The concept of man in St. Augustine.

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Thesis

THE CONCEPT OF MAN IN ST. AUGUSTINE

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. The Statement of the Problem

This thesis will seek to present St. Augustine's concept of man as it seems to develop from his various works, and to compare it, wherever possible, with Plato's concept of man. The emphasis will be on the faults and merits of St. Augustine's conception of man, taken as a whole and in context.

St. Augustine's most significant contribution may be said to be the picture of himself and the working of grace upon the human soul. For him the central issue is the relationship of man and his Creator. It is this relationship that this thesis will attempt to clarify and to reveal by examining many of St. Augustine's works.

In St. Augustine's thought, philosophy, theology, religion are all deeply interfused. Their functional relations are so clearly felt, that for him it is futile to talk of any one of these apart from the context of the others.

His thought cannot strictly be called a system. It is, rather, a world view or a universe view, one which comprehends God and all of reality from the highest order, down to
its most insignificant details in their manifold and complex interconnections.

Philosophy was for him not dry speculation, but an occasion to rise to a more fervent love of God. His style is not new and profound. He touched on almost all problems of life but nowhere did he reduce these problems to a system.

In one of St. Augustine's prayers, one may discover his whole outlook on knowledge:

O Lord our God, we believe in Thee, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. For the Truth would not say, Go, baptize all nations in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, unless Thou wast a Trinity. Nor wouldest Thou, O Lord God, bid us to be baptized in the name of Him who is not the Lord God. Nor would the divine voice have said, Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God, unless Thou wast so a Trinity as to be one Lord God. And if Thou, O God, wert Thyself the Father, and wert Thyself the Son, Thy Word Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit your gift, we should not read in the book of truth, "God sent His Son;" nor wouldest Thou, O Only-begotten, say of the Holy Spirit, "Whom the Father will send in my name;" and, "Whom I will send to you from the Father." Directing my purpose by this rule of faith, so far as I have been able, so far as Thou hast made me to be able, I have sought Thee, and have desired to see with my understanding what I believed; and I have argued and labored much. O Lord my God, my one hope, hearken to me, lest through weariness I be unwilling to seek Thee, "but that I may always ardently seek Thy face." Do Thou give strength to seek, who hast made me find Thee, and hast given the hope of finding Thee more and more. My strength and my infirmity are in Thy sight; preserve the one, and heal the other. My knowledge and my ignorance are in Thy sight; where Thou hast opened to me, receive me as I enter; where Thou hast closed, open to me as I knock. May I remember Thee, understand Thee, love Thee. Increase these things in me, until Thou renewest me wholly. I know it is written,
"In the multitude of speech, thou shalt not escape sin." But 0 that I might speak only in preaching Thy word, and in praising Thee! Not only should I so flee from sin, but I should earn good desert, however much I so spake. For a man blessed of Thee would not enjoin a sin upon his own true son in the faith, to whom he wrote, "Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season." Are we to say that he has not spoken much, who was not silent about Thy word, O Lord, not only in season, but out of season? But therefore it was not much, because it was only what was necessary. Set me free, O God, from that multitude of speech which I suffer inwardly in my soul, wretched as it is in Thy sight, and flying for refuge to Thy mercy; for I am not silent in thoughts, even when silent in words. And if, indeed, I thought of nothing save what pleased Thee, certainly I would not ask Thee to set me free from such multitude of speech. But many are my thoughts, such as Thou knowest, "thoughts of man, since they are in vain." Grant to me not to consent to them; and if ever they delight me, nevertheless to condemn them, and not to dwell in them, as though I slumbered. Nor let them so prevail in me, as that anything in my acts should proceed from them; but at least let my opinions, let my conscience, be safe from them, under Thy protection. When the wise man spake of Thee in his book, which is now called by the special name of Ecclesiasticus, "We speak," he said, "much, and yet come short; and in sum of words, He is all." When, therefore, we shall have come to Thee, these very many things that we speak, and yet come short, will cease; and Thou, as One, wilt remain "all in all." And we shall say one thing without end, in praising Thee in One, ourselves also made one in Thee. O Lord the one God, God the Trinity, whatever I have said in these books that is of Thine, may they acknowledge who are Thine; if anything of my own, may it be pardoned both by Thee and by those who are Thine. Amen.1

Some may ask here if there is any relation between Philosophy and Christianity. This is an old question, and many answers have been recorded. Augustine's view concerning the relation of Philosophy and Christianity is brought out in the following:

Faith wanted to understand itself, and philosophy wanted something new to understand. Their ultimate fusion in Christian Theology and philosophy, a fusion which we see accomplished and personified in St. Augustine, who tried all the philosophies before he turned to the Faith, was almost necessitated by the deep-seated intellectual instability of the Roman world, and by the urgent intellectual requirements of the early Church.¹

Thus St. Augustine read the challenge of his time, and, in a way, all his writing is devoted to clarifying what the nature of man's inner response to that challenge should be. In fact, all his characteristic doctrines of God, human nature, the will, grace, the city of earth and the city of God formulate, according to Christianity, man's inner response to the challenge of the human predicament.

2. Sources

The task of selecting a series of basic writings from the vast works of St. Augustine is, to say the least, overwhelming. For, many of the most concise expressions of his central views are to be found in widely scattered individual places; in his sermons or letters, or in the extended exegetical commentaries. On the other hand, the Augustinian compresence of thought can be viewed legitimately as an asset for one who seeks to bring together a collection of writings which will portray fully the entire position. As a consequence, it is this reader's belief that the present group of treatises will not have omitted anything of importance.

In making a selection from the Augustinian corpus, the first essential works are clearly De Confessiones, De Civitate Dei and De Trinitate.

From his De Confessiones it almost seems as if Christianity won him, not so much through the promise of deliverance from sin, as by affording him a solution of the mysteries of this unintelligible world.

The personality of the writer in all its intellectual earnestness has left an indelible mark on his treatment of the most abstruse problems. Each of the positions of his philosophy owes its strength, not to a mere series of rigid logical demonstrations, but to the convictions which had been formed in his own experience by his eager wrestling for Truth. He knew the nature of evil, since he had sounded its depths himself. He understood human freedom, since he was himself attaining it and he could realize
something of God's working in the world, since
he had traced it in his own life.1

From De Civitate Dei and De Trinitate, the most essential
parts that have a direct bearing on the nature of man have
been quoted and used in this thesis.

In choosing the block of minor treatises and selec­
tions for this thesis from the works of St. Augustine, there
are obviously certain works not pertinent to this thesis.
These include his anti-Donatist writings, with their air of
doctrinal dispute against the background of ecclesiastical
politics. It seemed better, instead, to read and study his
works following his conversion (when the influence of Greek
thought was strong upon him). These works include the attack
upon the Manicheans, and his writings against the Pelagians.

Thus, De Moribus Ecclesiae, where he deals with the
problem of free will and evil, has been a major source. De
Soliloqua and De Immortalitate Animae reflect the times when
St. Augustine was moving from his Platonic influence into
his more complete Christian mode of thought. De Vita Beata,
De Ordine, De Musica, and De Quantitate Animae all illustrate
well the Augustinian method of dealing with man. They
condense his entire theory of man and reveal his intellectual
and spiritual development. His anthropological views become
manifested.

1. William Cunningham, St. Augustine and His Place
in the History of Christian Thought (London: C. J. Clay and
Sons, 1886), pp. 10-11.
These works, by all means, are not the complete writings of St. Augustine. The ones used for this thesis reveal Augustine's God-centered soul and lead us to know the man.
3. The Method of Procedure

The aforementioned works will be the basis of the method used to arrive at a clear concept of man, in St. Augustine's view.

What is the essence of man, of the self and of the soul? Having found St. Augustine's answer to this question, man will be examined as a unity of body and soul. This dualism of man is accepted and taught by Augustine. But everything is not in harmony. What is the cause of the conflict between body and soul? Conflict certainly characterizes this dualistic view of St. Augustine.

This ontological and dualistic examination of man leads us to the psychological view. This conflict gives rise to the question of freedom and sin. Freedom is closely related to sin, and sin, from one philosophical point of view, is weakness. How can we be conscious of weakness (sin) without freedom? The one presupposes the other and both are necessary to the explanation of man.

Some philosophies offer a rational panacea for sin, but reason is not enough. Grace also is necessary, according to Christianity. Thus, the results of freedom and sin are grace and predestination. The relationship of freedom and predestination is difficult. They are usually opposite. How St. Augustine conceives this relationship is not clear, but he does accept their co-existence. St. Augustine, from his own experience, accepts the existence of freedom and grace as
being necessary to correct one's self.

Having found that reason is not enough for man to save himself from sin, which results from the conflict of body and soul, St. Augustine resorts to a notion of grace. But the problem is: Why does he conclude that predestination is necessary? Certainly this gives rise to many difficulties. The answer has been hinted at before, briefly, because the Christian Philosopher believes that the power of grace is greater than our human efforts. Both will and grace try to correct sin, but grace is more powerful. Again predestination, without freedom, is dangerous.

This leads us to what may be called Augustinian mysticism. For Augustine, the knowledge of the self is not wholly rational. Revelation, Illumination, both are important components of man's inner self, the final result being an ascent to God, the center of man's life and his goal.

Thus, man will be examined ontologically, which will include the basic components of man, namely, body and soul, the conflict between the two resulting in sin. This again brings us to the question of freedom, and the natural result is St. Augustine's notion of grace and predestination. Many of his views are composed of mystical elements and, thus, an examination of his belief in Revelation and his notion of Illumination will follow. The culminating point will be his own final point, the ascent of man to God.

St. Augustine's view of man's essence will be our first concern.
CHAPTER II

ST. AUGUSTINE'S PHILOSOPHICAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE SELF

1. The Ontological View

1. Definition

Ontology here designates the science of being. This seems to be a widely held and most acceptable definition. Of course, throughout the history of philosophy, the term ontology has meant many other things but, for our own use, ontology means the very essence of man. This for St. Augustine is the self or soul (in itself).

Being itself, of course, cannot be defined; it is indefinable. To conceive being, one may say, is to become aware, on the occasion of any experience whatever, that something exists without knowing why this something exists. The reality of the self, the soul, is the very core of St. Augustine's ontology.

Augustine has a threefold hierarchy of being; namely, the rationes aeternae, the rationes hominum, and the rationes seminales.

The rationes aeternae is the first of this hierarchy to be examined. The thought of St. Augustine is essentially theocentric. In God he found the ultimate source of all being, of all living, of all thinking. In The City of God
he states:

In Him are to be found the cause of existence, the ultimate reason for the understanding, the end in reference to which the whole life is to be regulated.¹

God was thus the alpha and the omega of all things. To be united with Him, was to know all, to possess all, to enjoy infinite bliss. This union was a spiritual one.

Philosophy's only purpose, according to the mind of the holy doctor, was to lead man to a knowledge of the First Principle whence "all things have proceeded for his welfare."² The first gives man a knowledge of himself, and makes him capable of happiness; the second gives a knowledge of his origin and this constitutes his happiness. Only he who has learned about God and the soul, the saint tells us, is capable of understanding the order of the universe. "Thus the study of philosophy includes a twofold object, the soul and God."³

St. Augustine was so completely convinced that everything was created by God, that he never attempted to prove this fact. The world, then, was rationally constructed, everything in it was being made according to its proper form;

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3. Ibid., col. 1017.
man, for example, not by the same ratio as animal, but according to the perfect form of man, subsisting eternally in the divine Mind. Each object has the basis of its intelligibility in its corresponding ratio aeternae. These forms are the rationes rerum stabiles atque incommutabiles, the enduring principles of law and order in things; they are the rules according to which things are formed, the rationes creandi; they are the exemplary causes, the causae rei creandae, in conformity to which things are true.¹ The individual created being participates somehow in its uncreated, unchangeable reason, existing from all eternity in the mind of God. The rationes aeternae are, then, the true realities. The finite things of this world are but copies that approach the degree of being of their exemplar, only in proportion as they mirror its perfection. The unity, the law, the order of each being is but a faint reflection of the true reality, in which it participates; the eternal ratio or intelligible idea, which is none other than the Divine Essence known as imitable, or according to a certain mode of deficiency.

Whether there is an idea for every particular existing thing in the corporeal world, or one only for every species doesn't seem to be too clear in the mind of Augustine. In regard to man, he is inclined to think that there is an

idea for each individual. These ideas seem to be archetypes of every species or of every individual created by God.

At any rate, St. Augustine expressly declares that the created beings are what they are and are true, in so far as they participate in their eternal and unchangeable forms:

Through participation in the rationes aeternae it happens that everything is what it is and how it is.²

The Degree of being and of intelligibility of each thing in Augustine's hierarchy (of being) is based upon the measure of its participation in the pure and true Reality, the Divine Being and Intelligence.

This leads us to the rationes seminales. These are seed-like principles implanted by God in the beginning in the texture of the elements from which all things ever to appear on the face of the earth develop.

But in truth, some hidden seeds, of all things that are born corporeally and visibly are concealed to the corporeal elements of this world.³

Regarding this theory of the rationes seminales, those seed-like principles, he held that they were sown in the

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2. Aurelius Augustinus, De Diversis Questionibus, Vol. XL of the Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina, col. 30. All English translations are the author's, unless otherwise stated.

original matter and from which all things have grown. However, he was not so sure about the origin of man. Man's body, he thought, was included in the simultaneous creation and was, therefore, created at first only potentially. Its development into its proper form may have been effected by God in a special way, whereas all other things, created in potentiality, developed in the ordinary manner, according to the powers and laws embedded in the primitive matter. As to the origin of man's soul, the great doctor never did attain a conviction.

Let us now consider the human ratio, which holds a middle position between the rationes aeternae and the rationes seminales in the Augustinian hierarchy of being.

The ratio hominis, according to the mind of Augustine, was definitely a higher reality than the ratio seminales. That the human soul did not develop from a seminal reason, Augustine was certain. However, as to the nature of its origin, he never did reach certitude. He hesitated to accept any of the four possible theories which will be discussed in this thesis.

St. Augustine had many definitions of man. He sometimes defined man as "a rational animal;" sometimes as a


"rational soul using a mortal and earthly body." ¹

In the De Immortalitate Animae, he says:

Nor is there to be found anything between the highest life, which is unchanging wisdom and truth, and the lowest to receive life, that is, the body, save the soul which quickens it. ²

Hence, the ratio hominis is, of course, less than the Supreme Being, but, on the other hand, a superior (more excellent) reality than bodies. ³

The passage from the De Immortalitate Animae, cited above, suggests that the soul is not only an intermediate reality but that it is an intermediary between God and matter. St. Augustine thought that the soul is in need of nothing and, thus, incapable of receiving any help from the body. He also thought that the value in the body—its measure, form and order—comes by way of the human ratio from the rationes aeternae. This concept in St. Augustine's theory may be summarized as follows:

Order and organization and life come down to the body by the way of and through the mediation of the soul. The hierarchy of divine ideas, soul and body, has as its fundamental motive the


transmission of organization to matter, which can take place only this way.\(^1\)

Also pertinent to this concept is the following:

Like knows like, it is through the soul alone that man can get in touch with the world that is most really real.\(^2\)

Moreover, as the body is perfected by the soul, in like manner is the soul perfected by contact with the eternal reason. Here, ontology and epistemology join hands in Augustine's thought. It is in the eternal ideas that man knows. It is by participation in the eternal ideas that man is.

This deferential regard for nature, reason, and law is found in some aspects in the Stoic teachings. Of course, the differences and similarities between the Stoics and St. Augustine are many, but both are in accord with a fundamental doctrine; namely, that there is in the universe a marvelous order proceeding from a Supreme Principle—according to an all-embracing law of reason. Every being in the world is permeated with reason—for the Stoics, a reason that is a fragment of divinity; for St. Augustine, a reason that is but the reflection of an Eternal Ratio in God. Reality, therefore, is rational. Nothing happens by chance, but

\(^1\) Prof. Pegis goes on to say: "The hierarchy of divine ideas, soul and body has as its fundamental motive the transmission of organization to matter, which can take place only this way." cf. M. D'Arcy, "The Philosophy of St. Augustine," A Monument to St. Augustine (New York: MacVeagh, 1930), p. 172.

\(^2\) Vernon Bourke, Augustine's Quest of Wisdom (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1945), pp. 120-121.
according to the same laws which pervade all things, "Universal Reason, ruler of Nature, that governs all things with
law."1

St. Augustine's ontological view of man gives rise
to the question, What is the relationship of body and soul?
This question is pertinent and necessary, if we are to com-
prehend the nature of man. An examination of St. Augustine's
views on sensations and on the intellect will throw light
upon his notion of man's nature.

Quoniam homo est corpus solum, vel anima sola,

sed qui ex anima constat et corpore. Hoc qui-
dem verum est, quod non totus homo, sed pars
hominis anima est; sed pars melior hominis
anima est; sed sum est utrumque conjunctum
simul, habet hominis nomen.2

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2. "For man is not a body alone nor a soul alone,
but a being composed of both. This, indeed, is true, that
the soul is not the whole man, but the better part of man;
the body not the whole, but the inferior part of man."
Aurelius Augustinus, De Civitate Dei, Vol. XLI of the
Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina, col. 399.
ii. Unity of Man

Man for St. Augustine is a unity, and the exact manner in which he sees man as a unit can be grasped only in his analysis of sense and intellectual knowledge.

First, let us study sensation in Augustine. The main text on this is contained in De Musica, Book VI.¹

In this study Augustine acknowledges the existence of corporeal things that can have a character independent of and different from the sensing person, as, for example, drops of water which fall with a certain rhythm. These corporeal bodies are necessary for sensation, but the rhythm is not sensation.

Augustine, in his consideration of rhythm, admits the reality of a corporeal world in saying that sensation is an effect made by bodies on the body. Then he says that sensation can be understood as a thing heard or an impression undergone by the soul in the body, effected by the action of other bodies. Then again, it can be sensation as produced by the soul and especially those activities flowing from memory; and, lastly, it can stand for a judgment of approval and disapproval.

He next goes on to ask which of these rhythmic sensations so defined is more excellent.

Those rhythms are most excellent that are from the activity of the soul. But, of these activities, the most excellent are those through which the others are judged; that is, the last stage of sensation, in which there is a natural judgment. The natural judgment seems to imply something lasting, stable and positive, in that man stands ready to accept or reject the rhythms presented to him. Also, it is according to these judgments that he produces rhythms and the rhythms heard are subject to these. Thus, all spontaneous judgments seem to imply a firmer judgment, and this is most evident in the production of rhythms. Thus, St. Augustine holds, spontaneous appreciation in man implies a judgment of reason.

In fact, one is implied in the other, for it is the same soul that is active in judging of the rectitude or non-rectitude of the suitableness. The judgment of rectitude is properly the judgment. It implies the understanding of equality or harmony, or harmony itself, the unchangeable, immutable, eternal harmony or order. Actually, we cannot find this firm judgment in corporeal forms; they are not strictly equal; they change and they pass away. Where, then, is found the exact harmony that is unchanging? These rules that are eternal? Who can communicate to the soul something unchanging and eternal, except He who is eternal and immutable, or God?
What we must note is that the soul is considered changing, in that it sometimes considers this immutable equality and sometimes does not.

In itself the soul is superior to the body, for in it resides the firm judgment. Yet, body is not evil in itself. It is a creature of God. It has its own harmony and beauty, though it possesses it in a weak fashion.

In the De Musica, Augustine affirms the unity of man, the reality and goodness of the body. He notes the superiority of the soul, but it is not the Platonic soul, the prisoner of the body; rather, it is the director of the body and uses the body to gain insight to that which will ennoble it. It is subject to the body and is a prisoner only through original sin. He seems to indicate that it is natural for the soul to be in the body, for the soul is the body's principle of life and organization. However, the two are distinct, in that sensation is an act of the soul, not an act of the composite. The soul suffers no action from the body. Soul itself produces its act of sensation, paying attention to what dispositions go on in the body. So the soul, in conjunction with the body, can define man.

The soul in itself is superior to the body and sense knowledge. Man is composed of body and soul. The body is composed of the four elements, but the soul in itself is a simple substance, with its own nature.
Although St. Augustine would contend that animals have souls, these souls are irrational, and more closely connected with the body.

Man's soul has not only sense knowledge, with its implied judgment of reatitude, but his soul can even withdraw from sense knowledge and look within itself.

What is the proper life of the soul? First, we may discern it in memory; that is, in the power to revert to a sign of innumerable things that are kept in the mind.

The essential character of man, as man, is grasped only when we appreciate the essential that is implied in such knowledge. As Augustine says in On the Trinity:

Let us see where lies, that is, where is the boundary line between the outer and inner man. For whatever we have in the mind common with the beasts, this much is rightly said to belong to the outer man.

The way of the soul is to turn in on itself acting, that is, sensing and knowing or judging of the sensible world.

St. Augustine holds in the De Libero Arbitrio that it is evident that one is, and this is not evident, unless one is living, and this is not evident unless one understands. The soul, then, active, living, intelligent, comprehends what


sense knowledge is. And in this knowledge in man's soul, man sees reason implied. The soul does not understand itself as reason by any other reality than reason itself; that is, by turning back on itself, knowing, to seize the essence of knowing. The question here is, Can we say that we are the norm of our judgments, or do we judge by a norm?

The answer to this question leads one to St. Augustine's doctrine of illumination. He says that man is himself instructed by the interior light of the soul.

Again, in the Confessions there is a resume of the doctrine of illumination. Guided by God, he says: "I entered into my depth . . . I entered, and with the eyes of my soul, I saw your Unchangeable Light shining over the same eye of my soul, over my mind."

This does not mean that the soul of man is itself the light. The soul, sufficiently independent of the body, could contemplate itself and have a sight of the light of truth. It can turn on itself, knowing and differentiating between intellectual and sense knowledge. Certainly Augustine, throughout his work, stresses the necessity of moral rectitude for man, resulting from the interior, thinking man, desirous of contemplating the truth.

Actually, Augustine is stressing truth in some sense independent of the intelligibility of the universe and the kinds of being in it.

For him there is a very close connection between truth and being. We always come upon truth prior to the notion of being or, in other words, we understand being in terms of truth.

If we take being to connote to be, we find in Augustine the division to be, to live, and to understand, as dividing the kinds of things.

For if I am deceived, I am. For he who is not, cannot be deceived; and if I am deceived, by the same token I am . . . Neither am I deceived in knowing that I know. And when I love these two things, I add to them a third, my love which is of equal amount.¹

So I knowing, am, and what I know, I know and love, and this act is existing in the true and real. It is knowledge by an inner sense, or by illumination. It is intellectual knowledge. This act of knowing, loving, is the very life of the soul. Soul is defined by life. This is its essence. To be in man is primarily to understand. Mind is always alive, because its life is always an expression of the eternal and unchanging.

There seems to be a duality evident in Augustine's analysis of the soul. On the one hand, there seems to be the

Being of God, which we do not see as it is; that is, we do not see His nature as it embodies the laws of being. On the other hand, things as created are natures but, until we seize the laws of being in this intelligibility, we do not understand created beings as being.

The soul is dependent on God, God not seen in terms of existence, but as the foundation of eternal truth.

What one has, it would seem, is a transcendental principle, seized in terms of truth as prior to being. The necessity of being as true replaces the necessity of ens, arising from existence. What has not the character of the true, then in a sense, is not, although it is there in an unexplained way. Truth is not the conformity of mind to being, to what is, but it is the norm of what is, inasmuch as it can be intelligible. But what is, seems, in some sense, outside the true in an unexplained fashion. Existence is rather accidental to the principle as true.

And this is true, not only of the corporeal world but even of the spiritual. We have seen the duality that a study of illumination reveals in the soul.

The study of the nature of man, through sense and intellectual knowledge, reveals a conception of transcendental notion that gives rise to an ontological duality.

Thus, as we look at the embodiment of principles in the various grades of being or, rather, as we view being as ruled or measured by the norms of being, we behold different
degrees of truth or perfection, or what might be termed different degrees of participation. We might tend to view these degrees as being analogically alike, but the problem facing us is whether participation per se can be without a participation by composition in which one element is, in some fashion, exterior to the other. This poses a more fundamental duality in man as an existent, than even that of soul and body.

Not only does this give rise to duality, but leads to the conflict of body and soul. But, before discussing this conflict, a comparison with Plato may help us to see how this unity does have conflicting results, for Plato and Augustine, at this point, are similar.

Three points are emphasized by St. Augustine:
(1) the superiority of the rational soul over any other creation, (2) the demand for purity, and (3) the theory of divine illumination. This idea was as much Platonic as Augustinian.

Plato being visual minded, like all Greeks, he calls sight the "keenest and most wonderful of all senses," but for the true knowledge, "the rational principle of our soul" must always be called in to correct sense impressions and sense illusions. Only the second kind of perception, then, is free from error, both for Plato and Augustine, because it

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1. Plato Phaedrus 250; Republic vi. 507.
2. Plato Republic x. 622-603.
is in communion with absolute truth itself. But the soul can achieve this absence of error and this communion with truth only when she "returns into herself" and "reflects unhindered by bodily affection upon the region of purity and eternity." For, again, like only can be perceived by like: Just as "the eye is most like the sun," so, "the soul is like the eye: when resting upon that on which truth and being shine, the soul perceives and understands and is radiant with intelligence."

In other words, pure light, the immediate source of reason, brought truth into the intellectual world, for Plato the idea of the Good, for St. Augustine God, will only be revealed to the pure soul, unalloyed by the affection of the body.

How this communion of the pure soul with the ultimate source of truth and light must be understood, St. Augustine never explained clearly.

1. Plato Phaedo 79.
2. Ibid., 80.
iii. Conflict between Body and Soul

In the face of the unity of man and mankind, and in face of the order from on high, man is to love his fellow man. Love of God and love of man are not separated; they are one. In social life, love is known by the exercise of virtue: "Virtue is the order of love."¹

In reality, this principle is the foundation of society. The City of God can never stay together without love or the exercise of virtue. Once love and virtue cease to exist, conflict results.

The destiny of man, moreover, is just as much a destiny for the individual as it is a destiny for all men; it is a collective destiny. Here lies the reason for Augustine's terrific insistence on the unity of mankind. It is mankind that lives in this present order, as well as every man; it is mankind that works out its destiny, as well as everyone; it is mankind fallen and mankind restored, as well as every man: omnes homines, unus homo; unus homo, omnes homines.²

Love for his fellow man, springing forth from the love of God, is the supreme virtue among men toward each other. All relations to society rest on the exercise of love, and man cannot fulfill himself in regard to other men without it. Thus, without love, conflict ensues.


². "All men for one man, one man for all men,"

St. Augustine undertook to ground the universal order exclusively in the personal will and intellect of God. He maintains that the "lex aeterna" is the divine reason, as well as the will of God, which commands us to maintain the natural order of things and forbids us to disturb it. This lex aeterna, which, at the same time, constitutes the "ratio aeterna" of all things created, resides in everything that exists or moves. Hence, the strictly personal will and intellect of God, which denotes the ultimate and abiding rationale, as well as the lasting order of all things, is at once the proper end of everything.

The "lex naturalis" of St. Augustine is essentially man's conscious participation in the lex aeterna. It is the subjective aspect of the objective lex aeterna. Our awareness of the existence of natural justice and natural law and right comes to us through the natural light of the human reason or intellect while, through our moral conscience, we are forever reminded of the lex aeterna as being immanent in the lex naturalis and in natural justice.

Despite man's having the basic principles of natural law and justice imprinted on his soul, and despite his ability to draw correct conclusions from these principles, man cannot escape the element of conflict. For, in the

1. "Eternal law."
2. "Eternal reason."
3. "Natural law."
course of events, these principles become blurred in the mind of man, through his evil inclination, sinfulness, and vice. The reconfirmation of these principles is now based also in human law. Laws had to be given to man by man in order that what had become obscured might again become manifest. Since man is what he is, the implanted *lex naturalis* does not necessarily make such human laws superfluous.

The human laws, however, cannot prohibit, or even control, everything that is prohibited or controlled by the *lex aeterna* and, hence, by the *lex naturalis*. For the human laws, which concern themselves exclusively with the proper adjustment of man's secular affairs, deal primarily with the mere prevention of the worst excesses of human wickedness and not, as it were, with the promotion of virtue and the virtuous life.

The Augustinian "cupiditas" and "charitas" are the basic unifiers of individuals and of societies. Only in their realization could conflict cease.

The conflict of body and soul, and of man in general, is also brought out clearly in the following summary of St. Augustine's ideology; Augustine distinguishes three kinds

1. "Love."

2. "Charity."
of perception, following the three kinds of objects perceived:1

One kind of perception is the corporeal, whereby are seen physical things. Another kind is the spiritual, whereby are seen images of physical things not present, be it in memory or in imagination. The third is the intellectual, whereby are seen things in no way physical, incapable of being represented by images, being the objects of the pure intellect; this perception he would probably call mental.

In most places he couples together the first two kinds of perception, corporeal and spiritual (imaginary), as both being the perception of things changeable, and, therefore, the objects of science, as distinguished from "sapientia,"2 whereby are perceived things not subject to change; they are eternal. Elsewhere, he distinguishes wisdom and science: "to wisdom pertains the intellectual cognition of things eternal; to science the rational cognition of things temporal."3

In corporeal and spiritual perception the soul is liable to error; but in things intellectually seen it is not

1. "Vision" is the word he uses; it is taken most frequently in the objective sense, meaning the thing seen; but sometimes, in its subjective or psychological sense, meaning the act of seeing.

2. "Wisdom."

liable to error—if there be any error, it is because the soul does not really, intellectually see; for what it intellectually sees is true. The result is conflict between the corporeal and the intellectual.

As objects of pure "intellectualiae" perception, he enumerates the mind, every good disposition of the soul, virtue, charity, joy, peace, by which it draws near to God; lastly, God Himself.

St. Augustine states in one of his works that to wisdom pertain those things that neither have been nor are to be, but are; and, because of that eternity in which they are, they are said to have been, to be, and to be about to be, without any changeableness of time; they always have had the same being, and they will always have it. They abide, not fixed in local spaces like bodies; but in an incorporeal nature they are present to the gaze of the mind, as visible and tangible things in places are present to the bodily senses. The rationes of sensible things existing in place, abide intelligibly and sensibly; things existing in place, abide intelligibly and incorporeally, not in local spaces; the squareness of a square figure abides as an incorporeal and unchangeable ratio.

1. "Intellectual."

Here one is confronted with Plato's doctrine of Ideas. St. Augustine took these Ideas and included them in a Christianized form as his theory. Ideas for Augustine are certain primary or principle forms or rationes of things, abiding and unchanging, which themselves have not been formed, and, by this fact, are eternal and always remaining the same, which are contained in the divine Intelligence. Whereas neither come into being nor perish, everything is said to be formed according to them, that can come into being and perish, and everything that comes into being and perishes.

Each thing is created according to its own proper ratio; but these ratios are supposed to be only in the Mind of the Creator.

But, if these ratios of things are to be created, or that having been created, are contained in the divine Mind, and there is nothing in the divine Mind but what is eternal and unchangeable, it follows that not only are they ideas, but they are true, because they are eternal, and remain the same and unchangeable, and by participation in them it comes about that everything is whatever it is.

In regard to intellectual vision, one can also see Plato's Ideas come into focus in a Christian surrounding. The following statement clearly brings out the influence of Plato's Ideas on the notion Augustine held concerning intellectual knowledge, or vision.

It is to be believed that the nature of the intellectual mind has been so made, that being
brought into contact with intellectual vision in the natural order, by the disposition of the Creator, it sees them in a certain incorporeal light sui generis, as the eye of the flesh sees the things around in this corporeal light.¹

Thus we may conclude that, according to Augustine, the human mind perceives Ideas, in some way, in the light of God. What exactly this light is, St. Augustine does not say anywhere. The human mind grasps all truth, in the Truth unchangeable, which is God. Augustine's ideology may be said to be a piece of Platonism. But, nowhere can one find sufficient basis to maintain that God Himself is seen, when wisdom is seen in His Light or in His Truth, any more than the sun necessarily is seen when objects are seen in its light.

Nevertheless, St. Augustine accepted the corporeal as inferior to the incorporeal. He rejects the Platonist solution, which sees life in the body as a disciplinary process for souls which had sinned in a previous existence.

Man has a mortal body. So opposite and incompatible elements do soul and body appear, that St. Augustine confesses himself at a loss to explain how they could ever have come to be united. But their union must simply be accepted. At all events, the union of soul and body is good, and their separation in death is the greatest evil. No man, however wretched, wants to die. The soul loves and serves the body, bestowing

upon it life, sense light and reason, guidance and governance. Made in the image of God, the soul is the point of contact between man and God. Soul and body ought to dwell together in peace and concord, the body subject to the soul and the soul to God. So it was in the days of man's innocence, and so it will be with the just, after the resurrection. It is sin, weakness,\(^1\) which has interrupted this happy relationship, and introduced tumult and discord into human life, the disobedience of the body to the soul, and physical death itself.

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1. Sin is a term used more frequently in theology; in philosophy it corresponds to weakness or to evil.
2. The Psychological View

From our knowledge of natures, which are recognized from operations, we conclude to being. Man, therefore, is a rational animal, because only a rational nature adequately accounts for man's proper operations. From the knowledge of being we possess, we should be able to know the final cause of being; from the metaphysical, intrinsic constitution of a being we should be able to conclude the end of that nature. Yet there is something of a mystery in defining man as a rational animal. Man has a rational nature, but the rational activity which, let us say, can be intelligibly deduced from his rational nature as known naturally, has no end.

There is something more to man than this rational nature. From the principle of final causality, St. Augustine defines man as a mind who remembers God. He bequeaths to man a nature which can freely turn to God. In so doing, not only does man attain a vision of God which God has invited, but also orders the whole field of operation, in which the temporal and corporeal are at the service of the rational. Let us see how he goes about it.

Man, according to St. Augustine, is a mind who remembers God.

It is He, then, who has given to the human soul a mind, in which reason and understanding lie as it were asleep during infancy, and as if they were not destined, however, to be awakened and exercised as years increase, so as to become capable of knowledge and of receiving instruction,
fit to understand what is true and to love what is good.  

St. Augustine poses the question: What is man? Are we to say that man is a body and soul, in the sense that he is like two horses in double harness, pulling the same chariot? Or is he a centaur—half man, half beast? Or, is man a soul that supposes a body, as a horseman supposes a horse? This dispute is not easy to settle.  

However, St. Augustine does settle the question for himself. There is no doubt in his mind. He knows the answer to these questions. He has written that "anyone who wishes to separate the body from human nature is stupid" and a "soul united to a body does not make two persons but one man." Nevertheless, emphatic as he was in asserting the natural unity of the body and the soul in man, he insisted with peculiar force upon the soul as a substantial unity, so that, instead of defining the soul in the function of the substantial composite, he defines it as "a rational substance apt to rule the


body,"¹ and he defined man as "a rational soul with a mortal and earthly body in its service."²

True, such a definition of man, if it was meant to define the metaphysical constituents of man, has implications which are disastrous in a Christian philosophy, but it appears that St. Augustine either did not see or was not interested in such abstract problems. Rather, his was a moral problem, a problem of the cause of man's happiness, the nature of which was essentially spiritual, outside the soul itself, but on the same level of intelligibility. In other words, if we were to introduce metaphysical objections to Augustine's definition of man, we would not be doing justice to St. Augustine; for we must bear in mind the problem of man he was trying to solve, and on the level on which he was trying to solve it. His problem was not what is man in his physical or metaphysical elements, but how is man ordered to his end, and how is he ruled so as to obtain that end.

Face to face with the Christian doctrine that salvation is for the whole man, both body and soul, Augustine could not define man as mere soul, which he would have done if he had accepted the Platonic man without reservations.

¹ Aurelius Augustinus, De Quantitate Animae, Vol. XXXII of the Patrologiae completus cursus, series Latina, col. 1048.

Consequently, he defines man as "a rational substance composed of soul and body"\(^1\) and he does not wish to contradict his former statement that man is the composite of body and soul. He could also say that man is a soul that rules and governs the body, because he was seeking the highest perfection in man that is ordered to the highest good. When speaking of Varro, Augustine thinks that there are two parts in human nature, body and soul, and makes no doubt that, of these two, the soul is the better and by far the more worthy part.\(^2\)

St. Augustine thus defines and examines man in the light of the highest good. Let us now examine the relation of the soul to the body.

St. Augustine first of all thinks that the soul naturally desires the body, though the reason for this is for the good of the body. The purpose of the union is not to confer any benefit upon the soul, but to endow matter with life and movement, which comes to it from God, through the soul. The hierarchy of being, of God, soul and body, demands that the soul be the intermediate nature between God above and the body below, for there is not found anything which exists between the Supreme Life, which is wisdom and truth unchangeable, and that remote thing which is made

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alive (i.e., body), except the soul that makes the body alive.

Because the body benefits by this union, it is the
soul which is to rule and govern the body. Its first and
immediate rule of the body is sensation, which is not due to
the body acting upon the soul, but to the soul acting upon
the body.

How such a governing of the body by the soul not
only reveals the superiority of the soul, but the problem of
good and evil of the soul is posed. Although the soul should
be the intermediary between God and body (a servant of God,
bringing God to the body), it sometimes becomes so involved
in the care of the body that it becomes a companion to the
body. Thus, it becomes a servant to its satiable and sensu-
al enjoyments, rather than its Ruler.¹ It forgets its true
nature. How shall it recapture its true nature?

Augustine was not a strict metaphysician developing
a set theory of metaphysics. He cannot find release for the
soul by its flight from the body to its divinity. Augustine's
soul is a created soul and its release from the bonds of the
flesh cannot be accomplished by being itself, but only by
grace.²

Such a release will discover the true nature of man;
that he is a mind. And what is it to be a mind? It is to

¹. Aurelius Augustinus, De Quantitate Animae,
Vol. XXXII of the Patrologiae cursus completus, series
Latina, col. 1046.

². Ibid., col. 1054.
remember God. The memory of God in the soul, of which St. Augustine speaks, is, then, the consciousness of the soul's conversion to God, a searching for Him through the activity of intellect and will, a dynamic functioning of those superior powers under the regulation of the divine presence, which will terminate in the knowledge and love of God, the true good of man.

What is most important in Augustine's study of man is not a metaphysical definition of the essence of man, but the ordering of man to his last end. "As the soul is the life of the body, so God is the life of the happy man;¹ so, "it is fitting that the soul be ruled by that which is inferior—the superior is God, and the inferior is the body."²

What shall the body be, when it is in every respect subject to the spirit, from which it shall draw a life so sufficient, as to stand in need of no other nutriment? For it shall no longer be animal, but spiritual, having indeed the substance of flesh, but without any fleshy corruption.³

Certainly this is not a definition of what man is, but a description of what man is for. Because man is in the profoundest depth of his being a mind which discovers it is made for God, man's body is not an instrument, a tool to be


used by the soul in the attainment of its beatifying good and then discarded, but, rather, it is a companion whose salvation is to be acquired by the soul which rules it. The body is not an accretion to be cast aside, but a part to be perfected. If the philosophical doctrine of St. Augustine concerning man is not entirely free of Platonism, his intentions are clearly Christian. Even though, metaphysically, the soul was a substantial unity made to rule the body, it was not a god which must discard the body to be divine. Augustine meant the soul to be the noblest part. It is because the soul is made to participate in the divine life and to resemble it, that there is inserted within it a craving for God, an appetite for God, whose very presence is a witness to God's presence in whose light it is clear that man, his body through his soul, is made for God.

Briefly summing up Augustine's psychological view, one sees that the holy doctor turned to man in his search for the image of God. He discovered it in the soul, precisely, the superior soul, where there are two principal trinities: mens, notitia and amor; memoria sui, intelligentia and voluntas. As to the first trinity, the mind mens, in the light of Eternal Light, sees itself and produces an internal word notitia; that which joins the two is love amor. As regards

1. "Mind, internal word and love; conscious of itself, conception and a free will."
the second, the mind is conscious of itself memoria sui, which consciousness is expressed by a word—an expression of itself and by itself, intelligentia. The soul, thus conscious of itself and expressive of itself, loves itself by choosing itself voluntas.

The whole problem is clearly stated by St. Augustine in the following statement from his writings:

Now this trinity of the mind is God's image; not because the mind remembers, understands and loves itself; but because it has the power also to remember, understand and love its Maker. And it is in so doing that it attains wisdom. If it does not so, the memory, understanding and love of itself is no more than an act of folly. Let the mind then remember its God, in whose image it was made, let it understand him and love him. In a word, let it worship the uncreated God who created it with the capacity for himself, and in whom it is able to be made partaker. Wisdom will be the mind's, not by its own illumination, but by partaking in that supreme Light; and only when it enters eternity will it reign in bliss. But to say that a man may possess such wisdom is not to deny that it is the property of God; God's is the only true wisdom; were it human, it would be vain. Yet when we call it the wisdom of God, we do not mean the wisdom wherewith God is wise; he is not wise by partaking in himself, as is the mind by partaking in God. It is rather as we speak of the righteousness of God, not only in the sense of what whereby God is righteous, but of that which he gives to man when he justifies the ungodly; to which the apostle refers when he speaks of those who being ignorant of God's righteousness, and willing to establish their own righteousness, were not subject to the righteousness of God. In the same way we might speak of some who being ignorant of the

1. The remaining chapters of the Book contain the climax of the whole argument.
wisdom of God, and willing to establish their own, were not subject to the wisdom of God.\(^1\)

1. Freedom and Sin

Man, for St. Augustine, is both body and soul. This unity in man lacks the one thing necessary for perfection, namely, harmony.

The result of this lack of harmony is sin (weakness). This leads to the question of freedom. Both sin and freedom are inseparable, but, for the sake of convenience and clarity, St. Augustine's view of sin will be first discussed.

Augustine held the view that all evil and all sin are not an absolute positive factor in the universe, but that it is only the privation of good; there is no existence apart from the good—and the most corrupted nature has good in it or it could not be. St. Augustine thus insists on the unreality of sin and evil.

Sin comes from the perverted will, man's will that has lost touch with God. But how does man's will become rightly oriented toward God? St. Augustine repeats the Pauline reply: by the grace of God, which grace is revealed in Jesus Christ.


2. "Mali enum nulla natura est; sed amissio boni mali nomen accepit." Ibid., p. 3.

In the Enchiridion ignorance and infirmity are named without qualification as the two causes of sin, against which we must pray for grace which illuminates, as well as confers the delight in righteousness.

Slavery, for St. Augustine, is closely related to sin. Augustine excludes slavery from the original idea of man and the final condition of society, and views it as an evil consequent upon sin, yet under divine direction and control. For God, he says, created man reasonable and lord only over the unreasonable, not over man. The burden of servitude was justly laid upon the sinner.

Sin, therefore, is the mother of servitude and the first cause of man's subjection to man. Yet, this does not come to pass except by the judgment of God, with whom there is no injustice, and who knows how to adjust the various punishments to the merits of the offenders. The apostle Paul exhorts the servants to obey their masters and to serve them \textit{ex animo}, with good will; to the end that, if they cannot be made free from their masters, they may make their servitude a freedom to themselves, by serving them not in deceitful fear, but in faithful love, until iniquity be

\begin{itemize}
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overpassed, and all man's principality and power be annulled, and God be all in all.\(^1\)

Another result of sin is death. All death is evil, and grace delivers no one from this. Spiritual pride brought the downfall. Corruptibility is not a natural quality of the body. It is a defect or diminution of quality, brought about by the endeavor on man's part to become more than he was by nature, whereby he became less. This deterioration was the result of sin, which is in essence nothing else but a spiritual pride.

The corruption of the body which impedes the soul is not the cause but the punishment of man's primordial sin. Corruptible flesh did not make the soul sinful, but contrary wise the sinful soul made the flesh corruptible.\(^2\)

The original disobedience was motivated by nothing but pride, and its punishment was further disobedience,—the disobedience of the carnal members to the mind, so that no longer can man do what he would. Hence originate the perturbations, of which fleshly lust is the type.

Before examining more closely Augustine's anthropology, from the point of view of sin, in what was said so far, there is a difficulty which is clearly brought out in the following quotation:

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2. Ibid., pp. 241-242.
Augustine's difficulties arise from the premises of his anti-Manichean argument: namely, that all human evil is either sin or punishment. The state in which we are born is evil. But if this evil is punishment rather than sin, what of the guilt which punishment implies? The only possible answer seemed to be, that we bear the guilt of a sin which we have not ourselves committed; the innocent child is at the same time guilty. But then guilt ceases to be ethically intelligible. It stands for the fact that man comes into the world without God, severed from the love which is his life.

There are many difficulties in the notion of sin and evil. The problem was and still is unsolved. Man's weak mind tends to offer many explanations, but the perfect answer has yet to come. St. Augustine developed an anthropology which attempted to answer the problem of sin. He began from the State of Innocence and ended with an attempted answer to the question as to the origin of the human soul.

First, let us examine the status integritatis. According to Augustine, man came from the hand of his Maker, his genuine masterpiece, without the slightest fault. He possessed freedom, to do good; reason, to know God; and the grace of God. The relation of man to God was that of joyful and perfect obedience. The relation of the body to the soul was the same. The flesh did not yet lust against the spirit;


2. "State of Innocence."
both were in perfect harmony, and the flesh was wholly sub-
ject to the spirit.  

Yet Augustine admits the original state of man was
only relatively perfect. God alone is immutable and abso-
lutely good; man is subject to development in time and
therefore to change.

Augustine goes on to make an important distinction
between the possibility of not sinning\(^2\) and the impossibility
of sinning.\(^3\)

A second form of freedom is the liberio arbitrium,
or freedom of choice. Adam was viewed as having a constitu-
tional tendency to the good, yet involving, at the same time,
a possibility of sinning; thus, Adam was not indifferent to
good and evil.

In like manner, he distinguishes between absolute and
relative immortality.\(^4\)

The latter belongs to man, the first is only an attrib-
ute belonging to God. God is the only absolute Immortal.

By Freedom Augustine understands, in the first place,
simply spontaneity or self-activity as opposed to action

\(^{1}\) Aurelius Augustinus, The City of God, Vol. II of
the Basic Writings of St. Augustine, ed. Whitney J. Oates,

\(^{2}\) "Non posse peccare."

\(^{3}\) "Impossibilitas peccandi."

\(^{4}\) Between the non posse mori and the posse non mori,
or between the immortalitas major and immortalitas minor.
under external constraint or from animal instinct. Both sin and holiness are voluntary; that is, acts of the will, not motions of natural necessity.

Finally, Augustine speaks most frequently and most fondly of the highest freedom, the free self-decision or self-determination of the will towards the good and holy, the blessed freedom of the children of God, which still includes, it is true, in this earthly life, the possibility of sinning, but becomes in heaven the image of divine freedom, and cannot sin. It is the exact opposite of the dura necessitas mali in the state of sin. The will is free in proportion as it is healthy, and healthy in proportion as it moves in the element of its true life, in God, and obeys Him of its own spontaneous impulse. Deo servire vera libertas est.\(^1\)

This was the state of man before the Fall. The Fall had its consequences, which greatly affected the previous state of innocence.

Augustine starts off with the organic unity of the human race; the first man was not an individual, but the representative of the whole race.\(^2\)

The consequences of the primal sin, for St. Augustine, are all comprehended under death, in its widest sense; as

1. "To serve God is the true freedom."

Paul says: "The wages of sin is death." These consequences are both in the negative and in the affirmative.

The negative results are: (1) Loss of the freedom of choice, which consisted in a positive inclination and love of the good, with the implied possibility of sin, and (2) obstruction of knowledge. Man was originally able to understand and to learn without labor. Now the mind is beclouded and knowledge can be imparted only with great difficulty. (3) Loss of paradise. Thorns, and sweat of man's face are to be found on earth.

The positive results are: (1) The preponderance of the sensuous, the lusting of the flesh against the spirit, harmony no longer rules; (2) physical death, with its retinue of diseases and bodily pains. Adam was created mortal and capable of death but not subject to death, and (3) the most important consequence of the fall of Adam is original sin and hereditary guilt on his whole posterity.

This leads us to the origin of the human soul and to the subject of original sin.

The three prevalent theories of the origin of the soul during Augustine's time are: (1) The Traducian or Generation Theory. This theory states that the soul originates with the body from the act of procreation, and, therefore, through human agency; (2) the Creation Theory. This theory ascribes each individual soul to a direct creative act of God, and supposes it to be united with the body at the moment
of its generation, or afterwards; (3) the theory of Pre-existence, which was originated by Plato and developed by Origen, supposes that the soul, even before the origin of the body, existed and sinned in another world, and has been banished in the body, as in a prison, to expiate the personal Adamic guilt, and by an ascetic process to be restored to its original state.

Augustine rejected all these theories, and more emphatically the theory of Pre-existence. His own theory of a generic pre-existence and apostasy of all men in Adam is really liable to the same objections concerning the Pre-existent theory; namely, that the soul is a prisoner of the body. Augustine also hangs the whole fate of the human race on a transcendental act of freedom, lying beyond our temporal consciousness; though, it is true, he places this act in the beginning of earthly history, and ascribes it to the one generic ancestor, while Plato and Origen transfer it into a previous world, and view it as an act of each individual soul. St. Augustine wished to keep both the continuous creative activity of God and the organic union of body and soul. He finally concludes by dismissing the whole matter as unimportant, because the Scripture does not seek an answer to the question.

The three theories have some element of truth. All aspects of each theory enter into the explanation of the creation of the soul. Each, taken individually, and
exclusively held, leads to gross errors.

St. Augustine's doctrine of sin may be summed up as follows: This fearful power is universal; it rules the species, as well as individuals; it has its seat in the moral character of the will, reaches thence to the particular actions, and from them reacts again upon the will; and it subjects every man, without exception, to the punitive justice of God. Yet, the corruption is not so great as to alter the substance of man, and make him incapable of redemption. The denial of man's capacity for redemption is the Manichean error, and the opposite extreme to the Pelagian denial of the need of redemption. "That is still good," says Augustine, "which bewails lost good; for had not something good remained in our nature, there would be no grief over lost good for punishment."¹

St. Augustine cannot deny that there were, before Christ, not only among the Israelites, but also among the Gentiles, God-fearing souls, such as Melchisedec and Job, true Israelites, not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit, whom God, by the secret working of His spirit, drew to Himself even within baptism and the external means of grace.

All human boasting is therefore excluded; man is sick, sick unto death out of Christ, but he is capable of health;

¹ Aurelius Augustinus, De Genesi ad Litteram, Vol. XXXIV of the Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina, col. 969.
and the worse the sickness, the greater is the physician, the more powerful is the remedy—redeeming grace.

Before discussing his notion of grace, the matter of the free-will will be presented, as Augustine seems to conceive it. From the preceding we have noticed a definite relationship between freedom and sin. Free-will is closely interwoven with St. Augustine's views on sin, and almost inseparable.

According to St. Augustine, will is the power of determination without external compulsion, and rational beings are distinguished from things by the possession of this characteristic,¹ Whether I determine to do what I like or what I dislike, it is my will that the decision is taken.

But the exercise of this faculty must be affected by the different conditions in which rational beings have existed. To the first man there was a real liberty of indifference, a complete free choice.

Fallen man is enslaved by lust; separated from God, he has no longer the power to keep himself free from sin. Man has not lost the power of will, but he has fallen from the state of freedom where he could exercise that power by avoiding sin. His act is still determined by his will, but it is a base and servile freedom of following his lower

nature willingly.  

Man need not rest satisfied with this low estate, for a better freedom than freedom to sin, or even than mere free choice, is held out to him; he may ultimately attain through Christ to a complete victory over sin, and thus to a divine freedom from evil, in which it shall be impossible to sin.  

No doubt, Augustine is confronted with many difficulties. These difficulties are never fully resolved satisfactorily by him. But it may help to note that Pelagius ascribed to fallen man the same free choice which St. Augustine regarded as the possession of Adam, but forfeited by him. The Pelagians argued that if there were no such liberty of indifference, there could be no justification for the punishment of the sins of individuals now, but St. Augustine held that, as sin is committed voluntarily or willingly, it does deserve punishment; while, by maintaining that Adam really had free choice, he avoided the position of the Manicheans.

In any discussion of freedom, two senses of the concept are present. One can be called negative freedom, indicating freedom from restraint of a sort or an order. All

1. Nam et animae in ipsis pecatis suis non nisi quamdam similitudinem Dei, superba et praepostera, et, ut ita dicam, servili libertate sectantur.

too frequently, thinking on this all-important human value
has stopped at the negative level, and has failed to realize
that there is always in freedom a positive aspect, without
which, the concept itself loses a major portion of its mean-
ing. The distinction between positive and negative freedom,
\textit{i.e.}, freedom from against freedom for, is present in
St. Augustine's analysis of the will. Both in the case of
mere volition, as well as in operation of a genuinely free
will, negative freedom is assumed. Also, neither type is
dealt with without reference to the end result, but the
designation of free will in the fullest sense is reserved
for an operation of positive freedom, where the answer to
the question "Freedom for what?" is unmistakably clear. It
is freedom for the pursuit of God, God's Truth and God's
Will. It is freedom that tears man away from slavery, from
the seductions of worldly goods and desires, and leads him
to the happiness which can only be found in God. Such,
St. Augustine insists, is the real meaning of Christ's
words, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples
indeed; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make
you free."\footnote{1. John 8: 31, 32.}

This, in substance, is St. Augustine's account of the
origin of sin and the character of man's freedom. Sin comes
from a perverted will, man's will that has lost touch with
God. But how does man's will become rightly oriented towards

\footnote{1. John 8: 31, 32.}
God? St. Augustine repeats the Pauline reply: by the grace of God, which is the grace revealed in Jesus Christ. Unwaveringly, he maintains the importance of grace in man's existence.
§1. Grace and Predestination

Augustine unwaveringly maintains that man is saved by grace and only by grace. The first man, Adam, was created with a will which was able not to sin. He willingly sinned, and the taint of his sin was transmitted to his progeny, so that all men since Adam have been able to sin. But God, in his infinite mercy, has seen fit to save men from this bondage to sin, and has done so by the nature of grace. In order that man should know precisely the nature of grace, God sent His Son to become man. In the life and teaching of the Son, this knowledge became available to man.

The conferring of grace results in the recreation of man. But this grace is a gratuitous gift on God's part, yet necessary, in order to live rightly in God's eyes.

In chapter XXIV of Book XXII of The City of God,¹ one sees the goods that God has conferred on nature, or that He confers on it now. True, all these splendors, and many others which he enumerates, are for Augustine only consolations of the miserable and condemned,² but yet they all remain for him good and beautiful, and, in particular, this nature of the human mind,³ even after the Fall, was a living

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2. "Miserorum demnatorumque solatia."

3. "Natura mentis humanae."
reflection of the creative light which still shines.

Before discussing his notion of redeeming grace more fully, let us examine his system of grace.

It is unquestionably in the great Doctor's solution of the eternal problem of freedom and grace—of the part taken by God and by man in the affair of salvation—that his thought stands forth as most personal, powerful, and most disputed. Most personal, for he was the first to synthesize the great theories of the Fall, grace and free will. Most powerful, for it was he, above all others, who won the triumph of liberty against the Manicheans, and of grace against the Pelagians. Most disputed, for it is the most misunderstood of his teachings.

The system of St. Augustine rests on the following three fundamental principles: (1) God is the absolute Master; by His grace, much of the determinations of the will are affected, (2) man remains free, under the action of grace, and (3) the reconciliation of these two rests on the manner of Divine government.

The fact is, St. Augustine, on the basis of these principles, distinguishes explicitly two orders of grace: the grace of natural virtues;¹ and grace for salutary and supernatural acts, given with the first preludes of faith. The latter is the grace of the soul; the former is the grace

1. The simple gift of Providence, which prepares efficacious motives for the will.
which even strangers and infidels can receive.\(^1\)

Thus, when he says that we have lost freedom, it is not the liberty of choosing between god and evil, because without it we could not help sinning, but the perfect liberty which was calm and without struggle, and which was enjoyed by Adam before his original sin.

So much for his system of grace. Let us examine more closely his doctrine of redeeming grace. Augustine reaches his peculiar doctrine of redeeming grace in two ways. First, he reasons upward from below, by the law of contrast; that is, from his view of the utter incompetency of the unregenerated man to do good. The greater the corruption, the mightier must be the remedial principle. The doctrine of grace is, thus, only the positive counterpart of the doctrine of sin. In the second place, he reasons downward from above; that is, from his conception of the all-working, all-penetrating presence of God in natural life, and much more in the spiritual. Thus, Augustine, through his speculative genius and the earnest experience of his life, deeply comprehended a sense of the absolute dependence of the creature on the Creator, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being."\(^2\)

Augustine's impression of the immanence of God in the world has nothing pantheistic, in that it does not tempt him

\(^1\) "Gratia filiorum."

to deny the transcendence of God and his notion of the absolute dependence of the world. Guided by the Holy Scriptures, he maintains the true mean, between deism and pantheism.

In the very beginning of De Confessiones, he says very beautifully:

Et quomodo invocabo Deum meum, Deum et Dominum meum? Quoniam utique in me ipsum eum vocabo, cum invocabo eum. Et quis locus est in me quo veniat in me Deus meus? quo Deus veniat in me, Deus qui fecit coelum et terram? Itane, Domine Deus meus, est quidquam in me quod capiat te? An vero coelum et terra quas fecisti, et in quibus me fecisti, capiunt te? An quia sine te non esset quidquid est, fit ut quidquid est capiat te? Quoniam itaque et ego sum, quid peto ut venias in me, qui non essem, nisi esses in me? Non enim ego jam in inferis, et tamen etiam ibi es. Nam et si descendero in infernum, aedes (Psal. CXXXVIII,8). Non ego essem, Deus meus, non omnia esset, nisi esses in me. An potius non esset, nisi esses in te, ex quo omnia, per quem omnia, in quo omnia (Rom. XI, 36)? Etiam sic, Domine, etiam sic. Quo te invoco, cum in te sim? aut unde venias in me? Quo enim recessam extra coelum et terram, ut inde in me veniat Deus meus, qui dixit: Coelum et terram ego impleo? (Jerem. XXIII,24).1

1. "How shall I call on my God, on my God and Lord? Into myself must I call Him, if I call on Him; and what place is there in me, where my God may enter into me, the God, who created heaven and earth? O Lord my God, is there anything in me, that contains Thee? Do heaven and earth contain Thee, which Thou hast created, in which Thou didst create me? Or does all that is, contain Thee, because without Thee there had existed nothing that is? Because then I also am, do I supplicate Thee, that Thou wouldest come into me, I, who had not in any wise been, if Thou wert not in me? I yet live, I do not yet sink into the lower world, and yet Thou art there. If I made my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there, I were not, then, O my God, I utterly were not, if Thou wert not in me. Yea, still more, I were not, O my God, if I were not in Thee, from whom all,
In short, man is nothing without God, and everything is in and through God.

Augustine calls grace specifically *gratia Christi*.1 With him grace is, first of all, a creative power of God in Christ, transforming me from within. It produces first the negative effect of forgiveness of sins, removing the hindrance to communion with God; then the positive communication of a new principle of life. Positive grace operates, therefore, not merely from without, upon our intelligence, by instruction and admonition, but also in the center of our personality, imparting to the will the power to do the good which the instruction teaches, and to imitate the example of Christ.

In a word, grace is the breadth and blood of the new man; from it proceeds all that is truly good and divine, and without it we can do nothing acceptable to God. "Volentem praeventit, ut velit; volentam subsequitur, ne frustra velit."2

Throughout his works, St. Augustine ascribes certain properties to grace. First, it is absolutely necessary to

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2. "Him that wills not, grace comes to meet, that he may will; him that wills, she follows up, that he may not will in vain."
Christian virtue; not merely auxiliary, but indispensable to its existence. It is, moreover, unmerited. Gratia would have no meaning, if it were not gratuitae, gratis data. As man without grace can do nothing good, he is, of course, incapable of deserving grace; for, to deserve grace, he must do something good.

Grace is irresistible in its effect; not, indeed, in the way of physical constraint imposed on the will, but as a moral power, which makes man willing, and which infallibly attains its end, the conversion and final perfection of its subject. But the irresistibility must manifestly not be extended to all; for the Bible speaks of grieving, lying to, and blaspheming the Holy Spirit, and so implies that grace may be resisted. Judas stands as an excellent example of one who resisted grace and, thus, repelled it. Augustine, therefore, must make irresistible grace identical with the specific grace of regeneration in the elect.

Grace, finally, works progressively or by degrees. It removes all the consequences of the Fall; but it removes them in an order agreeable to the finite, gradually unfolding the nature of the believer.

And as to the relation of grace to freedom: Neither excludes the other, though they might appear to be in conflict. In Augustine's system, freedom, or self-determination to do good is the correlative in man of grace on the part of

1. This may easily lead to fatalism.
God. The more grace, the more freedom to do good, and the more joy in the good. The two are in the idea of love, which is objective and subjective, passive and active, and apprehending and a being apprehended.

Augustine did not stop with this doctrine of sin and grace. He pursued his anthropopathy to the doctrine of predestination.

Augustine's formulation of predestination is (1) the eternal choice of the elect by God is very real, very gratuitous, and constitutes the grace of graces; (2) but this decree does not destroy the Divine will to save all men, which, moreover, is not realized except by the human liberty that leaves to the elect full power to fall and to the non-elect full power to rise. This may be put forth as one explanation of Augustine's theory.¹

Generally speaking, predestination may be said to be a necessary attribute of the divine will, as foreknowledge is an attribute of divine intelligence; though, strictly speaking, we cannot predicate of God either a before or an after, and with Him all is eternally present. It is absolutely inconceivable that God created the world or man blindly, without a fixed plan, or that this plan can be disturbed or hindered in any way by His creatures. Besides, there prevails everywhere, even in the natural life of man, in the

¹ This view does not do away with all the shortcomings.
distribution of mental gifts and earthly blessings, yet much more in the realm of grace, a higher guidance, which is wholly independent of our will or act. The further one becomes advanced in the Christian life, the less are we inclined to attribute any merit to ourselves, and the more to thank God for all.

The first sin, according to Augustine's theory, was an act of freedom, which could and should have been avoided. All men thus deserve temporal and eternal death. But God is just, and being just makes such punishment impossible. He has thus resolved from eternity to reveal in some His grace, by rescuing them from the mass of perdition, and, without their merit, saving them.

This is the election of grace, or predestination. God determines and knows beforehand what He will do; the fall of man, and the individual sins of men, he knows perfectly, even from eternity, but He does not determine or will them; He only permits them. Predestination has only reference to good, not to evil. Only the good are predestined, for if the evil were predestined, God would be Evil. Only a Good and Just God is possible in St. Augustine's views. Thus, also the imputation of teaching that a man may be elect, and yet live a godless life, is precluded. Many may be of the elect and fall, but they never cease becoming members of the elect, for they can again return to their former state. Hence, we cannot certainly know in this life who are the
elect, and we must call all to repentance and offer to all salvation, though the vocation of grace only proves effectual to some.

St. Augustine could cite many Scriptural texts, especially the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, for his doctrine. But other texts, which teach the universal vocation to salvation and make man responsible for his reception or rejection of the gospel, he could only explain by forced interpretation. One such passage is the Epistle to Timothy, chapter two, verse four. Augustine tries very hard to meet all objections to his doctrine; when he fails, he appeals to the inscrutable wisdom of God. ¹

Whom does God elect to grant his grace? St. Augustine is lost in mystery, in the face of this question. If grace is only given to those who, by virtue of their right actions, deserve it, they are able to sin, but not having sinned, they do not deserve it. Hence, sinners are the only possible recipients. But why does God elect one and not another? Augustine answers this question by stating that in God’s infinite wisdom lies the answer, which human wisdom cannot penetrate. However, St. Augustine is certain that the great majority of men are not chosen, and hence are to endure everlasting punishment in eternal death. This is a difficult problem for St. Augustine. In any event, in the Augustinian

¹ Augustine’s doctrine of grace and predestination was to cause much trouble, especially in theological development.
doctrinal of grace, man's good works do not, and, indeed, cannot precede its gift. Good works are possible after the gift of grace, for then man's will has been transformed to the state of being able not to sin. To look at it in another way, grace is given so that good works may be performed. Throughout, one finds that St. Augustine embraces free will and grace with equal fervor.

In order to clarify his ideas on Predestination, one must notice his treatment of time: In his discussion of time, his indebtedness to Plato is particularly evident. In the myth of creation, contained in the Timaeus, Plato distinguishes between time and eternity. He asserts that time came into being with the creation, and, consequently, it is only accurate to speak of past, present, and future, in connection with things found in the physical universe. It is incorrect to say that God, or the Demiurge, the Master Craftsman, as He is called in the Timaeus, has been or will be. The only proper assertion which can be made is that God is. He, like a Platonic Idea, is immutable, unchanging, outside of time. St. Augustine adopts this Platonic analysis in its essence. He asserts that for God there is no such thing as temporal sequence. Temporal sequence is a distinguishing feature of the created universe, whereas in God's mind, since He eternally is, with no past or future, all things are present simultaneously.

1. Plato Timaeus 37c. 6ff.
The application of St. Augustine's philosophy of time to the problem of God's foreknowledge should be clear. If God is an eternal present, then all knowledge is present in Him. From God's point of view, it would not be precise to say that He foreknows, for actually, by virtue of His eternal nature, He simply knows. Man, to be sure, uses the term "God's foreknowledge," but this tends to confuse him, since the term implies that God, like man, is a Being in whom knowledge is characterized by temporal sequence. Though, perhaps, this type of thinking on time and eternity may fall far short of solving the relation of the will to God's foreknowledge, at least it suggests that the two fall into separate categories, and that no investigation of the problem can be fruitful, if this notion is neglected. The will is in the category of time. God's knowledge, or foreknowledge, is in the category of eternity.

The real question then becomes: Does an all-inclusive, eternally present knowledge in God necessarily mean that knowledge exercises absolute coercive control over the human will which is in time? St. Augustine would reply in the negative, because he will never deny the reality of will. If we are puzzled by the dilemma, he would admit freely that to understand the nature of God's knowledge lies infinitely beyond human power.  

CHAPTER III

MYSTICAL BASIS OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE SELF

1. Definition

Without doubt there are signs of mysticism in the teachings of St. Augustine. The mystical element is more clearly observed in his views on the nature of contemplation. This teaching may be formulated under the following aspects:

In one instance he gives a definition or description of contemplation in general; it is the directing of a serene and straight look on the object to be perceived.¹ The whole scope of mysticism is the reformation and sanctification of the interior life; the gradual growth of the soul towards perfect union with God.

The contemplation of God is the lot of the Blessed in heaven; in it consists their essential eternal happiness.² Though contemplation really belongs to the next life, in this life some beginnings of it are possible, some passing glimpses, or intuitions, of divine things. For Augustine, contemplation is only begun in this life, to be perfected in the next.

Even in this life our soul hungers and thirsts for God, and we can find real satisfaction only in Him. This truth is enunciated in St. Augustine's celebrated formulation of what may be called the great mystical postulate, "Thou hast created us for Thyself, and our heart is restless till it rests in Thee."¹

The first step on the road to mystical unity is the purification of the soul. For Augustine, as for all true mystics, the indispensable condition of contemplation is such a purification of the soul as will render it fit to ascend to the contemplation of God; a purification which is the result of a long process of self-denial and self-conquest, of mortification and the practice of virtue—in short, asceticism, in the broad and full meaning of the word, viz., training.

St. Augustine distinguishes seven degrees in the functions or operations of the soul: The first four are the principle of life, of sensation, of intelligence, of morality; the fifth grade he characterizes as tranquillitas, the calming of the passions; the sixth as impressio, the approach to contemplation; the seventh as contemplation. These last three may be said to correspond in idea to the familiar stages of purgation, illumination, and union. He summarizes them thus: In the fourth God purges the soul; in the fifth

He reforms it; in the sixth He leads it in; in the seventh He feeds it.  

For Augustine, neither clear vision of God, nor union with Him, is possible until both mind and heart should be effectively purged. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.

He continues to emphasize that the preparation for contemplation lies in the processes called recollection\(^2\) and introversion.\(^3\)

The word recollection is taken, not in its present, secondary sense of remembering, but in its primary sense of gathering together and concentrating the mind. It consists, first, in the effort to banish from the mind all images and thoughts of external things, all sense perceptions and thoughts of creatures, then the reasoning processes of the intellect are silenced, and, by this exercise of abstraction, a solitude is produced, wherein the soul may operate in its most spiritual faculties. This exclusion of all external things from the mind, and emptying it of distracting thoughts,

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which is the object of recollection, is the prelude to that
to entering of the mind into itself, that is affected by intro-
version, which is a concentration of the mind on its own
highest, or deepest, part. The final step, before the soul
finds God, is described thus:

The mind abstracts itself from all the bodily
senses, as interrupting and confounding it with
their sin, in order to see itself in itself,
and know itself as mirrored in itself; and
again, it is by abstracting its attention from
all noise of flesh and blood.1

In this manner it reaches God.

The soul's search for God through the ascending
grades of creation, wherein the mind finally turns itself
in upon itself, mounting through its progressively more and
more spiritual faculties, till it finds God at once in and
above itself, is developed in the elaborate and eloquent
passage in Book X of the Confessions.2

Generally, western mystics represent contemplation
as attained by and in absorption in prayer; but, for Augus-
tine, it seems to have been primarily an intellectual
process—informed, indeed, by intense religious warmth, but
still primarily intellectual. It is the search for something
not subject to change, that leads the soul up to God, and it

1. Aurelius Augustinus, Exposition of Psalm xli, 
Vol. VIII of A Select Library of Nicene and Post Nicene

2. Aurelius Augustinus, Confessions, Vol. I of
Philip Schaff, pp. 142-162.
is represented as a great effort of intellect and will.

The Object contemplated is conceived as follows:

(1) Ultimate Reality. Contemplation for Augustine is the "striving to understand those things that really and supremely are"; when attained to, it is "the full enjoyment of the highest and truest Good"; by it we attain to "that highest Cause, or highest Author, or highest Principle of all things."\(^1\) (2) The Unchangeable. His mystical experiences are often expressed in terms of this idea; e.g., as a perception of something unchangeable, a beholding with the mind's eye of something unchangeable; a learning something divine and unchangeable.\(^2\) The same fundamental idea runs through the following descriptions of the act of contemplation, as the perception of unchangeable Good; as some vision of unchangeable Truth; as the search for some unchangeable Truth.\(^3\)

These Neo-Platonic conceptions of Truth are favorite ideas with Augustine, when speaking of contemplation and mystic experience.

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Is St. Augustine, an exalted Neo-Platonist, describing only the higher operations of the intellect? In other words, the problem is, Is it Christian mysticism or Neo-Platonic mysticism?

Beyond all possibility of doubt, one can see that St. Augustine's contemplations were full of religious experiences of the highest and most spiritual contemplation and thoughts.

An examination of the following two special points may verify the above statement; the psycho-physical phenomena associated with ecstasy, and the vision of God, attainable in this life.

In the autobiographical passages of the Confessions, wherein St. Augustine relates his own mystical experiences, there is no suggestion of any of the psycho-physical phenomena, such as ecstasy and trance, that figure so largely in the history of mysticism as frequent accompaniments of absorption in contemplation. There is no suggestion that St. Augustine's elevations of the spirit and contemplations produced any effects, quasi-hypnotic or other, in his body. Yet the phenomena of ecstasy, with their alienation of the senses, were familiar to him.¹

In a fully religious ecstasy the subject is withdrawn from the bodily senses and is carried away unto God and, afterwards, is restored to his mortal members. According to this, St. Augustine's idea of what takes place in ecstasy is an alienation of the mind from the bodily senses, but not of the soul from the body.

The question one asks at this point is, What is the object perceived in ecstasy of the highest and most intellectual kind? In his Confessions, he states the following:

And thus, by degrees, I passed from bodies to the soul, which makes use of the senses of the body to perceive; and thence to its inward faculty, to which the bodily senses represent outward things. . . . I passed on to the reasoning faculty, unto which whatever is received from the senses of the body is referred to be judged, . . . And thus, with the flash of a trembling glance, it arrived at that which is. And then I saw Thy invisible things understood by the things that are made.

This passage is a difficult one, and its meaning in various points is obscure. But it seems to show that, in St. Augustine's conception, there is an ecstasy of the intellectual order; the soul not only sees in the divine Light, but, in some way, sees that divine Light, which is God Himself. This gives rise to a question as to whether, in this life, any man has ever seen the divine Essence. St. Augustine was never too clear on this point.

How does St. Augustine treat the question of the vision of God? In his work, De Genesi ad Litteram, he discusses whether and how God can be seen in His Essence, in this life, as in the next.

St. Augustine does not limit the supreme vision of God to Moses and St. Paul, but holds that it is enjoyed by others. He speaks of its being granted to certain holy men.

He, himself, speaks of his mind touching the eternal Wisdom, seeing the Light unchangeable, gazing on perspicacious Truth. These words are evidence of his Platonic heritage.

Of course, it would be extravagant to believe that this supreme vision is always seen in intellectual contemplation, or is attained in all ecstasies, even intellectual.

Strongly related to his notion of contemplation is his following doctrine of illumination.


2. Illumination

A part of St. Augustine's mysticism is the doctrine of Illumination. He uses metaphorical language to bring out his theory of Illumination, and vagueness in all metaphorical descriptions breaks through in our passage here: "The soul is diffused in a certain way by that intelligible light."¹ But the way is not defined any more specifically. There is no definite answer as to the nature of this diffusion; here, or at any other place, in St. Augustine's writings:

There (i.e., in the intelligible world) is seen the brightness of the Lord, not by any vision corporeal or spiritual, but by light so far as the human mind is capable of it, by God's grace ... the highest spiritual state of the soul in this life consists in the vision and contemplation of Truth, wherein are joys and full enjoyment of the highest and truest Good, and a breadth of serenity and eternity, such as certain great and incomparable men have described in some measure, who, we believe have seen and see such things.²

This seems related to Plato's allegory of the Cave,³ where the road is shown which leads upward to the idea of the Good, but only with great effort;⁴ and, here, we must add the great speech of Socrates in the Symposium, where the same

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¹ "Quodum modo,"
³ Plato Republic viii.
⁴ Plato Republic viii. 517.
road upward is traversed, in a poetic fashion, under the guidance of love. And in this ascent from the "gold and garments," from "fair boys and youth," from "forms of speech and knowledge" to the last object in the scale of lovers, "beauty absolute, simple, separate, and everlasting," there lies another irreconcilable division of worlds. The doctrine of ideas demands not only separation of being from becoming, truth from opinion, soul from body; it also furnishes a justification for the distinction between earthly, corporeal and heavenly, spiritual love. This same upward climb and its difficulties are emphasized by St. Augustine.

But what can we say of the illumination theory as a theory of knowledge?

Illumination was stressed by St. Augustine as a theory of knowledge that is found in God, identified with Himself in the eternal law, whereby He conserves the order of nature already ordained by Him. Since man is obliged to make judgments, he makes them by way of participation in the eternal law, known to him by illumination. Such an illumination, for Augustine, is a moral conscience received from God, an illumination of the moral order, comparable to the illumination of the intellectual order. By reason of this moral illumination, God illumines the soul to enable it to weigh, judge, distinguish, and value all that He has made and

1. Plato Symposium 211.
2. Ibid. 212.
to seek virtue in the light of Eternal Truth.

In the doctrine of illumination Augustine drives home the complete dependence of man on God. The more a person knows God, the more he knows himself; and the more he knows himself, the more he knows God.¹

Thus, the human mind can know eternal truths or truths that cannot under any condition cease to be truths. Such truths, for instance, are the universals, which are essences always capable of existing. Now, he argued, only from the Eternal Truth can knowledge of other eternal truths come, and it did not occur to him that this knowledge could come otherwise than directly from God. St. Augustine's theory of the way this illumination is produced is as follows: The human mind, made in the image of the Divine, carries with it from birth the universal patterns of all things that can be known. It contains universal ideas not ready made but, rather, as the cuckoo clock contains the cry of the cuckoo, holding it in the leash of a cocked force that, at the right moment, will produce it to our ears. So, when any object presents itself to the senses, the corresponding universal idea is formed and released into the consciousness from the latent power of the mind by the action of God. And when a man further judges anything to be real or true, he can only do so by the help of a new illumination from God. This theory attempts to suggest that there is a very loose

¹. "Noverum me, noverim Te."
connection between the body and the soul. St. Augustine did not hold that the soul was the form of the body; he was an extreme dualist. He believed that matter and spirit were so opposed that the body and the soul of man were necessarily two substances and not one.

In the whole doctrine of illumination, one seems to find St. Augustine asking himself the question: How is it that we attain knowledge of truths which are necessary, immutable and eternal? That we do attain such knowledge is clear to him from experience. One cannot gain such knowledge from sense experience, since corporeal objects change. Nor can we produce truth from our minds, for they also change and are contingent. One can perceive such truths only through the action of Being, God, who alone is changeless. At this point the difficulty of interpretation begins. It seems that St. Augustine meant that the regulative influence of divine ideas, God, enables man to see the relation of created things to eternal supersensible realities, of which there is no direct vision in this life.

It is difficult to give a definitive interpretation of St. Augustine's thought at this point, as one can see, because he himself was not primarily interested in giving a systematic notion or account of knowledge. His use of the metaphor adds to the difficulty.
3. Ascent to God

The notion of man's ascent to God stems from his doctrine of illumination. Both his doctrine of illumination and the notion of the ascent to God are Neo-Platonic in origin.

Augustine's ascent cannot be understood separately from the Enneads of Plotinus. Plotinus did have a definite influence upon St. Augustine, as will be shown.

It is best to deal with the constituent elements of the ascent and then with its structure as a whole. We may distinguish two main features in Augustine's ascent: first, the idea of a scale, or gradation, of being and, secondly, the idea that the soul occupies a position of cardinal importance between the temporal and eternal spheres.

In the philosophy of Plotinus all Being is envisaged as one vast, connected scale, or hierarchy. This idea runs right through the Enneads, and references to it, overt or veiled, are encountered there at almost every step.

A. E. Taylor, writing of Plotinus, says:

He and his followers elaborated the famous conception of the scale, or ladder, of successive "emanations" or "progressions" which connect this supreme Good with the whole hierarchy of its increasingly blurred and imperfect images. Wherever in later philosophy or theology we come upon the "scale of being" or "ladder of perfection" we may be sure that we are dealing with the influence of Plato transmitted through Plotinus.¹

Faithful to Plato, whose thought he was endeavoring to revive, Plotinus retained the dichotomy of the world of Ideas and the world of sense. But, while he kept this doctrine substantially the same, he subjected it to an elaborate transformation. Thus, he made the ideal world to consist of a trinity of primary natures, or, as he called them, hypostases.

Those three principle hypostases, according to Plotinus, are: first, the One, which occupies the highest place; next, Nous or Mind, which sprang from the One; lastly, Soul, the offspring of Nous. ¹

The world of sense, like the ideal world, is also divided into the rational nature, the animal nature, the vegetative nature, corporeal or inanimate nature, and, last, the lowest of all, formless matter, the underlying principle of corporeal things.

At the summit of all Being, therefore, Plotinus placed the supreme hypostasis called One. He realized that there must be a first principle of existence. Further, since he regarded the created universe as the many, he thought it most fitting to call the first principle from which the many flowed the One. And yet, though the One is the source of all things, we are reminded that it is beyond all things. ²

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¹ Enneads v. 1. 8.
² Ibid. v. 3. 10.
The second member of his trinity is that which springs immediately from the One; namely, Nous or Mind. This hypostasis is so called because its natural function is to turn towards and contemplate the One.\(^1\)

The immediate offspring of Nous is Soul—the universal or All soul. This is the last and lowest hypostasis of the Plotinian trinity. In it the signs of multiplicity are apparent. The soul has knowledge only through a process of reasoning, as opposed to the One's knowledge, by eternal possession. The soul is thought of as having two phases: through its upper phase it clings in contemplation to the Nous; through its lower phase it brings forth an image of itself. This image is the visible world of nature. Here one notices an order of downward progression from the One.

As the One is at the summit, so Matter is at the bottom of the Plotinian scale. Matter is neither soul, nor intellect nor life. It is absolutely indeterminate.\(^2\)

Plotinus postulates Matter as a thing not having mass, with no shape or form, because he feels that the nature of things, reason, demand that there be a formless substratum underlying the changes which are constantly taking place in bodily substances.

It is by entering into conjunction with matter that Soul brings forth its offspring and image, the universe. The

\(^1\) Enneads v. 2. 1.

\(^2\) Ibid. iii. 6. 7.
Soul, which is determinate, fashions or gives to Matter (the indeterminate) form. In addition to giving form to Matter, it imparts varying degrees of its own nature. To some bodies it gives vegetative life, to others it gives a life of reason. All ultimately depending on the One.\footnote{Enneads v. 9. 3; ii. 3. 17; vi. 7. 33.} Without doubt one can see that Plotinus clearly has developed a doctrine of degrees. It is from him that St. Augustine borrowed much. How he could have easily used the Plotinian system is readily seen from the following sentence in Ennead vi, 7, 42:

Soul is joined to Nous and Nous to the Good, so that all things are linked to that by intermediate stages. Some things are near, some border on those which are near, and furthest away stands the sense-realm which depends on God.

In retrospect, St. Augustine's gradation is as follows: Bodies, as such, or mere inanimate things, occupy the lowest in the natural scale. Living things are superior to them. Even among living things there are degrees. Lowest is the mere vegetative life, the plant, which has no powers beyond those of nutrition, growth and reproduction. Next above this is the endowed with sensitive life, the animal, which, in addition to the vegetative functions, has the
power of perception and conscious action. Sensitive life is superior to vegetative, for St. Augustine says, "Whatever judges is superior to what is judged." 1

The sensitive life has two phases; the external senses and the internal senses. Each particular external sense has its own proper object—the eyes, color, the ears round, and so on. But the fact that some things are perceived in common by a number of senses can only be explained as being due to some other faculty, which is called the internal sense. According to Augustine, the internal sense is superior to the external senses, in that it presides over them, receives their reports, and passes judgment upon them. Yet, even the external senses may be said to have a certain power of judgment, though ever so imperfectly. 2

One nature still remains which is superior to all these. It is the human reason. This nature has power to judge not only bodies, animate and inanimate, but also the reports of the senses, even the internal. Of all these it alone can define the essence of a thing; it alone can distinguish between the color which is seen, the sight in the eye, the inner sense, and itself, which judges them all; it alone can grasp truths which are eternally and unchangeably valid. He feels sure that if he can find a nature higher than reason, he will have discovered God. But, is there any

2. Ibid., p. 119.
higher nature? Is not reason the supreme judge? No; it is far from infallible. Nature is changing and differs among persons. There must exist above our minds a nature which is eternal and unchanging. The whole dynamic force which causes this accent is Truth and Truth is God. Knowledge, Truth, Reality are all aspects of the One, Eternal.

Augustine realizes that, being a man, he contains within himself all the degrees of the scale of nature; he has a body, he has vegetative life, he has sensitive life and with its two phases, external and internal senses. Above all, he possesses the highest degree of the scale, mind or reason. He thus has all the materials necessary to make the ascent. Is it not only natural, therefore, that he should make this "Ascent" in the form of an intimate self-analysis?

He decides to search for God within, and not outside himself.

In the Confessions he questions creatures around him about God and they reply: "We are not thy God; seek above us." Thereupon, he says:

I turned my attention to myself and said to myself: "Who art thou?" and I replied "A Man." And behold there are present within me a body and soul, the one exterior, the other interior. Through which of these ought I seek my God? I had sought him through the body from earth to heaven as far as I could send messengers, the


2. This seems to lead to dualism.
beams of my eyes. But that which is interior is the better.1

Thus, the notion of turning within ourselves to find God above and through the soul.

But how will Augustine find God by turning within himself? It is because he knows that his mind is in contact with Truth and Truth is God. Hence his advice:

Go not outside; return into thyself; in the inner man dwells Truth. And if thou findest thy nature changeable, ascend above thyself too. But bear in mind when thou goest above thyself, that thou art going above the reasoning soul. Thither, therefore, do thou tend whence the very light of reason is enkindled. For where does every good reasoner arrive but at Truth.2

Plato, in this respect, to be sure, prescribed a long and arduous intellectual preparation for the highest vision, through arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and dialectic; but the intellectual preparation alone is not sufficient "to raise the eye of the soul to the universal light."3

After a long period of common life, the final truth is generated in the soul, suddenly, like a light kindled like a blaze leaping from a spark.4

St. Augustine's theory of the ascent to God can be summed up as follows: Who will ascend to God? He who has

2. Ibid., p. 99.
3. Plato Symposium 211.
4. Plato Republic vi. 466.
successfully withdrawn from outward activities and searched for God within himself.

How will one ascend to God? St. Augustine answers this in one short sentence: "Through my very soul will I ascend to Him."\(^1\)

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\(^1\) Aurelius Augustinus, Confessiones, Vol. XXXII of the Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina, col. 295.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Augustine was not only a voluminous writer, but also a profound thinker and a subtle reasoner. His books, with all the faults and repetitions of isolated parts, are a spontaneous outflow from the marvelous treasures of his highly gifted mind and his truly pious heart.

St. Augustine by no means claimed to be an original thinker, free from other influences. He did recognize the influence of contemporary thought, and gave credit to his sources. In a famous passage of his Confessions, St. Augustine says that the only fundamental truth that he had not found in the Neo-Platonists was the doctrine of the Incarnation. ¹

The central doctrine of the Augustinian theory of knowledge is Neo-Platonic in origin. The Augustinian view of the relation of God to the creation is clearly based in the end on the Platonic contrast between that which is and that which becomes.

Neo-Platonism and Augustinianism are, in many respects, in agreement with one another. But there is a

difference, and this difference keeps St. Augustine from being a complete Neo-Platonist. The inner life, which St. Augustine practised as a man of prayer, seeking that which is a gift of God, is one thing; the Plotinian flight from matter is quite another thing. The first is the work of Christian contemplation. The second finds its ultimate motives neither in love nor in prayer, but in an epistemology, which makes of human intellect a creator, in order to find in reality the object of human knowledge.  

The Plotinian thought, and generally the whole Greek philosophical tradition, has been a tradition which has exalted the human element. Greek philosophy was man-centered and the emphasis was on man.

St. Augustine, in contrast to this, held to a theo-centric philosophy. Man, without God, without grace, was helpless. The emphasis was on the Divine.

Again, St. Augustine's concept of man is based on Christian contemplation. The interiorism of Augustine is a complete stranger to Platonism, for Augustine's thought is clearly one of religious orientation.

It is true that St. Augustine, in certain respects, went to extremes. His emphasis upon the religious aspect and upon God was, and is, too extreme. Although he did use the Neo-Platonic notions concerning the soul, he removed the soul

1. This provides an answer to the question, Whether St. Augustine is a Christian mystic or a Neo-Platonic mystic?
from the human influence and placed it entirely in the care of the Divine. The role of the Divine seems to belittle or hamper any human potentialities. There is a complete dependence of man on God, in the St. Augustine concept of man.

Did St. Augustine accomplish anything by his religious orientation in respect to Platonism? The drawback in Platonism's cosmology is the account of the unity of man. Plato had no ontology of composite essences. The Forms are composite essences, but Plato does not hold either of the only two possible positions which would explain the compositeness of some of the Forms: (a) The Forms could be composite if they were the essences of composite substances. In that case, the consciousness of the composite substances would be the cause of the composition of their essences; (b) on the other hand, though they are separate, they are not creative divine ideas. In other words, the Forms are neither the causes of matter nor caused by it. The result is, that there is no other possible way open to Plato to explain the compositeness of composite essences. Thus, both Plato and Plotinus are committed to a cosmology, which can justify the unity of man only on the assumption that the world is not a creature, either in its origin or in its organization.

St. Augustine represents the Christian tradition, and the Greek view is in opposition. The Greek view is the view that the universe is necessary and eternal. Matter, which is apparently the pre-existing chaos upon which the Platonic
demiurge worked, introduces an inevitable dualism in Plato's system. St. Augustine, in turn, believed in the ex-nihilo creation, with nothing existing other than God. The doctrine of the free creation of the world in time, as developed and explained by Augustine, is completely Christian. But the Platonic contribution of freeing man from materialism cannot be denied. Christianity did utilize this contribution and St. Augustine tried to interweave it with Christianity.

The Neo-Platonists taught and considered philosophy nothing more than human wisdom. St. Augustine, in contrast, thought that philosophy is nothing but Christian wisdom, which not only showed the way to the knowledge of man's last end, but also provided the means and the powers by which this end could be realized; and that, of course, could be done only with the assistance of divine grace.

St. Augustine denies that man, of himself, can come to the knowledge of his last end. He believed that all philosophy was contained in the Scriptures and that divine illumination was necessary.

This leads us to distinguish between St. Augustine, a Christian philosopher, and between the non-Christian Greek philosophers. The theocentric notion is found throughout St. Augustine's views on man; his notions of grace and of illumination are some views he maintains, to bring out the theocentricity. But when he attempts to relate grace and illumination to free will and to evil, he finds himself confronted by a real problem. He settles, or attempts to answer,
the problem of evil. He states that there is no evil in itself. What is evil is created by man. He is willing to allow man the ability to create evil, but he is very hesitant throughout his other views on the man, to allow any great human potential to develop free from divine influence. As to the relation of free will to grace and predestination, he never did settle or answer satisfactorily. St. Augustine's treatment of man moves constantly around God's love. This love of God is the ultimate source of St. Augustine's spirit.

In his works, and throughout his thought, one finds that all the thinking of Augustine begins with his soul and ends with God. His concept of man seems to be nothing more than the personal explanation of his life. Without being too extreme, it seems that St. Augustine did limit his concept of man to his own personal experience. Yes, he did feel the impact of Plotinus and of the Neo-Platonists, but he could not free himself from his own personal experience. From a heathen, a non-believer, he ultimately found Christianity and believed. The manner of his belief, and of his acceptance of Christianity, can well be the basis for his theocentric views. In his piety he attempted to explain his own personal experiences as being greatly determined by the Divine. Probably, if one stops to think, one finds that we come across many forks in our lives, and the road chosen is not always the one resulting from human reason. There does seem to be another Force. To what extent the other Force helped, will probably remain a mystery.
Thus, St. Augustine, in his views of man, presented himself as the example. His mysticism reveals itself in his ascent to God. This ascent to God may be nothing more than a sincere Christian feeling, and not complete mysticism; it is difficult to estimate.

The Platonic view of man, in contrast to the Augustinian, seems to offer a more universal view. As humans, we seem to appreciate the importance of Plato's educational system. Only the few can completely attribute everything to God, and derive a concept similar to St. Augustine's. Again, St. Augustine seems to have stressed his theocentricity, at the expense of the human element. It seems that both are necessary, and can co-exist without harming each other.

Aristotle's golden mean would certainly make this possible.

In concluding, one may say that Augustine's views of man do not appeal to many today. There is the limitation of age and of personal experience.

Contrasted to St. Augustine, one finds Plato's epistemology studied and widely used, in whole or in part, from the time of its inception to the present time. Without seeming to praise Plato at the expense of St. Augustine, it does seem that Plato, in attempting to use human reason to reach truth, contributes a great deal. He used the human faculty to its greatest extent; he did not hide behind the Divine to solve problems, but he did realize the need of a Higher Power.
Perhaps the greatest lesson that Augustine has to teach, in his concept of man, is, that wisdom and true happiness are not to be bought, or handed over by other creatures like a chattel, but are solely the result of divinely aided, personal effort. Each man may reach a different degree of understanding of his own creature and its destiny—such understanding is always the culmination of a private, and somewhat solitary, quest of wisdom.


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The purpose of this thesis is to present and evaluate the concept of man, as found in selected works of St. Augustine. Included in this presentation and evaluation is a comparison with Plato's own concept of man and with the Neo-Platonic concept. Examination of his thought reveals that St. Augustine had no explicit, systematic theory concerning man. Therefore, emphasis is placed on the construction of the development of St. Augustine's concept of man, from a philosophical point of view.

The first step in constructing St. Augustine's theory of man is to examine his ontological views, his knowledge of the self. He was convinced that everything was created by God, and to be united with Him was to know all things. He therefore introduced a threefold hierarchy of being; namely, the rationes asternae, the rationes hominum, and the rationes seminales. The degree in each being is measured by the soul's participation in the pure and true Reality. The soul in turn was for St. Augustine the intermediary between God and matter, and the body was perfected by the soul.

St. Augustine does accept the union of body and soul in man. The soul is superior to the body, but both body and soul are creations of God. The soul is superior, in that it directs and uses the body to gain insight to what will
ennoble it. The soul thus becomes the body's principle of life and organization. The act of loving, knowing, is the very life of the soul. The body becomes subject to the soul, and the soul to God. Man thus becomes a mind who remembers God.

The moment the soul fails in its primary duty, conflict arises. The basic unifiers of the body and soul are the Augustinian cupiditas and charitas.

Following this conflict, one finds in St. Augustine the psychological view of man. Briefly, this view states that in man is a soul, the superior soul with principal parts. The first part, mens, mind, is in the light of the Eternal. The Light sees itself and produces an internal word notitia; that which joins the two is love, amor.

The lack of harmony between body and soul causes the following questions to be asked. What is the relation of freedom to sin and of grace to predestination? St. Augustine introduces all of these notions, but he seems to have failed to resolve them completely. Freedom, sin, grace, and predestination are all closely related to his theocentric views on man.

There are, throughout his views, definite mystical elements. The purpose of the soul is to unite with God. He believes in the possibility of the mind touching Eternal Wisdom by Contemplation. This contemplation is composed of Illumination and an Ascent to God. This notion emphasizes
union of soul with Eternal Wisdom.

Following the presentation of St. Augustine's concept of man, is a critical evaluation of his views. His whole view is definitely theocentric. This theocentricity seems to be stressed at the expense of the human element. In his anxiety to explain his own life, and his personal experience with God, he limited himself. No doubt he tried to make the central issue the relationship of man to his Creator, but it seems that the real relationship is St. Augustine and his Creator. He does not easily reconcile freedom to grace and predestination. In his extreme theocentricity he seems to limit the human element, and the rational. This may be due to his own personal experience or to the attempt he made to fit the Neo-Platonic views in with the Christian views. Nevertheless, the universal, classical appeal seems to be lacking, as contrasted to Plato's own theory of man.

Conclusions:

1. The central issue in St. Augustine's concept of man is the relation of man to his Creator.

2. For St. Augustine, God is the source of all being and, for him, God is the ultimate goal of man.

3. The soul for St. Augustine is the intermediary between God and man. The three points emphasized by St. Augustine concerning the soul are: (1) the superiority of the rational soul over any other creation, (2) the demand for purity, and (3) the theory of divine illumination.
4. Man is composed of a mortal body and a soul. The union of body and soul is good. The body becomes subject to the soul and the soul to God.

5. All evil and all sin for St. Augustine is not an absolute, positive factor in the universe, but it is the privation of good. There is no existence apart from Good.

6. Though his views of both sin and freedom, grace and predestination, were practical, he was never able to reconcile the one to the other.

7. St. Augustine emphasized that wisdom and true happiness are not bought, but are a result of divinely aided, personal effort.

8. As pointed out in the critical section, he over-emphasizes the Divine at the expense of the human initiative. He starts from God and ends with man, instead of starting with man and ending with God.