

THE IMAGE OF GOD*

HERE beginneth a sermon of Saint Austin how a man is made to the image and likeness of God his maker, of naught.

How great is the dignity of man's making it is known, that not by word alone of God's bidding, man is made of naught, as other works of six days, but in counsel of the Holy Trinity and work of God's majesty, that he should know of the honour of his first making, how much he owed to his maker. The which his maker gave to him so great privilege of dignity anon in his making, that by so much he should love more brenningly his maker, by how much he understood himself made of him more wonderly. He saith: 'make we man to our image and likeness', not for this thing only, that by counsel of the Holy Trinity man is so made of the excellence of his maker, but that the maker of all things, of nought, made man of nought to his image and likeness, which thing he gave to none other creatures. Which image is to be beholden diligently by nobleness of the inner man, that is the soul.

First soothly, that as one God is evermore, everywhere all, quickening all things, moving and governing, as the Apostle confirmeth that: 'in him we live, be moved and be', so the soul thriveth¹ or liveth everywhere all in its body, quickening it, moving and governing. Truly it is not more in more² members of his body and less in less members, but in the least it is all and in the most, all. And this is the image of unity of Almighty God, which the soul hath in itself.

Also the soul hath full likeness of the Holy Trinity, first in that
 1 *viget*, causeth to flourish. 2 *major*.

*This short piece is found in a mid-fifteenth-century MS, All Souls XXIV (fol. 35 sqq), a collection of treatises attributed to St Augustine, but all apocryphal. The latin is printed at the end of the Basle, 1569 ed. col. 1179, as '*De creatione primi hominis*' and is also found in part among the pseudo-Ambrosian pieces, Migne P.L. 17, Col. 1015, '*De dignitate conditionis humanae*', where the editors state that it is a composite work with reminiscences from Alcuin, St Augustine's '*De spiritu et Anima*' and Paulinus Aquilensis's '*De Salutaribus Documentis*' which also appears in this MS. as 'Augustine's book to an Earl'.
 —C.K.

thing that as God is, so the soul upon his manner, liveth and understandeth. Also and another likeness of the Trinity is in the soul, for it is made to the image of his maker, soothly perfect and highest Trinity, which is in Father, Son and Holy Ghost. And though the soul be of one kind, nathless it hath three dignities³ in in itself, that is understanding, will and mind. Which thing is signified, though by other words, in the Gospel when it is said: 'thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and of all thy soul and of all thy mind', that is of all thine understanding and of all thy will and of all thy mind. For why? as of the Father the Son is (en)gendered, and of the Father and Son, the Holy Ghost cometh forth, so by understanding will is gendered, and also of these twain cometh forth mind, as it may lightly be understood of each wise man.

Truly the soul may not be perfect without these three, neither any of these three as much as pertaineth to his bliss, is whole or full, without other twain. And as God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, nathless be not three Gods but one God having three Persons, so and the soul is understanding, the soul is will, the soul is mind, nathless not three souls be in one body, but one soul hath three dignities. And in three things, our inner man, that is soul, beareth wonderlike the image of God the Trinity, of these things, as the more excellent dignities of the soul, we be commanded to love God, that how much he is understood, he be had ever in mind. Neither understanding alone sufficeth, no but⁴ will be joined in his love; yea, neither these two sufficeth no but mind be put to (them). By which ever, in mind of man, understanding and loving God, dwelleth, as no moment may be in which the mind have not him present. And this thing have thou in mind of the image.

Now soothly understand thou some things of the likeness of God, which is to be beholden in virtues or conditions. That as God, that made of nought man to his likeness, is charity, is good and just and patient, mild and clean and merciful and other nobilities of his virtues that be read of him, so man is made of naught that he should have charity and were good and just and patient, mild, clean and merciful. Which virtues behove much each man have more in himself, by so much he is near to God and beareth the more likeness to his maker. Soothly if, that God

3 Powers, faculties. 4 no but, except.

forbid, any man err by wrong ways or vices and divorces of crimes,⁵ that is damnable sins, from this noble likeness of his maker and be unkind, then it shall be made that is written, 'man understandeth not when he was in honour, he is likened to unwise beasts, and is made like them'. What more honour might be to man than that he was made to the likeness of his maker and was orned with the same clothes of virtues by which and his maker was orned?⁶ How haunteth⁷ thou man and useth not in soul the mercy and goodness of God? So no moment shall be in which he is not mindful of God of whom it is read, 'the Lord hath reigned and he is clothed with fairness', that is orned with shining of all vitures, fairness of all goodness. Either what may be more shen-ship⁸ to man, either unblissful wretchedness, than that this glory of likeness of his maker be lost? He is drawn to the unshapely and unreasonable likeness of wild, unwise beasts.

Wherefore each man diligently behold the excellence or worthiness of his first making, know he the image of the Holy Trinity in himself and strive he to defend the honour of likeness to which he is made of nought, by noblity of conditions, by haunting of virtues and dignity of merits or good works. That when God shall appear at the doom, man appear like to him as he is now, which made man wonderly to his likeness in the first man Adam, and more wonderly reformed or again made in the second Adam that is in Christ.

Here endeth Austin's sermon how man is made to the image and likeness of almighty God in Trinity. Amen.

5 divortia criminum. 6 adorned. 7 frequenting, practising. 8 shame, dishonour.

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