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The Concept of the Human Soul

according to

Saint Augustine

DISSERTATION

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of America in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
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BY  
REV. WILLIAM P. O'CONNOR, A. B.

Archdiocese of Milwaukee  
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PREFACE.

The aim of this dissertation is to present and explain the concept of the human soul as it is found in the writings of Saint Augustine.

The soul of man was for Saint Augustine an object of life-long study and investigation., He was not particularly concerned about the soul as such, the plant soul, or the irrational soul of the brute, except insofar as a study of these might serve to throw some light on the nature and activities of the human soul. His interest in the soul of man was not actuated by mere curiosity to know for the sake of knowing, but he sought to know the human soul as a means whereby he might arrive at a clearer and better understanding of the Supreme Being.

The concept of the human soul as it appears in the writings of Saint Augustine is not set forth in a systematic manner, but the elements that enter into its make-up are found widely scattered through his various philosophical, apologetical, polemical, exegetical, and dogmatical works. He wrote a few special treatises on the human soul, but he never attempted to construct an organized philosophy of the soul.

The present thesis proposes to collect and coordinate the philosophical fragments of Saint Augustine's doctrine of the human soul and to interpret these in the light of his mental progress. There is a tendency on the part of some commentators to over-emphasize the Platonic character of Augustine's doctrine of the human soul. It is true that those works which were published during the first few years of his career manifest the strong influence of his recent study of Neo-Platonism. The treatises, however, which belong to that period when he was Bishop of Hippo and one of the most renowned scholars of his day stamp him unquestionably as a Christian philosopher. It is indispensable to the correct understanding of Augustine's concept of the human soul that due regard be paid to the development which characterizes his doctrine.

## PREFACE

No apology seems necessary for a piece of work such as is presented here when one considers the unique position held by Saint Augustine in the world of Christian thought. He was under Providence the instrument by which the philosophical riches of the past were trans-

mitted to the new world which rose upon the ruins of the Roman Empire. Through him the Christian Schools of the Middle Ages were to meet the great minds of Pagan antiquity and to learn what they had achieved in the field of philosophical endeavors. The debt of Scholasticism to the Bishop of Hippo not only in Theology but also in Philosophy is inestimable. His influence on the entire trend of Christian philosophic thought since his day has been tremendous. Any effort, therefore, to re-direct attention to the work of a great scholar and thinker like Saint Augustine, any contribution, however meager it may be, to the better understanding of his doctrine, deserves the consideration at least of all those who are interested in the promotion of what is best in the history of human achievement.

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### INTRODUCTION.

#### THE LIFE OF SAINT AUGUSTINE.

Aurelius Augustine was born at Tagaste, in Numidia, in the year 354. His parents, Patritius, an Afro-Roman pagan, and Monica, an ardent Christian, were

of the patrician class but in reduced circumstances. He received his early training in the grammar school of his native town, and in a school of rhetoric for beginners in nearby Madaura. Recognizing the marked talents of the boy, his father determined at any cost to prepare him for the forum. With this end in view Patritius endeavored to save a sufficient sum of money to enable him to send his son to the University of Carthage. Unfortunately for Augustine, his father's efforts did not meet with success, and he was forced to spend his sixteenth year in idleness. With the aid of Romanianus, a wealthy friend, the necessary funds were finally provided, and the journey to Carthage was made towards the close of the year 370. The latent genius of the new student was soon recognized by the University, and ere long he had achieved some reputation as a rhetorician. The reading of Cicero's Hortensius in the year 373, gave a new trend to his thoughts and aspirations, and enkindled in his breast a love for philosophy. The same year or in the beginning of the following year, he became a convert to Manicheism. Having finished his studies at the University, he abandoned the idea of becoming a lawyer and took up the teaching of rhetoric as a profession. He returned to Tagaste in 374, where he opened a school of grammar or rhetoric. After a few tedious, dragging months, the atmosphere of his native town becoming unbearable, he closed the school and returned to Carthage, where for nine years he taught rhetoric. This was a period of mental unrest and incipient religious doubt for Augustine. He had embraced Manicheism chiefly because it promised to satisfy his strong curiosity regarding the mysteries of

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nature, but after nine long years of painstaking effort on his part, this promise remained unfulfilled. Finally, in the year 383, Faustus, the most renowned exponent of the Manichean doctrines, came to Carthage. Augustine had been assured again and again by his co-religionists that this learned presbyter would be able to remove all his doubts and to solve all his difficulties. His meeting with Faustus, however, only resulted in his recognizing the inconsistencies of Manicheism, which he determined forthwith to abandon. The same year he left Carthage for Rome, where he resumed the teaching of rhetoric. During his sojourn in Rome, although he no longer considered himself a Manichean, both his host and his friends were members of the sect with which he had but

recently severed relations. Through the influence of these friends he was appointed Master of Rhetoric for Milan by Symmachus, Prefect of Rome. While in Rome he had been favorably impressed for a time by the skeptical philosophy of the New Academy, but shortly after his arrival in Milan he discarded this for the study of Neo-Platonism. The strong Platonistic tendencies so manifest, particularly in his earlier writings, are traceable to this period. At Milan he met the saintly Ambrose, who was directly responsible for his becoming a catechumen in the Catholic Church. At the close of the fall school-term in the year 386, he resigned his post as Master of Rhetoric, and after a short visit to Rome went into solitude at Cassiciacum, a country place near Milan. Towards the beginning of Lent, the following year, he returned to the city to prepare for Baptist. He was baptized by Ambrose about Easter time in the year 387.

After his baptism, he probably remained in Milan for some months before setting out for Ostia, whence he intended to embark for Africa. The sudden death of Monica at Ostia, however, caused him to change his plans and he returned to Rome. The voyage to Africa was made in the following year, 388. On his arrival there, after paying a hurried visit to Carthage, he retired to Tagaste, where he spent the following three years in

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monastic seclusion, devoting his time to prayer, meditation, and study. About the year 391, he was summoned to Hippo Regius, where, by popular request, he was ordained to the priesthood by Valerius, the Bishop of that place. Five years later, in 396, he was consecrated bishop. On the death of Valerius, which occurred in the same year, he was raised to the see of Hippo, which he filled with great honor and distinction until his death in the year 430. 1

1 There are two chief sources of the life of Saint Augustine:

I, *Confessionum, libri .riii*, an autobiography which records the principal events in his life up to the time of his conversion.

II. *Vita Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis Episcopi, auctore Possidio*, a biography written by one of his intimate associates, which chronicles his career from the time of his conversion until his death.

The following texts were consulted:

I. Confessionum, libri xiii Corpus script, eccl. lat. ed. Acad. Vind. t. xxxiii, sec. I, pars. I P. Knoll, 1896; Migne, J-P P. L. t. xxxii, col. 659-868 ; Watts, W St. Augustine's Confessions, London, 1631, The Loeb Classical Library, 1912.

II. Vita Sancti Aurelii Augustini, Hipponensis Episcopi auctore Possidio, Migne, J-P P. L. t. xxxii, col. 33-578; Sancti Augustini vita scripta a Possidio episcopo, edited by, Weiskotten, H. T. Princeton University Press, 1919.

## CHAPTER I. SOURCES.

The purpose of this chapter is to indicate and summarize the chief sources to be used in the present study. Augustine's philosophy of the soul is not to be found in any one work or in any particular class of writings. It is not only in his Philosophical Writings that his doctrine is to be looked for, but also his Letters, Apologetical, Polemical, Dogmatical and Exegetical Writings must be examined. It seems hardly necessary to advert to the fact that the list presented below is far from being a complete list of all the works in which Augustine touches on questions pertaining to the human soul. An effort will be made here to point out only those works which have a more direct bearing on the theme at hand.

As a preamble to this task, it is necessary to make the following general observation in order to determine accurately or to interpret intelligently Augustine's doctrine on any subject whatsoever, the investigator must be careful to consider the historical order of his writings. The reason for this becomes obvious when one remembers that his literary career extended over a period of forty-four years, during which time his views naturally underwent considerable change. One can reasonably look for greater accuracy of statement and maturer thought and judgment in the learned Bishop of Hippo than in the struggling catechumen of Milan. He himself informs us that his was a progressive science. He wrote as his knowledge increased, and his knowledge increased as he wrote, *Ego proinde fateor me ex eorum numero esse conari, qui proficiendo scribunt et scribendo proficiunt.* 2 In the Prologus of the *Retractationes* which was written about 427, he tells his readers that in order to understand the development of his doctrine they should read

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his works in the order in which they were written, Inueniet enim fortasse, quomodo scribendo profecerim, quisquis opuscula mea ordine, quo scripta sunt legerit. In any attempt, therefore, to determine the true doctrine of Augustine, one must be careful to consider the chronological order of his writings.

The following list has been drawn up for the purpose of acquainting the reader with the principal sources of his doctrine on the human soul, and in order that their chronological position among his works may be located.

Contra Academicos, libri III, the earliest of this extant works, was written towards the close of the year 386, at Cassiciacum, a country place near Milan. These dialogues are dedicated to his friend and patron Romanianus. They contain a refutation of the Academician principle that the human mind in its search for truth cannot attain certitude, but only a high degree of probability. The chief value of the work to the present treatise is that it furnishes some of the fundamental notions of Augustine's philosophy.

De Ordine, libri II. These two books were also composed towards the close of 386 at Cassiciacum. They are dedicated to Zenobius, one of his intimate companions and associates. Divine Providence and the Order of the Universe are the chief topics discussed. In the Second Book he touches upon some questions that enter into our study, such as the relation of philosophy to theology (c. v) ; authority and reason (c. ix) ; quid sit Ratio? (c. xi) ; quo ordine anima provehitur ad cognitionem sui et ipsius unitatis (c. xviii) ; homo unde brutis praesantior? (c. xix).

Soliloquia, libri II, were written before his baptism in the year 387 at Cassiciacum. They are in the form of a dialogue in which Augustine represents himself as discussing certain questions with his own Reason. In the First Book he considers the qualities of mind and heart requisite for attaining the vision of God; in conclusion, he touches upon the immortal character of Truth. This last consideration leads him to the main topic to be dis-

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cussed in the Second Book, namely, the immortality of the human soul. He introduces the meditations on immortality by explaining the nature of Truth and Error. Having discovered Truth to be immortal, he formulates the argument, undoubtedly Platonic in origin, that the human soul is immortal because it is the dwelling place of immortal Truth.

*De Immortalitate Animae* was written in the year 387, either at Milan during the time of his proximate preparation for Baptism, or at Cassiciacum shortly after his return from Milan. It is a continuation of the meditations begun in the *Soliloquia*. The arguments employed in this work are neither clear nor convincing. Some forty years later he expressed regret that the book had been published against his will, and confessed that the proofs developed therein are so obscure and involved that he himself could scarcely understand them. 3

*De Quantitate Animae* was begun in the year 387 and finished in 388 at Rome. This book, which is in the form of a dialogue with a friend named Evodius, contains an account of several discussions on the following questions pertaining to the human soul : unde sit, qualis sit, quanta sit, cur corpori fuerit data, cum ad corpus uenerit qualis efflciatur, qualis cum abscesserit. 4 The major portion of the work, as the title indicates, is devoted to an examination of the question: Quanta sit anima? According to Augustine, the human soul is a simple substance, that is to say, it is inextended ; it does not occupy space like material objects, so that different parts of the soul correspond to different parts of space; but it is present in the body which it animates vi ac potentia (c. xxxii, 69). The last four chapters deal with the seven stages in the progress of the individual soul towards God, an idea borrowed from Neo-Platonism.

*De Libero Arbitrio*, libri III. The first of these books was written about the year 388 while Augustine was sojourning in Rome; the second and third books were

3 Ret. I, c. v.

4 Ret. I. c. vii



composed about 395 in Hippo. They contain a series of dialogues with his friend Evodius in which they discuss the problem of evil and its relation to human liberty. The work was intended primarily as a refutation of the Manichean tenet that God is the author of evil as well as of good. He maintains against the Manicheans that God is not the author of evil, but that evil exists in consequence of man's exercise of free will. For our purpose Chapters XX and XXI of the Third Book are important, because they give a concise statement of his difficulties regarding the origin of the souls of the descendants of the first man. Augustine always hesitated about taking a definite stand on this question, but he seems to have been inclined to favor Generationism as the theory most readily reconcilable with the orthodox doctrine of original sin.

*De Diversis Quaestionibus Octoginta Tribus*, was published at Hippo in the year 396. This work is a compilation of answers given by Augustine to various questions proposed by his companions in the religious life at Tagaste and Hippo. The following questions are of importance in the present study: *Quaestio prima*, *Utrum anima a se ipso sit*; VII, *Quae proprie in animante anima dicitur*; VIII, *Utrum per se anima moveatur*; XXXVIII, *De conformatione animae*; XL, *Cum animarum natura una sit, unde hominum diversae voluntates*.

*Confessionum, libri XIII*. This work, Augustine's literary masterpiece, was published in Hippo in the year 400. The first ten books are an autobiography, containing an intimate description of the author's mental and moral experiences from his infancy up to the time of his conversion. The last three books are exegetical in character, being chiefly a commentary on the history of the Creation as recorded in the Book of Genesis. The autobiographical part of the work reveals the remarkable introspective powers of its author, and his ability to commit to writing his observations. The tenth book contains an acute analysis of Memory and Remembering a splendid piece of psychological work. This study is of

value because he builds up an argument for the spirituality of the soul on the power of Memory. It is the work as a whole, however, rather than any specific part, that furnishes many useful items, suggestions, and aids in the investigation of Augustine's concept of the human soul.

De Trinitate, libri XV, was begun about the year 400 and completed about 416 at Hippo. This is, perhaps, his most profound dogmatic treatise. As the title indicates, it discusses the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. His motive in writing this treatise was to convince those who attempt to demonstrate the truth of this great mystery by reason alone that the human mind is incapable of fathoming the nature of God, and hence that the Trinity is a matter for faith and not for reason. From the Ninth to the Fifteenth Book inclusive, he skillfully examines the various trinities which are found in man. These seven books in particular are replete with much that is of value to the present study.

De Genesi ad Litteram, libri XII. The writing of this work extended over a period of fourteen years from 401 to 415. These twelve books are chiefly exegetical in character, being a defense of the literal interpretation of the first three chapters of the Book of Genesis. The main purpose of the work is to prove that there is nothing in the history recorded in these chapters which cannot be literally true, nothing which is contrary to reason or to the nature of things. Two of these twelve books have a direct bearing on our problem the Seventh which discusses the nature of the human soul, and the Tenth, which deals with the origin of the human soul.

Epistola CXVIII, was written about the year 410 in reply to a communication forwarded to Augustine by a Greek scholar named Dioscorus. This young man who was studying the Latin classics evidently had encountered several difficulties which he was unable to solve. He submitted these to the Bishop of Hippo in the hope that he would take the trouble to answer them. His chief motive in seeking the desired information was one of

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vainglory. After severely rebuking his correspondent for imposing so great a task upon an already overburdened ecclesiastic, and from such a blameworthy, trivial

motive, Augustine answers his difficulties in a general way. This lengthy epistle interests us because it shows, among other things, how well acquainted its writer was with the current philosophical theories of his day. The third and fourth chapters especially acquaint us with his views on the relation of philosophy to religion.

Epistola CXLIII, was written about the year 412 in reply to a letter sent him by a friend named Marcellinus. In this short letter he defends the attitude he had assumed towards the problem of the origin of the soul.

De Civitate Dei, libri XXII. This monumental dissertation, probably Augustine's greatest work, was begun about the year 413 and completed in or about the year 426. It is the earliest known effort to formulate a philosophy of history. The invasion and sack of Rome by the Goths under King Alaric in the year 410 had aroused the animosity of the pagan population of the Empire against the Christian religion. The great disaster which had befallen Rome was attributed by the adherents of polytheism to the neglect of their gods consequent upon the introduction of Christianity. Augustine in this work undertakes to show the real causes of the fall of the earthly city, and at the same time to vindicate the Kingdom of God on earth against the misrepresentations and unjust accusations of its enemies. According to the author himself the first ten books are devoted to a careful study of the pagan form of worship and its relation to human welfare both in the present life and in the life to come. 5 The remaining twelve books constitute a history of the rise, the progress and the destiny of the two cities the City of God and the City of the World. 6

It does not fall within the province of this dissertation to give a detailed criticism of this noteworthy contribution to Christian Apologetics, suffice it to say, that in this

5 Ret. n, c. LXVIII.

6 Ibid.

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work Augustine glimpses the whole course of human history and "from the beginning to the end he interprets it with power and insight. His apology for Christianity rises at once to the dignity of a magnificent philosophy of

history, a work that towers 'like an Alpine peak' over all the other apologies of Christian antiquity." 7

The value of the work for the present purpose consists in this, that incidental to the main thesis, much light is thrown upon the philosophical opinions of the eminent thinkers of antiquity, particularly in Books VIII and XVIII, and side by side with these are found the author's views on the various problems they suggest. Although it is true that here as elsewhere we do not find any attempt at a systematic treatment of philosophical questions, yet there is a wealth of material scattered through the pages of this work which the student of Augustine's philosophy cannot afford to overlook. Moreover, in line with the general observation made in the beginning of this chapter apropos of Augustine's mental progress, it is useful to note that the views expressed in this work represent the results of life-long study and investigation. His doctrine of the human soul, as one might expect in a work of this kind, is diffused through the whole dissertation. It is only as occasion may demand that he digresses from the main theme to touch upon this or that particular aspect of our question. Again as in the case of the Confessions it is not so much to a particular part as to the general development of the thesis that one must look for his doctrine.

Epistola CLXVI, was written to Saint Jerome about the year 415. Augustine still troubled by the same doubts regarding the origin of the soul which had disturbed his mind some twenty years previously when he wrote *De Libero Arbitrio* decided to submit his difficulty to Jerome. In the *Retractationes*, we are informed that while the latter wrote to him approving the course he had taken in asking the advice of another, he nevertheless regretted

7 Bardenhewer-Shahan, *Patrology*, p. 479-480. Freiburg im Breisgau and St. Louis, Mo. 1908.

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that he did not have sufficient leisure to pen a fitting reply. 8 This epistle, while largely given over to a discussion of the origin of the soul, contains in the second chapter a short summary of what Augustine explicitly held regarding the human soul.

*De Anima et ejus Origine*, libri IIII. These four books

were written about the year 420. Vincentius Victor, a recent convert from an offshoot of the Donatist heresy, had found among the books of a certain Spanish priest named Peter, an account of Augustine's indecision in the matter of the soul's origin. Victor wrote two books on the question to Peter. These books fell into the hands of a monk named Renatus who forwarded them to Augustine. In his reply, the latter pens four separate books on the subject, sending one to Renatus, one, in the form of a letter, to Peter, and two to Victor. The main argument in all four books is the same, and aims at justifying their author's hesitancy in expressing himself definitely upon the manner of the soul's origin.

Retractationum, libri II. This work appeared about the year 427, and contains a critical review of the literary products of a long career. The author takes up each one of his works in the order of its composition, and after a brief statement of the purpose for which it was written, he subjects it to careful revision, and correction. The work is invaluable, if not indispensable, to the student of Saint Augustine. It makes available a synopsis of his chief works. It enables one to study the development of his doctrine. It affords the opportunity to examine the author's personal criticism of his own writings.

This list, as was remarked in the beginning of the chapter, is by no means complete ; in point of fact, a complete list would probably include a large part of the vast library of Augustinian literature which fortunately has come down to us. No further claim is made for the work presented here, other than that both from the standpoint of chronology and content it is sufficient to enable one to

8 II. c. LXXI. ,

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pursue intelligently the work that has been undertaken. For the purpose of facilitating reference to this list, and in order to designate the texts which have been used in this study, the following chronological and textual list

386 Contra Academicos,  
L. III

(Contra Acad.)

386 De Ordine, L. II

387 Soliloquia, L. II

(Solil.)

387 De Immortalitate An-  
imae, L. I

(De Immor. An.)

387-388 De Quantitate  
Animae, L. I

(De Quan. An.)

388-395 De Libero Arbi-  
trio, L. III

(De Lib. Arb.)

396 De Diversis Quaes-  
tionibus LXXXIII,  
L. I

(De Div. Quaes.  
LXXXIII)

400 Confessionum, L.  
XIII  
(Conf.)

400-416-De Trinitate, L.  
XV

(De Trin.)

Migne, P. L. t. xxxii, 905-  
958; Ret. I. c. I.

Migne, P. L. t. xxxii, 977-

1020 ; Ret. I. c. III.

Migne, P. L. t. xxxii, 869-904 ; Ret. I. c. IIII.

Migne, P. L. t. xxxii, 1021-1034 ; Ret. I. c. v.

Migne, P. L. t. xxxii, 1035-1080 ; Ret. I. c. vii.

Migne, P. L. t. xxxii, 1221-1310 ; Ret. I. c. viii.

Migne, P. L. t. XL, 11-100;  
Ret. I. c. xxv.

Corpus script, eccles. lat.

ed. Acad. Vind. sec. I.

pars. I, t. xxxiii P.

Knoll, 1896.

Migne, P. L. t. xxxii, 659-

868, Ret. II, c. XXXII.

Migne, P. L. t. XLII, 819-

1098, SS. Patrum opus-

cula selecta, sec. I. t.

XLII, XLIII, Hurter, H.

Innsbruck, 1868. Ret. II,

c. XLL

9 Wherever possible the Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum of the Vienna Academy of Sciences (Corpus script, eccles. lat. ed. Acad. Vind.) has been consulted; in all other cases the Opera Omnia Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis Episcopi, which is part of the Patrologiae Cursus Completus of J-P Migne, Vol. XXXII-XLVII Paris, 1845-1849 (Migne, P. L.), has been followed.

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401-415 De Genesi ad Lit- Corpus script, eccles. lat.

teram, L. XII

(De Gen. ad. Litt.)

ed. Acad. Vind. sec. Ill,  
pars I. t. xxviii J. Zy-  
cha, 1894.

Migne, P. L. t. xxxiv, 245-

486, Ret. II, c. L.

410 Epistola CXVIII, ad Corpus script, eccles. lat.

Dioscorum ed. Acad. Vind. sec. II,

(Ep. CXVIII) pars II, t. xxxiiii, Al

Goldbacher, 1898.

Migne, P. L. t. xxxiii, 432-  
449.

412 Epistola CXLIII, ad  
Marcellinum  
(Ep. CXLIII)

413-426 De Civitate Dei  
L. XXII

(De Civ. Dei)



415 Epistola CLXVI, ad  
Hieronymum  
(Ep. CLXVI)

420 De Anima et ejus  
Origine

(De An. et ejus  
Origine)

427 Retractationum, L. II  
(Ret.)

In preparing this list the  
suited :

Corpus script, eccles. lat.

ed. Acad. Vind. sec. II,

pars III, t. xxxiiii, Al.

Goldbacher, 1904.

Migne, P. L. t. xxxiii, 585-

590.

Corpus script, eccles. lat.

ed. Acad. Vind. sec. v.

pars I-II, t. xxxx, E.

Hoffman, 1899-1900.

Migne, P. L. t. XLI, 13-804,

Ret. II. c. LXVIII.

Corpus script, eccles. lat.

ed. Acad. Vind. sec. II,

pars III, t. xxxiiii, Al.

Goldbacher, 1904.

Migne, P. L. t. xxxiii, 720-

733, Ret. II, c. LXXI.

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pars II, t. xxxvi, P.

Knoll, 1902.

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## CHAPTER II. HIS NOTION OF PHILOSOPHY.

The history of Christian Philosophy begins with the Fathers of the Church. These early champions of the Christian philosophical world-view were interested in theology rather than philosophy. They devoted themselves to the task of fixing, developing, explaining, and defending the doctrines of Christianity. The pioneers among them those who labored before the Council of Nice (A. D. 325) were engaged in establishing Christian Dogma on a firm foundation of revelation and reason, and in warding off the sinister influences of pagan, Jewish, and heretical, philosophical and religious ideas. The writers of the Post-Nicene Period had their work mapped out for them by the dogmatic definitions of the Council. It fell to their lot to explain the articles of faith which had been defined, and to combat the prevailing heresies of their day.

With these facts in mind, it is not difficult to understand why the Patristic thinkers have not left any purely philosophical system or systems such as were created and developed by the great thinkers of pagan antiquity. They were not ex professo philosophers in the ordinary meaning of the term. They did not attempt to formulate any special theory of causes or ultimate explanations to solve the riddle of the cosmos and human existence. The philosophy they accepted and defended was not of their own fashioning; it had been handed down to them embodied in the doctrines of Jesus Christ.

What was their attitude towards Pagan philosophy? We must not think that they ignored entirely the achievements of the great pagan minds in the domain of human philosophy ; on the contrary, they sought to learn the best that pagan thought had attained in order that they might enlist it in the service of Christianity. Like the Neo-

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Platonists, they looked upon human philosophy and all secular learning as existing for the sole purpose of unfolding the impenetrable mystery surrounding the Supreme Being. Philosophy was, for them, merely an adjunct to Theology. It is not strange, then, that we find in the writings of these early Fathers of the Church so close a union between Philosophy and Theology that it is

difficult, and at times almost impossible, to divorce the one from the other. This intimate association of Philosophy with Theology is noticeable especially in the earlier half of the Patristic Period, and although the tendency to separate the two sciences appears towards the close of the Period, we do not find any accurate definition of their respective fields until the thirteenth century.

The outstanding figure among the Patristic philosophers, and one of the really profound thinkers of all times, was Saint Augustine. What has been observed above regarding all the Fathers in a general way, may be applied to Augustine in particular. He was first and foremost a theologian, and perhaps the greatest of them all. His chief interest centered in the development, exposition, and defense of Christian Dogma. Theology, in his opinion, occupies the highest rank in the hierarchy of the sciences. The value of all human knowledge is to be reckoned in terms of the service it renders the science of God. To know God is the most desirable good in life. It is in this knowledge only that man can find true happiness. That man who is versed in all the human sciences, but does not know God, is indeed miserable; but if he knows God, though he be ignorant of all else he is happy. <sup>10</sup> Referring to Philosophy in particular, he observes that the unique affair of true and genuine philosophy is to aid man in his quest for knowledge of the Uncaused Cause of all things. <sup>11</sup>

The relation of Philosophy to Theology as conceived by Augustine is one of reciprocal service. This is brought

<sup>10</sup> Infelix enim homo, qui scit ilia omnia, te autem nescit; beatus autem, qui te scit, etiamsi ilia nesciat. Conf. v. c. iv.

<sup>11</sup> De Ordine II, c. v. 16.

## HIS NOTION OF PHILOSOPHY † 23

out clearly in his exposition of the relations between Authority and Reason. No one doubts that there are two means by which we acquire knowledge, Authority and Reason. <sup>12</sup> There are two kinds of authority, divine and human. <sup>13</sup> Of these two, divine authority is the highest because it is infallible; human authority is less reliable, because it is subject to error. <sup>14</sup> The authority upon which he places the greatest reliance, and from which he is absolutely certain that he will never deviate, is Christ. <sup>15</sup>

So far as human authority is concerned, although, generally speaking, it is not trustworthy those men are to be preferred before all others who give the best evidences of greatest learning, and who carry out in their lives the precepts they teach. 16 As regards Reason, the other means by which we acquire knowledge, he writes : "I am influenced also by whatever has been attained by subtle reasoning, since I am eager not only to believe but also to understand the truth." 17 What, then, are the relations between these two, Authority and Reason ? In the order of time, Authority precedes Reason, but in the order of reality, Reason precedes Authority. (Tempore auctoritas, re autem ratio prior est.) 18 Reason appears to be more adapted to the capabilities of the learned for the acquisition of knowledge ; but Authority is necessary for all, both the cultured and the ignorant. 19 Reason precedes Authority, in so far as it lies within its province to examine the warrants of credibility of this or that author or work. 20 In a certain sense, Reason may be said always to precede Authority, since no one believes anything until he has determined in his mind that it ought to be believed. 21 Finally, Authority takes precedence over

12 Contra Acad. Ill, c. xx, 43 : Cf. De Ordine II, c. ix, 26.

13 De Ordine II, c. ix, 27.

14 Ibid.

15 Contra Acad. Ill, c. xx, 43.

16 De Ordine II, c. ix, 27.

17 Contra Acad. Ill, c. xx, 43.

18 De Ordine II, c. ix, 26.

19 Ibid.

20 De Vera Rel. c. xxv, 46.

21 De Praed. Sanct. c. II, 5.

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works that the object he had in view in composing them was not purely philosophical. *De Immortalitate Animae* was written not merely to restate the metaphysical proofs of immortality formulated by Plato, but also to confirm the Christian tenet that man is destined for unending communion with God. *De Quantitate Animae* had for its principal purpose the demonstrating of the incorporeal nature of the human soul. This philosophical investigation, however, is only a means by which the author arrives at an explanation of the various stages through which the soul must pass on its mystical return to God. *Epistola CLXVI ad Hieronymum* and *De Anima et ejus Origine* deal with the problem of the origin of the souls of the descendants of the first man. Augustine's prolonged interest in this perplexing difficulty was due not to mere curiosity, but rather to its important bearing on the orthodox doctrine of original sin. While these four works furnish much valuable information, they do not by any means afford a complete and systematic exposition of Augustine's philosophy of the soul. This lack of a connected, scientific treatment of the problem about to be investigated, renders it necessary to reach out in many different directions to gather together its widely scattered elements.

Augustine unlike Aristotle and his Christian interpreter, Saint Thomas Aquinas did not begin by formulating a general theory of soul from which he passed by stages to the human soul. There is no evidence to support the claim of Nourrisson that Augustine in the first place did not consider the human soul, but commenced his inquiry into this problem by asking himself, what is soul in general? <sup>33</sup> This method of approach to the study of the soul is evidently Nourrisson's, not Augustine's.

<sup>33</sup> II importe de le remarquer. Augustin ne considere pas tout d'abord dans l'ame uniquement l'ame humaine. Avant d'etudier d'une maniere particuliere l'ame de l'homme, il commence par se demander ce qu'est l'ame en general, l'ame principe des animaux. L'ame humaine reste d'ailleurs comme le type, d'ou il part pour y revenir, et sur lequel il ne cesse d'avoir les yeux fixes. (*Philosophic de Saint Augustin I*, p. 166, Paris, 1865.)

The French savant proffers neither direct evidence from the writings of Saint Augustine nor proofs of any kind to substantiate his claim. Had he offered the statement in question as an expression of his own personal opinion, this lack of substantiating proof might possibly be overlooked, but when he presents it as an unqualified fact, one may demand to know at least upon what grounds it is based. After asserting that Augustine at the outset did not consider the human soul in particular, the French philosopher admits that his interest centered in the latter. In his attempt, moreover, to sketch this supposed general scheme, he does not tell us how Augustine defined the soul as such, but begins his explanation by quoting a definition of the human soul. 34 After presenting a few brief statements regarding the plant soul, the World-soul, and the animal soul, he asserts that one must presume that these considerations lead to a study of the human soul in particular. 35 It is interesting to note that nothing was said about presuming this plan in the first instance, but it was stated as a fact that Augustine followed this mode of procedure. In another passage in the same work, it is alleged that this general theory of soul was formulated in imitation of Aristotle. 36 Again, it may be observed that the author is not venturing an opinion, but stating what is purported to be a fact. He makes no attempt, however, to prove this assertion, and proof is necessary in this case as in every other where there is question of Aristotle's influence on the philosophy of Saint Augustine. Aside from the fact that he himself records that he read the Ten Categories when he was scarcely twenty years of age, 37 it is not known for certain

34 Chap. III, p. 39.

35 Ainsi les considerations generates d'Augustin, sur l'ame, aboutissent, comme on devait le presumer, a une etude de l'ame humaine en particulier. Op. cit. I. p. 169.

36 Ainsi, c'est a l'imitation d'Aristote, qu'au lieu de s'attacher a l'etude de l'ame humaine en particulier, Augustin s'engage dans une theorie generate de l'ame, ou il s'enquiert de la nature de toutes les ames, depuis l'ame des plantes qu'il nie, jusqu'a l'ame -du monde sur laquelle il ne se prononce pas. II, p. 308.

37 Conf. iv, c. xvi.

that he was acquainted with any other work of the Stagirite. There are exceedingly few references to Aristotle in his writings, and none that mentions the general theory of soul. 38 We know, moreover, that while he refers to Aristotle as *vir excellentis ingenii et eloquii*, he did not consider him the equal of Plato, (*Platoni quidem impar.*)\* 9 There has been considerable controversy in regard to Augustine's knowledge of Greek, and although this has probably been underestimated at times, still one may reasonably presume that he was not given to reading works written in Greek, since he preferred to read the Neo-Platonist writings not in the original, but in the Latin translations of Marius Victorinus. 40 This latter is significant in the present discussion because in all probability Aristotle's *De Anima* had not been translated in the fifth century. What is suggested by these few items? We do not know for certain the extent of Augustine's acquaintance with the philosophy of Aristotle; we do not know whether or not he was familiar with his *De Anima*. We do know that there is no direct reference to the general theory of soul as expounded by Aristotle ; we do know that Augustine was by preference a Platonist and not an Aristotelian. In the light of these facts, and in the absence of substantiating proofs, one is fully justified in rejecting the statement that Augustine formulated a general theory of soul in imitation of Aristotle. Nourrisson admits that the Bishop of Hippo did not construct an organized philosophy of the soul, 41 but is it not causing his philosophy to appear as having been organized, to assert that Augustine first considered the soul in general, and then proceeded by way of the plant soul, the world soul, and the animal soul to the soul of man? To interpret Augustine after this fashion causes him to appear as having been interested in philosophizing about the soul after the manner of Aristotle, when

38 "He makes mention of Aristotle only three times, and seems not to have known his system" De Wulf-Coffey op. cit. p. 90.

39 *De Civ. Dei* viii, c. xii.

40 *Conf.* viii, c. II.

41 *Op. cit.* II, p. 307.

as a matter of fact, he was actuated in this as in all his philosophical investigations chiefly by religious motives. All the evidence that we have been able to gather points in the opposite direction to that indicated by the French savant. The human soul was for Augustine the starting point as well as the finis in his investigation of the soul problem. Whatever he may have had to say about the soul in general, the plant soul, the World-soul, and the animal soul was introduced merely to better explain this main theme, which, was for him second in importance only to the understanding of all that pertains to the Supreme Being. In the *Soliloquia*, *De Immortalitate Animae* and *De Quantitate Animae*, the first three works in which he treats the problem of the soul at any length, there is no mention of a general theory. On the contrary, in the first book of the *Soliloquia* he declares expressly that he is interested only in the human soul (7). There can be no doubt about the object of his study in *De Immortalitate Animae*, since he bases his strongest proof for immortality on the reasoning faculty which he conceives as belonging to man alone among terrestrial creatures (c. II). In *De Quantitate Animae* he makes the following explicit statement which places the matter beyond all question of doubt: *In primis tamen tibi amputem latissimam quamdam et infinitam expectationem, ne me de omni anima dicturum putes, sed tantum de humana, quam solam curare debemus, si nobismetipsis curae sumus* (c. xxxiii, 70). One will search in vain, moreover, in works of a later date for evidence that would justify him in presuming that Augustine arrived at a study of the human soul in particular through a general theory. Finally, when we view his doctrine in its totality, and recall his clear statement of purpose at the outset of his Christian career, *Deum et animam scire cupio*, 42 we cannot fail to perceive that the human soul as such, and not the soul in general or any other kind of soul, was in the beginning and throughout his life the

42 *Solil.* I, c. II, 7.

### 30 HIS NOTION OF PHILOSOPHY

primary object of whatever study he devoted to this problem.

What has been said thus far in regard to Augustine's

notion of philosophy may be summed up in the following few sentences : There is a philosophy of Saint Augustine, but it is a religious philosophy. He desires to know only God and the human soul. He desires to know God for His own sake; the soul for the sake of knowing God. His study of the soul is not a purely philosophical or psychological study ; it is a religious study. It is the soul of man, and not the soul in general or any other aspect of the soul question, that chiefly engages his attention.

Like the other early Christian thinkers, Augustine may be said to have been an eclectic in philosophy. There is no doubt but that he was acquainted with both past and contemporary schools of philosophy,\* 3 and that he wove into his own philosophy many of the ideas which came to him through these channels. The philosophy, however, which dominated and influenced his thought more than any other was Platonism. He had become familiar with the writings of Plotinus and Porphyry, the leading exponents of Neo-Platonism, through reading the latin versions of Marius Victorinus, a well-known Roman rhetorician. 44 While it is quite certain that Neo-Platonism influenced him more immediately and directly than did Platonism proper, it appears that the ideas which made the deeper and more lasting impression upon his mind were not those peculiar to Neo-Platonism, but those of Plato. 45 His preference for the Platonists can be explained by the fact that he considered their philosophy to be more in harmony with Christianity than that of the other pagan thinkers. Unlike other philosophers who spend their talents in seeking to learn the causes of things, and the manner of learning and of living, the Platonists have discovered in God the First Cause of the

43 De Civ. Dei viii.

44 Conf. VIII, c. II.

45 E. Portalie. Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique Vacant et Mangenot, t. 1, 2, col. 2268-2561. Art: St. Augustin.

## HIS NOTION OF PHILOSOPHY 31

Universe, the light by which we perceive truth, and the source whence we quaff happiness. 46 The influence of Plato on the thought of Augustine was enduring, and

although it is not so evident in his later writings as in those composed during the first few years after his conversion, it may be truthfully stated that it never disappeared entirely from his life. His attitude towards Plato and the Platonists, however, underwent a change in the course of time, as may be learned from the *Retractationes*, wherein he expresses his displeasure at having unduly praised these philosophers in his work *Contra Academicos* (386) : *laus quoque ipsa, qua Platonem uel Platonicos sen Academicos philosophos tantum extuli, quantum inpios homines non oportuit, non immerito mihi displicuit, praesertim contra quorum errores magnos defendenda est Christiana doctrina* (I, c. I). The principal errors of the Platonists which the Christian must guard against so far as the soul is concerned are the following: the eternity of the soul; the preexistence of the soul in an imaginary world of ideas together with the theory that its union with the body is in consequence of a previously committed crime ; the transmigration theory whether understood in the sense of Plato or Porphyry, and the indirect creation of the soul by God through the agency of inferior beings. In judging the influence of Platonism on the mind of Augustine it is important to remember that he prefers this philosophy to the other pagan philosophies, but not to the Christian philosophy. 47 Wherever Platonism and Christian philosophy conflict, Augustine unhesitatingly chooses the latter.

This general consideration of Augustine's notion of Philosophy has shown among other things the importance he attached to the study of the human soul. The under-

46 *Haec itaque causa est quam istos ceteris praeferamus, quia, cum alii philosophi ingenia sua studiaque contriuerint in requirendis rerum causis. et quoniam esset modus discendi adque uiuendi, isti Deo cognito reppererunt ubi esset et causa constitutae universitatis et lux percipiendae ueritatis, et fons bibendae felicitatis, De Civ. Dei viii, c. x. Cf. Ibid. x. c. I.*

47 *De Civ. Dei viii. C. X.*

## 32 HIS NOTION OF PHILOSOPHY

standing, therefore, of his concept of the human soul is not only useful but even indispensable to the proper appreciation of his whole philosophy. 48

48 For further information on the question of Platonism and its influence on Augustine, one may consult the following writers : Grand-george L.-S. Augustin et le neo-platonisme Paris, 1896; Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique, Vacant et Mangenot. art: St. Augustin, E. Portalie, col. 2325-31 ; Newmann, A. H. Introduction to Anti-Manichean Writings, The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Vol. iv, p. 27 ff ; Rainy, R. The Ancient Catholic Church c. ix Edinburgh, 1902; Nourrisson, J. F. La Philosophie de St. Augustin, II, p. 101 ff, Paris, 1865. Kampfe, A Augustinus verhaltniss, Zu Plato in genetischer entwicklung Jena, 1897.

## EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF THE HUMAN SOUL 33

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF THE HUMAN SOUL.

The present day champion of the soul theory, who finds himself face to face with the agnosticism and materialism so evident in certain quarters of the academic and scientific world, feels constrained before all else to formulate an answer to the question, "Does the human soul exist?" Saint Augustine apparently did not have to contend with this particular aspect of the soul problem since, as he himself assures us, there is no one who questions the existence of the human soul, Quasi non evidentior sit in hominibus anima, quae utrum sit, nulla fit quaestio. 49 It would be very convenient on the strength of this statement to pay no further attention to this question but to proceed at once to consider the nature of the human soul. To do this however would be to follow the line of least resistance, for some of the basic arguments employed today in demonstrating the existence of the human soul are to be found in the writings of Saint Augustine.

Harking back to his University days, perhaps, Augustine recalls that there are three essential queries to be considered in anything one may undertake to investigate, whether the thing be? what it is? what is its nature? (An sit, quid sit, quale sit.) 50 Had he studied the human soul as a special problem and in a formal manner, therefore, one may reasonably conjecture that he would have begun by asking himself the question, Does the human soul exist? What answer, if any, could he give to this

question, and how would be go about the framing of this answer?

Every one who has even a casual acquaintance with the principal works of Saint Augustine knows the great value he attached to the introspective method of study-

}<) De Civ. Dei, VII, c. xxiii.  
50 Conf. X, c. x.

#### 34 EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF THE HUMAN SOUL

(Noli foras ire in teipsum redi; in interiore homine habitat veritas.) 51 It is not necessary, then, to search for truth elsewhere than within ourselves for truth dwells within us. His writings bear witness to his own remarkable powers of introspection. He appears to have been endowed with a rare faculty for keen and precise interior observation, combined with a talent for analysis and the ability to record in expressive terms the results of his self-examination. His account of some of the more subtle phenomena of the inner life obtainable only by introspection is proof sufficient that he was not merely acquainted with the introspective method but even a master of it. As a matter of fact, he has been referred to as "the founder of the introspective method." 52 It would be very difficult, if at all possible, to prove this statement. As every student of the History of Philosophy knows, this is the original method of all psychology, and there is no one who would be so rash as to maintain that Augustine was the first psychologist. There were at least three eminent thinkers among the Greeks Socrates, Plato and Aristotle who were familiar with this method centuries before the time of Augustine. 53 Many of the early Christian philosophers who antedate the Bishop of Hippo undoubtedly employed this method particularly in their study of the affective side of man's life. It would be more in conformity with fact to say that Augustine was probably the first Christian philosopher to understand and appreciate the scientific value of facts obtained by this method. 54

From what has just been said regarding Augustine's ability as an introspectionist and his appreciation of the introspective method of study, one can assume that had he undertaken a formal inquiry into the problem of the existence of the human soul, he would have commenced



51 De Vera Religione, c. xxxix, 72.

52 Cath. Ency. Vol. XIV, p. 155. Art : Soul, Maher-Boland.

53 Cf: Driscoll, J. Christian Philosophy The Soul, p. 4 New York, 1898; Rand, B. The Classical Psychologists, p. 10 ff. Cambridge, 1912.

54 Gonzalez-Pascal, Histoire de la Philosophie, II, p. 89, Paris, 1890.

#### EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF THE HUMAN SOUL 35

with an examination of the testimony of Consciousness. According to Augustine, Consciousness assures me that I exist. I may be doubtful and uncertain about many other things, but of this much at least I am most certain I am. This is an intuitive datum implied in all conscious activity. So positive am I that this testimony of Consciousness is to be relied upon, that I see no difficulty whatever in the objection of those who say to me, but what if you are deceived? for, if I am deceived, I am; since, I could not be deceived, if I did not exist. This line of reasoning is familiar to readers of Modern Philosophy. Descartes, the distinguished French philosopher, who has influenced so powerfully the trend of modern speculation, lived at a time when Augustine commanded considerable attention among French thinkers. The position occupied by Augustine in the world of French thought at the beginning of the seventeenth century may explain in part the striking similarity between the direct proof or demonstration embodied by Descartes in his famous axiom, Cogito, ergo sum, and the indirect argument, Si enim fallor, sum, of the Bishop of Hippo. 55 I am aware, moreover, that I am a living being who remembers, understands, wills, thinks, knows, and judges. 56 There is a divergency of opinion among philosophers regarding the nature of the force by which we live and exercise these various other operations. Some have thought that this force is of the nature of fire or air, others that it is the brain or the blood. Some have held that it is nothing more than a concursus of atoms or some kind of a fifth essence, others that it is merely a combining together of the bodily elements. 57 However much the opinions of men may differ respecting the nature of this force, there is no one who questions its existence ; there is no one who

...". mihi esse me, idque rosse et arnare certissimum est. Nulla in his veris Academicorum argumenta formido, dicentium. Quid, si fallens?

Si enim fallor, sum. Nam qui non est, utique nee falli potest : ac per hoc sum. si fallor. De Civ. Dei. XI. c. xxvi. (cf. Ibid. c. xxvii ; De Vera Rel. c. xxxix, 715 ; De Lib. Arb. II, c. iii, 7 ; De Beata Vita, c. ii, 7 ; De Trin. X, c. x.)

56 De Trin. X, c. x.

57 Ibid.

### 36 EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF THE HUMAN SOUL

doubts that he lives, and remembers, and understands, and wills, and thinks, and knows, and judges. (Vivere se tamen et meminisse et intelligere, et velle, et cogitare, et scire, et judicare quis dubitet?) 58 According to Augustine the principle of this vital force is the soul, an incorporeal substance which cannot be perceived by means of an image, "but which is apprehended by the understanding and discovered to our consciousness by its living energy." 59

Augustine would prove the existence of the human soul, then, first of all by having each one consult his own inner experience. This argument based on data furnished by Consciousness was a noteworthy achievement for a philosopher of the fifth century. The historian of philosophy who cherishes the view that this method of handling the problem is a modern discovery could read with profit both to himself and others the writings of this Christian Bishop of the early ages. 60

While I may be able to prove the existence of my own soul by the introspective method, it is obvious that I cannot employ the same method in establishing the existence of a soul in other men, for inner experience is something personal and exclusive. In seeking to demonstrate the existence of a soul in other men, therefore, it is necessary to have recourse to the objective method of investigation. We are surrounded on all sides by human beings like ourselves. We observe in them directly not a soul, but certain activities which we recognize as resembling those which we experience in our own lives. 61 Reason tells us that similar effects demand a similar cause, but we know that in our own case these vital activities proceed from a soul. We infer, therefore, that these other beings have a soul like our own. 62

58 Ibid.

59 Ep. CLXVI, ii, 4; Cunningham, J. G. Letters of St. Augustine, vol. ii, p. 299-300, Edinburgh, 1875.

60. Cf. A. Schuyler. A Critical History of Philosophical Theories, p. 114, Boston, 1913.

61 De Trin. VIII, c. vi.

62 Ibid.

## EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF THE HUMAN SOUL 37

For the sake of avoiding possible misunderstanding, it may be well to stress the point that Augustine did not arrange the presentation of this question as it has been given here. The above arrangement is my own. The various items which have been brought together in this short sketch are not found in any single treatise composed for the express purpose of demonstrating the existence of the human soul. On the contrary, a cursory revision of the text will show that the materials used were drawn in the main from two sources, *De Civitate Dei* and *De Trinitate*, where they appear only as incidental to the discussion of the doctrine of righteousness in the first instance, and in the second, in connection with the dissertation on the Trinity.

By way of introduction to the problems suggested by the questions, what is the human soul? and what is its nature? it may be helpful to recall what has been said in the first chapter apropos of the progressive character of Augustine's doctrine. It was insinuated there that many of his earlier views were modified and even radically changed in after years. This point must be borne in mind in connection with the statement and explanation of the subject-matter of the present section. To be more specific, the answer to the question, what is the human soul? calls for a definition. It would evidently be unfair to Augustine not to say anything about the utter disregard of his expressed wish to take up his first attempt at defining the human soul and proceed to construct around this his doctrine, without making any allowances whatsoever for the changes and additions which naturally developed in the course of time. To do this would be to merit the rebuke he directed against the Semi-Pelagians when he wrote: *Non sicut legere libros meos, ita etiam in eis curaverunt proficere mecum.* 63 In

the present study, therefore, not only those works which belong to the so-called Philosophical Period of his career will be examined, but also, and especially, the treatises composed later in life.

63 De Praedestinatione Sanctorum c. iv, 8.

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At the very outset of this investigation one is confronted by a difficulty arising from the lack of a fixed terminology. By what term did Augustine designate the human soul ? The correct answer to this question cannot be given in a single term, because, as he himself acknowledges, he was unable to discover a term which would properly specify the soul of man. 64 At least three terms appear in his writings, *anima*, *animus*, *spiritus*, any one of which may mean the human soul. To determine the exact meaning he attached to these terms one must examine them in the context. Augustine distinguishes in the human soul a *pars inferior* and a *pars superior*. To the former belong the vital and sensitive powers, to the latter the rational or intellectual powers. *Anima* is sometimes used to include both *pars inferior* and *pars superior*; sometimes it is employed in a restricted sense to designate the *pars inferior* and to exclude the *pars superior*: *Anima aliquando ita dicitur, ut cum mente intelligatur ; veluti cum dicimus hominem ex anima et corpore constare; aliquando ita, ut excepta mente dicatur. Sed cum excepta mente dicitur, ex Us operibus intelligitur quae habemus cum bestiis communia. Bestiae namque carent ratione, quae mentis semper est propria.* 65

Concerning the use of *animus* he has this to say: "There are some Latin writers (he does not say that he is among them) who, according to their own peculiar mode of speech, distinguish between *anima* and *animus*, so that the latter signifies that which excels in man, and is not in the beast, while the former signifies that which is also in the beast." 66 In other words, they use the term *anima* to designate the principle of sensitive life, and *animus*, the principle of rational life.

As regards the use of *anima* and *spiritus*, which are merely relative terms, he is more explicit. In his reply to Vincentius Victor, he explains that if one distinguishes

64 De Gen. ad Litt. VII, 21.

65 De Div. Quaes. UCXXIIL VII. Cf. De Agone Christiano, c. XVIII.

66 De Trin. XV, c. I.

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between these two terms, he restricts spiritus to the higher life of man. He is careful, however, to point out that anima, when used in a generic sense, also includes spiritus.

What has been said in regard to the use of these three terms may be summed up briefly in the following manner :

Anima vel animus = the human soul

Anima (in a limited sense) == pars inferior

Animus (in a limited sense) = pars superior

Spiritus = pars superior

The meaning of these terms will become clearer in the light of the discussion that follows.

In seeking after an exact definition of the human soul in the writings of Saint Augustine, a much-quoted definition found in De Quantitate Animae may be taken as a starting point. In the course of a dialogue with Evodius, he says: Si autem definiri tibi animum vis, et ideo quaeris quid sit animus; facile respondeo. Nam mihi videtur esse substantia quaedam rationis particeps, regendo corpori accomodata. 68 The human soul, therefore, is a certain substance participating in reason and adapted to the governing of the body. This is the definition referred to in the comment on Nourrisson's statement that Augustine formulated a general theory of soul. 69 From the wording of the definition it is evident that it was not intended to apply to the soul as such but to the human soul. Concerning this definition Nourrisson writes as follows: L'ame peut etre exactement definie, suivant saint Augustin, une substance raisonnable, preposee au gouvernement du corps; substantia quaedam rationis particeps, regendo corpori accommodata. 70 In view of the statement immediately preceding this passage regarding a general theory of soul, the omission of the qualifying attribute humaine is misleading. The use of the phrase rationis particeps shows that the definition is applicable only to the human soul and not to the soul as such. The

67 De An. et ejus Origine, IV, c. xxii, 17 xxiii, 19

68 c. XIII, 22.

69 c. II.

70 Op. cit. I, p. 166.

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use of the adverb *exactement* is entirely unwarranted as appears at once from the phrases *mihi videtur* and *substantia quaedam*. Finally, it must be remembered that this definition is found in a work belonging to the period of beginnings in the philosophical life of Augustine, and was to undergo considerable development in later years. An analysis of this definition will furnish the occasion to set forth the various elements brought out in the course of this development.

*substantia*. The human soul is a substance. Augustine, following Aristotle, 71 understands by the term "substance" a being capable of subsisting in and by itself which does not need a subject in which to inhere. 72 The soul of man, therefore, is not an accident of the body ; it is not in any sense qualitatively related to it. 73

*quaedam. substantia* is limited by this indefinite pronoun because at the time this definition was formulated Augustine was unable to specify the substance of the human soul, *substantia vero ejus nominare non possum*. 74 Although he is unable to say what the substance of the soul is, he is careful to point out that he does not consider it to be corporeal, *non enim earn puto esse ex Us usitatis notisque naturis, quas istis corporis -sensus tangimus*. Further on in the same passage he explains that the human soul is a simple entity having its own proper substance, *simplex quiddam et propriae substantiae*. He apparently assumes that everyone understands that the human soul is a living substance. He had explained this notion in a previous work, *De Immortalitate Animae* (c. iii) ; it is also frequently referred to in many later works such as *De Agone Christiano* (c. xx) ; *De Trinitate* (X, c. vii) ; *De Genesi ad Litteram* (VII, 16, 18, 21 ; X 22-26) . When he teaches that the human soul

71 Conf. IV, c. xvi.

72 de his enim rebus recte intelligitur, in quibus subjectis sunt ea quae in aliquo subjecto esse dicuntur, sicut color aut forma in corpore, De Trin. VII, c. v, 10. Cf. Conf. IV c. xvi.

73 De Trin. IX, c. iv ; X, c. x ; De Imtnor. An. c. X, 17.

74 De Quan. An. c. i, 2.

75 Ibid.

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is a "living substance," he means that it is capable of imminent and spontaneous motion; it is not moved by being acted upon from without, except in so far as its activity comes ultimately from God, but its motion is intrinsic to itself, it belongs to the very nature of its being. 76 The human soul is not only a living substance but it is also a vivifying principle; it is the source of bodily vitality, corpus hoc terrenum atque mortale praesentia sua vivificat. 77 Augustine distinguishes three grades of life in man ; vita seminalis, vita sensualis, and vita intellectualis. 78 The soul is the first principle of life in man. It is the source of bodily unity; it prevents bodily disintegration ; it presides over the vital functions of nutrition, growth, and generation. 79 The vita sensualis embraces the activities of the five external senses, viz., sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell, and of the sensus interior, ad quern ab istis quinque notissimis cuncta referantur. 80 It includes also imagination, sense memory, and sense appetite. 81 The functions of sense require a living organism (certe sentire homo non potest, nisi uiuat) , 82 that possesses faculties capable of receiving impressions from sensible objects and of vitally reacting to the same. The rational soul in man is the ultimate principle and guide of all the activities of the vita sensualis. 83 Finally, there is in man the vita intellectualis, which includes the three principal faculties of the human soul, Memoria, Intelligentia, and Voluntas. These three faculties are not separate distinct entities but they are functions of the soul that share in its substantiality. 84 . There

76 De Div. Quaes. LXXXIII, viii ; De Gen. ad Litt. VII, 16.

77 De Quan. An. c. xxxiii, 70. Anima totum corpus nostrum animat

et uiuificat . . . De Agone Christiano, c. xx, 22 uiuit autem corpus ex anima, cum anima uiuit in corpore . . . De Civ. Dei, XIII, c. ii.

78 De Civ. Dei, V, c. xi.

79 De. Quan. An. XXXIII, 70.

80 De Lib. Arb. II, c. iii, 8.

81 De Quan. An. c. xxxiii, 71 ; De Civ. Dei, V, c. xi.

82 Ep. CXXXVII, II, 5.

83 De Quan. An. c. xxxiii, 71 ; De Civ. Dei, XXII, c. iv.

84 Haec igitur tria, memoria, intelligentia, voluntas, quoniam non sunt tres vitae, sed una vita ; nee tres mentes sed una mens ; consequenter utique nee tres substantiae sunt, sed una substantia. De Trin. IX, c. iv; cf. Ibid. XV, c. xxii ; Conf. XIII, c. xi.

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is no real distinction between the soul and these faculties. They are essentially one but relatively three. 85 The soul as a vivifying principle, therefore, is that by which we live, and feel, and carry on the operations of intellectual life.

The substance of the soul of man is incorporeal, that is, it is not a body but a spirit. It has neither length, breadth, nor thickness, nor is it extended in space. The category of quantity can in no way be applied to it, for it is a simple, inextended substance. Extension is the distinguishing characteristic of matter and whatever is not extended and yet has real existence is spirit. The substance of the human soul since it is not extended and has real existence is spiritual. 86

The obscure idea expressed by the complex term *substantia quaedam* evidently was gradually clarified and developed by Augustine until it assumed something like the following form: *substantia viva, incorporea, et spiritualis*.

*rationis particeps*. The human soul is a substance endowed with reason. Augustine defines Reason as a movement of the mind by which it is able to distinguish and connect those things which are learned. (*Ratio est*



mentis motio, ea quae discutuntur distinguendi et connectendi potens.) 87 The influence of the Neo-Platonist idea of Reason appears in De Quantitate Animae where he distinguishes between Ratio and Ratio cinatio. The former may be defined : quidam aspectus mentis 88 it is that power of the mind by which it is able to see truth immediately without any bodily concurrence. 89 Ratio-cinatio may be defined: rationis inquisitio, id est, aspectus illius, per ea quae aspicienda sunt, motion Ratio is the power of intuition, while Ratiocinatio is the power of discursive reasoning; the one enables the mind to see,

85 Ibid.

86 De Trin. II, c. viii ; Cf . De Gen. ad Litt. VII, 28.

87 De Ordine, II, c. xi, 30.

88 c. XXVII, 53.

89 Cf. De Immor. An. c. VI, 10.

90 De Quan. An. c. XXVII, 53.

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the other, to search for and investigate the truth. (Quare ista opus est ad quaerendum, ilia ad videndum.) 91 In De Trinitate he mentions a Ratio inferior, by which the mind studies temporal things, and a Ratio superior, by which it contemplates eternal things (XII, c. iii-iv). When he distinguishes between Ratio inferior and Ratio superior he does not mean that these are two distinct entities but merely that they are two functions of one and the same subject (c. IV, 4). Reason is characteristic of the human soul. It sets man apart from and above all the rest of terrestrial creation. 92 Among all the creatures of earth, sea, and sky, man alone possesses a rational soul that enables him to reach out beyond the world of sense and to penetrate the realm of eternal, universal, and necessary truth. 93

regendo corpori accomodata. The human soul is a living, vivifying, incorporeal, spiritual substance possessing reason and adapted to the governing of the body. This last phrase suggests one of the most difficult problems in all philosophy the union of soul and body. The solution of this difficulty was as much a mystery to

Augustine as it has been to philosophers since his time. He states frankly that the mode of union between the corporeal and the spiritual creatures in man is beyond human ken: Quia et iste alius modus, quo corporibus adhaerent spiritus, et animalia fiunt, omnino mirus est, nee comprehendi ab homine potest, et hoc ipse homo est. 94 It does not fall within the scope of this treatise to present an exhaustive account of Augustine's teaching on this subject, but we shall try to indicate its more salient features.

Man may be defined, according to Augustine, as a rational substance consisting of soul and body. (Homo

91 Ibid.

92 Fecit ergo Deus hominem ad imaginem suam. Talem quippe illi animam creavit, qua per rationem adque intelligentiam omnibus esset praestantior animalibus terrestribus et natatilibus et uolatilibus, quatenus mentem huiusmodi non haberent. De Civ. Dei XII, c. xxiii.

93 Cf . De Trin. Ill, c. ii, 8 ; De Gen. ad Litt. VI, 12 ; De An. et ejus Origine, IV, xxiii, 37 ; De Genesi contra Manichaeos I. c. xvii.

94 De Civ. Dei XXI, c. x.

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est substantia rationalis constans ex anima et corpore.) 95 The body has a certain quantity of flesh, an external form, an order and distinction of members, and a constitution of health. (Est certe in corpore humano quaedam moles carnis et formae species, et ordo distinctioque membrorum et temperatio valetudinis.) 96 The body is governed by a rational soul which has been breathed into it. (Hoc corpus inspirata anima regit, eademque rationalis.) 97 The whole corporeal part of man is under the dominion of the soul to which it is related as a servant or instrument. 98 This relationship is not to be understood in the sense that the body is nothing more than an external aid or trapping of the soul, for the body is something that pertains to the very nature of man. 99 On the testimony of our own nature, we know that there must be a union of soul and body to constitute the complete man, corpus uero animae cohaerere, ut homo totus et plenus sit, natura nostra ipsa teste cognoscimus. 100 It is folly for any one to try to separate the body from human nature, quisquis ergo a natura Humana corpus alienare

unit, desipit.\* This union of soul and body that results in man is a personal union. 102 This unity of person it is, that distinguishes Augustine's doctrine from the exaggerated dualism of Plato who regarded man as spirit joined to a body accidentally and guiding it after the manner of the charioteer directing his chariot. It cannot be denied that at one time, about the year 388, he employed a formula analogous to that of Plato, when he defined man as *anima rationalis mortali atque terreno utens corpore*. 103 This decidedly Platonic notion of man was very probably due to his then recent contact with the philosophical writings of the Neo-Platonists.

95 De Trin. XV, c. vii, ii.

96 De Trin, III, c. ii, 8.

97 Ibid.

98 De Civ. Dei, X, c. vi ; IX, c. ix.

99 Haec (corpora) enim non ad ornamentum uel adiutorium, quod adhibetur extrinsecus, sed ad ipsam naturam hominis pertinent. De Civ. Dei, I, c. xiii.

100 Ibid. X, c. xxix.

101 De An. et ejus Origine, IV, ii, 3.

102 Ep. CXXXVII, iii.

103 De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae. I, c. xxvii, 52.

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This early formula was cast aside in later years for the one referred to at the outset of this explanation, *Homo est substantia rationalis constans ex anima et corpore*. W4 The human soul exerts dominion over the whole corporeal nature that it animates. The question now arises as to the manner in which the soul acts upon the body in the exercise of this regimen. Augustine, referring to the prevailing theory of localization of function in the brain, states that there are three compartments or ventricles in the brain : one, the sense centre, is situated in the anterior portion; another, the motor area, is located in the posterior portion; while the third, the seat of Memory is placed between the anterior and posterior ventricles.

(Ideo tres tamquam uentriculi cerebri demonstrantur : unus anterior ad faciem, a quo sensus omnis; alter posterior ad ceruicem, a quo motus omnis; tertius inter utrumque, in quo memoriam uigere demonstrant.) 105 It is through these three ventricles of the brain that the soul rules the body. Augustine takes care to point out that the soul is not identical with these parts of the brain, but that it only uses them as the instruments of bodily control. (Sed anima in istis tamquam in organis agit, nihil horum est ipsa ; sed uiuificat et regit omnia, et per haec corpori consulit et huic uitae in qua factus est homo in animam uiuam.) 106 The question naturally suggests itself, how can the soul which is an inextended, spiritual substance affect these ventricles of the brain which are extended and material? He answers this difficulty by postulating a kind of intermediary substance, the nature of which is analogous to light or air. This substance serves as a medium of articulation between the soul and the brain. (Anima ergo quoniam res est incorporea corpus, quod incorporeo uicinum est, sicuti est ignis, uel potius lux et aer, primitus agit et per haec caetera, quae crassiora sunt corporis. . . .) 107 Saint Thomas in answer to an objection founded upon this theory of an intermediary substance, agrees with Augustine that the

104 fpe Civ.JDejJ XV, c. vii, ii. />

106 Ibid.

107 De Gen. ad. Litt. VII, 15.

105 De Gen. ad Litt. VII, 18.

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grosser parts of the body are moved by the finer parts, and that the first instrument of this motive power is a kind of spirit. (Summa Th. I, q. 76, a. 7, ad 1 um.) The human soul, therefore, administers the body proximately through the instrumentality of the brain, and remotely through a medium that is akin to spirit.

From this analysis and explanation of the definition which is found in De Quantitate Animae, it is quite evident that Augustine's notion of the human soul underwent considerable development during the years subsequent to the time it was formulated. This development, it is needless to remark, must be carefully considered by any

one who would form a correct idea of Augustine's concept of the human soul. This definition together with the one found in *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* (p. 44), especially the latter, are unmistakably Platonic in form, and to accept either the one or the other as final would expose one to the danger of misunderstanding and misinterpreting Augustine's whole philosophy of the soul. By collecting the various elements brought out in the analysis just presented, a fairly accurate idea may be obtained of what Augustine considered the human soul to be. Had he gathered these elements together in the form of a definition one might expect to find something like the following: the human soul is a living, incorporeal, spiritual, rational substance which is vitally and potentially present in the body as the principle of all its operations.

To what has been said heretofore in respect to the nature of the human soul, the following few pertinent observations may be added. The soul of man, although it is fashioned in the image and likeness of God, is not a part of God ; 108 it does not participate the Divine Essence, as the Manicheans, Priscillianists, and Origenists maintained. 109 This view of the soul was positively rejected by Augustine as blasphemous and heretical. 110 We know that the soul is subject to change and is, in a cer-

108 Ep. CLXVI, c. II.

109 *De Civ. Dei* XI, xxii. Cf. *De Duabus Animabus contra Manichaeos*, c. I ; *Ad Orosium, contra Priscillianistas et Origenistas*, c. I.

110 *De An. et ejus Origine* II, c. ii, iii.

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tain sense, corruptible; but God is in every respect immutable and incorruptible ; the soul, therefore, cannot be a part of God. (*Si enim hoc esset, omni modo incommutabilis atque incorruptibilis esset.*) 111

The human soul is not part of a universal soul. It is a single, individual entity. For a time he seems to have entertained some doubts as to whether there is a universal soul for all men or a particular soul for each individual. 112 This view, in all probability, was due to the influence of Neo-Platonism, which was then dominant in his intellectual life. A few years later, about 395, all doubt had

evidently disappeared for he not only rejects this idea, but even insists most emphatically on the individual character of the human soul. 113

We have seen that Augustine was a zealous follower of the Manicheans for a period of about nine years. (Introduction.) After his conversion to Christianity he devoted considerable time and attention to the refutation of the tenets of this sect. He is everywhere vigorous in his condemnation of the doctrine proposed by them that in man there are two souls the one good, emanating from the Good Principle ; the other, evil, emanating from the Evil Principle. 114

The theory of a World-soul invented by Plato, appears to have been considered by him at least as a possibility during the first years of his career. 115 Later on, while he does not positively reject it, he declares that it is hardly credible. 116 Finally, in the *Retractationes*, he warns his readers against rashly embracing such a doctrine (I, v). Although he shows some hesitancy in pronouncing for or against a World-soul, he does not hesitate to assert that if one accepts this theory, he must be careful to guard against confusing or identifying such a World-soul with God. 117

m Ep. CLXVI, ii, 3.

112 De *Quan. An.* c. xxxii, 69.

113 De *Lib. Art.* II, c. ix, 27; X, 28.

114 De *Duabus Animabus contra Manichaeos* (392) ; *Conf.* VIII, c. x.

115 De *Immor. An.* c. xv.

116 De *Civ. Dei* X, xxix.

117 De *Civ. Dei* IV, xii.

## 48 THE HUMAN SOUL IS INCORPOREAL

### CHAPTER IV.

#### THE HUMAN SOUL IS INCORPOREAL.

Three main lines of investigation appear in Augustine's search for knowledge of the human soul. The first of

(0 these has to do with the incorporeal nature of the soul of man. He teaches that the human soul is not a body but a spirit. This is a point on which his doctrine never varied. He was always foremost among those who defended the spirituality of the soul against the attacks of materialism. The second main problem that engaged his attention was the immortality of the human soul. He was convinced at all times, even in his pre-Christian days, that the soul of man is immortal in a sense proper to itself. Finally, he sought for a solution of the difficulty

( ^ concerning the origin of the soul of man, particularly that phase of the question which refers to the origin of the souls of the descendants of the first man. He studied this problem for over thirty years but never succeeded in solving it to his satisfaction. These three main lines of investigation will be traced in this and the subsequent chapters.

Saint Augustine maintained against the materialistic philosophers of his day that the soul of man is an incorporeal, spiritual substance. 118 The reason why the materialists hold that the human soul is a body, according to Augustine, is because they are so completely under the dominion of the imagination that they are unable to think of any substance as existing of which they cannot form an image. In the opinion of these men, therefore, only bodies are real things, and what is not corporeal is nothing, hence they conclude that the soul of man must be a corporeal substance. 119 The crux of this problem

118 Nunc tamen de anima, quam Deus inspiravit homini snfflando in ejus faciem, nihil confirmo, nisi quia ex Deo sic est, ut non sit substantia Dei; et sit incorporea, id est, non sit corpus, sed spiritus. De Gen. ad Litt. VII, 28.

119 Ep. CLXVI, c. ii; De Trin. X, c. vii; De Gen. ad Litt. X, 24.

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according to Augustine depends upon the meaning one attaches to the terms corpus and substantia. If corpus is used to designate every substance or essence, or to put it more aptly, that which is in some manner self-existent, then, the soul is a body, because it is a substance. 120 If the use of the term incorporea is restricted to that nature which is absolutely immutable and ubiquitous, the soul is

not incorporeal because it is not a nature of this kind. 121 If, however, the term corpus is employed to signify a measurable unity which is extended in space, so that one of its parts is greater and another less, and the whole is greater than any of its parts, the soul is not a body, because it is a simple, inextended entity having neither length, breadth nor thickness. 122 That Augustine understood the term corpus in this last-named sense is evident from his definition of corpus: *quidquid majoribus et minoribus suis partibus majora et minora spatia locorum obtinentibus constat*. 123 By *substantia*, he means a being capable of subsisting in and by itself ; one which does not require a subject in which to inhere. 124 The terms *corpus* and *substantia*, therefore, as understood by Augustine are not convertible. While every *corpus* is also a *substantia*, the converse of this is not true, namely, that every *substantia* is a *corpus*.

The human soul is not a *corpus*, but it is a *substantia* it is not spatially extended ; it has no measurable dimensions ; but it is a simple substance which is present simultaneously not only in the whole body but also in each of its parts, *non modo universae moll corporis sui sed etiam unicuique particulae illius tota simul adest*. 125 When the soul is spoken of as a "simple substance," the term "simple" is used in a relative not an absolute sense. Strictly speaking, God alone is simple, because He alone

120 Ep. CLXVI, c. II.

121 Ibid.

122 Ibid. Cf. etiam De Trin. VI, c. vi ; X, c. vii ; De Immor. An. c. xvi ; De Gen. ad. Litt. VII, 21 ; De. An. et ejus Origine IV, c. xii.

123 De An. et ejus Origine IV, c. xii, 17.

124 Chap. III, p. 40.

125 De Immor. An. c. xvi.

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is unchangeable; in Him alone there is perfect identity of essence and attribute, *quoniam quod habet, hoc est*. If the soul is a simple substance, devoid of parts and



spatial extension, in what manner may it be said to be present in the body which it animates? Augustine formulates an answer to this question somewhat after the manner of Plotinus, the leading exponent of Neo-Platonism, the soul is present in the body, not spatially, but vitally and potentially, *non spatio loci ac temporis sed vi ac potentia*; 127 or as he expressed the same idea elsewhere, the soul pervades the body not quantitatively but by a certain vital intension. 128 In connection with this description of the manner in which the soul is present in the body, he has recourse to the experimental method to confirm his theory. If you touch any part of a living man with a sharply-pointed instrument, you will observe that although the contact is made only at one tiny spot on the entire surface of the body, the whole soul is aware of the contact, and aware of it as taking place at the particular spot that is touched. In like manner, if you carry the experiment a little farther and establish two contacts simultaneously in different parts of the body, the whole soul is aware of each one separately, and of both at the same time. This simple experiment demonstrates that the soul is not diffused through the body after the manner of a material, extended substance which occupies a larger or smaller portion of space according to its dimensions. If this were the case, that part of the soul corresponding to the part of the body affected by the instrument would experience the sensation of contact but not the whole soul. 129 Since the whole soul and not merely a part experiences these sensations, it must be wholly present in each part of the body at the same time, *tota singulis partibus simul adest, quae tota simul sentit in singulis*; 13 and since it pervades the body in this in-

126 De Civ. Dei, XI, c. x.

127 De Quan. An. c. xxxii.

128 Ep. CLXVI, c. II.

129 Ep. CLXVI, c. II,

130 De Immor. An. c. xvi.

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extended manner, it must be an incorporeal substance. 131 Some of the arguments presented by Saint Augustine to prove the incorporeal nature of the human soul, are

neither clear nor convincing. This is true in particular of several arguments which are found in *De Quantitate Animae* and *De Immortalitate Animae*. As there is no real advantage to be gained from a restatement of these involved and subtle reasonings which represent the primitive efforts of our author in the field of philosophical writing, they may be omitted for the purpose of emphasizing those arguments which were to be appropriated by the Christian philosophers of the succeeding centuries. Augustine, in a letter which was written about the year 412 to Volusian, a distinguished Christian layman, says that the human soul if it is not deceived as to its own nature understands itself to be incorporeal, *Nam si anima in sua natura non fallatur, incorpoream se esse comprehendit.* 132 As has been stated, Consciousness testifies that the soul exists. 133 This interior vision bears witness also to the substantial nature of the soul. 134 We are aware, moreover, that we live, and remember, and understand, and will, and think, and know, and judge. 135 An examination of the nature of these operations will reveal the nature of the agent which is their principle *Agere sequitur esse.* The phenomena of Memory prove to Augustine that the soul of man is an incorporeal, spiritual substance. We know that we have innumerable images of bodies which are fashioned by the act of thinking and stored up in the depths of Memory, whence they are reproduced in some mysterious manner when we wish to recall the objects that they represent. 136 If the soul were a body, it would be able neither to form these images nor to retain them, since they are so numerous and frequently representative of such large objects. 137 There-

131 Ibid. Cf. *etiam De Gen. ad Litt. vii, 21.*

132 Ep. CXXXVII, c. iii, 11.

133 Chap. III, p. 35 ff.

134 Ibid.

135 Ibid.

136 *De An. et ejus Origine, IV, c. xvii.*

137 Ibid.

fore, there is no doubt that the soul is spiritual and not corporeal, *procul clubio tamen spiritalis est, non corporalis*. 138 This explanation of the Memory-processes of retention and reproduction is eschewed by the modern psychologist who points out, and rightly so, that "Since image means a conscious representation, the retention of images is but a metaphorical expression." 139 It is not correct, therefore, to speak of images as if they were accumulated in a receptacle of some kind from which they are drawn forth whenever we remember. The image itself is not retained but "the disposition or aptitude" to recall it, remains after the image has disappeared. 140 Augustine appears to have held that Sense-Memory as well as Intellectual is an incorporeal faculty. 141 The former, he reasons, is not a material faculty because if it were it could not contain images which are not bodies but only the likenesses of bodies. The latter must be incorporeal since it retains the immaterial, such as thoughts (*ibi reconditum est quidquid etiam cogitamus*) , 142 the explanations of the liberal arts, 143 the principles of mathematics, 144 and the notions of such affections of the soul as desire, joy, fear, and sorrow. 145 A few words of explanation may throw some light on his rather involved theory of Memory. He distinguishes three kinds of perception, corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual. The first, perceives all sensible objects; the second, perceives the images of bodies which are formed by the mind and retained therein; the third, is immediate perception by the simple exertion of the mind without any bodily cooperation. 146 To these three grades of perception correspond three kinds of Memory: the first, stores up the images which originate with the senses; the second, con-

138 Ibid.

139 Dubray, C. *Introductory Philosophy*, p. 84, New York, 1913.

140 Ibid.

141 *De Gen. ad Litt.* vii, c. 21 ; *De Civ. Dei*, VIII, c. v ; *De Trin.* X, c. viii.

142 *Conf.* X, c. viii.

143 Ibid. c. ix.

144 Ibid. c. xii.

145 Ibid. c. ix.

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tains those images which are created by the imaginative faculty; the third, retains those immaterial and purely spiritual ideas which originate in reason. 147 It would seem from this that he did not always distinguish clearly between Memory and Imagination. He leaves no room for doubt, however, that he considers at least some operations of Memory to be spiritual in character, and hence, concludes logically that the soul of which Memory is a faculty is incorporeal and spiritual.

The incorporeal, spiritual nature of the soul can be demonstrated also from the character of our intellectual knowledge and operations. Augustine, in imitation of Plato, argues that since the soul of man is capable of perceiving the incorporeal, it must itself be incorporeal, *Oportet animum quo videmus illa incorporalia, corporeum corpusve non esse.* 1 \* 8 He distinguishes between sense knowledge and intellectual knowledge: the former is acquired through the instrumentality of the senses; the latter, which relates to immaterial ideas, is obtained directly through the mind itself. 149 In his refutation of the theory of knowledge proposed by the Stoics, Epicureans and Atomists, in particular Democritus, he emphasizes this distinction between sense and intellectual knowledge. 150 He shows that, besides the knowledge which we acquire through the instrumentality of the bodily faculties, there are many things that we know, *incorporaliter atque intelligibiliter.* 15 ' 1 For instance, we know that philosophers dispute among themselves concerning the meaning of Wisdom and Truth, but, it is impossible for them to form images corresponding to these realities, and, yet they must be present to the mind in some way or they could not be discussed. They know Wisdom and Truth, therefore, not, indeed, as they know those things with which they come into contact by means

147 Conf. X ; De Vera Relig. X ; Ep. VI, VII.

148 De Quan. An. c. xiii.

149 De Trin. IX, c. iii.

150 Ep. CXVIII, c. iv.

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of images, but directly, by pure thought. 152 This argument is interesting in view of the fact that the problem of "Imageless Thought" is receiving some attention at the present time in the field of Experimental Psychology. It is a curious fact and one well worth noting that this very same question, as to whether there can be any thought without its concomitant image, was mooted in Augustine's day. A lengthy discussion of this problem is to be found in his correspondence with his "beloved friend" (*dulcis amicus meus*), Nebridius. 153 In a letter written to Augustine about the year 389, Nebridius had stated it as his opinion that there could be no thought without some kind of an image; a word-image at least must be present in every act of thinking. 154 Our author disagrees with this opinion and maintains that it is possible for us to think about certain things without any concomitant image. We are able to think of Eternity, for instance, without forming any image of it. 155 He emphasizes this imageless character of some of our thinking in several works of a later date. We know that we have such ideas as those of Faith, Hope and Charity, 156 the idea of God, 157 or, as he expresses it elsewhere, the notion of a being divine and supremely immutable 158 all of which are spiritual and hence in no way traceable to the activities of the bodily senses. Ideas of this kind can be apprehended only by pure reason. 159 Since the soul of man is capable of apprehending the purely spiritual, Augustine logically infers that the soul must be an incorporeal, spiritual substance. 160

As regards the higher operations of the soul, he teaches that man is capable of remembering, understanding, willing, thinking, knowing, and judging, all of which

152 Ibid. Cf : De Gen. ad Litt. X, 24.

153 Conf. IX, c. iii.

154 Ep. VI.

155 Ep. VII.

156 De An. et ejus Origine, IV, c. xx.

157 Ibid. c. xiv.

158 Ep. CXVIII, c. iii.

159 Ibid.

160 De An. et ejus Origine, IV, c. xiv.

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presuppose an incorporeal, spiritual principle. Take, for example, the act of judgment. If the image which one calls to mind to aid him in thinking is not a body, but only the likeness of a body, then that faculty by which he is able to perceive this image is not a body, and a fortiori the faculty which judges whether the image is beautiful or ugly is not a body. But that which judges is the mind of man ; it is a faculty which pertains to the nature of the rational soul, which certainly is not a body, Haec mens hominis et rationalis animae natura est, quae utique corpus non est. In refuting the Stoics and Epicureans who attributed the faculty of judgment to the senses (qui posuerunt indicium ueritatis in sensibus corporis), 101 he remarks, how can these philosophers assert that "none are beautiful but the wise," since neither "beauty" nor "wisdom" can be perceived by the senses. 162 To form a judgment of this kind one must compare not image with image, but idea with idea. If the faculty of judging images is incorporeal, then the faculty which is able to judge immaterial ideas must also be incorporeal. But this faculty belongs to the rational soul of man. Therefore the rational soul of man is incorporeal. 16 \*

Finally, the strongest and most convincing proof of the incorporeal nature of the human soul is based upon its capacity to reflect upon itself. By means of this act we not only know that we have a soul, but we can also know what the soul is by a study of our own. 164 In this operation the soul does not form an image of itself, so that it is, as it were, simultaneously where it can both look and be looked at, but it beholds itself by a certain process of incorporeal conversion which pertains to its very nature. 165 If the soul were a material, extended entity,

De Civ. Dei VIII, c. v.

161 Ibid. c. vii.

162 Ibid.

163 Ibid.

164 Non enim tantum sentimus animum, sed etiam scire possumus quid sit animus consideration nostri ; habemus enim animum De Trin. VIII, c. vi.

165 Proinde restat ut aliquid pertinens ad ejus naturam sit conspectus ejus, et in eam, quando se cogitat, non quasi per loci spatium sed incorporea conversione revocetur. De Trin. XIV, c. vi.

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however, it would not be able, so to speak, to bend itself completely back upon itself so as to be at one and the same time both the subject which sees and the object which is seen. 166 Since the soul is capable of this operation of self-reflection which is incorporeal in character it must itself be incorporeal. 167

The philosophical doctrine of Spiritualism as it is found in Christian Philosophy received much of its development from Saint Augustine. While it is very true that he borrowed freely from the Pagan as well as the Christian philosophers who had gone before him, yet he deserves not a little credit for the admirable manner in which he synthesized the best elements of their doctrine and brought them to a higher stage of development. He was the channel through which the spiritualistic findings of the past were transmitted to the Christian thinkers of subsequent times. Those who came after him in the great Scholastic movement took up the arguments which he had gathered together and both further developed and perfected them. Augustine's doctrine suffered from the lack of a fixed and sufficiently defined and expressive terminology. This terminology was contributed by the Schoolmen and was a distinctive addition to the Christian philosophy of the soul. The place which this problem occupies in Christian philosophy is an important one, because upon it rests the significant question of the immortality of the soul.

166 Ibid.

167 Ibid. Cf. De Trin. IX, c. iii.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE IMMORTALITY OF THE HUMAN SOUL.

A study of the popular and cultural traditions of all peoples of all times discloses a constant and universal conviction among men that the human being is destined to survive this present existence, that there is a life after death. The belief in an undying survival is as ancient as the race. We discover this belief among the great nations of antiquity intimately bound up with religious ideas, customs, rites of worship, and burial. With the rise of Philosophy among the Greeks the problem of human immortality enters the domain of rational speculation, but even here its religious aspect is never entirely submerged. "In one particular instance Greek religion contributed directly to Greek philosophy by handing over to philosophy the doctrine of immortality, a doctrine which in every stage of its philosophical development has retained the marks of its theological origin." 168 The doctrine of immortality in the Christian religion is a fundamental tenet resting upon both revelation and reason. The early Christian doctrine of immortality is well defined in the writings of Saint Augustine.

The philosopher is interested in constructing a rational doctrine of immortality; he seeks to demonstrate the immortality of the human soul on purely rational grounds. He begins his study of the problem by asking himself the question, what is immortality? Etymologically, the word "immortality" signifies deathlessness or the state of not being subject to death. According to Augustine, death is the cessation of life, hence that is immortal which will never cease to live. 169 By the immortality of the human soul, he means that the soul of man will never cease to have some kind of life. (*Quod sit immortalis secundum quendam uitae modum, quern nullo modo potest amitt-*ies Turner, W., *History of Philosophy*, p. 31, Boston, 1903. 169 *De Civ. Dei*, XIII, c. ii.

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tere.) 17 We know from experience that the body of man dies when it is separated from the soul. 171 Although the death of the body ensues when the two cohering essences are rent asunder, 172 the soul does not die, that is to say, it does not, at least in a certain sense, cease to live and feel.



(Nam ideo dicitur immortalis, quia modo quodam quantu-  
locumque non desinit uiuere adque sentire.) 173 He speaks  
of the immortality of the soul with a qualification be-  
cause as he recalls there is a kind of death which the  
soul experiences when it is deprived of happiness. 174  
This sort of death, however, does not affect the essence  
of the soul, for the soul even when it is most miserable  
does not cease to live. 175 The human soul is not immortal  
in the same sense as we predicate immortality of God.  
There is a certain kind of death which the soul of man  
can suffer, but God is above all death, He is absolutely  
immortal. 176 He alone possesses immortality *stride lo-*  
*quendo*, since He alone is immutable in his essence and  
will. 177 The immortality of the soul, therefore, according  
to Augustine means that the soul is of such nature that  
it will live always ; that while it is created in time it will  
not perish in time ; 178 that it is not absolutely undying as  
is God, but it is immortal in a manner peculiar to itself. 179  
His earliest discussion of the immortality of the soul  
is found in the simulated dialogues of the *Soliloquia* and  
in *De Immortalitate Animae*, both of which were written  
about the year 387. These two works contain several  
metaphysical proofs which are like in character to those  
formulated by Plato and developed by the Platonist  
philosophers. Three of these proofs are deserving of  
some notice, not that they have any special intrinsic

170 *De Gen. ad Litt.* VII, 28.

171 *De Civ. Dei*, XIII, c. vi.

172 *Ibid.* c. ii.

173 *De Civ. Dei*, XIII, c. ii.

174 *De Trin.* XIV, c. iv.

175 *Ibid.*

176 *Ep.* CLXVI. c. ii.

177 *Conf.* X, c. x.

178 *De Civ. Dei*, XI, c. iv.

179 *Ep.* CXVIII, 7.

value, but because they represent the earliest efforts of Augustine to construct a rational doctrine of immortality. In the first of these proofs his line of reasoning is as follows : Truth so exists in the soul that it is inseparable from it, but Truth is immortal, therefore, the soul is immortal. He introduces a resume of a very involved and long-drawn-out discussion of this argument by reminding himself of the familiar fact that one thing may be said to be in another in a two-fold sense: either it so exists in its subject as to be separable from it; or it exists in its subject in an inseparable manner. 180 With this distinction in mind he argues : if that which exists in its subject in an inseparable manner is immortal, the subject also must be immortal. We know that Science exists in the soul in an inseparable manner, but Science is Truth and Truth is immortal, therefore, the soul is immortal. 181 He concludes the exposition of this proof, which he himself considered the best and strongest of all the metaphysical proofs, by depicting Reason his imaginary disputant as exhorting him to yield to this argument and give his assent to Truth when she insists that she is indwelling and immortal, and that therefore the soul is immortal, *immortalis est igitur anima: jam jam crede rationibus tuis, crede veritati; clamat et in te esse habitare, et immortalem esse, nee sibi suam sedem quicumque corporis morte posse subduci.* 182

The meditations begun in the Soliloquia were finished in *De Immortalitate Animae*. He opens the latter work with an argument similar to the one just stated; the human soul contains knowledge, but all knowledge pertains to some science, and science is immortal, therefore the soul is immortal (c. i). 183 This argument is followed by another which also appealed strongly to the mind of Augustine at the time it was formulated. The soul of man is immortal because it is the seat of Reason which is immortal. Reason is another of those things which

180 Solil. II, c. xii.

181 Ibid. c. xix, 33.

182 Ibid.

183 Cf. Ep. II, ad Nebridium.

exists in the soul in an inseparable manner, but Reason can exist only in a living subject, and since it must exist always, its subject must be immortal, therefore the human soul is immortal, *quamobrem si anima subjectum est, ut supra diximus, in quo ratio inseparabiliter, ea necessitate quoque qua in subjecto esse monstratur, nee nisi viva anima potest esse anima, nee in ea ratio potest esse sine vita, ,et immortalis est ratio; immortalis est anima* (c. vty. The third and last of these metaphysical proofs worthy of mention is nothing more than a restatement of one of Plato's arguments. The soul of man differs from the body in this, that it is life, while the body is merely something animated. We know that what is merely animated may be deprived of life by separation from its life-giving principle, hence it is that the death of the body ensues when it is separated from the soul. The soul, on the contrary, cannot suffer death because life belongs to its very essence, therefore, the soul is immortal, *quidquid enim vita desertum mortuum dicitur, id ab anima desertum intelligitur; haec autem vita, quae deserit ea quae moriuntur, quia ipsa est animus et seipsam non deserit: non moritur animus* (c. ix; c. xiv). This same line of argumentation is repeated many years later in *De Trinitate*. In considering the various opinions advanced by the pagan philosophers respecting the substance of the soul, he observes that those who have held that the soul is some kind of incorporeal life have attempted also, each one according to his ability, to prove that it is immortal, since they understood that life cannot exist without life (X, c. vii).

It is exceedingly difficult to follow the intricate mazes, of speculation in which these alleged proofs of immortality are involved. Augustine himself evidently realized this when he wrote his review of *De Immortalitate Animae* in the *Retractationes*, for he remarks, *qui primo ratio cinationum contortione atque breuitate sic obscurus est, ut fatiget, cum legitur, etiam intentionem meam uixque intelligatur a meipso* (I, c. v). He acknowledges, then, some forty years after they had been proposed, that

these metaphysical proofs are not only vague and confused, but even unintelligible. However much deserved

this severe criticism of his own work may appear at first glance, nevertheless one must not overlook the fact that some elements of real value are to be found in this early treatise on immortality.

This purely speculative line of reasoning was abandoned by Augustine in after years for the presentation and development of what may be termed the natural evidences of immortality. What is by far the best and most acceptable of all the arguments proposed by him in favor of the immortality of the human soul is based upon man's natural desire to continue in existence. Every man, he writes, is aware of a deep-seated, ineradicable, natural longing for being and life. We know, moreover, that this desire is not peculiar to ourselves, but that it is universal ; it is one of those fundamental cravings which belongs to our common, rational, human nature. 184 We all desire to live. We wish not to be annihilated. 185 Our nature shrinks from the very thought of annihilation. 186 So powerful is this longing for existence that were a man who is actually miserable to be given the alternative of continuing in a state of misery or of being annihilated, he would choose unhesitatingly the former. 187 We need not seek far for corroboration of this, for we know from personal observation the horror and fear men have of death and how mightily they struggle against its approach, even when they are in the greatest misery. 188 This instinct of self-preservation that we find in man is not wanting in brute creation. Irrational animals from the smallest to the largest, show by their behavior that they possess this tendency to cling to being and to life. 189 Trees and plants, too, after their own fashion manifest something similar to this tendency as can be seen from

184 De Trin. XIII, c. iii.

185 Ibid.

186 De Civ. Dei XI, c. xxvii.

187 Ibid.

188 Ibid.

189 Ibid.

the way in which their roots dig down deep into the soil while their branches stretch skywards towards the sun in order that they may draw from these sources what is necessary for the continuance of life. 190 Even inanimate matter seems somehow or other to assume that position in which it can exist in most accordance with its nature. 191 In the case of inanimate matter, and trees, and plants, this natural tendency, of course, does not imply conscious effort. The irrational animal on the other hand strives consciously in the struggle for existence. Finally, in the human being there is present not only conscious effort, but also the rational desire to survive. 192 Man desires not merely to survive his present existence, but he actually desires to be immortal. 193 This desire has been implanted in man by the supremely immutable Creator, therefore, it will not be frustrated, and man will continue to exist forever. 194

In view of the fact that there are those who reason by analogy from the accepted principles of the conservation of matter and of energy to the indestructibility of the soul, it is interesting to observe that a trace at least of this analogy seems to be found in one of the arguments for immortality advanced by Augustine. Annihilation means the perfect destruction of a being so that nothing of it remains, or to express the same idea in simpler terms, it implies that something becomes nothing. 195 Every loss that a being suffers tends towards its annihilation, but it does not follow that because a being tends towards annihilation that it is ever actually annihilated. We know, for instance, that a physical body can be diminished and hence tend towards annihilation, but although it may be infinitely reduced, that is to say, broken up into the smallest conceivable particles, it is not thereby annihilated. If this be true of the body of man which is a

190 Ibid.

191 Ibid.

192 Ibid.

193 De Trin. XIII, c. viii.

194 Ibid.

195 De Immor. An. c. vii.

physical something how much truer must it be of his soul which has a nature so far superior to the body. 193 It would be presuming too much, perhaps, to lay any particular stress on the possible relation of this argument to the line of reasoning followed by some modern thinkers. It is offered here merely for what it may be worth as an item of historical interest.

Side by side with the development of the argument based on the natural desire for existence, we find another drawn from man's natural desire for happiness. Augustine says that there is no doubt among those who are able to reason in any manner whatsoever that all men wish to be happy, *omnium certa sententia est, qui ratione quoquo modo uti possunt, beatos esse omnes homines uelle*.<sup>1</sup> Each man recognizes in himself this longing for happiness. He knows, furthermore, that this desire is not proper to himself as an individual, but that it is shared also by every other human being. 198 While all men are aware of this desire to be happy, all are not agreed as to how it is to be fulfilled. This is evident from the fact that some men seek happiness in those things which pertain to the appetites of the flesh ; others search for it in the pleasures of the mind; while some few look for it in both of these. 199 For his part Augustine agrees with the Platonists that this desire for happiness can be fully realized only in the possession of the Supreme Good. 200 The Supreme Good, however, is God, and He is unattainable in this mortal state, therefore, if man is to be happy he must survive his present existence. This survival, moreover, must be permanent for if it were not man would not be happy, since he would always live in fear of losing that which he possessed and enjoyed. 201 It follows from this that since man desires to be happy, he desires also to be immortal for happiness

196 Ibid, c. vii-viii.

197 De Civ. Dei X, c. i.

198 De Trin. XIII, c. iii.

199 Ibid. c. iv.

200 De Civ. Dei, X, c. i.

201 Ibid.

cannot be without immortality, cum ergo beati esse omnes homines velint, si vere volunt, profecto et esse immortales volunt; aliter enim beati esse non possent. 202 This two-fold desire for happiness and immortality has been implanted in the nature of man by the Creator, therefore, it will not be frustrated. 203

Augustine maintained that there are very few men who have the ability and the necessary leisure and learning to discover the immortality of the soul by the unaided light of human reason. 204 Philosophers who have attempted to solve this problem by reason alone may have succeeded in establishing the fact of survival, but they have failed to grasp the idea of permanence of personal identity. 205 Plato, for example, taught that the soul survives the death of the body, but it is most certain that he held also that the souls of men return in the bodies of beasts. 206 This same opinion was cherished by Plotinus, the ablest interpreter of Plato. 207 Porphyry, however, the pupil of Plotinus, rejected this view and substituted for it the theory that human souls return, not indeed in the bodies of beasts, but in human bodies. 208 Augustine praises Porphyry not only for improving upon the theory of his Master but also for teaching that the soul after passing through a certain cycle of reincarnations, finally enjoys immortal happiness in the possession of God. 209 Although the theory of Porphyry is more reasonable than that of the other Platonists, it is by no means satisfactory since it provides only for the immortality of the soul and not for the immortality of the whole man. 210 From these considerations it is clear that even the best equipped intellects, if left to themselves, are unable to solve the

202 De Trin. XIII, c. viii.

203 Ibid.

204 De Trin. XIII, c. ix.

205 Ibid.

206 Nam Platonem animas hominum post mortem reuolui usque ad corpora bestiarum scripsisse certissimum est. De Civ. Dei X, c. xxx.

207 Ibid.

208 Ibid.

209 Ibid.

210 De Trin. XIII, c. ix.

## THE IMMORTALITY OF THE HUMAN SOUL 65

problem of immortality. 211 This whole question of immortality rests ultimately on faith, "it is faith that promises not by human argumentation, but by divine authority that the whole man, who, indeed, consists of soul and body will be immortal and therefore truly blessed." 212 One reason why the Son of God became man was that He might build up this hope of immortality in the hearts of men. He assumed our mortality in order that we might one day partake of that immortality which He alone can give. 213

Augustine's doctrine of immortality has some real merit. This fact is sometimes overlooked by those who summarily dismiss this portion of his philosophy of the soul with a passing mention of the Platonic proofs stated in *De Immortalitate Animae*. 21 \* Others writers there are who seem to be of the opinion that there is nothing worth while in Augustine's doctrine of immortality, for they pass it by without even so much as a mention. 215 There is a tendency in other quarters to lay particular stress on the Platonic proofs of his earlier years while the arguments set forth in *De Trinitate* and *De Civitate Dei* are given but scant attention. Nourrisson, for instance, in his *Critique of Augustine's philosophy* points out in a single sentence that our author saw a strong presumption for immortality in man's natural desire for being, while he devotes some pages to the discussion of the proofs found in *De Immortalitate Animae*

Any one who essays to present the doctrine of immortality as it is developed in the writings of Augustine cannot afford to disregard those proofs to which he devoted

211 Ibid.

212 Fides autem ista totum hominem immortalem futurum, qui utique constat ex anima et corpore ; et ob hoc vere beatum. non argumentatione humana, sed divina auctoritate promittit. De Trin. XIII,



c. ix.

213 Ibid.

214 Turner, W. History of Philosophy, p. 232, Boston, 1903; Stoeckl, A. Geschichte der Christlichen Philosophie zur Zeit der Kirchenvater. p. 303, 304 Mayence, 1891. Ueberweg-Heinze II, p. 134-135.

215 Cath. Ency. II, art: Augustine, p. 84; Immortality, VII, p. 687.

216 Op. cit. II, p. 316-317.

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special attention during the best years of his career. He cannot fairly state this doctrine until he has investigated at least the principal arguments which are advanced in the two great dissertations, De Trinitate and De Civitate Dei. The argument based on man's natural craving for immortality as presented by Saint Augustine is deserving of some serious consideration. This argument in one form or another has always made a strong and sometimes a convincing appeal to thoughtful men. 217 It was probably through Augustine that this argument found its way into scholastic philosophy where in the hands of Saint Thomas it was developed into a strong rational support of the Christian doctrine of Immortality.

217 Catholic University Bulletin, April, 1900: The Argument of Saint Thomas for Immortality, E. A. Pace.

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### CHAPTER VI.

#### THE ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN SOUL.

The problem of the origin of the human soul as it is found in the writings of Saint Augustine presents a two-fold aspect. There is first of all the fundamental question regarding origin itself. He believes that the human soul comes from God by way of creation. (*Propriam quamdam habitationem animae ac patriam Deum ipsum credo esse a quo creata est.*) 218 Then there is the question of the time and manner of creation, which involves two distinct problems how and when did the first human

soul originate? How can the origin of subsequent souls be explained ?

Augustine teaches very clearly that neither the soul of the first man nor the souls of his descendants have been created by God in the sense that they have been engendered from His own substance ; the human soul is not to be considered as emanating from the Creator so that in its essence it is divine. 219 The Emanation Theory had been advanced and supported by the Neo-Platonists, Gnostics, Stoics, Manicheans, and Priscillianists of Spain. 220 Augustine admits that he subscribed to this pantheistic theory during his Manichean days, because, as he frankly acknowledges, he was incapable at the time of differentiating between the Divine Substance and that of the soul. 221 When he had arrived at last at a clearer understanding of the nature of the Supreme Being, he understood that it was impossible for a mutable substance like the human soul to be identical with the absolutely unchangeable substance of God. 222 In connection with this theory, it must be noted also that he explicitly

218 De Quan. An. c. i, 2.

219 De Gen. ad Litt. VII, 3. 4; Epistolae CXL, c. iii, CXLIII, 7, CLXVI, c. ii, CXC, c. i; De An. et ejus Origine II, c. iii.

220 Ep. CLXV, c. i.

221 Conf. IV, c. xvi, VII, c. i.

222 Ep. CLXVI, c. ii; De Civ. Dei VIII, c. v; XI, c. xxiii.

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warns us against entertaining the idea that the soul of man was begotten from the substance of God as was His Divine Son, or that it came by way of procession as did the Holy Spirit so that in its nature and substance it is identical with the Deity, non de substantia dei genitus nee de substantia dei procedens, sed factus a deo. 223

The Evolutionary Theory of soul which came into prominence during the latter half of the nineteenth century was not unknown to Augustine. Among the things which he holds most firmly regarding the origin of the human soul is this, that no body, nor any irrational soul can be so transformed as to become a human soul, nee

corpus nee animam irracionalem nee substantiam, qua deus est, conuerti et fieri animam humanam. 224 If the human soul is in some manner drawn from the irrational soul of a brute, one may reasonably inquire whence comes this irrational soul? If the reply is given that it is fashioned from corporeal matter, then, it follows logically, that the human soul is corporeal, a conclusion which is contrary not only to known facts but also to the explicit teachings of the Catholic Faith. 225

If God did not form the first human soul from his own substance or from any corporeal matter or irrational soul, it remains that either He fashioned it from some already existing spiritual substance, or that He created it from nothing. 226 After a lengthy discussion of different inter-

223 De Gen. ad Litt. VII, 28. Cf. De An. et ejus Origine II, c. iii; De Actis cum Felice Manichaeo II, c. xx.

224 De Gen. ad Litt. X, 4. Cf. Ibid, VI, 15.

225 Si autem anima irrationalis materies est quodammodo, de qua fit anima rationalis, id est humana, rursus quaeritur, etiam ipsa irrationalis unde fiat, quia et ipsam non facit nisi creator omnium naturarum. an illa de materie corporali? cur non ergo et ista? Nisi forte quod uelut gradatim fieri conceditur compendio posse deum facere quisquam negabit. Proinde quaelibet adhibeatur interpositio, si corpus est materies animae irrationalis et anima irrationalis est materies animae rationalis, procul dubio corpus est materies animae rationalis. quod neminem umquam scio ausum esse sentire, nisi qui et ipsam animam non nisi in genere alicuius corporis ponit. Deinde cauendum est, ne quaedam translatio animae fieri a pecore in hominem posse credatur quod ueritati fideique catholicae omnino contrarium est si concesserimus irracionalem animam ueluti materiem subiacere, unde rationalis anima fiat. De Gen. ad Litt. VII, 9.

226 De Gen. ad Litt. X, 4.

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pretations of several passages in the Holy Scriptures bearing on this question, Augustine expresses his preference for the view that the soul of the first man was created ex nihilo. 227 The soul of the first woman also was created from nothing. Since the first woman was not an offspring of the first man by natural generation but was made in a different manner from other human beings her soul was not from the first man but was

created ex nihilo by God. 228

Concerning the time of origin of the first soul he teaches that the soul is not eternal and that it did not previously exist in the sense expounded by Plato and Origen. The statement of Ueberweg that he maintained that "only God and the souls of angels and men are eternal" is evidently incorrect. 229 For Augustine expressly declares that though he is ignorant of the ages that may have passed before the human race was created he is certain that nothing created is co-eternal with the Creator. 230 The statement in question, moreover, does not harmonize with another which is found in the same paragraph in which it is declared that Augustine taught that the soul had no existence previous to its union with the body. This declaration likewise is not entirely accurate. Although human reason may not be able to comprehend how the soul can be immortal without being at the same time eternal, Faith, founded upon Divine Authority, teaches that the soul is not co-eternal with God but has been created by Him. 231

The doctrine of Preexistence as advocated by Pythagoras, Plato, the Platonists, and Origen, 232 is condemned

227 Ibid, 6, 7, 8, 9.

228 Ibid. 10.

229 Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie, II, p. 119-120, Berlin, 1905.

230 Quae saecula praeterierint antequam genus institueretur humanum, me fateor ignorare : non tamen dubito nihil omnino creaturae Creatori esse coaeternum. De Civ. Dei, XII, c. xvii.

231 Quur ergo non potius diuinitati credimus de his rebus, quas humano ingenio peruestigare non possumus, quae animam quoque ipsam non Deo coaeternam, sed creatam dicit esse, quae non erat? De Civ. Dei, X, c. xxxi.

232 Ep. CLXV. c. i. Concerning Origen, cf. De Civ. Dei, XI, c. xxiii.

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by the Bishop of Hippo in the name of Reason and in conformity with the express anathema of the Church. 233 This theory which maintained that the soul is united to

the body in the present life in consequence of faults committed in some previous state of existence is opposed chiefly on the grounds that it is entirely incompatible with the Divine Goodness, for if this were true, Creation would be a punishment and not a blessing. 234

Augustine did not reach any definite conclusion as to the time when the first soul was created. There are two possibilities in the case: either it was created in the beginning when "He that liveth forever created all things together ;" 235 or it was created on the sixth day at the moment of its union with the body. 236 Of these two opinions, he holds the former to be *credibilis et tolerabilis*. 2 ^ As to whether the soul, if it were created in the beginning entered the body on the sixth day through direct Divine intervention or in some spontaneous manner he was unable to decide. 238

The feature of this problem which caused the greatest mental anxiety to Augustine concerns the origin of the souls of the descendants of the first man. This question engaged his attention at frequent intervals during his career. We discover its beginning in *De Libero Arbitrio* (III, c. xx-xxi), written about 395. He devotes considerable attention to it in *De Genesi ad Litteram* (VII, X), (401-415), and *Epistolae* CXLIII (412), CLXIV (414), CLXVI (415), CXC vel CLVII (418). He composed four books on the subject entitled, *De Anima et ejus Origine*, about 420. The problem was unsolved when he wrote the *Retractationes* (I, c. i) about 427. Finally, in his last work *Opus imperfectum contra Julianum* written sometime during 430, he acknowledges his inability to arrive at a decision in this matter.

233 *De An. et ejus Origine*, III, c. vii.

234 *Ep. CLXVI*, c. ix; *De Civ. Dei* XII, c. xxvi.

235 *Ecclus.* XVIII, 1.

236 *De Civ. Dei*, XII, c. xxiii.

237 *De Gen. ad Litt.* VII, 24, X, 2.

238 *De Gen. ad Litt.* VII, 25-27. (A complete statement of this entire problem is to be found in *De Gen. ad Litt.* VI, VII, 24-28; X.)

As in the preceding discussion he entertained no doubt about the ultimate origin of these souls he believed that they are created by God, 239 but he hesitated to embrace any definite opinion concerning their proximate origin. Four theories present themselves to his mind as possible solutions of this question: (1) each soul may be produced by a special creative act of God at the time of its union with the body; (2) all souls being created apart from J their bodies are either infused into them by God, (3) or enter them by some inherent, natural force; (4) each soul may be derived from the first soul through the generative act of the parents. 240 These four theories are reducible to two which are generally designated Creationism and Traducianism. The ablest advocate of Creationism in the time of Augustine was the eminent biblical scholar, St. Jerome. He supported the view that every soul that comes into being is produced by a special creative act of God. Augustine wrote a letter about the year 415 in which he gives a complete statement of the Creationist theory as he understood it. (Ep. CLXVI.) This letter was forwarded to Jerome, who at the time resided near Bethlehem, but he never answered it. Upon the death of the latter, Augustine published the letter as an apology for his hesitancy in pronouncing in favor of any one of the four theories. As regards the opinion held by Jerome, he writes that he is willing to adopt it if he can be convinced that it is true and in perfect harmony with all the teachings of the Church. 241 There are some objections proposed by others against this view in which he sees no difficulty, but he has his own objections which he is unable to solve. 242 The one unanswerable and outstanding difficulty in this manner of accounting for the origin of the souls of the descendants of the first man, according to his way of thinking, is this, how is this theory of special creation reconcilable with the doctrine

239 De Gen. ad; Litt. X, 3.

240 De Lib. Arb. Ill, c. xxi, 59; De Gen. ad Litt. X; Epistolae CXLI, CLXVI, c. iii; De An. et ejus Origine, I IV.

241 Ep. CLXVI, c. viii.

242 Ibid. c. v.

of the Church on original sin; how does it explain the transmission of original sin and at the same time save the goodness and justice of God? 243 If the soul of an infant is created at the time of its union with the body, how does he inherit Adam's sin so that he requires the redemption of Christ? 244 In the event that one replies that the sin is contracted by the mere fact that the soul is united to bodily members which are derived from another, how is it compatible with Divine Justice that the infant be condemned to eternal punishment in case he should die without baptism, since it does not lie within his power to procure this Sacrament by his own efforts? 245 If this opinion is the correct one, how are we to account for the penal sufferings of this life which children undergo without any evil of their own as the cause? 246 Finally, if one accepts this theory how does he explain the great diversity of talents in different souls, and how does he explain the unfortunate condition of those who come into the world absolutely devoid of reason? 247 Augustine had hoped that Jerome would be able to answer these objections in a satisfactory manner, but since his communication remained unanswered, he always hesitated to adopt the Special Creation theory. He found himself face to face with the same difficulties when he examined the other two Creationist explanations, namely, that souls already existing elsewhere are infused into bodies by God, or find their way to union with bodies through some natural process. 248 If one is inclined to favor either one of the latter two opinions he must guard against preexistence as understood by the Platonists. 249 The remaining plausible explanation is Traducianism. In general Traducianism maintains that the soul of man is transmitted to the offspring in the generative act of the parents. When this term is employed in a specific

243 Ep. CLXVI, c. iii-iv.

244 Ibid.

245 Ibid.

246 Ibid, c. vi.

247 Ibid. vi.

248 Ep. CLXVI, c. ix ; Ep. CXLHI, 9 ; De Gen. ad Litt. VII, 24-26.

249 Ep. CLXVI, c. ix; Ep. CLXIV, c. vii.

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sense it implies that the soul is propagated by means of a material germ. This is sometimes referred to as Corporeal or Materialistic Traducianism. This theory which was defended by Tertullian was absolutely condemned by our author as militating against the incorporeal nature of the human soul, *admoneo sane, quantum ualleam, si quos ista praeoccupauit opinio, ut animas credant ex parentibus propagari, quantum possunt se ipsos considerent et interim sapiant corpora non esse animas suas.* 250 The other aspect of Traducianism which holds that subsequent souls descend from the soul of the first man through the parents, is frequently designated Generationism. 251 While Augustine's whole attitude towards the problem of the origin of the soul of the descendants of the first man was one of doubt and hesitancy, he seems to have been inclined to favor the theory of Generationism. The principal reasons he assigns for viewing this opinion with greater favor than the rest are these: it explains the transmission of original sin, (*Si una anima facta est, ex qua omnium hominum animae trahuntur nascentium, quis potest dicere non se pecasse, cum primus ille peccabit?*) ; 252 it safeguards the goodness and the justice of God by furnishing an adequate cause for the penal sufferings of infants both here and hereafter ; 253 finally, this explanation seems to be more consonant with the teachings of the orthodox faith than the others. 254 In giving his preference to Generationism Augustine does not overlook the fact that this theory presents a special difficulty insofar as the soul of Jesus Christ is concerned. If one adopts this theory he must hold either that the soul of Christ, by way of exception, was not derived in the same manner as are the souls of other human beings, but came into existence through an act of special creation ; or if it was derived in the same way as the souls of

250 De Gen. ad Litt. X, 24.

251 Cf . Cath. Ency. vol. XV, p. 14, art : Traducianism, C. A. Dubray.

252 De Lib. Arb. Ill, c. xx.

253 Ep. CLXVI, c. iv, vi.

254 Ep. CXC, c. i, vi ; Ep. CCII, bis, c. vi.



other men, one must believe that when He assumed it, He so purified it that He came into the world sinless. 255 The question concerning the origin of the souls of the descendants of the first man, as was remarked at the outset of this discussion, caused Augustine considerable trouble and anxiety over a long period of years, and although he pursued his investigations with an admirable and praiseworthy tenacity of purpose, he was never able to decide definitely in favor of any one theory to the exclusion of the rest. Whenever he refers to this problem he is always careful to warn his readers of his own hesitancy in adopting any particular theory. A single reference taken from Epistola CXC which was written about the year 418 covers this point in all the works published previous to that time : De qua re antequam aliquid admoneam sinceritatem tuam, scire te uolo in tarn multis opusculis meis numquam me fuisse ausum de hac quaestione definitam proferre sententiam et inpudenter referre in litteras ad alios informandos, quod apud me non fuerit explicatum. (2) When his indecision was made the object of attack by those who tried to force him to commit himself to a definite view, he calmly informed them that if they could produce unquestionable evidence in support of any one of these theories from the Canonical Books of Scripture, or if they could adduce valid arguments founded upon evidently true premises, he was ready and even anxious to embrace an opinion so well established. If on the contrary, no such evidence or argumentation can be produced, he feels perfectly justified in maintaining a non-committal attitude of mind. 256 Although he sought untiringly in his own splendid intellect and in both past and contemporary philosophy and theology for some solution of this problem which would harmonize with the orthodox doctrine of original sin, he was forced to acknowledge in the end of his days that so far as he is concerned the origin of the soul of the descendants of

255 Ep. CLXIV, c. vii.

256 Ep. CXLIII, 11.

the first man is a profound mystery. 257 One cannot refrain from expressing his admiration at the high quality of a mind that could frankly confess that he did not know how to solve this difficulty, and furthermore was not ashamed to admit that he did not know. 258 This honest and open recognition of his intellectual limitations tends only to bring out in clearer perspective the rare quality of Augustine's genius. The great care and sustained effort devoted to this problem, combined with that critical attitude of mind so indispensable in the searcher after truth, manifest to us how deservedly Augustine merits the title of "Philosopher," and lends an added sanction to the unanimous verdict of the ages which ranks him among the few really great thinkers of all times.

Saint Augustine fixed the Christian concept of the human soul and contributed largely to its development. He collected and condensed the principal ideas and arguments which he found in Pagan philosophy, and interpreted and developed these in the light of the teachings of Christianity. Profound philosopher and able psychologist though he was, his primary interest in problems touching the human soul was neither philosophical nor psychological, but rather theological in character. Jesus Christ had directed attention to the mutual relations that exist between God and man, and it was ever with these relations uppermost in his mind that Saint Augustine studied the human soul.

His most noteworthy contribution to the Christian philosophy of the human soul was his development of the proofs for spirituality. He was probably the first Christian thinker to understand clearly the distinction between matter and spirit, body and substance. He stands

257 *Opus Imperfectum contra Julianum II*, c. LXVIII.

258 *Quapropter dico etiam ego de anima mea : nescio, quomodo uenerit in corpus meum neque enim ego illam mihi donavi ; scit ille qui donauit, utrum illam de patre meo traxerit an sicut homini primo nouam crauerit. sciam etiam ego, si ipse docuerit, quandocumque uoluerit ; nunc autem nescio nee me pudet ut istum fateri nescire quod nescio. De An. et ejus Origine, I, xv, 25.*

out conspicuously among the philosophers of his time as the fearless and uncompromising champion of the doctrine that the soul of man is not a body but a simple, spiritual substance. The arguments which he advanced to maintain his position constitute a permanent bulwark of defense against the ever-recurring attacks of materialism. His appeal to the authority of consciousness in the elaboration of this doctrine, and his insistence on the scientific value of the data obtainable by introspection, has merited for him an estimable place among those who have aided in the advance of psychological method. The philosophical doctrine of spirituality outlined by the Bishop of Hippo is the equal of any which has been attempted since his day, and, perhaps, it is not an exaggeration to say, that so far as this aspect of Christian philosophy is concerned he was the richest contributor in the long history of Christian thought.

As regards the doctrine of immortality, he was evidently under the influence of Plato when he proposed the so-called metaphysical proofs of the soul's immortality at the beginning of his Christian career. His development of the argument based on the universal desire for being and immortality however, was his own, and as a distinct contribution to this doctrine must not be overlooked.

His protracted investigation of the question concerning the origin of the human soul resulted in his arriving at a clearer and better understanding of the soul's nature. While he never pronounced in favor of any one particular theory of origin to the exclusion of the rest, he seems to have been inclined to favor Generationism as the theory best adapted to his defense of the orthodox doctrine of original sin against the Pelagians. As is well known, this theory has long since been supplanted in Christian philosophical and theological circles by the Special Creation theory as advocated by Saint Jerome in Augustine's day and many centuries later by Saint Thomas Aquinas.

A knowledge of the Concept of the human soul as developed by Saint Augustine is indispensable to the proper understanding of the whole trend of psychological

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thought from his day down to and including the thirteenth century. Every Christian thinker worthy of note who

appeared during this period was more or less under the influence of the great Patristic philosopher. Albertus Magnus and Saint Thomas Aquinas, who graced the Golden Age of Scholasticism, were undoubtedly more directly and powerfully dominated by the philosophy of Aristotle, but they were also influenced in no inconsiderable degree by Saint Augustine. The Angelic Doctor not only appeals frequently to the authority of the African Bishop, but also repeats many of the arguments which had been formulated by him. In the hands of this Master Scholastic of the thirteenth century the Christian concept of the human soul was perfected and woven into that "perennial philosophy" which has been the rich heritage of subsequent centuries.

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84 VITA

VITA.

William Patrick O'Connor was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on October 18, 1886. His elementary training was received in St. John's Cathedral School of his native city. He studied the Classics, Philosophy, and Theology at St. Francis Seminary near Milwaukee. He was ordained to the priesthood on March 11, 1912, and assigned as Assistant to the Pastor of St. Rose of Lima Church, Milwaukee. In the year 1915, he attended Marquette University, Milwaukee, where he studied Rational Psychology under the direction of Dr. G. Deglmann, S. J. He received the A. B. degree in June, 1916. The following September he entered the Catholic University of America where he followed courses in Metaphysics and History of Philosophy under Dr. W. Turner, General, Experimental and Abnormal Psychology under Dr. T. V. Moore, C. S. P., and Biology (Animal and Plant), under Dr. J. Parker. On June 29, 1917, he was commissioned First Lieutenant in the Wisconsin National Guard, and on August 3 of the same year he was assigned as Chaplain to the First Regiment, Wisconsin Cavalry. When this organization became the 120th Field Artillery of the 57th Brigade, Thirty-second Division, he was reassigned as Chaplain. He served with this organization in America, England, and France, participating in four major operations of the French and American Armies. On November 19, 1918, he was advanced to the position of Senior Chaplain, Thirty-second Division, A. E. F., with the Army of Occupation in Germany. In March, 1919, he was promoted to the rank of Captain, Chaplain Corps, A. E. F. On the mustering out of the Thirty-second Division, he resigned his commission and returned to Milwaukee, where he spent the following three months as Assistant to the Pastor of St. Rose of Lima Church. In September of the same year he reentered the Catholic University of America, following courses in Philosophy of Mind, Social Psychology, Philosophy -of Evolution,

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and Genetic Psychology under Dr. E. A. Pace, and Philosophy of Saint Thomas under Dr. H. I. Smith, O. P. He is particularly indebted to Dr. E. A. Pace and Dr. J. Fox for valuable assistance rendered in the preparation and execution of this dissertation.

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