonaventure: "Licet Scriptura divina mundanae scientiae evacuet disciplina, si quis tamen quaerat quae illi in suis sermonibus mirabilia putant, in divinis Scripturis inveniet."

⁴⁵ Fulgentius, *De dispensationibus Dominis*, sermon 1, par. 1: "Ibi prorsus ad salutem consulitur universis quos Dominus salvare dignatur; ibi est quod omni aetati congruat, ibi quod omni professioni conveniat; ibi audimus praecepta quae faciamus, ibi cognoscimus praemia quae speremus." Bonaventure: In divinis sermonibus, ad salutem prorsus consulitur universis; ibi est quod omni aetati

transgression, the manner of reparation, and the fruit of retribution. The first is treated in the beginning of Genesis; the fourth at the end of the Book of Revelation; the second and third in intermediary books. For "all things were created by him and in him. And he is before all, and by him all things continue to exist" (Colossians 1:16–17).

(15) The second unity is the unity of the perfection of the whole, which is like the line of a circle that is perfectly complete in every one of its parts. There could not ever be some other science that is a part of it, nor is there a part of some other such part, nor is there a part of some part along with it by which salvation is gained.⁴⁶ Otherwise, if you were not content with these [the books of Scripture], you would keep on looking elsewhere, but "Of the making of many books, there is no end," as the Gloss on Ecclesiastes says;⁴⁷ and so every addition and subtraction is prohibited, "under penalty of anathema," as it states in Galatians 1:9, or under penalty of damnation, as it suggests in the Book of Revelation 22:18–19.⁴⁸ Whence Chrysostom, commenting on that verse in Matthew 26:55, "I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple," says: "Every teacher is a servant of the law, because he is neither able to add something above the law or subtract from it, according to a proper understanding, but he preaches only what he finds in the law,"⁴⁹ otherwise he displays himself as though he were wiser than God, and he begins to be a false witness. "All these things are the book of life, and the covenant of the most High, and the knowledge of truth" (Ecclesiasticus 24:31). And so well it is said that no one may receive the book, complete, closed, sealed, and confirmed in the death of Christ.⁵⁰

congruat; quod omni professioni conveniat; ibi audimus praecepta quae facimus; ibi cognoscimus praemia quae speramus, etc." [ibi est iussio quae nos per litteram doceat et instruat ad scientiam; ibi promissio quae per gratiam trahat et perducat ad gloriam].

⁴⁶ The Latin here is more than a little confusing: "Secunda unitas est totalis perfectionis, quae sicut linea circularis, sic ex omnibus suis partibus perfecte perficitur autem nec alia scientia pars eius, nec ipsa pars alicuius alterius, nec aliqua cum ipsa quam adquiratur salus, penitus esse possit." I take it his point is that the Scriptures are whole and complete in and of themselves so that there is no other source of knowledge from which we gain salvation.

⁴⁷ The editor of the critical edition cites Jerome, *Incipit Liber Ecclesiastes*. But this famous phrase can also be found in Ecclesiastes 12:12.

⁴⁸ Galatians 1:9: "If any one preach to you a gospel, besides that which you have received, let him be anathema." Revelation 22:18–19: "For I testify to everyone that hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If any man shall add to these things, God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from these things that are written in this book."

⁴⁹ Pseudo-Chrysostom, *In Mathaeum, opus imperfectum*, hom. 20.

⁵⁰ Cf. Revelation 5:1–9: "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within and without, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel, proclaiming with a loud voice: Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man was able, neither in heaven, nor on earth, nor under the earth, to open the book, nor to look on it. And I wept

(16) The third unity is the unity of principal attribution, by which all things contained in it refer to God, who undoubtedly is the principle subject of the Sacred Scripture, both because the consideration of him is the first object, because the search for him is the first thing supposed and because he is the first subject of attribution. Others are referred by attribution to him as to an end and subject as the Commentator (Averroes) teaches in the fourth book of the *Metaphysics*. "From him and through him and in him are all things" (Romans 11:36). And yet although every knowable thing can be taken up in service of this knowledge (*scientiae*), nevertheless it is most powerfully taken up by the attribution of the subject which considers our faith or salvation. Whence Augustine in the beginning of book 14 of *On the Trinity* says: "I do not attribute to this knowledge (*scientiae*) everything whatever that can be known by man about things human, wherein there is exceeding much of empty vanity and mischievous curiosity, but only those things by which that most wholesome faith, which leads to true blessedness, is begotten, nourished, defended, and strengthened."⁵¹

(17) The fourth unity is the unity of uniform consideration. For while the other sciences consider single things under some *ratio* according to which, in the *esse* proper to them, they are what they are, this science considers all things uniformly under the *ratio* of a vestige participating in the divine *esse*; so that they may consider according to the vestige in that thing, [the source] from which (under mode, kind, and order) they are what they are.⁵² As Augustine says in a letter to Orosius: "Number, measure, weight: God Himself is number without number, from which comes every number; He is measure without measure from which comes every measure; He is weight without weight, from which comes every weight."⁵³ And again, in *On True Religion* 7.13: "For every thing, every substance, essence or nature, it is necessary that it is some *thing*, that it is

much, because no man was found worthy to open the book, nor to see it. And one of the ancients said to me: Weep not; behold the lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I saw: and behold in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the ancients, a Lamb standing as it were slain ... And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne. And when he had opened the book, the four living creatures, and the four and twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb ... And they sung a new canticle, saying: You are worthy, O Lord, to take the book, and to open its seals; because you were slain, and have redeemed us to God, in your blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation."

⁵¹ Augustine, *De trinitate*, 14.1.3.

⁵² I do not wish to enter into the dispute over what Bonaventure means by *esse*: whether he is fundamentally an "essentialist" or whether he held that there is a real distinction between essence and existence. Translating *esse* here as "being" would favor one side in the debate; translating it as "essence" would favor the other. I have preferred to leave it untranslated. For more on the debate, see George Klubertanz, "Esse and Existere in St. Bonaventure," *Medieval Studies* 8 (1946): 169-188.

⁵³ Cf. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 4.3.

discerned by its own proper species; and that it does not exceed the order of nature."⁵⁴ Hence the Sacred Scripture assigns all the *exemplata* to the exemplar. "All these things came to me written by the hand of the Lord that I might understand all the works of the exemplar" (1 Chronicles 28:19). Therefore because Sacred Scripture is one in highest simplicity over all the sciences, it is the measure of all the others.

***Sapientia* (Wisdom): Formal Cause**

(18) With regard to the formal cause, which is associated [in the *thema* verse above] with the word "wisdom," we ought to pay special attention to the fact that, by reason of the form of its treatment and mode of proceeding, not only is it called a "science" (*scientia*), but "wisdom" (*sapientia*); this is because it is higher in dignity than all others, more certain in truth, and superior in freedom. For it is deiform in inspiration (*deiformis inspiratione*), luciform in erudition (*luciformis eruditione*), multiform in signification (*multiformis significatione*), and pulchiform in representation (*pulchiformis representatione*). Wisdom 7:25–26 speaks of "a pure emanation of the almighty God: the brightness of eternal light, the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of his goodness." Wisdom is a "pure emanation", because there is no mixing of human invention in it; as it says in 2 Peter 1:21: "For prophecy came not by the will of man at any time: but the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost." For pure truth is not to be expected from human invention. As Augustine in *Against the Academics* 3.14 says: "nothing can be proved by reason that, if ingenuity is present, will not be bitterly resisted."⁵⁵

[The Scripture] is bright, like the brightness of light, because it is the first impression of divine illumination (*primo impressio divinae illustrationis*); it is a mirror because it is a sure description of the eternal order (*certa descriptio aeternae dispositionis*); it is an image because it is a clear expression of future contemplation (*clara expressio futurae contemplationis*). Hugh of St. Victor, in his *Exposition on the Celestial Hierarchy* 2.1, declares that, "All that cognition, which now through sacred eloquence

⁵⁴ Augustine, *De vera religione* 7.13: "Omnis enim res, vel substantia, vel essentia, vel natura, vel si quo alio verbo melius enuntiatur, simul haec tria habet; ut et unum aliquid sit, et specie propria discernatur a ceteris, et rerum ordinem non excedat." Bonaventure: "Omne enim ens, omnis substantia, essentia vel natura necesse est ut unum aliquid sit et propria specie discernatur et ordinem non excedat."

⁵⁵ Augustine, *Contra Academicos* 3.14.30: "Hoc enim ipso ostenditur nihil quamlibet copiosis-
simis subtilissimisque argumentis posse suaderi, cui non ex parte contraria, si adsit ingenium, non minus acriter, vel fortasse acius resistatur." Bonaventure: "Ita ratione probari potest quin si assit ingenium ita acriter resistatur."

we learn by the study of reading or of meditation, is the image of that full and perfect cognition, which afterward we will draw out from the present contemplation." What is expressed is the figure of uncreated wisdom, so that there is no falsity, no duplicity, no dubiety, no opacity; hence there is in it the most certain and inerrant truth and sureness, so that whatever is not consonant with it is undoubtedly false. Whence Augustine in the *City of God* 18.40 says: "But we, being sustained by divine authority in the history of our religion, have no doubt that whatever is opposed to it is most false."⁵⁶

(19) From the excellence of form, therefore, by which we name it wisdom, a fourfold dignity follows, namely because it is highest in principles (*altissima in principiis*), most certain in opinions (*certissima in sententiis*), most profound in mysteries (*profundissima in mysteriis*), most plain in necessary things (*planissima in necessariis*). With such words the Scripture speaks "to mock proud readers with its heights, terrify the attentive with its depths, feed great souls with its truth, and nourish little ones with sweetness," as Augustine says in *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 5.3.⁵⁷

(20) First, therefore, it is most high as to principles, which in supernatural light are naturally above cognition. These are the articles of faith, inspired and revealed by God, seen and read by the canonical authors in the light of eternal art, and because of this, placed by us before other principles whatsoever known *per se*, because they were passed on and written down in this way. Augustine, *The City of God* 11.3, says: "it behooves us to believe those who have acquired knowledge of these things set in that incorporeal light or who contemplate abidingly."⁵⁸ Nor should we wonder if the wisdom is highest which is from the Highest and about the Highest. For it [wisdom] is, as Avicenna said at the beginning of his *Metaphysics*: "knowledge of that which is the most excellently known"; and shortly before: Wisdom is "of the cause of causes and principle of principles, which is the highest God."⁵⁹

(21) Second, as it is most high, so also most certain, so that it excels both in height and in the nobility of certitude, as it says in the first book of *De anima*;⁶⁰ not, however, with the certitude of demonstration, for

⁵⁶ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 18.40.

⁵⁷ Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 5.3.

⁵⁸ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 11.3.

⁵⁹ Both passages can be found in Avicenna, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina* (also known as the "Metaphysics of the Healing" or, in Arabic, the *al-Shifā'*) 1.1. As we have seen, Bonaventure often paraphrases or quotes "creatively," in this case, however, he quotes his Latin text of Avicenna's work word-for-word.

⁶⁰ Cf. Aristotle, *De anima* 1.1 (402a 1–4). In Bonaventure's Latin version, the original would have read: "Bonorum et honorabilium noticiam opinantes, magis autem alteram altera aut secundum certitudinem aut ex eo quod meliorum quidem et mirabiliorum est" In this text, Aristotle suggests that a subject-matter may be judged better and more honorable than others by reason of

it is "not inculcated by the wrangling of arguments," as Augustine says in *City of God* 18.41, but with the certitude of inerrant tradition.⁶¹ It has authentic [inspired writers who] handed down the Scriptures to us (*authenticos traditores in Scripturis*); catholic expositors in the sentences (*catholicos expositores in sententiis*); wonderful proofs in its miracles (*mirificos probatores in prodigiis*), and magnificent defenders in its supplications (*magnificos defensores in suppliciis*).⁶² Hence, "Beyond all doubt, we hold nothing more supremely certain than that which is comprehended by constant faith," as Richard of Victor says so beautifully in the first book of his *On the Trinity*.⁶³ And for this reason, therefore, it requires (a) the most sincere possessors (*sincerissimos possessores*) because "wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul" (Wisdom 1:4); (b) the most faithful professors (*fidelissimos professores*) to "teach, delight, and transform, as Augustine says in *On Christian Doctrine* 4.12.17; and (c) "studious listeners (*studiosos auditores*), benevolent, teachable, and attentive," as [Pseudo] Boethius says in *On the Discipline of Scholars*;⁶⁴ and (d) the most zealous seekers (*zelantissimos sectatores*) since "not hearers but doers are justified" (Romans 2:13). Jerome, in an epistle to Pope Damasus, says: "It is necessary if one is to know the Scriptures to listen spiritually, or if one does not know, yet desires to know, to strive hard not to live according to flesh

its "certitude" or because it deals with things that are "better and more wonderful." Bonaventure summarizes thus: "ut tam altitudinis quam certitudinis nobilitate praeccellat," the key addition here being the addition of the word "height" (*altitudo*).

⁶¹ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 18.41.

⁶² This is one of Bonaventure's many parallelisms that can be difficult, if not impossible, to render accurately in English. Literally, it would say that the Church's "certitude of inerrant tradition" has to do with "the authentic handers-on in its Scriptures (*authenticos traditores in Scripturis*), the wonderful provers in its miracles (*mirificos probatores in prodigiis*), and the magnificent defenders in its supplications (*magnificos defensores in suppliciis*). The three phrases are poetic and beautiful, matching as they do in both meter and sound, but they are not only odd in Latin, they are also nearly impossible to render into English in a way that both (a) makes sense and (b) preserves the parallelism.

⁶³ Richard of St. Victor, *De Trinitate* 1.2. I felt the need to translate fairly literally above, but I prefer the more lively translation by Ruben Angelici, *Richard of St. Victor: On the Trinity* (Cambridge, U.K.: James Clarke, 2011): "Then, without a shadow of a doubt, we do not hold anything more firmly than that which we grasp by a resolute faith." NB: Several of the categories in the previous paragraph can also be traced to this section of Richard's *De trinitate*.

⁶⁴ Cf. [Pseudo]-Boethius, *De disciplina scoliarum* 2: "Debet autem discipuli subieccio in tribus consistere: in attentione benivolencia et docilitate. Docilis ingenio, attentus exercicio, benivulus animo. Attentus, inquam, ad audiendum, docilis ad intelligendum, benivulus ad retinendum." Bonaventure: "studiosos auditores, benivolos, dociles et attentos." It is unusual that Bonaventure did not change *studiosos* to *studiorissimos* to match the other items in his parallel list, especially since the word did not appear in the text he is quoting from. During the Middle Ages, this text, the *De disciplina scoliarum*, was very popular, especially among scholars, and was thought to have been written by Boethius. It was not. I trust it is clear that I have added the sectioning (a,b,c, and d) to clarify the items in this fourfold list.

and blood so that he may become worthy of the spiritual mysteries."⁶⁵ And Hugh of St. Victor, in part 5 of the *Didascalicon*, says: "The one studying Sacred Scripture does not have confidence in the acumen of genius, the subtlety of scrutiny, the sedulity of study; he has confidence in the goodness of God, in the piety of the prophecy, and in the humility of the inmost heart"⁶⁶—those things hidden from the wise, but revealed to the little ones (cf. Matthew 11:25, Luke 10:21).

(22) Third, Scripture is most profound in mysteries, which it contains under mystical figures—to exclude the infidels (*infideles excludat*), lead the faithful (*fideles manuducat*), exercise the seeking (*quaerentes exerceat*), and restore the intelligent (*intelligentes reficiat*). Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 15.25: "Scripture uses such words to terrify the proud, excite the negligent, exercise the seeking, nourish the intelligent." Hence the Commentator (or a commentator) in the first chapter of the *Angelic Hierarchy*, taking this phrase from Augustine, says: "The depth of the mysteries [in the Scriptures] are meant to hide them from the vile, to exercise those who seek, and to feed those to whom they are opened."⁶⁷

(23) The first cause of this profundity is the multiplicity of signification, namely: "of words, things, and properties," as Hugh teaches at the beginning of the first book of *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*; from this he concludes that "all the arts are servants to this wisdom."⁶⁸

(24) The second cause is the limitlessness of understanding. For so great is the understanding the catholic teacher can elicit according to the measure of faith, as much as he has understood in the Holy Spirit Himself, for whatever is in the Scripture is His, from what the author intended. Hence Augustine, in *Confessions* 12.31–32, says: "He, surely, when he wrote those words, perceived and thought whatever of truth we

⁶⁵ Jerome, *Interpretatio homiliarum duarum Origenis in Canticum Canticorum* (addressed to Pope Damasus), homily 1: "Necesse est igitur eum, qui audire Scripturas spiritualiter novit, aut qui certe non novit, et desiderat nosse, omni labore contendere, ut non iuxta carnem et sanguinem converteretur, quo possit dignus fieri spiritualium secretorum." Bonaventure: "Necesse est si quis scripturas audire spiritualiter novit aut si non novit nosce [nosce] tamen desiderat cum labore contendere, ut non iuxta carnem et sanguinem converteretur, quo possit spiritualium dignus fieri secretorum." I am fairly sure that "nosce" in the text of Bonaventure should be "nosse."

⁶⁶ This passage as quoted does not show up anywhere in the *Didascalicon* or in any other of Hugh's works that I can find. It might be understood as a paraphrase of certain ideas in book 5 of the *Didascalicon*, but the central message of that book is that the student of Scripture needs both human effort in study and God's help.

⁶⁷ Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 140.1: "Sunt enim in Scripturis sanctis profunda mysteria, quae ad hoc absconduntur, ne vilescent; ad hoc quaeruntur, ut exercent; ad hoc aperiuntur, ut pascant." Bonaventure: "Mysteriorum profunditas ob hoc tegitur, ne vilescent, ob hoc quaeritur ut exercent, ob hoc aperiuntur ut pascant." Anyone looking for this passage in either of the English translations of this work will have two difficulties: (a) the numbering of the Psalms in the English translations varies from Augustine's, and (b) this introductory passage is not translated.

⁶⁸ Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacramentis*, prol., 6.

have been able to discover and whatever we have not been able, nor yet are able, though still it may be found in them. O Lord, if man does see anything less, can anything lie hidden from Your good Spirit, which You Yourself, by those words, were going to reveal to future readers, and if he, through whom they were spoken, amid the many interpretations thought of one alone?"⁶⁹

(25) The third cause is the multiformity of senses, under the categories of "things done" (*sub ratione gesti*), "things to be believed" (*crediti*), "things that ought to be done" (*gerendi*), and "things to be hoped for" (*sperandi*). For just as in the concave mirror, a fourfold locus of the image results, so in the mirror of Scripture, there is a fourfold sense. Whence Augustine at the beginning of his commentary *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, declares that, "In all the sacred books, we should consider the eternal truths that are taught, the facts that are narrated, the future events that are predicted, and the precepts or counsels that are given about what is to be done."⁷⁰ But the four senses are figured most beautifully in the four animals in Ezekiel 1. For history coincides with the ox because of its simplicity, allegory with the lion because of its authority, tropology with the man because of his civility, and anagogy with the eagle because of its sublimity. But just as the fourfold faces are attributed elsewhere to whatever you please, because the four faces are the four faces of one living being, so whatever the four senses encompass, so also the fourfold quaternary has been multiplied by four.⁷¹

(26) For the historical sense contains precepts, counsels, miracles, and examples. The anagogical sense considers uncreated essence, exemplary wisdom, angelic simplicity, and the Church triumphant. The allegorical sense deals with assumed humanity, the glorious virgin, the Church militant, and the Sacred Scripture. And the tropological sense deals with spiritual grace, spiritual life, spiritual battle, and spiritual office. Augustine describes this profundity most beautifully in his *Third Letter to Volusianus*: "For such is the depth of the Christian Scriptures, that even if I were attempting to study them and nothing else from early boyhood to decrepit old age, with the utmost leisure, the most unwearied zeal, and talents greater than I have, I would be still daily making progress in discovering their treasures; not that there is so great difficulty in coming through them to know the things necessary to salvation, but when

⁶⁹ Augustine, *Confessionum* 12.31–32.

⁷⁰ Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* 1.1.

⁷¹ I think what Bonaventure is implying here is that, just as each of the four "living beings" (angels) Ezekiel sees has four faces — this is the source of the image of the "fourfold quaternary multiplied by four (four angels with four faces each) — so also each passage in Scripture has four senses. He might also be implying that just as each of the four "angels" has four faces, so too there are four senses in each of the four Gospels, which is what the four creatures are customarily used to signify.

any one has accepted these truths with the faith that is indispensable as the foundation of a life of piety and uprightness, so many things which are veiled under manifold shadows of mystery remain to be inquired into by those who are advancing in the study, and so great is the depth of wisdom not only in the words in which these have been expressed, but also in the things themselves, that the experience of the oldest, the ablest, and the most zealous students of Scripture illustrates what Scripture itself has said: 'When a man has finished, then he begins' (Sirach 18:6).⁷² And again in the *Confessions* 12.14, he says: "Behold the inviting surface, but marvelous depth, of divine eloquence."⁷³

(27) Fourth, the Scripture is most plain in necessary things (*planissima in necessariis*); thus as Gregory puts it, in the prologue to the *Moralium*: "In the mysteries, the elephant floats, in the necessary things, the lamb walks."⁷⁴ Thus as the perfect are fed with solid food, so the simple are nourished with milk, and necessary things are proposed to the simple in a healthy style. Whence Jerome, in a letter to Paulinus, says: "Let not the simplicity of the scripture or the poorness of its vocabulary offend you, which are advanced with industry, for in this way it is better fitted for the instruction of an unlettered congregation as the educated person can take one meaning and the uneducated another from one and the same sentence."⁷⁵ So much for the form.

***Docet Me* (Teaches Me): Final Cause**

(28) With regard to the final cause, it is important to note that the goal of Scripture is the goal of instruction (*doctrinae*); as it says in Romans 15:4: "For whatever things were written, were written for our instruction" (*doctrinam*). But it is the Maker Himself who created who teaches. So Augustine, in his *Commentary on John*, hom. 7.10: "Let no one say that one gave the law, and that another teaches the law: for the same teaches it who gave it."⁷⁶ The Maker teaches principally, but the

⁷² Augustine, *Epistula* 137.3.

⁷³ Augustine, *Confessionum* 12.14: "mira profunditas eloquiorum tuorum, quorum ecce ante nos superficies blandiens parvulis, sed mira profunditas, deus meus, mira profunditas!" Bonaventure: "Ecce eloquiorum divinarum superficies blandiens sed mora profunditas Deus meus."

⁷⁴ Gregory, *Moralia in Iob*, "Epistle to Leander," 4. Gregory's *Moralia* is prefaced with this long letter to Leander, bishop of Carthage. In that letter, he formulates this marvelous image, saying of the Scripture that "it is, as it were, a kind of river, if I may so liken it, which is both shallow and deep, wherein both the lamb may find a footing, and the elephant float at large." (Quasi quidam quippe est fluvius, ut ita dixerim, planus et altus, in quo et agnus ambulet, et elephas natet.) Bonaventure's paraphrase: "In misteris elephas natet, in necessariis agnus peditet."

⁷⁵ Jerome, *Epistula* 53.10.

⁷⁶ Augustine, *In Iohannis evangelium tractatus*, hom. 7.10.

teacher does so as his minister. The goal, therefore, is the utility of the use of his instruction; the end is the felicity of the fruit of its life, to which end all the sciences tend, because, as Avicenna says: "All the sciences come together in the utility which is the acquisition of preparing human perfection for future felicity."⁷⁷ No one, however, attains this on his own, because he cannot make clear what ought to be done, what he is striving for or by what means he may be purged. As Augustine says in *The City of God* 18.41: "But what can human misery do, or how or where can it reach forth, so as to attain blessedness, if divine authority does not lead it?"⁷⁸ The Scripture, therefore, "teaches temperance, prudence, justice, and fortitude, of which there is nothing more profitable in human life" (Wisdom 8:7). Whatever moral science may teach, if it is not ordered by grace to the true end, fails to reach the end and the fruit of true wisdom. Augustine, in the *City of God* 19.20, says: "For the true blessings of the soul are not now enjoyed; for that is no true wisdom which does not direct all its prudent observations, manly actions, virtuous self-restraint, and just arrangements, to that end in which God shall be all and all in a secure eternity and perfect peace."⁷⁹

(29) From the goal of its use, a fourfold utility arises, so that the goal of its fruit may be attained, namely happiness of life. These four are: knowing the truth (*cognitio veritatis*), arguing against falsity (*argumentatio falsitatis*), correcting iniquity (*correptio iniquitatis*), and building up charity (*eruditio caritatis*), so that by knowing the true, all falsity may be excluded, whereby the understanding is perfected; and by being perfected by the good, all evil may be removed, whereby the affections may be perfected. For according to Augustine: "The rational creature, through that which is most excellent in him, attains that which excels all things."⁸⁰ For this is the goal of the divine law and the intention of the lawgiver, which twofold end the Lawgiver Jesus himself shows us, namely the use of it by which he tends to God here, and the fruit of it through which he may possess God; as it says in John 20:31: "But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing, you may have life in his name." The Apostle [Paul] expresses the aforementioned fourfold utility and orders it to the fruit of

⁷⁷ Avicenna, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina* 1.3.

⁷⁸ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 18.41.

⁷⁹ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 19.20.

⁸⁰ The editor lists the reference here as *In Iohannis evangelium tractatus* 107.2. That passage is similar in some respects, but the actual source is *De civitate Dei* 8.4: "si enim homo ita creatus est, ut per id, quod in eo praececlit, attingat illud, quod cuncta praececlit" Bonaventure: "Creatura rationalis per id quod ipsa excellit, attingat illud quod cuncta praececlit." Augustine goes on immediately to add: "id est unum uerum optimum deum" (that is, to the one true and absolutely good God). Bonaventure will make the same point in his next sentence.

happiness in 2 Tim 3:16–17: “All scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice, that the man of God may be perfect, furnished for every good work”: for teaching every truth, for arguing against every falsity; for correcting every perversity, and for building up all sanctity. The Scripture therefore teaches the true wisdom of the handiwork of God, as Augustine declares in *Against the Academicians*: “Wisdom seems to me to be not only the knowledge of, but also the diligent search for, those things human and divine which pertain to the blessed life; so that, however much he can, he may strive more tranquilly toward God, and on the last day of his life find himself prepared for that which he desired, and he who before enjoyed human fruit, ready to enjoy beatitude by divine merit”⁸¹; to which divine beatitude may He lead us, etc.

⁸¹ Augustine, *Contra Academicos* 1.8: “sapientia mihi videtur esse rerum humanarum divinarumque, quae ad beatam vitam pertineant, non scientia solum, sed etiam diligens inquisitio. [Quam descriptionem si partiri velis, prima pars quae scientiam tenet, Dei est; haec autem quae inquisitione contenta est, hominis. Illa igitur Deus, hac autem homo beatus est. Tum ille: Miror, inquit, sapientem tuum quomodo asseras frustra operam consumere. Quomodo, inquit Licentius, frustra operam consumere, cum tanta mercede conquirat? Nam hoc ipso quo quaerit, sapiens est; et quo sapiens, eo beatus: cum ab omnibus involucris corporis mentem quantum potest, evolvit, et seipsum in semetipsum colligit; cum se non permittit cupiditatibus laniandum, sed in se atque] in Deum semper tranquillius intenditur: [ut et hic, quod beatum esse supra inter nos convenit, ratione perfruatur,] et extremo die vitae ad id quod concupivit adipiscendum reperiatur paratus fruaturque merito divina beatitudine, qui humana sit ante perfruitus. Bonaventure: “Sapientia mihi videtur rerum humanarum et divinarum, quae ad beatam vitam pertinent, non scientiam solum sed diligens inquisitio; ut hoc quantum potest in Deum tranquillius tendat, et extremo vitae die ad illud quod concupivit reperiatur paratus fruaturque merita divina beatitudine, qui ante fruatur humana fructus.”