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The Exegesis of Genesis in the Early Works of Augustine*

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1 INTRODUCTION

Augustine planned and wrote commentaries on Genesis at least five times during the approximately forty years of his writing career.¹ He started writing the first of these, *On Genesis, Against the Manicheans*, around 388/389, after his return to Thagaste in order to establish a small (monastic) community in his hometown.² He began writing the second one, *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis, an Unfinished Work*, around 393/394, after his ordination to the priesthood.³ Later in *Reconsiderations* at length,⁴ Augustine explained the method, origin, and end of these first exegetical writings: in the former commentary, by employing the method of the allegorical interpretation on the Genesis-Creation Story (Gen. 1–3),

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¹ M.-A. Vannier, *Creatio, conversio, formatio chez s. Augustin* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1991) 83–94; G. Pelland, 'Augustin rencontre le livre de la Genèse', in G. Pelland et al. « *De Genesi contra manichaeos* » « *De Genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus liber imperfectus* » di Agostino d'Ippona (Palermo: Augustinus, 1992) 15–53; Y. K. Kim, *Augustine's Changing Interpretations of Genesis 1–3* (Lewiston NY: Mellen, 2006) 4–7.

² *Retr.* 1.10(9).1. Concerning the 'monastic' character of the community established by Augustine, see G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); D. C. Alexander, *Augustine's Early Theology of the Church: Emergence and Implications*, 386–391 (New York: Peter Lang, 2008) 179–243 and 245–318.

³ *Retr.* 1.18(17).

⁴ *Retr.* 1.10(9) and 1.18(17).

he intended to refute Manichaean criticism of the Old Testament; and in the latter commentary, unlike the first one, a literal reading of the six days of Creation was designed for the audience. Yet, this approach was unsuccessful. He stopped writing because of his inexperience as an exegete.⁵ Although he realised the necessity of interpreting the scriptures literally,⁶ Augustine made his third attempt to show the reader the figurative exegesis of the creation narrative in Genesis 1. The last three books of the *Confessions* appeared about seven years after his first commitment to the literal reading. It might seem that the figurative interpretation on the *Hexaemeron* relates to the fulfilment of the confessions of his spiritual pilgrimage. Consequently, after about fifteen years had passed, he could finish writing a literal interpretation of the first chapters of Genesis by his comprehensive commentary, *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis*, which was probably completed in 415.

It is interesting to note that Augustine reverted again and again to the exposition of the beginning of Genesis. He could not lose concentration and focus on the task. We may assume, then, that his effort had been made to continue to treat some difficulties involved in Genesis, even when he did not get to work on his commentary. In fact, before the publication of Augustine's first commentary, some explanations of Genesis can already be seen in his earliest works. Although to understand Augustine's early views on Genesis, we must consider his early commentaries (*On Genesis*, *Against the Manicheans* and *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis, an Unfinished Work*), is there any significant tendency towards a comprehensive interpretation? How did he make sense of difficult texts from Genesis? In this paper, the investigation of this topic will principally focus on Augustine's early works around the time, in 393/394, before he gave up on his plan of writing the first literal interpretation. What I intend to do is, first, to examine some difficulties Augustine faced in providing a first literal reading of Genesis 1: 26–27 in *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis, an Unfinished Work*.⁷ Second, I

⁵ See R. J. Teske, 'The Image and Likeness of God in St. Augustine's *De Genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus*', *Augustinianum* (1990) 441–451; B. Neil, 'Exploring the Limits of Literal Exegesis: Augustine's Reading of Gen 1: 26', *Pacifica* 19 (2006) 144–155 at 148 n. 21.

⁶ *Retr.* 1.18(17).1.

⁷ For the incompleteness of *Gen. litt. imp.*, see R. J. Teske (trans.), *Saint Augustine on Genesis*, FC 84 (1991) 36–9; M. Marin, 'Il "De genesi ad litteram imperfectus liber"', in G. Pelland et al. « *De Genesi contra manichaeos* » « *De Genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus liber im-*

shall turn to some interpretations in his early works. For the sake of clarity, I have divided these writings along chronological lines into two groups, and within each group, I shall consider the status of the topic. Finally, I shall venture an explanation for the change in the way in which Augustine dealt with the difficult passages, which is surely tied to the significance of his early exegesis of Genesis.

2 AUGUSTINE'S LITERAL READING IN *ON THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF GENESIS, AN UNFINISHED WORK*

When Augustine started writing *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis, an Unfinished Work*, as he tells us in *Reconsiderations*, he seemed to appreciate the importance of the exegetical method of his present commentary. He considered it as a challenging programme for his ability:

that is, how what was said there could be understood in keeping with its historical character. In this very arduous and difficult work as well I wanted to get a sense of what I was capable of, ...⁸

When he exerted himself to comment on Genesis 1:26, he would not resort to an allegorical way of reading. In his former commentary, *On Genesis, Against the Manicheans*, which was written about four or five years before, he would rather have had recourse to an allegorical interpretation. A literal interpretation could not have avoided the serious danger with which the Manichaeans condemn the ordinary believers of the Catholic faith to accept what they consider blasphemy.⁹ Yet, the present commentary, *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis, an Unfinished*

perfectus » (1992) 117–151 at 118f.; E. Hill (trans.), *On Genesis*, J. E. Rotelle et al. (eds.), WSA I/13 (2002) 110f.; P. Monat, M. Dulaey, M. Scopello, and A.-I. Bouton-Touboulic (eds. and trans.), *Sur le Genèse contre les manichéens; Sur la Genèse au sens littéral livre inachevé*, BA 50 (2004) 387–92; N. Kamimura, 'Augustine's Scriptural Exegesis in *De Genesi ad litteram liber unus imperfectus*', in J. Baun, A. Cameron, M. Edwards, and M. Vinzent (eds.), *StudPatr* 49 (2010) 229–234.

⁸ *Retr.* 1.18(17); CCSL 57,54: 'hoc est quemadmodum possent secundum historicam proprietatem quae ibi dicta sunt accipi, uolui experiri in hoc quoque negotiosissimo ac difficillimo opere quid ualerem; ...'. English trans. in B. Ramsey (trans.), *Revisions*, R. Teske (ed.), WSA I/2 (2010) 78.

⁹ See J. J. O'Meara, *The Creation of Man in St. Augustine's De Genesi ad Litteram* (Villanova PA: Villanova University Press, 1980) 14.

Work, remains incomplete. It can be seen how in this treatise, the literal interpretation comes to be more highly demanded and more closely linked to, and not in conflict with, his understanding of that Genesis story. Augustine firmly adhered to its exegetical method in this commentary.

In *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis, an Unfinished Work*, Augustine managed to deal with the first chapter of Genesis up to Genesis 1:26: '*And God said: Let us make man to our image and likeness* (Gn 1:26).'¹⁰ At this point, he left the passage unfinished (16.55–60). When he was revising his writings in *Reconsiderations*, Augustine found this work among them and hesitated over whether to destroy it. But he did not abandon the commentary. Finally, in 427, he complemented his explanation of the verse 26 (16.61–62) and published it as 'an indication of [my] early attempts'.¹¹ Why, then, did Augustine stop interpreting the following verses in Genesis? Both in the passages (16.55–60) and its supplementary part (16.61–62), he tried to expound on the phrase 'to our image and likeness' (*ad imaginem et similitudinem dei*) and summarised his view as follows:

in which we read that *God said Let us make man to our image and likeness*, insofar as the likeness of God to which man was made can be taken to be the very Word of God, that is to say, the only-begotten Son; nor of course that man himself is that same image and likeness, equal to the Father.¹²

It is noteworthy that without any hesitancy, Augustine considered the human likeness to God in relation to the participation in the Likeness, who is the Word and the Son of the Father. Although in additional sections (16.61–62), he quoted a passage from 1 Corinthians 11:7 that urges the reader to reconsider the words 'to our image' as 'to his own image, and that is the Trinity itself',¹³ there would be no reason why his first literal exposition was discontinued altogether. Thus, it may be seen

¹⁰ *Gen. litt. imp.* 16.55; CSEL 28/1,497: '*Et dixit deus: faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram.*' English trans. in E. Hill (trans.), WSA I/13 (2002) 146.

¹¹ *Retr.* 1.18(17); CCSL 57,54: 'index . . . rudimentorum meorum'.

¹² *Gen. litt. imp.* 16.61; CSEL 28/1,501: '*in quibus legimus dixisse deum: faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram, ut similitudo dei, ad quam factus est homo, ipsum dei uerbum, hoc est unigenitus filius accipi possit: non utique ut ipse sit eadem imago et similitudo aequalis patri.*' English trans. in E. Hill (trans.), WSA I/13 (2002) 150.

¹³ *Gen. litt. imp.* 16.61; CSEL 28/1,502: '*ad imaginem suam, quod est ipsa trinitas.*' English trans. in E. Hill (trans.), WSA I/13 (2002) 151.

that the serious difficulty Augustine faced was the literal interpretation of the next verse 27, particularly, the phrase: 'male and female he created them'. Since he saw the humanity created by God as an incorporeal soul with a spiritual body, it would seem to be impossible to think about the 'male and female' who had not fallen into their mortal body.

3 AUGUSTINE'S EARLIEST REFERENCES TO GEN. 1:26–27

We have seen that in his first literal exegesis, the problems Augustine encountered when interpreting Genesis were, first, that Genesis 1:26 speaks of human nature as the image and likeness of God and, second, that the verse 27b might demand of him a literal interpretation of 'male and female'. I shall turn to some citations of these verses found in his earliest works, and in the next section, examine some works written around the same period when Augustine began *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis, an Unfinished Work* around 393/394.

Augustine cited the verse 26 of Genesis 1 as early as the Cassiciacum dialogues (386–387). In *Soliloquies*, the citation is found in the prayer to the whole Trinity, the one God, "'who made man to your own image and likeness", which he who knows himself recognises'.¹⁴ This is the fourth part of the prayer that draws explicit attention to God's governing of the universe and concludes with the text of Genesis 1:26.¹⁵ Yet, Augustine did not give any explanation for the verse, apart from a kind of Delphic oracular phrase: 'know thyself'. And in *On the Catholic and the Manichean Ways of Life* (388), we find an allusion to Genesis 1:26,¹⁶ in which he argues for the necessity of a divine precept to love one's neighbour as oneself. But here, he also left the text open to the explanation. In *On Genesis, Against the Manicheans* (388/389), when he dealt with the first

¹⁴ *Sol.* 1.1.4; CSEL 89,9: 'qui fecisti hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem tuam, quod qui se ipse novit, agnoscit'. English trans. in G. Watson (trans.), *Saint Augustine: Soliloquies and Immortality of the Soul* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1990) 29.

¹⁵ For the structure of the prayer at the beginning of *Soliloquies*, see O. Du Roy, *L'Intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon saint Augustin* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1966) 196–206; D. Doucet, 'Recherche de Dieu, Incarnation et philosophie: *Sol.* I, 1, 2–6', *REAug* 36 (1990) 91–119; H. Stirnimann, *Grund und Gründer des Alls: Augustins Gebet in den Selbstgesprächen* (*Sol.* I, 1, 2–6) (Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag, 1992).

¹⁶ *Mor.* 1.26.49; CSEL 90,53: 'non enim contentus fuit uno, qui sciret aliud deum esse aliud hominem; atque interesse tantum, quantum inter eum qui creavit et id quod ad creatoris similitudinem creatum est.'

chapter of Genesis, Augustine's primary concern with the Manichaean anthropomorphic interpretation directs the audience to read it for spiritual insights. Augustine thought of the image and likeness of God in the 'interior man' in terms of the expression of human superiority to the other animals.¹⁷ In Book 1, he expounded on the verse 27b, 'Male and female he made them', and the subsequent divine blessing in Genesis 1:28, thereby indicating 'a chaste coupling of male and female' and 'a spiritual brood of intellectual and immortal joys'.¹⁸ Again in Book 2, Augustine offered an allegorical interpretation that describes their union as the superior (rational) and the inferior (appetite) aspects of the soul.¹⁹ Hence, in his first commentary on Genesis, he did not yield a literal interpretation of these verses.

In *On True Religion* (written in c. 390 at Thagaste), which is the last of his works prior to his ordination to the priesthood, there are several citations of Genesis 1:26. It is evident from these that Augustine regarded the soul's complete transformation into the eternal life within the septenary ascending stages toward God as its being made according to the image and likeness of God.²⁰ He also defined the image and likeness as the Son.²¹

[T]he Father of Truth is supremely the One, the Father of his own Wisdom, which is called his likeness, in no respect at all unlike him, and his image because it is from him. And so the Son is rightly said to be *from* him, everything else to be *through* him.²²

Thus, among his earliest works, Augustine viewed God's image and likeness as the Son of God. But he had not yet worked out a literal interpretation of Genesis 1:27b.

¹⁷ *Gen. adv. Man.* 1.16.25–26 and 2.7.9. At this point Augustine's dependance on Ambrose's *Hexaemeron* is clearly admitted: see R. Teske, *Augustine of Hippo: Philosopher, Exegete, and Theologian* (Milwaukee WI: Marquette University Press, 2009) 277.

¹⁸ *Gen. adv. Man.* 1.19.30; CSEL 91,97–98: 'casta coniunctio masculi et feminae ... et spiritalis fetus intellegibilium et immortalium gaudiorum'. English trans. in E. Hill (trans.), WSA I/13 (2002) 58.

¹⁹ *Gen. adv. Man.* 2.12.16.

²⁰ *Vera rel.* 26.49.

²¹ *Vera rel.* 43.81–44.82.

²² *Vera rel.* 43.81; CCSL 32,241: 'summe unus est pater ueritatis, pater suae sapientiae, quae nulla ex parte dissimilis similitudo eius dicta est et imago, quia de ipso est. Itaque etiam filius recte dicitur ex ipso, cetera per ipsum.' English trans. in E. Hill (trans.), *On Christian Belief*, B. Ramsey (ed.), WSA I/8 (2005) 85.

4 AUGUSTINE'S REFERENCES TO GEN. 1:26–27 AROUND 393/394

I now consider the second group of his works which, written around the same period *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis, an Unfinished Work* was started, contains *Sermon 1* and 259, *Letter 23*, *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* and *Against Adimantus, a Disciple of Mani*.

The first to be considered is *Sermon 1*, dating from 391–393 (394–395 or before 396),²³ against the Manichaeans, in which Augustine compared the passage of Genesis 1:1 with the opening of the Gospel of John²⁴ and interpreted the 'beginning' as the Son of God through whom all things are made. With reference to the doctrine of the Trinity, that is, the three persons in God, it is interesting that in the last part of this sermon,²⁵ Augustine assumed that the Manichaeans had also accepted the doctrine, despite their consistent rejection of the God of the Old Testament. For this, a passage of Genesis 1:26–27 is crucial: 'Let us make man to our image and likeness'; and 'God made man to the image of God'.

Though even if it was not plain, and trinity were not being suggested to perceptive readers under the naming of unity, that is no reason why the beginning of the gospel should strike careful readers as contradicting the beginning of Genesis.²⁶

The approach that the Christian should discern the inner harmony of the scriptures is essential to Augustine's theory of biblical exegesis. Hence, not only did he imply that the image of God the Trinity is the only Son,

²³ For information on chronological matters of the sermons, see most recently J. J. O'Donnell, 'Envoi: After Augustine?', in M. Vessey (ed.), *A Companion to Augustine* (Chichester, West Sussex: Blackwell, 2012) 512–513; P.-M. Hombert, *Nouvelles recherches de chronologie augustinienne* (Paris: Institut d'Etudes Augustiniennes, 2000); H. R. Drobner, *Augustinus von Hippo: Sermones ad populum. Überlieferung und Bestand* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); F. Dolbeau, *Augustin et la prédication en Afrique: Recherches sur divers sermons authentiques, apocryphes ou anonymes* (Paris: Institut d'Etudes Augustiniennes, 2005). For a chart listing of the sermons, see E. Rebillard, 'Sermones', in ATA (1999) 774–789; 'Chronological Table', in J. E. Rotelle (ed.), *Sermons*, WSA III/1 (1990) 138–163; P.-P. Verbraken, *Etudes critiques sur les sermons authentique de saint Augustin* (Steenbrugge: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976). Concerning the chronology of *Serm. 1*, see also E. Hill (trans.), WSA III/1, 172 n.1.

²⁴ *Serm. 1.1.*

²⁵ *Serm. 1.5.*

²⁶ *Serm. 1.5*; CCSL 41,5: 'Quamquam etiam si non appareret, et sub unitatis appellatione trinitas intellegendibus insinueretur; non ideo contrarium principio Geneseos, euangelii principium uideri debuit prudentibus.' English trans. in E. Hill (trans.), *Sermons*, WSA III/1 (1990) 171.

but he also spoke of the Son in such other texts as Matthew 5: 34–35 and Romans 11: 33–36.

Next, *Sermon* 259, preached around 393 (394 or circa 400) at the Basilica of Peace in Hippo Regius,²⁷ contains the exposition of the words from the Gospel of John 20: 19–29. In this sermon, after clarifying how the ‘eighth day, octave, day represents the new life at the end of the age’,²⁸ Augustine showed his congregations the seventh day as the future rest the saints will have on Earth. He also talked about the sixth day and, with the citation of Genesis 1: 27a: ‘in the image of God’, offers a spiritual interpretation of this sixth day:

... in this age, as in the sixth day of the whole course of time, we are made new in baptism in order to receive the image of our maker.²⁹

Letter 23, dating from between 391 and 395, addressed to Maximinus, the Donatist bishop on Sinita in Numidia,³⁰ provides a passage from Genesis 1: 26 in its opening, in which Augustine explained the reason why he showed proper respect and consideration for the addressee at the time of his first contact with the Donatist bishop.

I, therefore, willingly call you ‘honourable’ on the basis of that rule by which I know that you are a human being and know that a human being has been made

²⁷ Concerning the chronology of *Serm.* 259, see E. Hill (trans.), *Sermons*, WSA III/7 (1993) 181 n.1.

²⁸ *Serm.* 259.2; PL 38,1197: ‘Octavus ergo iste dies in fine saeculi novam vitam significat’. English trans. in E. Hill (trans.), WSA III/7, 175.

²⁹ *Serm.* 259.2; PL 38,1198: ‘in isto tempore, quasi sexto die totius saeculi, renovamur in Baptismo, ut recipiamus imaginem Conditoris nostri.’ English trans. in E. Hill (trans.), WSA III/7, 176.

³⁰ For the letters of Augustine (with chronological issues), see F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus von Hippo: Prosopographische, Sozial- und Ideologiegeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Bochum: Universitätsverlag Dr. N. Brockmeyer, 1993); R. B. Eno, ‘Epistulae’, in *ATA* (1999) 298–310; J. Divjak, ‘Epistulae’, in *AL* 2:5/6 (2001) 893–1057; W. Löhr, ‘Die Briefsammlung’, in V. H. Drecoll (ed.), *Augustin Handbuch* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007) 416–427; S. Lancel, ‘Introduction’, in S. Lancel and E. Bermon (eds. and trans.), *Lettres 1–30*, BA 40/A (2011) 159–175. See in general also L.-J. Wankenne, ‘La langue de la correspondance de saint Augustin’, *Revue Bénédictine* 94 (1984) 102–153; P. Allen, ‘The Horizons of a Bishop’s World: The Letters of Augustine of Hippo’, in W. Mayer, P. Allen, and L. Cross (eds.), *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church* 4 (Sydney: St Pauls Publications, 2006) 327–337; eadem, ‘How to Study Episcopal Letter-writing in Late Antiquity: An Overview of Published Work on the Fifth and Sixth Centuries’, in V. Baranov, K. Demura, and B. Lourié (eds.), *Scrinium. Revue de patrologie, d’hagiographie critique et d’histoire ecclésiastique* 6 (Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press) 142–154.

to the image and likeness of God and placed in a position of honour by the very order and law of nature, ...³¹

Yet, he did not offer a further explanation for the verse 27. And this is the only example found in his letters written before 393/394.

I shall turn to his citations from his writing, *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount*, written in c. 392/396. Since Augustine was concerned with the study of Scripture after his ordination,³² in the first part of the book 1,³³ we read Augustine's first extended exegesis on the New Testament, in which he interpreted the eight maxims (Matth. 5: 3–10) in terms of the ascent of the soul. With regard to the seventh step, he explained twice as follows:

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.' Where there is no contention, there is perfect peace. And, because nothing can contend against God, the children of God are peacemakers; for, of course, children ought to have a likeness to their father.³⁴

Finally, the seventh maxim is wisdom itself; it is the contemplation of truth, making the whole man peaceful, and taking on the likeness to God. It is summed up in this way: 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.'³⁵

There is an interesting element in his interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount that should be indicated, such as the point that the human likeness to God is clearly defined as the Son. He previously commented on Genesis 1: 26 in *On True Religion*,³⁶ there he was also concerned with

³¹ *Ep.* 23.1; CCSL 31,61: 'Honorabilem igitur ex ea regula te libenter appello, qua noui te esse hominem, et noui hominem ad imaginem dei et similitudinem factum, et in honore positum ipso ordine et iure naturae, ...'. English trans. in R. Teske (trans.), *Letters 1–99*, WSA II/1 (2001) 63.

³² *Serm.* 355.2; *Ep.* 21.3–4. See also S. Lancel, *Saint Augustine*, A. Nevill (trans.) (London: SCM Press, 1999) 152.

³³ *Serm. dom. mont.* 1.2.4–4.12.

³⁴ *Serm. dom. mont.* 1.2.9; CCSL 35,6: 'BEATI PACIFICI, QVONIAM IPSI FILII DEI VOCABVNTVR. In pace perfectio est, ubi nihil repugnat; et ideo filii dei pacifici, quoniam nihil resistit deo et utique filii similitudinem patris habere debent.' English trans. in D. J. Kavanagh (trans.), FC 11 (1951) 23.

³⁵ *Serm. dom. mont.* 1.3.10; CCSL 35,8–9: 'Postrema est septima ipsa sapientia, id est contemplatio ueritatis, pacificans totum hominem et suscipiens similitudinem dei, quae ita concluditur: BEATI PACIFICI, QVONIAM IPSI FILII DEI VOCABVNTVR.' English trans. in D. J. Kavanagh (trans.), FC 11, 26.

³⁶ *Vera rel.* 43.81.

the soul's ascension toward God. At this point, Augustine consistently regarded the likeness as lying in the human soul by virtue of which 'this same pre-eminent faculty of man [scil. mind and reason] is itself subject to a still higher power, which is Truth Itself, the only begotten Son of God'.³⁷

The last work examined in this section is *Against Adimantus, a Disciple of Mani*, written around 392 (or 394) when he was still a priest, addresses the Manichaeism criticism of the incompatibility of the Old and the New Testament.³⁸ The procedure of this work is to cite passages from a work of Adimantus, which came into Augustine's hands, and show them to the reader with his comments.³⁹ Since this work follows the sequence of the Old Testament, in its first part, we read the Manichaean oppositions to Genesis and Augustine's responses.⁴⁰ First, Augustine identified the Manichaeans' claim that the words in Genesis 1:26, 'Let us make man to our image and likeness', were opposed to the words of Christ, who called the Jews children of the devil (John 8:44) and a brood of vipers (Matth. 3:7, 23:33). Then, he marked a significant difference in these verses as follows:

They do not understand that the former statement, that man was made to the image and likeness to God, was said of man before he sinned, but that the latter statement in the gospel, *You are from your father, the devil*, is said to sinners and unbelievers.⁴¹

Although, later in *Reconsiderations*, he mentioned another use of the term 'sons' in the scriptures,⁴² it is clear that he regarded the image and likeness to God as the Son of God. It is noteworthy that in the next section of this chapter (5.2) Augustine cited another passage necessary to comprehend the meaning of the text in Genesis.

³⁷ *Serm. dom. mont.* 1.2.9; CCSL 35,6: 'id ipsum quod excellit in homine ... subiciatur potiori, quod est ipsa ueritas unigenitus dei filius.' English trans. in D. J. Kavanagh (trans.), FC 11, 24.

³⁸ *Retr.* 1.22(21).1.

³⁹ See N. Baker-Brian, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire: A Study of Augustine's Contra Adimantum* (Lewiston NY: Edwin Mellen, 2009) 25–26.

⁴⁰ *C. Adim.* 1–5.

⁴¹ *C. Adim.* 5.1; CSEL 25,124: 'non intellegunt illud dictum esse de homine antequam peccaret, quod factus est ad imaginem et similitudinem dei, hoc autem, quod in euangelio est, *uos ex patre diabolo estis peccatoribus et infidelibus dici.*' English trans. in R. Teske (trans.), *The Manichean Debate*, WSA I/19 (2006) 181.

⁴² *Retr.* 1.22 (21).3.

*A man certainly ought not to veil his head since he is the image and glory of God, but a woman is the glory of her husband. (1 Cor 11: 7)*⁴³

And Augustine advised the audience as follows:

And in order that we might clearly understand that man was made to the image of God, . . . according to his spiritual formation, the same apostle admonishes us that, having stripped off the habit of sin, that is, our old self, we should put on the new life of Christ, which he calls our new self.⁴⁴

With regard to his view of the renewal of the self, it was confirmed by the addition of relevant messages from Colossians 3: 9–10⁴⁵ and John 1: 12.⁴⁶ Thus, it may be that, at this point of the work, Augustine had in mind that the words ‘made to the image of God’ are understood as the Son of God in terms of the spiritual transformation into ‘our new self’.

5 CONCLUSION

I have shown, in this paper, that Augustine’s view of Genesis 1: 26 evolved gradually during about several years between the Cassiciacum dialogues (387) and *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis, an Unfinished Work* (393/394). In the third section of this paper, I have offered certain signposts that enable us to understand more clearly what he was speaking of in a difficult passage of Genesis, how he was shaping the interpretation of Genesis 1: 26–27a and not interpreting the verse 27b (‘male and female he created them’) at all. In fact, as shown in the first section, he could expound on the words, ‘to our image and likeness’ in *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis, an Unfinished Work* and could understand the human likeness to God in terms of the participation in the Likeness, who is the Word and the Son of the Father. Yet, no doubt it was not only able to be achieved through Augustine’s effort in this commentary, but also

⁴³ C. Adim. 5.2; CSEL 25,125: ‘uir quidem non debet uelare caput. cum sit imago et gloria dei, mulier autem gloria uiri.’ English trans. in R. Teske (trans.), WSA I/19, 182.

⁴⁴ C. Adim. 5.2; CSEL 25,125: ‘et ut manifeste intellegatur . . . secundum spiritalem conformationem factum esse hominem ad imaginem dei, item apostolus monet, ut exuti consuetudine peccatorum, id est uetere homine, induamus nouam uitam Christi, quem nouum hominem appellat.’ English trans. in R. Teske (trans.), WSA I/19, 182.

⁴⁵ Col. 3:9–10: ‘Stripping off your old self with its actions, put on your new self that is being renewed in the knowledge of God in accord with the image of him who created it’.

⁴⁶ John 1: 12: ‘He gave them the power to become sons of God’.

by the continued commitment to the text in another works. In the case of Genesis 1: 27b, after offering an allegorical interpretation in *On Genesis, Against the Manicheans*, there were no citations in his writings before 393/394.

Why did Augustine continue the interpretation of Genesis 1: 26, while passing over Genesis 1: 27b? It is interesting to note that the same passage from 1 Corinthians 11: 7 is found in both *Against Adimantus, a Disciple of Mani* and the complementary part of *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis, an Unfinished Work* (written in 427). From this verse, Augustine would proceed with the literal interpretation and show the reason why Genesis 1: 26 (Let us make man to our image and likeness) uses the plurals '*faciamus*' and '*nostram*' if God made man in the image of the Son. It would, thus, seem reasonable to suppose that Augustine did anticipate the complementary reading in showing the reader its passage in *Against Adimantus, a Disciple of Mani*. The subset of relevant material for the interpretation of Genesis 1: 26 has been referred to and, indeed, texts such as the emphasis on the whole Trinity, the expression of human superiority to other animals and the spiritual transformation of the soul were explicitly repeated in his early works. Despite the fact that he did not do a literal reading of these works, these elements contribute to the understanding of Genesis 1: 26 in both *Against Adimantus, a Disciple of Mani* and *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis, an Unfinished Work*. An important factor that can be said to have combined these elements is Augustine's primary concern for the internal unity and harmony of the scriptures. Some biblical texts were persistently charged by Manichaeans with the conflict between the Old and the New Testaments. Hence, particularly after his ordination to the priesthood in 391, together with his spending much more time on the study of the scriptures, Augustine would consider this Genesis text in the context of their relation with one another, pointing out that it referred to a correlation between the image and likeness of the Son and its spiritual implications. While almost ignoring Genesis 1: 27b, the Manichaeans, at least in the works of Augustine, have been of particular interest to the opposition between the words of Genesis and those of Christ. This is the case, too, with Augustine's special concern.