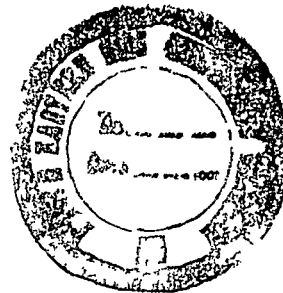


Plus

SOME CENTRAL PROBLEMS IN ST. AUGUSTINE'S PHILOSOPHY

**A THESIS
SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD
OF THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**



**BY
ENN ZA SIAN**



**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION
NORTH-EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY
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Certified that the thesis entitled "**SOME CENTRAL PROBLEMS IN ST. AUGUSTINE'S PHILOSOPHY**" is the record of work done by **MR. EHN ZA SIAN**, that the contents of this thesis did not form a basis of the award of any previous degree to him, or to the best of my knowledge, to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by him for any research degree in any other University.

In habit and character **MR. EHN ZA SIAN** is a fit and proper person for the **Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**.

SHILLONG

THE 23RD SEPTEMBER 1995.

S. C. Daniel
(S. C. Daniel)
Supervisor

WITH
GRATEFUL HEART
TO
THE GIVER
DEDICATED
TO
MY DEAR PARENTS
NGIN ZA KAP
AND
HING ZA DIM

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a very special thanks to my teacher and guide Dr S. C. Daniel, Reader, Department of Philosophy, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, for his understanding guidance, inspiration and invaluable encouragement without which this work would not have been a success.

I am sincerely thankful to Dr. N. Malla, Head of the Department of Philosophy and to all the Faculty Members and all Office Staff of the department for their constructive suggestions and help towards the progress of my project.

I am also very grateful to the Principal of Patkai Christian College, Nagaland, for granting me study leave and to all the Staff-Faculty members for their concern and intercession.

I am also deeply grateful to Fr. K. George, President of Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong, for allowing me to use the College Library with love. My thanks are also due to Fr. Fernandez Francis, the Librarian and his staff members for their invaluable help and guidance in the Library.

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. A. K. Lama, Regional Secretary of UESI-NE through whose concern I received gifts in terms of books from the people of the USA & the International Book Project, Inc. Lexington, Kentucky. I am also grateful to the following persons for

lending me their books: Dr. Rev. Tuisem A. Shishak, Rev. Khup Za Go, Rev. L. Taithul, Patrick Kham Vai Lian, Suzzana Yaden, Puhran M. Sangma, and S. Khaiminthatang. I also place my gratitude on record to Dr. David Syiemlieh, Dr. H.I. Singh, K.L. Biakchungnunga, T.T. Haokip, Vanlalringa Bawitlung, Elizabeth, Seiboi Lhungdim, H. Soikholian, Saji Varghese and members of the Sohpetbneng and Chhinlung Hall of Residences, who have been a source of encouragement and help in more than one way.

I am also very thankful to the Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR) for their favour enabling me to be at its Academic Centre: Butler Palace, Lucknow during which I also had the privilege of using the Library which has a very good collection of philosophy books and journals. I also would like to thankfully acknowledge in advance the anticipated financial assistance of the Council towards this research project.

I also would like to express my profound thanks to Rev. J.M. Paupu, my local guardian and his family for their priceless role during my stay in Shillong. I am also very very thankful to Mr. Joseph F. Khongbuh for typing the thesis with utmost care and sincerity within a very short span of time.

I am sincerely grateful to my wife Lalsanhim for her patience, prayer, moral support and great understanding. I must also thank her for watchfully taking care of all my needs, in addition to mothering our children during my long absence. I also would like to affectionately appreciate the love, concern and innocent but precious prayers of my children. I am also highly obliged to Muamuan, who looked

after my quarters and played such an important role along with Zara during my absence. My sincere most thanks to my dear parents, to whose honour I dedicate this thesis, for their love, care and prayers. I would fail in my duty if I do not thank my brothers, sisters and in-laws for standing by us in times of joy and difficulties.

Above all, I am eternally thankful to Almighty God for His ever-abiding grace and infinite mercy without which, I am sure, this humble endeavour of mine would not have seen the light of the day.

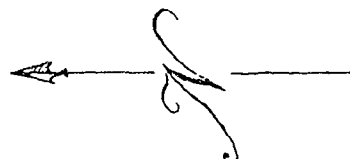
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Galla

Italy and
North Africa
in the time of
Saint Augustine

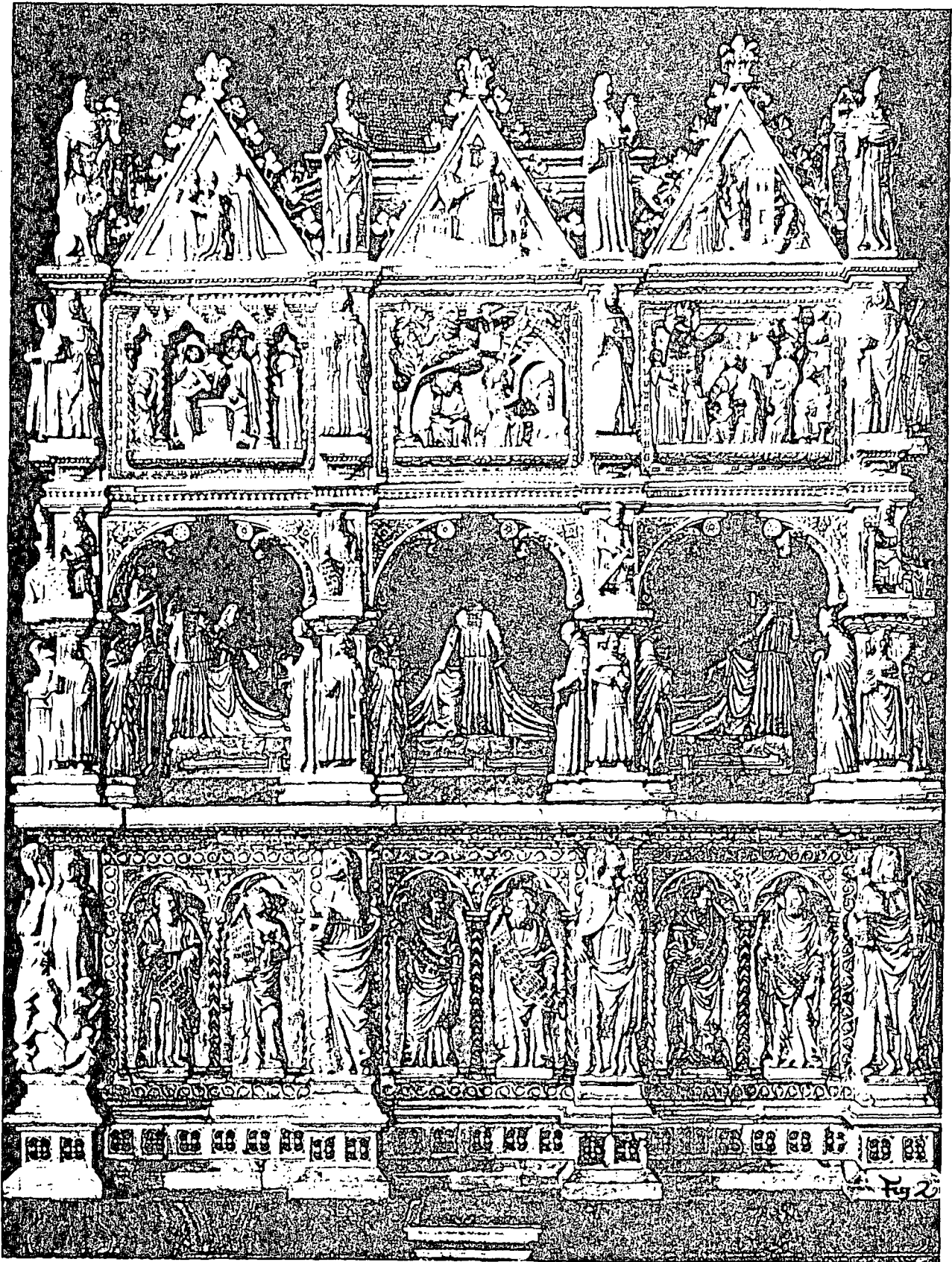


Source: New Catholic Encyclopaedia, Vol. I (1967), The Catholic University of America, Washington DC, USA, Rpt., 1981, by Jack Heraty & Association, Inc., Palatine III, p. 1045.



"St. Augustine Listening to St. Ambrose," by the 16th-century artist Bernard van Orley.

Source: New Catholic Encyclopaedia, Vol. I (1967), The Catholic University of America, Washington DC, USA, Rpt., 1981, by Jack Heraty & Association, Inc., Palatine III, p. 1047.



Tomb of St. Augustine, by the sculptor Benino da Campione, 1362, in the cathedral at Pavia, Italy.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

My thesis is entitled, "Some Central Problems in St. Augustine's Philosophy." It is divided into four chapters, namely, 1. Introduction, 2. St. Augustine and Plato, 3. St. Augustine and the Fundamental Principles of Christianity, and 4. St. Augustine and God.

It is imperative on my part to explicate the meaning of the word, central. This word means principal, chief, dominant or core. It also means that from something central other related things proceed. It would mean that central is something logically primitive, from which derivative principles can be deduced. I have discussed some central problems in St. Augustine's philosophy. It does not, however, mean there are no other principles which are central in St. Augustine's philosophy. I must reiterate that this is not my claim.

What is a problem? A problem means a question proposed for solution or discussion. We must note that philosophical problems are different from other problems, espe-

cially problems in mathematics. In mathematics, solutions for the problems are available by means of various kinds of mathematical operations. Philosophical problems are posed or raised so that they may be improved upon or reconstituted or reformulated.

I have identified certain philosophical problems in St. Augustine's philosophy which he seeks to improve upon. What are these philosophical problems which St. Augustine deals with? He deals with the problems of Scepticism and Christian Philosophy. I have discussed these two problems in my introductory chapter threadbare. In the second chapter, I have highlighted the influence of Plato especially his theory of Ideas or Forms on St. Augustine. The theory of Ideas, I may venture to say, is a very important problem for philosophers, whether traditional or modern. In the third chapter, I have presented the Fundamental Principles of Christianity. Are these Fundamental Principles of Christianity problems in philosophy? Yes, they are. In the final chapter, I have explicated the problem of God. Needless to say that the problem of God has engaged the highest minds from time immemorial.

The problems I have discussed in my thesis are central as well as philosophical. I may say again at the pain of repeating myself that these problems are central because

they belong to the core area of St. Augustine's philosophy. And they are philosophical because they do not admit of any definite solutions. In a nutshell, these problems are some of the problems – perennial in philosophy.

St. Augustine's first interest in philosophy was aroused by a reading of Cicero's Hortensius. This was a dialogue in praise of the pursuit of wisdom. Drawn to philosophy at the age of nineteen, he strove for a knowledge that would lead him from surface of things to the essence. His conversion was a turning point, when he was thirty-three years of age. As a result, his philosophical passion was transformed into a passion of faith. Apparently, his philosophy and his faith seem to be identical, yet, they are separated by a leap, the conversion. The essence of his thinking has then changed. The new faith of knowledge is won by another knowledge based on the Christian faith and its contents.

In the first chapter, I would like to highlight the following important points: the importance and relevance of St. Augustine's philosophy; a brief account of St. Augustine as a man, and his conversion to Christianity; St. Augustine and Scepticism; and St. Augustine as a Christian philosopher.

Importance and Relevance

The importance and relevance of St. Augustine's philosophy are so many. According to Anders Wedberg,¹ St. Augustine is the first great name in the long succession of Christian theologians who tried to support their faith with philosophical arguments. His philosophy can be characterised as a synthesis of Christian doctrine with Platonic and Neo-Platonic thinking.

In seeking to describe the greatness of St. Augustine, the author of the biography in Hastings, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ascribes him a significant contribution to Catholic theology, pre-eminently as the 'doctor of grace' while, at the same time, he regards him as the spiritual ancestor of Protestants, considers on its dogmatic side, as a triumph for the doctrine that grace is 'free'. It is also supposed that St. Augustine influenced the development of Cartesianism, with its basis in 'clear and distinct ideas'; while through his 'romanticism', his 'self-assured subjectivity', and his 'penetrating psychological insight', he anticipated certain distinctive aspects of what is called modernism. He is also said to have been the first thinker to undertake a philosophy of history.

¹ A. Wedberg, A History of Philosophy, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992), p. 151.

St. Augustine, according to Battista Mondin,² is the greatest Christian philosopher of the Patristic period and one of the most brilliant thinkers in history. More than any other Christian thinker, he succeeded in finding an harmonious synthesis between Platonism and Christianity. He gave the revealed doctrines of God, which in principle are accessible to pure reason, and markedly Platonic foundation. His religious philosophy and his theological doctrines exercised a decisive influence on all later developments of Christian thought, particularly throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Scholastic theology also shows the mark of St. Augustine, not only in its speculation, but also in its methods. It is from St. Augustine that medieval mysticism in both its ecclesiastic and heretical form, received its most important inspirations. Even in the so called pre-reformers we see the direct or indirect influence of Augustinian inspiration.

Ernest Hauser³ says that without the towering figure of St. Augustine of Hippo, Christianity would not be what

² Battista Mondin, A History of Medieval Philosophy, (Theological Pub. in India, Bangalore, 1991), p. 82.

³ Ernest Hauser, "The Passions and Peace of St. Augustine", Sunday Banner, Nagaland, March 28 - April 3, 1993, p. 2.

it is today. Christians of all persuasions refer to his authority in basic matters of their faith, recognizing in him the greatest Christian thinker after St. Paul. Much like Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus, it was a landmark in the history of Christianity. The five-hundred sermons of St. Augustine that have been preserved prove him to be one of the greatest preachers of all time. But St. Augustine's main weapon was the written word, the Holy Bible.

Karl Jaspers⁴ is of the opinion that St. Augustine was the end of an old tradition in Western Christian thought and the fountain head of another that has been in progress ever since. Countless philosophers have been awakened to new and original thinking through their encounter with St. Augustine. By his originality he influenced the heretics. St. Augustine provided impulses for a free, original philosophizing. St. Augustine's acceptance of Church authority gave the Church every right to claim St. Augustine for its own in nearly all its great spiritual and political struggles. Both lines of influence are well grounded: the first in the particular ideas and movements of thought to which St. Augustine gave strength, the second in his fundamental

⁴ Karl Jaspers, The Great Philosophers, (Rupert Hart Davis, London, 1952), pp. 226-229.

and dominant mood. A history of St. Augustine would be a history of Christian thought as a whole. It is the tendency to original inward thought in contrast to intellectual operations. It is a radical thinking-through of problems. It is a thinking grounded in faith, not in intellectual derivation from presupposed dogmas. It is a thinking of the whole man. St. Augustine's influence, though immeasurable, is especially notable in the teachings of Luther, Pascal, Descartes and Leibniz. St. Augustine was the first to perceive an atmosphere of arrogant humility, of sensual asceticism, of perpetual veiling and reversal which runs through Christianity. He knew the torment of inner disharmony, of false and hidden motives - the dogmas of original sin. The self-penetration that set in with St. Augustine continued down through the Christian thinkers from Pascal to Kierkegaard.

To Anthony Elenjittam,⁵ St. Augustine is the most outstanding genius in the realm of philosophy, theology and culture of the Catholic church. He was a versatile genius, a universal genius, creative, emotional, intellectual, the pattern of a great mind, converted from error to truth and to sanctity. St. Augustine has left us a patrimony which

⁵ Anthony Elenjittam, Saints For Young Men Today, (St. Paul Publications, Allahabad, 1966), pp. 14, 121.

has an appeal for each and every one of us, especially for those youths who are gifted with great natural talents, who have lost their paths to God, to real values, and to virtue. The psychology, philosophy, theology and, above all, the faith and sanctity of St. Augustine are our perennial heritage for each and every one of us, and for the whole Church and mankind at large. To young men who have entangled in the tentacles of worldly love, to intellectual who have plunged heart and soul into modern errors, St. Augustine is a signpost, showing the path to unfetter them from all sorts of bonds that prevent them from seeing the face of God, entering His kingdom on earth, and from being children of the Church of Christ, St. Augustine was the universal genius of the Church. Philip Schaff⁶ remarks about him:

A philosophical and theological genius of the first order, dominating like a pyramid over antiquity and succeeding ages... compares with the great philosophers of past centuries and of modern times, he (St. Augustine) is the equal of them all; among the theologians, he is undeniably the first, as such has been his influence that none of the Fathers, Scholastics or Reformers has surpassed it.

According to the observation of Colin Brown,⁷ the

⁶ Philip Schaff (ed.), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Church, (Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Michigan, 1974), p. 7.

⁷ Colin Brown, Philosophy and the Christian Faith, (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1968), p. 14.

most outstanding thinker of 354-430 A.D., that is, the Medieval Philosophy, was St. Augustine, the saintly bishop of Hippo in North Africa. St. Augustine had not always been a Christian. In his early years he had committed more sins than most men. But it was not philosophy that brought him peace with God or gave him meaning to his life. It was his encounter with Christ. His conversion not only changed his life, but also re-energized his thinking. He recounts his experiences in his autobiographical The Confessions, one of the greatest spiritual classics of all time. How far St. Augustine's later thought was coloured by the philosophical ideas of his time is still a matter of debate amongst scholars. But it was the Word of God in Scripture that was the chief influence on him. From his conversion onwards St. Augustine devoted himself to bring this to bear on the current questions of the day.

A critical comment given by W. T. Jones⁸ can never be brushed aside. To him, St. Augustine was not the sort of thinker whose views evoke a neutral response. Those who are not for him are likely to be dead against him. Thus, many people today regard St. Augustine's point of view as

⁸ W. T. Jones, A History of Western Philosophy: Medieval Mind, (Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. 1969), pp. 136-137.

hopelessly unbalanced - a neurotic exaggeration of guilt and sin and unhealthy other - worldliness that result in almost total neglect of the really serious social and political problems that it is the business of the philosopher to discuss. Such critics will be inclined to take St. Augustine's mystical experience in the garden of Milan less a profound insight into the nature of reality than as a sign of psychic instability. Others, however, will argue that if St. Augustine went too far in one direction, the modern world have gone too far in another. Concentration camps, Horishima and Nagasaki have shocked many of us into a painful recognition of man's inhumanity to man. The post-world II generation is likely to understand St. Augustine's horror at the depth of iniquity of which men are capable; and even those who reject his specifically Christian interpretations may feel that he gave a truer picture of human nature than that presented by the later philosophers of progress.

St. Augustine is a figure of great importance in the history of western mind. As one of the Fathers of the Church, he developed ideas that form a corner stone of Catholic Christianity. Moreover, it was to him that the leading Protestant thinkers turned when they rebelled against Rome. His views are therefore, the theological core of most modern Protestant sects. It is fair to say, then, that Augustinianism,

in at least some of its aspects, is still a living view.

Eugene TeSelle⁹ says that St. Augustine attracts our interest in many ways - as the personality exhibited in The Confessions, as a bishop and a chaplain of the church, as a saint - but he has remained an abiding presence in the subsequent history of the west chiefly as a thinker, and its theology, both Catholic and Protestant, is largely a series of annotations to his work. He may have even greater relevance today than in the past.

According to I. Trollov,¹⁰ St. Augustine, Christian theologian and mystic philosopher, holds views close to Neo-Platonism, and was a prominent patriotic. His world outlook had a well defined fideist character based on the principle, "Where there is no faith, there is no knowledge, no truth."

Writing an introduction on St. Augustine's The Confessions, John K. Ryan¹¹ says that The Confessions of St. Augustine has a special place among the world's great books.

⁹ Eugene TeSelle, Augustine The Theologian, (Burn and Oates, London, 1970), p. 19.

¹⁰ I. Trollov, Dictionary of Philosophy, (Progress Publisher, Moscow, 1984), p. 23.

¹¹ St. Augustine, The Confessions, Trans. John K. Ryan, (Image Books, Doubleday, N.Y., 1960), pp. 17, 33.

Autobiographical in character, it is not an attempt to tell the story of the writer's life, least of all of the outward events of those years. But no other writer went deeper into his own character and deeds, passed keener judgements upon himself, or revealed himself more fully and more humbly to others than St. Augustine. It may be asserted also that no writer of his own life's story had such wealth of thought and feeling to draw upon as had St. Augustine. For this reason, his book is not only a most penetrating psychological study and a unique document for understanding the spiritual and ascetic life, but it is also a storehouse of thought for the philosophers and the theologians, and for others as well. St. Augustine continually keeps in view his three-fold way of purgation, of light, and of union with God.

The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church¹² record that St. Augustine had a creative and decisive hand in almost every dogma of the Latin Church, completing some and advancing others. The centre of his system is the Free Redeeming Grace of God in Christ, Operating Through the Actual, Historical Church. He is evangelical or Pauline in his doctrine of sin and grace, but Catholic (that is, genuine Catholic, not merely Roman Catholic) in

¹² Philip Schaff (ed.), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Church, (Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Michigan, 1974), p. 4.

his doctrine of the Church. He was rather a thinker than a scholar, and depend mainly on his own resources, which were always abundant.

Writing the foreword, Etienne Gilson¹³ says that The City of God is not only one of St. Augustine's masterpieces, but ranks, along with The Confessions, among the classics of all literature. We are striving toward the unity of all men, we must look beyond mankind for the unifying principle. The only possible source of future unity lies not in multiplicity, but above it. One World is impossible without One God and One Church. In this truth lies the ever timely message conveyed to man by St. Augustine's The City of God.

According to Vernon J. Bourke,¹⁴ contemporary scholarship continues to rank St. Augustine among the great minds in western civilization. His authority as a Christian writer is second only to the canonical writings and official pronouncements of his Church. And in the growth of Christian theology, St. Augustine is always a key author. St. Augustine's insights are still pertinent to the problems of our

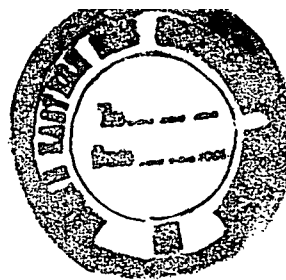
¹³ St. Augustine, The City of God, (Image Books, Double-day, NY, 1958), pp. 13, 35.

¹⁴ Vernon J. Bourke, Wisdom From St. Augustine, (University of St. Thomas, Houston, Texas, 1984), p. 40ff.

day. He was fully convinced that God exists as the Supreme Good and Truth. Without God, Augustinian wisdom is nothing. Yet, St. Augustine's "unquiet heart or restless heart" is not unsympathetic to the anxieties of the modern mind.

It is probably impossible to exaggerate the influence of St. Augustine's life and thought. His religious and philosophical teachings have been studied by an ever increasing number of interpreters. New journals and publication series are devoted in whole or in part to the study of his writings. St. Augustine's original writings have been re-edited and translated into modern languages. Archaeological discoveries have brought precious information about St. Augustine's world.

The fact that many present day people want to read St. Augustine is strikingly attested by the publication of the Basic Writings of St. Augustine. Eight of the American volumes of A Select Library of The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Church were devoted to St. Augustine. Published in New York under the general editorial direction of Dr. Ludwig Schopp, The Fathers of the Church series were produced, which eventually include nearly all the representative works of St. Augustine. Contemporary revival of Augustine studies confines not only to America, but also in France, Italy, Holland, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, England and



many other countries. Bourke,¹⁵ conscious of the importance and relevance of St. Augustine said:

If there is to be a resurgence of Christian culture in the modern world, the works of St. Augustine may become one of the chief instruments in that much-destined phenomenon. If we are to approach, even imperfectly, that 'tranquility of order' with peace, St. Augustine may be the man to show us that all order comes from but one Source.

The Faith of the Fathers, selected and translated by William A. Jurgens,¹⁶ comparing the works of St. Augustine and of all other Fathers and Writers, writes:

If we are faced with the unlikely proposition of having to destroy completely either the works of St. Augustine or the works of all other Fathers and writers, I have little doubt that all others would have to be sacrificed. St. Augustine must remain. Of all the Fathers it is St. Augustine who is the most erudite, who has the most theological insights and who is effectively the most prolific.

I would now like to briefly look at the works of St. Augustine. From the preceding discussion we have come to know that he has done many useful works during his life. I would like to consider his works in two ways, that is, first subject-wise; second, in chronological order.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 212.

¹⁶ William A. Jurgens (Selected & Trans.), The Faith of the Early Fathers, Vol. 3 (The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1979), p. 1.

Subject-wise, the works of St. Augustine may be grouped under seven important heads. First, Philosophical Works, which include, Against the Skeptics, The Happy Life, On Order, Soliloquies, The Immortality of the Soul, On Music, On Free Choice, The Teacher. To mention a few, On Music, St. Augustine seeks to demonstrate how the soul rises up to God through music. In his On Free Choice, St. Augustine examines the problems inherent to the relations between freedom and evil. Through The Teacher, St. Augustine proves the secondary role of the teacher, given the fact that truth comes from within, not without. Second, Polemical Works. These works are directed against three groups on controversial issues, namely, against the Manichaeans, against the Donatists and against the Pelegians. His discussion against the Manichaeans includes the origins of the world and of the evil too. His work against the Pelegians refutes Pelegian negation of original sin and the necessity of sanctifying grace. Supporting the theory of Traudicianism that the soul was directly created by God, St. Augustine confronts the grave problem of the co-existence of free will and divine grace. Third, Exegetical Works. This is an expository works on the Gospels, Genesis, and Psalms. Fourth, Pastoral Works, which include On Lying, Holy Virginity and Instructions For the Unlearned. Fifth, Theological Treatises, which include On Christian Doctrine, The Trinity and The City of God. Sixth, Sermons and Letters. St. Augustine wrote over three hundred letters

with varied contents with authoritative character. There are about five hundred Sermons listed under this, although St. Augustine certainly composed many more than that. Their purpose, according to Battista Mondin,¹⁷ is prevalently polemic, dogmatic and pastoral. Seventh, Autobiographical Writings, such as The Confessions and The Retractations. In The Confessions, St. Augustine gives praise and thanks to God by way of an autobiography in which philosophical and theological thoughts appear as the substance of life that knows itself to be under God's guidance. To Philip Schaff,¹⁸ The Confessions is the most profitable, at least the most edifying, product of his (St. Augustine) pen; indeed, we may say, the most edifying book in all the patristic literature. The Retractations were produced in the evening of his life, when mindful of the Proverbs 10:19, which says, "In a multitudes of words transgression is not lacking," and remembering that we must give account for every idle word (Matthew, 12:36), St. Augustine judged himself, that he might not be judged (1 Corinthians 11:31). Further, in Retractations, he revised in chronological order the numerous works he had written before and during his episcopate, and retracted or corrected whatever in them seem to his

¹⁷ Battista Mondin, op.cit., p. 88.

¹⁸ Philip Schaff, op.cit., pp. 11, 12.

riper knowledge false or obscure. The Retractations give beautiful evidence of his love of truth, his conscientiousness, and his humility.

Partly basing on the wisdom of Bourke,¹⁹ I would now like to list down the works of St. Augustine in chronological order.

<u>Time in A.D.</u>	<u>The Works</u>
380	On the Beautiful and Fitting (De pulchro et apto)
386/430	Letters (Epistulae)
386	Against the Skeptics (Contra Academicos)
386	The Happy Life (De beata vita)
386	On Order (De ordine)
386/7	Soliloquies (Soliloquia)
387	The Immortality of the Soul (De immortalitate animae)
387/390	On Music/Prosody (De musica)
387/388	The Magnitude of the Soul (De quantitate animae)
387/389	The Customs of Catholics and Manichees (De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et manichaeorum)
388/389	On Genesis against the Manichees (De Genesi contra manichaeos)
388/395	On Free Choice (De libero arbitrio)

¹⁹ Vernon J. Bourke, op.cit., pp. 8ff.

<u>Time in A.D.</u>	<u>The Works</u>
389	The Teacher (De magistro)
391/430	Sermons (Sermones)
391	On True Religion (De ver religione)
388/395	Eighty-three Different Questions (De diversis quaestionibus 83)
392	The Advantage of Believing (De utilitate credendi)
392/393	On Dual Souls against the Manichees (De duabus animabus contra manichaeos)
392	Proceedings against Fortunatus the Manichee (Acta contra Fortunatum manichaeum)
392/426	Enarrations on the Psalms (Enarrationes in Psalmos)
393	Sermon on Faith and the Creed (De fide et symbolo)
393	Incomplete Book on the Literal Meaning of Genesis (De Genesi ad litteram, liber imperfectus)
394	The Sermon of Our Lord on the Mount (De sermone Domini in monte)
394	Alphabetical Chant against the Donatists (Psalmus contra partem Donati)
394	Against the Letter of Donatus Heretic (Contra epistulam Donati heretici)

<u>Time in A.D.</u>	<u>The Works</u>
394	Against Adimantus (Contra Adimantum)
394/395	Explanation of Some Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans (Expositio quarundum propositionum ex Epistula ad Romanos)
394/395	Explanation of the Epistle to the Galatians (Expositio Epistula ad Galatas)
394/395	Unfinished Explanation of the Epistle to the Romans (Epistulae ad Romanos inchoata expositio)
395	On Lying (De mendacio)
395	On Continence (De continentia)
395	Answers to Simplicianus' Various Questions (De diversis questionibus ad Simplicianum)
396	Against the So-called Fundamental Letters of Mani (Contra Epistulam quam vocant Fundamenti)
396	The Christian Combat (De agone Christiano)
396/426	Christian Doctrine (De doctrina Christiana)
397/399	Questions on the Gospels (questiones Evangeliorum)
397/401	The Confessions (Confessiones)
397/398	Christian Discipline (De disciplina christiana)
397/398	Against Faustus the Manichee (Contra Faustum manichaeum)
398	Against Felix the Manichee (Contra Felicem manichaeum)

<u>Time in A.D.</u>	<u>The Works</u>
399	The Nature of the Good (De natura boni)
399	Against Secundins the Manichee (Contra Secundinum manichaeum)
399	Against Hilary (Contra Hilarum)
399	Faith in Things Unseen (De fide rerum quae non videntur)
399	Notes on Job (Annotationes in Job)
399	Instructions for the Unlearned (De catechizandis rudibus)
399	The Advantage of Fasting (De utilitate jejunii)
399/419	The Trinity (De Trinitate)
400	The Harmony of the Evangelists (De consensus evangelistarum)
400	Against the Letter of Parmenianus (Contra Epistulam Parmeniani)
401	On Baptism against the Donatists (De baptismo contra Donatistas)
401	Response to Centurius' Report on Donatism (Contra quod attulit Centurius a Donatistis)
401	Reply to the Demands of Januarius (Ad inquisitiones Ianuarii)
401	On Monastic Work (De opere monachorum)
401	The Good of Marriage (De bono conjugali)

<u>Time in A.D.</u>	<u>The Works</u>
401	Holy Virginity (De sancta virginitate)
401/414	Literal Commentary on Genesis (De Genesi ad litteram)
401/405	Against the Petilian's Letter (Contra litteras Petilianí)
405	To the Donatists on the Unity of the Church (Epistula ad catholicos de secta donatistarum seu de <u>unitate</u> Ecclesiae)
405/406	Against Crescon ⁿ ius the grammarian (Contra Cresconium grammaticum)
400/410	Seventeen Questions on Matthew's Gospel (<u>Questiones</u> 17 in Evangelium Matthaei)
406/408	Proofs and Testimonies against the Donatists (Probationum et testimoniorum contra Donatistas)
406/408	Against the Unknown Donatist (Contra Donatistam nescio quem)
406/408	Warning for the Donatists against the Maximianists (Admonitio Donatistarum de Maximianistas)
406/408	On the Divination of Demons (De divinationibus daemonum)
406/409	Explanation of Six Questions against the Pagans (Quaestiones 6 expositae contra paganos)

<u>Time in A.D.</u>	<u>The Works</u>
410	Letter to Dioscorus (Epistulae 118 ad Dioscorum)
410	The Fall of Rome (De urbis excidio)
411	Exposition of the Epistle of James to Twelve Tribes (Expositio epistulae Iacobi ad duodecim tribus)
411	The Deserts and Forgiveness of Sins (De peccatorum-meritis et remissione)
411	On One Baptism against Petilian (De unico baptismo contra Petilianum)
412	On the Maximianists against the Donatists (De maximianistis contra donatistas)
412	The Grace of the New Testament (De gratia Testamenti novi)
412	The Spirit and the Letter (De spiritu et littera)
413	Faith and Works (De fide et operibus)
413	Resume of the Conference with the Donatists (Breviculus collationis contra Donatistas)
413	Against the Donatists (Post collationem contra donatistas)
413	Letter on the Vision of God (De videndo Deo)
413	Admonition to Fortunatianus (Commonitorium ad Fortunatianum)

<u>Time in A.D.</u>	<u>The Works</u>
413	On the Epistle of John to the Parthians (In Epistulam Iohannis ad Parthos)
414	The Good of Widowhood (De bono viduitatis)
413/415	On Nature and Grace (De natura et gratia)
413/418	Treatise on John's Gospel (Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus 124)
413/426	The City of God (De civitate Dei)
415	To Orosius against the Priscillianists and Orogenists (Ad Orosium contra Priscillianistas et Origenistas)
415	The Origin of the Soul (De origie animae)
415	Jame's View on the Soul's Origin (De sententia Iacobi)
415/416	Man's Perfection under Justice (De perfectione iustitiae hominis)
416	To Emiritus the Donatist after the Conference (Ad Emeritum donatistam post collationem)
417	The Activities of Pelegius (De gestis Pelegii)
417	The Correction of the Donatists (De correptione Donatistarum)
417	The Presence of God (De praesentia Dei)
418	The Grace of Christ and Original Sin (De gratia Christi et de peccato originali)
418	The Proceedings with Emeritus (Gesta cum Emirito donatista)

<u>Time in A.D.</u>	<u>The Works</u>
418	Sermon for the People of the Church of Caesarea (Sermo ad Caesariensis Ecclesiae plebem)
418	On Patience (De patientia)
419	Against an Arian Sermon (Contra sermonem Arianorum)
419	Eight Questions from the Old Testament (De octo quaestionibus ex Vetere Testamento)
419/421	Marriage and Concupiscence (De nuptiis et concupiscentia)
419/420	Discourse on the Heptateuch (Locutiones in Heptateuchum)
420	Questions on the Heptateuch (Quaestiones in Heptateuchum)
420/421	The Soul and Its Origin (De anima et ejus origine)
421	Adulterous Marriages (De adulterinis coniugiis)
421	The Opponents of the Law and the Prophets (De adversarii Legis et Prophetarum)
421	Against Gaudentius the Donatist (Contra Gaudentium donatistam)
422	Against Lying (Contra mendacium)
422/423	Against Two Pelagian Letters (Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum)

<u>Time in A.D.</u>	<u>The Works</u>
423	Against Julian (Contra Iulianum)
423/424	The Enchiridion for Laurentius (Enchiridion ad Laurentium)
421/425	Care to be Devoted to the Dead (De cura pro mortuis gerenda)
423/426	The Eight Questions of Dulcitius (De octo Dulcitii quaestionibus)
426	Grace and Free Choice (De gratia et libero arbitrio)
426	Correction and Grace (De correptione et gratia)
426/427	Retractations (Retractationes)
427	Speculum on the Scriptures (Speculum)
427	Conference with Maximinus (Collatio cum Maximino)
429/430	Treatise Against the Jews (Tractatus adversus Iudaeos)
429	On Heresies for Quodvultdeus (De heresibus ad Quodvultdeum)
429	The Predestination of the Saints (De praedestinatione Sanctorum)
429	The Gift of Perseverance (De dono perseverantiae)
429/430	An Incomplete Answer to Julian's Second Response (Contra secundam Iuliani responsionem, imperfectum opus)

The works and achievements shown above certainly prove the importance and relevance or allow me to say, the permanent significance of St. Augustine. But, as an individual person, do we think that he was born along with those greatness? The answer simply is 'no'. He was, as an individual person, an ordinary man. His reading of Cicero's Hortensius which further crucially led him to his spiritual conversion made the difference. So much so that his conversion or new life in Christ becomes the turning point of his life as well as his philosophy. I, therefore, would like to take up St. Augustine's life in the following paragraphs.

His Conversion

St. Augustine, also known as Aurelius Augustinus, was born on the 13th of November in 354 A.D. The place of his birth is known as Tagaste - the modern Souk Ahras, Algeria which was firmly under Rome's imperial rule, as was the whole northern seaboard of Africa. He was not baptized at infancy. He lived through nearly eighty years of the social transformation, political upheavals, and military disasters that are often referred to as the "decline of the Roman Empire". He stood at the beginning and end of the Medieval Philosophy. He died of a fever during the siege of Hippo by the Genserio's Vandals. The date was 28 August 430 A.D. But his philosophical ideas and works could not perish.

Patricius, the father of St. Augustine was a pagan and remained a pagan almost till the end of his life. He was a town councillor, known for flashes of hot temper. It is said that through the influence of his wife he was converted and baptized one time before his death. But this had no much significance. Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, was a devout and fervent Christian. From her early teaching, St. Augustine learnt reverence for the "name of Christ" that never totally left him, even during his gay student or youthful life. It was partly, if not mostly, because of his mother that St. Augustine was what he was or is today. She died after the conversion of St. Augustine, at the age of 56, when St. Augustine was 33. Recollecting the influence of his mother, St. Augustine²⁰ says,

From my tendered infancy, I have in a manner sucked, with my mother's milk, the name of my Saviour; I kept in the recesses of my heart; and all that presented itself to me without the Divine Name, though it might be elegant, well written and even replete with truth, did not altogether carry me away.

St. Augustine attended the local school and went to nearby Madaura for further schooling. Recalling his school life he wrote in his The Confessions, "I loved not study. Unless

20. Anthony Elenjmittan, op.cit., p. 105.

forced, I would not have learnt". But at 16 he had to interrupt his studies for lack of funds (Conf. 2:3,5). This year of forced leisure coincided with the most difficult period of his adolescence, which seemed to have involved him in a life of sensual pleasure. The following year, thanks to benefactions of a certain Romanianus, St. Augustine was able to resume his studies at Carthage (Contra Academicos 2:2,3), and he engaged in a gay student life, frequented the theatre, and formed a liaison ith a concubine who bore him a son, Adeodatus meaning "God's gift" (Conf. 9:6,14). In his The Confessions, St. Augustine²¹ talks about his life at Carthage in this way,

I came to Carthage, where caldron of shameful loves seethed and sounded me on every side. I was not yet in love, but I as in love with love... there was a hunger within me from a lack of that inner food which is Yourself, my God.... Therefore, my soul did not grow healthy, but it was ulcered over, and it cast outside itself and in its misery.... To love and to be loved was sweet to me, and all the more if I enjoyed my loved one's body.

Born in 372 A.D., Adeodatus, the illegitimate son of St. Augustine died at the age of seventeen, but with such richness of piety and purity as seemed to counter balance the vicious trends of his father at that age. But,

21. St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 77.

despite the long standing relationship with the boy's mother, St. Augustine never married her. Instead, he took another mistress while in Milan (Conf. 6:13,14,15), having left the first one in Africa. In those days, concubinage was considered as a marriage of lower rank and ~~was not~~ completely condemned even by the Church. St. Augustine at this time rejected not only Christian morals but also Christian doctrine. He was especially troubled by the failure of Christianity to explain how a good God could be responsible for a world with so much evil in it.

St. Augustine thus passed from nominal Christianity in his early days into a young manhood which was dissolute and wayward, "but never marked by an unremitting search for the meaning of existence".²² His waywardness could be partly because of his father who "directed his education and choice of career according to the pagan tradition".²³ His search for wisdom and truth, as pointed out earlier, began with his reading of a now lost dialogue by Cicero, the Hortensius, at the age of nineteen. From that moment, he recognized a call from Christ (Conf. 3:4,7,8). In other words, the Hortensius of Cicero inspired him for philosophy and the knowledge of Truth (Christ) for its own sake. Looking

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

back at his life, St. Augustine said that it was this work that changed his interests and gave his life a new direction and purpose.

Attracted at this point by the preaching of the Manichees, who in their discussion of gnosis promised to provide St. Augustine with a comprehension of all that exists (Util. Cred. 1:2). St. Augustine joined the sect and remained a member for nine years, during his career as a teacher at Tagaste one year and at Carthage for eight years. Mani, the founder of Manichaeism was born in 215 to a princely Persian family and was crucified around 275 A.D. He combined Gnostic Christianity with Eastern wisdom and religion, meaning a mixture of Persian-Christian elements. The materialistic ideas of Manichaeism tells that the world is dominated by two eternal and opposing principles, good and evil, light and darkness. The Manicheans believed that by eating no meat (which belonged to darkness) but by eating quantities of vegetables (and thus releasing their light into themselves), they would hasten the kingdom of light. Unfortunately this practice led to many orgies small children (particularly good conductor of light) being stuffed until they died of windy indigestion. The manicheans also condemned marriage and procreation as evil, but allowed fornication. The movement was strongly opposed by the Church and was

looked upon as one of the arch-heresies. It is said that St. Augustine even won his one time financial supporter Romanianus to Manichaeism. St. Augustine, placed all his hopes in Manichaeism, even expecting a secret revelation or some type of illumination (Beat. Vit. 6:1,4). However, after a disappointing encounter with the Manichaean Bishop, the chief interpreter of the doctrine, who could not give satisfactory answers to his searching queries, St. Augustine abandoned the sect (Conf. 5:6,10.11; 7,12.13). He said that Manichaeism destroyed everything, but built up nothing. This frustration intensified the inner crisis of St. Augustine, without finding an answer that would satisfy his mind and heart, the 'restless' one.

The path of Manichaen-gnostic pseudo knowledge led St. Augustine to scepticism. He had already worked out a personal philosophy composed of Stoicism, Pythagoreanism and Ciceronian scepticism. Gradually the dualistic explanation of the universe that had initially captured his interest gave way before a conception, with a Stoic tinge, of an infinite God disseminated everywhere in space. In his The Confessions, he says,²⁴

²⁴ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 158.

... whatever I conceived as devoid of such spatial character seemed to me be nothing, absolutely nothing, not even so much as an empty space. For if a body is removed from a place, and the place remains empty of anybody whatsoever, whether earthly, watery, airy, or celestial, yet there remains that empty space, as it were a spacious nothing. So gross of heart was I, and I had no clear idea even of my own self ... You had not enlightened my darkness.

The ultimate conversion came closer, after a long restless struggle. Having left Carthage for Rome in 383 and taught rhetoric there for a year, then, thanks to the assistance of influential Manichees, he obtained a chair as professor at Milan. It was there that St. Augustine encountered the three principal factors²⁵ that led to his conversion: his meeting with Bishop Ambrose of Milan, his introduction to Neo-Platonism, and his reading of St. Paul.

St. Ambrose's eloquence, followed by his preaching and his teaching attracted St. Augustine in Milan. Three discoveries prepared his conversion. St. Ambrose was the first to give him an idea of spiritual interpretation of Scripture. As an immediate consequence, St. Augustine broke completely with the Manichaeism and was inscribed in the catechumenate of the Catholic Church (Conf. 5:14,24.25).

²⁵ New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. I, (Catholic University of America, Washington DC, USA, 1967; Reprinted in 1981 by Jack Heraty & Assoc. Inc. Palatine, III), p. 1041.

This exegesis likewise gave him an understanding of man as made in the image of God, not by a corporeal resemblance, but according to the Spirit (Conf. 6:3,4). while fear of being deceived prevented his commitment to the Catholic faith, he began to understand the role of belief in human life (Conf. 6:5,7.8). The bishop of Milan Ambrose introduced him to a Christian Neo-Platonism.

Meanwhile St. Augustine's mother Monica joined him in Milan. Encouraged by the saintly assurance of St. Ambrose that "a son of so many prayers and tears could not be lost" Monica continued to pray for her son that he may experience the redeeming grace of God.

The pure philosophy and lofty ideals of Plato, as filtered through Plotinus, began to stir up the very moral being of St. Augustine. The spiritual father St. Ambrose and Simplicianus, set before St. Augustine's eyes the example of the rhetorician Marius Victorinus, through whose translation work of Platonic books into Latin, St. Augustine had come to know Neo-platonism. Consequently there was a change in his world view. He could understand the notion of the Divine Trinity, which he identified with the three hypotases of Plotinus (Conf. 7:9,13-17). Simplicianus, who met Victorinus in Rome and had consequently become more familiar with him, was able to relate to St. Augustine from his

own experience how Victorinus had found the way to Christianity by the study of the Scripture and had confessed it openly without regard to his office and reputation among the pagans. In the persecution of Emperor Julian he had even renounced his office rather than his faith. St. Augustine, on hearing this, was inspired with the desire to imitate this example. But he was too entangled in the world; two desires conflicting within him. Another conversation played a decisive role. A fellow African, Ponticianus, visited him. During the conversation he accidentally opened a book which was lying on the table close by and discovered to his surprise that it contained the letters of St. Paul. Thus, the conversation turned to question of faith. Ponticianus began to speak of Anthony the monk, whom St. Augustine had not yet heard. The report on the life of Anthony and the miracles which had worked through him deeply touched St. Augustine and Alypus. Ponticianus, who one time accompanied the emperor as an imperial official, narrated his experience. St. Augustine admired those heroes who immediately resigned from their responsible offices and joined the settlement of the monks.

St. Augustine had before him example of others who had taken the very step from which he repeatedly shrunk again and again. After Ponticianus left, St. Augustine called

his friend Alypus and said to him: What is this? what did you hear? Unlearned people are taking heaven by force whereas we, with all our knowledge, are so cowardly that we keep rolling around in the mud of our sins? Then, "with a contrite heart" as spoken by the Psalmist,^{26*} St. Augustine flung himself into the garden. He threw himself down under a fig tree and gave vent to his tears and cried out to God: How long, how long? Tomorrow and tomorrow? Why not now? Why not this very hour and make an end to my sins? Just then, a child's voice, singing and calling in the neighbour's house said: "Tolle, lege, Tolle, lege" meaning "Pick it up and read it; Pick it up and read it" seemed to give an answer to the problems of St. Augustine. Hurriedly, he took the epistles of St. Paul in the Bible and opened at random. His eyes fell on Romans 13:13-14 which reads: "Let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarelling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires." Augustine did not want to read on, and it was not necessary: "... for instantly, as the sentence ended, there was infused in my heart something light the light of full certainty and all the gloom of doubt vanished away." Augustine's long wavering ceased: worldly temptation was over. He reported

²⁶ Psalms 51:17.

* All references are from the King James Version unless otherwise stated.

it to his friend Alypius who confirmed his experience. In his The Confessions, St. Augustine²⁷ wrote:

Then having inserted my finger, or with some other mark, I closed the book, and with a countenance now calm, I told it to Alypius. What had taken place in him, which I did not know about, he then made known to me. He asked to see what I read: I showed it to him, and he looked also at what came after what I had read for I did not know what followed: ... now him that is weak in the faith take unto you, which he applied to himself and disclosed to me. By this admonition he was strengthened, and by a good resolution and purpose, which were entirely in keeping with his character, wherein both for a long time and for the better he had greatly differed from me, he joined me without any painful hesitation.

Together, St. Augustine and Alypius went to Monica and told her what had happened. Hearing the news she was filled with exultation and triumphant joy and blessed the Lord God Almighty, St. Augustine²⁸ said:

... she leaps for joy, and triumpheth, and blesseth Thee, 'Who art able to do above that which we ask or think (Eph. 3:20), for she perceived that Thou hadst given her more for me than she was wont to beg by her pitiful and most sorrowful groanings... and Thou didst convert her mourning into joy (Ps. 30:11), much more plentiful than she had desired....

²⁷ St. Augustine, op.cit., pp. 202, 203.

²⁸ St. Augustine, The Confessions, Trans. Edward Bouverie Pusey (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. Chicago, 1952), p. 61.

This took place in the fall of 386 A.D. St. Augustine's life moved in a straight line from then on. Along with friend and fellow convert Alypius, and his son Adeodatus, St. Augustine received baptism from St. Ambrose in Milan on Easter Sunday, in 387 A.D.

What all, comes after in the life of St. Augustine? We do not have space and time for all the details at the moment. However, some must be pointed out. One day in Hippo he attended a sermon by Bishop Valerius, who spoke to his people of the necessity of choosing and ordaining a priest for services in the city. The congregation, on recognizing St. Augustine, seized²⁹⁾ him and presented him to the bishop as their candidate for the ordination. Accordingly, Valerius raised him to the priesthood, but permitted him to continue his monastic life, providing him with a house and a garden near the Church (Serm. 355:1.2). Contrary to African custom, the Bishop who was of Oriental origin, entrusted St. Augustine with the task of preaching in the Church in his presence. St. Augustine became quickly aware of how poorly he knew the Scripture. He, therefore, requested Valerius a period of leisure to complete his education. Since Valerius was growing old, he feared that St. Augustine might be chosen

²⁹ New Catholic Encyclopaedia, op.cit., p. 1044.

bishop for another diocese, he obtained permission from the metropolitan of Carthage to consecrate St. Augustine as bishop. It was apparently in the summer of 395 that St. Augustine was consecrated, and Valerius died a short while later.

As bishop of Hippo St. Augustine served about 35 years. During his time, he took up residence in the episcopal palace in order to be at the disposal of visitors. He grouped his clerics around him in a sort of theological seminary or clerical monastery, based on a community of goods in imitation of the apostles. This arrangement was made obligatory for all his ecclesiastes (Serm. 355, 356). But St. Augustine could hardly live a life of silence and retirement, for he was rapidly inundated with visitors, nor could he remain tranquilly at Hippo. He was frequently called to preside at synods and councils; to preach, to take part in controversies; to visit his friends among the bishops, and thus much of his time was consumed in travel. For eight and thirty years, until his death, he laboured in this place, and made it the intellectual centre of Western Christendom.

As an individual person, his outward mode of life was extremely simple, and mildly ascetic. Females, even his own sister, were excluded from his house, and could see him only in the presence of others. But he founded

religious societies of women; and over one of these his sister, a saintly widow, presided (Epist. 211, 4). He once said in a sermon, that he had nowhere found better man, and he had nowhere found worse, than in monasteries. Combining the clerical life with the monastic, he became unwittingly the founder of the Augustinian order, which gave the reformer Martin Luther³⁰ to the world. He wore the black dress of the Eastern coenobites, with a cowl and a leathern girdle. He lived almost entirely on vegetables, and seasoned the common meal with reading or free conversation, in which it was a rule that the character of an absent person should never be touched. That rule was engraved on the table.

St. Augustine's ministry extended far beyond his diocese. He was the intellectual head of the North African and the entire Western Church of his time. He took active interest in all theological and ecclesiastical questions. He was the champion of the orthodox doctrine against Manichean, Donatist and Pelagian. In him was concentrated the whole polemic power of the Catholic church of the time against heresy and schism. In him it won the victory over them.

The evening part of St. Augustine's life was troubled by increasing infirmities of body and by the unspeakable

³⁰ Philip Schaff, op.cit., p. 5.

wretchedness which the barbarian Vandals spread over his country in their victorious invasion, destroying cities, and churches without mercy, and even besieging the fortified city of Hippo. Yet he faithfully persevered in his work. The last ten days of his life was in close retirement, in prayers and tears and repeated reading of the penitential Psalm, which he had caused to be written on the wall over his bed. Thus, with an act of penitence he closed his life, on the 8th of August 430, in the 76th years of his age, in full possession of his faculties, and in the presence of many friends and pupils. He passed gently and peacefully into that eternity to which he had so long aspired and prayed for. This was St. Augustine's prayer:³¹

Lord's Jesus, may I know myself, may I know Thee?
 May I wish nothing outside Thee.
 Let me hate myself that I may love Thee.
 May I humble myself so that I may praise Thee.
 May I think nothing except Thee.
 May I mortify myself so that I may live in Thee.
 Whatever may befall me, may I accept it all from
 Thee.
 May I knock myself down so that I may follow Thee.
 May I always wish to follow Thee.
 May I fly away from myself and take refuge in Thee,
 so that I may become worthy to be defended by
 Thee.
 May I be afraid of myself, so that I may fear Thee,
 so that I may be numbered among Thy elect.
 May I distrust myself so that I may trust in Thee.
 May I wish to obey for Thy sake.
 May I be enticed to nothing save Thee!

³¹ Anthony Elenjmittam, op.cit., p. 121.

May I become poor for Thy sake!
 Look at me so that I may love Thee.
 Call me so that I may see Thee,
 And be with Thee for ever,
 Blessed for all eternity. Amen!

St. Augustine had no earthly property except his library, which he bequested to the Church. But his works will never die. His insights and philosophy fell like a living seed into the soil of Europe and produced abundant fruits in nations and countries under the sun. The fact that I am working on him in our age is also an indication of the truth. I trust, many more will come forward in the future too.

St. Augustine and Scepticism

Scepticism was one of the philosophical problem St. Augustine wrestled with before his conversion. He was disillusioned with the sceptical thought, and he took this philosophy seriously for a time, agreeing with them, "No truth can be comprehended by man".³² But after his conversion, his problem was no longer whether man can attain certainty, but rather how to attain it. He therefore, sought to answer the sceptics or refute the sceptics. In the Contra Academicos, St. Augustine shows that man knows truths with certainty, such as the principle of contradiction and his own existence. St. Augustine says that human reason is

³² Samuel Enoch Stumpf, Socrates to Sartre: A History of Philosophy, (McGraw-Hill Book Co., N.Y., 1982), p. 133.

absolutely certain of the principle of contradiction. We know that a thing cannot be both be and not be at the same time. Using this very principle, we can be certain, for example, that there is either one world or many worlds. What we know here is that both alternative cannot be true. It meant for St. Augustine that man's mind is not lost in uncertainty.

St. Augustine further says that even the sceptics would have to admit that the act of being mistaken is itself a form of certainty. No one can be mistaken about his own existence because this act itself is a proof of existence. Here, then, is another certainty, the certainty that I exist, for if I am mistaken, I must exist. Whatever else he may be mistaken about, he cannot be mistaken that he is mistaken. In his The City of God, St. Augustine³³ argues:

I am certain that I am, that I know that I am. In the face of these truths, the quibbles of the sceptics lose their force. If they say; "What if you are mistaken?" - well, if I am mistaken, I am. For, if one does not exist, he can by no means be mistaken. Therefore, I am, if I am mistaken. Because, therefore, I am, if I am mistaken, how can I be mistaken that I am, since it is certain that I am, if I am mistaken?

³³ St. Augustine, The City of God, Edited by Vernon J. Bourke (Image Books, Doubleday, NY, et al., 1958), p. 236.

And because, if I could be mistaken, I would have to be the one who is mistaken, therefore, I am most certainly not mistaken in knowing that I am....

To object, as the sceptic did, that a person could sleep and only while dreaming that he sees things or is aware of himself, did not seem to St. Augustine a formidable argument. In this regard, St. Augustine argues that "whether he be asleep or awake, he lives". These truths stand without fear in the face of the arguments of the Academics. Unlike Rene Descartes, who formulated a similar argument in his classic principle of Cogito, "Cogito ergo sum: I think, therefore, I am" and then proceeded to use it as a foundation for his system of philosophy, St. Augustine was content merely to derive from the fact of being mistaken, a refutation of the sceptics' basic premise. In this way, St. Augustine vigorously combats the scepticism and probabilism of the New Academy, which advocates that man can never reach the truth but can at best attain probability. In his Contra Academicos, 3:16, which was a treatise on this philosophical problem, St. Augustine indicates that Scepticism is false because its consequences in the moral field are disastrous:

... if the norm is to follow the probable, then adultery is not allowable for some but allowable for others.... Hence adultery, homicide, sacrilege and every kind of wrong doing become licit, and every foundation of morals is destroyed.

Christian Philosophy

What are the problems to be discussed? The problems are philosophical problems, particularly tackled by St. Augustine. This thought lead us to search out first, the concept of philosophy on one hand, and Christian Philosophy, St. Augustine being a Christian, on the other.

What then, is, Philosophy? An answer to this question, which can satisfy all, can hardly be given. The difficulty arises because philosophers differ among themselves as regard the nature of philosophy. S. C. Daniel³⁴ has rightly pointed out the difficulty. He says,

Different philosophers have variously defined the nature of philosophy. There is no agreement among the philosophers as to what is philosophy. This disagreement arises because philosophers think about every thing, including philosophy. Indeed, philosophers are delighted by their disagreements. There are other reasons as well, which make it difficult to provide a 'universal definition' of philosophy.

Looking at the word itself, 'Philosophy' comes from a Greek word: 'philos', meaning love and 'sophia' meaning wisdom or knowledge or truth. Philosophy, therefore, means 'love of wisdom or knowledge or truth'. A philosopher, therefore, means "lover of wisdom" or "knowledge or truth".

³⁴ S. C. Daniel, "Folklore and Philosophy", Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, NEHU Pub., Vol. IX, No. I, Jan-March, 1991, p. 7.

According to S. C. Daniel,³⁵ Plato distinguishes philosopher from non-philosopher. This distinction is based on the distinction between knowledge and belief ... according to Plato, philosopher is one who possesses knowledge or wisdom while non-philosopher is one who is in the realm of belief only. We can further ask, knowledge of what? or study of what? The answer is, it includes all studies. For now, as per the various fields open before us, I would like to propose the following areas, namely, the principles of reasoning (logic); the study of beauty and art (aesthetics); the study of moral value, right and wrong (ethics); the study of knowledge (epistemology); the study of value (axiology); the study of reality including transcendent reality (metaphysics). Although it may not be exhaustive, I like a working definition of philosophy suggested by Ed. L. Miller,³⁶ according to which: "Philosophy is the attempt to think rationally and critically about the most important questions."

As regards the genesis of its usage, the word "Philosophy" was coined or at least first given by the Greek philosopher. Pythagoras, in the sixth century B.C., who

³⁵ S.C. Daniel, "Plato's Distinction Between Knowledge and Belief: A Philosophical Investigation", Khasi Studies, Vol. VIII, (Shillong, July 1994), p. 100.

³⁶ Ed. L. Miller, Questions That Matters: An Introduction to Philosophy, (McGraw-Hill Bk. Co., NY, 1984), p. 15.

spoke of himself as a "philosophos" or "lover of wisdom". After that we find the term and its derivatives knocking about in every Greek to indicate a love of thinking about things and the possession of a thoughtful and reflective attitude toward life in general. It was Plato, however, who gave a specific and technical meaning, when he described the "philosopher" as one whose attention was fixed on reality rather than on appearance, and whose characteristic interest lay grasping the essential being and the nature of things.

What about the concept of Christian philosophy? In this regard, although there may be different opinions, we can say that there is what we call Christian philosophy. Writing the introduction of Louis Bogliolo's Philosophical Anthropology, Sebastian Karotemprel³⁷ says,

They (Aristotelian-Augustinian-Thomastic insights into reality) also broadly constitute what has been called Christian Philosophy because they form part of the Christian tradition of interpretation of reality and are the natural foundations for God's historical and saving Revelation to man.

Looking back at the history of the world, we come to know that the Middle Ages mark the triumph of the Christian

³⁷ Louis Bogliolo, Philosophical Anthropology: A Complete Course in Scholastic, Vol. I., Trans. by Noel Chin, ed. by Sebastian Karotemprel (Sacred Heart Theo. College, Shillong, India, 1984), pp. v-vi.

faith. It is the epoch in which the Church converted all Europe to Christ's faith. In the name of Christ the Church established a profound spiritual, cultural, and political unity for the people living within and without Rome's ancient boundaries. A new society was born, a society basing its juridical statutes not on the Twelve Tablets of the Kings of Rome, but on the Gospel of Christ. For this very reason the medieval society is called respublica Christiana.³⁸ The public placed a strongly Christian imprint in all their manifestations of life, whether laws and customs, art and literature, music and poetry, education and morals, and more. The greatest thinkers of this period elaborated a general perspective on things by taking principles directly from the Bible. This is exemplified in St. Augustine, St. Anselm, St. Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Albert the Great, Dun Scotus and many others. Their system of thought is called Christian philosophy. Some of these philosophers take up concepts like God, Trinity, Creation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Salvation, Eternal Life, Second Coming of Christ, Judgement and the like.

It is a fact that certain central problems of philosophy are rooted, or not only rooted but also originated in Christian philosophy. The concept of the origin of the

³⁸ Battista Mondin, op.cit., p. 1.

world, the concept of God, the concept of man, the question of life after death, the concept of soul, the relation of faith and reason, the concept of morality and so on were the philosophical problems of men even before St. Augustine. St. Augustine had dealt with many of these problems during his time. The works that he has accomplished during his life, which we can even learn today, attested the truth without needing further explanation. I am convinced that he has succeeded in providing satisfactory solutions to these problems. And upon reading his works, one's philosophical faculty is awakened. On the other hand, philosophically speaking, nothing is complete or perfect, for one's finding or solution leads to further thinking and finding. The more we philosophize, the more we are aware of how much remains yet to be clarified. There is never an end of new interpretations. Hence, I also propose to do research on St. Augustine and entitled my thesis: "Some Central Problems in St. Augustine's Philosophy". I do not, of course, propose to treat all his works, for it will take one's life, but only those philosophical problems which are centrally important.

In the second chapter entitled, St. Augustine and Plato, I shall try to search out and establish that St. Augustine is very close to Plato. However, this is not the

claim that St. Augustine is either a Platonist or a Neo-Platonist for there are certain differences between the two. I shall bring out the differences and similarities. I will show that there are more points of similarities which testify the truth that St. Augustine is very close to Plato. I shall also discuss St. Augustine's interpretation of Scripture, his concept of Faith and Reason, Creation, Illumination, Numbers and Soul.

In the third chapter, I shall endeavour to state and explain the Fundamental Principles of Christianity and St. Augustine's interpretation of them. The fundamental principles Christianity are in the content of the Christian Faith or Credo. I shall explain the Credo and pick up some central problems out of it. In this I would like to include the Immaculate Conception of Christ, which is very fundamental to Christian belief. I would like to take up the Death and Resurrection of Christ, which occupy a central position in the belief-structure of the Christians. I shall also refute the false theories of Christ's resurrection. I shall also deal with the Forgiveness of Sins through God's Grace, the only One Church, the Ascension and the Second Coming of Christ and the Concept of Trinity. I will try to relate and logically cohere all these Fundamental Principles of Christianity.

The final chapter, entitled, St. Augustine and God will examine the following important points to highlight the inextricable relation between God and St. Augustine. The restlessness of Augustine's life without God, the concept of God as Creator, Sustainer, Provider and Redeemer and the attributes of God: the Natural attributes of God that He is a Living Being, a Personal Being, a Spiritual Being, Absolute Being, that is Supreme, Self-Existent, Unity, Immutable, Perfect, Eternal and Immense Being. God is Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent Being. I would also show that the Moral attributes of God consist of Holiness, Righteousness, Love and Truth. Finally, I will endeavour to bring out St. Augustine's arguments for the existence of God. I must also mention here that St. Augustine takes the existence of God for granted. To him, it is a matter of self-evident principle. It is like an axiom in mathematics which does not require any further proof. However, I believe he does have some proofs and I will discuss those proofs.

Conclusion

In the first chapter entitled, Introduction, I have highlighted the following important points. 1. I have explicated the title of the thesis. 2. I have brought out the importance and relevance of St. Augustine's philosophy. 3. I have given a brief account of St. Augustine as a man,

and his conversion to Christianity. 4. I have dealt with St. Augustine as a sceptic. 5. I have tried to establish that St. Augustine can be considered as a Christian philosopher. 6. I have given the general structure of the whole thesis.

Explicating the title of the thesis, Some Central Problems in St. Augustine's Philosophy, I have pointed out that the word central means principal, chief, dominant or core. I also mean that from something central, other related things proceed. I have discussed some central problems, and not all, in St. Augustine's philosophy. A problem here means a question proposed for solution or discussion. I have identified certain philosophical problems which St. Augustine seeks to improve upon, including the problems of scepticism and Christian philosophy.

The importance and relevance of St. Augustine's philosophy cannot be undermined. It has been generally acknowledged that St. Augustine is one of the greatest Christian theologians who tried to support his faith with sound philosophical arguments. It is no exaggeration to say that his philosophy is a synthesis of Christian doctrines and the philosophical systems of Plato and Neo-Platonists. It may be pointed out that all Christians, whatever their denominations may be, accept his authority regarding basic matters

of their faith. His philosophy has influenced the thinking of Martin Luther, Pascal, Descartes, Leibniz and others. In my considered opinion, St. Augustine is, no doubt, a philosophical and theological genius. St. Augustine's works, which also show his permanent significance, have been grouped under the following heads: (i) Philosophical works, (ii) Polemical works, (iii) Exegetical works, (iv) Pastoral works, (v) Theological treatises, (vi) Sermons and Letters, and (vii) Autobiographical writings.

The father of St. Augustine was a pagan and remained so almost till the end of his life. St. Augustine had a rather immoral youthful life. He had an immoral relationship with a concubine and fathered a son. He never married her despite the long standing relationship he had with her. In fact, he took another mistress while in Milan. He was a troubled man, and his young manhood was one of dissolution and waywardness. His mother, Monica played a very significant role in his life. Partly, her constant and fervent prayers resulted in the conversion of St. Augustine when he was thirty-three. His conversion, needless to say is the turning point of his life.

St. Augustine was attracted by the philosophy of Manichees. And this led him to scepticism. But after his conversion he refutes scepticism as follows. Human reason

has certainty about variety of things, especially about the principle of contradiction. We know that a thing cannot be both B and not-B at the same time. St. Augustine further says that even the sceptics would have to admit that the act of doubting is itself a form of certainty.

Is Christian philosophy a philosophy at all? The answer to this important question is highly debatable. Many philosophers, both traditional and modern are of the view that there is no such thing as Christian philosophy. Heidegger goes to the extent of saying that Christian philosophy is a contradictio in terminus. However, I claim that Christian philosophy can be considered as an important branch of philosophy for the following reasons. Christianity is a first order inquiry while Christian philosophy analyses and clarifies the concepts that are involved in Christianity such as Oneness of God, Creation, Grace, Trinity, Immaculate conception of Christ, Crucifixion, Death, Resurrection, Repentance, Love, Forgiveness of sins, Salvation, Peace, Eternal Life, Second Coming of Christ and the like. St. Augustine is a full-blooded philosopher of the highest order since he analyses and clarifies the central concepts of Christianity. Not only that he validates Christian faith by convincing philosophical arguments.

The general structure or schema of my thesis is as follows. 1. Introduction, 2. St. Augustine and Plato, 3. St. Augustine and the Fundamental Principles of Christianity, and 4. St. Augustine and God. I am well aware of the fact that there are other central problems in St. Augustine's philosophy as well. But, I am constrained to delimit the parameters of my thesis for obvious reasons.

Chapter II

ST. AUGUSTINE AND PLATO

ST. AUGUSTINE AND PLATO

It is generally accepted that St. Augustine is closer to Plato than to Aristotle. However, I would not try to substantiate this claim. I would rather try to show that St. Augustine is very close to Plato. Augustine's interpretation of the Scripture was guided by the main theories of Plato and Neo-Platonists. But, this is not to claim that St. Augustine is either a Platonist or Neo-Platonist since some of the doctrines of Platonist and Neo-Platonist are incompatible with Christian belief. To cite a few, Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine does not believe in creation from pre-existent matter, nor does it believe in the pre-existence of the soul and the doctrine of emanation. Nevertheless, ideas could be modified and be used in Christian philosophy by taking help from Platonic and Neo-Platonic sources. And that was what St. Augustine did for his philosophy and that is why he is very close to Plato.

Plato was a student of Socrates and the leading spokesman for Socrates' ideas. He was shocked by Socrates'

execution and dedicated his life to developing and spreading his philosophy. In 385 B.C. he set up the 'Academy' to educate the future leaders of Athens in morality and philosophy in general. Plato was justly regarded as a philosopher because his method, for the most part, was to proceed to his conclusion by rational argument based on premises self-evident from observation, experience and thought. For him, it was the mark of a philosopher to move from the particular to the general, from the perception of the senses to the abstract knowledge of the mind. Forms or Ideas, as he called Universals, play a fundamental role in most of his thought and, through his different treatments of them, one tendency remain constant. The Forms are considered to exist in reality; and the particular things which can be perceived by the senses are held to depend, in some way on the Forms for being what they are. To Plato, what really is must be changeless, otherwise it is not something, but is always becoming something else. All the objects which are perceived by the senses can be shown to be capable of change: what, then really is? Plato could answer confidently that the Forms are unchanging and unchangeable, and so really are. Consequently, they are the object of true knowledge.

As regards creation of the universe, many argued from the order and beauty of the Universe to the existence

of a deity who created it. Plato's theory moves in the opposite direction. The world of becoming, which we experience with our senses, must have been made by a maker who really is. Moreover, because the maker is good, he must have made the world as good as possible. What has intelligence is better than what lacks it, and intelligence can only be present in a soul. The world, therefore, must have been made like a single living creature, with intelligence in its soul; and it must have been copied from an intelligible living creature. The maker is described as making the World-Soul. In developing this metaphor, Plato expounds his cosmology, a subject on which he continues when he describes the world's body, which is fitted to the soul and woven into it. The Timaeus, one of Plato's dialogues includes a description of the process by which the world was made. This provides a physical account of the universe in the same way as the earlier part of the dialogue provided a cosmological account.

Why was it the Timaeus translated into Latin and preserved for the early Middle Ages? It was not merely the result of chance. The Timaeus was the most popular of Plato's dialogues in antiquity; it was commented on at length by many of Plato's followers. There was another translation of it by Cicero. As a result, the early Middle Ages was

the beneficiary or the 'victim' of the philosophy of Plato. But how did the influence take place?

The influence comes from Platonism to Neo-Platonism. The most intelligent of Plato's disciple was Aristotle. He strongly disagreed with his teacher's theories. He was the tutor of Alexander (who later on became the "Great"). He read Plato's books in order to criticise his philosophy. Thus, much of his efforts was directed towards showing that Plato's arguments from the existence of immutable Ideas were baseless. Aristotle had only a few direct followers and their bearing on the Middle Ages is negligible. Both Aristotle's philosophy and his logic had influence in and through the exponents of Platonism. But, whereas the Platonists followed much of Aristotle's logical teaching faithfully, the effort of their adaptations of his metaphysics was to strengthen Plato's thought. Aristotle grants the transcendence, which he denied to Plato's Ideas, to the soul: Intellect (nous). He treats the Intellect as immortal and not bound to the body. When his theory of cause and effect requires that he postulates an ultimate, unchanging principle of the universe - he identifies this as an intellect.

For Plotinus, the Forms, which are identified with the Intellect (Nous) are only the second highest stage of

reality. The highest principle of reality must be absolutely simple and unitary. Above the Intellect there must be the One. The One has not merely true being like Intellect, but unlimited being. Plotinus can even say that the One is beyond being, not finite being. Intellect proceeds from the One without its production in any way affecting its source. In like manner, Soul (Psyche), the lowest level of the intelligible world, is produced by Intellect. The concept owes something to the World-Soul of the Timaeus of Plato. The One, Intellect and Soul thus constitute the three levels of Plotinus' reality or hypotases.

Like Plato, Plotinus arrives through speculations, which are philosophical, at conclusions which come near to being religious. Concepts originally developed by Plotinus reached the early Middle Ages in three main ways, namely, first, through secular handbooks which show the influence of Porphyry; second, through the Greek Christian writers; and third, ~~through~~ the Latin writer Boethius, who followed the Neo-Platonism of Porphyry successfully, and also through the Latin Fathers especially St. Augustine who carefully read Plotinus and Porphyry.

St. Augustine's God and the God of Neo-Platonists seem very close. The Neo-Platonist describe God as incorporeal, immutable, infinite and the source of all things.

In his The City of God, St. Augustine devotes a good deal of space to praising Platonism above other non-Christian beliefs. He speculates about whether Plato could have had some knowledge of the Hebrew Scripture and suggests that Neo-Platonist talk, though in a confused way, of the Trinity. Their God is, he considers, not merely similar to the true and living God, but the same. Yet, the Platonist cannot reach Him. They know where to go, but not know how to go there. In his spiritual biography, The Confessions, St. Augustine¹ describes how he himself was led towards Christianity by reading books of the Platonists:

You procured for me certain books of the Platonists that had been translated out of the Greek into Latin. In them I read, not indeed in these words but much the same thought, enforced by many varied arguments, that 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him nothing was made. What was made, in Him is life, and life was the light of men. And the light shines in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Etienne Gilson² also writes the first contact of St. Augustine with the Neo-Platonist and Plotinus in the following way:

¹ St. Augustine, The Confessions, Trans. John K. Ryan, (Image Books, Doubleday, New York, 1960), p. 168.

² Etienne Gilson, God and Christian Philosophy, (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1974), p. 44.

The first epoch making contact between Greek philosophical speculation and Christian religious belief took place when ... the young Augustine began to read the works of some Neo-Platonists, particularly the Enneads of Plotinus.

St. Augustine, therefore, sees the workings of providence in the fact that he became acquainted with Platonism before his conversion to Christianity. Had he discovered Platonists' books only after he had joined the Church, he might have thought that they alone could have taught him what he had learned from the Christian faith. But his experience showed him that they could not. The Platonists knew nothing of Christ; and, in accepting the truth of the Incarnation, St. Augustine implies, the believer in Christ does much more than add another detail to Platonic doctrine, he reverses the very structure of philosophical speculation. For the Platonist, the nature of the One and the real, intelligible structure of the universe are discoveries made as the result of intensive intellectual speculation. For Plotinus' successors, this speculation might have been learnt from authority rather than based on active reasoning. Its results were nonetheless the secret reward of the philosophers. For St. Augustine, God had taken on human flesh, in the person of Christ. He had preached to people and had left His Gospel even for the simplest man to understand.

St. Augustine made use of Neo-Platonism even after he became a Christian. He did not need to have the authority of Plato or Plotinus to tell him the structure of the universe. As a Christian, he knew it. St. Augustine knew that certain central ideas in Neo-Platonism were false, because they are contradicting his faith, for example, re-incarnation, the uncreated status of matter, the almost entirely negative view of the human body and the created material world. But St. Augustine also found that his own thought could profitably take two things from that of Neo-Platonists. On the one hand, certain individual concepts which, detached from their place within Plotinian system, could be used to explain aspects of the Christian universe. On the other hand, some themes of argument, although not necessary in order to confirm revealed truth, could help the Christian better to understand what he has already believed. Karl Jaspers' view³ in this connection is noteworthy. He says,

He (St. Augustine) transferred Plato's Demiurge, who made the world from matter of space into a Biblical Creator, who called it forth from void, transferred the Ideas into thoughts of God from whom the Logos emanated, replaced self-liberation through thinking by redemption from the original sin through grace.

³ Karl Jaspers, The Great Philosophers, (Rupert Hart Davis, Soho Square, London, 1962), p. 173.

St. Augustine understands the relations between the three Plotinian hypotases, that is the One, the Intellect and the Soul, in a sense nearer to the Christian idea of Creation. But, his God is not beyond being, like Plotinus' One, but rather true being, on which all created things depend. St. Augustine has little use for the World-Soul or for Soul as the third hypotasis. However, he gains from Plotinus' speculations by using them in his De Trinitate, as part of his plan to discuss the concept of Trinity through its analogies in the human soul. The Ideas or Forms are held by St. Augustine to be the thoughts in God's mind. This may suggest that, as in Plotinus, they are to be identified with the Intellect, which is the second hypotasis.

St. Augustine understand that human beings cannot elevate themselves by moral and intellectual effort to mystical union with God. This is because the human will is in bondage to itself. Self-love obstructs the human will from proper devotion to God. Only God's love can awaken the human will so that it yearns for the love of God, which is the only means to salvation. Gilson asserts that St. Augustine owed almost all the matter and technique of his philosophy to Plotinus, but that he drew from the Bible such basic Christian beliefs as those which compelled him to make inner changes which separated him from the Plotinian programme

of salvation. St. Augustine went on to develop a philosophical theology which is the first and best and most original contribution to Christian thought.

St. Augustine's fondness for arguments on themes common place to Neo-Platonists are seen in De libero arbitrio, De ordine and the Soliloquia. The direction of such arguments is to move from self-evident premises to a knowledge of immaterial things and thence to the affirmation of God's existence. For a Neo-Platonist, a philosophical argument is intended to reveal some important truth about the structure of the universe and it is the conclusion that is important. St. Augustine, however, knew the most important conclusions about the structure of the intelligible world from his faith. The importance of argument lays for him in the process of reasoning itself. The earlier works of St. Augustine, with their attention to the logical movement of ideas, their frequent use of dialogue-form, and their simplification of Plotinian concepts, have as much in common with Plato's own writings as Platonists bear so clearly the stamp of a powerful, logical mind.

Although St. Augustine is very close to Plato, mention should be made in passing of Aristotle's Categories, which St. Augustine read at the age of twenty. Though they were not a major influence upon his early thinking, they

did become important later on when he was working out his doctrine of the Trinity. And in any event we are reminded again of the diversity of philosophical influences to which St. Augustine was subjected.

In his The Confessions, St. Augustine asked himself: "What did it profit me that when I was scarcely twenty years old certain writings of Aristotle called The Ten Categories fell into my hands?"⁴ The Categories of Aristotle is one of the most influential books in the history of Philosophy. It is the first of the six treatises on logic making up the collection known as Organum or instrument for philosophical investigation. The other treatises are On Interpretation, the Prior Analytics, the Posterior Analytics, the Topics, and the Sophisticated Arguments.

St. Augustine⁵ further said:

I had gaped at the very name, as if in suspense at a thing somehow magnificent and divine, whenever my teacher, a rhetorician at Carthage, along with others who were considered learned man had praised the works with cheeks bursting and booming in pride. What did it profit me that I read and understood these writings by myself alone? When I conferred with others, who said that they could hardly understand them, although taught by very learned teachers not only by lectures

⁴ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 110.

⁵ Ibid., p. 110.

but also by many diagrams drawn in the dust, they were able to tell me no more than what I had grasped by myself. The book seemed to me to speak clearly enough of substances, such as a man is, and of what are in them, such as a man's figure; of what quality he is; his stature, how many feet tall he is; his relationships, as whose brother he is; where he is placed; when he was born; whether he stands or sits; whether he is shod with shoes or armed; whether he does something or has something done to him; and the innumerable things that are found in these nine categories, of which I have set down some examples, or in the category of substance.

Aristotle worked out his doctrine of categories or predicamenta (predicaments) with great care. Substance is what exists in itself and not in another as in a subject. It is the subject of which certain other things as in a subject. It is the subject of which certain other things are predicated; it is not itself the predicate of some other subject. On the other hand, accidents, in the ordinary course of nature, inhere in a substance are affirmed of it.

Thus, in St. Augustine's illustration, a man is a substantial being, he is a substance. There are certain other realities that can be affirmed of him because he is the subject in which they are found. These are called the nine categories or classes of accidents. They may increase or decrease, or come and go, but as their subject, the man remains substantially the same. Thus, St. Augustine himself

through the course of his life grew in size: an instance of the category of quantity. He acquired certain vicious habits that were in time replaced by virtues. He acquired great skill as a writer and great learning: virtues, vices, skill and the like come under the heading of quality, as do colors and certain aspects of our being. St. Augustine was taught by other men (passion) and he in turn instructed students (action). He existed at different moments (time) and in many places (place). He had countless relations with others: men and other things. He was a son, a brother, a father, a disciple, a master, a priest and a bishop (relation). He was clothed in various ways and equipped with tools or armour at different times (habit), in the sense of wearing a monk's habit or a soldier's uniform). He assumed various positions, such as kneeling in prayer (posture).

The distinction between the substantial or essential and the merely accidental is one of the most important and useful in human thoughts. Failure to know it and use it is often the cause of very gross errors.

There is soul in every individual but its immortality is impossible to Aristotle. St. Augustine believes in the existence and immortality of individual souls. Aristotle also believes that man is to be distinguished from all other objects in nature by the fact that he possesses reason.

Like all other lower forms of life, plants for example, man has vital functions. Also like all animals, he has the power to imagine, remember, to experience desire, pain, pleasure, and the like. But unlike either plants or animals, man has the power to think. His reason is creative. This is the spark of divine in man.

St. Augustine and Scripture

St. Augustine's Interpretation of Sacred Scripture is grounded in faith. Opinion is no longer based on reason alone as such but along with the reason on the Bible or Revealed Scripture. Though at times he gets along without the support of the Bible and arrives independently at his insights in the area of reason, he always returns to it when he is in need of answers to the unanswerable questions that have pressed in upon him in the area of reason. The Scripture became his never failing guide to truth. For him the Bible was the language of revelation that is the source of all truth. The philosophical idea of transcendence was fulfilled by the Biblical idea of God, which transformed speculation into living presence. This is guided by the main themes of Plato and Neo-Platonists.

Reasons and faith are not two separate sources that meet at some point. But reason is in faith and faith in reason. St. Augustine knows of no conflict that can be

resolved only by the surrender of reason. Hence St. Augustine's believing verification of the truth does not start with unequivocal Bible quotations from which dogmas are deduced. Faith, as a living and active presence, is in fact, free in its approach to the Bible as unfathomable depth that remains to be understood. The unphilological and unhistorical methods of interpretation, developed before St. Augustine, made it possible to find almost any tenet of faith in the Bible. For this reason, St. Augustine's writings are sought through with quotations from the Sacred Scripture. The Confessions of St. Augustine are written in the form of prayer, perpetually giving thanks and praising God. In many texts insight is gained through Biblical exegesis or confirmed by quotations from the word of God.

To St. Augustine, there are two things on which all interpretation of Scriptures depends: the mode of ascertaining the proper meaning; and the mode of making known the meaning when it is ascertained. For example, the Lord saith, "whosoever hath, to him shall be given." He will give, then, to those who have; that is to say, if they use freely and cheerfully what they have received, He (the Lord) will add to and perfect His gifts. Besides, the items in the miraculous feeding of the five thousand were only five loaves and two fishes, seven in total number before the

disciple began to distribute them among the hungry people. But, when once they began to distribute them, though the needs of the multitude were satisfied, they filled twelve baskets with the leftover. Just as the bread increased in the very act of breaking it, so those thoughts which the Lord has already vouchsafed to me will be multiplied by His grace as soon as I begin to impart them to others. And in this very work of distribution in which I am engaged, I shall be made to rejoice in a marvellous way.

The fulfilment and the end of the Sacred Scripture is the love of God and our neighbour. Whosoever takes another meaning out of the Scripture than the author intended, goes astray. He is to be corrected. For, if he takes up rashly meaning which the author does not intend, he often falls in with other statements which cannot harmonise with this meaning. "We walk by faith and not by sight", says the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians chapter five verse seven. Faith will begin to fall in the authority of the Scripture and began to shake. If faith fall, love itself will grow cold. For if a man has fallen from faith, he must necessarily fall from love, for he cannot love what he does not believe to exist.

According to Cochrane,⁶ St. Augustine perceived

⁶ C.N. Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, (Oxford University Press, Fair Lawn, N.J., 1968), pp. 474-475.

that to proclaim the historicity of the Bible was not in itself, to provide oneself with a ready made solution for all possible difficulties. For, while the authority of the Scripture was admittedly absolute, its meaning was not always clear. On the contrary it was veiled in enigma, the nature of which was two-fold. (i) The first and most obvious source of difficulty was verbal, since words, as symbols and signs of meaning, occasionally bore a double significance and, in such cases, there was always the danger of getting one's signals mixed. (ii) To the verbal, was added a material ambiguity, arising from the fact that teaching even with regard to fundamentals appeared to differ in different books, especially of the Old and New Testament. In some respects, the divergence was so vast as to suggest an absolute relativity of doctrine. It was, indeed, this fact which, already in the second century, had provoked the heresy of Marcion, whose distinction between the God of Justice (of the Old Testament) and the God of Love (of the New Testament) was so sharp that it virtually nullified the value of the Bible as a continuous revelation of the Divine. In Augustine's day problems of interpretation found expression in puzzles such as that propounded by Manichean rationalism: What was God doing in the time before creation? It was easy enough to reply with the Jibe (mock/jeer): He was preparing hell for those who pry into mysteries.⁷ But as for St. Augustine,⁷

⁷ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 286.

... it is one thing to see the objection; it is another to make a joke of it. I (Augustine) do not answer in this way. I would rather respond, 'I do not know' concerning what I do not know rather than say something for which man inquiring about such profound matters is laughed at, while the one giving a false answer is praised ... I boldly say, 'Before God made heaven and earth, He did not make anything....'

St. Augustine was not content until he had found a way of answering such questions seriously. In so doing, he developed a new and distinctive basis for interpretation. To begin with, he recognized that words, as instruments of expression, could operate no less effectively to embalm, than to enshrine, truth. It was thus apparent that he could not accept and defend in a literal sense every statement of Scripture. For the objection of literalism St. Augustine invoked the authority of St. Paul: the letter killeth; and, in throwing it overboard, he doubtless owed something to the example of Ambrose. But he did not escape from the pitfalls of literalism in order to lose himself in the common place of allegory. For he perceived that, however, obscure and difficult to comprehend, the purpose of words was nonetheless to convey meaning; and, in order to arrive at this meaning, it was necessary to understand the true significance of the text. Wittgenstein⁸ agrees with this position. He says:

⁸ L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, Trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Basic Black Well, Oxford, 1974), p. 2e.

... the individual words in language name objects - sentences are combinations of such names... in this picture of language we find the roots of the following idea: Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands.

To St. Augustine the real purpose of Scripture is to reveal the means whereby we may attain to a just and happy life. In this sense it is indubitably apocalyptic (revelation). It thus points unerringly to a future which includes 'the conversion of the Jews, the reign of Antichrist, the second coming of Christ, the last judgement, separation of the good from the evil, the conflagration and renewal of the world.' St. Augustine affirms that we are bound to believe and will certainly come to pass. But how and in what manner of order, is a matter of experience at the time rather than the mind of man to apprehend fully at the present. These, indeed, are not events to be forecast by any sort of scientific provision; they are value judgements. The Scripture is replete with such value judgements, the nature of which may be illustrated by reference to texts like that of John 1:1-14, "In the beginning was the word... there was a man, sent from God, whose name was John..." In the latter pronouncement, the words, "there was a man ... whose name was John" constitute a statement of fact. As such, they are subject to the methods of verification which

is conventional to Science. But Science, though it may serve to verify the fact, can in no way establish the value. "Those who hold it do so as a consequence of faith; for those who do not hold it by faith, it remains a matter either of doubt or of contemptuous disbelief" (De Trin. 13:1).

Faith and Reason

To St. Augustine, "Believe in order that you may understand", rather than "understand in order that you may believe" expresses his fundamental attitude that Faith precedes and understanding follows. But this does not exclude completely sound arguments depending on reason alone for some of the propositions initially believed. On the contrary, St. Augustine is convinced that reason can establish the need for belief and can elucidate and even establish some of what is initially believed.

In his treatise, St. Augustine⁹ outlined his programme to find wisdom as follows:

Let me tell you my whole programme briefly. Whatever may be the nature of human wisdom, I see I have not yet perceived it. But though I am now in my thirty-third year, I don't think I ought to despair of something reaching it. So I have turned away from all the things that moral men consider to be good, and I have set myself the goal of serving

⁹ As quoted in Medieval Philosophy by Armand A. Maurer (Random House, New York, 1964), p. 4.

the pursuit of this wisdom. The arguments of the Academics (that is, the skeptics) used to hold me back seriously from such an undertaking; in the present disputation I have, as it seems to me, defended myself sufficiently against those arguments. Furthermore, everyone agrees that we are impelled to learning by the double urge of authority and reason. From this moment forward it is my resolve not to depart from the authority of Christ, for I find none that is stronger. However, I must follow after this with the greatest subtlety of reason. For I am so disposed now that I have an unbounded desire to apprehend truth not only by believing it, but also by understanding it. In the meantime, I am confident that among the Platonists I shall find what is not opposed to the teachings of our religion.

In the cited programme of St. Augustine, we find two guides to wisdom, namely, the authority of Christ and human reason. St. Augustine's own personal experience convinced him that human reason, left to itself, is not enough. Faith in Christ must come first to prepare the way for understanding. He was much impressed by the Isaiah 7:9, "Unless you have believed, you will not understand" or "nisi credideritis, non intelligetis". Once we have accepted the truths of faith, reason intervenes to help understand better what we believe. In a later work St. Augustine defined "to believe" as "to think with assent". Therefore, the act of believing is itself an act of thinking and part of a content of thought. After his conversion in Christ, then, reasoning and understanding were for St. Augustine, no longer dependent, alter-

native route to faith. They still had their work, but now within a new setting and a new foundation. And, progress in understanding, founded on faith and proceeding within its framework, was part of the growth of faith itself.

But what is faith? Reason is inferential and mediate, while faith is intuitive and immediate. Faith is verifiable in experience only and it is strictly private and subjective. As far as St. Augustine was concerned, it is the function of faith to accept what is not yet seen. The Bible says:

Now faith is the assurance of the things we hope for, being the proofs of things we do not see and the conviction of their reality, perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses.... By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that what we see was not made out of things which are visible Prompted by faith Noah, being forewarned by God concerning events of which as yet there was no visible sign, took heed and diligently and reverently constructed and prepared an ark for the deliverance of his own family. By this faith which relied on God, he passed judgment and sentence on the world's in belief and became an heir and possessor of righteousness that relation of being right into which God puts the person who has faith. (Hebrews 11:1,3,7)

Faith is 'trust' too. To trust in someone is to have faith in him. We have an implicit faith in the integrity and proficiency of a doctor, consequently trust and follow his prescriptions. In like manner, when we have faith in some authority we trust and follow whatever we are told.

Faith is a 'tentative belief'. We have beliefs in so many propositions which have not been verified, but which we know can be verified. For instance, we believe in millions of suns or stars.

Faith is 'belief in unverifiable'. The unverifiabes are ridiculous to the empiricists and the rationalists. However, for example, Christian's belief in the Immaculate Conception of Jesus Christ, cannot be verified, since there is no way to do so.

What I want to draw at this point is that, religious faith involves 'faith is trust', 'faith is tentative belief' and 'faith is belief in unverifiable'. Whether it is in the field of intellectual, moral or religious faith is simply unavoidable and indispensable. Even human societies cohere basically because of mutual faith and trust. St. George once said that, if the work of God could be comprehended by reason, it would be no longer wonderful, and faith would have no merit if reason provided proof.

St. Augustine's belief does not always imply supernatural faith. There is an interesting passage in which he distinguishes three kinds of objects of belief called tria genera credibilium. First of all, some things are always believed and never understood. We have events in human history

that are not witnessed by the believer. Secondly, there are other things that are understood as soon as they are believed. These are items evident to human reason like mathematical truths. Thirdly, there are things that must be first believed and then later understood. These are divine truths, matters of religious faith.

What moves us to believe is not that fact that revealed truths appear as true and intelligible in the light of our natural reason: we believe, "Because of the authority of God Himself who reveals them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived." So "that the submission of our faith might nevertheless be in accordance with reason, God willed that external proofs of His revelation should be joined to the internal helps of the Holy Spirit." Thus the miracles of Christ and the saints, prophecies, the Church's growth and holiness, adapted to the intelligence of all"; they are "motives of credibility", which show that the assent of faith is "by no means a blind impulse of the mind", as the Bible¹⁰ says.

Thus faith is certain. It is more certain than all human knowledge because it is founded on the very Word of God who cannot lie. To be sure, revealed truths can seem

¹⁰ Mark 16:20.

obscure to human reason and experience, but the certainty that the divine light gives is greater than that which the light of the natural reason gives.

Faith seeks understanding. It is intrinsic to faith that a believer desires to know better the One in whom he has put his faith, and to understand better what He has revealed. A more penetrating knowledge will in turn call for a greater faith, increasingly set afire by love. The grace of faith opens the eyes of one's heart to a lively understanding of the contents of revelation. The same Spirit constantly perfects faith by His gifts, so that revelation may be more and more profoundly understood. Thus, in the words of St. Augustine,¹¹ "I believe, in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe".

Why does St. Augustine consider that faith or belief is prior to reason or understanding? One reason is that reason is fallen. Reason is not in the state it was originally created. It has been distorted by sin. It cannot attain the wisdom whose object is God because it has been turned away by pride from eternal things to the changing things of the senses. Further, we who have deformed the image of God in ourselves cannot reform it; only God who made it

¹¹ Sermon 43:7.9.

can remake it. Reason, therefore, requires help from above. In other words, faith must transform the heart before reason can be restored to health or normalcy.

St. Augustine continues to say that natural reason without the assistance of faith is able to attain certain rational knowledge. For instance, the knowledge of mathematical and ethical truths may be acquired without faith. Natural reason may even attain a kind of knowledge about God. St. Augustine recalls that the followers of Plato entertain such an idea of God as to admit that in Him are to be found the cause of existence, the ultimate reason for the understanding, and the end in reference to which the whole world is to be regulated. But this knowledge is imperfect and ineffective. St. Augustine points out that in spite of this imperfect knowledge of God among the Greek philosophers, they did not renounce polytheism. Thus, according to St. Augustine, reason cannot have sight until it yields to commitment of faith; to put in another way, faith must awaken reasoning or understanding.

What St. Augustine has in mind is faith culminating in understanding. And this is the basis of his famous formula "fides quaerens intellectum", or "faith seeking understanding". To believe in God is not the end of man; it is eternal life to know God. We begin in faith and we are made perfect

by understanding. Faith, therefore, is the prerequisite for the full understanding of God's revelation according to St. Augustine. However, a partial understanding of the basis of the Gospel is of course necessary before one can believe it. The full understanding of Christian truth is thus, subsequent to faith. He further says that Faith is understanding's step and Understanding is faith's reward.

How is Faith Understanding's step? St. Augustine answers that faith initiates one to knowledge. Faith in God's revelation is prior to human reason. No one ever believes something before he has some understanding of what he is to believe. In fact, he asserted that no one should believe in a revelation which has not been first judged by good reason, to be worthy of belief. To this effect, to believe a "square" as a "circle" or to understand a "circle" as a "square" would be a false judgement for a square is different from a circle. It is an accepted truth of geometry that a square is a plane figure bounded by four straight lines, whilst a circle is a round figure. The purpose and ground of faith should not be such false judgements or delusions but a reality.

Understanding is Faith's Reward. The reward for accepting God's revelation by faith is that one has a fuller and more complete understanding of truth than he could have

otherwise. Indeed, taking from revelation insight into the nature of unchangeable God and man's mutable mind, one can devise a valid proof for God's existence, which borrows no premise from God's revelation. We can show the argument like this:

- (a) My mind understands some immutable truths, such as $7 + 3 = 10$.
- (b) But my mind is not immutable.
- (c) A mutable mind cannot be the ground of Immutable Truths.
- (d) Hence, there must be an Immutable Mind, that is God.

Finally, I would like to point out that although Faith is before or above Reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between the two. Since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith and has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind, God cannot deny Himself, nor can truth ever contradict truth. Consequently, methodical research in all branches of knowledge, provided it is carried out in a truly scientific manner and does not override moral laws, can never conflict with the Faith, because the things of the world and the things of faith are derived from the same God. Knowing this relation, TeSelle¹² writes:

¹² Eugene TeSelle, Augustine The Theologian, (Burns and Oates, London, 1970), pp. 74-75.

Revelation (belief, faith) and true philosophy (reason, understanding) converse not only in a common source but in a common goal.... It is in connection with this practical task, that Augustine speaks of the indispensable role of authority and the fruitfulness of philosophy Authority is the doorway that must be entered first; but it leads to the further treasures of rational knowledge, and this is the goal aimed by revelation itself.

Hirschberger says that the sharp differentiation between faith and reason implied in Kant's statement, "I had to push reason aside in order to make room for faith", was not a subject open to discussion during the Patristic period. There was no fundamental distinction made between faith and reason. This is clearly shown by examining them logically and in accordance with the theory of knowledge. The divine Logos includes the philosophical Logos. Hirschberger¹³ quoted H. Meyer, and I consider it very appealing:

A hard and fast distinction between faith and reason was foreign to the whole Patristic period as well as to St. Augustine.... The scholars did not seek such division; they did not think it was either desirable or any longer possible for Christian faith.

Creation

Let us now turn to St. Augustine and Plato concerning the world. How did the world in which you and I live

¹³ Johannes Hirschberger, The History of Philosophy, Vol. I, Trans. Anthony N. Fuerst, (Bruce Pub. Co., Milwaukee, 1958), p. 300.

come into being? Was it created or has it existed forever? Who or what made it, and how was it made? Before his conversion, St. Augustine had conceived the world, man included, as emanation of God, a fragment of God, "frustrum de illo corpore", of the immense divine body: "... I thought that You, O Lord God of truth, were immense shining body, and I a particle of that body."¹⁴ However, after his conversion, he finds the answer in the Bible, the Revealed Truth or Scripture. Believing what the Scripture says St. Augustine accepted that the world was created by God. The Scripture does tell us in Genesis chapter one verse one: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth".

St. Augustine's distinctive doctrine on creation was that God created the world out of nothing, Creatio ex nihilo, by His free act. All things then owe their existence to God. In the Plotinian emanation, the world is depicted as proceeding in some way from God. But for Plotinus God does not act freely, but rather necessitates nature, the Good necessarily diffusing itself. The doctrine of free creation out of nothing is not to be found in Neo-Platonism, except one or two pagan thinkers who had most probably been influenced by Christian thinking. St. Augustine may have

¹⁴ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 112.

thought that Plato had taught creation out of nothing in time. But it is improbable that Plato really meant to imply this, in spite of Aristotle's interpretation of the Timaeus. However, whatever St. Augustine may have thought about Plato's view on the issue, he himself clearly states the doctrine of free creation out of nothing and it is essential to his insistence on the utter supremacy of God and the world's entire dependence on Him. All things owe their being to God. (De lib. arbit, 3:15, 42).

There is, however, a sharp distinction between God and the things He has created. Matter itself is a creature of God. The Forms which He impressed upon matter were in God's mind from the beginning of time, and even before, for God existed before there was any time. Thus, anything that is or ever shall be is a creation of God and must follow His law and will. Even if there were formless matter that was capable of being formed, even this would have its origin in God and would have to be created by Him out of nothing. That matter is created by God and that matter is good, because nothing evil is created by God. As a result, there is an optimism in the thought of St. Augustine in contrast to the pessimism of the Manicheans, who considered matter to be substantially evil, and of the Neo-Platonists who regarded matter as the principle of evil and imperfection.

But suppose that things were made out of some formless matter? Would not this formless matter be independent of God? To this, St. Augustine says, 'Are you speaking of a matter which is absolutely formless or a matter which is formless in comparison with completely formed? If you are talking about 'absolutely formless' then you are speaking of what is equivalent to nothingness'. That out of which God has created all things is what possesses neither species nor form; and this is nothing other than nothing'. Secondly, if, however, you are speaking, of matter which has no completed form, then such matter is not altogether nothing indeed, but, as something, it has what being it has only from God. Wherefore, even if the universe was created out of some formless matter, the very matter was created from something which was wholly nothing.

In The Confessions (1:6,6), St. Augustine identifies this matter with the mutability of bodies and observe that if he could call it 'nothing' or assert that it does not exist, he would do so. But if it is the capacity of receiving forms, it cannot be called absolutely nothing. Again, he remarks in the De vera religione that not only the possession of form but even the capacity to receive form is good, and what is good cannot be absolute nothing. Yet this matter, which is absolutely nothing, is itself the creation of God,

... and he identified the 'unformed matter which God made out of nothing', with the heaven and earth mentioned in the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis of the Bible as the primary creation of God. In other words, St. Augustine is stating that God created out of nothing not absolutely formless 'prime matter', but form and matter together. We should remember that St. Augustine is emphasizing the essential dependence of all creatures on God and the perishable nature of all corporeal creatures, even when once constituted in existence. All have their being from God, but their being is bound up with their changeability and limitations.

Rationes Seminales or 'Seminal Reasons' was a significant and dear theory to St. Augustine, and it has a bearing on the problem of causality. Commenting on Genesis chapter one, St. Augustine asks what Scripture means when it says that the world was created in six days. Was God's creation not complete on the first day? Did He have to add to his original work and perfect it little by little? According to St. Augustine, God created everything at once, although not in the same perfect state. In the beginning some things existed in perfect form, while others were created in embryo or in 'seed', and only later reached their full development. Originally, then, the world was filled with 'seeds' of things to come. "These, St. Augustine calls 'seminal principles'

or 'seminal reasons' or 'rationes seminales' — a notion borrowed from the Stoics through Plotinus," says Copleston.¹⁵ Some thinkers consider this an anticipation of the doctrine of Evolution, according to which one species has evolved from another. But St. Augustine has no notion of evolution whatsoever. His sincere view is that God implanted the seminal principles of each species in matter, so that in the course of time, under favourable circumstances, each might come, as it were, to full flower. "Just as in the seed of a tree are invisibly present all the parts which will later develop of the tree, so from the beginning all the various bodies were present in a germinal fashion."

St. Bonaventure, who maintained the theory of St. Augustine on this point compared the ratio seminalis to the rose-bud, which is not yet actually the rose but will develop into the rose, given the presence of the necessary positive agencies and the absence of negative agencies. In his De Trinitate St. Augustine said: "The world is like a woman heavy with child: it carried within itself the cause of thing which will come to light in the future. Hence all things (of all times) have been created by God." (II:9, 16). To say that, according to St. Augustine, things unfold from their "seminal reasons" is to say that they function in accordance with the laws of nature. Connor¹⁶ also writes:

¹⁵ Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy, Vol.II, (An Image Book, Doubleday, NY, 1985), p. 76.

¹⁶ D.J. O'Connor, A Critical History of Western Philosophy, (The Free Press, Mac. Pub. Co., NY, 1964), p. 96.

All that normal cause of nature is subject to its own normal laws. According to this, all created living things have their determinate inclinations.... From these "seminal reasons" as if from a primordial origin everything that comes about emerges in its own time in due course of events, and having come to its end passes away, each according to its nature.

Looking from a philosophical point of view, the doctrine of 'seminal reasons' has bearing in connection with Causality. Parents are the cause of their children, horses produce horses, still they are unable to introduce new forms into nature. To St. Augustine, all natural forms have been created by God's Intelligence and pre-existed in matter their seminal principles potentially. A created being has no capacity to introduce forms into nature. It can only ignite already existing forms to come into perfect one. For St. Augustine, Pauline doctrine holds good not only in the order of grace but also in nature. Paul¹⁷ said, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." This doctrine shows the greatness and power of God and also emphasizes the frailty and nothingness of the creatures. Thus, with his Rationes Seminales, St. Augustine explained the origin of species, locating their cause in the mind of God,

¹⁷ I Corinthians 3:6-7.

whence comes the seminal principles. Also, St. Augustine thought that he solved a problem in the Scripture, where it is said that God created the world in six days. That God should have to create step by step seemed inconsistent with St. Augustine's view of God. St. Augustine did not interpret 'day' as our day of twenty-four hours, since the sun was made only on the fourth 'day'. Thus, the principle of rationes siminales enables St. Augustine to say that God had created all things at once. He also implanted the seminal principles simultaneously. In due course, as and when favourable conditions come each developed into each full form.

It is not out of place to mention here that St. Augustine made use of number-theme, which goes back to Pythagoreanism. His treatment of number sometimes appears to us as fanciful and even fantastic. In general, he looks on numbers as the principle of order and form, of beauty and perfection, a proposition and a law. Thus the Ideas are the eternal numbers, which unfold themselves in time. The 'seminal reasons' are hidden numbers, whereas bodies are manifest numbers. Just as material number begins from one and ends in a number which is itself an integer, so the hierarchy of beings begins with the Supreme One (God), which brings into existence and is reflected in more or

less perfect unities. This comparison or parallel between mathematical and metaphysical number was derived, of course, from Plotinus.

Why did creation take place? To this question St. Augustine's answer is, "For His own goodness, which would not permit a good creation to remain in nothingness." In De Civ. Dei, 21:21, St. Augustine says, "No better author can there be than God; no better art than His Word; no better cause why, than a good God should make a good creature. And this Plato praised as the justest cause of the world's creation." We can say with John,¹⁸ "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy own pleasure they are and were created".

Of what was it made? As already seen earlier St. Augustine differs from Plato in this regard. For St. Augustine, as a Christian philosopher, there can be no such thing as eternal matter or world. Rejecting the Platonic theory of emanation, St. Augustine advanced the Christian theory of creation out of nothing. In his The Confessions, St. Augustine¹⁹ asks question and answers himself concerning creation as follows:

¹⁸ Revelation 4:11.

¹⁹ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 281.

How did You make heaven and earth?
 What was Your engine for doing this mighty work?
 You did not work as does the human artist,
 who transforms one body into another...
 You spoke ... and these things were made,
 and in Your Word
 You made them.

The 'when' of creation, according to St. Augustine lies in eternity, that is to say, it lies outside time. Time begins only with the creation of the material world. The question, why the world was not created earlier or later thus becomes meaningless. Such a question presupposes, by the use of the terms 'earlier' or 'later', that time was already in existence. If anyone should wish to ask: what would God have done before creation? we would answer: He has prepared a place in hell for those who want to know too much (Conf., 12:12). Or as Martin Luther, leader of Reformation or Protestant Movement translated the original statement into German, which in English is as follows: God sat down behind a hazel bush and made switches to punish those who asked idle questions.

Soul

Among the chief concerns of St. Augustine,²⁰ we may number his interest in the SOUL as one for he said: "I desire with great longing to know God and my soul. Nothing

²⁰ As quoted by Johannes Hirschberger, op.cit., p. 325.

else besides? No, nothing else." (Sol., 1:2,7). Whose soul? What is the Origin of Soul? What is the Soul itself? Is the soul immortal? What is the relation of the Soul to the body?

Our longing to know here is the soul of man. St. Augustine thought of man as a unity. His unity consists in this, that the soul possesses, uses, and governs the body. "The soul is a certain kind of substance, sharing in reason, fitted to rule the body" (De quant. Animae, 13,22). Man is, as a consequence, truly soul; the body is not a constituent part of the composite nor equal to the soul in importance. "Thus, man is a rational soul, which makes use of a mortal and material body" (De Mor. Eccles. Catholicae, 1,27). The Pessimistic note which is still struck by Origin that the soul lives in the body as in a prison was rejected by St. Augustine. The doctrine of man as essentially soul continued to be defended and become through St. Augustine the common heritage of the Christian attitude toward man in general. The Bible in Genesis 1:26-27 records the fact chronologically that man was created on the sixth day by God. In the same book 2:7 gives the details of how it was done: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul".

Like Clement, Origen and other Church Fathers, St. Augustine also sees man as an image of God, "imago Dei". In his De Trinitate, St. Augustine outlines the many aspects in which man resembles God. The resemblance with God, "icon of God" is not erased by Adam's sin, insofar as after the first sin, each man preserved reason and freedom, which are the fundamental characteristics of God likeness. However, the knowledge and will which man currently possesses are no longer accompanied by the effective capacity to do good. Hence, the "imago" has become gravely obscured. In De spiritu et litera, a work very dear to the Medievals, St. Augustine writes:²¹

In the human soul, the disorder of terrestrial passions has damaged the image of God to the point where even its smallest lines have almost been removed. Therefore, it can be correctly said that men, even in the impiety of their life, feel and observe some prescriptions of the law Through the renewal of the pact, one writes in his own heart what had never been completely cancelled by the old sin. Just as through the New Testament is renewed in the minds of believers the same image of God which impiety had not completely destroyed, since man's soul remained essentially reasoning, so likewise the law of God, which has not been completely cancelled in human soul through sin, is certainly renewed through grace.

²¹ Battista Mondin, A History of Medieval Philosophy, (Theological Pub. in India, Bangalore, 1991), p. 90.

The work of the Spirit is to restore in us the image of God, in which we are naturally or originally created. St. Augustine himself states, "I wish to demonstrate, if I succeed, that the words of the Apostle Paul" (2 Corin. 3:6), 'the letter kills, while the Spirit gives'. The "letter" or the law, "kills" because man is incapable of doing good and must be subjected to condemnation. The "Spirit" is the grace which heals man and gives him the capacity to observe the law. Hence, man can obtain eternal life or the image of God.

What is the Soul itself? The phenomenological art both in the consideration and the presentation of his psychological researches helped St. Augustine to arrive at a knowledge of the spirituality of the soul. Everything corporeal has height, breadth and thickness. All psychological acts are without spatial extension. Thus, he concludes that the soul must be immaterial. Another way, he demonstrates the immateriality of the soul: Either the soul can perform its activity (say - willing, thinking, doubting, etc.) without the body, and hence it is spiritual, or the soul is incapable of performing its activity without the body, in which case it is material.

Now, there is at least one case in which the soul has no need for the body - the case in which the soul knows

itself. The spirituality of the soul is then confirmed by what the soul knows of itself. What the soul knows itself, it discovers that it is a substance which lives, remembers, wills, etc. These are all things which do not relate to anything corporeal. Therefore, the soul is spiritual and not material.

Then, Is the Soul Immortal? St. Augustine's answer to this question is that precisely, the Soul is immortal. His discussion of the soul's immortality is found in Book II of the Soliloquies and in the smaller work De immortalitate animae. Basing on the Platonic argument of the relation of the soul with it the Ideas, the basic thought contained in Augustine's proof for the immortality of the soul is the following. Since truth is unchangeable and eternal, and since the human mind is united inseparably to it, the human mind (soul) must also be eternal. The core of the proof is the inseparable union of the mind with truth. This union can never be lacking because nothing can separate the soul from truth. Therefore, truth and the soul is unity, immutable and eternal, and hence the soul is also eternal (De immortalitate animae, Chap. 4-5).

What is the relation of the Soul to the body? According to St. Augustine, Soul and Body are two substances of a different genus — whilst one is spiritual the other

is material. Following the Platonian concept, St. Augustine believes that body is more an instrument of the soul than a substantial element. However, this statement does not prevent man from being a single person. A soul which possesses a body does not make up two persons, but a single person.

The Platonic conception of man is echoed in the Augustinian doctrine of sensation. According to St. Augustine, sensation is an activity performed by the soul using the body as an instrument. Since the soul is superior to the body, it cannot be overpowered by the body, although the soul perceives changes of the body due to external stimuli. This doctrine of St. Augustine, that is psychophysical dualism, was later supported by many medieval philosophers including Bonaventure and Scotus; and some modern philosophers like Descartes and others.

What is the origin of the Soul? St. Augustine experienced difficulty when he thought the problem of the origin of the soul. In his own mind he was convinced that the soul could not emanate from God in the sense in which Neo-Platonic pantheism explained it. Because, in that case, the soul would be necessarily a part of God Himself. St. Augustine corrected Origen, whose doctrine of pre-existence had not sufficiently adapted ancient Platonism to Christian speculation.

For St. Augustine the soul must be created. On this point various possibilities are open for investigation. Either souls proceed from the soul of Adam (Generationism), or each soul is individually created (Creationism), or the souls existed in God and are sent off into bodies, or they existed in God and of their own accord freely entered into bodies of their own choice (a notion of pre-existence held by some early Christian thinkers). Creationism occasioned a special difficulty for St. Augustine's theology, because by it the doctrine of original sin could not be explained sufficiently well. Generationism or Traducianism appeared to him to be much more suitable, but it ran the danger of lapsing into materialism. However, this solution does not satisfy him either, because he does not manage to understand "in what way the soul can be formed by a paternal soul, as a flame is lit by another flame."

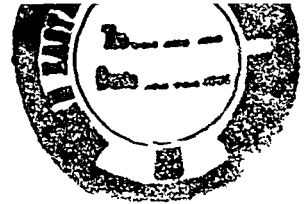
St. Augustine admitted that he had not arrived at personal clarity on this issue (Retr., I:1,3). To Plato, the soul was of the body - it was the principle of sensory life, on the other hand, it was radically different from it.

What is Soul then? St. Augustine's answer to this important question is that the soul is a special substance, endowed with reason, adapted to rule the body. In one of

his youthful psychological treatises, The Greatness of the Soul (A.D. 388), St. Augustine described for the first time his Seven levels (grades) of the soul's greatness, its significance in the body, its significance to itself and its significance before God. Following the ascending order, the seven levels of the Soul according to St. Augustine as given by Sumner²² are: First, Vitalization; Second, Sensation; Third, Art; Fourth, Virtue; Fifth, Tranquility; Sixth, Initiation; Seventh, Contemplation. Bourke²³ says that to St. Augustine they can also be designated in this way: (acts) first, "concerning the body"; this is the lowest level where the soul gives life to its body; second, "through the body" in which the soul perceives through the sensory organs of the body, a step higher than animation or vitalization; third, "about the body", where the force of the soul is reasonably directing man's actions in all the arts and skills of living, whether useful or fine; fourth, "toward itself", which involved the discernment of or evaluation of good things; which entails a purification of human effort and is the beginning of man's spiritual or moral growth; fifth, "in itself", in which the soul rests or stabilizes

²² Claude Sumner, The Philosophy of Man, Vol. III, (Addis Ababa, Printing Press, 1975), p. 42.

²³ Vernon J. Bourke, Wisdom From St. Augustine, (Centre Thomistic Studies, Univ. of St. Thomas, Houston, Texas, 1984), p. 64.



in itself; sixth, "toward God", in which the soul directs and fixes its attention toward the highest object of vision; seventh, finally "in God", where is in contemplation of the serene vision of truth which is God Himself. The following expressions is also possible, according to St. Augustine: (acts performed) (1) "excellently concerning another thing"; (2) "excellently through another thing"; (3) "excellently about another things"; (4) "excellently in the presence of an excellent thing"; (5) "excellently in an excellent thing"; (6) "excellently in the presence of Excellence"; (7) "excellently in Excellence".

By way of comment, we may not two things from what we have just discussed. In the first place it is a cognitive analysis of man's ascent to Truth. And among these seven levels of soul we have but four steps in man's spiritual progress, for that begins only at the fourth level.

In the Old Testament the Soul is called "nephesh", and in the New Testament it is called "psuche". By this is meant the entire living being, the living organism. We have a term for Soul used with an ascending meaning throughout the Scripture. Following are the three aspects in which the Soul is used. First, Soul is Life-Spirit embodied in the flesh. In the Bible²⁴ we read, "But if any harm follow, then thou shalt give life for life". The Hebrew term transla-

²⁴ Exodus 21:23.

ted "life" here is "nephesh", or "soul". Second, Soul is Subject of all activities. The Soul manifests even the highest activities of man. "But if from there you will seek (inquire for and require as necessity) the Lord your God, you will find Him if you truly seek Him with all your heart and mind and soul and life. (Deuteronomy 4:29). Psalms 42:2 says, "My inner self or soul thirst for God, for the living God". Third, Soul is individual possessing life. The highest use of the term soul is to denote the individual possessing life. The soul is the subject possessing life, which is derived by means of the life-principle, pneuma. "And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man become a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). "All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, that came out of his loins, besides Jacob's wives, all the souls were three score and six; and the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, that came into Egypt, were three score and ten" (Genesis 46:26,27). Thus, we see that the term 'Soul' in the Scripture freely connotes a person, one having appetites and passions, but also one who possesses the power of choice and potential of growing positively in regard to moral and ethical qualities. In fact, there are places in the Old Testament where the term "nephesh" is translated as "person". And the king of Sodom

said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself" (Genesis 14:21). This is the meaning in Romans 13:1, although translated with the word "soul". "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers". Yet the Hebrew and Greek terms are in most instances better translated with simply "soul" or "life". It will be noteworthy to remember here that the same soul may be used in the following ways: In mankind or people (person, man, mortal); in life (elan vital or vital force); in spirituality (spirit, psyche, pneuma, nephesh); in interiority (substance, marrow etc.).

In connection with the Three Theories of the Origin of Soul, Pre-Existence, Creationism and Traducianism, William W. Stevens²⁵ has put St. Augustine as one of the persons who held Traducianism. Let us look and examine each one briefly. Pre-Existence. This theory states that the soul has pre-existed in a previous state and enters the body sometime during early development. But this theory is without support in Scripture. In fact, it contradicts the Mosaic account of creation of man in the image of God. It also knocks out Paul's view of sin and death as derived from Adam. There is no explanation of inherited sin. If the soul were conscious and personal in this previous state would

²⁵ William W. Stevens, Doctrines of Christian Religion, (Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1967), pp. 137-138.

there not be some remembrance of existence? As for Christ who existed from before, He remembered His pre-existence. W. David Stacey²⁶ asserts:

Neither is there any evidence for the pre-existence of the soul. Some of the inter-testamental writes, under the influence of Hellenism, taught the existence of the soul before birth and, in a vague way, the Rabbis made similar statements. Not so Paul. It is not merely that he fails to mention it, but his Old Testament conception of soul as the animating principle of man leaves no room for it. Where there is no body, there can be no soul, for soul is not life in the abstract, but the vital force of the body of the flesh.

Yes, there are thinkers who support this view of the Pre-existence of the Soul. They are Plato, Origen, Kant, Philo, Muller, William Wordsworth, and some others.

Creationism holds that the soul is an immediate creation of God, entering the body at sometime during its early development, maybe even as early as conception of itself. This theory is an attempt to preserve the spiritual nature of soul, in the belief that if souls are produced by natural generation there would be a tendency to conceive of them as materialistic. God's usual method of operation is the mediate rather than the immediate. Besides, this theory suggests that the earthly father begets only the

²⁶ W. David Stacey, The Pauline View of Man, p. 124.

body of his child, not the higher element, that is the spirit. This theory also rests upon dualism between body and soul and does not account for the tendency to sin in men. It tends to make God create a pure human soul and place it in a body that will corrupt it. In other words, it makes God create a soul with sinful tendencies. Aristotle, Jerome, Boyce, modern Roman Catholics and some Reformed theologians held this view of the origin of soul.

Traducianism holds that both soul and body are produced by natural propagation, both being generated from the parents. The term is derived from Latin traduco, meaning to "lead or bring together". This theory seems to accord best with the Scripture. It represents God as creating the species in Adam and then continuing it through secondary means. Thus, it agrees with God's working in general through the natural process. It also best satisfies reason. St. Augustine's theory of "seminal principles" or "Ration Seminales" fits into the Traducianic theory. Besides, the transmission of traits of character is accounted for. The unity of the race is reckoned with by this theory, as well as the evil moral tendencies of all men. Besides St. Augustine, Tertullian, John Milton, E.Y. Mullins, A.H. Strong, Lutheran Church today, held this Traducianic theory of the origin of soul.

To St. Augustine, how the soul came into being was a mystery. He was unable to tell how this exactly came into being. However, according to St. Augustine, after the soul come into being, it continued to live forever. Therefore, it is immortal. Body is the house of the soul. The soul should, insofar as possible, free itself from the body and its temptations. Life of the soul after the death of the body shall be two. It will be a happy and blessed life, if won favour of God during the earthly life. It will be misery, suffering and tormenting, if it did not earn the favour of God during earthly life. In many instances, man sought ways so that the soul could live its own good life and prepare itself for an eternity of happiness. To attain this, the centre of St. Augustine's system is nothing else but the Free Redeeming Grace of God in Christ, Operating through the Actual Historical Church.

Doctrine of Illumination

Doctrine of Illumination of St. Augustine cannot be also put aside. Mondin²⁷ says that St. Augustine distinguishes three cognitive operation of knowledge, namely, the Senses, which know the qualities of bodies; the Inferior Reason, which knows the laws of the physical world and the Superior Reason, which knows the eternal truths.

²⁷ Battista Mondin, op.cit., p. 90.

Through the Senses, the sensitive knowledge of colours, odours, taste, touch, etc. are obtained. The soul is not passive with regard to the senses. St. Augustine is convinced that the soul is absolutely superior to the body that it cannot depend on the body in any way of its activities. Sensation is an activity exercised by the soul through the body. The body experiences the impressions of other bodies. Through the impressions from the bodies the soul acquires knowledge of the corporeal world. "The soul gathers the image, not the sense, of all the sensible objects". Therefore, according to St. Augustine, bodies are not known immediately, but through meditation.

Through the Inferior Reason or Ratio, Scientific knowledge is obtained. Scientific knowledge occupies itself with the corporeal world and seeks to discover universal laws through the process of observation.

Through Divine Illumination or the Ratio Superior, knowledge of eternal truths is obtained. St. Augustine says that we cannot perceive immutable truth of things unless they are illuminated by a sun (Solil. 1:8,15). The divine light which illumines the mind comes from God, who is the "intelligible light" in whom and by whom all those things which are luminous to the intellect becomes luminous. In the doctrine of light, St. Augustine makes use of Neo-Platonic

theme which goes back to Plato's comparison of the idea of the Good with the sun, the Idea of Good irradiating the subordinate intelligible objects or ideas. For Plotinus, the One or God is the sun, the transcendent light. The illumination is a spiritual illumination which performs the function for the objects of the mind as the sunlight performs for the object of the eye. Putting in different way, as the sunlight makes corporeal things visible to the eye, so the divine illumination makes the eternal truths visible to the mind. St. Augustine says that it is not through remembrance or what is technically called "reminiscence". Like Plato, St. Augustine is convinced that eternal truths cannot come from experience. Since St. Augustine does not admit the pre-existence of souls, it is not possible for him to explain the knowledge of eternal truths with reminiscence. Hence, St. Augustine's doctrine of Divine Illumination.

Left with the problem of how the mind could make judgements involving necessary truths, St. Augustine asked: What makes it possible for the mind to know that Seven and Three always and necessarily make Ten? St. Augustine replied that, the problem exist because all elements involved are mutable and imperfect. The sensed objects are mutable, and the bodily organs of sense are subject to change. The mind itself as a creature and is therefore finite. How can these

elements be deployed in such a way as to rise above their own imperfection and mutability, and discover truths about which the mind has no doubts? Plato answered this question by his doctrine that knowledge is recollection or reminiscence. Accordingly, soul is made to remember what it once knew before it entered the body. Aristotle in this issue argues that the eternal universal ideas were abstracted by the intellect from the particular things. St. Augustine could accept neither Plato nor Aristotle. He followed Plato's other insight contained in the analogy between the sun in the visible world and the Idea of the Good in the intelligible world. The mind is capable of "seeing" eternal objects if bathed in the proper light. St. Augustine says that we ought to believe "that the nature of the intellectual mind was so made that, by being naturally subject to intelligible realities, according to the arrangement of the Creator, it sees these truths, such as mathematical truth, in a certain incorporeal light of unique kind, just as the eye of the body sees the things all around it in this corporeal light." The mind of man requires illumination, if it is to "see" eternal and necessary truths.

St. Augustine states in his Doctrine of Illumination that there is present in us the light of eternal reason, in which light the immutable truths are seen. What he means

by these lines is not clear to many. However, what we can say is that illumination comes from God just as the light is brought by the sun. By the light of the sun we can see the trees and the houses. If this analogy is taken seriously, then, the divine light must illuminate something that is already there. Divine illumination is the illumination of our judgement whereby we are able to discern that certain ideas contain necessary and eternal truths. God, the source of this light is perfect and eternal, and the human intellect operates under the influence of God's eternal ideas. Thus with the doctrine of illumination St. Augustine solved to his satisfaction, the problem of how human intellect is able to go beyond sense objects and make judgements about necessary and eternal truths.

St. Augustine's language often has further overtones. It is easy in a way, to pass from ideas to judgement in his way as seen in his doctrine of divine illumination. But, the judgement he speaks of appears as a kind of foreshadowing of the ultimate divine judgement on all human lives and actions. The Bible,²⁸ says, "... but know thou (each individual) that for all these things God will bring thee into judgement." Paul Edwards²⁹ thinks that the basic

²⁸ Ecclesiastes 11:9.

²⁹ Paul Edwards (Ed. in Chief), The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Vol. I, (Mac. Pub. Co. Inc., & The Free Press, NY, 1972), p. 202.

reason why St. Augustine had found Platonic metaphysics so congenial was that it harmonised so easily with the moral bearings of his own views. In his discussion of knowledge, as in his discussion of the relation of mind and body, ethical considerations often play the major part. The central themes of Platonic thoughts support the views held by Augustine primarily and fundamentally on account of moral bearings. Hence, Augustine is naturally very close to Plato as it has been already pointed out earlier.

Conclusion

In the light of the above discussion, I now would like to point out certain remarkable differences as well as similarities between the philosophies of St. Augustine and Plato. Let me enumerate the differences first.

In the theory of Creation of the world, St. Augustine believes in creation out of nothing, creatio ex-nihilo. He believes in what the Bible³⁰ says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth And God said, let there be light, and there was light." Thus, the Scripture proves that God created the world out of nothing and out of His free will. Plato, on the other hand, does not believe in creation out of nothing, but in creation out of pre-

³⁰ Genesis 1:1,3.

existent matter. In this regard, Runes³¹ tells us:

The story of the making of the universe and man by the Demiurge is mythic and yet it is in many points a logical development of his (Plato) theory of Ideas. The world maker does not create things from nothing; he fashions the world out of a pre-existing chaos of matter by introducing patterns taken from the sphere of Forms.

There is also a difference as far as the concept of Soul is concerned. According to St. Augustine, the soul is created by God. A soul does not exist before the body in which it dwells. It is immortal, it has beginning but cannot die. Plato expresses his view on soul in his magnum opus, 'The Republic'. According to him, the individual soul is a part of the universal Soul and resembles it in every aspect. The only difference is that whereas the individual soul is finite and imperfect, the universal Soul is infinite and perfect. Although the soul is imprisoned in the body, it is not destructible like the body. It is simple, indivisible and conscious. The soul of an individual existed before it came into the body. The soul, therefore, is eternal. It has no beginning and it will have no end either.

To St. Augustine matter is created by God and it

³¹ Dagobert D. Runes, Dictionary of Philosophy, (Littlefield, Adams & Co., Totowa, New Jersey, 1979), p. 201.

is good. He has the confirmation from the Scripture,³² which says, "And God said, let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind; and it was so ... and God saw that it was good." Nothing evil was created by God. However, St. Augustine has the view that evil is necessary to good, just as a picture is not beautiful or complete without shadows. If there is negation of good, the good loses its value. Evil is a privation of good or absence or lack of good. Moral evil does not mar the beauty of the world. And God maintains His omnipotence by keeping aloof from evil. For Neo-Platonist, a matter or body is the principle of evil. The Manicheans also think that matter is substantially evil. Evil for Plotinus is not a positive destructive force. It is not a devil contending with the good God. For him, evil is simply the absence of something, the lack of perfection or to loose control of passions. Thus, the goal of man is freedom from the body and all its sin, and return to God and perfect goodness. To Plotinus matter is the source of evil and God is the source of good.

St. Augustine does not believe in the doctrine of Emanation. But according to Plotinus, things emanate or flow from God, the way light emanates from the sun. The

³² Genesis 1:24,25.

sun is never exhausted, it does not do anything, it just is. By being what it is, it necessarily emanates light. In like manner, God is the source of everything, and every good things manifest God. However, nothing is equal to God, as the rays of light in any way equal the sun.

St. Augustine advocates the doctrine of Illumination. To him we cannot perceive the immutable truths of things unless they are divinely illuminated. This divine illumination comes from God who is the intelligible light. It may be worth noting that Plato does not believe in the doctrine of illumination but in the doctrine of recollection or reminiscence.

A unique creation is the ground of the world which has all beginning and end in God according to St. Augustine. For Plotinus, the One emanates Spirit, World-Soul, Matter in an eternal cycle. And Augustine's God is an active will, which turns towards man, whereas Plotinus' One is of rest.

Again, another difference between the two philosophers is that whereas St. Augustine normally find himself in the authority of the Church and in the living presence of a powerful organisation, Plotinus finds himself in a free company of individual philosophers.

Finally, St. Augustine finds exaltation in self-

examination which aims at clarification of faith, whereas Plato's self-examination leads only to the understanding of reality. Talking about the difference between Plato and St. Augustine, Louis Bogliolo³³ writes:

There is, however, a very great difference between Plato and St. Augustine. The Augustinian illumination is entirely interior. The light of cognition comes entirely from the Logos (the Word) who speaks and illumines from within. In fact, the difference between the position of Plato and St. Augustine is so great that St. Augustine is generally regarded as the typical exponent of interiority and the teacher and precursor of Scholastics. While Platonic cognition resolutely destroys the subject, the Augustinian cognition resolutely tends towards the full revelation of the subject and is a prelude to Thomism.

After having seen the differences, I would now like to point out the similarities between the philosophies of St. Augustine and Plato. In fact, I see more points of similarities than points of differences. I consider that these similarities are more important than the differences. Let us briefly look at some of these basic and fundamental similarities.

³³ Louis Bogliolo, Philosophical Anthropology: A Complete Course in Scholastic Philosophy, Trans. Noel Chin, Ed. Sebastian Karotemprel, Vol. I, (Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong, India, 1984), p. 76.

(i) Plato's Forms or Ideas and Plotinus' Intellect can be identified with St. Augustine's Ideas which are the thoughts in God's Mind. Copleston³⁴ says appropriately:

Neo-Platonists interpreted the Platonic Ideas as thoughts of God and 'placed' them in Nous which emanates from the One. We may say that St. Augustine accepted this position, although he did not accept the emanation theory.

(ii) St. Augustine assumes with Plato that objects of true knowledge are unchanging, from which it necessarily follows that knowledge of changing objects is not true knowledge.

(iii) Like Plato, St. Augustine is convinced that eternal truths cannot come from sense experience. Sensation is regarded by St. Augustine, in accordance with Platonic psychology, as an act of the soul using the sense organs as its instrument.

(iv) St. Augustine's standard of goodness and beauty corresponds to Plato's first principles or exemplary ideas. St. Augustine's ideal forms geometrical figures correspond to Plato's mathematical objects.

³⁴ Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy, Vol. II, (An Image Book Doubleday, NY, London, 1985), p. 56.

(v) In the doctrine of light, St. Augustine makes use of Neo-Platonic theme which goes back to Plato's comparison of the Idea of the Good with the Sun, the Idea of the Good irradiating the subordinate intelligible objects or ideas.

(vi) Both St. Augustine and Plato believe in the immortality of the soul of the individual. Both agree that after death, the soul survives the body.

(vii) Both St. Augustine and Plato stress the importance of morality as the basis of everything — be it metaphysics, epistemology or philosophy of language.

(viii) St. Augustine agrees with Plotinus about the fundamental structure of the idea of God: everything has its ground in God or One. He is a reality and as such the source of the existence of things. As Logos, the intellectual light, He is the source of the truth of things. As the good per se, He is the source of the goodness of all things.

(ix) Plotinus' triad, the One, that is above being, the Spirit that is being, and the World-Soul that is reality becomes in St. Augustine, the Trinity, the One God in three persons — God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

(x) Plotinus' One, beyond being, Spirit and Knowledge is identical with St. Augustine's God, who is Himself a Being, Spirit and Knowledge.

(xi) Prayer is the centre of St. Augustine's life. Plato also recommended prayer, especially for important occasions such as before closing a business deal or when contracting marriage.

(xii) St. Augustine and Plato emphasize the role of number or orderliness in the issue of life. They look on numbers as the principle of order and form, of beauty and perfection, a proposition and a law. Thus, the Forms are eternal numbers which unfold themselves in time. St. Augustine's Seminal Principles is a fitting example. According to St. Augustine, God created everything at once. The 'seminal reasons or principles' are hidden numbers, where bodies are manifest numbers. Where and how did St. Augustine use number seven? In answer to this, we find seven stages of spiritual development described by St. Augustine in his On Genesis Against the Manichees as follows: First Day of creation signifies man's gaining the light of faith; Second Day means that man distinguishes things of the flesh from those of the spirit; Third Day prefigures man freeing his soul from the stain of passions; Fourth Day to mean man's vision of the spiritual truths in the light of Immutable

Truth; Fifth Day means man's acting to serve his brothers; Sixth Day suggests the submission of one's soul to the control of justice and reason; Seventh Day stands for man's resting in the hope of lasting peace.

In similar way, we also find seven step-series toward blessedness in St. Augustine's The Lord's Sermon on the Mount, as follows: (1) Fear of God is the beginning of blessedness; (2) Meekness signifies a certain stability in one's eternal heritage; (3) The sorrow of those who mourn turns one from earthly joys to God; (4) Hunger makes us lovers of truth and immutable goodness; (5) Mercy brings the achievement of blessedness; (6) Clean-heartedness prepares one for the vision of God; and (7) Peace making brings us to perfection.

(xiii) For St. Augustine, the Bible is his guiding thread. It is also the anchor to which he attaches his own thoughts and life, having found the solution to his problems in the Scripture. Reid³⁵ indicates Plato's knowledge of the Bible as follows:

He (St. Augustine) will not believe that Plato had ever met Jeremiah, but neither does he discount the possibility that the Hebrew Scriptures were known to him. He

³⁵ J. K. S. Reid, Christian Apologetics, (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1969), p. 98.

is inclined even to credit this, for he finds in the 'I am that I am' of Exodus 3:14, the same truth as Plato held and diligently taught, that He truly is, is unchangeable, while the things that are changeable have no real existence. This view... goes to show that here, as elsewhere, St. Augustine was rather too content to look through the eyes of the greatest philosopher of antiquity at matters where Christian theology and classical philosophy had a common interest.

In my opinion, the fact that we have more points of similarity than difference between the philosophies of St. Augustine and Plato indicate that they are indeed, very close. And that is the truth that I have established in this chapter, St. Augustine and Plato.

St. Augustine faces a difficulty with regard to Creationism. He thinks that Creationism would not be able to account for the doctrine of original sin. In my considered opinion, the difficulty of St. Augustine can be overcome by giving the following explanation which has Scriptural support. God created Adam as an autonomous being with complete freedom of will. This means that Adam was given the choice between good and evil as it is indicated in the Holy Scripture³⁶: "And the Lord God commanded the man (Adam), saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou

³⁶ Genesis 2:16.

shalt not eat of it." Unfortunately, Adam opted for the forbidden one and thus committed the original sin. The Bible³⁷ further records:

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat it and gave also to her husband (Adam) with her and he did eat.

The argument here is that if he were not a free being he would not have been able to commit the original sin. It follows from this that God did not create the original sin. He only placed the choice before man.

I have discussed the theory of Emanation. In this regard, I would like to say a word or two about Leibniz's philosophy. The relation of God to the other Monads (Minds) is the crux of Leibniz's philosophy. 'Monas' or 'monads' in Greek means 'a unit'. He wishes to maintain the individuality of the monads and their essential unity with God. "To him (Leibniz), the monads are the real atoms of nature, the elements of things. The monad is a simple substance, completely different from material atom. It has neither extension, nor shape, nor divisibility. Nor is perishable. Monads begin to exist or cease to exist by the decree of God". For him, 'creation' would mean too complete a separation

³⁷ Genesis 3:6.

between God and the other monads. On the other hand, 'emanation' would mean too complete an identity between them, according to him. Which is why, he advocates 'Fulguration' which means 'a lightning flash of the mind'. To Leibniz, the monads are God's perpetual fulgurations. By this Leibniz means that the monad is not absolutely created out of nothing nor on the other hand, merely a mode or an absolutely necessary product of the divine nature, but that it is a possibility tending to realize itself. But for this it requires the assistance, choice or will of God to set it free from the counter acting influence of other possibilities.

In my view, St. Augustine has no need for 'fulguration'. For, according to St. Augustine's Philosophy, the Soul does not depend on the choice of God after its creation. The soul is endowed with the free choice of his own.

I have also discussed the Traducian theory of the origin of soul. St. Augustine need not have abandoned Creationism in favour of Traducianism. For creation can account for the tendency to sin in man by itself without needing any help from Traducianism. As I have already pointed out, St. Augustine advocates the unitary concept of person which contains soul as its subject and body as its non-subject.

It is customary for the Philosophers to make a dis-

tinction between Faith and Reason or Believing and Understanding. Here, one is reminded of the famous Cartesian distinction between Revealed Theology and Natural Theology. The distinction consists in maintaining that Revealed Theology is enjoined and supported by Faith only and Natural Theology is supported and enjoined by Reason only. This sort of dichotomy between Faith and Reason, in my view, has been successfully removed by St. Augustine. Credit must be given to St. Augustine for making this important contribution. St. Augustine holds that Faith and Reason are not two separate sources that meet at some point, but they are two sides of the same coin. "Reason is in Faith and Faith in Reason" — this is the claim of St. Augustine. This has tremendous bearing on what Jesus Christ³⁸ has said as regards the first and most important commandment. I quote in full,

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (intellect). This is the great (most important, principal) and first commandment.

³⁸ Amplified Bible, St. Matthew 22:37-38.

Chapter III

ST. AUGUSTINE AND THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY

ST. AUGUSTINE AND THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY

For St. Augustine, the data of the Fundamental Principles of Christianity is presented by the content of faith or the Credo. The firm acceptance of Revealed Truth is the point of departure for St. Augustine from human reason. Thus, this third chapter will endeavour to state and examine the fundamental articles of faith.

The Credo

The word Credo (Latin) means "I believe". This is also called the "Symbols of faith". It is the fundamental principal truth of the Christian faith and therefore, serves as the fundamental point of reference for Catechesis. St. Ambrose¹ points out its importance when he says, "The Creed is the spiritual realm, our heart's meditation and ever present guardian; it is unquestionably, the treasurer of our soul."

¹ As quoted in Catechism of the Catholic Church, (Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1994), p. 43.

The Creed is divided into three important parts. The first part speaks of the first divine Person and the wonderful work of Creation. The next speaks of the second divine Person and the mystery of His redemption of men. The final part speaks of the third divine Person, the origin and source of our sanctification. These three parts are distinct although connected with one another. According to a comparison often used by the Church Fathers, we call them articles, and thus call "articles of faith". Indeed, just as in our bodily members there are certain articulations which distinguish and separate them, so too in this profession of faith, the name articles has justly and rightly been given to the truths we must believe particularly and distinctly.

Through the centuries many professions or symbols of faith have been articulated in response to the needs of the different eras. Among all the creeds, The Apostles' Creed and The Nicene Creed occupy a special place in the Church's life. The Apostles' Creed is so called because it is rightly considered to be a faithful summary of the apostles' faith. It is the ancient baptismal symbol of the Church at Rome. Its great authority arises from this fact that it is the Creed of the Roman Church, the diocese of Peter, the first of the apostles, to which he brought the

common faith. The Nicene Creed or The Nicene-Constantinopolitan draws its great authority from the fact that it stems from the first two ecumenical Councils (in 325 and 381). It remains common to all the great churches of both East and West even to this day.

I quote, in full, The Apostles' Creed and The Nicene Creed, as recorded in the Catechism² of the Catholic Church.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ,
his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

² Ibid., p. 41.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God
 the Father, the Almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth,
 of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
 the only Son of God
 eternally begotten of the Father,
 God from God, Light from Light,
 true God from true God,
 begotten, not made, one in Being
 with the Father.

Through him all things were made.
 For us men and for our salvation
 he came down from heaven:
 by the power of the Holy Spirit
 he was born of Virgin Mary,
 and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
 Pontius Pilate;
 he suffered, died, and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
 in fulfilment of the Scriptures;
 he ascended into heaven
 and is seated at the right hand of the Father

He will come again in glory to judge the
 living and the dead,
 and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
 the giver of life,
 who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
 With the Father and the Son he is worshipped
 and glorified.
 He has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic
 Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the
 forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
 and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Creed is founded on the Sacred Scripture. It is not an invention of man. This leads us further to consider Revelation and Scripture, which are the grounds of the the Apostles' Creed. The importance can be known if we think the incompleteness of the Creed without the Sacred Scripture; also the emptiness of the Scripture without God's Revelation.

Revelation

Had God not revealed Himself, man could not possibly have any knowledge of God. We can categorize God's revelation into two, namely, General Revelation (Natural Theology) and Special Revelation (Revealed Theology).

The General Revelation of God in nature is fitly mentioned by the Psalmist,³ who says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth wisdom."¹ This revelation does not come to man in the form of verbal communications, but in the facts, the forces, and the laws of nature, in the constitution and operation of the human mind, and in the facts of experience and history.

While Pelegians, Reationalist and Deists regard this revelation as adequate, Christians including St. Augustine agreed that it is not sufficient. Because, it was

³ Psalms 19:1-2.

obscured by the blight of sin resting on God's creation. The handwriting of the Creator was not entirely erased, but became hazy and indistinct. It does not now convey any fully reliable knowledge of God and spiritual things, and therefore, does not furnish us a trustworthy foundation on which we can build for our eternal future. While it conveys some knowledge of the goodness, the wisdom, and the power of God, it conveys no knowledge whatever of Christ as the only way of salvation.

This does not mean, however, that General Revelation has no value at all. It accounts for the elements that are still found in pagan religions. In his The Confessions, St. Augustine⁴ set aside one chapter dealing with Sacred Scripture and Pagan Philosophy. Due to this revelation Gentiles feel themselves to be the offspring of God, "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also ~~His~~ offspring...."⁵ They also see in nature God's everlasting power and divinity, and do by nature the things of the law, as St. Paul⁶ says,

⁴ St. Augustine, The Confessions, Trans. John K. Ryan (Image Books, Doubleday, NY, 1960), pp. 168-170.

⁵ Acts of the Apostles, 17:28.

⁶ Romans 2:14-15.

For when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.

Although they live in the darkness of sin and ignorance, and pervert the truth of God, they still share in the illumination of the Word, and in the general operation of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the General Revelation of God also forms the background for His special revelation.

The Bible⁷ is pre-eminently the book of God's Special Revelation. In addition to the revelation in nature, we have this special revelation which is now embodied in the Scripture. In this category of revelation facts and words go hand in hand, the words interpreting the facts and the facts giving substance to the words.

Special Revelation became necessary because of the entrance of sin into the world. God's handwriting in nature was obscured and corrupted. Man has spiritual blindness and fails to read aright God's revelation. Therefore, it became necessary that God should re-interpret the truths of nature, should provide a new revelation of redemption and illumine the mind of man and redeem him.

⁷ The word 'Bible' is derived from the Greek word 'biblos' meaning 'a book'.

In giving His special revelation God uses different kinds of means. For example, God reveals His presence in fire and clouds, in stormy winds, and in a still small voice. The highest point of the personal appearance of God among men reached in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. St. John⁸ in his Gospel pointed out, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Sometimes God spoke to men in an audible voice, directly, as He did to Moses and the children of Israel. He also reveals Himself through dreams and visions. In the New Testament, Christ appears as the Great Teacher sent from God to reveal the Father's will. In due course, through the Holy Spirit the Apostles became the organs and instruments of further revelations. God also on rare occasions reveals in the form of miracles. They are manifestations of the special power of God. However, the greatest miracle is the coming of the Son of God. And in Him the whole creation of God is being restored and brought back to its original beauty. This Special Revelation is instrumental in renewing man; it illumines his mind and inclines his will towards good; it fills him with holy affections, and prepares him for his heavenly home. It not only enriches us with knowledge,

⁸ John 1:14.

but transforms lives by changing sinners into saints. And that was what St. Augustine himself has personally experienced through Jesus Christ. Sinner Augustine was turned into Saint Augustine. In relation to this Anthony⁹ says:

To young men who have got entangled in the tentacles of worldly love, to intellectuals who have plunged heart and soul into modern errors, Augustine is a sign-post, showing the path to unfetter them from all sorts of bonds that prevent them seeing the face of God, entering His Kingdom on earth, and from being children of the Church of Christ.

The Source

Let us have a brief look on the Scripture, which is the source or foundation of the Apostles' Creed, the basis of the Christian Faith. The prophets and the apostles often received messages from God before they committed them to writing. These are now contained in the Scripture⁹. The whole Bible is given by inspiration of God, and is as such the infallible rule of faith and practice for all mankind. The Old Testament writers are repeatedly instructed to write what the Lord commanded them. The prophets were conscious of bringing the Word of the Lord, and therefore, introduced their messages with some such formula as, "Thus saith the Lord," or "The word of the Lord came unto me" (Jeremiah

⁹ Anthony Elenjimittam, Saints for Young Men Today, (St. Paul Publications, Allahabad, 1966), p. 105.

36:27; Ezekiel 26:1). Paul speaks of his words as Spirit taught words, claims that Christ is speaking in him, and describes his message to the Thessalonians as the Word of God. The Epistle to the Hebrews often quotes passages of the Old Testament as words of God or of the Holy Spirit. The most important passage to prove the inspiration of the Scripture is mentioned by the Apostle Paul¹⁰ in his letter to Timothy, which reads:

And that from a child thou (Timothy) has known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Under the influence of Rationalism it has become quite common to deny the inspiration of the Bible altogether, or to hold that only parts of it are inspired. Some deny the inspiration of the Old Testament, while admitting that of the New. Others affirm that the moral and religious teachings of Scripture are inspired, but that its historical parts contain several chronological, archaeological and scientific mistakes. Still others limit the inspiration

¹⁰ 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

to the Sermon on the Mount. They who adopt such views have already lost their Bible, for the very differences of opinion are positive proof that no one can determine with any degree of certainty which parts of Scripture are, and which are not inspired. There is still another way in which the inspiration of the Scripture is limited, that is, by assuming that the thoughts were inspired, while the choice of the words was left entirely to the wisdom of the human authors. But this proceeds on the very doubtful assumption that the thoughts can be separated from the words, while, as a matter of fact, accurate thought without words is impossible.

Every part of the Scripture is inspired according to the Bible as quoted above. Jesus and the Apostles frequently appeal to the Old Testament books as 'Scripture' or 'the Scriptures' to settle controversial issues. To them such an appeal was equivalent to an appeal to God Almighty. The Epistle to the Hebrews repeatedly cites passages from the Old Testament as words of God or of the Holy Spirit. St. Peter¹¹ places the letters of Paul on a level with the writings of the Old Testament, when he says, "... in all his (Paul) epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they

¹¹ 2 Peter 3:16.

that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures (Old Testament), unto their own destruction." St. Paul¹² speaks of all Scripture as inspired when he says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." St. Augustine¹³ also writes the fact of the inspiration of the Scripture as:

At any rate, if in reading the Scriptures we keep an eye, as we ought, only to what the Spirit of God spoke by the lips of man, we will conclude... that the Spirit elected to say this by the lips of the original Prophets... thus making it clear that all of them were inspired.

All Sacred Scripture is but one book, and that one book is Christ, because all divine Scripture speaks of Christ, and all divine Scripture is fulfilled in Christ.

God is the author of Sacred Scripture because He inspired its human authors; He acts in them and by means of them. He thus gives assurance that their writings teach without error His saving truth. And interpretation of Scripture must be attentive above all to what God wants to reveal through the sacred authors for our salvation. What comes from the Spirit is not fully understood (except by the Spirit's

¹² 2 Timothy 3:16.

¹³ St. Augustine, The City of God, Trans. Gerald G. Walsh, Demetrios B. Zema, Grace Monahan, Daniel J. Honan, (Image Books, Doubleday, N.Y., et al.), p. 415.

action. The miracle can only be explained by the Master Author's guiding hand.

The unity of the two Testaments proceeds from the unity of God's plan and revelation. The Old Testament prepares for the New and the New Testament fulfils the Old; they shed light on each other; both are true Word of God. St. Augustine says that the New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New.

Immaculate Conception

The Virgin birth of Christ or the Immaculate Conception of Christ is one of the fundamental principles of Christianity. This is the beginning of God in taking the form of man, which is theologically called Incarnation. In his The Confessions, St. Augustine¹⁴ confesses:

I conceived my Lord Christ only as a man of surpassing wisdom, whom no other man could equal. Above all, because He was born in a wondrous manner of the Virgin, to give us an example of despising temporal things in order to win immortality, He seemed by the godlike care that He had for us, to have merited such great authority as a teacher. But what a mystery was contained within those words, "The Word was made flesh...."

St. John in his Gospel 1:14 expresses or uses "the Word become flesh", to describe God taking the form of man or

¹⁴ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 177.

the Incarnation. The apostle Paul¹⁵ in his letter to the Philippians put in this way:

... Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man.

In the same vein, S. C. Daniel¹⁶ also listed the belief in the incarnation of Christ, as one of the fundamental principles of Christianity. I would like to quote him as he puts in his article, Christianity and Culture;

The easiest as well as the most efficacious way to define Christianity is to identify and state its fundamental principles. Some of the fundamentals of Christianity are spelt out in the Nicene Creed. It would be worthwhile enumerating these principles and their explications as under: (i) belief in one God. (ii) belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, (iii) belief in the incarnation of Jesus Christ as man, (iv) belief in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, (v) belief in the second Coming of Jesus Christ to judge both the living and the dead, (vi) belief in the Holy Ghost, and (vii) belief in one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Jesus was supernaturally conceived, being born of a virgin. It was foretold in the Old Testament. The prophet

¹⁵ Philippians 2:5-8.

¹⁶ S.C. Daniel, "Christianity and Culture", CNI-NEI Diocesan Journal, Vol. 7, No. 1, Pentecost, 1994.

Moses has written in Genesis 3:15 about the first promise of God of the Redeemer, given to man after his fall into sin. Tracing the genealogy of Christ from Abraham, St. Augustine¹⁷ says that Christ sprang from the tribe of Juda. He says:

It is because the City of God in its earthly pilgrimages is found in the people of Christ that we are tracing the genealogy of Christ. Beginning with Abraham and ... we came to Isaac; ... we reach Jacob (also called Israel); in the line of Israel, passing over other sons, we come in Juda; and it was from the tribe of Juda that Christ sprang.

The actual prophecy of Christ's virgin birth is given by the prophet Isaiah¹⁸ 740 years before it actually happened: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel".

The quoted verse was repeated by the angel who came to inform Joseph, the would be husband of Mary (Matthew 1:23). St. Augustine¹⁹ himself testifies the truth of the virgin birth of Christ as follows:

According to the prophecy, Christ was born in Bethlehem of Juda, at the time as I said,

¹⁷ St. Augustine, The City of God, Trans. by Gerald G. Walsh, Demetrios, B. Zema, Grace Monahan, Daniel J. Honan, (Image Books, Doubleday, N.Y., London et al.), p. 372.

¹⁸ Isaiah 7:14.

¹⁹ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 416.

when Herod was king of Judea... Christ was born a visible man of a human virgin mother, but He was a hidden God because God was His Father.

Mary's conception was from the Holy Ghost and not from her fiance Joseph. The angel said to Mary, "The Holy shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee" (Luke 1:35). St. Luke, a medical doctor records the unusual conception in his Gospel chapter 1, verses 27, 31, 34 too. And Mary's sensible question, "How can I have a child when I am not married?" Verse 34, infers that she was a pure virgin abhorring immorality.

There are some thinkers who object to the virgin birth of Christ even today. They say that, the doctrine of Christ's virgin birth is found only in a few places in the Bible. But the fact remains the same. Even one Scripture reference should be sufficient to establish the truth of the doctrine. We have Isaiah from the Old Testament, and the records of Matthew, Luke and other apostles in the New Testament. Objection is also raised that Jesus did not personally claim to be virgin born. Christ²⁰ did infer virgin or divine and heavenly origin, for He says, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven". Again, some said that modern theologians do not accept the doctrine. However,

²⁰ St. John 6:51.

that does not alter the fact that it is true, for it is taught in the Bible in prophecy and there was the historic fulfilment of this prophecy. It is also objected on the ground that Scientists do not accept it for it is not biologically true. But it is to be remembered that Jesus did not come by natural conception but by a miraculous conception. The mystery of the virgin birth is to be believed. He is God and remains God because of the Holy Ghost conception and virgin birth.

Jesus Christ is true God and true man, in the unity of His divine person; for this very reason He is the one and only mediator between God and man. He possesses two natures, one divine and the other human, not confused but united in the person of God's son. At the divine appointed time, the only Son of the Father, the eternal Word, the Word and substantial Image of the Father, became Incarnate.

The Incarnation of Christ is the central point of Christianity. Christianity is the person of Christ. But, how did this Incarnation really take place? I would therefore, now want to come to the birth of Christ.

Matthew and Luke represent that Jesus was born of Mary without a human father. He was begotten by the Holy Spirit. The virgin birth of Christ fits into the account

of His sinless life. Luke²¹ says, "... the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee (Mary), and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore, also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God". An angel or messenger sent by God from heaven came to a virgin called Mary, who was betrothed or engaged to be married to a man called Joseph. She was not married as yet. The angel told her that she was chosen by God to be the mother of the expected Saviour. The angel told that she would conceive through the miraculous intervention of the Holy Spirit. Would not Jesus' origin in such an act of the Holy Spirit help us to understand how, of all men, He is the only exception to the fact that men live under the dominion of sin?

St. Augustine²² once posed,

For how do we know what abundance of grace for the total overcoming of sin was conferred upon her (Mary), who merited to conceive and bear Him (Jesus Christ) in whom there was no sin? The special grace that enables Mary to become the mother of the expected Saviour is called by some 'The Immaculate Conception'.

They thought that God had prepared a special place for Mary in His plan of salvation. And, this thought or conviction

²¹ Luke 1:35.

²² St. Augustine, "Nature and Grace", 36,42, as given in The Faith of the Early Fathers, Vol. 3, p. 111.

was not easy to arrive at, because two factors appeared to conflict. On the one hand, everyone is in need of God's redemption through Jesus Christ because of the fallen and sinful condition of man. The Scripture²³ says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus". On the other hand, it seems impossible to Christians that Holy God (~~in the person of~~ Christ) could have been born to someone bound by the sin of the fallen man. The question, therefore, is ~~how~~ could Mary have been a sinner, and still have carried Holy God (Christ) in her womb? It would have been impossible for Mary to respond as she did, and for God to dwell within her, unless God had given her a special grace. This special grace, as pointed above is called 'Immaculate Conception'.

The Immaculate Conception is more of a statement about Jesus than about Mary. It proclaims that Jesus was someone so unique and holy that God would even prepare His mother for His birth. St. Augustine believed that Mary was the one exception to the Scripture text, of First John chapter one verse eight, "If we say we have not sinned, we deceive ourselves". "For, how do we know what abundance

²³ Romans 3:23-24.

of grace for the total overcoming of sin was conferred upon her, who merited to conceive and bear Him in whom there was no sin?" The Latin Church resoundingly confirmed Augustine's insight, and the Eastern Church had arrived at the same conclusion, exalting Mary's sinlessness as that of "a lily among thorns".²⁴

However, some influential Christians expressed reservations about this doctrine, because it appeared to imply that Mary did not need Christ as her Saviour. Even such a great figure as St. Thomas Aquinas could not fully accept the doctrine for the same reason. As a result of deeper considerations, pastors and theologians came to the conclusion that the doctrine does not contradict the Word of God. The Immaculate Conception does not deny that all men need a Redeemer. Mary too needed a Redeemer and she was indeed saved from her sin by the death and resurrection of her Son, Jesus Christ. Pope Pius IX also said that Mary was truly redeemed by the merits of her son, Jesus Christ:²⁵

The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God and

²⁴ Edward O'Connor, "The Development of Marian Doctrine in the Church", God's Word Today, May 1982, pp. 93-94.

²⁵ Catechism of the Catholic Church, op.cit., p. 97.

by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin.

According to St. Augustine,²⁶ "Mary is a virgin because her virginity is the sign of her faith 'unadulterated by any doubt', and of her undivided gift of herself to God's will" (De Virg., 3: Patrologia Latina 40, 398). Mary's virginity also manifests God's absolute initiative in the Incarnation.

Death and Resurrection

St. Augustine believes in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as it is written in the Creed. The Apostles' Creed²⁷ says in this connection, "He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again." In the Nicene Creed²⁸ it is given as:

For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered, died and was buried.
On the third day He rose again
in fulfilment of the Scriptures.

Christ's cross and resurrection stands at the centre of the Gospel that the apostles and the Church following them, are to proclaim to the world. God's saving plan was accomplished 'once for all' by the redemptive death and resurrec-

²⁶ Ibid., p. 100.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 40.

²⁸ Ibid.

tion of His Son Jesus Christ. I shall discuss the Death of Christ first and later the Resurrection of Christ.

The doctrine of the Death of Christ was in God's plan of Salvation for mankind from sin and death. It was foretold by God as found in the Scripture. "He was cut off out of the land of the living" (Isaiah 53:8); "After three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself...." (Daniel 9:26). The Bible had foretold this divine plan of salvation through the putting to death of "the righteous one, my Servant" as a mystery of universal redemption, that is, as the ransom that would free men from the slavery of sin". St. Paul professes that "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scripture" (1 Corinthians 15:3). On the other hand, Christ's redemptive death fulfils Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering Servant foretold in Isaiah chapter fifty three. Redemption in Christ foretold by the Scripture and its fulfilment was also spoken by St. Augustine;²⁹

This mystery of eternal life, from the beginnings of the human race, has been announced to all whom it concerned by the messengers of God, using outward signs and sacred symbols appropriate to particular periods... to carry with them the witness of the Scriptures in which the future Redemption in Christ was foretold. Thus, all that was fulfilled in Christ is being fulfilled before our eyes....

²⁹ St. Augustine, op.cit., pp. 141-142.

The death of Christ was appointed by God, for the Word of God says, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all"; "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin" (Isaiah 53:6,10). Peter also explains to the Jews of Jerusalem in his first sermon on Pentecost: "This Jesus was delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23). And by giving up his own Son for our sins, God manifests that His plan for us is one of benevolent love, prior to any merit of our part: "In this love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the expiation of our sins" (I John 4:10,19). God "shows His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Christ offered Himself to His Father for our sins. The Son of God, who came down from heaven, not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him said on coming into the world, "Lo, I have come to do your will, O God". "And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:7-10). From the first moment of His Incarnation the Son embraces the Father's plan of divine salvation in His redemptive mission: "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work" (St. John 4:34). The desire

to embrace His Father's plan of redeeming love inspired Jesus' whole life, for redemptive passion was the very reason for His Incarnation. Jesus once asked, "And what shall I say: 'Father save me from this hour?' No, for this purpose I have come to this hour" (St. John 12:27). And again, "Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?" (John 18:11). From the cross, just before "It is finished," He said, "I thirst" (John 19:30,28). After agreeing to baptize Him along with the sinners, John the Baptist looked at Jesus and pointed Him as the "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (St. John 1:29). By doing so, he reveals that Jesus is at the same time the suffering Servant who silently allows Himself to be led to the slaughter and who bears the sin of the multitudes, and also the Pascal Lamb, the symbol of Israel's redemption at the first Passover. At the Last Supper with the apostles into the memorial of His voluntary offering to the Father for salvation of men Jesus³⁰ said:

This is my body which is given for you.
This is my blood of the covenant,
which is poured out for the forgiveness of your sins.

The cup of the New Covenant, which Jesus anticipated when He offered Himself at the Last Supper, is afterwards accepted

³⁰ Luke 22:19.

by Him from His Father's hands in His agony in the garden of Gethsemane, making Himself obedient unto death. This sacrifice of Christ is unique. It completes and surpasses all other sacrifices. It is both the Paschal sacrifice that accomplishes the definitive redemption of men, through the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, and the sacrifice of the New Covenant, which restores man to communion with God by reconciling him to God through the blood of the covenant, which was poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. In this connection, St. Augustine³¹ in his The City of God says that by his sacrificial death Christ is the true mediator between God and men:

Christ Jesus, Himself man, is the true Mediator, for, inasmuch as He took the 'form of a slave', He became the 'Mediator between God and men'. In His character as God, He receives sacrifices in union with the Father, with whom He is one God; yet He chose, in His character as a slave, to be Himself the Sacrifice rather than to receive it.... This is the true sacrifice of which the ancient sacrifices of the saints were but many and manifold symbols. This one sacrifice was prefigures... it is the supreme and true sacrifice....

That Christ is the mediator between God and men is also seen in St. Augustine's³² The Confessions.

³¹ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 196.

³² Ibid., p. 176.

I sought for a way of gaining strength sufficient for me to have joy in You, but I did not find it until I embraced "The mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who is over all things, God blessed for ever" (I Tim. 2:5). He called to me, and said, "I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6).

Jesus substitutes His obedience for man's disobedience. the Bible says in Romans 5:19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous." By His obedience unto death, Jesus accomplish the substitutionary works. He atoned for our sins and made satisfaction for our sins to the Father. He did this on the cross of calvary. St. Rose of Lima once fitly said that apart from the cross there is no other ladder by which we may get to heaven.

Eugene TeSelle³³ pointed out that if we want to give a just characterization of St. Augustine's view of redemption, we must recognize that he finds in it various aspects which are really distinct and which resist being driven into a single framework of explanation. In his writings there seem to be four irreducible aspects to the work of Christ: (i) In His earthly activity as revealer and example He makes God known to men, proving His love,

³³ Eugene TeSelle, Augustine the Theologian, (Burn & Oates, London, 1970), pp. 174-175.

demonstrating His humility, but also leading the perfect human life even in the face of opposition: these themes, that Christ has an effect upon men's minds and affections through His words and deeds, are found in Augustine's writings of every period. (ii) In His inward devotion and total obedience He (Christ) is the reconciler, making sacrifice "for sin" as the priestly representative of the race in the sense that He compensate for the shortcomings of other men. (iii) He is the redeemer who by undergoing an undeserved punishment discredits the forces of evil and ransoms men from their solidarity in guilt. (iv) Finally, there is an ecclesiastical and eschatological function as the pioneer and head of a redeemed humanity. The single death and resurrection of Christ is, so to speak, reduplicated in its significance for other men, for they are subject to the double death of both soul and body and have need of a double resurrection. Consequently, Christ's death and resurrection is both a sacramentum of the current death and renewal of the inner man and an exemplum of the future death and resurrection of the outer man.

St. Augustine's approach to the problem of redemption, then, is to divide and conquer. And this is really the practice of many later theologians as well, especially when they are operating in a doctrinal rather than a speculative context.

Was Jesus buried as the Creed says? Certainly Yes. By the grace of God Jesus tasted death for everyone. In His plan of salvation God ordained that His Son should not only die for sins but also taste death, experience the condition of death, the separation of His soul from His body, between the time He expired on the cross and the time He was raised from the dead. The state of the dead Christ is the mystery of the tomb and the descent to the dead. It is the Holy Saturday, when Christ, lying in the tomb, reveals God's great Sabbath rest after the fulfilment of man's salvation.

Christ was in the tomb in His body. It is truly the Son of God made man who died and was buried. During His period in the tomb, His divine person continued to assume both His soul and His body, although they were separated from each other by death. For this reason the dead Christ's body "saw no corruption" (Acts 13:37).

The Apostles' Creed confesses Christ's decent to the dead. The frequent New Testament affirmations that Jesus was "raised from the dead" presupposes that the crucified Christ sojourned in the realm of the dead prior to His resurrection. This was the first meaning given in the apostolic preaching to Christ's descent to the dead: that Jesus, like all men, experienced death and in His soul joined the

others in the realm of the dead. But He descended there as Saviour, proclaiming the Good News to the spirits imprisoned there. The Bible³⁴ says,

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.

The Gospel was preached even to the dead. I Peter 4:6 says clearly that "... for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged...." Christ's descent to the dead (Sheol in Hebrew or Hades in Greek), brings the Gospel message of salvation to complete fulfilment. This is the last phase of Jesus' messianic mission. Christ³⁵ went so that "the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live". Jesus, the Author of life, by dying destroyed him who has the power of death, that is the devil, and delivered all those who through the fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage. Henceforth the risen Christ holds the keys of Death and Hades, so that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven and things in earth and things under

³⁴ I Peter 3:18-19.

³⁵ John 5:25.

the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."³⁶

Sometimes Christ's death is called an expiation, sometimes a reconciliation, sometimes a redemption, and sometimes a ransom. It is also described as securing remission of sins and as the purchase price for man's deliverance from the bondage of sin. In His death Christ is thought of as becoming a curse for us. He is also shown as offering His body for sin, and as offering Himself as a sacrifice once for all.

Is the death — the redeeming death of Christ without any objection? The answer is no. It is objected that it would not be just, but rather the height of injustice, for one man to bear the sins of other men. It is not just for one man to be punished for another man's wrong doing. If God should put the sins of the guilty on the innocent, that would show Him to be a monster instead of a God of love.

In answer to the objection raised, let us consider this way. It is a law of life that men should suffer for the wrongs of others. The Scripture tells us that because of the sin of Adam the whole human race suffers. In the history of Israel, we have come across in the Book of Joshua

³⁶ Philipians 2:10-11.

that, because of the sin of Achan the chosen people of God got defeated at the hands of the comparatively insignificant Ai (Joshua 7. & 8 chapters). No matter what we may say the justice or injustice of it, it is a fact. And it is difficult to see how it could be otherwise in a social world. An arrangement by which one would suffer the exact actions of his sins and nobody else suffers for them would hardly be a social world at all. And it is true that the innocent sometimes suffers for the guilty. This is one of the great disciplinary laws of life. Men are often restrained from evil by the consciousness that other will suffer if they sin. Also, it is true that much of our ethical development comes from suffering on behalf of others. It is a law of the Christian life that one should be willing to follow the Saviour's footsteps of suffering. Christ calls his disciples to take up their cross and follow Him, for Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example so that we should follow His footsteps (I Pet. 2:21).

The highest expression of love is found in the Christian law of willingness to suffer on behalf of others. This was the crowning glory of the life of Christ. It was love that moved Christ to give Himself for humankind. It was that same love which sent out men and women to the unreached areas. It is love that moves to share the sufferings of others or for others.

The objection cited above is also based on a false assumption, which says that it would be unjust for God to lay the sins of one man on another man. There are two things to be pointed out here. One is that God did not take our sins and lay them on an unwilling victim. Christ voluntarily and willingly took our sins on Himself. Jesus³⁷ says, "... I lay down my life No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." He was not forced to do it. He therefore, volunteered to die for sinners, wrong-doers like us. The other false assumption is that Christ is only one human individual among other human individuals. Perhaps the objection would be right that one human individual could not bear the sins of countless other individuals. However, the relation of Christ to any man is entirely different from the relation of one who is only human individual to his fellow men. It was through Him and in Him that mankind or everything was created and preserved. The Bible says, "All things were made by Him, and without Him, was anything made that was made" (John 1:3). Colossians 1:16-17 again says, "... all things were created by Him, and for Him: He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Therefore, it does not mean that God laid the burden of our sins on a helpless human individual, but rather in the Person of Christ God Himself (God-Incarnate) bore the burden of our

³⁷ John 10:17-18.

sins to save us. The work of Christ is the work of God and the Holy Spirit. And this death of Christ is sufficient for every sinner. Each individual by faith can experience the saving grace of God in the person of and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible³⁸ vividly says:

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

The Doctrine of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the crowning truth of our faith in Christ, a faith believeth and liveth as the central truth by the first Christian community; handed on as fundamental by Tradition; established by documents of the New Testament; and preached as an essential part of the Paschal mystery along with the cross:

Christ is risen from the dead!
Dying, He conquered dead;
To the dead, he has given life.

He rose, from the dead
And the Lord shall bear His children home.³⁹

St. Augustine agrees with St. Paul who says, "If Jesus did not rise from the grave, we are all men most miserable, for we are yet in our sin; we are lost; eternally

³⁸ John 3:16-17.

³⁹ Given from author's memory.

lost" (I Cor. 15:16-19). The Apostle and the Nicene Creed⁴⁰ also says, "... On the third day He rose again."

What evidence do we have to convince us that Jesus really resurrected from the dead? What is the meaning and significance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

The mystery of Christ's resurrection is a real event, with manifestations that were historically verified, as the New Testament bears witness. In about 56 A.D. St. Paul⁴¹ already wrote to the Corinthians:

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures: and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: and He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that He was seen of above five hundred at once...."

Paul the apostle speaks here of the living tradition of the resurrection of Jesus Christ which he had learned after his conversion at the gate of Damascus.

Next, the first element we encounter in the framework of the Easter is the empty tomb. Its discovery by the disciples was the first step toward recognizing the fact of

⁴⁰ Catechism of the Catholic Church, op.cit., p. 40.

⁴¹ I Corinthians 15:3-6.

resurrection. This was the case, first with the holy women and then with Peter. The discipline whom Jesus loved (John) entered the empty tomb and discovered the linen cloths lying there, he saw and believed.

The testimony of the Angels is another evidence. On the morning of the third day when some women proceed to the tomb and find that it is empty, an angel⁴² announces that Jesus has risen: "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying, the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

Mary Magdalene and the holy women who came to finish anointing the body of Jesus, which had been buried in haste because the Sabbath began on the evening of Good Friday, were the first to encounter the Risen Jesus. Thus the women were the first messengers of Christ's resurrection. They were the next to whom Jesus appears, first Peter, then the twelve. Peter (Cephas) had been called to strengthen the faith of his brothers, and so sees the risen Lord before them. It is on the basis of Peter's⁴³ testimony that the

⁴² Luke 24:5-7.

⁴³ Luke 24:34.

community exclaims, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon (Peter)".

In addition, we have many other evidences. Jesus appears to Cleopas and an unnamed disciple on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32). He also manifests Himself to the apostles, Thomas being absent (Luke 24:36-43). Later He appears to all the apostles, Thomas being present (John 20: 26-29). Then Jesus appears to seven of the apostles by the sea of Galilee (John 21). There is also an instance of Christ's appearance to above five hundred on a mountain in Galilee, at which time the Great Commission is given (Matthew 28:16-20; I Corinthians 15:3-6). Then, there is a manifestation to James, His half-brother (I Corinthians 15:7). At another instance He appears to the disciples and issues the Great Commission and is received up out of their sight (Luke 24:44-53). Jesus appears to Stephen at his martyrdom (Acts 7:56). Christ also appears to Saul (later known as Paul) on the Damascus road. Even today millions testify Christ to be a living Saviour, including myself. The resurrection of Jesus Christ produces in the disciples a great change. They are transferred from a small group of discouraged disciples into a band of aggressive and zealous proclaimers of the Gospel. And nothing but a genuine and triumphant resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and grave could produce such a dynamic transformation.

In our century, Ravi Zacharias⁴⁴ writes the significance of the statement made by one German Chancellor as regards the resurrection of Jesus Christ as:

Dr. Billy Graham told of an occasion when German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer asked Dr. Graham, "Do you believe in the resurrection of Christ from the dead?" When Dr. Graham immediately answered that indeed he did, there was a long silence from the Chancellor, and then he said, "Outside of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, I know of no other hope for mankind." That is an extraordinary and yet most meaningful statement, made by one of the greatest statesmen of the twentieth century. It is highly significant because it spoke volumes, coming from a man who had pick up the ruins after Hitler had left the world mangled.

In spite of the above factual evidences, there are several false theories which attempt to explain the resurrection on certain grounds. I want to look at them briefly.

(1) The Fraud Theory maintains that Jesus' disciples stole into the tomb at night and then circulated the report that He had risen from the dead. It is true that the guard who watched the tomb, on reporting to the Jewish authorities that it was empty, were told (bribed) to say that the disciples stole the body "while we slept" (Matthew 28:12-13). But how would they have known all this if they were asleep?

⁴⁴ Ravi Zacharias, A Shattered Vision, (RZIM India, Madras, 1992), p. 160.

The whole story of this theory is a hoax. History and the Scripture flatly deny such a ridiculous theory. This theory makes thieves and liars of the disciples, thus reflecting on their character. (ii) The Mistake or Myth Theory holds the view that the women make a mistake, while going to an old deserted tomb. And thinking it to be the tomb of Jesus, they hurried away to spread the news that Jesus has risen from the dead. The whole canon of Scripture shows the lie to this mistaken theory. St. Matthew testifies that the women were there when Jesus was buried. St. Luke⁴⁵ says: "And the women also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His body was laid." (iii) The Ghost Theory, propounded by Keim, states that Jesus really died and that only His spirit (ghost) returned from the grave. His spirit gave the disciples a confirmation of His continued life, much as a telegram from heaven. They only saw His spirit or ghost and thought that it was real Jesus. The reply to this theory consists of the fact that His body arise from the tomb, for the tomb was empty and the linen cloths were lying in an orderly manner (St. John 20:6,7). Jesus⁴⁶ Himself denied being a bodiless spirit when He asserted, "A spirit hath no flesh

⁴⁵ Luke 23:55.

⁴⁶ Luke 24:39-43.

and bones, as yet see Me have. And when He had thus spoken, He shewed them His hands and His feet ... they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey comb. And He took it, and did eat before them." (iv) The Swoon Theory, on the other hand, maintains that Jesus did not really die. The soldiers did not really kill Jesus. He only fainted. Strauss is the main advocate of this theory. It was through the agency of the coldness of the tomb and smell of the spices that cause Jesus to regain His consciousness. The spices, on the contrary, being poisonous, would kill Jesus if He was still alive. The blood and water which flowed out from the body of Jesus while He was on the cross (John 19:34) and the statement of His death made by the centurion to Pilate (St. Mark 15:44-45) proves the falsity of the Swoon Theory. Furthermore, the Bible tells us that soldiers who came to break the legs of Jesus need not break because they saw that He was already dead (John 19:32-33). And, this took place that what the Scripture said in the Old Testament be carried out (Exodus 12:46). (v) The Hallucination or Vision Theory was put forth by Renan, who believed that there was no objective appearances at all. All the so called various appearances were subjective. Mary Magdalene has a subjective hallucination. The subjective vision of Mary spread, as though contagious. The Jews expected Jesus to work miracles and to rise from the dead; and so, the

subjective visions included what they have expected. The disciples wanted to see Jesus and thought that He would rise so they in their imaginations imagined that they saw Him. Convincing reply to this false theory contains that, the disciples did not expect Jesus' resurrection. The remarks of Thomas and the two on the road to Emmaus show such evident. The women who went to the grave to embalm a dead body clearly show that they were not expecting a risen Jesus. Besides, subjective visions do not change human lives, while the resurrection of Jesus Christ transforms the apostles⁴⁷ from coward souls to courageous soul-winners.

... Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice... repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins... and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

St. Augustine⁴⁸ has written the fact of the resurrection of Jesus in his The City of God as follows:

Even if we should grant that the resurrection of the body was once beyond belief, the fact is that the whole world now believes that the earthly body of Christ has been taken up to heaven. Learned and unlearned alike no longer doubt the resurrection of His flesh and His ascension into heaven, while there is but a handful of those who continue to be puzzled.

⁴⁷ Acts of the Apostles, 2:14,38,41.

⁴⁸ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 509.

Having known from the above discussion that Jesus really resurrected from the dead, let us now try to answer the question, What is the Meaning and Significance of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ?

If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. The resurrection, above all, constitutes the confirmation of all Christ's works and teachings. All truths, even those most inaccessible to human reason, find their justification if Christ by His resurrection has given the definitive proof of His divine authority, which He had promised. Christ's resurrection is the fulfilment of the promises both of the Old Testament and of Jesus Himself during His earthly life. The phrase in Nicene Creed 'in fulfilment of the Scriptures', indicates that Christ's resurrection fulfilled these predictions.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most significant of all miracles. It is the miracle of miracles. This is the miracle on which all other miracles stand or fall. Let us pin-point some of the significance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The truth of Jesus' divinity or deity is confirmed by His resurrection. He said: "When you have lifted the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He." The resurrec-

tion of the crucified one shows that He was truly "I am", the Son of God and God Himself. So, St. Paul could declare to the Jews: "What God promised to the fathers, this He has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus as also it is written in the second Psalm, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you." Christ's resurrection closely linked to the Incarnation of God's Son, and its fulfilment in accordance with God's eternal plan. Paul says Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). This great act proves to the minds of His followers that He is the Christ, the Son of God, the one who has come with all power authority to deliver them. It brings meaning to Jesus'⁴⁹ own statement: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Resurrection is fruition of Calvary. On the cross of Christ at Calvary (Golgotha), the debt is paid, the ransom discharged, the expiation made, and the Son glorified. "It is finished" is the cry of victory. The resurrection, therefore, triumphantly brings to fruition that which is accomplished at Calvary. Paul, the apostle declares that Jesus "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again

⁴⁹ John 11:25.

for our justification" (Romans 4:25). Even our justification is made complete through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without the resurrection, Calvary would not be efficacious in atoning for sin. Some writers even speak of these two great episodes in the early sojourn of our Lord as the Cross-Ressurrection Event, thus displaying the vital connection between the two.

Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ we conquer our sins. Christ conquered sin because He conquered death. He rose from the dead because He has exhausted the power of sin. Therefore, He rose victorious over death. He conquered sin for us and enables us to conquer it. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus frees us from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2ff). And the dominion of death is broken because the rule of sin is ended. The sting of death is sin, and the sting of sin is extracted, the power of death is destroyed (I ~~C~~orinthians 15:56-57). And sin can be overcome only as we are united to the living Christ. The Christ, who lives forever, having conquered sin and death, the Christ who has the keys of death and hades, is the assurance of our victory over sin (Revelation 1:18). If He be not risen, we are yet in our sins (I ~~C~~orinthians 15:17). Thus, resurrection also brings about filial adoption so that men become Christ's brethren, as Jesus

Himself called His disciples after His resurrection: "Go and tell my brethren" (Matthew 28:10). We are brethren not by nature, but by the gift of grace, because that adoptive filiation gains us a real share in the life of the only Son, which was revealed in His resurrection. St. Paul⁵⁰ says:

... ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father... we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

Again, the resurrection of Christ gives assurance of triumph of the kingdom of God. The living Christ who conquered death in resurrection power and who reigns in omnipotence at the right hand of God, is the assurance of the final and complete triumph of the kingdom of God. Through His Spirit and the preaching of His Word He is gradually extending His kingdom and will bring it to final triumph. He announced His programme to His disciples before He went away, and in the Acts of the Apostles we see how He successfully carried out that programme. He does not hesitate to use persecution to thrust them out when necessary. In the book of Revelation He stands in the midst of the candle stick (1:3), and hold the seven stars in the right hand (1:6), the one who was dead but is alive forever more (1:8).

⁵⁰ Romans 8:15-17.

He conducts a campaign against sin and darkness that finally results in the coming to earth of the New Jerusalem from God out of heaven (21:1, 2). He is proclaimed worthy of all power, riches, wisdom, blessings, honour and glory (5:8-14). Meanwhile, one who gives himself to this living Christ and the ends of His kingdom can trust Him unreservedly with life and all, knowing that He cares for His own. And that is glorious!

The resurrection of Christ holds a very prominent place in the preaching of the apostles. Resurrection is mentioned 104 times in the New Testament alone. In fact, every New Testament sermon ascribed to any of the apostle places emphasis on the resurrection. When they preach they proclaim Jesus as Saviour risen from the dead. This centrality of Jesus' resurrection is the theme of the preaching of the apostles is vividly shown by Peter's⁵¹ sermon on the day of Pentecost:

He (Peter) seeing this before spake of the RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh see corruption. This JESUS hath God RAISED UP, where of we all are witnesses.

The resurrection power of Christ helps the witnessing of the apostles. Knowing this, St. Augustine⁵² writes in

⁵¹ Acts of the Apostles 2:31-32.

⁵² St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 511.

his famous The City of God:

Those who had not themselves seen Christ rising from the dead and ascending into heaven with His flesh believed the men who said they had seen the miracle, not merely because these men (apostles) said so, but also because these men (apostles) themselves worked miracles. For example, many people were astonished to hear these men, who knew but two languages (and, in some cases, only one) suddenly break forth into so many tongues that everybody in the audience understood. They saw a man who had been lame from earliest infancy now, after forty years, stand upright at a word uttered by these witnesses who spoke in the name of Christ. Pieces of cloth that touched their bodies were found to heal the sick. Uncounted people suffering from various diseases set themselves in line in the streets where the apostles were to pass and where their shadows would fall upon the sick, and many of these people were at once restored to health. Besides many other marvels wrought in the name of Christ, there were even cases of dead men restored to life.

Finally, Christ's resurrection is the principal source of our future resurrection: "... now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. 15: 20-22). Because Jesus arose we have accepted His great atoning work will arise also. His resurrection guarantees to us life beyond the grave. Men have speculated as to whether we live on earth after death. The resurrection of Jesus Christ takes

the question out of the realm of speculative thought and puts it into the realm of fact. Moreover, the appearances and the ascension of Jesus give us the assurance that, for those who die in fellowship with Him, death is the entrance into a more glorious life. As death for Jesus marked the transition into a larger and more glorious, so will it be for us. St. Paul⁵³ in the book of Romans says:

... if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection... now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.

... if the Spirit of that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Everyone shall rise, the righteous unto life eternal and the unrighteous to eternal condemnation and punishment (St. John 3:36; Matthew 25:46).

Forgiveness of Sins

To sinful man, forgiveness of sin(s) becomes the most important problem in life. One of the fundamental blessings in salvation through Christ is deliverance from sin, for sin prevents fellowship with God. When sin is forgiven,

⁵³ Romans 6:5-8; 8:11.

a relationship can be established, a fact recognised both in the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament there are three words for forgiveness: One means "to cover"; another means "to lift away"; and the third means "to send away". In the New Testament forgiveness is "the separation of sinner from his sins through the sacrifice of Christ and upon the ground of pure grace." The Apostle Creed says, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins" and the Nicene Creed states, "We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins."

The Old Testament is very clear on the idea of forgiveness. Psalm of David number thirty-two is one of the greatest examples of the joy of one who has experienced the forgiveness of God. St. Augustine also frequently quotes from the Psalm. The Psalmist here talks of the blessedness of one "whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Verse 1). The sinner tried to be silent and not confess his sin; but his bones wasted away, and God's hand was upon him. On the other hand, when the sinner confesses his iniquity and transgressions, God forgives him. In his famous The Confessions,⁵⁴ we come across Augustine saying:

⁵⁴ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 202.

... but to this effect I spoke many things to you:
 'And you, O Lord, how long? How long, O Lord,
 will you be angry forever?
 Remember not our past iniquities.
 For I felt that I was held by them,
 and I gasped forth these mournful words...
 Why not in this very hour and end to my uncleanness?
 ... a peaceful light streaming into my heart, all
 the dark shadows of doubt fled away.

Psalms 103 is very similar in thought. God is one "who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases" (Verse 3). God does not deal with us according to our sins, nor reward us according to our iniquities. He removes our transgressions from us as far as the east is from the west. Psalms 51 is the greatest of the penitential psalms. It is the urgent cry of one who recognises his sin and seeks the forgiving and cleansing hand of God. "Have mercy upon me, O God according to Thy loving kindness: according to the multitudes of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgression, and my sin is ever before me" (Verses 1-3). Further, he asks God to purify him with hyssop and wash him whiter than snow, to hide his face from his sin and to blot out his iniquities. God will not despise the broken and contrite heart. It is said that St. Augustine put up this Psalm 51 on his wall to remind himself of his past sins and God's gracious forgiveness of those sins.

There is much greater emphasis upon forgiveness in the New Testament. Jesus, for example, teaches in the model prayer, "And forgive us our sins" (Luke 11:4). Again, when He sees the faith of those bearing the man sick of the palsy, He says, "Son, thy sins are forgiven" (Mark 2: 3-12). The remission of sins in the name of Jesus is designated as an elemental part of the Great Commission as found in Luke chapter twenty four, verse forty-seven. Remission of sins again is the basic preaching of the apostle Peter (Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43). St. Paul remarks, "In whom (Christ) we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses" (Ephesians 1:7). And in the Bible⁵⁵ we find that our confession of sins is the basis of our being forgiven: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all our unrighteousness".

There is no one, however, wicked and guilty, who may not confidently hope for forgiveness, provided his repentance is honest. Christ who died for all men desires that in His Church the gates of forgiveness should always be open to anyone who turns away from sin (Matthew 18:21-22). In his Sermon 213, St. Augustine says:⁵⁶

⁵⁵ I John 1:9.

⁵⁶ As quoted in Catechism of the Catholic Church, p. 196.

Were there no forgiveness of sins in the Church, there would be no hope of life to come or eternal liberation. Let us thank God who has given us His Church such a gift.

The forgiveness of sins and attainment of salvation for man is possible through the Grace of God. St. Augustine himself experienced that grace and it is clear in his mind. As a result of this spiritual experience, St. Augustine's philosophy professes a creation that makes God not only the source of man's being, but also the conversion that makes man free.⁵⁷

What is grace? Grace is God's unmerited favour, kindness and love towards the undeserving sinner man. Some one has given a acrostic for the word GRACE this way, God's Riches At Christ's Expense in favour of the guilty sinner, and I see the truth in it. The apostle Paul⁵⁸ has rightly pointed out:

For it is by free grace (God's unmerited favour) that you are saved (delivered from judgement and made partakers of Christ's salvation) through (your) faith. And this (salvation) is not of yourselves (of your own doing, it came not through your own striving) but it is the gift of God.

Under the law, God demands righteousness, but under grace, God gives righteousness to sinners. Our justification comes

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New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. I, (Reprinted, 1981), p. 1055.

58. Amplified Bible, Ephesians 2:8.

from the grace of God. Grace is favour, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to His call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life. Further, Grace says that whosoever hears and believes on Jesus Christ has passed from death unto life (John 5:24), and those who receive eternal life will never perish (John 10:28). Thus, grace offers forgiveness, peace and eternal life.

It is interesting to note what St. Augustine once said, concerning the operation of grace, metaphorically. He says, "It (grace) is the medicine of the soul, working internally as drugs work externally upon the body" (De Civ. Dei., 15, 6). He also says that the preparation of man for the reception of grace is already the work of God's grace. God brings to completion in us what He has begun, "since He who completes His work by cooperating with out will began by working so that we might will it" (De gratia et libero arbitrio, 17:PL 44,901). St. Augustine⁵⁹ also stresses the fact that without God man can do nothing in his De natura et gratia, 31:PL 44,264:

Indeed we also work, but we are only collaborating with God who works, for His mercy has gone before us. It has gone before us so that we may be healed, and follows us

⁵⁹ As quoted in Catechism of the Catholic Church, op.cit., p. 371.

so that once healed, we may be given life; it goes before us so that we may live devoutly, and follows us so that we may always live with God: for without Him we can do nothing.

Salvation or forgiveness of sins is not man's doing, but a dialectic between God and man leading from one stage to the next. There is interaction between free choice of man and divine influence throughout the process. I would like to point out this dialectic interactionism in the same line of thought with that of Eugene TeSelle.⁶⁰ They are: (i) To acknowledge one's ignorance of what ought to be done and then to seek after instruction (De lib. arb., 3:22,65). When even men do not react appropriately and seek instruction, God in many ways calls upon them to return, though both the external law and his inward address to the heart (Ibid. 3:20,57). (ii) Man "under the law" makes proper use of his knowledge of God's requirements when he comes to the discovery that they cannot be fulfilled by his own powers. This is the specific locus of what St. Augustine calls "difficulty", willing without being able to accomplish (Ibid. 3:18, 51-52; 22,65). The proper outcome is man's seeking of divine aid (auditorium) in order to achieve what is required. (iii) Faith makes the transition from existence

⁶⁰ Eugene TeSelle, op.cit., p. 161ff.

'under law' to 'under grace'. St. Augustine understands faith in the Pauline way, setting it in contrast with works, though he also notes that faith does not displace works entirely. Good works are required, but faith is the beginning, and good works will follow from it (Exp. ad. Gal. 19). Grace, then, is the offer of a definite way of salvation; it is preached in order that men might believe, and it is received through faith. Faith is the proper culmination of man's struggle with his natural weaknesses, his ignorance of the good, and his painful failure to do the good even when he knows and wills it. Faith is, indeed, the only exit from the human part, for it is the renunciation of all attempts to achieve salvation by one self and the acceptance of an offer made graciously by another (Jesus). The struggle against sin can now become successful with the infusion of love by the presence of the Spirit, for man will not only will but do what is good. (vi) The struggle against sin is not completed during this present life. However, St. Augustine does view the Christian life 'eschatologically',⁶¹ for there is already a possession of the goal in the 'inner man', which is the 'first fruits' of salvation. Thus the highest part of the soul, the mind or spirit, is

⁶¹ Collins English Gem Dictionary, (London, 67), p. 173.

the first offering man makes to God, reaching out in faith, hope, and love beyond the situation of mortality in which believers, in common with all men, still groan in travail. But the difference is that, they do it with eagerness, "reaching forth unto those things which are before or ahead" (Philippians 3:13), awaiting the resurrection in which the body as well will come to share, for the first time, in the benefits of their adoption as sons (Romans 8:15).

Prior to St. Augustine's day the time had been largely taken up in correcting heresies within the Church and in refuting attacks from the pagan world in which it found itself. Consequently only little emphasis had been placed on the systematic development of doctrine. However, St. Augustine was led to develop his doctrines of sin and grace partly through his own personal experience in being converted to Christianity from a worldly life, and partly through the necessity of refuting the teaching of Pelagius.

At the end of the fourth century, an Irish monk named Pelagi^{us} began to teach that Adam's sin could not have caused any damage to posterity because sin is a voluntary act, and hence responsibility for sin can only fall on the person who committed the sin. Therefore, we could not have inherited the consequences of our first forefathers' sin, and hence we could not have been deprived of the possi-

bility of doing good. Therefore, there was no need for Christ's redemption. Christ's work had only the value of a good example, just as that of Adam had no other value than that of a bad example.

Against the view of Pelagius St. Augustine developed the very opposite. He stepped out with great decisiveness and in over fifteen polemic and doctrinal writings he supported the traditional Church doctrine. He taught that the whole race fell in Adam, that all men by nature are depraved and spiritually dead. The will is free to sin but not free to do good toward God — Christ suffered vicariously for His people, that God elects whom He will irrespective of their merits, and that of saving grace is efficaciously applied to the elect by the Holy Spirit. St. Augustine thus became the first true interpreter of St. Paul and was successful in securing the acceptance of his doctrine by the Church. In other words, what St. Augustine stressed is that, if there would have been no special divine intervention, that is Redemption, then humanity would have forever remained a "mass of damnation". Only Grace can give some efficacy to the effort which man makes to save himself. The apparently good actions which man can perform are not worth anything without God's grace.

The Reformation was essentially a revival of Augustinianism, and through it, evangelical Christianity again came into its own. It is to be remembered that Luther, the first leader in the Reformation, was an Augustinian monk and that it was from this rigorous theology that he formulated his great principle of justification by faith alone, as it is written in the Bible,⁶² "The just shall live by faith",

It is interesting to note that Manju Jain,⁶³ while giving comment on the IIIrd Part, 'The Fire Sermon' of T.S. Eliot's poem, The Waste Land, writes, "St. Augustine trusts to the grace of God for salvation". In the said poem, the poet refers to St. Augustine's own words from his The Confessions, saying, "To Carthage then I came ... O Lord Thou pluckest me out"⁶⁴ (iii,i). In this part, St. Augustine is writing of the sensual temptations of his youth at Carthage when he was sixteen. St. Augustine further mentions how the Lord plucked him out of such life to Him. T. S. Eliot also mentions Buddha's words, "Burning burning burning burning"⁶⁵ in the same poem. In his note Eliot points out the

⁶² Romans 1:17.

⁶³ Manju Jain, T.S. Eliot Selected Poems, (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 180.

⁶⁴ St. Augustine, The Confessions, iii, i, as quoted by Manju Jain, Ibid., p. 180.

⁶⁵ T. S. Eliot, Waste Land, Ibid., p. 54.

collocation of the Buddha and St. Augustine, the two representatives of Eastern and Western asceticism, as the culmination of his poem. Both Buddha and St. Augustine describe sensual temptation as a burning fire. The Buddha advocates the cultivation of an aversion of the pleasures of the senses, which will lead to freedom from passion, and then from rebirth. As for St. Augustine, he trusts to the grace of God for salvation.

Church

To believe that the Church is "holy" and "Catholic", and that she is "One" and "apostolic" (as the Nicene Creed adds), is inseparable from the belief in God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In the Apostles' Creed we profess "One Holy Church" (Credo ... Ecclesiam), and not to believe in the Church, so as not to confuse God with his works and to attribute clearly to God's goodness all the gifts He has bestowed on His Church.

What is the meaning of the word 'Church'? The word "Church"⁶⁶ means a convocation or an assembly. It designates the assemblies of the people, usually for a religious purpose. Ekklesia is used frequently in the Greek Old Testament for

⁶⁶ Latin ecclesia, from the Greek ek-kalein, meaning, "to call out of".

the assembly of the chosen people before God. On Mount Sinai, Israel received the Law and was established as his holy people by God. (Exodus 19). By calling itself "Church", the first community of Christian believers recognized itself as heir to that assembly. In the Church, God is "calling together" His people from all ends of the earth. The equivalent Greek term Kyriake, from which the English word Church and the German Kirche are derived, meaning "what belongs to the Lord". In Christian usage, the word "church" designates the liturgical assembly, but also the local community or the whole universal community of believers. These three meanings are inseparable. The Church is the people that God gathers in the whole world. She exists in local communities and is made real as a liturgical, above all a Eucharistic (consecrated elements), assembly. She draws her life from the word and the Body of Christ and so herself becomes Christ's Body. St. Augustine⁶⁷ is acutely aware of this unity of Christ and His Church for he wrote:

Let us rejoice then and give thanks that
we have become not only Christians, but Christ
himself. Do you understand and grasp,
brethren, God's grace toward us?
Marvel and rejoice: we have become Christ.

⁶⁷ As quoted in Catechism of the Catholic Church, op.cit.,
p. 162.

For if he is the head, we are the members;
 he and we together are the whole man...
 The fulness of Christ then is the head
 and the members,
 But what does "head and members" mean?
 Christ and the Church.

The Church is a plan born in the heart of God the Father. The eternal Father, in accordance with the utterly gratuitous and mysterious design of His wisdom and goodness, created the whole universe, and chose to raise up men to share His own divine life to which He calls all men in His Son, Jesus Christ. The Father determined to call together in a holy Church those who should believe in Christ. This family of God is gradually formed and takes shape during the stages of human history, in keeping with the Father's plan. Just as God's will is creation and is called 'the world' so His attention is the salvation of men, and it is called 'the Church'.

The remote preparation for this gathering together of the people of God begins when He calls Abraham and promises that he will become the father of a great people. Its immediate preparation begins with Israel's election as the People of God. By this election, Israel is to be the sign of future gathering of all nations. But the prophets accuse Israel of breaking the covenant and behaving like a prostitute. They announce a new covenant. Christ instituted this

New Covenant. It was the Son's task to accomplish the Father's plan of salvation in the fulness of time. Its accomplishment was the reason for His being sent. The Lord Jesus inaugurated His Church by preaching the Good News, promised over the ages in the Scriptures. The Church is born primarily of Christ's total self-giving for our salvation anticipated in the institution of the Sacrament and fulfilled on the cross. The origin and growth of the Church are symbolized by the blood and water which flowed from the open side of the crucified Christ. For it was from this side of Christ as He slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the "wondrous sacrament of the whole Church". As Eve was formed from the sleeping Adam's side, so the Church was born from the pierced side of Christ hanging dead on the cross.

The Holy Spirit revealed the Church. When the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that He might continually sanctify the Church. Then the Church was openly displayed to the crowds and the spread of the Gospel among the nations, through the preaching was begun. As the convocation of all men for salvation, the Church in her very nature is missionary, sent by Christ to all the nations to make disciples of them. So that she

can fulfil her mission, the Holy Spirit "bestows upon them Church varied gifts, and this way directs her". Henceforth, the Church endowed with the gift of her founder and faithfully observing His precepts of charity, humility and self-denial, receives the mission of proclaiming and establishing among all the peoples the Kingdom of Christ and of God.

The Church will receive its perfection in the glory of heaven only, at the time of Christ's glorious return. Until that day, the Church progresses on her pilgrimage amidst the world's persecution and God's consolations. Here below, she knows that she is in exile far from the Lord, and longs for the full coming of the Kingdom, when she will be united in glory with her king.

The one Mediator, Christ, established and ever sustains here on earth His holy Church, the community of faith, hope and charity, as a visible organization through which He communicates truth and grace to all men. The Church is at the same time: a "society structured with hierarchical organs and the mystical body of Christ; - the visible society and the spiritual community; - the earthly Church and the Church endowed with heavenly riches."

The Church, in Christ, is like a sacrament - a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity

among all men. The Church's first purpose is to be the sacrament of the inner union of men with God, because men's communion with one another is rooted in that union with God, the Church is also the sacrament of the unity of the human race. In her, this unity is already begun, since she gathers men "from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues" (Revelation 7:9), at the same time, the Church is the sign and instrument of the full realisation of the unity yet to come.

The Church is the People of God. At all times and in every race, anyone who fears God and does what is right has been acceptable to Him. He has however, willed to make men holy and save them not as individuals without any bonds or link between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge Him and serve Him in holiness. He therefore, chose the Israelites race to be His own people and establish a covenant with it. All these things, however, happened as a preparation for and figure of that new and perfect covenant which was to be ratified in Christ, the New Covenant in His blood, "This cup is the New Covenant or Testament in my blood".⁶⁸

⁶⁸ I Corinthians 11:25.

The people of God is marked by certain characteristics. It is the people of God. God is not the property of any one people. But he acquired a people for himself from those who previously were not a people. One becomes a member of this people not by a physical birth, but by being "born anew", that is by faith in Christ and baptism. This people has for its head Jesus the Christ. The status of this people is that of the dignity and freedom of the sons of God, in whose hearts the Holy Spirit dwells as in a temple. Its law is the new commandment of love as Christ loved us. Its mission is to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. This people is the most sure seed of unity, hope and salvation for the whole human race. Its destiny, finally, is the Kingdom of God which has been begun by God Himself on the earth and which must be further extended until it has been brought to perfection by Him at the end of time.

The Church is the Body of Christ. Believers who respond to God's word and become members of Christ's Body, are intimately united with Him. In that body the life of Christ is communicated to those who believe, and who through the sacraments, are united in a hidden and real way to Christ in His passion and glorification. And Christ is the head of the body, the Church. He is the principle of creation and redemption. Raised to the Father's glory, in everything

(He) is pre-eminent, especially in the Church, through whom He extends His reign over all things. That is the reason why St. Augustine⁶⁹ says,

Let us rejoice then and give thanks that we have become not only Christians, but Christ (Himself) ... for if (He) is the head, we are the members, He and we together are the whole man... The fulness of Christ then is the head and the members. But what does the head and members mean? Christ and Church.

The Church is also the Bride of Christ. The Lord referred himself as the "bridegroom" (Mark 2:19). The Apostle speaks of the whole Church and of each of the faithful, members of His Body, as a bride "bethrothed" to Christ the Lord so as to become one spirit with Him. The Church is the spotless bride of the spotless Lamb (Revelation 22:17). Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her (Epesians 5:25-26). He has joined her with himself in an everlasting covenant, and never stops caring for her as for His own body (Epesians 5:29). St. Augustine⁷⁰ says again,

They are, in fact, two different persons, yet they are one in the conjugal union ... as head, (He) calls (Himself) the bridegroom, as body, (He) calls (Himself) 'bride'.

⁶⁹ Catechism of the Catholic Church, op.cit., p. 162.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 163.

Again, the Church is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes the Church "the temple of the Living God" (Corinthians 6:16). Indeed, it is to the Church herself that the "Gift of God" has been entrusted. (It is in her that the communion with Christ has been deposited, that is to say: the Holy Spirit, the pledge of incorruptibility, the strengthening of our faith and the ladder of our ascent to God. For where the Church is, there also is God's Spirit; where God's Spirit is, there is the Church and every grace. In his Sermon 267, St. Augustine⁷¹ made one very interesting remark, "What the soul is to the human body, the Holy Spirit is to the Body of Christ, which is the Church."

The Church is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.

This is the sole Church of Christ, which in the Creed we profess to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic. These four characteristics, inseparably linked with each other, indicate essential features of the Church and her mission. The Church does not possess them of herself, it is Christ who, through the Holy Spirit, makes His Church one, holy, catholic and apostolic, and it is He who calls her to realize each of these qualities. I suggest to take up these inseparably linked qualities one after another.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 163.

The Church is one because of her source. The highest exemplar and source of this mystery is the unity, in the Trinity of Persons, of one God - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Church is one because of her founder, for the Word made flesh, the Prince of Peace, reconciled all men to God by the Cross, restoring the unity of all in one people and one body. The Church is one because of her soul. It is the Holy Spirit, dwelling in those who believe and pervading and ruling over the entire Church, who brings about the wonderful communion of the faithful and joins them together so intimately in Christ that He is the principle of the Church's unity.

If so, what are these bonds of unity? According to St. Paul, above all these things (mentioned already) Charity or love binds together, for charity is the bond of perfectness. Besides, the unity of the pilgrim Church is also assured by the visible bonds of communion, say for example: the profession of one faith received from the apostles, the common celebration of sacraments, the maintenance of the fraternal concord of God's family, and more.

The early Christians understood the importance of this unity. Christianity spread rapidly throughout the Roman empire. The apostles everywhere establish "churches" - local groups of those who believed in Jesus Christ and who respected

the apostolic authority that Jesus had established. Those group understood themselves as local units of the one, universal Church of Jesus Christ. They referred to themselves as "the church in Philippi" or "the church in Corinth" to underscore that they were local expressions of one, universal or catholic Church of Christ. The local Church is any local congregation in a given location. The Church universal includes all Churches everywhere, for the one Church which is His body consists of all regenerated souls, each one redeemed by the blood of Christ and transferred by the Holy Spirit.

The Church is held holy. This is because Christ, the Son of God, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit is holy, loved the Church as His Bride, giving Himself up for her so as to sanctify her. He joined her to Himself as His body and endowed her with the gift of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God. The Church, then, is "the holy People of God" and her members are called "saints", as the Apostle Paul ⁷² used: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave given order to the churches of Galatia, even so, do ye".

The Church is holy, raises the question of how a Church of sinners claims to be a "holy" Church. Our answer

⁷² I Corinthians 16:1.

is that the Church is holy, not by the merits or virtues of its members, but because God has called it holy. In other words, to say that the Church is holy does not mean that it is perfect without sin. Holiness is a gift of God to His people, a share in divine nature. And we need to know the distinction between the visible local Church and the invisible Church. The visible Church consists of those ~~whose~~ names are on local Church rolls, and all earthly denominations and sects, good, bad and indifferent would be included. But the invisible Church is made up of those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of life (Revelation 21:27).

St. Augustine,⁷³ in the The City of God, said that some persons would be saved who truly love God, even if they were not formally members of the Church. On the other hand, St. Augustine warned his fellow Catholics that some baptized members may be of the Church would not be saved if they did not love God and live in charity. Church membership may be a great help to an individual in attaining salvation, but it is never an automatic "ticket to heaven". Similar to what St. Augustine said the Second Vatican Council insisted: "He is not saved, however, who, though he is part of the body of the Church, does not persevere in charity.

⁷³ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 459ff.

He remains indeed in the bosom of the Church, but, as it were, only in "bodily" manner, and not "in his heart". All the sons of the Church should remember that their exalted status is to be attributed not to their own merits but to the special grace of Christ. If they fail to respond to that grace in thought, in word, and deed, not only will they not be saved but they will be the more severely judged."

The Apostles' Creed express a belief in the holy Catholic Church. What does the term "Catholic" mean, and where did it come from? The word means "universal", "all embracing" or "all-inclusive". The term refers to one Church that would embrace all who followed Jesus Christ.

This use of "catholic" has ancient roots. In his The Confessions, St. Augustine⁷⁴ says that his mother Monica told him shortly before she died:

Son of my own part, I now find no delight in anything in this life. What I can still do here, and why I am here, I do not know, now that all my hopes in this world have been accomplished. One thing there was, for which I desired to linger a little while in this life, that I might see you a Catholic Christian before I died. God has granted this to me in more than abundance, for, I see you his servant....

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 223.

The Church of Christ is really present in all local groups of the faithful. In them the faithful are gathered together through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, and the mystery of the Lord's Supper is celebrated. The Father God willed to call the whole humanity together in His Son's Church. The Church is the place where humanity must rediscover its unity and salvation. The Church is the world reconciled. She is the bark which in the full sail of the Lord's cross, by the breath of the Holy Spirit, navigates safely in this world. According to another image dear to the Church Fathers, she is prefigured by Noah's ark, which alone saves us from the flood.

The Church, in obedience to the command of her founder Jesus Christ,⁷⁵ and because it is demanded by her own essential universality, strives to preach the Gospel to all men.

Go ye therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

The origin and purpose of the Lord's missionary mandate is grounded in the eternal love of the most Holy Trinity.

⁷⁵ Matthew 28:18-20.

It is from this God's love for all men that the Church receives both the obligation and the vigour of her missionary dynamism. St. Paul says, aptly, "... for the love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Corinthians 5:14). And the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of the whole of the Church's mission. It is the Holy Spirit that leads the Church on her missionary paths.

The Church is Apostolic because she is founded on the apostles in three ways. She was and remains built on the foundation of the apostles, the witnesses were chosen and sent on mission by Christ Himself. With the help of the Holy Spirit dwelling in her, the Church keeps and hands on the teaching, the words she has heard from the apostles. She continues to be taught, sanctified and guided by the apostles until Christ's return, through their successors. Christ apostles knew that they were called by God as "ministers of the New Covenant", "Servants of God", "Ambassadors for Christ and Stewards of the Mysteries of Christ."

The Apostles have given the conditions for membership in the Church. Those who believe on Christ and continue in His word are the disciples (John 8:30-31). The disciples are Christians (Acts. 11:26). The believers are the members of the Church of Christ. Repentance is a must. The apostle Peter says, "Repent ye, and be baptized in the name of Christ

for the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:37-38). Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, Lord the Son of God (Matthew 16:16-18); Acts 16:31-32) is another condition. Confession of Christ before the world (Luke 12:8). Salvation or regeneration or the new birth (John 3:3). Acts. 2:47 says, "And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." In other words, they were not added to the Church in order to be saved but added to the Church because they are saved already. This what we mean a member of the invisible Church becoming a member of the earthly visible Church. Another condition is baptism in the name of the Trinity as it is found Matthew 28:19, also in Mark 16:16. Finally, the Church⁷⁶ is to continue in the apostles' doctrine and teachings:

And they continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of the bread, and in prayers.

After confessing "the holy Catholic Church", the Apostles' Creed adds "the communion of saints." In a certain sense this article is the further explanation of the proceeding: "What is the Church if it is not the assembly of all the saints?" The communion of the saints is the Church.

⁷⁶ Acts of the Apostles 2:42.

Ascension and Second Coming

The Apostles' Creed⁷⁷ says, "He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again (Nicene adds, 'in glory') to judge the living and the dead (Nicene again adds, 'and His kingdom will have no end')". The fact of the ascension and the second coming of Christ is revealed in the Scripture.⁷⁸

And when He (Christ) had spoken these things, while they (His disciples) beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they look steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.

I would now like to consider the ascension of Christ. And in this connection St. Augustine did attest to the truth of Christ's ascension. To quote him, he says in his The City of God:⁷⁹

It is simply undeniable that, as a fact, there have been a number of miracles attesting the one, sublime, and saving miracle

⁷⁷ Catechism of the Catholic Church, op.cit., p. 41.

⁷⁸ Acts of the Apostles 1:9-11.

⁷⁹ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 513.

of Christ's Ascension into heaven with the flesh in which He arose from the dead. The books which record these miracles are absolutely trustworthy and, what is more, they record not merely the attesting miracles but the ultimate object of our faith which the miracles were meant to confirm. The miracles were made to help men's faith and, of course, they are now still better known on account of the faith which the world has embraced. The miracles are read to our people in our churches to nourish their faith....

The Old Testament speaks of the ascension of Christ, and Jesus spoke of it freely while He was on earth. The Psalmist in the Old Testament states: "Thou hast ascended on high" (68:18). In the New Testament Christ says, "Let not your (disciples) be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me... I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:1). After His resurrection from the death, Christ said to Mary, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go unto My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father" (John 20:17).

It is logical that Jesus ascends or returns home, because heaven was His home and He returns home having completed His mission on earth. By ascending into heaven and sitting at the right hand of the Father, He enters into the ministry of intercession for us at God's throne. Stephen saw Christ, and he said, "I see the heaven opened, and the Son of Man ... on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56). This

ascension proves beyond doubt that Christ actually had risen from the dead. We should worship and serve this Christ who defied the laws of gravity and ascended bodily. He ascended personally, bodily and visibly and in like manner return in His Second Coming.

The Bible and Christian tradition have given many names to the time when the glorified Jesus will return to judge mankind and to bring history to a close, such as The Second Coming of Christ, The Day of the Lord, The Parousa (personal presence), The End Time, and so on. Some Christians believe that the Second Coming will inaugurate a thousand year reign of Christ on earth, often called the "millennium", mentioned in the book of Revelation chapters 19-20 of the New Testament. In his book, Catholic and Christian, Alan Schreck⁸⁰ points out that Catholic Christians usually follow St. Augustine's interpretation of this text. I quote:

To him (Augustine), the thousand years (which is a biblical way of saying "a very long time") represents the whole history of the Church — from the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost until Christ's return at the end of time. It is a time of God's victory, but also a time of conflict. Jesus Christ has won the victory by His death on the cross, and yet Satan and his demons are still at working the world, warring against the Church. As this period of history closes,

⁸⁰ alan Schreck, Catholic and Christian, (Servant Books, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1986), p. 199.

Satan's power will increase until Jesus comes to earth again and condemns him and his followers to eternity in hell, or "lake of fire" (Revelation 20:10-14). Followers of Jesus, whose names are written in the "book of life", will then enter forever into the "new Jerusalem" of heaven (Revelation 21).

What does the Scriptures say about the Second Coming of Christ? We have a number of instances both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament in relation to the Return of Christ. The prophets of the Old Testament days foretell events connected with the last days and the Second Coming of Christ. Man of God, Job says, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth" (19:25). David says in the book of Psalms 96:13, "For He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth". Daniel, the prophet saw a vision and said:

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and ... there was given Him, dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, -nations and languages, should serve Him, His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. (7:13-14)

Jesus our Saviour Himself promises His return to the disciples. In the Gospel of John we come across what He said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in

God, believe also in Me ... I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again..." (14:1-3). Reading Matthew 24:30, we find Jesus saying, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory".

The Apostles believed and mentioned the return of Jesus to this world. St. Paul in I Thessalonians 4:16 states, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God...." Other apostles like, Peter (Acts 3:19-20), John (Revelation 1:7), James (5:7) also mention the Second Coming of the Lord.

The holy angels on the day of Jesus' ascension declared that Jesus would come the second time. To quote the relevant portion:

... He (Christ) was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight ... as He went up, behold two men (angels) stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven. (Acts 1:9-11)

The manner or the way in which the Lord will be coming is partly indicated by the Scripture references given

above. I would like to point them out and also add some other more. It will take place in the clouds (Matthew 24:30). It will be in the glory of the Father (Matthew 16:27), Jesus own glory (Matthew 25:31). It will be with power and great glory. It will also be with His saints (I Thessalonians 3:13), accompanied by angels (Matthew 16:27). He will come publicly as it is written by the apostle John, "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him". (Revelation 1:7).

What about the Time of Christ's Second Coming? When will this happen? To St. Augustine, basing on the Scripture, it is not for man to know the dates and times for it is fixed by God in His own authority. He says, in his The City of God:⁸¹

At this point people usually inquire: When will all this happen? A most unreasonable question, for, if it were good for us to know the answer, the Master, God Himself, would have told His disciples when they asked Him... "It is not for you to know the times and dates which the Father has fixed by His own authority."

However, we have certain references in the Bible which directly or indirectly answer the query. The apostle Paul in his epistle to Thessalonians says that "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (I Thessalonians 5:2).

⁸¹ St. Augustine, op.cit., pp. 420-421.

Jesus Himself said in the Gospels that "for in such an hour as yet think not the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:44); or "the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him," and in an hour that he is not aware of" (Matthew 24:50). In other words, the time of Christ's Second Coming is a secret. This is known only to the Father, for, Jesus said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but by My Father only" (Matthew 24:36). Jesus Himself as a man did not know that day and hour, but Jesus as God who is omniscient for sure knows the exact moment when this glorious Second Return will take place. This secret tells His children to be ready at all times, for He may come at any time, as one chorus says:⁸²

Jesus may come in the morning,
 Jesus may come at noon,
 Jesus may come in the evening,
 So, keep your heart in tune.

If the time of the Second Coming of Christ is not known, will there be Signs of Christ's coming? The Bible has answer to this question through the writing of men of God. Matthew 24:29 tells the would be signs in the sun, moon and stars. In the same book and in the same chapter verse six, Jesus mentions wars and rumours of wars. Again, in verse seven Jesus included earthquakes, pestilences,

⁸² Recall from author's memory.

storms to be part of the signs. In 2 Timothy 3:1-5, St. Paul mentions that the moral condition of the people be worse in the last days. The Bible further indicates that there will be Economic troubles (James 5:1-6); Distress among the nations (Luke 21:25-28); Spread of false evolutionary philosophy over the world (2 Peter 3:3-7); Spread of modern spiritualism over the earth (1 Timothy 4:1-3; Leviticus 19:31); Apostasy in the Church (2 Timothy 3:1-4); the great modern increase of knowledge. Modern inventions begin to come, one after another especially those that have to do with modern communications and transportations — the railway train, automobile, airplane, rockets, modern postal systems, telegraph and telephone, radio and television etc. etc. God Almighty has spoken to prophet Daniel⁸³ concerning transportation-communication knowledge as:

But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words,
and seal the book, even to the time of the end:
many shall run to and fro, and
knowledge shall be increased.

Still, other signs such as the destruction of Jerusalem (Luke 21:20-24); the completion of the Church, 'until the fullness of the Gentiles become in' (Romans 11:25); the coming of anti-Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:3-8) shall also take place. But what is finally the most wonderful sign of all at the

⁸³ Daniel 12:4.

end and the coming of the Lord? The Bible,⁸⁴ which is newer than tomorrow's newspaper, has the answer, from the very mouth of Christ Himself: "And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations; and then shall the end come".

The question, "Why is Christ coming the second time?" is answered by the Creed when it says, "He will come again 'in glory' to judge the living and the dead, 'and His kingdom will have no end'". And this is the most important area in the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is coming again to judge the world. The Bible in I Peter 4:5-6, says,

But they will have to give an account to Him who is ready to judge and pass sentence on the living and the dead. For this why the good news (the Gospel) was preached (in their life time) even to the dead, that though judged in fleshly bodies as men are, they might live in the spirit as God does. (Amplified).

The primary purpose of His first coming was "to seek and to save that which was lost". St. Luke says, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (19:10). He came the first time in humility; He was rejected and crucified. But in this Second coming, He comes 'in glory'

⁸⁴ Matthew 24:14.

and power. He does not come on a saving mission, but it will be a saving mission only to those who have received Him as Saviour and Lord earlier. He will raise the dead and transform the living Christians, and thus complete their salvation (I Corinthians 15:50ff; I Thessalonians 4:13ff). But no sinner will repent after He comes. It will offer no opportunity for repentance. Christ is not coming for the salvation of sinners. He comes for judgement. The apostle Peter seems to say and teach that the reason the Lord delays His coming is because He does not wish that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). In other words, He delays that men may have the opportunity to repent.

In the presence of Christ, who is Truth itself, the truth of each man's relationship with God will be laid bare (John 12:49). The Last Judgement will reveal even to its furthest consequences the good each person has done or failed to do during his earthly life. St. Augustine in Sermon 18:4 wrote:⁸⁵

All that the wicked do is recorded, and they do not know. When "our God comes, He does not keep silence"... He will turn towards those at His left hand ... Would

⁸⁵ As quoted in Catechism of the Catholic Church, p. 207.

that you had known that my little ones were in need I placed them on earth.... But you have placed nothing in their hands; therefore you have found nothing in My presence.

The just and the unjust will be resurrected. All who are in the tombs will hear the Son's voice and come forth. Those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgement. Then when Christ shall come in glory, and the angels with Him,

... before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and He will place the sheep at His right hand, but the goats at the left... and they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. (Matthew 25:31-46).

Christ is coming to raise the righteous dead and translate the living righteous. Jesus Himself said in St. John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

Christ is also coming again to reward His people. "And behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give everyman according to his work shall be" (Revelation

22:12). St. Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:8, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also love His appearing".

Further, Jesus is coming the second time for the consummation of His kingdom - to smite the wicked one and begin His reign in glory. In other words, He will bring to completion that which is now incomplete. He will perfect the imperfect. The apostle Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 & 8, "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work... and then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming". Jesus speaking of Himself said: "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory" (Matthew 25:31). All authority was given unto Him (Matthew 28:18). This authority envisions the complete realization of the salvation of men. Some day it will be universally recognized "that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11). The deliverance of the kingdom to the Father, along with the abolishing of death,

is part of the consumation. "Then cometh the end, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death" (I Corinthians 15:24-26). When the work of redemption is accomplished, He restores the kingdom to the Father, having brought the redeemed back into the submission and fellowship of God.

And those who are fellowshiping with Christ will form the community of the redeemed, "the holy city" of God, "the Bride, the Wife of the Lamb" (Revelation 21:2,9). She will not be wounded any longer by sin, stains, self-love, that destroy or wound the earthly community. The beautiful vision, in which God opens Himself in an exhaustible way to the elect, will be the ever-flowing well-spring for happiness, peace and mutual communion.

Finally, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is to redeem the cosmos. The apostle Peter indicates that the present order will pass away and there will be new heaven and new earth (2 Peter 3:12, 13). The apostle saw new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21:1). St. Paul⁸⁶ indicates that the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God for redemption:

⁸⁶ Romans 8:19-23.

... the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God... because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruit of the Spirit even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption to wit, the redemption of our body.

Thus, at the end of time, that is at the Second Coming of Christ, the Kingdom of God will come in its fullness. The just will reign with Christ for ever, glorified in body and soul, and the material universe itself will be transformed/redeemed. And God will be "all in all" in eternal life, as the apostle Paul said:⁸⁷

And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him that God may be all in all.

Trinity

The concept of Trinity in Christianity is not only central to Christianity but also to the Christian philosophy of St. Augustine. It is the belief of the Christians that God is one in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Donne⁸⁸ also wrote about "three-personed God" or Trinity

⁸⁷ I Corinthians 15:28.

⁸⁸ C.A. Patrides (Ed.), The Complete English Poems of John Donne, (Everyman's Library, London & Melbourne, 1985), p. 428.

in his Holy Sonnets. These three persons are distinct, but equal in power, majesty, and divinity. The "Trinity" is the name that the early Christians gave to the one God which comprised of three equal and distinct divine persons. According to Frost:⁸⁹

The word Trinity is a Latin derivation, meaning three in one. The knowledge of the doctrine of Trinity comes through revelation; man may derive from reason the unity of God... though the Montanists first defined the doctrine of Trinity, Tertullian (the first of the early Church Fathers to write in Latin) was the one who named it.

The centrality of Trinity in St. Augustine's philosophy is seen in his, The Confessions.⁹⁰ He says:

In Your name we were baptized, O Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit. In Your name we baptize, O Father, and Son and Holy Spirit.

In other words, he was baptized and he also baptized others in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Again, St. Augustine⁹¹ makes mention of the indication of the Trinity in the creation of man as follows:

You (God) do not say, "Let man be made", but "Let us make man", and You do not say

⁸⁹ S.E. Frost, Great Philosophers, (The Standard Bookshelf, Garden City, N.Y., 1942), p. 121.

⁹⁰ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 343.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 355.

"according to His kind", but "to Our image and likeness"... You teach him (man) to see the Trinity of unity and the unity of the Trinity.

In his On the Trinity, St. Augustine points out that in this Trinity there is absolute equality. In divinity, the Father is not greater than the Son, nor are the Father and the Son together greater than the Holy Spirit; nor is any single Person of the three anything less than the Trinity itself.

The Bible also bears witness to the Trinity, whether it is the Old Testament or the New Testament. Let us briefly look at the Old Testament. The first line of the evidence of Trinity is found in the precise grammar of the Hebrew language, which has two different words for "One". "Echad" means "one", but a compound unity, and this word is often linked with plural verbs and adjectives. "Echad" is frequently used to describe the One God of Israel, as found in the famous verse, "The Lord our God is One Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4). "Yacheed" also means "One" but implies absolute unity, and thus would be the obvious choice of any author who would like to express the absolute singular unity of God. Yet "Yacheed" is never once used to describe the Oneness of God. The Jews did not believe in the Trinity, but they have never attempted to remove this line of evidence, nor would

they have permitted the Christians to tamper with the Sacred Text by inserting "echad" instead of "Yacheed". This fact is also an incidental proof of the claim that the text of the Bible has not been corrupted. Again, we find that God Himself taught that He is a compound Unity. In the prophecy of Isaiah⁹² we read: "I am He; I am the first, I also am the last... and now the Lord God and His Spirit hath sent Me." As a matter of fact, by reading the context, we find that here in the quoted portion, God spoke these words, and clearly it is the Son who mentions both Father and Spirit.

The New Testament teaching on Trinity seems much clearer than that of the Old Testament. We observe that when Jesus was baptized, the Spirit descended upon Him, and the voice of the Father was heard saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16-17). Again, Jesus commanded His disciples to baptize in the Name (not 'names') of the Father, and of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus⁹³ commanded: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

⁹² Isaiah 48:12-16.

⁹³ Matthew 28:19.

St. Augustine⁹⁴ points out in his The Confessions, "O God, one Trinity and trinal Unity... you have created heaven and earth and out of nothing, a great thing and a little thing. For You are almighty and good, to make all things" To mention a few, the Trinity acted in Unity in creation, in incarnation, in prayer and in generation. (i) In creation, God the Father spoke, "And God said, Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3). God the Son was the Word spoken, "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1). God the Holy Spirit moved upon the face of the waters (Genesis 1:2). (ii) In the Incarnation, God the Father gave His only Son (John 3:16). God the Son was born into the world (Luke 2:11). God the Holy Spirit came upon Mary to cause the conception (Luke 1:35). (iii) In Prayer, God the Father is the one who receives the requests (John 16:23). God the Son is the One in whose name we pray (John 16:23). It was God the Holy Spirit who directs us in our prayers (Romans 8:26). (iv) In Regeneration, God the Father records the names in glory (Luke 10:20). God the Son cleanses the sin in His precious blood (Ephesians 1:7). And, God the Holy Spirit performs the transforming miracle of the regeneration or new birth (John 3:3-6).

⁹⁴ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 308.

St. Augustine also offers an analogy on a man's nature, trinity or three actualities. He says in his The Confessions,⁹⁵ "I speak of these three: to be, to know, and will: I am a knowing and am willing being, and I know that I am and that I will, and I will to be and to know". This is his way of reasoning. In like manner, I consider that although no perfect demonstration or analogy is possible, there are certain ways we can illustrate the Trinity from Reasoning. I shall start off with my own example, then to man, and then to water.

(1) E.Z. Sian: I am only one person but I can be revealed as three persons. How? The answer is like this. My parents see me as their son. They see me differently from anyone else and accordingly I respond to them in a way that is different from my response to others. Say, I have due respect to them and therefore, dedicate my thesis to their honour. My wife (Sanhim) sees me as her husband which is a different relationship. My children (El, Daniel, Hermon, Rody) see me as their father. I remain still one person but I am revealed as a son, a husband and a father at the same time. God, is also indivisible but revealed in three persons as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 342.

(ii) Man: According to the Scripture, is a three-fold unity of Body, Soul and Spirit. In I Thessalonians 5:23, the apostle Paul writes, "I pray to God that your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has made man in His likeness - a tripartite being, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...." (Genesis 1:26). It is not easy to demonstrate the relation of these three components of man as body, soul and spirit. Yet, the fact is unchallengeable. Think of a man who is intellectually brilliant and physically perfect, but the moment the spirit leaves his body, he is no longer a man but a corpse. To be a true man, he must possess the three-fold unity of body, soul and spirit. This, therefore, let us know the Triune God.

(iii) H₂O: stands for Ice, Water, and Steam. The formula H₂O is known to us in all three forms, as Ice (which is Solid), as Water (which is Liquid) and as Steam (which is Vapour). On the one hand, Solid is not liquid, and liquid is not vapour. On the other hand, we cannot deny the fact that Solid is H₂O and Liquid is H₂O and Vapour is also H₂O. It is a three-fold unity. In like manner, we can reason about the Trinity. The Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Spirit. On the other hand, the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Spirit is God.

There are certain false views of Trinity. I would like to briefly look at them. I also would like to give comment on them. The four false views are, Sabellian view, Arian view, Tritheistic view and Calculation False (views).

(i) Sabellian or Modalistic View holds that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are simple manifestations or revelations of God to His creatures, which manifestations are not eternal. God is one, and this one God has shown Himself in three offices or modes. Hence, this view is also called Modalism. According to this view, God is not tri-personal. He is uni-personal, manifesting Himself in three different aspects. As the Father, representing God, He is the source of all things, He creates and plans. As the Son, representing God, He incarnates, reveals and saves. As the Holy Spirit, representing God, He regenerates, sanctifies, and leads the individual believer and the Church.

But, we have here only an economic Trinity, one of a function alone. It is not an immanent Trinity. It is not permanent but only temporary. Each mode is a temporary manifestation. The only merit in this system is that it preserves the deity of Christ and the personality of the Holy Spirit.

(ii) The Arian view is also called Unitarian view.

According to this view, the Father is only divine being who had no beginning, and was not created. The Son and the Holy Spirit were created. The Son is the first and greatest of all created beings. He is next to God and He is endowed with divine powers. Arius the founder of this view insisted that Christ should be worshipped. However, Socinus, one of the followers of Arius, does not believe in worshipping a created being, including Christ. This is the source of modern Unitarianism.

The Arian view throws Christ and the Holy Spirit out of the Godhead. Christ is never conceived as God Incarnate. Therefore, there is hardly anything of merit in this view.

(iii) The Tritheistic view speaks of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as we speak of three human individuals. A good deal is said about "cooperation among the three persons of the Trinity; cooperation in this case meant that the three conferred, agreed on a plan, and all worked at it separately or conjointly. We hear, in this system, the 'Councils of Eternity' as if three individuals met around a council table and come to an agreement.

This view of solving the Trinity by thinking of the Godhead as being three individuals of the same class

who "confer" and "cooperate" does not do justice to the unity of God. Father, Son and Holy Spirit might be spoken of as three persons, but not as three individuals.

(iv) A very common mistake made by those who oppose the thought of Trinity is that of attempting to dispose this doctrine mathematically. I would like to call this view, Calculation False. According to them, $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$, meaning that Father + Son + Holy Spirit = God.

The above answer would have been correct, if the sum were correct. But, unfortunately the sum is wrong. The Bible never states, nor do the Christians believe that the Father + the Son + and the Holy Spirit = God. The Christian belief and the Bible concept of the Trinity rather is $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$. What would a teacher say, if a child was asked to find the dimensions of a cube $1 \times 1 \times 1$ and he added the three digits together? In the same way, the doctrine of Trinity does not set out the number of Gods but the greatness or dimension or magnittude of God.

In his The City of God,⁹⁶ St. Augustine has pointed out the fact of Trinity as follows:

⁹⁶ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 232.

We believe, maintain and faithfully teach that the Father begot the Word, that is, the only-begotten Son, who is the Wisdom by which all things were created. He is one as the Father is one, eternal as the Father is eternal, and equally with the Father, is supremely good. The Holy Spirit is, like-wise... consubstantial and co-eternal with both. And this whole is a Trinity because of the individuality of the Persons and, yet, a single God because of the indivisible divinity and a single Almighty because of indivisible omnipotence. Yet, when we ask concerning each Person individually, the answer must be that each one is God and each is Almighty; and when we inquire concerning the three together, the reply must be that they are not three Gods or three Almighties, but a single God Almighty.

According to Alban Douglas,⁹⁷ "God is Infinite while we are Finite. To attempt a philosophical explanation of the Trinity of God is an attempt to put the facts of the Infinite in Finite terms. It is a mystery and will remain a mystery until we meet the Lord in glory". In the same line of thought Lindsell and Woodbridge⁹⁸ also made a proverbial statement like this, "He who try to understand the Trinity fully will lose his mind. But he who would deny the Trinity will lose his soul."

St. Augustine also believes that it is impossible to comprehend fully the mystery of the Trinity. He comes

⁹⁷ Alban Douglas, One Hundred Bible Lessons, (GLS Bombay, 1980), p. 15.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 16.

to this conclusion after a personal experience. Warren Thomas Smith,⁹⁹ writing on the life and thought of St. Augustine related the mysterious incident that had happened in the life and experience of St. Augustine as follows:

There is the delightful story of St. Augustine, as he laboured through On the Trinity, that he walked on the beach of Hippo. He saw a handsome little boy (really an Angel in disguise) digging a hole in the sand, then filling it with water from a cockle shell. When the bishop inquired what the child was doing, the reply came that he was attempting to empty the sea. "Impossible", said the Bishop. "Not more impossible St. Augustine", said the boy, "than for your finite mind to comprehend the mystery of the Trinity".

On the basis of what is seen in the Bible, we cannot deny the truth of the doctrine of Trinity. On the other hand, as St. Augustine and others as I have already mentioned express that it is impossible for finite mind to fully comprehend and understand the mystery of the Trinity. With Geisler and Feinberg,¹⁰⁰ I would like to put the concept of the Trinity in the following form of argument.

Premise 1 : There is one God.

Premise 2 : There are three persons who are God
(Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

⁹⁹ Warren Thomas Smith, Augustine: His Life and Thought, (John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1980), p. 108.

¹⁰⁰ Norman L. Geisler & Paul D. Feinberg, Introduction to Philosophy, (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1985), p. 75.

Conclusion : There is one God who (eternally) exists in three persons - the Trinity.

Conclusion

I have arranged the Fundamental Principles of Christianity in the following order. The Credo. Immaculate Conception of Christ. The Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Forgiveness of Sins through God's Grace. Belief in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. The Ascension into Heaven and the Second Coming of Christ. The Concept of Trinity. However, I would hasten to add that the above mentioned order is not one that of priority but one that of equal importance.

Under the concept of Credo, I have tried to define what  Credo is. There are two important Credos of Christianity, namely, The Apostle's Creed and The Nicene Creed. I have indicated the origin and the significance of these two. It is no exaggeration to say that the Creeds are based on Revelation and Scripture. There is, I have pointed out, an intimate relation between the Creeds and the Scripture on the one hand, and the Scripture and God's Revelation on the other.

The Immaculate Birth of Christ is very fundamental to the Christian belief. So much so, we cannot talk about

Christianity in a meaningful way without having a belief in such a birth. The Immaculate Birth of Christ and His Incarnation are necessarily connected. After all, the Incarnation of Christ necessarily involves the notion of the Son of God assuming the human nature in order to bring about salvation for the sinful mankind. Many a thinker has tried to invalidate the Immaculate Birth of Christ. These thinkers, I am afraid, are not aware of the Scriptural truth that Christ's sinless nature befits His Virgin Birth. Moreover, the Immaculate Conception must be understood as a statement about Jesus rather than a statement about Mary, though Christians believe in the uniqueness of Mary.

The Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ occupy a central position in the belief-structure of the Christians. The Death of Christ was essential for the salvation of mankind. Christ bore all the sins of mankind and died on the despicable cross for them. However, Christ triumphed over death. He rose from the dead on the third day. His Death and Resurrection is both the sacramentum of the current death and the renewal of the inner man, and an exemplum of the future Death and Resurrection of the whole mankind. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is very meaningful and significant for the Christian. There are several theories which attempt to repudiate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Some of the important theories are The Fraud Theory, The Myth Theory, The Ghost Theory, The Swoon Theory and The Hallucination Theory. I have repudiated all these theories on the basis of sound arguments.

The Forgiveness of Sins through the Grace of God becomes paramount as far as the sinful nature of man is concerned. Forgiveness of sins is one of the distinguishing characteristics of Christianity. It is possible only through God's Grace. Forgiveness is emphasized in the Lord's Prayer. Needless to say that St. Augustine gives much importance to this aspect of Christianity. He is of the view that without forgiveness, there is no eternal liberation.

The Church is One. Christ established only One Church. This Church is known as the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I have given the meanings of the word 'Church' and 'Catholic'. The unity of the Church cannot be over-emphasized. St. Augustine explicates the unique relation between Christ and Church. He says that Christ is the head and that others are members of the Church. Church is both a sign and an instrument, that is, of communication with God and unity among all men. The Church is also described as the bride of Christ, Christ Himself being the bridegroom. The Church is Catholic because it is considered to be universal, all-embracing or all-inclusive. The Church

is Apostolic because it is founded on the Apostles in different ways, as I have already explained.

The Ascension and Second Coming of Jesus Christ forms one of the fundamental principles of Christianity. I have pointed out that it is logical that Jesus ascends into heaven because heaven is His home. He simply returns home after having gloriously completed His given task on earth. The Second Coming of Christ is equally important. He comes again to judge the living and the dead. This is very important for the Christians to know so that they may lead a virtuous life. I have also discussed the Timing of the Second Coming. The Second Coming of Christ not only redeems mankind but also the whole Cosmos.

The Concept of Trinity in Christianity is not only central to Christianity but also to the Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine. This Concept of Trinity is not acceptable to many. I have rejected all their opinions and tried to establish the validity and the importance of this concept. I have also given my own example to state and explicate the notion of Trinity or the Concept of True God.

I have tried to relate and logically cohere all the Fundamental Principles of Christianity. These Fundamental Principles stand or fall together. Take away one Principle,

the whole edifice collapses. There are many other Principles of Christianity. I have not taken them into consideration simply because of the fact that I do not consider them to be Fundamental to Christianity. They do not belong to the core, but to the periphery.

Chapter IV

ST. AUGUSTINE AND GOD

ST. AUGUSTINE AND GOD

Having considered St. Augustine and the Fundamental Principles of Christianity in the preceding chapter, I would like to consider St. Augustine and God in this fourth chapter. There is, I believe, an inextricable relationship between St. Augustine and God. Do we ever pause and think as to what will happen if we subtract God from St. Augustine?

In answer to the question posed above, I would say that we will get a "restless Augustine". My reason for saying so is being supported by St. Augustine's own words. In the opening chapter of his famous The Confessions, St. Augustine¹ says, "You (God) have made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in You." Pascal² also has the same line of philosophy, when he says, "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of man, and only God can fill it." In my considered opinion, therefore, St. Augustine minus God will

¹ St. Augustine, The Confessions, Trans. John K. Ryan, (Image books, Doubleday, N.Y., 1960), p. 43.

² Ravi Zacharias, A Shattered Visage, (RZIM India, Madras, 1992), p. 89.

be restless, vacuous Augustine, no saintship or sainthood along with his name. It goes without saying that he would not be what he is today without God. And it is only when St. Augustine rests or takes refuge in God, and in His strength that St. Augustine could overcome his emptiness and sinful life which has been troubling him. Concerning this sinful labour and troubling life of burden of heart, St. Augustine³ mentions the invitation of Christ as:

I have read in Plato and Cicero sayings that are wise and very beautiful; but I never read in either of them: "Come unto Me (Christ) all ye that labour and are heaven laden, I will give you rest."

Turning the pages of his life and experience, we can say that what the Psalmist has said is true in the life of St. Augustine. The Psalmist⁴ says,

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

Moreover, to St. Augustine, God is Creator, Sustainer, Provider and Redeemer. God is the creator of nature

³ George Sweeting (Compiler), More Than 2,000 Great Quotes & Illustrations, (Word Books Publisher, Texas, 1985).

⁴ Psalms 46:1-3.

and man. Creation is the free act of God, without using material existing prior to that time. It includes what can be seen and what cannot be seen in the universe. It is not just an idea of God, but this idea made objective. It has destined origination. It is creative energy becoming force. It is the beginning of time. It is the origination of that which did not exist, either in form or substance. It is the production of an effect with no natural antecedent existing prior to its coming into being. God did not have to create out of necessity. He simply chose to create. What does the Bible say?

The Bible clearly states that creation is an act of God. Genesis 1:1 says that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". Again in the same book, chapter one, verse twenty-seven says, "And God created man in His image". We find also in Genesis 2:7: "And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul". Christ Himself was the agent of creation for John records in his Gospel, "All things were made through Him (Christ); and without Him was anything made that hath been made (1:3). God willed it, and the world came into existence. In his The Confessions, St. Augustine⁵ asserts:

⁵ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 160.

Upto this time, although I affirmed and firmly believed that You, our Lord, the true God, who made not only our souls but also our bodies, and not only our souls and bodies, but all men all things....

St. Augustine believes that God is the Sustainer of His creation. It is God the Creator who constantly and actively sustains mankind and the forces of the whole universe. All life and growth, all activity, all movements are due to the Creator, God Himself. St. Augustine's belief in the sustaining act of God is supported by the Word of God. The Psalmist says, "Thou sustains or preserves man and beast" (36:6). The apostle Paul writes, "In Him we live, and move and have our being" (Acts. 17:28). Again, the book of Nehemiah⁶ says,

Thou, even Thou, art Lord alone; Thou hast made heaven, and the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are there in, the seas, and all that is there in, and Thou preservest (sustaineth) them all.

King David,⁷ a man after God's own heart trustfully says,

I lay down and slept
I wakened again,
for the Lord sustains me.

⁶ Nehemiah 9:6.

⁷ Psalms 3:5.

God, according to St. Augustine, is a Provider too. He is the provider of the progress of the creation. It is all-comprehending, involving the small and the great, the individual and the group, the national and the international. It involves both heredity and the environment that influence men in their preparation to do God's will and motivate them to obedience. This belief of St. Augustine that God is the Provider of His creation is supported by both the Old and New Testaments. Job in the Old Testament records, "He (God) increaseth the nations, and He destroyeth them. He enlargeth the nations, and He leadeth them captive" (12:23). In the New Testament, Luke states, "He put down princes from their thrones, and hath exalted them of low degree" (1:52). St. Paul⁸ assuredly says, "My God shall supply (provide) all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus".

To St. Augustine, God is not only the Creator, Sustainer, and Provider, but also Redeemer. Since I have dealt with this in chapter three, I will not discuss it again. However, I would like to say a few things about God being the Redeemer. Redemption here means "buying back". Men had been sold for nothing to the Devil, but Christ redeemed and brought men back to God. The Scripture says, "without

⁸ Philippians 4:19.

shedding of blood there is no remission of sin" (Hebrews 9:22). The distinctive feature of Christian philosophy is blood atonement. It is the very heart of Christianity. St. Augustine knew that without the redeeming work of Christ he cannot be saved or he cannot have rest of soul. Peter⁹ has rightly pointed out in his epistle, saying:

For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ as a lamb without blemish and without spot.

St. Augustine believes that not only are men redeemed from the hands of the devil, but also from the hands of the law. The law condemns the sinner, but Christ redeems every sinner. Thus, the redemptive death of Christ bought men back to God's fellowship and citizenship by changing men's standing before God. It is a change from guilt and condemnation to pardon and forgiveness. There is the secret of peace and this is peace with God. The apostle Paul¹⁰ strongly says,

And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

⁹ 1 Peter 1:18-19.

¹⁰ Colossians 1:20.

Mention must be made here too that God or Christ is not only the Redeemer of the sinners or humankind. It is, as St. Paul says in his letter to the Romans, for the whole creation too. And this redemptive work will be completed at the second coming of Christ, which man and the whole creation is anxiously waiting for. The apostle Paul¹¹ writes,

The whole creation groaneth and travaileth... even ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

God's Essence and Attributes

What, then is the essence of God, according to St. Augustine? St. Augustine appreciates and stresses the fact that Infinite God is above and beyond the comprehension of men's finite minds. He says that if we comprehend Him He is not God. He further says,¹²

We must as far as we are able, hold God to be the good, without belonging to the category of quality; as immense, without pertaining to the category of quantity; as the Creator, but without need; as above all things, but without local place; as containing all things, but Himself not contained; as truly present everywhere, but without a 'where', as eternal, but without time, as a creator of all things changeable, but without undergoing any change in Himself; as free from all suffering.

¹¹ Romans 8:19-23.

¹² De Trin., 5:12.

God is both One and Unique; He is infinitely perfect and eternal; and especially is He Being Itself for St. Augustine in Psalms 101, Serm. 2:10 says, "Everything that is in God is being". And, He is the First Cause of the Universe. All beings outside of God are only reproductions of the original exemplars existing in His mind. Only by participation in the Divine Being do other beings come into existence.

The natural attributes pertaining to the essence of God may be briefly defined as Living Personal Spirit. God is the Living God, for there is within His own being a source of being and activity for Himself and others. He is self-existent. He is contrast to the gods that have no life. If man's spirit implies life, God's Spirit implies an exhaustible life, an endless, ever-abiding life. The Scripture tells of a Living God. After pouring ridicule on idols made of gold and silver, the prophet Jeremiah states, "But Jehovah is the true God; He is the living God, and everlasting King" (10:10). In the New Testament we have enough evidence that God is a Living God. Jesus¹³ states, "For as the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son also to have life in Himself". The apostle Paul¹⁴

¹³ John 5:25.

¹⁴ 1 Thessalonians 1:9.

commends the Thessalonian believers because they turned unto God from idols, to serve the living and true God, he says, "... they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."

St. Augustine, as a believer of the Bible, believes that God is a Personal Being. God has personality which is characterized by the possession of knowledge, feeling and will-power. An idol is devoid of personality for it neither knows, feels nor responds. The believers at Thessalonica turned from such idols to the Living Personal God. God is a Person. He is not an influence or unseen force or power like electricity. In the Old Testament¹⁵ it is recorded, "... the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect." The moving eyes denote life and personality is unknown to false gods and idols. The truth of the personality of God may be affirmed from different reasons. (i) It is inferred from the personality of man. Man's personality calls for the personality of God. God would not be subordinate to created man in His qualities. Personality is the highest form of being of which we know. Therefore, we attribute to God this perfection of being. (ii) It can again be inferred from the religious life of

¹⁵ 2 Chronicles 16:9.

a man. Every valuable thing in religion is based on the conception of God as personal. Repentance, faith, prayer, offering, confession, worship and so on, all point to God as Personal Being. (iii) The Scripture pictures God in a very personal manner. God speaks to Adam and Eve, Noah and Abraham. And God spoke to Moses, "I Am that I Am" (Exodus 3:14). He did not say "It is I", therefore, implying both personality and presence. (iv) Jesus Christ addresses His Father in the closest term - "My Father". He tells Mary, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God" (John 20:17). (v) Christian experience portrays God as personal. The sinner is convicted of sinning against a Personal God. He repents to a Personal God and expresses faith in a Personal God. This same Personal God regenerates and saves him, thus bringing fellowship with God in the most personal terms. God's personality is a reality to the saved ones. In his The Confession, St. Augustine¹⁶ confesses:

"What shall I render to the Lord", for He recalls these things to my memory, but my soul is not made fearful by them? Lord, I will love You, and give thanks to You, and confess to Your Name, since You have forgiven me so many evils and so many impious works. To Your grace and to Your mercy I ascribe it that You have dissolved my sins as if they were ice.

¹⁶ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 73.

Accepting what the Scripture says, Augustine confesses that God is Spirit. Jesus¹⁷ said to the Samaritan women at the well, "God is Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." In Romans 1:20, the apostle Paul talks about the "invisible things of Him". A Spirit has neither flesh, bones nor blood. But God is described as having hands, feet, arms, eyes, mouth (Luke 24:39). We call these "anthromorphic" (from two Greek words, meaning 'form of man') expressions of God. They are concepts designed to set forth vividly the activities of God, and in no way do they contradict or oppose His spirituality. Christian or a child of God experiences that he knows and have fellowship with God's Spirit. This is the way we have experience Him in our lives as believers. He came convincing our sins, He came regenerating. He came sanctifying. In each of these happenings the Spirit of God was the controlling factor. God, therefore, is a Spirit. St. Augustine¹⁸ says in his The Confessions:

Lord, is not this your Scripture true, since
You who are true and You, Truth itself,
have set forth? To this You answer
me that You are my God, and with a mighty
voice You speak to your servant in his

¹⁷ John 4:24.

¹⁸ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 364.

interior ear, and break through my deafness, and cry out: "O man, true it is that what my Scripture says I myself say So the things that you see me through my Spirit I see, just as those things which you speak by my Spirit I say."

Pertaining to God's Infinity, He is not limited by the universe, nor confined to the universe; for He is Infinite, while the universe is Finite. God is Infinite because of His Absoluteness, Self-Existence, Supremacy, Unity, Immutability, Immensity, Perfection and Eternity.

The Absoluteness of God indicates that He is not dependent on anything outside Himself. He is independent of the universe, for His relations to the universe are not necessary from His side. The world is dependent upon God, but God is not dependent upon the world. His relation to the world is due to choice on His part. If God is limited by the world, it is self-limitation on the part of God. He limits Himself by something He Himself creates. There is nothing outside God with which He can be contrasted. If there be anything outside God, God would be limited by or conditioned by that. It is interesting to note that St. Augustine has set aside one chapter called "God the Absolute Good" in book seven of his famous The Confessions. Let me take the liberty of quoting him from the section,¹⁹

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 161.

For absolutely no corruption defiles our God: none from the will, none from the necessity, none from any unforeseen chance. He is God, and what He wills for Himself is good, and He Himself is the same good, whereas to be corrupted is not good. Nor are You forced to do anything against Your will, because Your will is no greater than Your power. But it would be greater if (You) were greater than Yourself. God's will and power are God Himself.

The Self-Existence of God means that God exists in and of Himself. He Himself is the source of His being. Man has the ground of existence outside himself. God has the ground of His existence within Himself. He does not depend on others and thus making this idea of God parallel to the idea of absoluteness we have just discussed above. The very name "I am that I Am (Exodus 3:14) which God gave for Himself to be used of Moses in his great mission, implies self-existence. Yet when we say that God is the cause of His own existence we do not attribute to Him beginning of existence. This would imply that at some time He was not, which is not true. We are saying that the ground of His existence is not outside Himself. Rather, He is the living source of all energy and all being, Nor are we saying that God willed Himself into existence, for this would again imply the same false conclusion, that there was a time He was not. His existence is founded in His nature, for it is His very nature to be. St. Augustine²⁰ acknowledges the

²⁰ Ibid., p. 171.

self-existence of God in the following lines:

From afar You cried to me, 'I Am Who Am'.
I heard, as one hears in his heart; there
was no further place for doubt.... I beheld
other things below You, and I saw that they
are not altogether existent nor altogether
non-existent: they are, because, they are
from You; they are not, since they are not
what You are. For that truly exists which
endures unchangeably. 'But it is good for
me to adhere to my God....

By the Supremacy of God, St. Augustine means that there is no power greater or higher than He. There is no one over Him. Man cannot conceive of a being superior to God. What God wills happens. What He decides takes place. What He wishes is being fulfilled. The supremacy of God was the central factor in God's dealing with men. It took ten plagues to make Pharaoh in Egypt to realize this. Pharaoh once said, "Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto His voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, and moreover, I will not let Israel go" (Exodus 5:2). However, the Supreme Almighty God led the Israelites out of the cruel bondage of Pharaoh of Egypt. Therefore, God Jehovah is the Supreme God, for there is no measuring of His wisdom and power. St. Augustine²¹ do acknowledge that God is supreme, as seen in the following lines:

²¹ Ibid., p. 157.

But what more I should think You to be,
I did not know. I, a man - and such a man! -
tried to think upon You, the Supreme, the
sole, and the true God, and I believed with
all my soul.

By the Unity of God is meant that God is one. It is the same idea that is expressed by the term monotheism, a word derived from the Greek meaning, one God. If God is Supreme He is One. The unity of God is found both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. In Deuteronomy 6: 4-5 of the Old Testament the Scripture says, "Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah; and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might". Again in the book of Isaiah 44:6, God said: "I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God." The unity of God is not inconsistent with the doctrine of the Trinity, for the doctrine holds to personal distinctions within the One being of God. They are manifested in three persons in the one Godhead. To Jesus Christ, God is one, He is a Unity (John 5:44). The apostle Paul also says, "There is no God but one" (I Corinthians 8:4). In other words, the New Testament also testify that God is One. The Nicene Creed²² also says, "We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen". St. Augustine also accepts

²² Catechism of the Catholic Church, (Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1994), p. 41.

and advocates what the Creed says. The Apostles' Creed²³ confesses: "I believe in one God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth."

God is Immutable. When we say that God is immutable we are referring to His unchangeable nature. God is an unchanging reality, though all changes are within God. He is the ground of the changing world. God's immutability implies that the nature of God remains self-consistent throughout. God's essence does not change and His attributes remain unchanged. But this does not mean immobility or inactivity. Immutability refers to the self-consistency that pervades all that God is or does. He is changeless in all His great attributes and powers.

Reason itself teaches no change in God. There can be no decrease or increase in God. God is perfection already. The Scripture teaches no change in God. In the Old Testament, the Psalmist speaks of the fact that God change the heavens and the earth. But of God Himself, he says, "But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end" (102:27). Through the prophet Malachi God said: "For I, Jehovah, change not" (3:6). In Genesis 6:6 we read, "It repented Jehovah that

²³ Ibid.

He had made man". But this must be interpreted in the light of the book of Numbers 23:19, "God is not a man, that He should lie, neither the Son of man that He should repent". God's holiness does not change. When the moral conditions of man change, God must alter His treatment of man. But this is man's changing and not of God's. Recognizing the immutability and unchangeability of God, St. Augustine²⁴ writes:

... You are not a bodily image, nor are You an effection of a living thing, such as obtains when we rejoice, feel sad, desire, fear, remember, forget, or do anything of that kind. Nor are You the mind itself, because You are the Lord God of the mind. All these things undergo change, but You remain unchangeable above all things.

St. Augustine devotes one chapter on God's Immensity in his The Confessions. Immensity means that God transcends all limitations of space. God's nature is without extension. He is not conditioned by the limitation of space. Instead, He is the cause of space. King Solomon²⁵ says of God:

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded?

²⁴ St. Augustine, op.cit., pp. 253-254.

²⁵ I Kings 8:27.

The immensity of God is a phase of His infinity, for it is His infinity in relation to space. Just as God is not subject to the law of time, He is not subject to the law of space. God was the creator of even space and time. I would like to quote from St. Augustine's²⁶ The Confessions:

Do heaven and hell therefore contain You, since You fill them? Or do You fill them, and does there yet remain something further, since they do not contain You? ... the vessels that are filled by You do not restrict You, for even if they are shattered, You are not poured forth. When You are poured upon us, You are not cast down, but You rise up; you are not scattered about, but You gathers us up. You fill all things, and You fill them all with Your entire self.

God is Perfect. Being subject to no conditions and limitations, God is Perfect. He manifests Himself through all that is finite. But the imperfections of the finite beings and things cannot defile His perfect nature. The perfection of God, here, relates to His qualitative excellence. His ways and activities with men are perfect, thereby presupposing moral perfection on His part. His intellect, affection, and will are fully complete. The Psalmist in the Old Testament clearly says, "As for God, His way is perfect" (18:30). During His life on earth, Jesus²⁷ also once said:

²⁶ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 44.

²⁷ Matthew 5:44-48.

Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven For if you love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

The Eternity of God is a phase of His infinity in relation to time. It denotes that God transcends all limitations of time. God has no beginning or end. He is free from the succession of time. God is eternal. There is no time that He has not been and no time that He will never be. When God calls Himself the "I Am" God, He uses a name, involving eternity. (Exodus 3:14). The Psalmist²⁸ testifies: "From everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God", "But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end". In the New Testament the book of Jude ascribes to God, "glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore" (Jude 25). Contrast to God human beings and other created beings are bounded by time. I, as a research student, had a time to be born, and have a time of study. I have to finish my work within a particular period of time as

²⁸ Psalms 90:2; 102:27.

set up by the North-Eastern Hill University. I am limited. But God is the Creator of time and space and the whole universe. St. Augustine²⁹ is also very much aware of this. He writes, in his The Confessions:

You made that very time, and no times could pass by before You made those times There was no 'then', where there was no time.... You proceeds all past times in the sublimity of an ever present eternity, and You surpass all future times, because they are to come, and when they come, they shall be past, 'but You are the Selfsame, and your years shall not fall; You years neither come nor go.... Your years are one day, and Your day is not each day, but today, because with You today does not give way to tomorrow, nor does it succeed yesterday. With you, today is eternity. Therefore You begot the co-eternal, to who You said, 'This day have I begotten you'. You have made all times, and You are before all times, and not any time was there no time.

St. Augustine believes in the Omnipotence, Omniscience and Omnipresence of God, which is also one of the fundamental principles of Christianity. In the opening lines of his famous The Confessions there is an indication of the Omnipotence and the Omniscience of God, "You are great, O Lord, and greatly to be praised: great is Your power and to Your wisdom there is not limit".³⁰

²⁹ St. Augustine, op.cit., pp. 286-287.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 43.

By Omnipotence of God, St. Augustine means the power of God to do anything. He is all-powerful. However, it does not mean that He can perform what is intrinsically contradictory. God is omnipotent in the sense that He can impart reality to the content of His will. He is omnipotent because He is the self-sufficient ground of the existence of the world, and He is not limited by anything that comes from His divine will.

God's omnipotence does not include the self-contradictory things. For instance, God cannot make a past event not to have occurred. He will not draw a shorter line between two points than a straight line. In like manner, He cannot make two and two equals five or He cannot make one piece of chalk both three inches and five inches long at the same time. The simple reason is that they are self-contradictory.

God will not do things which is contradictory to His very nature. God cannot lie. He cannot sin. To do any of these things would be inconsistent with the moral nature of God. God has all the power to do that which is consistent with His nature.

This Omnipotence of God does not mean that man has no power. The absolute supremacy of God and the freedom of man run parallel in the Scriptures. In fact, since the

freedom of man is grounded in the will of God, and since man's power is derived from God, man's freedom and power are manifestations rather than contradictions of God's power. God has given man the freedom of will that he can exercise it.

The Omnipotence of God includes self-limitation. But such limitation is free. He may or may not employ it in His dealings with man. He is not compelled by any reason within or without Himself. The self-limitation is clearly seen in the Incarnation, at which time God the Son humbled himself by taking the form of human flesh and blood. The pre-existent glory was laid aside. He "emptied Himself" and He "humbled Himself".

Again, His power is being controlled by His will. He is in control of that power and is not a slave of it. If necessary He "is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham",³¹ but He does not. He can turn the stones into bread or the scorpion into fish, but He does not do it.

God said, "Let there be light: and there was light".³² In the Old Testament He also said, "I am God Almighty."³³

³¹ Matthew 3:9.

³² Genesis 1:3.

³³ Genesis 17:1.

God in His own will has done whatsoever He pleases. Thus, as His very name also implies God is Omnipotent. He can give back life to the dead. At His divine will His Incarnated Son could not be held back by death.

St. Augustine³⁴ says, "... to your wisdom there is no limit". God is Omniscient. His wisdom, knowledge and understanding is limitless. He has perfect and eternal knowledge of all things. Everything is open and not hid before Him. Past, present and even the future is known to Him.

The Omniscience of God is vivid in prophecy. Phrase like "thus saith the Lord"³⁵ of the prophets are based on the all-knowing of God. It is also seen in His omnipresence, for an all-present God would necessarily be an all-knowing God. It is again seen in creation, for if God created all He too knows all.

The knowledge of God is distinct and immediate. It is not vague or mixed up or confused. It is simple, sharp and distinct. It is not partial or distorted. His knowledge is not based on deduction or induction. It is not through inference or senses or imagination. His understanding is

³⁴ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 40.

³⁵ Amos 1:7.

direct, for all the forces that operate in His created universe are grounded in His will. The causes and effects of every phenomena are known to Him.

God's omniscience is not limited by time and space. It simply is eternal. Past, present and future are like one moment in the mind of God. The temporal world order is known to Him. And He is working out His purpose with complete control. In the same way, God knows what is taking place in every part of the universe. There is no place or no spot unknown to Him, because the spatial order is grounded in God.

The knowledge of God embraces the possible as well as the actual. To God everything is known. He knows what would have taken place under a completely different set of circumstances and surrounding^s. He knows what our lives would have been had we made other choices. He knows what would have been had He made His creation entirely different from what is now. However, His knowledge does not include the self-contradictories and the absurdities. There is no answer to an absurd question like, "What would happen if a non-stoppable object came in contact with an immovable wall?"

On the other hand, God's knowledge does not violate

the free-will of the created man. No doubt, God has foreknowledge of man's actions. He knows every choice that will be made and what will be the result of it. His knowledge extends to the evtns of future. God foreknows the movtive, the choice, and the would be result. Yet man is free to choose. This is also the biblical view, for it follows from two well known certainties: the first, God knows all things - past, present and future; and the second, man is a free moral agent. Neither of these ideas can be dismissed or violated. In fact, they exist side by side.

We have numbers of evidences concerning the Omniscience of God in the Bible. Let us look at some of the important ones:

And there is no creature that is no manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do. 36

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known men. Thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a work in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether... Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. 37

36 Hebrews 4:13.

37 Psalms 139:1-6.

The Omnipresence of God is pointed out by St. Augustine in his, The Confessions. One chapter is set aside as 'God Omnipresent' and I would like to quote a few lines from it:³⁸

... I am not now in hell, yet You are even there. For "if I descend into hell, You are present". Therefore, my God, I would not be, I would not wise be, unless you were in me. Or rather I would not be unless I were in You, 'from whom, by whom, and in whom are all things.' Even so, O Lord, even so. To what place do I call you, since I am in you? Or from what place can You come to me? Where can I go beyond heaven and earth, so that there You may come to me, my God, who have said, 'I fill heaven and earth?'

When, then, is my God? ... Most high, most good, most almighty, most almighty, most merciful and most just, most hidden and most present.³⁹

God's Omnipresence has reference to His presence in the temporal and spatial order, meaning that He is present at all points of time and space. God, in totality of His being, penetrates the universe in all its parts. He does not have to be multiplied or divided to do so. He is not conditioned by time or space; rather they are subject to Him, having come into being at the time of creation.

³⁸ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 44.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 45.

There is a heretical belief that God's essence is in heaven and that only His power is present on earth. This would be to say that God is potentially present on earth, but not essentially. This kind of view is to be rejected. It is true that we read, "O thou sittest in heavens" (Psalms 123:1), and "That hath his seat on high" (Psalms 113:5). But these words merely show His exaltation above earthly things. They simply tell us that the most glorious manifestation of Himself is to the heavenly hosts and do not necessarily imply that He is present on earth as only power.

God is wholly present in every part of His Universe. There is no difference in God for this part or that part. In other words, the true essence of God is present in every part, as Alger, Poet of the Orient puts it, "Though God extends beyond Creation's rim, each smallest atom holds the whole of Him."

It is to be noted here that God is present throughout His universe by His free choice, not by compulsion. He is there by free will, not because of necessity. The latter would be pantheism; for in pantheism God is bound to the universe by necessity, since it is claimed that God is the universe.

We have a number of Scripture support as to the

Omnipresence of God. I would like to cite some of them to substantiate the truth. The Psalmist⁴⁰ says:

Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there;
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold Thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning, and
dwell in the uttermost part of the sea;
Even there shall Thy hand lead me,
And Thy right hand shall hold me.

The Omnipresent God Jehovah Himself asked:⁴¹

Am I a God at hand, saith Jehovah, and
not a God afar off?
Can any hide himself in secret places so that
I shall not see him? saith Jehovah.
Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith Jehovah.

The Lord Jesus Christ who is Emmanuel (meaning God with us) promised His beloved disciples to be with them even unto the end of the earth. To quote in full:⁴²

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying,
All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father, and
of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Teaching them to observe all things
whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo,

I am with you alway,
even unto the end of the world. Amen.

⁴⁰ Psalms 137:7-10.

⁴¹ Jeremiah 23:23-24.

⁴² Matthew 28:18-20.

As pointed out earlier, God is a moral being. As a moral being, God's Moral Attributes are many. Some of them are Holiness, Righteousness, Mercy, Love, Truth, Faithful, Long suffering, Compassionate, Good, Gracious, and others. I would like to point out a few of them in brief. Needless to say that St. Augustine struggled with these moral attributes of God before his conversion. However, in spite of his unholy and unrighteous living that he could come to the saving knowledge of God which He provided through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Even the chief of sinner, that was how he called himself, the persecutor Saul of Tarsus become preacher of the gospel. God made him righteous and saintly by His grace and mercy. The present research student too has experienced the love, compassion and long suffering of God in spite of his sins and unrighteousness. God's cordial invitation still remains,⁴³

Come now, and let us reason together,...
 though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be
 white as snow;
 though they be red like crimson, they shall be
 as wool.

God is holy. God's holiness has been rightly termed the most fundamental, the most inclusive of His attributes.

⁴³ Isaiah 1:18.

The first time God is revealed as holy is at the redemption of Israel from Egypt, where Moses in his song of praise calls God, "glorious in holiness" (Exodus 15:11). The stamp of holiness is imprinted on every activity at Mount Sinai. When Israel enters into a covenant relation with God it is declared that they must be holy because He is holy. "For I am Jehovah your God: sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy, for I am holy".⁴⁴ Things or people are considered holy when set apart or devoted to God. The tabernacle, the ark of the covenant, the vessels of tabernacle, the priests, the sacrifices, the Sabbath - all these are declared holy because they are set aside and dedicated to God who is holy. Sinner like Saul becomes Saint Paul, in like manner sinner like Augustine becomes Saint (St.) Augustine.

The vision of Isaiah reveals to him God high upon a throne, with the seraphim flying back and forth singing, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory".⁴⁵ In this display of holiness and glory Isaiah realizes his own sinfulness and the sinfulness of the people among whom he is living, which shows the moral element in holiness. Isaiah condemns himself, "Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and

⁴⁴ Leviticus 11:44

⁴⁵ Isaiah 6:3.

I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."⁴⁶ His conviction and confession are immediately followed by cleansing and removal of the iniquity, thus showing the mercy part of the holiness of God along with justice. Henceforth, Isaiah's favourite terms for God are Holy One (10:17) and the Holy One of Israel (10:20).

In the New Testament time Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name...."⁴⁷ The word "hallowed" translates a Greek word meaning, "let be holy". So we are till today praying that God's name shall be holy, and we shall direct our activities to that end. Mary was told that she would conceive of the Holy Spirit and the child born "shall be called holy, the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). The apostle Peter demands holy living for Christians basing his declaration in the Old Testament oracles. We are to live as children of obedience:⁴⁸

As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as He which hath called you is holy, so be holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 6:5.

⁴⁷ Matthew 6:9.

⁴⁸ I Peter 1:14-16.

The Righteousness of God involves the purity of His nature. It means that His character is upright, that is maintained in absolute rectitude. This attribute finds God exercising Himself in favour of the right as opposed to the wrong, the pure as opposed to the impure. He is not only free from evil but is opposed to it. Besides, the righteousness of God is grounded in His nature and is affirmed in His will. Since God is righteous, God's people must react accordingly.

God demands that man be righteous. It is seen from different areas. (i) It is seen in the conscience of man. Man's conscience demands that he does the right and avoid the wrong. Romans 2:15 says, "The (Gentiles) show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them". (ii) It is seen in Mosaic Law or the Ten Commandments. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not lie. Thou shalt not commit adultery, and so on. All these points that God demands that man be righteous. (iii) Jesus Christ stresses on the subjective state of the heart and inner life; it is the motive that counts. This is shown vividly concerning murder and adultery in the Sermon on the Mount, as found in Matthew chapter five and following. The Ten Commandments are brought to a higher level in the

two commandments of Love to God and Love to Fellow Men, for they constitute all that the law and the prophets endeavoured to fulfil. (Matthew 22:34-40). (iv) It is also seen in the life and character of Christ Himself. Jesus is the perfect man, the epitome of what God expects of His redeemed humanity. He is the express image of God. He is the perfect example of the Christians.

God also condemns man for his lack of righteousness or condemns man because of his sin. God deals with the sinner in accordance with strict justice, punishing the guilty for his transgressions. The universality of sin shows that man falls short of the standard or glory of righteousness set by a righteous God. The apostle Paul writes, "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God."⁴⁹ God is just, and condemns sin according to the full measure of His justice (Romans 2:6-16). He does not treat the righteous and the wicked alike. The Psalmist knowing the moral character of God says, "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." (Psalm 1:6). Not to react against sin would be to violate His very nature and this will amount to declaring Himself to be a non-moral God. Nor is this to say that He does not

⁴⁹ Romans 3:23.

love the sinner and condemns his sin. Such godly and loving expression was made by St. Augustine. The Indian Currents.⁵⁰ carries, the heading,

ST. AUGUSTINE: "Kill the error, but love the erring."

God exhibits His righteousness in redeeming sinful mankind. In His redeeming activity God works according to the principles of righteousness. We see this both in the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament we find it in Psalms.⁵¹

Mercy and truth are met together:
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

The New Testament presents the same line of thought. In John's letter, we read,⁵²

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Righteousness and redeeming love, therefore, bound closely together. Man can become righteous for God is righteous. St. Paul, therefore, out of his personal experience, boldly says,⁵³

⁵⁰ Indian Currents, Vol. III, No. 48, Aug. 1992, p. 4.

⁵¹ Psalms 85:10.

⁵² I John 1:9.

⁵³ Romans 1:16-17.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ:
for it is the power of God unto salvation to
everyone that believeth; to the Jews first,
and also to the Greek.

For there in is the righteousness of God
revealeth from faith to faith: as it is written,
The just shall live by faith.

The Love of God, again, is not something incidental or accidental to God. It is a part of His very nature. It was John who says that "God is Love" in his first epistle chapter four verse eight. Now, since love is part of the very nature of God, and since God is eternal, therefore, love of God is also eternal. Jesus, speaking to the Father, says, "For Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24). God's expression of love is found in Golgotha. The Bible⁵⁴ says,

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him
should not perish, but have everlasting life.

In his epistle John writes again, concerning love, "Hereby know we love because He laid down His life for us". (I John 3:16). God's love is a rational affection, grounded in reason and moved by deliberate choice. His love is not arbitrary and wild: it does not consist of uncontrolled emotion. Wisdom is used in the expression of love.

⁵⁴ John 3:16.

God's love wants to bestow the supreme good upon the object loved. Throughout the New Testament this is clearly known. The Gospel of Luke 19:10 says, "For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." This seeking and saving was motivated by the desire to give to man the very best redemption itself. God desires to reclaim the wanderers and effect a reconciliation back into His presence. He wants to condition, mould and form man for entrance into a holy society of His eternal kingdom. He is not content with anything less than the best. One hymn writer, speaking on behalf of the Lord, therefore, writes,⁵⁵

I gave My life (best) for thee,
What wilt thou give for Me?

Every expression of God's love has due respect for the fact that God is righteous. His love must always be morally conditioned. The motive of the redemptive work of God through Christ is love. Man must be received into the divine favour with due regard to all God's moral principles. Maintaining the integrity of God's character is even a higher principle than the giving and receiving of love itself. God's love is dynamic too. The prophet Jeremiah⁵⁶ says,

⁵⁵ Recall from author's memory.

⁵⁶ Jeremiah 31:3.

The Lord hath appeareth of old to me, saying,
yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love:
therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn thee.

And this loving kindness of God is identified with "grace" in the New Testament. Titus 2:11 also testifies, "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men." The Indian Currents⁵⁷ comments St. Augustine's understanding of God's grace, thus,

St. Augustine was doubtless one of the world's greatest thinkers; as a theologian and philosopher he is outstanding among the Church Fathers for the influence he wielded. Particularly famous in his system of Grace, which reconciles the absolute mastery of God with the freewill of man.

In return, God seeks the love of its objects. Exodus 20:5 says that "He (God) is a jealous God". God's categorical demand and desire from His people is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thine might" (Deuteronomy 6:5). This passage was quoted by Jesus in the New Testament, for example, in Matthew 22:37, "Jesus said... Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Thus, what God desires is a mutual self-giving between Himself and His redeemed mankind. God has expressed His love in the sacrificial death of Christ on the Cross,

⁵⁷ Indian Currents, op.cit., p. 4.

and He desires the undivided loyal love and affection from His people. Consequently, it was this very love of God that constraineth St. Augustine to gratefully give the rest of his life in and for the service of God. In response to God's great love, the disciples of Jesus Christ spread the good news all over the world even unto the cost of their own lives. William Carey, who is known as the Father of Modern Missionary had to leave England and step into the Indian soil in response to the "agape" love of God.

One of the outstanding Moral Attributes of God is that God is a God of Truth. For God as the ground of truth comes knowledge of Himself, knowledge of all objects of knowledge, and all forms of knowing on the part of the created beings. There is no standard of truth outside of God, for He is the standard. God's truth is the element of His very nature by virtue of which His nature and His knowledge completely conform to each other. Jesus, who is God in human form says in John 14:6, "I AM... THE TRUTH". The word "truth" here means truth of being, more than truth of expression. To know the revelation of God is to know the truth itself.

God knows truth and wills truth, because He is truth. Truth makes God's will, not vice versa. Being conditions will. God cannot will that which is false or erroneous or self-contradictory. He cannot will that two plus two equal

six, for this would be contrary to the truth. God speaks only truth. Whatever (He) says be it about Himself, His laws. His methods, His procedures, His desires, His promises, His creation, His being, all is true.

Again, God's truth is the ground of man's truth. All truth, whether mathematical, scientific, moral, musical, artistic, religious, astronomical, is grounded in God. It is derived from God, for He ordained it. Anything knowable by man was known first to God, and came into being from God. Therefore, knowledge of God is knowledge of truth. (i) Two and two make four is truth. It is an eternal principle inherent in the Godhead. (ii) Virtue is to be commended; vice to be condemned. This is a principle resting in the eternal Godhead. (iii) A mathematical formula can be explained only in relation to God, for it was ordained by God. (iv) A Saint, including St. Augustine can say, "I speak the truth", but he cannot say like (Him), "I am ... the Truth". The prerogative of truth lies with God alone. Recognizing the being of God, St. Augustine⁵⁸ writes in his The Confessions,

What did all this profit me when I thought
that You, O Lord God of truth....

⁵⁸ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 112.

In the same book, one chapter is entitled "God, Truth Itself", and I quote a few lines here,⁵⁹

Behold, how far within my memory have I traveled in search of You, Lord, and beyond it I have not found You!.... For since I learned of You, I have not forgotten You. Wheresoever I found truth, there I found my God, truth itself, and since I first learned the truth I have not forgotten it. Therefore, ever since I learned about You, You abide in my memory, and I find You there when I recall You to mind and take delight in You. These are my holy delights which You have given to me out of Your mercy....

Arguments or Proofs for God's Existence

The existence of God was a well established fact for St. Augustine as it was also for the other Fathers of the Church. To St. Augustine, the fact that God exists is like an axiom in mathematics which does not require any further proof. He must have come to this philosophical conclusion as a consequent of his search of wisdom and peace with God. Samuel E. Stumpf⁶⁰ writes: "His (St. Augustine's) philosophical reflection about God were the product of his own intense pursuit of wisdom and spiritual peace." I believe that since he has found the solution of his problems in God Himself, it needs no further establishment of the

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 253.

⁶⁰ Samuel Enoch Stumpf, Socrates to Sartre: A History of Philosophy, (McGraw-Hill Book Company, N.Y., 1982), p.136.

existence of God. This could also be the reason why Copleston⁶¹ says that St. Augustine was not so much concerned to prove that God exists. If that is the case, does St. Augustine offers any argument for the existence of God at all?

In quick response to the question raised, I would like to say that St. Augustine may be considered to have some, such as: argument from eternal truths, argument from corporeal world, proof from universal consent, long proof, argument from cosmos and so on. I shall now discuss them one by one.

(1) Argument from eternal truths or noological (intuitive) proof, may be considered as the central and favourite argument of St. Augustine for the existence of God. Referring to St. Augustine's Soliloquia (I:1,3) Battista Mondin⁶² writes:

St. Augustine uses the presence of eternal truths in us as an argument in favour of God's existence. This is the argument: there are eternal truths present in the human mind. But the human mind, being contingent and mutable, is not a sufficient reason for these truths. Therefore, God exists, and He is the sufficient reason for these truths.

⁶¹ Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy, Vol. II, (Image Books Doubleday, London, 1985), p. 69.

⁶² Battista Mondin, A History of Medieval Philosophy, (Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1991), p. 101.

St. Augustine's deep involvement in sensual pleasures had given him dramatic evidence that the soul cannot find its peace among the pleasures of flesh and sensation. Similarly, in his quest for certainty of knowledge, he discovers that the world of things was full of change and impermanence. His mind, too, he discovered, was imperfect, since it was capable of committing error. At the same time, he had the experience of certain truths that were eternal. He was able to compare the experience of contemplating truth with the experience of having pleasures and sensation. Of these two experiences he found that the activities of the mind could provide more lasting and profound peace. When he considers the technical question of how it was that his finite human mind was capable of attaining knowledge beyond the capacity of his mind, he came to the conclusion that this knowledge could not have come from finite things outside of him. It could not be produced from his mind either. Since the knowledge available to him was superior to the workings of the mind, he was led to believe that immutable truth must have its source in God. What led to this conclusion was the similarity between the characteristics of some of his knowledge and the attributes of God, namely, that both are eternal and true. Thus, the existence of eternal truths meant for St. Augustine, the existence of God.

To support the given argument. I would like to repro-

duce what St. Augustine has once said in his De Vera Religione (31,57), "Nor it can be doubted that the unchanging nature which lies above the rational soul, is God, and that the first essence and first life are there where the first wisdom is." In his The Confessions, St. Augustine⁶³ talks about his certainty concerning God:

Not knowing when or how, I (St. Augustine) clearly saw and was certain that what can be corrupted is inferior to what cannot be corrupted, and what can be violated I hesitatingly placed above what is violable, and what suffers no change I saw to be better than what can be changed.

The argument from eternal truths may be summarized as follows:

- 1) There are some necessary and unchangeable truths (ideas) such as $7 + 3 = 10$.
- 2) But a finite mind, such as mine, is not unchangeable.
- 3) An unchangeable truth cannot be based in a changeable, finite mind.
- 4) Therefore, there must be an infinite, unchangeable Mind (that is, God) which is the basis for all unchangeable truths.

⁶³ St. Augustine, op.cit., p. 158.

There are two basic criticisms of this argument. Some question whether or not any necessary truths about reality exist. Mathematical "truths", they say, are merely definitional and stipulative. They are not informative about reality. The second question asked is: why an immutable idea cannot arise in a finite mind? Why cannot one think about an immutable or necessary truth unless one is an immutable or necessary being? Necessary truths about the existence of reality is possible both psychologically and in reality. Man is born with a universal belief in a supreme beings; no tribe or community has yet been discovered that lacks this. Mathematical truths are no doubt informative. Otherwise, how can a businessman, for example, knows whether he makes profit or loss? He will calculate his sale on the basis of the information given by the numbers. St. Augustine also uses the term 'ordo' or numbers to indicate the rational and intelligent disposition found in things of this world as well as realities. It is interesting and noteworthy what Albert Einstein once said: "The mathematical precision of the universe reveals the mathematical mind of God."⁶⁴ In answer to the second part of the criticism, along with St. Augustine, I would like to say that man is mutable and

⁶⁴ As quoted by Steve Kumar & John Heininger, Christianity for Skeptics, (Worldwide Communications for Life Foundation, New Zealand, 1994), p. 1.

limited because he was created by God that way. On the other hand, God the Creator is immutable -- it is His very nature or essence. He is the same yesterday, today and forever, as He says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End He who is and Who was and Who is to come"⁶⁵ God is both transcendent and immanent. It is not possible for man to know Him perfectly. And that is the distinction between the Creator (Immutable) and the creation (mutable), including man.

While contemplating this argument, it is befitting also to consider how Julius R. Weinberg⁶⁶ look at St. Augustine in establishing that Truth which is no one else but God. To Weinberg, the full force of proving God's existence can be grasped by considering St. Augustine's On Free Choice, On Prosody and The Teacher, for in these works he considers:

... that we can learn nothing of pure mathematics or morals from experience or human teachers, and that in sensation the body does not affect the soul, and that the understanding of the contents of sensation require some apprehension of mathematical truth. Consequently, the presence of mathematical truth in several different men prove it three ways that this truth has a super human source -

⁶⁵ Revelation 1:8.

⁶⁶ Julius R. Weinberg, A Short History of Medieval Philosophy (Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1974), p. 37.

- a : all truths share a common feature by virtue of which they are truths. This is derived from the Platonic view that resemblance must be accounted for by common Forms or Ideas;
- b : truths must be founded in something, and eternal Truth must be founded in something which is itself Eternal;
- c : finally, the presence of the same truths in several different minds (which cannot teach each other) proves that a single eternal Source of eternal Truth must be postulated;

And, that Truth is no one else but God.

Corelative to St. Augustine's "eternal truth", Rene Descartes, who is thought of today as the founder of modern philosophy, furnishes an argument for God's existence. Reading his Meditations, we come to know that he defines God as "the most perfect being", and concludes that as sum of all perfections, God must possess not only the attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, all-loving, etc, but also the attribute of "existence". His argument is known as Ontological Argument. He presents his argument as follows:⁶⁷

... each time I happen to think of a first and sovereign being, and to draw, so to speak, the idea of Him from the storehouse of the mind, I am necessitated to attribute

⁶⁷ Rene Descartes, Meditation V, Trans. J. Veitch, as quoted in The Ontological Argument, ed. by Alvan Platinga (Anchor Books, Doubleday & Co. Inc., Garden City, New York, 1965), p. 87.

to Him all kinds of perfections, though I may not then enumerate them all, nor think of each of them in particular. And this necessity is sufficient, as soon as I discover that (existence is a perfection), to cause to me infer the existence of this first and sovereign being: just as it is not necessary that I should ever imagine any triangle, but whenever I am desirous of considering a rectilinear figure composed of only three angles, it is absolutely necessary to (attribute) those (properties) to it from which it is correctly inferred that its three angles are not greater than two right angles.

From the above quotation, it is clear that Descartes is assuming a logical parallel between "a triangle has angles equal to two right angles" and "a perfect being exists". In other words, in the ontological argument Descartes sought to demonstrate the existence of God by exploring what the very idea of God implies. He is saying that if all which I know clearly and distinctly as pertaining to this object really does belong to it, may I not derive from this, an argument demonstrating the existence of God? It is impossible to think of God or at least of the greatest being, without thinking of Him as existing.

According to Descartes, some of our ideas are so clear and distinct that we immediately perceive what they imply. One cannot, for example, think of a triangle without at once thinking of its lines and angles. Although one cannot think about a triangle without also thinking about its attri-

butes of lines and angles, it does not follow that to think about a triangle means that it exists. But just as the idea of a triangle implies certain attributes, so also the idea of God implies attributes, and specially the attribute of existence. The idea of God signifies a perfect Being. And the very idea of perfection implies existence. Therefore, to Descartes, to speak of a non-existence just as one cannot think the idea of a triangle without recognizing its attributes, so also one cannot think the idea of God without recognizing that this idea clearly implies the attribute of existence. In his Meditations on First Philosophy, Descartes says,⁶⁸

But now, if just because I can draw the idea of something from my thought, it follows that all which I know clearly and distinctly as pertaining to this object does really belong to it, may I not derive from this an argument demonstrating the existence of God? It is certain that I no less find the idea of God, that is to say, the idea of a supremely perfect Being, in me, than that of any figure or number whatever it is; and I do not know any less clearly and distinctly that an (actual and) eternal existence pertains to this nature than I know that all that which I am able to demonstrate of some figure or number, and therefore, although all that I concluded in the preceding Meditations were found to be false,

⁶⁸ Rene Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy in The Philosophical Works of Descartes, Trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1911), I, pp. 180-182.

the existence of God would pass with me as at least as certain as I have ever held the truths of mathematics (which concern only numbers and figures) to be.

Objections were raised by some philosophers and theologians against the ontological argument of Descartes. I would like to show here the objection by a group of the seventeenth century philosophers and theologians, and also Descartes' satisfactory answer to these thinkers. They objected that Descartes has gone astray in drawing his conclusion. It does not follow that God actually exists but only that He ought to exist if His nature were anything possible or not contradictory. The nature or essence of God cannot be conceived apart from His existence. Hence, if that essence is real, God exists as an actual fact. All this may be reduced to the argument, "If it is not a contradiction that God exists, it is certain that He exists; but His existence is not a contradiction; hence, etc. etc." But a difficulty occurs in the minor premise, which states that God's existence is not a contradiction, since our critics either profess to doubt the truth of this or deny it. Moreover, that little clause in your argument ("after we have sufficiently investigated the nature of God") assumes as true something that all do not believe. You know that you yourself confess that you can apprehend the infinite only inadequately. The same thing must be said in the case of each and any of God's

attributes for since everything in God is utterly infinite, what mind can comprehend the smallest fragment of what exist in God except in a manner that is utterly inadequate? How then can you have "investigated with sufficient clearness and distinctness what God is?"

Descartes replies in the following way to the objections of the seventeenth century philosophers and theologians. Whereas you criticise the conclusion of a syllogism constructed by me, you yourselves seem to make a blunder in the form of the argument. In order to derive the conclusion you desire, you should have worded the major premise thus: that which we clearly understand to belong to the nature of anything, can truthfully be asserted to belong to its nature. Consequently, nothing but an unprofitable tautology will be contained in it. But my major premise is as follows - That which we clearly understand to belong to the nature of anything can truly be affirmed of that thing. Thus, to be an animal belongs to the nature of man. It can be asserted that man is animal. And, if to have its three angles equal to two right angles belongs to the nature of the triangle, it can be asserted that the triangle has its three angles equal to two right angles. In like manner, if existence belongs to the nature of God, it can be affirmed that God exists. But my minor premise is yet existence does

belong to the nature of God. Hence, it can be truly affirmed of God that He exists; not as you wish - hence, we can truthfully affirm that existence belongs to the nature of God.

Thus, in order to make use of the exception that you append, you should have denied the major and said that which we clearly understand to belong to the nature of anything, cannot on that account be ascribed to it unless the nature of that thing be possible, or not contradictory. But notice, kindly, how little value this exception has. By possible either you mean whatever does not disagree with human thought. In this sense, the nature of God is possible. But on this account it tells that man may know as against the nature or existence of God. For that which entitles us to deny that God's nature is possible, although there is no impossibility on the part of its concept and will permits us to deny that it is possible for the three angles of a triangle to be equal to two right angles, or that he, who actually thinks, actually exists. If there is no contradiction in God's existence, it is certain that He exists. Hence, it suffices us to understand clearly and distinctly those few things that we perceive about God. Although they may form inadequate knowledge, necessary existence is found. In this way, by examining the nature of God with sufficient

precision, we can affirm that it contains no contradiction. Hence, God's existence is proved.

According to St. Augustine, God is being itself. God is truth and in some sense, He is within man. But since God is eternal, He also transcends man. But what else can man say by way of describing God? St. Augustine finds that it is easier to say what God is not than to define what He is. Still then, to say that God is superior to finite things was an important step. Basing on the Old Testament Exodus 3:14 where God has given His name to His servant Moses, "I Am That I Am", St. Augustine applied this to mean that God is "Being Itself". He is the highest being, like what St. Anselm says, "God cannot be conceived not to exist — God is that, than which nothing greater can be conceived." As the highest being, God is perfect being, which means that He is self-existent, immutable and eternal being. Further, St. Augustine reasons that the world of everyday things reflects the being and activity of God. Although the things we see are mutable, nevertheless insofar as they exist they have a definite form, and this form is eternal reflection of God. In short, God is the highest being, suggesting thereby that in God there is no change either from non-being to being or from being to non-being. God is: "I Am That I Am". This line of thought is not to be found not

so much in its philosophical rigor, it had its relevance in solving St. Augustine's spiritual problem. St. Augustine, therefore, says that,⁶⁹

One recognises the existence of God, whether the truth is considered identical or inferior to Him, because if there is some thing more elevated than truth, than it is that which is God; but if there is nothing more noble, then it is truth itself which is God. In any case, one cannot negate that God exists.

Like St. Augustine, after a very long meditation upon God, St. Anselm of Canterbury also concluded that God by definition must be the most perfect being possible or conceivable. St. Anselm's Ontological Argument unfolds this way,

- 1) God is by definition the most perfect being conceivable.
- 2) The most perfect being conceivable cannot lack anything.
- 3) But if God did not exist, He would lack existence.
- 4) Therefore, God must exist.

The first thing in this Ontological Argument is that it begins with the definition of God as the greatest being possible or as the most perfect being, the unlimited

⁶⁹ Battista Mondin, op.cit., p. 116.

being, a being no greater than which is conceivable. We can simplify this way. What is greater, to exist as a mere idea in the mind, or to exist in reality too? Obviously, so the argument goes, it is greater to exist objectively in reality. But then, God must actually exist, because if He did not, then He would not be the greatest being possible. Meaning, it is logically absurd to deny the existence of God, for we would deny the existence of what must exist to be the thing we are talking about. St. Anselm takes as his definition of God, "that than which no greater can be conceived,"⁷⁰ and concludes from this that God must, in fact, exist.

It is said that St. Anselm asks the reader, before the beginning of the Ontological Argument, to enter the inner chamber of his mind and to shut out all things save God and whatever may add in his seeking of God. The argument then moves swiftly: "that than which no other greater can be conceived or thought". The question then is, Does this than which nothing greater can be conceived really exist? There are those who would deny God's existence. St. Anselm quotes from the Old Testament of the Bible which runs,⁷¹

The fool hath said in his heart,
There is no God.

⁷⁰ As quoted in Ed. L. Miller, Questions That Matters: An Invitation Philosophy, (McGraw-Hill Book co., NY, 1984), p. 279.

⁷¹ Psalms 14:1.

What is meant by the word 'fool' in this context? It means that the one who denies God's existence is involved in a flat contradiction. Because when the fool hears the word "something than which nothing greater can be conceived", he understands what he hears, and what he understands can be said to be in his intellect. But it is one thing for something to be in the intellect and it is another to understand that something actually exists. A carpenter, for instance, thinks first what he is to make. There is in his mind an understanding of what he is about to make, although he has not made the actual piece. But when he finally completed making the furniture, he both has in his understanding and understands as existing the very furniture piece he has finally made. This proves that something can be in the intellect even before the intellect knows it to exist. There is, then, in the fool's intellect an understanding of what is meant by "something than which nothing greater can be conceived", even though he does not necessarily understand yet that this something does not actually exist. Hence, even the fool knows that there is at least in his intellect a being than which nothing greater can be thought. This brings home to Anselm the crux of his argument is: Anyone even the fool, can think of something greater than a being which is only in the intellect as an idea, and this something is the actual existence of that than which there is no

greater. The contradiction in which the fool finds himself is in understanding what is meant by the word 'God', namely, a being than which nothing greater can be conceived, realizing that its actual existence is greater than just having an idea of it in the intellect, and still denying that God exists. St. Anselm, therefore, says, that there exists beyond doubt something than which a greater cannot be thought, both in understanding and in reality.

No sooner had St. Anselm shown why the atheist is a fool, then, one monk named Gaunilo came to the defence of the 'fool'. Gaunilo did not want to deny God's existence but simply try to argue that Anselm had not constructed an adequate proof. He argued that the first part of the proof is impossible to achieve. It requires that there be in the understanding an idea of God, that upon hearing this word, the fool is expected to have a conception of that than which there is no greater. But, the fool cannot form a concept of such a being since there is nothing among other realities he experiences from which this concept can be formed. Actually, if human mind could form such a concept, no proof would be necessary, for one would then already connect existence as an aspect of a perfect being. Another objection Gaunilo raised is that we often think of things that in fact, do not exist, for example, we imagine a perfect

island, an island than which no greater can exist, but there is no way to prove that such a perfect island exists.

In response to Gaunilo's objection, St. Anselm gave two replies. (1) Along with the fool, we are able to form a concept of that than which there is no greater. We do this whenever we compare different degrees of perfection of things and move upward to the maximum perfection, than which there is no more perfect. (2) St. Anselm was of the opinion that Gaunilo's example of perfect island shows that he had missed the point of the argument. Further, we can move from an idea to its necessary existence in only one case, that is, in the case of that being whose non-existence cannot be conceived. An island does not have to be, it is possible or contingent kind of being. There is only one something through which everything else has its being but that is not derived from anything else but has its existence necessarily from itself, and that is God. St. Anselm further insisted that an island by definition need not be absolutely perfect in the same sense that God by definition must be absolutely perfect. Therefore, a perfect island might exist in the mind but not in reality, but God, to be perfect, must exist in reality.

Alston also criticized the Ontological Argument of St. Anselm. I would like to briefly point out his criticism

as follows: (a) Anselm's Ontological argument is successful only if its conclusion predicates real existence of a being assumed to have existence in the understanding. (b) No statement about a being presupposed to have existence in the understanding entails that it really exists. Suppose we begin with (b). Presumably it is to follow from (b)₁^{which is} if real existence were predicted of a being assumed to have mental existence, the resulting proposition, would lack the entailments that make the proposition God exists religiously interesting. But (b)₁ is not entirely clear. The idea is that there is no difficulty in attributing real existence to a being 'B' assumed to exist in the understanding. The result of doing this is not equivalent to the proposition 'B' exists in reality; because the former lacks the latter's entailment for the real world. Predicating real existence of a being 'B' presupposed to exist in the understanding, according to Alston, does not entail that 'B' really exists. We can only say that 'B' is thought of as existing in reality. On this interpretation Anselm's conclusion would be equivalent to the proposition that (c) God exists in the understanding and is thought of as existing in reality. [Alston concedes that the conclusion of Anselm's Ontological Argument, if he is predicating real existence of a being existing in the understanding, is necessarily true. But (c) is not necessarily true for it entails that

someone believes that God exists in reality, which is certainly contingent. Anselm's (a) is also dubious. Anselm proposes to show that the proposition God exists in reality is true by showing that God exists with understanding but does not in reality is necessarily false. If Anselm is treating real existence as a predicate merely by arguing that God exists in the understanding but not in reality is necessarily false, then anyone, in arguing that any proposition of the form 'X' exists in the understanding but not in reality is necessarily false is guilty of the same indiscretion. Now, Alston is not prepared to argue that there are no necessary essential statements. But if he did not think that one can argue for the necessary falsity of a proposition of the above form only by treating real existence as a predicate, then, he would have an argument for the conclusion that there are no necessary existential propositions. For, suppose a given proposition 'p' is a necessary existential proposition, then, the proposition that the subject of 'p' exists in the understanding but not in reality will be necessarily false. Hence any argument for the necessary truth of an existential proposition will yield an argument for the necessary falsity of a proposition of the form 'X' exists in the understanding but not in reality. And so, it is not easy to see why Alston believes that Anselm's procedure involves treating existence in reality as a predi-

cate whether or not it is a predicate, there will be necessary false statements of the form 'X' exists in the understanding but not in reality is necessarily false.

Anselm's Ontological Argument can be restated in such away that the notion of existence in the understanding does not play any part in it. And if it is restated this way, the argument will not involve predicating real existence of a being presupposed to exist in the understanding. (1) Supposes that the being than which it is not possible that there can be a greater does not exist (assumption for reductio). (2) Any existence being is greater than any non-existent being. (3) The Taj Mahal exists. (4) Hence, the Taj Mahal is greater than the being than which it is not possible that there be a greater (1,2,3); (4) is necessarily false. Hence the conjunction of (1), (2) and (3) is necessarily false; (2) is necessarily true. Therefore, the conjunction of (1) and (3) is necessarily false. So, the Taj Mahal exists entails the being than which none greater can be conceived exists. But the former proposition is obviously true, hence the latter too, is true.

Immanuel Kant insisted that Anselm wrongly assumed that existence is a property of perfection. Kant shows that the being or existence of God stands in a different relation to God than His regular attributes, such as omnipotence,

and that, specifically, being or existence is not a predicate at all. It is possible that God does not exist. It is not rationally necessary that God exists. No one, therefore, can use this argument to claim that God exists for certain. In his Critique Of Pure Reason, Kant writes,⁷²

If an identical judgement (a judgement of the form A is A) I reject the predicate and retain the subject, there arises a contradiction, and hence I say, that the former belongs to the latter necessarily. But if I reject the subject as well as the predicate, there is no contradiction, because there is nothing left that can be contradicted. To accept a triangle and yet and reject its three angles is contradictory, but there is no contradiction at all in admitting the non-existence of the triangle and of its three angles. The same applies to the concept of an absolutely necessary Being. Remove its existence, and you remove the thing itself, with all its predicates, so that the contradiction becomes impossible.... If you say, God is almighty, that is a necessary judgement, because almightiness cannot be removed, if you accept a deity, that is an infinite Being, with the concept of which that other concept is identical. But if you say, God is not, then neither his almightiness, nor any other of his predicates is given; they are all, together with the subject, removed out of existence, and therefore there is not the slightest contradiction in the sentence....

Being is evidently not a real predicate, or a concept of something that can be added

⁷² Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Trans. F. Max Muller, (Anchor Books, Garden City, N.Y., 1966), p. 399ff.

to the concept of a thing. It is merely the admission of a thing, and a certain determinations in it. Logically, it is merely the copula of a judgement. The proposition, "God is almighty", contains two concepts, each having its object, namely, God and almightiness. The small word "is", is not an additional predicate, but only serves to put the predicate in relation to the subject. If, then, I take the subject (God) with all its predicate (including that of almightiness), and say, "God is", or there is a God, I do not put a new predicate to the concept of God, but I only put the subject by itself, with all its predicates, in relation to my concept, as its object....

By whatever and by however many predicates I may think (even in completely determining it), nothing is really added to it, if I add the thing exists.

Norman Malcolm emphasizes that we have in St. Anselm not one but two arguments. The first formulation revolves round the notion that God is a greater being if He exists than if He does not. God's existence is one of His attributes or predicates. Whereas the second formulation revolves round the notion that God is a greater being if He cannot not-exist. Necessary existence is a divine predicate. Malcolm agrees with Kant. He says,⁷³

The doctrine existence is a perfection is remarkably queer. It makes sense and is true to say that my future house will be a better one if it is insulated than if it is not insulated; but what could it mean

⁷³ Norman Malcolm, Knowledge and Certainty: Essays and Lectures, (Prentice-Hall, Eaglewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1963), p. 144.

to say that it will be a better house if it exists than if it does not?.... Or who understands the saying that if God exists He is more perfect than if He does not exist? One might say, with some intelligibility, that it would be better (for oneself or mankind) if God exists than if He does not but that is a different matter.

I believe I am merely resting an observation that Kant made in attacking the notion that "existence" or "being" is a "real predicate".... Anselm's ontological proof of Proslogion 2 is fallacious because it rests on the false doctrine that existence is perfection (and therefore that "existence" is a "real predicate"). It would be desirable to have a rigorous refutation of the doctrine but I have not been able to provide one. I am compelled to leave the matter at the more or less intuitive level of Kant's observation.

Malcolm says that in connection with the second formulation, the situation is entirely different from the first one. Necessary existence is a predicate. He says,⁷⁴

What Anselm has proved is the notion of contingent existence or of contingent non-existence cannot have any application to God. His existence must either be logically necessary or logically impossible. The only intelligible way of rejecting Anselm's claim that God's existence is necessary to maintain that the concept of God, as a being a greater than which cannot be conceived, is self-contradictory or non-sensical. Supposing that this is false, Anselm is right to deduce God's necessary existence from his characterization of Him as a being a greater than which cannot be conceived.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 149ff.

Let me summarize the proof. If God, a being greater than which cannot be conceived, does not exist then He cannot come into existence or have happened to come into existence, and in either case He would be a limited being, which by our conception of Him He is not. Since He cannot come into existence, if He does not exist, His existence is impossible. If He does exist he cannot have come into existence (for the reasons given), nor can He cease to exist, for nothing could cause Him to cease to exist nor could it just happen that he ceased to exist. So if God exists His existence is necessary. Thus God's existence either impossible or necessary. It can be the former only if the concept of such a being is self-contradictory or in some way logically absurd. Assuming that this is not so, it follows that He necessarily exists.

Malcolm's Ontological Argument, therefore, may be arranged in the following form:

- 1) God is an unlimited being.
- 2) The existence of an unlimited being is either impossible or necessary.
- 3) The concept of an unlimited being is not self-contradictory, so such a being is not impossible.
- 4) Therefore, such a being is necessary.

(2) Argument from Corporeal or External World. St. Augustine brings his argument by way of commentary in the course of Scriptural exegesis, commenting on Psalms 73. He puts it in the form of a question, "How do I know that

Thou art alive whose soul I see not? How do I know? Thou wilt answer, because I speak, because I walk, because I work. Fool! by the operations of the body I know Thee to be living, canst thou not by the works of creation know the Creator?"

Commenting on Genesis, St. Augustine, again states that "the power of the Creator and His omnipotent and all-swaying strength is for each and every creature, the cause of its continued existence, and if this strength were at any time to cease from directing the things which have been created, at one at the same time both their species would cease to be and their whole nature would perish." In other words, St. Augustine is here emphasizing the fact and necessity of divine conservation, reminding his readers of an acknowledged fact, rather than proving it philosophically. In his A History of Philosophy, Frederick Copleston⁷⁵ says,

When St. Augustine asserts in the De Civitate Dei (11,4,2) that 'the very order, disposition, beauty, change and motion of the world and of all visible things, silently proclaim that it could only have been made by God,'... he (St. Augustine) is rather reminding Christians of a fact than attempting to give a systematic proof of God's existence.

⁷⁵ Frederick Copleston, op.cit., pp. 69-70.

(3) Proof from Universal Consent, may be considered as another argument of St. Augustine to prove that God exists. In his Joan Evang or John's Gospel, (106,4) St. Augustine again says that such is the power of true Godhead that it cannot be altogether and utterly hidden from the rational creature, once it makes use of its reason. Further, St. Augustine says that with the exception of a few in whom nature is excessively depraved, the whole human race confesses God to be the author of the world. Even if a man thinks that a plurality of God exists ... all concur in believing God to be that which excels in dignity all other objects (De Doct. Christ/Christian Doctrine 1.7,7).

(4) Long Proof of God's Existence. Gilson in his Introduction a L'etude de Saint Augustine remarks that in the philosophy of St. Augustine there is one Long Proof of God's Existence. This Long Proof starts from the stage of initial doubt and its refutation through the Si fallor, (sum,) which is a kind of methodical preliminary to the search for truth, assuring the mind of the attainability of truth, the soul proceeds to consider the world of sense. In this world, however, it does not discover the truth it seeks. It then turns inwards, where, it discovers immutable truth which transcends the soul and does not depend on the soul. It thus leads to apprehending God as the ground of all truth.

The proof has the advantage not only of bringing into the prominence the proof from thought, from eternal truths, but also of linking up the 'proof' with the soul's search for God as the source of happiness. This picture is confirmed by a passage contained in St. Augustine's sermon (Ser. 241,2,2 and 3,3), where he depicts the human soul questioning the things of sense and hearing them confess that the beauty of the visible world, of mutable things, is the creation and reflection of immutable Beauty, after which the soul proceeds inwards, discovers itself and realises the superiority of the soul to the body. Men saw these two things, pondered them, investigated both of them, and found that each is immutable in man. The mind, therefore, both body and soul to be mutable goes in search of what is immutable. And thus they arrived at a knowledge of God the Creator by means of the things which He created.

From the above discussion we come to know that, in no way, St. Augustine denies what we called 'natural' or 'rational' knowledge of God. Instead, this rational knowledge of God is viewed in close connection with the soul's search for beautifying Truth and is seen as itself a kind of self-revelation of God to the soul. St. Augustine makes no sharp dichotomy between Natural and Revealed Theology, not because he failed to see the distinction between Reason

and Faith, but rather he viewed the soul's cognition of God in close connection with its spiritual search for God, as the one object and Source.

Further, St. Augustine says that the world of creatures reflects and manifest God and that "if anything worthy of praise is noticed in the nature of things, whether it be judged worthy of slight praise or of great praise, it must be applied to the most excellent and ineffable praise of the Creator." Creatures possess some form, and this is the reflection of the Form which can neither decline nor pass away. Thus, the order and unity of nature proclaim the unity of the Creator, just as the goodness of God and the order and stability of the universe manifests the wisdom of God, and God Himself.

(5) Order of the Cosmos. Another argument given by St. Augustine is taken from the order of the Cosmos. Battista Mondin⁷⁶ in his A History of Medieval Philosophy, quoting from St. Augustine's Sermon 141,2 writes:

Ask the world, the ornament of heaven, the splendour and disposition of the stars, the sun which has light necessary for the day, the moon which gives comfort at night; ask the earth fertile with herbs and plants,

⁷⁶ Battista Mondin, op.cit., p. 115.

full of animals and strewn with men; ask the sea, full of every quality and quantity of fish; ask the air, travelled by every species of bird; ask each thing, and see whether they all respond to you, "God has made us". This has also been studied by illustrious philosophers, and from the art they have recognised the author.

According to this argument, God's existence is proved from the shadows, traces and images that He leaves in His works. St. Augustine finds both in physical nature and in man an indication of the Creator which produced all things. St. Augustine must have derived this idea from the Platonic view of the physical world as a reflection of the Ideal World. God is represented in the Cosmos as well as in the Revealed Scripture. It is wonderful to recollect what the Revealed Scripture says through the Psalmist,⁷⁷ "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork."

The soul or self with its memory and capacity of understanding also speaks of the existence of God. St. Augustine believes that man is a rational soul, having a body. The soul is thus a rational substance having trinity of capacities such as memory, understanding and will. Memory is required not only in understanding, but also in recognizing the objects of sensation. Memory for St. Augustine

⁷⁷ Psalms 19:1.

includes all that we know, even though we are not at the moment consciously thinking of it. Memory is, therefore, the fundamental source of truth. St. Augustine believes that the memory power is possible because of the illumination of the mind by God. Hence this proves the existence of the Divine Mind.

St. Augustine again says that the truth is taught to us by Christ, the Interior Teacher, who is always present in each man's soul. He will always teach any man of good will who interrogates concerning the truth. St. Augustine rejected the Platonic doctrine of Reminiscence because it requires the pre-existence of the soul. St. Augustine believes that the soul is created by God. He also denies the doctrine of innate ideas which was later adopted by the seventeenth century thinkers and philosophers. St. Augustine further says that In order to recognize an object or a process, my memory must earlier parts of my experience and compare them with the latter parts. Perception, thus, involves recognition, and therefore, the mnemonic (helping memory) retention of earlier parts of sensation. In this connection, the experience of time would be quite impossible were it not for this capacity of retention. Thus, the recognition of an articulated sequence of sounds requires such mnemonic retention which can be explained by the fact that

the soul preserves the living, moving memories of the past events. It is important to remember that consistent with Platonist view of knowledge, St. Augustine also insists that sensory cognition involves knowledge of perfect Forms, made present to us by the Interior Teacher.

All these facts of the cosmos, whether it is from nature or from man with his memory, understanding and will power, points at an Intelligent Creator, and thus proved the existence of God. The French philosopher Voltaire⁷⁸ has given a conclusive convincing remark:

I shall always be convinced that
a watch proves a watch maker,
and that a universe proves a God.

(6) Conclusive Cosmological Evidence. I like the Conclusive Cosmological Evidence for the existence of God given by Steve Kumar and John Heininger, which appear in the Nagaland Post, January 23-25, 1995. They say that, "According to most Christian philosophers, one of the greatest proofs for the existence of God is the cosmic evidence." Indeed, the writings of St. Augustine, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sarte, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Thomas Aquinas, C.S. Lewis and others, indicate that the question of existence is crucial to thinking. One of the most profound philosophical questions that has caused many debates and much discussion

⁷⁸ As quoted by Steve Kumar & John Heininger, op.cit., p.1.

among the philosophers through the centuries is, "Why is there something, rather than nothing?"

Philosopher and theologian H.D. Lewis from London University notes, "The question 'Why is there something rather than nothing?' is regarded even by some skeptical philosophers as a significant one." According to Wittgenstein, the answer to the question mentioned lies not in the something, but beyond the something. Wittgenstein is here demanding a ground for its existence, and that the contingency of existence requires a non-contingent Being who is the cause of all contingency. John W. Montgomery,⁷⁹ in his How Do We Know There is a God, says,

Nothing in this world is able to explain its own existence; thus, there must be a God in order to explain the world in which we find ourselves.

Fredrick Copleston also asserts in his The Existence of God, "What we call the world is intrinsically unintelligible, apart from the existence of God". And even a radical skeptic such as David Hume admitted the force of this argument when he writes,

I never asserted so absurd a proposition as that anything might arise without a cause.

(The Letters of David Hume)

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 3.

One can readily, therefore, see the absurdity of a universe without God. In this regard Norman Geisler writes, "If any finite being exists, then an infinite Being exists as an actual and necessary ground for finite being." The apostle Paul⁸⁰ speaking to the Greek philosophers of his day argued that the existence of the universe depends on the existence and the sustaining power of God:

God that made the world and all things therein,
seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth,
dwelleth not in temples made with hands...
in Him we live, and move, and have our being....

(7) Argument from Verbal Testimony. From the verbal testimony of Christ and others, another argument for the existence of God may be abstracted from the writings of St. Augustine. St. Augustine has not declared such an argument but from his own very life and the testimony of Christ we can have enough ground for saying so. Verbal testimony here means the words uttered by trustworthy persons, directly or through the Holy Scripture.

The biblical evidence indicates that Christ testifies or claims to be the Son of God, God in human form, equal to God, sinless as God, with authority to forgive sin, to grant eternal life, who is worthy of worship, and who is

⁸⁰ Acts 17:24,28.

Truth. The claims of Christ are unique compared to the claims of other religious founders of the world. With due respect to the different founders of religions, Mohammad never claimed to be God; Buddha remained silent on the question of God; Confucius refused to discuss the idea of God; only Jesus claimed to be God. During His life on earth, talking about Himself and about God, Jesus said:⁸¹

He that seeth me (Jesus Christ) seeth Him
(God) that sent Me (Jesus Christ).

God Himself also testifies Jesus as His own Son. The Scripture testifies that Jesus came to Galilee unto John the Baptist to be baptized of him. And when Jesus was baptized, He went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heaven were opened, and Christ saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him, and a voice from God⁸² came, saying,

This is my beloveth Son,
in whom I am well pleased.

The apostle Paul also says in Romans 8:3 that God sent His Son to in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, and condemned sin in the flesh. Hence, words of St. Paul, Christ

⁸¹ John 12:45.

⁸² Matthew 3:17.

very own words, and the words of God prove that Jesus is the Son of God. These facts therefore, prove that God exists.

It is interesting to note that even Satan and the Evil spirits recognised that Jesus was the Son of God, for they uttered it. To support this point I would like to furnish from the records of St. Matthew,⁸³ and this will further strengthen the argument that God exists.

What have we (evil spirits) to do with Thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art Thou come hither to torment us before time?

If Thou (Christ) be the Son of God, command these that stones be made bread.... But He (Christ) answered and said, it is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Even the unclean spirits, when they saw Him (Christ) fell down before Him, and cried, saying, "Thou art the Son of God" (Mark 3:11). Dr. Billy Graham, the World Wide Famous evangelist, in his book, Peace With God, has rightly pointed out:⁸⁴

The philosophers of the centuries have struggled with the problem of a Supreme Being (God)... and questions about God are revealed in this Holy Book we call the Bible.

⁸³ Matthew 8:29; 4:3-4.

⁸⁴ Billy Graham, Peace With God, (Educational Book Exhibits, Bombay, 1973), pp. 24, 35, 36.

Whenever anyone asks me how I can be so certain about who and what God really is, I am reminded of the story of the little boy who was out flying a kite. It was a fine day for the kite flying, the wind was brisk and large billowy clouds were blowing across the sky. The kite went up and up until it was entirely hidden by the clouds. 'What are you doing?' a man asked the little boy. 'I am flying a kite', he replied. 'Flying a kite, are you?' the man said. 'How can you be sure? You can't see your kite'. 'No', said the boy, 'I can't see it, but every little while I feel a tug, so I know for sure that it's there!'

The testimonies and claims of Christ are consistent with His life. He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointeth Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised..." (Luke 4:18). He has the power to set men free from sin, from sicknesses, the blind see, the lame walk, the dumb speak, even the dead like Lazarus regain life, demons and evils spirits cast out. St. Matthew records that even nature obeys Him. He rebuked the tempest and there was a great calm. The disciples of Christ seeing this Godly power astonishingly said, "What manner of Man is this that even the winds and the sea obey Him!" (Matthew 8:27).

The verbal testimony of Christ are consistent with the reality in which man lives. He said in John 10:10, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly". Christ also invites men to come to Him and take rest in Him. This is said by Christ in Matthew 11:28-29, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls". St. Augustine accepted this invitation and experienced for himself that the Son of God was a reality. Thus, this proves that God exists from the testimony of St. Augustine. Here, I would like to quote Augustine:⁸⁵

I have read in Plato and Cicero sayings that are very wise and beautiful; but I never read in either of them, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden".

St. Paul himself also experienced the reality of the Son of God. There was total conversion or newness in his life. Thus, he also testifies:⁸⁶

Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

⁸⁵ George Sweeting (Compiler), More Than 2000 Great Quotes & Illustrations, (Word Book Publishing, Texas, 1985).

⁸⁶ 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Again, I would like to point out that the historicity of Christ is universally accepted. We know that we are in the year 1995 A.D., meaning 1995 years after the first coming of Jesus Christ, who is God, taking the form of man. The other part of history, we count in terms of B.C., meaning Before Christ. This is universally accepted as regards counting of year. A time will come when man will see what is called "2000 A.D." whether it is for better or worse. This proves that Christ is a true historic character, and that further shows that whatever He says will not be wrong. Thus, from the testimony and words of the Son of God, we can establish that God exists.

But who is this Son of God or Jesus Christ or the Word? Jesus is introduced in chapter one of St. John's Gospel as the Word or Logos.⁸⁷ In Christian Philosophy, the Logos (Word) becomes the Second Person of the Trinity and its functions are identified with the creative, illuminating and redemptive works of Jesus Christ. Among the Greek philosophers, Heraclitus affirms the reality of Logos analogous to the reason in man that regulates all physical processes and is the source of all human law. Again in Philo of Alexandria, in whom Hebrew modes of thought mingle with Greek

⁸⁷ Amplified Holy Bible, (Zondervan Bible Publishers, Michigan, 1987), p. 1206.

concepts, the Logos becomes the immaterial instrument, and even at times the personal agency, through which the creative activity of transcendent God is exerted upon the world. Finally, the Logos plays an important role in the system of Plotinus as the creative and form-giving aspect of Intelligence (Nous) the second of the three Hypotases.⁸⁸ Therefore, from the words of Christ, the Logos Himself, we come to the conclusion that God really exists. And, perhaps, we cannot have a more convincing argument than that of this Logos.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to highlight the inextricable relation between God and St. Augustine. It is no exaggeration to say that any discussion on St. Augustine without a discussion on God would be meaningless. It should be remembered that St. Augustine was not a mere philosopher but was also a man of God. St. Augustine himself acknowledges that his heart would be restless until it would find its rest in God.

I have tried to discuss in detail the Essence and Attributes of God in accordance with St. Augustine's philo-

⁸⁸ Dagobert D. Runes, Dictionary of Philosophy and 72 Authorities, (Littlefield, Adam & Co., New Jersey, 1979), p. 184.

sophical principles. These attributes are as follows: (i) God is a Living Being, (ii) God is a Personal Being, (iii) God is a Spiritual Being. (iv) God is an Absolute, Supreme, Self-Existence, Unity, Immutable, Perfect, Eternal and Immense Being, (v) God is an Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipotent Being. The main Moral Attributes of God are as under - (i) Holiness, (ii) Righteousness, (iii) Love, and (iv) Truth.

According to St. Augustine, creation is the result of a free act of God. His creation includes not only what can be seen but also what cannot be seen in the universe. In my opinion, whatever I see makes me believe whatever I do not see. It may be pointed out once again that God's creation involves no natural antecedent. God chose to create because of His goodness. Therefore, St. Augustine rightly holds the view that creation is an act of the personal free will of God. For this position of St. Augustine, substantiation is given from the Holy Bible. God also sustains what He has created. This explains the continuance of nature. God is a Provider too. He provides of the progress of the creation. More importantly, God is the Redeemer of man and the whole creation.

St. Augustine, it must be pointed out, was not interested in mere speculation about the existence of God. Samuel

Enoch Stumpf is right when he says: "His (St. Augustine) philosophical reflection about God were the product of his intense pursuit of wisdom and spiritual peace" (A Historical of Philosophy, p. 136). Copleston echoes the same view when he says, "He (St. Augustine) was not so much concerned to prove that God exists" (A History of Philosophy, p. 69). It must be also pointed out that St. Augustine takes the existence of God for granted. He regards it as a matter of self-evident principle. For St. Augustine, the existence of God is as self-evident that it does not require any proof. He takes it as an axiom in mathematics which does not require any further proof. (A Concise Introduction to Philosophy by William H. Halversion, Random House, NY, 1976, p. 123). This creates the suspicion in one's mind whether at all, St. Augustine offers any proof for the existence of God. However, I am convinced that He does have some. Accordingly, I have discussed those proofs. The Noological (Intuitive) Proof for the existence of God or Proof for the Existence of God from Eternal Truths was the one the most dear to him. This proof of St. Augustine may be summarized as follows:

- (i) There are some necessary and unchangeable truths (ideas) such as $7 + 3 = 10$.
- (ii) But a finite mind, such as mine, is not unchangeable.

(iii) An unchangeable truth cannot be based in a changeable, finite mind.

(iv) Therefore, there must be an infinite, unchangeable Mind (that is God) which is the basis for all unchangeable truths.

G.W. Leibnitz produces an argument of the same kind. His argument may be summarized as follows. The necessary and eternal truths are the first principle of all rational knowledge. They are, in fact, the very principle of our nature as of the universe, because it is our essence to represent the whole universe. Thus, consciousness or knowledge of these truths is knowledge of ourselves, and it is at the same time knowledge of God who is the final reason of all things. There are two main criticism of Proof for the existence of God from eternal truths. The first criticism is based on the question of whether or not any necessary truths about reality exist. This criticism also points out that the mathematical truths being merely definitional and stipulative, cannot give any information about reality. The second criticism points out that an immutable idea can also arise in a finite mind. I have met the first criticism as follows. Mathematical truths can be informative. Furthermore, St. Augustine uses the term "ordo" or numbers to indicate the rational order of the world and the realities. I would like

to quote Albert Einstein, one of the greatest scientists of all times, to support my view. He says, "The mathematical precision of the universe reveals the mathematical mind of God." I have tried to invalidate the second criticism along with St. Augustine as follows - Man is mutable and limited, while God is immutable and unlimited. Therefore, man being mutable cannot be a source of immutable ideas.

Descartes' proof for the existence of God from the existence of an 'idea of perfect being' seems to be similar to St. Augustine's proof for the existence of God from the eternal truths. I have only said that these two arguments seem to be similar because I am well aware of the danger of saying that these two arguments are of the same kind. I have related St. Augustine's argument to the Ontological argument of St. Anselm and Descartes. In this connection, I have also discussed the views of Gaunilo, Kant, William P. Alston and Norman Malcolm.

I have also discussed St. Augustine's argument for the existence of God from External or Corporeal World. St. Augustine gives this argument by way of commentary in the course of Scriptural exegesis. In my opinion, this argument is not philosophically very important since it is based on acknowledged fact that all creatures depend on God for their conservation.

St. Augustine may be said to have produced another argument, that is, Proof from Universal Consent. This consists in the fact that the whole human race confesses God to be the author of the world. This argument again is not philosophically very significant. Therefore, I have not given much space to this argument.

Gilson in his Introduction a L'etude de St. Augustine says that, St. Augustine has yet another argument for the existence of God. The argument may be called as Long Proof of God's existence. This argument may be summarised as follows. The soul looks for truths in the world of sense — it fails to find it. Therefore, it turns inwards and discovers the immutable truth which transcends the soul. The discovery of immutable truth leads to understanding God as the ground of all truths. This argument has an advantage. The advantage consists in the fact that, it not only gives prominence to the proof from the thought but also links up this proof with the search of soul for God as the origin of happiness.

St. Augustine gives another argument which may be called Proof for the existence of God from the Cosmos. By means of this argument, St. Augustine tries to prove the existence of God from the order we find in the physical nature as well as in reflection and recollection of the

soul. I consider this argument to be one of the greatest proofs for the existence of God. Because it makes a very important point that a contingent being requires a non-contingent being, and that the world would be completely unintelligible apart from the existence of God.

I am of the opinion that another argument for the existence of God can be abstracted from the writings of St. Augustine. I would like to call this, Argument from Verbal Testimony. I must hasten to add that no other writer has suggested this argument. This is my very own. The testimony and claims of Christ, God Himself, and others show Jesus as the Son of God. Christ makes an extraordinary claim that He and God the Father are one, and that those who have seen Him have seen God, the Father.

Thematic Unity of the Thesis

Last but not the least, I would like to connect all the central problems which I have discussed in my thesis so as to bring out the thematic unity of the thesis.

As I have said before, I have discussed and highlighted the philosophical problems of scepticism and Christianity. I am confident that scepticism in St. Augustine's philosophy is not only chronologically prior but also logically prior to Christian philosophy. Needless to point out

that St. Augustine's rejection of scepticism led him to Christian philosophy.

In the second chapter, I have connected Plato with St. Augustine, especially with Plato's Theory of Forms. In my considered opinion, which is the outcome of my acquaintance with St. Augustine's philosophy, St. Augustine uses Plato's theory to elucidate his Christian philosophy.

In the third chapter, I have given a full blooded philosophical account of the Fundamental Principles of Christianity, vis-a-vis St. Augustine's philosophy.

In the fourth chapter, St. Augustine's concept of God occupies a very prominent and significant place.

Thus, I have no hesitation to claim that there is a connecting link between all my chapters, that is to say, first chapter leads to second, second to the third, and third to the fourth.

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