AUGUSTINE AND HIS CRITICS

Essays in honour of Gerald Bonner

Edited by Robert Dodaro and George Lawless

London and New York

CONTENTS

List of contributors vi

Acknowledgements vii

Abbreviations viii

Introduction 1

1 Gerald Bonner: an appreciation 5
DANIEL W.HARDY

2 Gerald Bonner: a select bibliography 11
DANIEL W.HARDY

3 Studying Augustine: an overview of recent research 17
HUBERTUS R.DROBNER

PART I If Plato were alive 35

4 *Paucis mutatis verbis:* St Augustine's Platonism 37
ROBERT CROUSE

5 The fundamental grammar of Augustine's trinitarian theology 51
LEWIS AYRES

6 Sacred triads: Augustine and the Indo-European soul 77
JOHN MILBANK

PART II The order of love 103

7 Insubstantial evil 105
ROWAN WILLIAMS

8 Snares of truth: Augustine on free will and predestination 123
JAMES WETZEL

9 Augustine's decentring of asceticism 141
GEORGE LAWLESS

10 Christ, God and woman in the thought of St Augustine 163

E.ANN MATTER

11 A critical evaluation of critiques of Augustine's view of sexuality 175
MATHIJS LAMBERIGTS

PART III We are the times 197

12 *'Tempora christiana'* revisited 199
ROBERT A.MARKUS

13 The rhetoric of scripture and preaching: classical decadence or Christian aesthetic? 213
CAROL HARRISON

14 Augustine's secular city 231
ROBERT DODARO

Index 261

INTRODUCTION

'What I desire for all my works, of course, is not merely a kind reader but also a frank critic'.[1] Augustine did not fear criticism. Nor did he have to search far to find it. It may safely be asserted that from the time he began to write, his *opus* met with both kindly readers and frank critics, often enough together in the same persons. Interest in Augustine's thought on the part of scholars and enquirers engaged in various fields of study has not waned even in our own times. Contemporary philosophers, theologians, spiritual writers, cultural theorists and social scientists take him to task for certain positions of his on issues ranging from human sexuality and the body, gender, personal freedom, religious liberty and the ethics of force, to his concepts of the self and God. Today, more often than not, Augustine's outlook is characterised as 'pessimistic', and he is charged with responsibility for a certain Christian malaise.

Inspired by the eirenic, yet tenaciously scholarly example of Professor Gerald Bonner, to whom this volume is affectionately dedicated, the contributors of *Augustine and his Critics* wished to examine the arguments of certain strident, present-day critics of Augustine in an effort both to respond to the more inaccurate and unfair of these criticisms, and to argue in favour of some of the much-neglected historical, philosophical and theological perspectives that lie behind Augustine's most unpopular convictions. Far from desiring to stifle criticism of Augustine in this way, or to 'whitewash' his controversial positions, the authors gathered here hope to promote a deeper conversation concerning the purposes, direction and, where possible, the contemporary value of the difficult, disputed areas of his thought.

Following an appreciation of Gerald Bonner prepared by Daniel Hardy, Hubertus Drobner opens the volume with a panoramic report on research trends in Augustinian studies over the last decade. His essay offers to specialists and students alike a concise indication of the multifaceted interests in Augustine's work which today command the greatest amount of attention from scholars.

Concern with Augustine's critics, then, begins with Part One of the volume, 'If Plato Were Alive', a phrase rendered famous by Augustine's attempt in *De uera religione* to come to terms with Christianity's debt to the Platonists. Augustine's Platonic heritage constitutes one of the over arching problems for modern critics of his work. This Augustinian, Christian Platonism, still difficult to define precisely, even after a century of research, is a matter which weighs upon every aspect of his thought and lies, sometimes inaudibly, at the foundation of the criticisms of his work considered in each of the essays of this volume. Robert Crouse offers a magisterial account of the most important among the recent efforts to specify the various strands of Platonic influence within Augustine's intellectual and spiritual achievement, and hints strongly in the direction of the need for a wholly new, comprehensive explanation of Augustine's Platonism. Meanwhile, Lewis Ayres and John Milbank present strong, new arguments for refining Augustine's theological and anthropological purposes away from those generally classed or even dismissed as 'Platonist'. Writing on Augustine's trinitarian theology, Ayres takes exception to several recent characterisations of Augustine's trinitarian theology which are popular in North America and the UK, and which associate his theology with a 'Platonic' (read 'other-worldly') over-concern with speculation upon the immanent Trinity at the expense of a sustained, biblical reflection on the historical experience of a triune God intent upon human salvation. Milbank takes up the other principal pole in Augustine's most philosophical investigations—that of the self and its relationship to rule—and argues that Augustine went further even than Plato in replacing the Indo-European mythological, tripartite structure of the soul (and its contingent political theories centred on the ideal of self-government) with something akin to the tripartite structure of love, a move which takes Augustine to the point of subverting Platonic interiority.

This Augustinian 'Order of Love', the heart of Book 15 of the *City of God,* constitutes the theme for Part Two of the volume, which begins with Rowan Williams's highly suggestive—in part, because refreshingly unconventional — reconsideration of Augustine's understanding of evil as the 'privation of the good' *(privatio boni).* Williams unlocks new possibilities in this fundamental direction of Augustine's thought for re-imagining the psychological and religious dynamics involved in self-discovery, reconciliation and relationship to God in a world beset with tragedy.

James Wetzel courageously returns to the choppier philosophical and theological waters surrounding Augustine's doctrines of free will and predestination, long the bane of advocates of Augustine's theology of grace on account of the latter doctrine's seemingly twisted logic and inattention to the divine will in favour of universal salvation. After setting out in remarkably clear terms what he views at stake in the Augustinian position, Wetzel proposes a compromise with the doctrine's hardest aspects, but one that does not reject the entirety of Augustine's concern to hold intact the divine mystery behind the grace of confession.

George Lawless carries many of these themes surrounding Augustine's theology of grace into a focused examination of the several forms of asceticism in his life and thought. Lawless finds a unity in Augustine's ascetical concern for moderation with respect to enjoyment of the body, sexuality, and other material pleasures in his conclusion that, for Augustine, Christian asceticism consisted in the cultivation of ways and means to foster human relationships and render them firm.

E.Ann Matter takes up the highly disputed territory of gender in Augustine's thought, with a thorough review of the most recent scholarly discussions of Augustine's writings on women. Perhaps nowhere else in Augustinian scholarship today are the perspectives of history, philosophy and theology so vital to our attempts to assess the legacy and the value of Augustine's works than in terms of their reception from feminist points of view. Matter navigates among various, differing methods of interpretation of Augustine's views on women in a manner that allows her to outline the strengths of these evaluations, while keeping the historical distance between Augustine's times and our own always before our eyes. Mathijs Lamberigts brings a similar set of skills and sensitivity to bear in his investigation of wide-ranging criticisms of Augustine's views on human sexuality, so many of which are frequently rehearsed in today's popular literature. As he finds no modern critic of Augustine on these questions as courageous in standing up to Augustine as Augustine's younger contemporary, Julian of Eclanum, Lamberigts casts his meticulously detailed presentation and evaluation of Augustine's case largely in terms of Julian's criticisms.

Such is the weight Augustine's times exercised in limiting the horizons of his thought, that the topic itself seemed to warrant examination. Thus, the theme of Part Three of the volume, 'We Are the Times', takes its inspiration from a sentiment expressed in Augustine's *Sermon* 80. In an essay that sets the tone for this section, Robert Markus reopens the question concerning the reasons behind Augustine's abandonment of his earlier view that he lived in divinely privileged, 'Christian times', the era of an evangelisation fulfilled, in exchange for his adoption of a disillusioned, radical agnosticism over God's purposes in human history, and a determination to pursue a 'christianisation' not founded in secular laws and institutional structures supporting the work and values of the Christian religion, but in the interior, spiritual renewal of individual Christians.

In line with this argument, Carol Harrison rejects the judgement that Augustine's rhetorical accomplishments in biblical exegesis and preaching— the heart of his cultural production—exist in unremarkable continuity with the classical sensibilities of late antique Roman culture, and argues instead that they represent an emergent, distinctly Christian aesthetic, informed by and subservient to the aim of promoting in the soul the love of God and neighbour, as witnessed in the life and teachings of Christ. Finally, Robert Dodaro assesses the value of recent criticisms of Augustine's political thought and tactics as authoritarian, elitist and coercive against his goal of liberating individuals from the entire range of ancient philosophies and spiritualities, all of which were captivated for him by an illusion of the self as capable of moral and spiritual self-sufficiency. Dodaro interprets Augustine's rejection of Roman civic virtue, paradigmatically represented in the military and political hero, as being grounded ultimately in imperial society's closure to the possibilities of social reconciliation contained in the experience of pardon as divine gift.

Evidently, a number of urgent, contemporary criticisms of Augustine are not represented in this volume. Augustine's attitudes to war, Jews and ecclesiastical authority are only examples of other of his positions which draw constant fire from modern critics. Selection of the above-mentioned, and exclusion of other topics, are consequences of the availability at the time of qualified contributors and the limit to the length of the volume that could be produced. Routledge are to be thanked for generous consideration given to us in terms of the latter condition.

In addition to the persons named in the Acknowledgements to this book, we would like to thank in particular our contributors for their immediate and overwhelmingly positive response to our invitation to collaborate in this project. In spite of their busy academic and personal lives, they responded as they did both out of love for Augustine and the deepest affection and esteem for Gerald Bonner. For you, Gerald, our most heartfelt, best wishes *ad plurimos annos!*

Robert Dodaro, OSA
George Lawless, OSA
Rome, 28 August 1999
The Feast of St Augustine

Notes

1 Augustine, *trin. 3. proem.* 2; CCL 50.128: 'Sane cum in omnibus litteris meis non solum pium lectorem sed etiam liberum correctorem desiderem'.

8
SNARES OF TRUTH
Augustine on free will and predestination

James Wetzel

There is no hedging on predestination in Augustine's letter of AD 418 to the Roman presbyter Sixtus. All human beings inherit the guilt of original sin and are thus of 'one and the same clay of damnation', justly to be forsaken; a select few are destined, nevertheless, to be singled out from common clay and restored to God's favour, not because they have in some way, however meagre, distinguished themselves, but because of God's unfathomable will to redeem.[1] Augustine draws his paradigm case of election from Rom 9, where Paul mentions two famous sons of Israel, Jacob and Esau, and attributes the ascendancy of one over the other to a divine decision, in place before either brother is born. As such, the decision to favour the younger brother, Jacob, could not have been made based on what Jacob deserved, unless God were to have made it based on what Jacob would end up deserving. There is no room for compromise here, insists Augustine, who finds in the appeal to God's foreknowledge an overly subtle attempt to subvert the priority of election over human merit; those who resort to it 'jump off cliffs' in order to evade 'snares of truth'.[2]

Augustine's doctrine of predestination, founded on his premise of unearned election, has been akin to theological dynamite. To preach this doctrine is to invite revolution and retrenchment, license and rebuke. I think especially of John Calvin in the sixteenth century; Jansenius in the seventeenth. There is something potent and potentially destructive in the idea that human redemption is not in human hands; it therefore pays to ask whether Augustine's uncompromising deference to a deity of selective compassion is really the best way of avoiding a bad end and remaining caught up in truth. Not every admirer of Augustine has thought so. Gerald Bonner, for example, seems convinced that Augustinian predestination is a theological dead end: 'Nothing is gained by attempting to defend the doctrine, which remains a terrible one and more likely to arouse our awe than enlist our sympathy'.[3]

At the very least, it must be conceded that Augustine's provocative way of reading Paul disrupts the delicate *pas de deux* of western theism, between ethical self-assertion and religious self-surrender. After AD 397, that is, soon after he has arrived at his definitive reading of Rom 9, Augustine never tires of citing 1 Cor 4: 7: 'What part of a good do you have that you have not received?'[4] For the sinner who makes this his petition in his *Confessions,* 'Give what you command, and command what you will," the answer is clearly, 'no part at all'.[5] In the dance of redemption, it would seem that the human partner arrives empty-handed and lacking in grace; not only does the divine partner supply the grace, God does all the dancing. It is as if sin has drained the human heart of vitality, leaving God to assume (or forsake) a spiritless husk.

'Between predestination and grace,' writes Augustine, 'there is only this difference, that predestination is preparation for grace, while grace is already the giving itself'.[6] If all good is given in the gift, then a prepared heart is a wasteland, barren of good. Where in this emptiness would the redeeming spirit of God meet up with the original goodness of creation? It was never Augustine's intention to attribute to sin, an all-too-human creativity, the power to undo divine creation and rob the soul of its beauty, and yet by fixating on the conjunction of two aspects of predestination, inexorability and selectivity, he risked replacing the vulnerable good of creation with the invincible grace of redemption, a trade of one kind of creation for another. The antithesis between creator and redeemer is so contrary to the spirit of Augustine's confessional theology that it is tempting to dismiss his doctrine of predestination as the late and twisted product of a career overburdened with controversy.

Two considerations should give pause, however, to the friendly amender of Augustine. First, Augustine seemed not to feel the force of the most obvious and persistent objection to his belief in predestination, that it cultivated disbelief in the validity of moral appraisal and, therefore, disinterest in moral improvement. He handed human will, root and branch, over to God. The wisdom set against him was that no one could be good or bad, if no one had a will to be either. Being subject to the will of another is paradigmatic of a lack of freedom.[7] Still, Augustine writes as if being wholly subject to God changes nothing about the urgency of moral striving.[8] I am disposed to believe that Augustine left it largely to his interpreters to discover how his insistence on the priority of grace over virtue could yet retain some motive for ethics, but I remain unconvinced that he offered only dogmatic intransigence to those who held out for a bridge. The amender of Augustine ought to consider whether the burden of misunderstanding is Augustine's alone. Second, even if the doctrine of predestination should prove to be theologically irredeemable, it is not easily excised from Augustine's thought. It was not a late-career innovation, as his loyal opposition had hoped, but, as he himself claimed, a working out of his formative insights into the mystery of redemption.[9] Without the doctrine of predestination, there is no Augustinian theology of grace.

In what follows, I will not be trying to uphold Augustine's doctrine in quite the manner he espoused it. There is much good sense behind Gerald Bonner's sentiment, and I do not want to lose sight of it by serving up too spirited an *apologia*. I begin my defence, then, with an eye towards the most unsavoury parts of Augustine's doctrine. These will turn out to be every bit as unpalatable as his judicious critics have imagined. Nevertheless, the centre holds, and, in the main, I take my inspiration from there. In conclusion, I return to the apparent antithesis between free will and predestination and reconsider the wisdom of Augustine's critics. When his doctrine is viewed from the centre of his vision, it can be seen to accommodate much of the wisdom taken traditionally to oppose it. Augustine was right to be uncompromising, but wrong to be unaccommodating. There is room in his inspiration for a wide diversity of temperament, talent, and insight. In respect of this, I offer an unpolemical defence of predestination.

A mystery misplaced: secret justice

Opposition to Augustinian predestination falls standardly under two rubrics: Pelagian and semi-Pelagian. Pelagianism refers to a loose confederation of theologies taking their name, but not necessarily their inspiration, from the British moralist, Pelagius. Those named for him are more or less united in their dislike of Augustine's doctrine of original sin.[10] Pelagius believed that there was a first sin, and that it had dire consequences, but his reading of Rom 5:12, a prooftext for original sin, differs from Augustine's in limiting the inheritance of sin to physical death, or death of the body.[11] Spiritual death, referring to the soul, is not heriditable and, therefore, we can avoid it if circumstances favour our efforts. For Pelagius, favourable circumstances meant membership in a church that helped its faithful by means of exhortation and example to steel their wills against temptation and commit to a life of virtue. In Augustine's understanding, sin's inheritance is more insidious and correspondingly more mysterious. We are born not only with bodies destined to die, but with hearts disposed to sin. The eruption of sin into human conduct is, for him, a symptom, not a source, of a disease fatal to the soul. Unlike physical diseases, we are morally accountable for soulsickness, and thus to the doctrine of original sin Augustine appends transmissible guilt.[12] The sin of Adam and Eve is literally everyone's. Although Augustine leaves the mechanism of transmission ultimately unaccounted for, he suggests enough of a connection to sexual intercourse to hand him his reputation as an enemy of sexuality; a reputation he has never quite managed to live down.

The Pelagians were fundamentally at odds with Augustine's theology. Semi-Pelagians, so named long after their day by seventeenth-century controversialists, favoured Augustine over Pelagius, but reacted against what they took to be Augustine's excesses. A number of them played key roles in the monastic movement of southern Gaul, notably John Cassian, abbot of the monastery of Saint Victor in Marseilles. Cassian's thirteenth *Collatio,* though not expressly aimed at Augustine, offers an irenic and elegant alternative to Augustine's numbing emphasis on God's initiative in his later writings against Pelagians.[13] While Cassian never denies that God sometimes seizes upon a wayward heart and, unbidden, sets its straight, he suggests that there is no impropriety in the thought that, at other times, God responds to the heart's petition for help. Regardless of who initiates the relationship, Cassian is mindful of the disproportion of what ensues; whatever the human investment, the divine return far outstrips it. In place of overwhelming grace, Cassian praises grace abounding. In his estimation, the exceptional cases are the ones in which the initial human investment is nil, and even in these there must be a subsequent investment of will in the gift of divine spirit; no one is ever forced to remain with God.

Augustine knew the semi-Pelagians as Massilians, that is, he knew them more for their association with Marseilles and Cassian than for any affiliation with Pelagius. The Massilians came to be known later as semi-Pelagians, but the designation ill suits them; scholars who still use it do so more out of respect for precedent than out of conviction. Much about Augustine had, after all, been praised by Massilian luminaries, in particular his recognition of human debility after original sin and his appreciation for the grace that heals a wounded heart from within. A sizeable number of monks disliked Augustine's apparent elimination of human initiative, as that seemed contrary to their practice of petitionary prayer, but their reservation did not put them halfway along the road to Pelagius.

Granting that 'semi-Pelagian' has been something of a misnomer, there is yet another, far more subtle misconstruing of Augustine's relation to his critics, and this one continues to obscure the motive of his predestinarian sentiments. Massilians may not be centrists in a theological continuum running from Pelagius to Augustine, but nor are they right of centre (taking Augustine as conservative), or left (taking him as radical); the error is to suppose that there is a continuum. On the supposition of continuity, all that really separates Cassian from Augustine is that one reserves a tiny bit of will for human initiative, while the other cuts bait. That is a paltry difference, apt to make Augustine seem inhumane in relation to Cassian's tempered humanism and Pelagius seem, by contrast, rather full of himself. Such a manner of construing difference lends itself to caricature; I doubt that Pelagius had as blithe an opinion of human nature as he has so often been saddled with, and I am certain that Augustine respected the human will (he practically invented the concept).

My alternative to difference in terms of degrees of separation is a shift in perspective. Augustine's negation of the Pelagian ideal of initiative and effort is not the negation of initiative and effort, but a reclaiming of virtue under a new wisdom. Pelagians try to win God's favour with upright resolve and good deeds; Augustine has given up on this, not, I think, because he is too cynical to believe in human virtue, but because virtue makes no sense to him as a means of seducing God. Semi-Pelagians and Pelagians are alike in believing that some good can originate with human beings, and that God, who desires only goodness, will be drawn to it. In that sense, they are on the same road, even if they are far apart. Semi-Pelagians are badly named only because the name understates the degree to which Pelagian conviction has atrophied in them. They have parted company with Pelagius, but they have yet to set out on a new direction. Augustine addresses them with circumspection and without compromise.

The monks of Marseilles received two of the last gasps of his literary output, *De praedestinatione sanctorum* and *De dono perseuerantiae*. Among his major works, only the massive and unfinished harangue against the Pelagian bishop, Julian, post-dates these writings. I confess that I find his two treatises on predestination a tedious pair; Augustine hammers home his conviction that a life redeemed is wholly redeemed in God, from start to finish, but the quality of a such a life, and what one could expect of it, he leaves to the side. If the monks simply had wanted to know what Augustine believed, his replies are ample; they are stingy things, however, for anyone who would like to share in the wisdom of his beliefs.

Perhaps the one redeeming feature of his Massilian rejoinders is his mention in each treatise of the exegetical study he wrote near the beginning of his episcopate, and at the prompting of his friend and mentor, Simplicianus. Book 1 of his replies to Simplicianus deals first with the issue of Paul's persona in Rom 7:7–25, and then with the moral of Jacob's election over Esau in Rom 9:10–29. In *De praedestinatione sanctorum,* Augustine tells the monks that they will find there, in his struggle to fathom the basis of election, a radical change of view.[14] He cites the judgement of his *Retractationes:* 'In resolving this question, I really worked for the free choice of human will, but the grace of God won out'.[15] Augustine further underscores the importance of *Ad Simplicianum* in *De dono perseuerantiae,* where he places his exegetical turn of mind within close proximity of its existential correlate, the description in the *Confessions* of his personal experience of election.[16]

It is not implausible to suppose that, in AD 397 Augustine wrote his *Confessions* out of the impetus of his new reading of Paul and that the conversion he describes so memorably in Book 8 owes as much to exegetical insight as it does to his recollection of an experience more than ten years old.[17] I do not mean to suggest by this that his account is unfaithful to his experience, but more that the meaning of his experience had to wait upon his revision of Paul. *Ad Simplicianum* ends Augustine's attempt of about two years earlier to read into Rom 9 some basis in human worth for God's favouring of one mother's son over another.[18] Back then, election had been of the faithful son, the one who would know not to presume upon his own strength and so would petition willingly for divine aid; in *Ad Simplicianum* the petitioning becomes part of what is given with being elected. Where once there was a human difference, now there is only a distinction in how God calls. Jacob is favoured because God calls Jacob favourably *(congruenter),* so as to bring him irresistibly to faith and a new life. Too bad for Esau; he is called, but not favourably. His heart is never opened.[19] Once Augustine embraces the idea that God is always the source of the soul's desire for God, he never shrinks from it. It awakens him, to all he has been given and releases his conversion from its moment: in recollection, the moment fades, but not the grace the moment conveys. In a moment, there is grace enough for a lifetime. The Paul who shuts off Augustine's access to Massilian theology opens his way to the theology of the *Confessions*.

There is a dark side to Augustine's reading of Rom 9. It is Esau. Augustine assumes that because Esau is the son not favoured, he is forever cast off. Leave aside whether this reading fits Paul (it does not); in subscribing to a doctrine of reprobation, Augustine subscribes to the belief that some who feel abandoned by God are, in fact, abandoned by God.[20] These unhappy souls are the damned, the sons and daughters not favoured. The doctrine of reprobation has mixed poison into Augustine's motives for affirming predestination. You do not have to be a Pelagian not to like the taste. His affirmation of reprobation is tragically wrong in two fundamental ways: it assumes that a soul is capable of experiencing the pain of being forsaken by God, and it assumes that God has a motive for inflicting it.

Let me begin with the second part. As of *Ad Simplicianum,* human beings are, for Augustine, a damnable lot, and by the strict imperatives of justice, God has cause to consign every last one of them to perdition. The wonder is that God spares some. God's reprieve of the few and condemnation of the many is in agreement, says Augustine, with 'a certain secret equity, beyond the measure of human reckoning, but there to be observed in the very transactions of mundane human affairs'.[21] The analogy implied is commercial. When an offer of goods or services is something other than the offer of a gift, the willing recipient of the benefit incurs a debt. It is of the essence of equity for a creditor to exact payment and for the debtor to render the same. If, however, a creditor is so moved, he or she may forgive the debt and treat the benefit in question as a gift. There is nothing unfair about forgiving debts, even when the creditor's motive for doing so is mysterious. It is simply an act beyond what we would normally reckon as fair. When the logic of a business transaction is applied to God, it is mysterious, but not unfair, that God forgives the sin of some, and it is within the human measure of fairness that God punishes the sin of others. Augustine sticks to this logic when he defends God's justice to his Pelagian and Massilian critics.

I am not convinced that the analogy between sin and debt is especially strong, but even conceding its force, it strains credibility to think of damnation as settling an account.[22] If human beings have expropriated a life they can rightly have only in God, it stands to reason that God ought to want that life returned. Reprobation is giving up the goods. To maintain his reasoning, Augustine has to deny that the goods forsaken are still good. Such a denial places an enormous burden upon his doctrine of original sin. It must now serve as a warrant for reprobation, a death warrant for those who no longer can pay their debts. All die in Adam, asserts Augustine, but he never explains why Adam's bad debt is everyone else's as well.[23] The mystery is not supposed to be here. We are supposed to be able to see why we are born debtors, fairly owing what we have no hope of redeeming. As a doctrine of redemption, original sin speaks to the darkness of human desire for God, to be broken by God alone. As a doctrine of reprobation, it is a thorough confusion of the laws of commerce, biology, and morality. The only room for a 'certain secret equity' in the doctrine is where

Augustine excludes it: where God would discern something redeemable in a humanity human beings have forsaken.

If there is no intelligible motive in justice to move God to withhold grace, then perhaps Augustine should have gone the route of 'double' predestination, where damnation and redemption alike are impenetrable mysteries of divine election.[24] I do not believe that he ever really had this option. The doctrine of reprobation is not an ill-conceived rider to his doctrine of predestination; it is profoundly in contradiction with it. Predestination affirms God's priority as a lover by acknowledging the inspiration behind all human love of God; the doctrine of reprobation subverts this priority by affecting to make a hell out of desire. It would be hell to desire God and never have that desire requited. No one comes to desire God, however, in the absence of God's love. Here, requital is intimated by the very presence of desire. According to Augustine's logic of predestination, there is no pain of separation from God that is wholly without its element of grace.

Reflections on prodigality

Augustine's reputation as a thinker of modern insight rests on his mastery of the psychology of self-contradiction. He found his scriptural epitome of self-contradiction in the voice of Rom 7, who laments: 'I don't know what I am doing, for I don't do what I want, but what I hate I do'.[25] He knew the phenomenon best from his own experience. Most of Book 8 of the *Confessions* details the agony of his irresolution. He cannot will himself to become the person he wants to be, and so he finds himself divided between two wills, or more accurately, between the two contrary inclinations of a wounded will, neither of which has the power to transform and incorporate the other. One inclination chains him to a discredited, but mysteriously seductive, past; the other urges him on to a valued, but mysteriously resistible, future. Since Augustine has no will outside of his will's sorry division, the psychology of Book 8 contributes to the mystery of his divinely inspired resolution.

It took Augustine quite a while to concede that the voice of Rom 7 had to be Paul's own and not that of an adopted persona.[26] His overt motive for making the concession was polemical; against the Pelagian confusion of grace with virtue, and at the risk of impugning the character of a revered saint, Augustine put forth a Paul whose life under grace included self-doubt, internal strife, and a dose of carnal mindedness; failings fatal to the perfection of virtue. Of course, this was a Paul akin to himself and his own experience of grace; the polemical motive of Augustine's reading of Rom 7 had its roots in more basic exegetical and personal imperatives. In *Ad Simplicianum,* where he makes redemption wholly a matter of God's will to redeem, Augustine persists in his habit of assigning Paul a persona in Rom 7; he supposes Paul to speak there in the voice of someone who knows what he should do, but cannot do, who stands in need of divine aid, but has yet to seek it. In Augustine's terminology, this would be the voice of a person bound 'under the law' *(sub lege),* whose one remaining freedom is to turn to God and ask for liberation.[27] Augustine's rereading of Rom 9 will make this persona harder to sustain. When he admits that God's call invokes in the person called both desire for God and consent to it, Augustine erases the boundary between life under the law and law under grace.

It is ultimately not an exegetical imperative, however, that dictates Paul's 'conversion' in Rom 7. Augustine could have re-established the boundary between servitude under the law and freedom under grace by putting a certain spin on irresistible grace, that much-disputed mechanism of predestination. First, he robs life under the law of even its ineffectual love of justice, leaving in its stead fear of punishment; then he marks conversion at the onset of well-directed desire, always the result of an infusion (whether small or large) of divine spirit. The bigger the infusion, the deeper the desire. To some extent, Augustine's dreary doctrine of reprobation pulls him towards a theology of manipulative grace, but his most enduring testimony to life in God holds the line against this drift. Paul under grace, fighting the good fight within, is best represented in what Augustine confesses; whether the representation is finally of Paul himself is perhaps doubtful at best, but it is none the less the only Paul that Augustine could have assimilated at the scene of his conversion.[28] An existential imperative shapes what Augustine comes to hear in the voice of Rom 7, and unless its influence is taken into account, there can be no understanding of his doctrine of predestination.

This imperative, briefly stated, is the imperative of confession: recollect sin and receive grace. In the *Confessions,* Augustine plays upon the intimacy of the connection between sin and the love of God, the former being a kind of parody of the latter. When sin is recollected in confession, the parody is exposed, and the sinner is less subject than before to having to live it out. The premise of Augustine's confessional theology is that grace is already at work in the agonised heart of a reluctant sinner; from there, he looks for the perfection of the work of grace less in sin's transcendence than in sin's thorough transformation into the love of God. In this regard, he differs from most, if not all, of his critics, who allot grace and sin respectively to two contrary worlds of experience, the carnal and the spiritual. Although Augustine is hardly a stranger to the antithesis, he adopts Paul's distinction between flesh and the wisdom of the flesh, and aims his disdain at too great a love of what is bound to die.[29] He avoids making an enemy of the flesh, when he looks into sin's heart and finds there not a diversionary love, competing with the love of God, but love of God unknown to itself and directed toward what has no hope of containing it: the flesh that sin, if unchecked, must inevitably destroy.

The best illustration of the view of sin I am attributing to Augustine comes in Book 2 of the *Confessions,* where he turns his recollection of an adolescent theft into an allegory for sin.[30] Apart from its scriptural allusions and Augustine's analysis, the storyline is simple enough. As part of a company of adolescents in search of amusement, Augustine joins in a night-time trespass of a neighbour's orchard, where he and his cohorts make off with armfuls of fruit taken from a pear tree. They bite into a few of the stolen pears, but throw most of them to pigs. There are two plausible allusions in Augustine's recollection of an otherwise unremarkable adolescent prank. The taking of forbidden fruit recalls the first sin, as described in Gen 2–3; the careless squandering of a bounty recalls the prodigal son of Lk 15, who is reduced by famine and desolate living to envying the pigs he is sent to feed. At first sight, the allusions seem hard to combine. The original man and woman turn from Yahweh in order to have what Yahweh has: wisdom and immortality. The prodigal son wastes what he has been given freely, his share of his father's wealth. A story of theft that takes in both tales is apt to turn on a confusion between taking and receiving. That is a confusion uncommon in theft, but endemic to sin, as is revealed over the course of Augustine's recollection.

He ponders above all else the question of what moved him to thievery. In retrospect, he has an insight into his motives that he surely lacked at the time of his theft. Nothing at all moved him, aside from the sheer delight of transgression: 'I loved my falling away, not for what I was falling toward, but for the falling itself .[31] The mundane motives of thieving, material advancement and honour among other thieves, have no explanatory force in the recollection. Augustine remembers throwing away the pears, and he does not recall, or does not choose to, the names of his companions. When recollected as sin, the motive behind a theft takes on a more than mundane order of complexity. Augustine concedes that sin is committed for the sake of what may be called 'the most limited of goods' *(extrema bona),* that is, whatever is here today but gone tomorrow, but he adds that sinful desire for goods of this sort is always immoderate; what is transient is coveted as if it were eternal.[32] Sin is its own motive, then, in a negative sense: nothing in the world satisfies the desire behind sin. From a mundane standpoint, sin is desire without end. There may as yet, however, be an overlooked end in the theft Augustine recollects. Delight in transgression is characteristic of most adolescent rebellions, and most adolescent rebellions have as their aim the expropriation of parental authority, or, at least, parental authority as an adolescent conceives of it. The adolescent Augustine dispenses with what he has in as wilful a manner as he likes. Prodigality is the sign of his new freedom and new authority; parental restraint has been left behind.

Suppose that a pleasurable defiance of adult resourcefulness did at some time move a gang of north African adolescents to waste the fruit of adult labour. That motive, like all the rest, takes on an added gravity when it is mixed up with sin. Theft and prodigality in the mundane sense end in predictable irony. The more you take and waste, the more your life of licence enslaves you to the moderation of others. The prodigal son returns home penniless, expecting to become his father's servant. The irony of sin is deeper and more perplexing. What could the soul take from God and waste, when all the virtues that the soul could covet are inseparable from the divine being?

Augustine speculates that human vice is invariably the counterfeit of divine virtue.[33] What the soul lacks in resource, it makes up in pretence. Fear parades as prudence, ignorance as simplicity, arrogance as self-reliance, envy as the desire to excel. The list goes on. The question, however, is not whether the soul is moved by sin to make a virtue out of a lack, but why. What is the point of stealing virtue from God, or, short of that, of counterfeiting it? Augustine recalls the void in sin; it is the lack in love, the space no mortal beloved can ever fill. Perhaps that lack has to serve as the answer. Sin is the love of nothing. In reality, love of nothing is love's negation, but in pretence, where sin operates, it is God's manner of loving, to love without fear of loss. If the soul can bring itself to love nothing, the soul then has nothing to lose. The motive behind sin is, ironically, the desire to have God's love.

In sin, the profoundest desire of the soul gets perverted into a force of destruction. In seeking invulnerability, the soul loses the substance of divine love —its wholeheartedness—and thus it is driven towards an insane prodigality: to love beyond loss, the soul gives up all that it loves. The insanity lies not only in the divestment, but in having no beloved left to receive it. In practice, sin's counterfeit of God's love is impossible to perfect, for perfection here ends in the void, the undoing of the bonds of creation. The soul that falls away into sin continues to love mortal beloveds, but its attachments lack measure, and so its love goes begging. It wanders about aimlessly in a 'wasteland of need' *(regio egestatis)*.[34]

Why there should be this wasteland is finally a mystery (the mystery of sin's origin), but it is a mystery best shaped by Augustine's sense of predestination. The pre-eminent theme of his *Confessions* is the persistency of God's love; Augustine often overlooks its presence, and yet the love never leaves him. It gives him his beginning; it draws him towards his end. In the meantime, he wanders about in a self-imposed oblivion, and fear takes him to the edge of one abyss after another. However, whenever he comes to the edge of the abyss fatal to his soul, he finds that he cannot peer over it without knowing he is upheld. The snare of truth that catches him is always some reminder of the love that has preceded his steps. He looks past the emptiness of his heart to what embraces it; there is no exit out of God. That is a hard truth to remember when you are busy trying to steal or win back the love you have already been given.

A mystery replaced: the prodigal heart

Few theologians have had as profound an appreciation as Augustine's for the magnitude of the difference between divine and human orders of being. He opens his *Confessions* on the theme of God's immeasurable greatness, whose variation is his own human puniness. God is boundless, beyond the contentment of heaven and earth. In comparison, Augustine's soul is a hovel in disrepair *(ruinosa),* cramped, dirty, and badly in need of renovation.[35] It is not a likely place for God to dwell. The one nice feature of the place is that it houses desire for God, but even that turns out to be part of an unexpected renovation, under an unlikely new owner. Augustine will not allow his heart to take refuge in even the dubious consolation of a profound longing. Until God awakens it, his desire is dead.

There is a fine line between humility and humiliation, and when Augustine's critics, both loyal and disloyal, fault him for morbid self-criticism, they generally mean to imply that he has crossed the line. You can have a relationship with another person only if you know something of humility; otherwise your ego gets in the way. If, however, you are humiliated instead of humbled, there is no 'you' to enter into a relationship. Massilians and Pelagians had differing understandings of when humility before God became too much of a good thing, but they had common cause in not liking Augustine's scruples about the human will to relate to God. If everything about the soul's relationship to God is God's doing, including the very desire to be in relation, where exactly does the soul surface in its redemption? The Word seems to have become a monologue.

I appreciate this criticism of Augustine and the wisdom behind it. Since I have earlier dissociated predestination from the doctrine of reprobation and all the problems it raises for God's justice, I am now prepared to deal more directly with the issue the criticism raises: free will.

As a criticism of Augustine's commitment to predestination, the claim that he enslaves the will to God is psychologically astute, but theologically misguided. It relies on too close an analogy between interpersonal relations in the human sphere and the soul's relationship to God. For Augustine, God is not a supreme person among other lesser persons, but a wholly other kind of reality. What is anything human to God? Nothing unless God has claimed it first. Augustine allows himself the audacious thought that his desire for God is first of all God's desire for God, because no other alternative conforms to the truth of his existence. He is here because God created him to seek and become part of God, and this despite the fact that a being sufficient unto itself has no motive to create or relate to anything outside of itself. The doctrine of predestination accords a transcendent God a prodigal heart; it is whatever is in God that welcomes back souls drawn from, and enamoured of, the void. In the face of this mysterious divine prodigality (grace), and only in the face of it, is humility endless and human prodigality redeemed.

God's incarnation in Christ gives the mystery its human face and supplies Augustine with his paradigm of predestined humanity, or humanity fully restored to God.[36] Apart from his experience of God incarnate, in whose death and resurrection the body is lost and found, Augustine would have had no awareness of the divine mystery of the flesh. In Book 7 of *Confessions,* he artfully invokes what is lacking in any return to God that is experienced outside of this awareness. The experience he recalls there is of an introspective journey, prompted by his reading of certain undisclosed Platonic writings; in all likelihood they included selections from the *Enneads,* the great work of the Neoplatonic mystic, Plotinus.[37] He follows the admonition of the writings to turn inward, and within himself he encounters the immutable light that is at the source of his own existence. Within this light, he is offered a vision of creation as God sees it, beautiful and unmarred by evil. What is most remarkable about this vision is that Augustine never sees himself in it, and yet he knows he belongs there, as his status as a creature of God is the one certainty he takes from the light.

As a way back to God, the path of introspection ends in paradox. Augustine finds God within himself, but he also finds himself far from God, in a strange place of interior exile *(in regione dissimilitudinis);* it is from there that he has his extraordinary vision of divinely created beauty.[38] After a time, his habit of fleshly love weighs him down and returns him to his familiar world of attachment. His recollection is of having been taken up into a love beyond corruption.[39]

The mystical vision of Book 7 is the high-water mark of Augustine's Platonism. Scholars who have studied it, and it has been a source of great fascination, have generally concluded that the vision fails to take because Augustine's heart was not in it. That is undoubtedly true, and some attention to why it lacked heart will disclose the connection between predestination and the doctrine of the incarnation. The key clue comes in what Augustine reports hearing from on high, while he was trembling alone and awestruck in his place of interior exile. A voice tells him to feed on it as his food, and then adds: 'You will not change me into you, as you do the food of your flesh, but you will be changed into me'.[40] Soon thereafter, the voice identifies itself in the words of the God of exiles: 'I am who I am' (Exod 3:14). It is a frequent theme of the Hebrew Scriptures, and one well familiar to Augustine, that no one sees God and lives. Set within the context of his Platonic adventure, the arrival of the sublime God of Exodus suggests that the God Augustine touches upon in himself is still in some terrifying way wholly other. He cannot take it in and not be consumed. The denouement of his adventure discloses the source of all the difficulty: Augustine continues to identify with a flesh that is foreign to God.

If Augustine were a Platonist in the style of Plotinus, he would have sought the resolution of his difficulty in freedom from all attachment to the flesh. Instead, he sees his way back to God opened in the inspiration of two Pauline imperatives: 'Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in vain desires'.[41] These words were put before him in the hour of his most desperate self-contradiction, when the pull of old loves and the push of a new vision wrestled within him to a fearsome draw, leaving him, in effect, without power of will. The effect on him, then, of reading Paul's exhortation to a new life was, under the circumstances, little less than miraculous. Light flooded into love; for the first time Augustine found himself able to carry a vision of God in his heart. No longer did God's call threaten him with consumption.

I have long wondered why an exhortation should have been of any comfort or use to Augustine at the very time his will was in abeyance. It seems perverse to demand of a person bound from the inside simply to get over it and get on with it. The ability to 'just do it' is precisely what is lacking. When Pelagius takes up and reads verse 13:14 in his exegesis of Romans, he finds moral exhortation there and with it the expectation of a clean break between the life lived before Christ is put on and the one lived thereafter, a difference between vice and dissolute desire and a life of virtue.[42] I suppose that, for Pelagius, the will to break with sin comes with being freed from having to be held to sin as a punishment. If so, Pelagian wisdom is not to be disparaged out of hand; there is considerable liberation in being forgiven debts of suffering and not always to bad effect. Mercy can be midwife to virtue.

However, whatever the complexities are of the psychological calculus of retribution and pardon, they have no bearing on what binds Augustine prior to his conversion; for he is bound not by guilt but by misguided love. Nor does it add much to imagine him freed by some great infusion of well-turned desire, designed to strengthen his resolve. When Augustine describes his conversion, he speaks of light pouring into his heart, conferring safety *(lux securitatis).*[43] Light is a trope for the wisdom beyond desire. In this second gift of interior illumination, Augustine must have caught sight of the person he lays claim to in confession: the one still roving about in a wasteland of need, but all the while beloved of God and predestined to be welcomed home.

I cannot presume to enter far into this wisdom, but perhaps I can illuminate its surface by turning a different kind of light upon the wisdom held against it. Is love authentic only when it admits of being refused? Many of Augustine's critics have thought so. They believe that where there is no freedom to refuse, there can be no freedom to accept. Put another way, it is wise never to love anything or anyone wholeheartedly; for if you do, you will lose yourself in what you love and disappear. Freedom in loving waits upon a measure of irresolution in the lover, some reserve towards the beloved. Predestination seems to violate this wisdom by locking God and the soul into a relationship of irresistible consummation.

However, there is really nothing in what motivates Augustine's doctrine that would require him to deny the wisdom of a measured love. In fact, the pathology of sin, as he construes it, shows up in disproportionate love. The soul's natural affinity for God, a beloved beyond measure, shipwrecks upon a world unable to contain it. Fear puts a temporary limit on the howling pain of shipwreck by prescribing love of limited aspiration. Little is lost if little is loved. Limits set in fear, however, do not keep. The sin that motivates fear comes eventually to infect it and render it prodigal. Love of limited aspiration degenerates into no love at all and then into love of nothingness. Unmeasured love weds the soul to an abyss.

If it is dangerous to love wholeheartedly in a world where beloveds die, it is no less dangerous to love only a God who is foreign to mortal flesh. The asceticism of bodily hatred is not all that far from the prodigality in sin. Both lack a world in which to love. Augustine gets his world back, or part of his world, along with the promise of the rest, when he puts on the flesh of Christ, for whom love of neighbour and love of God are the supreme and ultimately the same imperatives. Grace conferred by way of incarnation is not some magical recipe for fulfilling the imperatives, but the call to love wholeheartedly in the midst of mortality. We are upheld in our ordinary loves, the very ones we thought made us most vulnerable. Love takes its true measure from faith in love's redemption. Perfect love casts out fear. Then there will be freedom in God.

Conclusion: wholeheartedness

In an early and unfinished exposition of Romans, attempted before the watershed of *Ad Simplicianum,* Augustine identified sin against the Holy Spirit—the one unforgivable sin—as contempt of forgiveness.[44] The human heart imposes a limit upon the divine power to forgive and holds it firm against divine trespass. If you take unforgivable sin to the other side of the watershed, where Augustine has been won over to the idea of God's inexorable, but limited, will to redeem, you will be left to conclude that no sin is unforgivable unless God has lost the will to forgive it; the contempt of forgiveness, and the onus of it, is God's. In contrast to most of Augustine's friendly amenders, I believe that is it far more faithful to him to keep inexorability and remove the limits than the reverse. Without the spectre of reprobation, Augustine's predestinarian theology is relieved of its one unforgivable sin: its presumption to limit God's love.

It may seem that I leave Augustine with a doctrine of universal salvation, the teaching that all souls are redeemed, regardless of their individual disposition or desires. Augustine disliked the moral torpor of the doctrine; I dislike what it must inevitably concede to modern sentimentality about love. Happily, I have not committed him to it. The Augustinian doctrine of predestination is, first and foremost, a doctrine of confession. I can confess to my own redemption but not to yours, and much less to your damnation. The same goes for the church: its communal confession of salvation has no business doubling as a judgement for or against those on the outside. Confession is always in the first person, always addressed to God, and always a mix of joy and sorrow. When I confess to salvation in God, I do so out of the pain of alienation. I may believe, on the contrary, that I am forever lost and met with a fate I deserve, but I cannot make my despair my confession. These truths all belong to humility.[45]

In the end, grace may prove irresistible, but love can never be forced. Augustine knew this. He never expected his world to shake off its chains of fear either quickly or easily. Even a Christian regime could be expected to perpetuate the human tragedy of coercive justice, founded upon fear of retribution and infliction of punishment. The tragedy is not so much that we still have need to punish, but that we have still the desire. In the midst of all this human darkness, Augustine's doctrine of predestination recollects a light of hope: the last word will be the first, God's eternally, and ours when we are ready to receive it within time's covenant. T.S.Eliot put it well, in the confession of poetry: 'In my end is my beginning'.[46] Augustine put it best, in the poetry of confession: 'Restless is our heart until it rests in you'.[47]

Notes

1 *Ep*. 194.2.4; CSEL 57.178: 'una eademque massa damnationis'.
2 *Ep*. 194.8.35; CSEL 57.204: 'Mirum est autem…in quanta se abrupta praecipitent metuentes retia ueritatis'.
3 *St Augustine of Hippo: Life and Controversies,* London, SCM Press, 1963, p. 392 (rev. ed., Canterbury Press, Norwich, 1986). In recent work, Bonner's assessment of the doctrine of predestination is more irenic, but no less unsympathetic; see the second part of his masterful Otts Lectures on 'Augustine and Pelagianism,' printed in *Augustinian Studies* 24 (1993), pp. 27–47. In his concluding remarks, Bonner speculates that Augustine held to an 'interior conviction' of predestination, based on his experience of conversion. In my own way, I will be attempting to articulate Bonner's insight.
4 As in *ep*. 194.5.21; CSEL 57.192: 'Quid enim boni habes, quod non accepisti?'.
5 *Conf*. 10.29.40; CCL 27.176: 'Da quod iubes et iube quod uis'.
6 *Praed. sanct*. 10.19; BA 24.522: 'Inter gratiam porro et praedestinationem hoc tamen interest, quod praedestinatio est gratiae praeparatio, gratia vero iam ipsa donatio'.
7 Bernard William makes an excellent case for this paradigm over its alternative, the lack of freedom involved in being short of choices or opportunities; see especially ch. 6 of *Shame and Necessity,* Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993.
8 *De correptione et gratia* is his most sustained attempt to rebut the claim that predestination renders the practice of moral persuasion otiose.
9 The Benedictine scholar, Dom Odilo Rottmanner, offered one of the earliest and best studies of the theological principles behind Augustine's doctrine of predestination; in calling the doctrine 'Augustinism', Rottmanner rightly underscored the importance of its presuppositions for almost all of Augustine's theologizing. See *Der Augustinismus*. *Eine dogmengeschichtliche Studie,* Munich, J.J.Lentner, 1892; also available in the French translation of J.Liébaert, 'L'Augustinisme: Etude d'histoire doctrinale', *Mélange de science religieuse* 6 (1949), pp. 31–48.
10 In this supposition, I follow Bonner, 'Augustine and Pelagianism', *Augustinian Studies* 23 (1992), pp. 33–51, especially at p. 35. (This is the first part of his Otts Lectures.)
11 *Pelagius's Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans,* tr. T.De Bruyn, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 92.
12 Augustine's first nod to the *heriditability* of guilt, as opposed to, say, ignorance or a bad disposition, is *Simpl.* 1.2.16. His expressed use of the term, 'original guilt' *(reatus originalis),* can be found at *Simpl*. 1.2.20; CCL 44.52.
13 *Ioannis Cassiani Collationes* (CSEL 13); an English translation of the thirteenth conference is available *in John Cassian: The Conferences,* tr. B.Ramsey, OP, New York, Paulist Press, 1997, pp. 459–98 (with notes). For Cassian's relation to Augustine, see ch. 4 of O.Chadwick, *John Cassian,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, ^{2}1968.
14 *Praed. sanct*. 4.8.
15 *Retr*. 2.1; CCL 57.89–90: 'In cuius quaestionis solutione laboratum est quidem pro libero arbitrio uoluntatis humanae, sed uicit dei gratia'.

16 *Perseu*. 20.52–53.
17 My supposition is not original. For an important precedent, see P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo, a Biography,* London, Faber & Faber, 1967, the chapter entitled The Lost Future'.
18 *Ex. prop. Rm.* 60.
19 *Simpl*. 1.2.13; CCL 44.38: 'Illi enim electi qui congruenter uocati, illi autem qui non congruebant neque contemperabantur uocationi non electi, quia non secuti quamuis uocati'.
20 The Paul of western Christianity is arguably Augustine's invention; Augustine's reading of Romans is especially creative, in goods ways and bad. I recommend one recent and quite brilliant attempt to recover the Paul before Augustine:S. K.Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles,* New Haven, Yale University Press, 1994.
21 *Simpl*. 1.2.16; CCL 44.41: 'Atque ita tenacissime firmissimeque credatur id ipsum, quod deus…cuius uult miseretur et cuius non uult non miseretur, esse alicuius occultae atque ab humano modulo inuestigabilis aequitatis, quae in ipsis rebus humanis et terrenisque contractibus animaduertenda est'.
22 The analogy between sin and debt shows up in Mt 6:12, as part of the Lord's Prayer. It is, of course, not my intention to criticize the Lord's Prayer. The strength or weakness of an analogy has to do with its proximity to the literal, while aptness has to do with how effectively an analogy conveys its intended insight in context. While it may be illuminating to think of sins as debts (as in Mt 6:12), it does not follow that sin is literally, or very nearly, some kind of debt.
23 The issue is tied up with the question of the soul's origin. Is the soul specially created with each individual at birth, or were all souls created with Adam, later to be given their own bodies by way of propagation? Augustine decides not to decide: see *an. et or.* 4.24.38. His best answer to the question is that the soul originates with God, but that one does not help him explain the transmission of original sin.
24 On rare occasions, *an. et or.* 4.11.16, for example, Augustine will write about predestination to eternal death. There is in his reckoning, however, neither divine will to promote sin, nor to single out and condemn particular individuals. There is instead a lack of divine will to save everyone who needs saving. However tenuous the distinction may prove to be, it was very important to Augustine.
25 Rom 7:15, as cited at *Simpl.* 1.1.8; CCL 44.14: 'Quod enim operor ignoro; Non enim quod uolo hoc ago, sed quod odi illud facio'.
26 *C. ep. Pel.* 1.8.13–14.
27 *Simpl.* 1.1.7–14; see *ex. prop. Rm.* 44–46.
28 For the source of the doubt, see the classic argument of K.Stendahl, 'The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West', *Harvard Theological Review* 56 (1963), pp. 199–215. The best account of Augustine's autobiographical use of Paul is P.Fredriksen, 'Paul and Augustine: Narratives, Orthodox Traditions, and the Retrospective *Self', Journal of Theological Studies,* new series, 37:1 (1986), pp. 3–34.
29 *Ex. prop. Rm.* 49.
30 *Conf.* 2.4.9–10.18.
31 Ibid., 2.4.9; CCL 27.22: 'amaui defectum meum, non illud, ad quod deficiebam, sed defectum meum ipsum amaui'.
32 Ibid., 2.5.10; CCL 27.22.

33 Ibid., 2.6.13–14.
34 Ibid., 2.10.18; CCL 27.26.
35 Ibid., 1.5.6; CCL 27.3.
36 *Praed. sanc.* 15.30; perseu. 24.67.
37 *Conf.* 7.10.16–7.17.23.
38 Ibid.,7.10.16; CCL 27.103.
39 Ibid., 7.17.23.
40 Ibid., 7.10.16; CCL 27.104: ‘Nec tu me in te mutabis sicut cibum carnis tuae, sed tu mutaberis in me’.
41 Rom 13:14 as cited at *conf.* 8.12.29; CCL 27.131: ‘induite dominum Iesum Christum et carnis prouidentiam ne feceritis in concupiscentiis’. The Latin word, *concupiscentia,* which I have rendered as ‘vain desire’, is usually translated as ‘lust’, or simply ‘desire’. In this context, however, I think Augustine clearly intended the connotation of sin, and it is of the essence of sinful desire that it goes begging. Sin can never be satisfied as such. (I make no claims about Paul’s meaning.)
42 De Bruyn, *Pelagius’s,* op. cit., p. 140.
43 *Conf.* 8.12.29; CCL 27.131.
44 *Ep. Rm. inch.* 21.
45 My understanding of humility and its place in Augustine’s theology has been greatly enhanced by the humane argument of G.W.Schlabach, ‘Augustine’s Hermeneutic of Humility: An Alternative to Moral Imperialism and Moral Relativism’, Journal *of Religious Ethics* 22:2 (1994), pp. 299–330.
46 The last line of East Coker, one of the *Four Quartets*. Eliot’s quartets are profoundly Augustinian in sentiment. They are arguably this century’s greatest poetic expression of the doctrine of predestination.
47 *Conf.* 1.1.1; CCL 27.1: ‘inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te’. This essay has benefited from the insightful comments of my friend, John Cavadini. He has my thanks once again.