

## ST. AUGUSTINE AND COSMIC REDEMPTION

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IN THE contemporary effort to elaborate a theology of the temporal, the name of St. Augustine is frequently enough invoked. Reference is usually made to one or other classic theme: his conception of time and eternity, of *uti* and *frui*, *scientia* and *sapientia*. His theology of history is discussed, especially in connection with the master idea, the *civitas Dei*. When consideration focuses more particularly on the theme of cosmic redemption,<sup>1</sup> however, interest in his contribution appears to slacken. There may be a passing reference to his unique reading of the famous "groaning of creation" passage in St. Paul (Rom 8:19-23) and perhaps a mention of the fear of Manicheism which led him to reject a cosmic interpretation. But rarely in the flood of Augustinian scholarship does one see proposed the general question: Is there for St. Augustine any solidarity of man and cosmos in sin and redemption?

The chief reason for this neglect may well be the hazardous nature of the inquiry. It is always risky to seek in an ancient writer the answer to a question which he never explicitly put to himself; anachronism has made the history of scholarship a road weighted with ugly corpses. Moreover, Augustine would appear to be so disinterested in the material world, so exclusively intent on God and the soul, as to render antecedently sterile any search for a theology of the cosmos.<sup>2</sup> There is, however, both validity and value in such an investigation, provided it be cautiously pursued. Genius enriches even by what it leaves implicit. And in the present instance the materials are not lacking for a balanced estimate of the mind of the Bishop of Hippo.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the acceptability of this expression, cf. G. Thils, *Théologie des réalités terrestres 1: Préludes* (Bruges-Paris, 1947) 110 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the excerpt from H. Marrou at the end of this article.

<sup>3</sup> Because, on the broad topic which is our primary concern, there is no radical development in Augustine's thought, we have chosen, with due regard for chronology, a topical rather than a genetic exposition. Further, we make no attempt to offer a bibliography on the question of cosmic redemption.

## THE EX-MANICHEAN

The Manichean adventure of the ardent young African has, by comparison with his exposure to Neoplatonism, suffered from long neglect. It is one of the numerous merits of Professor O'Meara's recent study<sup>4</sup> to give to this period of Augustine's career its due emphasis and, to the extent that the obscurity and paucity of the data (despite significant recent discoveries on Manicheism) will permit, to throw fresh light on an experience that left a permanent mark on the character and mind of Augustine.

His association with the Manichees, while lasting about a decade, never brought him into the inner circle of the *electi*. He remained an *auditor*, content with a less perfect observance of the Manichean code (the *electi* led a life of extreme austerity, including chastity), while accepting its destructive critique of the Bible and of Catholic faith, together with its weirdly materialistic dogmas. These doctrines are of special interest to us here to the extent that they include a curious cosmogony and eschatology, whose general outlines are well known, largely from Augustine's own writings.

We may state the Manichean world-view briefly as follows. In the beginning were two adjacent kingdoms, of light and darkness. The former was invaded by the latter, and its resistance, only partially successful, was achieved only at the cost of the capture of some light-particles of divinity by the forces of darkness. Thus the world in its substance is a vast prison, and divinity itself is the prisoner. Included among the captured light-particles are the souls of men, which the Manichees identify with the divine substance. The organization of the cosmos is a divine counterattack, directed to the eventual liberation of the divine light imprisoned in matter. The whole of Manichean morality, asceticism, and eschatology is based on the orientation of cosmic history to this ultimate deliverance of the divine substance

<sup>4</sup> John J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine: The Growth of St. Augustine's Mind up to His Conversion* (London, 1954) pp. 61-91. Other significant works on Manicheism and Augustine's relation to it include: H. C. Puech, *Le Manichéisme, son fondateur, sa doctrine* (Paris, 1949); F. C. Burkitt, *The Religion of the Manichees* (Cambridge, 1925); P. Alfarc, *L'Évolution intellectuelle de saint Augustin 1* (Paris, 1918). For a critical history of researches into Manicheism, cf. J. Ries, "Introduction aux études manichéennes: Quatre siècles de recherches," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 33 (1957) 453-82. This valuable study is to be continued in subsequent articles.

from the powers of darkness. Materialistic in its conception of God, dualistic in its explanation of evil in the world, Manicheism, as so many ancient systems, conceived of human life at its highest as an effort of purification from the stain of matter, a calculated escape from the cosmos.<sup>5</sup>

Years of progressive disappointment with the unfulfilled promises of the sect of Manes were crowned with the discovery by Augustine (chiefly through the mediation of St. Ambrose and Neoplatonism) of the transcendent spirituality of God, the privative character of evil, and the profound and supraliteral meaning of the Bible.<sup>6</sup> The break, when it came, was definitive, and nowhere is the polemic of the Bishop of Hippo more vigorous (and sometimes even contemptuous) than when he disputes with his former coreligionists.

That polemic reveals the reasons for his antagonism towards the cosmic doctrines he had once accepted, as well as for his reluctance to allow any involvement of the infrahuman world in the fall and redemption of man. The following paragraphs will seek concrete verification of this in Augustine's handling of the principal man-cosmos themes; contrast with his patristic predecessors will, on occasion, serve to sharpen our understanding of his consistent refusal of cosmic redemption.

### *Cursing of the Earth*

On the basis especially of Gn 3:17-19 some authors, both ancient and modern, have predicated a solidarity of man and world in guilt and punishment. Nature is punished with man; sin has disturbed the order of creation.<sup>7</sup> Several of the Fathers entertain the notion that strife in the animal kingdom, and especially the hostility of the beasts

<sup>5</sup> Puech, *op. cit.*, p. 85, points out that not all the Manichees were agreed that all the light-particles would be liberated, even by the eschatological conflagration. He signals the considerable difference this detail makes as regards their conception of cosmic history: "Dans une telle perspective, la lutte entre le Bien et le Mal se couronne bien d'une victoire de la Lumière, mais elle ne s'est pas poursuivie sans danger ni catastrophes, et elle ne s'achève pas sans pertes, sur un triomphe plénier de Dieu." Augustine's polemic supposes, in his adversaries, the notion that some light-particles remain captive, even after the conflagration; cf. *Contra Faustum* 2, 5 (PL 42, 212); also *De haeresibus* 46 (PL 42, 38); *Contra Secundinum* 20 (PL 42, 595 f.); *Contra Faustum* 13, 6 (PL 42, 284 f.).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. O'Meara, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-21.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. J. Chaîne, *Le livre de la Genèse* (Paris, 1949) pp. 50 f.

towards man, are the result of sin, and that the definitive coming of the messianic kingdom will restore the primitive harmony to the subrational world.<sup>8</sup> The cursing of the earth in Gn 3:17 is interpreted by Irenaeus and Origen in a literal sense, and Chrysostom, it would appear, goes even further by attributing the very corruptibility of the material world to the sin of man.<sup>9</sup>

What is the view of Augustine? First of all, he never wearies of repeating, especially against the Manichees, and later in refutation of the charge of Manicheism directed by the Pelagians against himself, that all things in the world are from God and are therefore good.<sup>10</sup> Adam sinned not because he loved an evil substance, but because he loved a good creature in preference to the Creator who is better than all creatures.<sup>11</sup>

Augustine does not completely refuse the notion that Adam's sin changed man's relationships with the lower creation. For one thing, the hostility of the animal kingdom towards man and the imperfection of man's dominion over it is the result of Adam's transgression. The final liberation of man will see a restoration of the perfect hegemony which Adam once possessed over the beasts.<sup>12</sup> Further, there is an essential difference between man's relationship to the soil in Paradise and at present. Work in Paradise was blissful dialogue with nature, exhilarating adventure into the secret caverns of creation, sublime cooperation with the Creator. Work for fallen man, on the contrary, is *labor*, painful punishment for sin; whether or not thorns and thistles existed before the Fall, they certainly plague fallen man's pursuit of agriculture.<sup>13</sup>

The cursing of the earth is a theme which strikingly reveals Augus-

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolyicum* 2, 17 (PG 6, 1079–82); Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 5, 33, 4 (PG 7, 1214 f.); Tertullian, *Adversus Hermogenem* 11 (PL 2, 231); Chrysostom, *Hom. 9 in Gen.* 4 (PG 53, 78 f.).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 3, 23, 3 (PG 7, 961 f.); Origen, *Contra Celsum* 7, 28 f. (PG 11, 1459–62); Chrysostom, *Hom. ad pop. Antioch.* 10, 5 (PG 49, 117 f.); *Hom. in ep. ad Rom.* 14, 5 (PG 60, 529 f.).

<sup>10</sup> For example, *De libero arbitrio* 3, 13, 36 (PL 32, 1289); *De natura boni* 34 (PL 42, 562); *Opus imperfectum contra Julianum* 3, 186 (PL 45, 1325).

<sup>11</sup> *De natura boni* 34 (PL 42, 562); cf. *De vera religione* 20, 38 (PL 34, 138).

<sup>12</sup> *De vera religione* 45, 84 (PL 34, 160); *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* 1, 18, 29 (PL 34, 187); *De Genesi ad litteram* 8, 10, 21 (PL 34, 381); *Contra Julianum* 1, 6, 25 (PL 44, 657).

<sup>13</sup> *De Genesi ad litteram* 8, 8, 15 f. (PL 34, 379); *Opus imperfectum contra Julianum* 6, 21 (PL 45, 1549).

tine's fear of Manicheism. His exegesis of Gn 3:17, while characteristically varied according to the needs of the polemical or pastoral moment, clearly excludes any solidarity of man and earth as regards both *culpa* and *poena*. His unfinished literal commentary on Genesis stopped short of this verse. But his *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*, the first of his scriptural commentaries, written shortly after his conversion, explicitly states that it is man, not the earth, which is being punished by the curse.<sup>14</sup> In his *De Genesi ad litteram* he contents himself with the remark that man's *labores* on earth are self-evident and did not exist in Paradise; he does not comment on the cursing of the earth as such.<sup>15</sup>

It is in the sixth book of the unfinished polemic against Julian, at the end of his life, that we find the most satisfying treatment of Gn 3:17. Throughout a long and tortuous discussion, important for the Saint's teaching on original sin, he is forced constantly to defend himself against the charge of Manicheism. We will not here follow the two contestants through the labyrinth of argument, but a brief summary will be helpful.

It is Manichean, argues Julian, to say that the sin of one person can make the nature of another person sinful. He supports this contention with an analogy between the effects of original sin on the material world and its effects on human nature. Just as the earth is cursed because of Adam's sin without sharing Adam's *culpa*, so, even if it be granted that certain afflictions of men are a punishment for original sin, it does not follow that human nature shares the *culpa* of that sin. The cursing of the earth does not correspond to anything in the earth

<sup>14</sup> "Ergo dicendum est, quod per peccatum hominis terra maledicta sit, ut spinas pareret: non ut ipsa poenas sentiret, quae sine sensu est, sed ut peccati humani crimen semper hominibus ante oculos poneret, quo admonerentur aliquando averti a peccatis, et ad Dei praecepta converti"; *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* 1, 13, 19 (PL 34, 182). Besides taking the thorns and thistles literally, Augustine, who had learned from Ambrose that the Manichean critique of the Old Testament could be met by interpreting the latter "spiritualiter" (cf. *Confessiones* 6, 4, 6 [PL 32, 722]), later in the same work will say: "spinæ ac tribuli sunt punctiones tortuosarum quaestionum, aut cogitationes de provisione huius vitae." The man who perseveringly labors to clear his soul of such growths will be released from this toil at the end of the present life; the man who allows his soul to be choked with thorns "habet in hac vita maledictionem terrae suae in omnibus operibus suis, et post hanc vitam habebit vel ignem purgationis vel poenam aeternam"; *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* 2, 20, 30 (PL 34, 211 f.).

<sup>15</sup> *De Genesi ad litteram* 11, 38, 51 (PL 34, 450 f.).

itself, but to something in the soul of sinful Adam. It is really Adam who has been cursed for his sin.<sup>16</sup>

Augustine's answer reveals his dismissal of any man-earth solidarity. He attacks Julian's analogy directly: the progeny of Adam can experience *poena*, whereas the earth cannot. The earth has neither *poena* nor *culpa* as a result of Adam's sin; in fact, its cursing means that it becomes the *poena* of man. Hence the invalidity of Julian's argument against the principle of the inseparability of *culpa* and *poena*.<sup>17</sup>

And so, on two distinct occasions, once at the beginning and once at the end of his career of defense of the Catholic faith against heresy, once against Manicheism and once against the charge of Manicheism, Augustine firmly resists the notion—accepted, as we have seen, by other Fathers—of a solidarity between man and earth in sin and punishment.

### *Groaning of Creation*

More celebrated even than Gn 3:17 is the passage (Rom 8:19–23) where St. Paul speaks of the subjection of "creation" to "vanity" as a result of sin, and of its yearning for the liberation that will come with the glorious consummation of the divine sonship which Christ has introduced into the world. Both in ancient and in modern times this has been a classic locus for establishing the solidarity of man and creation in sin and redemption.<sup>18</sup> Some of Augustine's predecessors

<sup>16</sup> *Opus imperfectum contra Julianum* 6, 27 (PL 45, 1566–69).

<sup>17</sup> "Maledicta enim terra . . . cur non attendis quia sicut non habet culpam, sic ex illa maledictione non habet poenam; sed peccantis hominis, cum maledicitur terra, ipsa fit poena"; *ibid.* (PL 45, 1574).

<sup>18</sup> No thorough study of the patristic exegesis of this passage has been published. The best summary presentations would appear to be: H. Biedermann, *Die Erlösung der Schöpfung beim Apostel Paulus* (Würzburg, 1940) pp. 69–78; K. Schelkle, *Paulus Lehrer der Väter* (Düsseldorf, 1956) pp. 293–304. The latter refers to an unpublished dissertation of H. K. Gieraths, *Knechtschaft und Freiheit der Schöpfung: Eine historisch-exegetische Untersuchung zu Röm 8, 19–22* (Bonn, 1950). The predominant modern opinion understands "creation" as referring to the material world exclusive of man; e.g., R. Cornely, *Epistola ad Romanos* (Paris, 1896); M.-J. Lagrange, *Épître aux Romains* (Paris, 1916); F. Trucco, "Omnis creatura ingemiscit (Rom VIII, 19–23)," *Divus Thomas* (Piacenza) 12 (1935) 320–26; J. Huby, *Épître aux Romains* (4th ed.; Paris, 1940). A. Viard comes closer to Augustine in wishing to include man with the rest of creation: "Expectatio creaturae (Rom., VIII, 19–22)," *Revue biblique* 59 (1952) 337–54. P. Dulau is one of relatively few who retain the Augustinian interpretation: "'Omnis creatura ingemiscit' (Rom VIII, 22)," *Divus Thomas* (Piacenza) 11 (1934) 386–92. For a theological treatment, cf. A.-M. Dubarle,

among the Fathers understood "creation" as the material world.<sup>19</sup> Others, on the grounds that irrational creatures cannot be in anguish, affirm that the text speaks of the angels, the intelligent powers placed by God over the planets.<sup>20</sup> Origen and St. Ambrose are even willing to include the human soul, along with sun, moon, stars, and angels, within the extension of "omnis creatura."<sup>21</sup> But no one among the Greeks or Latins seems to have restricted the extension of the phrase to man alone.<sup>22</sup>

No one, that is, until Augustine.<sup>23</sup> His exegesis of Rom 8:19–23 and the reasons for it are most enlightening for his attitude towards the notion of cosmic redemption.<sup>24</sup> Three preoccupations, all central to his

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"Le gémissement des créatures dans l'ordre divin du cosmos (Rom 8, 19–22)," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 38 (1954) 445–65.

<sup>19</sup> So, among others, Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 5, 32, 1 (PG 7, 1210; Harvey 2, 413 f.); cf. 5, 36, 3 (PG 7, 1224; Harvey 2, 429); Methodius, *De resurrectione* 8 (PG 18, 273–76; GCS 27, 298 f.); Chrysostom, *Hom. in ep. ad Rom.* 14, 4–6 (PG 60, 529–31); cf. *Hom. ad pop. Antioch.* 10, 5 (PG 49, 117 f.); Ambrosiaster, *Comm. in epist. ad Romanos* (PL 17, 130–32).

<sup>20</sup> Diodorus of Tarsus (K. Staab, *Pauluskommentare aus der griechischen Kirche* [Münster, 1933] pp. 93–95); Theodore of Mopsuestia (Staab, *op. cit.*, pp. 137–39; PG 66, 823–28). On the relationship between the commentaries of Diodorus and Theodore, cf. Staab, *op. cit.*, pp. xxv f. For Theodore's theology of man and the cosmos, cf. H. B. Swete, *Theodori episcopi Mopsuesteni in epistolas b. Pauli commentarii* 1 (Cambridge, 1880) lxxix–lxxxv, and, with reference to particular Pauline texts, 128–31, 143 f., 267–72.

<sup>21</sup> Origen, *Comm. in epist. ad Romanos* 4 (PG 14, 1111); Ambrose, *Ep.* 34, 6–11 (PL 16, 1120–23); cf. *Ep.* 35, 7 (PL 16, 1124).

<sup>22</sup> According to Schelkle, *op. cit.*, p. 295, it would seem that St. Ephraem anticipated Augustine in equating "creation" with man alone. The reference is to *S. Ephraemi Syri commentarii in epistolas d. Pauli* (Venice, 1893) p. 27.

<sup>23</sup> For Augustine's interpretation of the famous Pauline passage, cf. Cornely, *op. cit.*, pp. 424–37 *passim*; H. Eger, *Die Eschatologie Augustins* (Greifswald, 1933) pp. 63 f.; P. Platz, *Der Römerbrief in der Gnadenlehre Augustins* (Würzburg, 1938) pp. 182–87; J. Pépin, " 'Primitiae Spiritus': Remarques sur une citation paulinienne des 'Confessions' de saint Augustin," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 140 (1951) 183–86; and the present author's *The Eschatological Transformation of the Material World according to Saint Augustine* (Woodstock, Md., 1956). This last is a modified excerpt of the thesis of the same title presented to the Gregorian University, Rome, in 1954. The thesis dealt with the broad theme of the present article; the excerpt is concerned almost exclusively with Augustine's interpretation of Rom 8:19–23.

<sup>24</sup> The two central treatments of the Pauline passage are *De diversis quaestionibus* 83 67 (PL 40, 66–70), and *Quarundam propositionum ex epistula ad Romanos expositio* 53 (PL 35, 2074–76). We shall refer to these passages hereafter as *Qu.* 67 and *Expositio* 53. Pépin, *op. cit.*, 184–86, after careful study of doctrinal and literary affinity and the readings of Romans employed, proposes the year 395 for *Qu.* 67 and 395 or 396 for *Expositio* 53;

thought, compelled him to depart from previous interpretations of the Pauline passage. The first is his detestation for the Manichean notion that part of the divine substance is somehow imprisoned in material things. To speak, as some patristic writers did, of the material world groaning and longing for deliverance sounds for Augustine a little too much like the sighing of the Manichean light-particles of imprisoned divinity. He will have nothing to do with a theory so reminiscent of that blasphemous assault on the divine spirituality.<sup>25</sup> Secondly, if "omnis creatura" is the material world, then, asks Augustine, who is meant by "nos," contrasted with "omnis creatura" in the sacred text? Man, of course. But this seems to remove man, or at least his soul, from the category of the created and rank him with the properly divine. Once again the repulsive shadow of Manicheism haunts the former *auditor*. The consubstantiality of the human soul with God, present in more than one ancient pantheism, had been experienced by Augustine in most objectionable form in Manicheism. Once again he will have none of it.<sup>26</sup> Thirdly, what of the possibility that the angels, presiding over the cosmos, are spoken of in "omnis creatura"? Augustine was familiar enough with this view, and he does not venture to stigmatize

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this is an attempt to be a little more definite than Zarb's 388-95 for *De diversis questionibus* 83 and 394-95 for *Expositio*. For some of Augustine's numerous briefer treatments of these Pauline verses, cf. Clarke, *op. cit.*, p. 3, n. 9.

<sup>25</sup> "... sic intelligendum est, ut neque sensum dolendi et gemendi opinemur esse in arboribus et oleribus et lapidibus, et caeteris hujusmodi creaturis; hic enim error Manichaeorum est..."; *Expositio* 53 (*PL* 35, 2074). Augustine's teaching on this point was directed against others besides the Manicheans. Some time after his two extensive comments on Rom 8:19-23, his letter to Orosius on certain errors of the Priscillianists and Origenists contained a similar view; cf. *Ad Orosium contra Priscillianistas et Origenistas* 8, 11 (*PL* 42, 675 f.).

<sup>26</sup> "Hoc capitulum obscurum est, quia non satis hic apparet quam nunc vocet creaturam. Dicitur autem secundum catholicam disciplinam creatura, quidquid fecit et condidit Deus Pater, per unigenitum Filium, in unitate Spiritus sancti. Ergo non solum corpora, sed etiam animae nostrae ac spiritus creaturae nomine continentur. Sic autem dictum est, 'Ipsa creatura liberabitur a servitute interitus, in libertatem gloriae filiorum Dei': quasi nos non simus creatura, sed filii Dei, in quorum gloriae libertatem liberabitur a servitute creatura. Item dicit, 'Scimus enim quia omnis creatura congemiscit et dolet usque adhuc; non solum autem illa, sed et nos ipsi': tanquam aliud simus nos, aliud omnis creatura. Totum ergo capitulum particulatim considerandum est"; *Qu. 67* (*PL* 40, 66). On the Manichean identification of the soul with the divine substance, cf. Puech, *op. cit.*, p. 82 and p. 175, n. 341.



it as heretical.<sup>27</sup> But it was not for him. Central to Augustinian thought is the notion of perfect beatitude, which requires not only permanence in possession of the supreme good but certitude thereof.<sup>28</sup> Since the good angels are now certainly in possession of perfect happiness, it is impossible that any earthly event should sadden them. Hence the “*creatura congemiscens*” cannot be the angelic universe.<sup>29</sup>

And so, largely from abhorrence of Manicheism, Augustine is forced to an exegesis almost unheard of till his time and little favored by exegetes today. “*Creatura*” is man and man alone. We will return to this interpretation later for its important positive contribution to Augustine’s theology of the material world. But for our present purpose Augustine’s position is clear: it is not the material world which has been subjected to “*vanitas*” because of human sin. Once again, the anti-Manichean character of his view of the world has kept him from admitting that it shares the fall of man.

### *Cleanness of Creation*

Another class of texts relevant to our inquiry deals with the uncleanness of material things in relation to man, and of man in relation to

<sup>27</sup> “*Tamen nihil temere confirmandum est, sed pia diligentia etiam atque etiam verba divina tractanda sunt; ne forte quae congemiscit et dolet et vanitati subjecta est, possit aliquo modo alio intelligi, ut de summis angelis . . . non impie possit existimari*”; *Qu.* 67 (*PL* 40, 69 f.).

<sup>28</sup> This principle was employed by Augustine in his refutation of the cyclic theory, in so far as it involved rational souls capable of beatitude; cf. *De civitate Dei* 12, 20 (*PL* 41, 369–72). It likewise was a presupposition in his speculations on the state of Satan and the rebellious angels before they sinned; cf. *De Genesi ad litteram* 11, 19, 25 (*PL* 34, 439); *De civitate Dei* 11, 11–15 (*PL* 41, 327–31); *Enchiridion* 28 (*PL* 40, 246).

<sup>29</sup> “*Hoc capitulum si hoc modo, ut tractatum est [that is, understanding ‘creatura’ to be man alone], aperiat, non incidimus in illas molestias, quibus plerique homines dicere coguntur, omnes Angelos sublimesque Virtutes in dolore et gemitibus esse, antequam nos penitus liberemur, quoniam dictum est, ‘Omnis creatura congemiscit et dolet.’ Quamvis enim adjuvent nos pro sua sublimitate, dum obtemperant Deo, qui pro nobis etiam unicum Filium suum dignatus est mittere; tamen sine gemitu et doloribus id facere credendi sunt, ne miseri existimentur, feliciorque sit de numero nostro Lazarus ille qui jam in Abrahae sinu requiescit. Praesertim quia dixit, eandem creaturam quae congemiscit et dolet, vanitati esse subjectam; quod de summis et excellentibus Virtutum Potestatumque creaturis nefas est credere. Deinde liberandam eam dixit a servitute interitus; quo illos cecidisse, qui in coelis agunt vitam beatissimam, non possumus credere*”; *Qu.* 67, 7 (*PL* 40, 69). Cf. *Expositio* 53 (*PL* 35, 2074).

material things. Is man somehow soiled by his contact with matter, and if he is, how is this to be understood? Does matter in turn share the stain of human sin, so that it too is in need of purification? A brief examination of these questions will reveal another aspect of Augustine's rejection of cosmic redemption and will prepare the way for the subsequent consideration of the theme of purification by Deluge and conflagration.

Here again it is the anti-Manichean polemic that is our major source. The Manicheans' practice of abstinence and its dogmatic basis in their cosmogony are the targets of Augustine's attacks. Among the moral regulations of the followers of Manes, abstinence from certain foods held a notable place.<sup>30</sup> The second of the three "seals," the *signaculum oris*, besides prohibiting sins of the tongue, also regulated the quantity and types of nourishment that could be taken by the *electi* and *auditores* respectively. Certain foods were considered unclean. For example, meat was prohibited to the *electi*, since animals had their origin from the demons; moreover, they reproduce by carnal generation, which is the work of concupiscence. Though animals when alive contain certain elements of the divine principle, these are gradually liberated by their activity, and at the moment of death nothing is left except a soiled mass. To eat meat is to be soiled by this contact with impure matter and to retard the process of separating light from darkness, the promotion of which is the foundation of Manichean morality and asceticism and the special vocation of the *electi*.

It is in sharp opposition to such conceptions that Augustine's thought unfolds. From the time of his break with Manicheism, the basic principle on the subject is the goodness and cleanness of all creatures and all foods.<sup>31</sup> Sometimes, possibly under Neoplatonic influence, he speaks of the soul as being defiled by contact with the body or by love of material things.<sup>32</sup> But, no more than in Plotinus,

<sup>30</sup> On this aspect of Manicheism, cf. Puech, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-91; O'Meara, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-79; Alfarcic, *op. cit.*, 126-34.

<sup>31</sup> *Confessiones* 10, 31, 46 (*PL* 32, 798 f.).

<sup>32</sup> "... animas . . . altissimis a corpore sordibus oblitus . . ."; *Contra Academicos* 3, 19, 42 (*PL* 32, 956). "Amore eorum quae forinsecus sentiuntur, computruerunt interiora mea"; *Annotationes in Job* 19 (*PL* 34, 845). He also speaks of prayer as being unclean if it desires earthly things; cf. *ibid.* 16 (*PL* 34, 842).

such expressions do not indicate that a stain of some sort passes from matter to spirit. Even in his early works it is clear both that lower creatures may be called unclean only by comparison with the purity of higher things,<sup>33</sup> and that the stain contracted by man when he sins has its origin in his own *cupiditas*, not in the nature of the material things which are the instruments of his malice.<sup>34</sup>

Further, Augustine explicitly refutes the notion that man's sin stains the material world. When Scripture speaks of the world as defiled by human sin, "the world," says Augustine, refers to sinful men, not to the material universe.<sup>35</sup>

In his defense of the abstinence inculcated in both New and Old Testaments, he appeals repeatedly to Paul and the other New Testament authors to exclude the idea that certain foods are unclean.<sup>36</sup> He meets the embarrassing difficulty concerning Old Testament prohibitions of certain foods as unclean by appealing to a typological interpretation. There are in the Old Testament, he says, certain precepts whose sense is adequately had from the obvious meaning of the words. These are "praecepta vitae agenda." There are other precepts, however, whose sense can be adequately grasped only when we consider their symbolic aspect: "praecepta vitae significandae."<sup>37</sup> The

<sup>33</sup> "Prorsus nemo nos fallat. Quidquid recte vituperatur, in melioris comparatione respuitur. . . . Nulla itaque foeditate universa creatura maculari permittitur"; *De vera religione* 41, 78 (PL 34, 157). Cf. also *Annotationes in Job* 25 (PL 34, 851).

<sup>34</sup> "Non igitur numeri qui sunt infra rationem et in suo genere pulchri sunt, sed amor inferioris pulchritudinis animam polluit. . . . Quod autem illam sordidat, non est malum, quia etiam corpus creatura Dei est, et specie sua quamvis infima decoratur, sed prae animae dignitate contemnitur; sicuti auri dignitas, etiam purgatissimi argenti commixtione sordescit"; *De musica* 6, 14, 46 (PL 32, 1187). "Sordescit enim aliquid, cum inferiori miscetur naturae, quamvis in suo genere non sordidae; quia etiam de puro argento sordidatur aurum si misceatur: ita et animus noster terrenorum cupiditate sordescit, quamvis ipsa terra in suo genere atque ordine munda sit"; *De sermone Domini in monte* 2, 13, 44 (PL 34, 1289).

<sup>35</sup> ". . . cum haec mala faciunt homines, inquinant terram, quia inquinantur homines qui haec imitantur. . . ."; *Quaest. in Heptat.* 3, 67 (PL 34, 707). Cf. *De diversis quaestionibus* 83 27 (PL 40, 18): "anima peccatrix. . . . universum regnum Dei nulla sua foeditate deformat." Also *De vera religione* 23, 44 (PL 34, 141): "Neque de peccatis poenisque ejus animae efficitur, ut universitas ulla deformitate turpetur."

<sup>36</sup> For example, *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum* 2, 14, 35 (PL 32, 1560); *Contra Adimantum* 14, 1 f. (PL 42, 148 f.).

<sup>37</sup> "Respondeo istos omnino nescire quid intersit inter praecepta vitae agenda, et prae-

prohibition of certain meats belongs to this latter class. Such prohibitions involve not a judgment that the animals in question are unclean in their nature, but rather a judgment regarding spiritual uncleanness in the new dispensation.<sup>38</sup> Whatever the intrinsic value of this exegesis, it serves to point up the Saint's horror for the notion that any material creature is unclean in its nature. In this respect his break with Manichaeism is complete.<sup>39</sup>

### *Flood and Conflagration*

Confirmation of the fact that the material world does not share the stain of man's sin is had in Augustine's explanation of the biblical Deluge and the final conflagration. The themes of purification, renewal, and judgment by fire and water are of major importance in any theory of cosmic redemption. In the Genesis account of the Flood, sinful man and his world are coupled in unmistakable fashion; both are to feel the anger of God (Gn 6:7). The earth is to be cursed because of man, for whom it was made and with whom it has a real solidarity in sin (Gn 8:21; 6:11-13).<sup>40</sup> In the New Testament, 2 Peter renews the theme of

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cepta vitae significandae. Exempli gratia: 'Non concupisces' praeceptum est agenda vitae; 'Circumcides omnem masculum octavo die' praeceptum est significandae vitae'; *Contra Faustum* 6, 2 (PL 42, 227 f.). Augustine repeats this formula later in the same work, 10, 2 (PL 42, 243).

<sup>38</sup> "Testamento autem Veteri, ubi quidam cibi carniū prohibentur, cur non sit contraria ista sententia qua dicit Apostolus, 'Omnia munda mundis,' et 'Omnis creatura Dei bona est'; si possunt, intelligant hoc Apostolum de ipsis dixisse naturis; illas autem Litteras propter quasdam praefigurationes temporis congruentes, animalia quaedam, non natura, sed significatione immunda dixisse. Itaque, verbi gratia, si de porco et agno requiratur, utrumque natura mundum est, quia omnis creatura Dei bona est; quadam vero significatione agnus mundus, porcus immundus est"; *Contra Faustum* 6, 7 (PL 42, 233).

<sup>39</sup> "Unde revera Manichaeis omnino nihil est mundum, quandoquidem etiam ipsam Dei substantiam vel naturam, non solum coinquinari potuisse, sed etiam ex parte coinquinatam esse contendunt; nec solum coinquinatam esse, verum etiam ex omni parte recuperari mundarique non posse. Unde mirum est quod ita se dicunt immundas omnes carnes existimare, et ob hoc ab eis abstinere, quasi aliquid existiment esse mundum, non solum escarum, sed omnium creaturarum. Nam et ipsa olera, et poma, et omnes fruges, et totam terram, et coelum, commixtione gentis tenebrarum perhibent inquinata"; *Contra Faustum* 6, 6 (PL 42, 233). This passage brings out the fact that Augustine's hatred of Manichaeism and its dogmatic foundations was directed primarily against its involvement of the divine substance itself in cosmic impurity, as well as the fact that the salvific process would never succeed in totally purifying the divine substance; cf. supra n. 5.

<sup>40</sup> "Yahweh se résout alors à exterminer toutes les créatures, les hommes coupables comme les animaux solidaires de l'homme, pour qui d'ailleurs ils ont été créés"; A. Clamer, *Genèse (La sainte Bible, ed. Pirot, Paris, 1953) p. 180.*

judgment of man and his world by destructive waters and associates the Deluge with an eschatological conflagration of similar purpose (2 Pt 3:5-12).<sup>41</sup> Both water and fire are ambivalent: they represent destruction for the sinner and his world, salvation for the faithful remnant (Noe and his, Christ and His).

On the basis of this scriptural data, several of the Fathers elaborated, with the aid of typology and allegory, a complex and often beautiful explanation, in which Noe, the Flood, and the ark were related not only to the eschatological conflagration but also to Christ in His death and resurrection, to Christian baptism, and to the Church as the ark of salvation. We need not enter into the details of these reflections.<sup>42</sup> What is significant for us is that some among the Fathers spoke of both Flood and conflagration as a judgment pronounced not only on sinful man but on a world solidary with him, and as a purification of the world by water and fire.<sup>43</sup>

Augustine shows himself well informed regarding both pagan and Christian deluge traditions.<sup>44</sup> For him the Flood was a destruction of sinful man and his world.<sup>45</sup> It represents a punishment for the sinful human race, with the exception of the one just man, who is saved by the ark.<sup>46</sup> But, though the world was destroyed with man, nowhere does he suggest that its destruction was a punishment visited upon it. So far as we know, he does not offer any *argumenta convenientiae* for the destruction of the world along with man. There is, in fact, a passage

<sup>41</sup> Cf. J. Chaine, "Cosmogonie aquatique et conflagration finale d'après la 'Secunda Petri,'" *Revue biblique* 46 (1937) 207-16.

<sup>42</sup> On this patristic theme, cf. J. Daniélou, "Déluge, baptême, jugement," *Dieu vivant*, no. 8, pp. 97-112; *id.*, *Sacramentum futuri* (Paris, 1950) pp. 55-94; C. M. Edsman, *Le baptême du feu* (Uppsala-Leipzig, 1940). Unfortunately, neither of these authors gives much attention to Augustine.

<sup>43</sup> Origen would here seem to be the most unambiguous witness; cf. *Contra Celsum* 4, 12 (PG 11, 1041 f.); 4, 62 (PG 11, 1129 f.); 4, 21 (PG 11, 1053-56); 4, 64 (PG 11, 1131 f.); 4, 69 (PG 11, 1137 f.). On this cf. Edsman, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-14; on p. 100 Ephraem is cited to similar effect.

<sup>44</sup> *De civitate Dei* 18, 8 and 10 (PL 41, 566, 568); 15, 27 (PL 41, 473-76).

<sup>45</sup> "... illud genus atque universa propago diluvio deleteretur..."; *De civitate Dei* 15, 21 (PL 41, 466); "periisse... mundum," "... eo mundo qui diluvio periit..."; *ibid.* 20, 18 (PL 41, 684).

<sup>46</sup> "Factum est aliquando diluvium per totam terram, ut peccatores deleterentur"; *De catechizandis rudibus* 27, 53 (PL 40, 346). "Nec frustra creditur sic factum esse diluvium, jam non inventis in terra qui non erant digni tali morte defungi, qua in impios vindicatum est"; *De civitate Dei* 15, 24 (PL 41, 471).

where he explicitly states that the perishing of subhuman life along with man was *not* a punishment for the world but merely a sign of the vastness of the destruction wrought by the Flood.<sup>47</sup>

If the Deluge was not a punishment for the world, was it at least a purification? There are, indeed, a few passages where Augustine seems so to conceive it. The Flood purified the earth from the malice of sinners, he says, and this is a type of Christian baptism.<sup>48</sup> There are, however, a few good reasons for believing that he does not wish to be taken literally. In the first passage cited, the idea of purification is quite secondary to that of destruction of the wicked and salvation of the good. Secondly, Augustine is playing the role of catechist and preacher respectively in the works cited; a metaphorical type of expression is thus permitted. Thirdly (and this is perhaps the most important argument), *terra* and *mundus* must be interpreted consistently with his habitual practice. As we shall see, there are scores of texts where, when Scripture refers to *mundus* or *terra* pejoratively, Augustine is careful to say that there is question not of the physical world but of sinful men. Finally, there is a passage in one of his more scientific works of exegesis, where he explicitly rejects any bond of sin between man and the material world, and states categorically that the defiling of the earth by human sin means only the defiling of man himself.<sup>49</sup>

His viewpoint with regard to the eschatological conflagration is

<sup>47</sup> "Quod autem etiam interitum omnium animalium terrenorum volatiliumque denuntiat, magnitudinem futurae cladis effatur; non animantibus rationis expertibus, tanquam et ipsa peccaverint, minatur exitium"; *De civitate Dei* 15, 25 (PL 41, 472).

<sup>48</sup> "Ita quemadmodum per diluvium aquis terra purgata est a nequitia peccatorum, qui tunc in illa inundatione deleti sunt, et justi evaserunt per lignum . . ."; *De catechizandis rudibus* 20, 34 (PL 40, 335). "Quis enim nesciat, ab iniquitatibus quondam diluvio terram esse purgatam, mysteriumque sancti baptismi, quo per aquam cuncta hominis peccata delentur, jam tunc fuisse praedicatum . . ."; *S. Augustini sermones post Maurinos reperti* (ed. G. Morin, *Miscellanea Agostiniana* 1 [Rome, 1930]) p. 334. Among the sermons once attributed to Augustine is one which says: "Nam sicut tunc quadraginta diebus pluit ad purgandum mundum, ita et nunc quadraginta diebus miseretur ad hominem purificandum"; cf. PL 39, 2028. The sermon, however, belongs to Maximus of Tours; cf. PL 57, 574, and *Clavis patrum Latinorum* (= *Sacris erudiri* 3; Bruges, 1951) p. 68.

<sup>49</sup> "Quod dicit 'Et exhorruit terra eos qui insident super eam,' propter mala facta eorum, quae superius commemoravit, non ideo dictum putandum est, quod habeat terra sensum quo ista sentiat et exhorreat; sed nomine terrae homines significat, qui sunt super terram. Proinde cum haec mala faciunt homines, inquinant terram, quia inquinantur homines qui haec imitantur; et exhorret terra quia exhorrent homines qui nec faciunt nec imitantur"; *Quaest. in Heptat.* 3, 67 (PL 34, 707).

similar. Unlike the Flood, it is not even a punishment for man, since the wicked will already be in hell.<sup>50</sup> It will certainly not be a judgment pronounced on the material world, or a purification of that world by fire.<sup>51</sup> Later we will see the important positive teaching of Augustine on the role of the conflagration. For now, we may safely conclude that his treatment of this theme is consistent with his general refusal to associate the material world with man in sin, punishment, and redemption.

### *Prince of This World*

A final consideration, regarding "the world" and "the prince of this world," will complete the survey of the negative aspect of Augustine's attitude towards cosmic redemption. Several passages in the New Testament seem to attribute to the evil spirits a real hegemony not only over sinful men but over the cosmos or certain areas of it.<sup>52</sup> The work of Christ is sometimes considered to be the reconquest for the kingdom of God of a world which had passed under the dominion of Satan.<sup>53</sup> Further, there is present in the New Testament a certain dualism (historical rather than metaphysical) because of which "the world" is spoken of pejoratively, as the enemy of God and Christ, as something to be hated.<sup>54</sup> Among some modern writers these data have been employed in the construction of theories of cosmic redemption.<sup>55</sup>

Augustine's demonology was developed in three distinct contexts.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>50</sup> "Judicatis quippe his, qui scripti non sunt in libro vitae, et in aeternum ignem missis . . . tunc figura huius mundi mundanorum ignium conflagratione praeteribit, sicut factum est mundanarum aquarum inundatione diluvium"; *De civitate Dei* 20, 16 (*PL* 41, 682).

<sup>51</sup> The argument here is from silence, as we have found no explicit negation regarding the final conflagration. But his teaching on the Flood, as well as his general denial of the sinfulness of the material world, clearly justify our statement.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Lk 4:6; Jn 12:31; 1 Cor 2:6, 8; 2 Cor 4:4; Gal 4:3; Eph 6:12; 2:2; Col 1:16.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Eph 1:21; Col 1:13; 2:15, 20.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Jn 1:10; 7:7; 15:18-19; 17:14; 1 Jn 2:15-17; 5:19. On this cf. F.-M. Braun, O.P., "Le 'Monde' bon et mauvais de l'évangile johannique," *Vie spirituelle* 88 (1953) 580-98.

<sup>55</sup> Notable among contemporary authors is Louis Bouyer; cf., e.g., "Le problème du mal dans le christianisme antique," *Dieu vivant*, no. 6, pp. 15-42; "Les deux économies du gouvernement divin: Satan et le Christ," *Initiation théologique* 2 (Paris, 1953) 503-35.

<sup>56</sup> On the angelology of St. Augustine, cf. K. Pelz, *Die Engellehre des heiligen Augustinus* 1 (Münster, 1912); unfortunately it was not possible to consult the complete work, pub-

The first was his protracted controversy with the Manicheans, for whom the great adversary of God is not (as in Christianity) a creature of God, completely subject to Him, but a distinct supreme principle, called the Prince of Darkness, Matter, even god, who is the ultimate reason for the presence of evil in the world.<sup>57</sup> Secondly, controversy with the pagans furnished Augustine, especially in the *City of God* and in his short but informative *De divinatione daemonum*, with occasions to develop the Gospel teaching on false gods, idolatry, astrology, etc.<sup>58</sup> The third locus is the anti-Pelagian controversy, where the cloven hoof, so to speak, is on the other foot: now it is Augustine himself who must refute the charge of Manichean dualism and of giving Satan too great a dominion over man and the world.

It would be tempting to study this topic in detail, especially since it has not attracted too many students of Augustine. But the purpose of the present essay can best be served by a summary treatment.

In general, Augustine has scant respect for the Prince of Darkness and takes care to warn his Christians against an inferiority complex in his regard.<sup>59</sup> Whatever superiority Satan has over the just is secondary, due to the subtlety of his body and the sharpness of his senses.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, far from being the ruler of the starry regions, as some thought, he is in his present state imprisoned in the lower air.<sup>61</sup> If he is allowed to tempt and afflict men, he does so always in subordination to divine Providence, as the instrument of God, within limits assigned

lished in 1913. Cf. also the general treatments of G. Bareille, "Ange," *DTC* 1, 1193-1213; E. Portalié, "Augustin (saint)," *ibid.* 1, 2355 f.; E. Mangenot, "Démon d'après les Pères," *ibid.* 4, 368-73.

<sup>57</sup> In the words of Faustus, "Est quidem quod duo principia confitemur, sed unum ex his Deum vocamus, alterum *Hylen*: aut, ut communiter et usitate dixerim, daemonem . . . etiam interdum nos adversam naturam nuncupare deum, sed non hoc secundum nostram fidem, verum juxta praesumptum jam in eam nomen a cultoribus suis, qui eam imprudenter existimant deum"; *Contra Faustum* 21, 1 (*PL* 42, 387 f.). On this cf. Puech, *op. cit.*, p. 161, n. 286.

<sup>58</sup> The *De divinatione daemonum* has recently been edited, with copious introduction and notes, by H. J. Geerlings, *De antieke Daemonologie en Augustinus' Geschrift De divinatione daemonum* (The Hague, 1953).

<sup>59</sup> Cf. *De trinitate* 4, 11, 14 (*PL* 42, 897).

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *De divinatione daemonum* 3, 7 (*PL* 40, 584 f.).

<sup>61</sup> Cf. *De trinitate* 3, 7, 12 (*PL* 42, 875); *De Genesi ad litteram* 11, 26, 33 (*PL* 34, 443); *Ep.* 102, 20 (*PL* 33, 378); *Enchiridion* 28, 9 (*PL* 40, 246); *De civitate Dei* 8, 14; 8, 22; 9, 18; 11, 33 f.; 14, 3 (*PL* 41, 238 f., 246, 272, 346 ff., 406).



by God, and with the mockery of the good angels who are his superiors in knowledge and power.<sup>62</sup>

Satan possesses, indeed, power over material things.<sup>63</sup> But, as in the case of man, this power is limited by God.<sup>64</sup> What is more important, it does not constitute him in any true sense the ruler of the physical world or any part of it.<sup>65</sup> God alone is Ruler and Maker of all. If Scripture, and especially St. Paul and St. John, speak of Satan as prince and ruler and even god of this world, this means not the material cosmos but sinful and unbelieving men, who are in the world, who love the world, and who have freely subjected themselves to Satan because of their *cupiditates*, not because he possesses the object of their love.<sup>66</sup>

It would be tedious to enumerate the passages where the pejorative use of *mundus* and *terra* in Scripture elicits from Augustine the caution that this is not the physical world but sinful men.<sup>67</sup> He gives this to his flock as a general norm of exegesis.<sup>68</sup> To condemn the physical world is to condemn its Maker (a statement which St. Thomas was to repeat in more abstract form and in the general context of a theology where the created received a stronger emphasis than in the Augustinian theocentric view).<sup>69</sup> Especially striking in this regard is Augustine's polemic with Julian shortly before his death.<sup>70</sup> On points which touch man, his liberty under divine grace, and his capabilities without grace, there had been, as is well known, no small development in Augustine since his anti-Manichean period with its vigorous defense

<sup>62</sup> Cf. *De trinitate* 13, 12, 16 (PL 42, 1026); *De natura boni* 32 (PL 42, 561); *De civitate Dei* 11, 33 (PL 41, 347).

<sup>63</sup> Cf. *De sermone Domini in monte* 2, 25, 85 (PL 34, 1307 f.); *De divinatione daemonum* 2, 6 (PL 40, 584).

<sup>64</sup> *Annotationes in Job* 1 (PL 34, 825).

<sup>65</sup> *Contra Julianum* 6, 2, 3 (PL 44, 822 f.).

<sup>66</sup> *De agone christiano* 1, 1 (PL 40, 291).

<sup>67</sup> By way of example, *Opus imperfectum contra Julianum* 4, 18–20 (PL 45, 1346–48); *In epistolam Joannis ad Parthos* 2, 8–12 (PL 35, 1993–96).

<sup>68</sup> "Numquid saepe vobis dicendum est quid est mundus? Non coelum, non terra, nec ista opera quae Deus fecit. . . . Quid est mundus? Mundus est, quando in malo ponitur, dilectores mundi: mundus quando in laude ponitur, coelum et terra est, et quae in his opera Dei"; *In epistolam Joannis ad Parthos* 5, 9 (PL 35, 2017).

<sup>69</sup> "Non ipsum mundum vituperat, qui dicit, 'Nolite diligere mundum'; qui enim istum vituperat mundum, artificem mundi vituperat"; *Sermones* (Morin) p. 66. Compare this with the beautiful passage of St. Thomas, *C. gent.* 3, 69 (ed. Parma 5, 212).

<sup>70</sup> Cf. supra n. 67.

of human liberty and the goodness of all created natures. But regarding the goodness of the material world and its subjection to God alone, not to demonic powers, the anti-Manichean of 390 and the anti-Pelagian of 430 speak with identical accents.

### *Summary*

We may sum up this part of our study, therefore, with the assertion that Augustine, from conversion to death, consistently refused the idea of the solidarity of man and cosmos in sin, punishment, and redemption. In his view, the material world lies under no curse, is afflicted with no stain, no subjection to Satan, is not alienated from God, because of man's sin. It shares neither the guilt nor the *poena* of man. It does not groan for liberation; it awaits no redemption, no judgment, no purification. There is no servitude to be broken, no fault to be punished, no stain to be effaced. Whatever the relationship to man's sin and redemption (and we shall now see that there is such a relationship and what it is), it is not one of solidarity. The notion of cosmic redemption cannot in any proper sense be employed to describe Augustine's theology of man and the cosmos.

It would be rash, perhaps, to assign to the fear of Manicheism the total causal role in the genesis of this viewpoint, which departed notably from those of some other writers of the patristic age. But our survey would seem to justify the assertion that this fear was a principal factor responsible for Augustine's position.

### THE CHRISTIAN NEOPLATONIST

A half century and more of animated discussion has failed to yield a clear and universally accepted picture of the role of Neoplatonism in the conversion and throughout the life of Augustine. What was the temporal and causal sequence between his return to the faith of Monica and his being captivated by Neoplatonism? Is Plotinus or Porphyry to be credited with the primary intellectual influence? To what extent was Augustine's acquaintance with these authors direct, and how great was the mediational role of St. Ambrose and his sermons? What is the comparative value of the *Confessions* and the early

dialogues as sources for Augustine's thought at this crucial period? These are all questions which still await definitive answers.<sup>71</sup>

However great the differences among scholars, the following statement would seem calculated to win widespread if not common agreement: While Augustine's debt to Neoplatonism is so substantial as to render invalid any interpretation of his thought which would not take cognizance of that debt, his legacy to the world is no mere Neoplatonization of Christianity, but primarily a rethinking (whose fidelity will be variously judged) of the data of Scripture and ecclesiastical tradition in the context of his time and culture, with Neoplatonism predominant in furnishing philosophical categories. Clear, too, is the fact of Augustine's explicit and, it would seem, progressive disavowal of Neoplatonism where it falls short of the Gospels, particularly as regards the Incarnation and the resurrection of the body.<sup>72</sup> Hence the title of this part of our study is acceptable only if one realizes that in Augustine's own conscious mind the Christian element was primary and normative. Towards Neoplatonism there was throughout his life a decidedly ambivalent attitude; one must expect both agreement and sharp dissent, derivation but also repudiation.

In the matter which concerns us here, the agreement with Neoplatonism (and with the Platonic tradition in general) centers on two related notions: immutability as a primary characteristic of divinity, and likeness to divinity as the primary vocation of the soul.<sup>73</sup> The disagreement chiefly concerned, as we have said, two related and

<sup>71</sup> The work of O'Meara, already mentioned, may serve as an excellent introduction to recent discussions on these points; cf. also his introduction to *Against the Academics* (*Ancient Christian Writers* 12; Westminster, Md., 1950) pp. 18-23; and "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," in *Recherches augustiniennes* 1 (Paris, 1958) 91-111.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. the texts given by O'Meara, *The Young Augustine*, pp. 143-51, and his remarks on pp. 195 ff.

<sup>73</sup> For the notion of the divine immutability and its important role in the thought of Augustine, cf. C. Boyer, *L'Idée de vérité dans la philosophie de s. Augustin* (2nd ed.; Paris, 1940) pp. 114-16; E. Gilson, *Introduction à l'étude de saint Augustin* (2nd ed.; Paris, 1943) pp. 27 f.; *id.*, *Philosophie et Incarnation selon saint Augustin* (Montreal, 1947) pp. 13, 28-32, and *passim*; B. Cooke, "The Mutability-Immutability Principle in St. Augustine's Metaphysics," *Modern Schoolman* 23 (1945-46) 175-93; 24 (1946-47) 37-49. On the notion of likeness and its relation to the notion of image, cf. G. Ladner, "St. Augustine's Conception of the Reformation of Man to the Image of God," *Augustinus magister* 2 (Paris, 1954) 873-76.

central Christian dogmas: the Incarnation of the Son of God and the resurrection of the flesh. To establish these two statements would require a sizable volume. We take them here rather as hypotheses, which will receive some confirmation, we believe, in the following study of the positive aspects of Augustine's theology of man and the cosmos.

### *The Effects of Adam's Sin*

Man in the original creation occupied a middle position between God and the material creation. Creation was good, but God was better. Man himself, because of his soul, was better than the infrarational world.<sup>74</sup> One testimony of this was his dominion over the animal kingdom.<sup>75</sup> Man's dignity was to be already, even in the state of trial, like his Creator, whose prime characteristic is to be immutable, eternal.<sup>76</sup> Not that Adam was completely removed from the realm of time and change. But his freedom from concupiscence, together with the gift of bodily immortality, gave him a certain participation in God's incorruptibility and eternity. This participation, it is true, did not have the perfection of that of the angels or the blessed. In the moral sphere it was compatible with a *posse peccare*, and in the bodily sphere, with a necessary dependence upon food which is excluded from the spiritual body after the resurrection.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, Adam did not share the

<sup>74</sup> "Melior quippe Creator, quam ulla creatura quam condidit"; *De natura boni* 34 (PL 42, 562). "Animae autem natura nec terra, nec maria, nec sidera, nec luna, nec sol, nec quidquam omnino quod tangi, aut his oculis videri potest, non denique ipsum quod videri a nobis non potest, coelum melius esse credendum est. Imo haec omnia longe deteriora esse, quam est quaelibet anima, ratio certa convincit . . ."; *De quantitate animae* 34, 77 (PL 32, 1078).

<sup>75</sup> "Inter multa quibus ostendi potest, hominem ratione bestiis antecellere, hoc omnibus manifestum est, quod belluae ab hominibus domari et mansuefieri possunt, homines a belluis nullo modo"; *De diversis quaestionibus* 83 13 (PL 40, 14); cf. *De libero arbitrio* 1, 7, 16 (PL 32, 1230).

<sup>76</sup> ". . . quando est primum conditus, veritati similis factus est . . ."; *Enarr. in psalmos* 143, 11 (PL 37, 1863).

<sup>77</sup> Augustine's view on Adam's need of food appears to have changed over the years. Early in his career he considered that such a need was incompatible with the gift of immortality; cf. *De sermone Domini in monte* 2, 17, 56 (PL 34, 1294); *De Genesi ad litteram* 3, 21, 33 (PL 34, 293); *Ep.* 102, 6 (PL 33, 372). Later, however, he insisted that Adam's body, though immortal, remained an animal body, and differed from the risen bodies of the just in needing bodily food for its sustenance; cf. *Contra Julianum* 4, 14, 69 (PL 44, 772); *Retractationes* 1, 11, 3; 1, 13, 4; 1, 19, 9 (PL 32, 601, 603, 617).

restless striving, the succession of life and death, even then characteristic of the material world.<sup>78</sup>

Such was the original God-man-world relationship: (1) the world is good, but man and, much more, God are better; (2) man is like the immutable and eternal Truth, God, and unlike the mutable and temporal world, in possessing the gifts of bodily immortality and freedom from concupiscence; (3) man is subject to God, man's body to his soul, the material world to man.<sup>79</sup>

The sin of Adam now brought a new stage in this relationship. First of all, God and the material world were both involved in the sinful act of Adam, the eating of forbidden fruit (Augustine here takes the Genesis account literally). Both tree and fruit were good.<sup>80</sup> Nor did Adam's sin consist precisely in loving the material, for moral evil is the bad use of a good thing. The formal element in his sin was the preference of the lesser over the greater, the good over the better.<sup>81</sup> This preference constitutes a rebellion on the part of man, a refusal to accept the divinely ordered hierarchy of being.<sup>82</sup>

Since man's *culpa* has been a rebellious preference of the mutable to the immutable, his *poena* will be appropriate to the crime. We may study this interesting aspect of Augustine's thought from a double standpoint, that of dominion and that of likeness. From the standpoint of dominion, man's rebellion against divine authority sets off a chain reaction which reaches to the lowest levels of creation. Divine Providence has so arranged that when man by his free will disturbs the

<sup>78</sup> This is clear from the texts to be cited *infra* n. 91.

<sup>79</sup> The notions of dominion and of likeness (related to that of image) are, of course, intimately linked in patristic tradition, especially in the interpretation of Gn 1:26; on this cf. W. J. Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man according to Cyril of Alexandria* (Woodstock, Md., 1957) chap. 5: "Dominion," pp. 51-64.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. *De natura boni* 34 (PL 42, 562); *De Genesi ad litteram* 8, 6, 12 (PL 34, 377).

<sup>81</sup> "Non ergo malam naturam homo appetivit cum arborem vetitam tetigit: sed id quod melius erat deserendo, factum malum ipse commisit. Melior quippe Creator, quam ulla creatura quam condidit: cujus imperium non erat deserendum, ut tangeretur prohibitum, quamvis bonum: quoniam deserto meliore, bonum creaturae appetebatur, quod contra Creatoris imperium tangebatur. Non itaque Deus arborem malam in paradiso plantaverat; sed ipse erat melior qui eam tangi prohibebat. . . . Non est ergo, ut dixi, peccatum malae naturae appetitio, sed melioris desertio; et ideo factum ipsum malum est, non illa natura qua male utitur peccans. Malum est enim male uti bono"; *De natura boni* 34 and 36 (PL 42, 562); cf. *Contra Secundinum Manichaeum* 12 and 16 (PL 42, 588, 591).

<sup>82</sup> Cf. the text cited in the following note.

order of creation, he must against his free will suffer, and suffer precisely from the order which he has disturbed.<sup>83</sup> The flesh rebels against the spirit. The lower appetites are now released from their loyalty and seek their satisfaction independently of reason.<sup>84</sup> Man is no longer capable of subjecting his own cravings, of using creatures well; he himself is now subject to the domination of his *cupiditates*. He seeks happiness in creatures, seeks a *frui* which consists not so much in the love of creatures (he permits this sometimes, though rarely and grudgingly) as in loving them wrongly, for themselves, not for the Creator.<sup>85</sup> He does them violence, seeks to wrest them from their true purpose. Because he has become the enemy of the Creator, he is no longer in harmony with the rest of creation.<sup>86</sup>

The material world, on its part, revolts against the dominion of man, punishes him, positively by inflicting pain on his senses, negatively by frustrating his desire to find beatitude in its enjoyment.<sup>87</sup> And this punitive role the material world fulfils primarily by being itself, fleeting, changeable, temporal.<sup>88</sup> The significant change has taken

<sup>83</sup> "Cum ergo omnia optime sint ordinata, quae videntur nobis nunc adversa esse, merito contigit hominis lapsi, qui legem Dei servare noluit. . . . Huic autem animae obtemperanti legibus suis, omnia subiecit sine adversitate: ut ei caetera quae Deus condidit servirent, si et ipsa Deo servire voluisset. Si autem ipsa noluisse Deo servire, ea quae illi serviebant, in poenam ejus converterentur"; *Contra Fortunatum* 15 (PL 42, 118); and cf. infra n. 87. Cf. G. de Plinval, *Pour connaître la pensée de saint Augustin* (Paris, 1954) pp. 177 f.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 1, 6, 7 (PL 44, 417 f.).

<sup>85</sup> For the basic discussion of *frui-uti*, cf. *De doctrina christiana* 1, 3-35 (PL 34, 20-34). On loving or not loving the world compare, e.g., "Quis eum mundus non cognovit? Dilector mundi, amator operis, contemptor artificis. Amor tuus migret: rumpe funes a creatura, alliga ad Creatorem. Muta amorem; muta timorem. . . ."; *Sermones* (Morin) p. 66; and "Non te prohibet Deus amare ista, sed non diligere ad beatitudinem; sed approbare et laudare ut ames Creatorem"; *In epistolam Joannis ad Parthos* 2, 11 (PL 35, 1995). "Ergo aut cupiditate, aut charitate: non quo non sit amanda creatura; sed si ad Creatorem refertur ille amor, non jam cupiditas, sed charitas erit. Tunc enim est cupiditas, cum propter se amatur creatura. Tunc non utentem adjuvat, sed corrumpit fruentem"; *De trinitate* 9, 8 (PL 42, 967 f.).

<sup>86</sup> Cf. infra n. 88.

<sup>87</sup> "Ita omnis corporea creatura, si tantummodo possideatur ab anima quae diligit Deum, bonum est infimum, et in genere suo pulchrum; quoniam forma et specie continetur: si autem diligitur ab anima quae negligit Deum, ne sic quidem malum fit ipsa; sed quoniam peccatum malum est, quo ita diligitur, fit poenalis dilectori suo, et eum implicat aerumnis, et pascit fallacibus voluptatibus: quia neque permanent, neque satiant, sed torquent doloribus"; *De vera religione* 20, 40 (PL 34, 138 f.). And cf. supra n. 83.

<sup>88</sup> Augustine remarks that it is the sinner, not the saint, who protests against the fleeting nature of earthly things; cf. *Confessiones* 7, 14 and 16 (PL 32, 744); *De vera religione* 22, 43 (PL 34, 140).

place in man, not in the earth, which now yields him thorns and thistles, or in the brute beasts, who now resist his dominion.<sup>89</sup> And in this rebellion against man, the world is not rebelling against God. On the contrary, it is acting as a divine instrument. Things remain good in themselves and parts of the harmonious order of the universe, even when they are evils for sinful man.<sup>90</sup>

From the viewpoint also of likeness, man's sin has its fitting punishment. As he has preferred the mutable to the immutable, the temporal to the eternal, his punishment is to become like the object of his choice, to lose, in so far as he can, the image of what he has spurned. In the unleashing of his tyrannical concupiscence and in his subjection to death he now becomes fully a creature of time. Under this aspect of Augustine's ambivalent teaching, sin marks man's entrance into time. This does not mean that man was not from the first a temporal being, but that in his pristine condition he had been elevated in body and soul to a condition of supernatural likeness to God. Sin is the preference of time to eternity, vanity to truth, and its fitting punishment is that man now becomes a creature of time, made like to vanity.<sup>91</sup>

At this point Augustine's exegesis of Rom 8:19–23 again becomes relevant and now makes a positive contribution to his theology of man and the cosmos. The "creatura" subjected to "vanitas" is "homo" made like, because of sin, to "vanitas."<sup>92</sup> Augustine frequently contrasted "vanitas" and "veritas," usually in connection with texts of

<sup>89</sup> Cf. supra nn. 12 and 13.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. supra nn. 83 and 87.

<sup>91</sup> "Tu autem temporalis natus es, et per peccatum temporalis factus es: tu factus es temporalis per peccatum . . ."; *In epistolam Joannis ad Parthos* 2, 10 (PL 35, 1994). "Eo enim quod temporalis est, de peccato vincitur: nam aeternum illum tu feceras"; *Annotationes in Job* 14 (PL 34, 840). Cf. *De vera religione* 22, 43 (PL 34, 140): "... saeculorum vero partes damnatione facti sumus." The relationship between sin and time for Augustine is a difficult question and has brought a variety of views; e.g., J. Guittou, *Le temps et l'éternité chez Plotin et saint Augustin* (Paris, 1933) p. 343; H. Marrou, *L'Ambivalence du temps de l'histoire chez saint Augustin* (Montreal, 1950) pp. 62–71; H. Rondet, *Saint Augustin parmi nous* (Le Puy and Paris, 1954) p. 300; J. Chaix-Ruy, "La Cité de Dieu et la structure du temps," *Augustinus magister* 2 (Paris, 1954) 930; J. LeBlond, *ibid.* 3, 209; G. de Plinval, "Déterminisme et liberté chez saint Augustin," *Revue des études augustiniennes* 1 (1955) 347, n. 6.

<sup>92</sup> "Homo quippe sponte peccavit, sed non sponte damnatus est. Peccatum itaque fuit spontaneum, contra praeceptum facere veritatis: peccati autem poena, subijci fallaciae. Non ergo sponte creatura subjecta est vanitati"; *Qu.* 67, 3 (PL 40, 67). Cf. *Expositio* 53 (PL 35, 2074 f.).

Scripture which spoke of "vanitas" or "vanitantes."<sup>93</sup> "Vanitas" is a name for the temporal and transient world. The things of time are "vanitas" by a twofold title: (1) in contrast with the changeless "veritas" of the divine, and (2) as the object of man's perverse will.<sup>94</sup>

Sinful man's relation to "vanitas" is described by Augustine in terms of both dominion and likeness. By his sin he has become like the passing things of time and subject to them. In what does this likeness and subjection consist? In the loss of bodily immortality and in the loss of immunity from concupiscence.<sup>95</sup>

### *From Time to Eternity*

Such is the second stage of the God-man-world relationship. Man is now like the corruptible world of time, subject to the vicissitudes of time. It is into this human situation that the Incarnate Word leaps. To save man from the flux of the temporal, to restore to him the original likeness to the eternal truth, in fact to bestow on him a more perfect likeness than Adam's, this is what Christ came to do. Man was the prisoner of time, belonged to time from his birth in sin. Christ belonged to time only as a visitor in the prison, only because of the divine pity.

<sup>93</sup> Besides the Romans text, important in this regard were Ps 143:4: "Homo vanitati similis factus est . . .," and the famous "Vanity of vanities" of Qoh 1:2. On Augustine's reading of "vanitantium" instead of "vanitatum" in this latter text, cf. *Retractationes* 1, 7, 3 (PL 32, 592). On the notion of *vanitas* in Augustine, cf. L. Chevallier and H. Rondet, "L'Idée de vanité dans l'oeuvre de saint Augustin," *Revue des études augustiniennes* 3 (1957) 221-34.

<sup>94</sup> "Vanitas enim ista dicitur in comparatione semper manentis et nunquam deficientis veritatis"; *Enarrationes in psalmos* 143, 11 (PL 37, 1863). "Tali tamen principio constituto, exsequitur omnia, vanitantes esse eos qui rebus huiusmodi falluntur; idipsum autem quo falluntur vanitatem vocans, non quod Deus ista non creaverit, sed quia subicere se homines volunt iis rebus per peccata, quae illis per recte facta divina lege subjectae sunt"; *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum* 1, 21, 39 (PL 32, 1328). Cf. *De vera religione* 21, 41 (PL 34, 139).

<sup>95</sup> "Agnoscite cum ecclesia Dei, quia 'corpus corruptibile aggravat animam' (Wis 9:15). Non enim ante peccatum in paradiso tale erat corpus, ut illo anima gravaretur. . . . Neque enim qui est ad similitudinem Dei factus, fieret nisi per peccatum similis vanitati, ut aetatum cursu et mortis incurso, velut umbra dies illius praeterirent"; *Opus imperfectum contra Julianum* 6, 27 (PL 45, 1572). The *Enchiridion* sketches in several graphic sentences the chaos that is unleashed within the human microcosm as a result of his turning away from the unchanging Truth: ignorance, concupiscence, error, pain, fear, death; *Enchiridion* 24 (PL 40, 244).



Without ceasing to be eternal, He came into time to lead man back to eternity.<sup>96</sup>

This reconquest of eternity by man in Christ is a gradual and structured change. First of all, Christ Himself passes through and out of time into eternity, as the model for the Christian pilgrimage.<sup>97</sup> Then it is the turn of Christian man. With faith and baptism the likeness of eternity is restored to his higher nature, his "spiritus," and is increased in proportion as man turns from "vanitas" to "veritas." Once more the "spiritus" is capable of ruling the "anima," and through it the "corpus," and thereby rendered purer and freer to give itself to God. And so the peak of man's personality becomes a living sacrifice to God, "primitiae spiritus," as divine truth takes hold of this part of man first.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>96</sup> "Rerum temporalium fluvius trahit: sed tanquam circa fluvium arbor nata est Dominus noster Jesus Christus. Assumpsit carnem, mortuus est, resurrexit, ascendit in coelum. Voluit se quodammodo circa fluvium temporalium plantare. . . . Propter te factus est temporalis, ut tu fias aeternus; quia et ille sic factus est temporalis, ut maneret aeternus. Accessit illi aliquid ex tempore, non decessit ex aeternitate. Tu autem temporalis natus es, et per peccatum temporalis factus es: tu factus es temporalis per peccatum, ille factus est temporalis per misericordiam dimittendi peccata. Quantum interest, cum duo sunt in carcere, inter reum et visitatorem ipsius? Homo enim aliquando venit ad amicum suum, et intrat visitare eum, et ambo in carcere videntur; sed multum distant et distincti sunt"; *In epistolam Joannis ad Parthos* 2, 10 (PL 35, 1994).

<sup>97</sup> "Itaque in illo quia et id quod ortum erat transiit ad aeternitatem, transiturum est et nostrum, cum fides pervenerit ad veritatem"; *De trinitate* 4, 18, 24 (PL 42, 904). This entire chapter is crucial for the Christological aspect of the passage from time to eternity, and for the notion that we are purified for the passage by the things of time. On the incorruptibility of the risen body of Christ, cf. especially *Ep.* 205 (PL 33, 942-49). For two different judgments regarding Augustine's conception of the risen body of Christ, cf. M. Pontet, *L'Exégèse de saint Augustin prédicateur* (Paris, 1946) pp. 413-15; C. Journet, "Saint Augustin et l'exégèse traditionnelle du 'corpus spirituale,'" *Augustinus magister* 2 (Paris, 1954) 879-90.

<sup>98</sup> "Qui autem spiritu animam regit, et per animam corpus . . . vocatur spiritualis. Quae vita cum aliqua molestia nunc agitur, post autem nullam patietur"; *Qu.* 67, 5 (PL 40, 68). "Et bene dixit, 'primitias habentes spiritus': id est, quorum jam spiritus tanquam sacrificium oblatis sunt Deo, et divino charitatis igne comprehensi sunt. Hae sunt primitiae hominis; quia veritas primum spiritum nostrum obtinet, ut per hunc caetera comprehendantur"; *Qu.* 67, 6 (PL 40, 69). ". . . spiritus jam mutatus est reconciliatione fidei ab erroribus conversus ad Deum"; *Expositio* 53 (PL 35, 2076). On the significance of "primitiae spiritus," cf. the article of Pépin cited supra n. 23. We need not here take a position on this controverted question. The variety of meanings which the Saint gives to *spiritus* is brought out by W. A. Schumacher, *Spiritus and Spiritualis: A Study in the Sermons of Saint Augustine* (Mundelein, Ill., 1957); cf. especially pp. 97-105.

But the passage out of time into eternity is not yet perfect, and because the lower nature of man, mortal and subject to "cupiditas," still shares the vicissitudes of time, even Christian man, even, it would seem, the "anima" of Christian man, is in anguish until the liberation be consummated by the transformation of man's body in the resurrection.<sup>99</sup> For, with the final resurrection of the just, man's body too, in a "mirabilis mutatio," will pass out of time into eternity.<sup>100</sup> It will no longer be a "corpus animale, terrestre," but a "corpus spirituale, caeleste, angelicum."<sup>101</sup> Not that it will cease to be a body.<sup>102</sup> But it will no longer be corruptible, mutable, temporal. It will share, more perfectly than Adam's body, in the divine immutability and eternity. There will be a capacity for food, for example, but no need for it.<sup>103</sup> The body, no longer corruptible, will cease to be a hindrance to the

<sup>99</sup> " 'Non solum autem,' inquit, omnis creatura congemiscit et dolet, 'sed et nos ipsi': id est, non solum in homine corpus et anima et spiritus simul dolent ex difficultatibus corporis, sed et nos ipsi, exceptis corporibus, 'in nobis ipsis congemiscimus, primitias habentes spiritus. . . .' Nunc ergo, inquit, non solum omnis creatura, id est, cum corpore, 'sed etiam nos ipsi primitias habentes spiritus': id est, nos animae, quae jam primitias mentes nostras obtulimus Deo, 'in nobis ipsis congemiscimus,' id est, praeter corpus . . . ut et ipsum corpus accipiens beneficium adoptionis filiorum, qua vocati sumus, totos nos liberatos, transactis omnibus molestiis, ex omni parte Dei filios esse manifestet"; *Qu.* 67, 6 (*PL* 40, 69). "Non solum ergo, inquit, ipsa quae tantummodo creatura dicitur in hominibus qui nondum crediderunt, et ideo nondum in filiorum Dei numero constituti sunt, congemiscit et dolet: sed etiam nosmetipsi qui credimus, et spiritus primitias habemus, quia jam spiritu adhaeremus Deo per fidem, et ideo non jam creatura, sed filii Dei appellamur. . . . Haec enim adoptio, quae jam facta est in iis qui crediderunt, spiritu non corpore facta est"; *Expositio* 53 (*PL* 35, 2075 f.). In this latter work, the opposition between "creatura" and "nos" is clearly between the unbeliever and the Christian. In *Qu.* 67, Augustine begins to give the same distinction, but switches, it would appear from the citation just given, to a distinction between the whole man and man considered independently of his body. On this discrepancy, cf. Clarke, *The Eschatological Transformation*, pp. 19-23.

<sup>100</sup> For the passage out of time into eternity, cf. supra n. 97. For the *mirabilis mutatio*, cf. infra n. 110.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. *Ep.* 148, 5, 16 (*PL* 33, 629); *De agone christiano* 32, 34 (*PL* 40, 309); *Enchiridion* 91 (*PL* 40, 274); *Sermo* 242, 8, 11 (*PL* 38, 1142); *Contra Faustum* 11, 3 (*PL* 42, 246 ff.).

<sup>102</sup> In some of his earlier works Augustine had so emphasized the spiritualization of the risen body that he felt compelled several times in his *Retractationes* to insist that the body will remain a body and not become a spirit; *Retractationes* 1, 11, 2; 1, 17; 1, 26; 2, 3 (*PL* 32, 601, 613, 626, 631). A good example of his hesitation on the subject is the passage from *Ep.* 148 referred to in the previous note.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. *De civitate Dei* 13, 22 (*PL* 41, 395); *Ep.* 95, 7 f. (*PL* 33, 355); *Ep.* 102, 6 (*PL* 33, 372); *Sermo* 242, 2, 2 (*PL* 38, 1139 f.). Cf. also supra n. 77. On this question cf. G. de Broglie, *De fine ultimo humanae vitae tractatus theologicus: Pars prior* (Paris, 1948) pp. 82 f.

soul in the latter's quest for happiness.<sup>104</sup> In fact, union with the glorified body seems in Augustine's thought an indispensable condition for perfect happiness.<sup>105</sup>

*New Heavens and New Earth*

If this were all, then the final word on Augustine's theology of man and the cosmos would be the conclusion of our first part: the refusal of cosmic redemption. But it is precisely at this point that the material world assumes a new and important role. There is, indeed, no redemption of the cosmos in any proper sense, since it has never fallen, except in man, the microcosm. There will be, nevertheless, a cosmic resonance of man's redemption, and this is explained by Augustine as the extension to the material world of the "mirabilis mutatio" that has taken place first in the soul, then in the body of man. The cosmos, too, is to pass out of time into eternity, is to share, according to its capacity, in the eternity of the immutable Truth, is to become the new heavens and new earth of biblical promise, wherein man will, with the eyes of his soul, and perhaps even with those of his body, see God. In the final consummation of all things, therefore, time will be no more; all will be eternal—God, man, the world.

Let us examine this remarkable teaching somewhat in detail. Augustine was not the first of the Fathers to teach the optimistic view that the present world will continue after the final conflagration and will be transformed into the new heavens and new earth, the final setting for man's eternal enjoyment of God. St. Irenaeus, among others, anticipated him, and the terminology of the two Fathers in interpreting 1 Cor 7: 31 ("figura huius mundi praeterit") is close enough to suggest a direct borrowing.<sup>106</sup> This view was in sharp contrast with that which held an annihilation of the present world and the creation of a completely new one, and even with the Stoic view of the dissolution of all the elements into fire, whence they are to emerge again in the

<sup>104</sup> *Sermo* 243, 9, 8 (*PL* 38, 1147); *De civitate Dei* 22, 30, 1 (*PL* 41, 801).

<sup>105</sup> On this disputed question, cf. Portalé, "Augustine (saint)," *DTC* 1, 2447; Eger, *op. cit.*, p. 35; D. Leahy, *St. Augustine on Eternal Life* (London, 1939) pp. 92 ff.; de Broglie, *op. cit.*, pp. 82 f.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 5, 36, 1 (*PG* 7, 1221). For Augustine cf. *infra* n. 109. Cf. also Origen, *De principiis* 1, 6, 4 (*PG* 11, 169 f.); Methodius, *De resurrectione* 9 (*PG* 18, 275-78). For other witnesses among the Greek Fathers, cf. Joh. Casp. Suicerus, *The-saurus ecclesiasticus* 2 (2nd ed.; Amsterdam, 1728) 151 f.

course of the eternally recurring cosmic cycle. Augustine himself points out the contrast between his own opinion and that of the Origenists, for whom a future material world was possible only on the premise of a new sin needing to be expiated by the enclosing of rational spirits in material bodies. In fact, he makes use of the new heavens and new earth of Scripture as a proof that the present world was not created merely as an instrument of punishment for delinquent spirits.<sup>107</sup>

The role of the eschatological conflagration is not, we have seen, one of cosmic judgment or purification.<sup>108</sup> Its precise purpose, according to Augustine, is cosmic renewal, transformation, "eternalization," if we may use the expression. Employing Aristotelian categories in the light of 1 Cor 7:31 ("figura huius mundi praeterit"), Augustine distinguishes between "substantia" (or "natura") and "figura" (or "qualitates"). In the eschatological fire the "qualitates corruptibiles" will perish and will be replaced by "qualitates incorruptibiles."<sup>109</sup>

This transformation of the cosmos is described by Augustine in terminology identical with that employed for the resurrection of the body, and is explicitly associated with it. In each case the substance or nature remains. The old, corruptible qualities are replaced with new,

<sup>107</sup> "Et cum coelum novum et terram novam polliceatur Deus habitaculum sanctorum atque ab omni labe huius saeculi purgatorum, qua tandem affirmatur audacia, non futurum fuisse mundum, id est, coelum et terram, nisi propter necessitatem purgandorum spirituum rationalium, qui vel in coelo vel in terra non essent nisi pro meritis peccatorum? Quid ergo purgatis opus est coelo novo et terra nova, si purgati ad hoc restituuntur, ut sint quemadmodum fuerunt ante coelum et terram sine coelo et terra? . . . Quid est autem absurdius, quam dicere, coelum et terra non essent, nisi necessaria esset mundi structura purgandis; cum alterum coelum et alteram terram promittat Scriptura purgatis?"; *Ad Orosium contra Priscillianistas et Origenistas* 8, 10 (PL 42, 674 f.).

<sup>108</sup> Cf. supra n. 51. Some modern authors—wrongly, we think—attribute to Augustine the notion that the final conflagration will be purificatory; cf. E. Mangelot, "Fin du monde," *DTC* 5, 2511 (cf. also col. 2536).

<sup>109</sup> ". . . tunc figura huius mundi mundanorum ignium conflagratione praeteribit, sicut factum est mundanarum aquarum inundatione diluvium. Illa itaque, ut dixi, conflagratione mundana elementorum corruptibilium qualitates, quae corporibus nostris corruptibilibus congruebant, ardendo penitus interibunt; atque ipsa substantia eas qualitates habebit, quae corporibus immortalibus mirabili mutatione convenient: ut scilicet mundus in melius innovatus, apte accommodetur hominibus etiam carne in melius innovatis . . ."; *De civitate Dei* 20, 16 (PL 41, 682). "Peracto quippe iudicio tunc esse desinet hoc coelum et haec terra, quando incipiet esse coelum novum et terra nova. Mutatione namque rerum, non omni modo interitu transibit hic mundus. Unde et Apostolus ait, 'Praeterit enim figura huius mundi, volo vos sine sollicitudine esse' (1 Cor 7:31 f.). Figura ergo praeterit, non natura"; *ibid.* 20, 14 (PL 41, 679).

incorruptible ones. There is a change for the better.<sup>110</sup> It is clear that the new heavens and new earth are the extension to the material world of the fruits of the redemption. Like man, and for the sake of man, the world will pass out of time into eternity. There will be no winter and summer, no night and day. Birth, growth, and corruption will be no more. All will have the fixity of the eternal.<sup>111</sup>

With characteristic sobriety Augustine is, in general, reluctant to speculate about the details of the man-cosmos relationship after the final resurrection. But he is not completely silent. Man's life will include dominion over the animals, absence of *labor*, independence of bodily food.<sup>112</sup> But the most significant point, one apparently to whose meditation Augustine frequently returned, concerns the vision of God. In the new heavens and new earth man will see God with the eyes of his soul. Once his gaze is purified, once the material world, rendered incorruptible, becomes a more perfect mirror of the divine, this will be its destiny.<sup>113</sup>

But is it possible that even the eyes of the body will see God? On this question Augustine underwent a development which does not lack significance.<sup>114</sup> In his earliest treatment he firmly rejects the affirmative view on the grounds that it is contrary to the spirituality and infinity of God. He goes so far as to call it insane.<sup>115</sup> Several years later he is still opposed and now relies on the authority of Jerome and Ambrose as well as on his former reasonings. But he no longer castigates

<sup>110</sup> Cf. the preceding note; also, regarding the risen body: "... de commutationibus corporalium qualitatum . . ."; "... mutata corporum qualitate . . ."; "... in melius commutationem . . ."; *Ep.* 102, 6; 147, 20, 48; 148, 5, 16 (*PL* 33, 372, 618, 629).

<sup>111</sup> "Est ergo terra viventium: nam cum aeterna et coelestis sit, terra dicitur quia possidetur, non quia aratur. Habet enim possessorem sine labore: quia et ista possessorem suum exercet in labore, et fatigat in timore. . . . Cum autem transierit omnis labor et gemitus, erimus in terra viventium. Nihil ibi nascitur et crescit: quidquid ibi est, eodem modo est, sic est semper. Non ibi alternant hiems et aestas, nox et dies"; *Sermo* 45, 4 (*PL* 38, 265). We should not too quickly, however, take "terra" here as referring to the physical world; it is quite possibly being used metaphorically, and in this case the accompanying description would refer to the life of the blessed with God, not to the physical cosmos.

<sup>112</sup> For dominion over the beasts, cf. supra n. 12. For the absence of *labor*, cf. *Sermo* 45, 4 (*PL* 38, 265). For independence of food, cf. supra nn. 77 and 103.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. *De civitate Dei* 22, 29, 6 (*PL* 41, 801).

<sup>114</sup> On this cf. D. Leahy, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-104. Vision for Augustine is not always the intuitive vision of subsequent theology; on this cf. F. Cayré, *La contemplation augustinienne* (2nd ed.; Bruges-Paris, 1954), "Table alphabétique" s.v. "Vision."

<sup>115</sup> *Ep.* 92 (*PL* 33, 318-21).

the proponents of the opposite view and is, in fact, willing to consider it an open question. The crux of the matter is the change experienced by the risen body from "corpus animale" to "corpus spirituale." Since Augustine is unwilling to hold that the body is transformed into spirit, a bodily vision of God (whose immateriality is beyond question) is difficult for him to accept.<sup>116</sup>

The final step came in the concluding pages of the *City of God*.<sup>117</sup> In a paragraph of great beauty, in which his transcending of Neoplatonism is manifest, he speculates on the role of the body in the life of the blessed. He finally concludes with the boldest of his affirmations on the subject: it is both possible and quite credible that we shall with our bodily eyes behold God present and ruling in the new heavens and new earth. This bodily vision of God is comparable not with our present knowledge of Him in creatures, where the role of faith is predominant, but rather with the way in which we perceive life in bodies.<sup>118</sup>

It would be an exaggeration to present this position, so strange to our ears, simply as an Augustinian teaching. Still, there seems to be no doubt that it found favor, at the last, in his eyes. His gradual warming towards it may be significant for his theology of man and the cosmos. Whatever value it may have in the discussion of his conception of the *corpus spirituale*, it confirms what we have seen about the transformation of the corruptible world into the new heavens and new earth, and assigns to the material universe an important role in the life of man with the eternal Truth. In terms of likeness to God, who is "veritas incommutabilis," "veritas aeterna," the final state of man and the

<sup>116</sup> *Ep.* 147 (*PL* 33, 596-622); *Ep.* 148 (*PL* 33, 622-30); *Ep.* 162, 8 f. (*PL* 33, 707 f.); *Sermo* 277, 13-19 (*PL* 38, 1264-68).

<sup>117</sup> *De civitate Dei* 22, 29 (*PL* 41, 796-801).

<sup>118</sup> "Quamobrem fieri potest, valdeque credibile est, sic nos esse visuros mundana tunc corpora coeli novi et terrae novae, ut Deum ubique praesentem et universa etiam corporalia gubernantem, per corpora quae gestabimus, et quae conspiciemus quaquaversum oculos duxerimus, clarissima perspicuitate videamus: non sicut nunc invisibilia Dei, per ea quae facta sunt, intellecta conspiciuntur per speculum in aenigmate, et ex parte, ubi plus in nobis valet fides qua credimus, quam rerum corporalium species quam per oculos cernimus corporales. Sed sicut homines, inter quos viventes motusque vitales exserentes vivimus, mox ut aspiciamus, non credimus vivere, sed videmus; cum eorum vitam sine corporibus videre nequeamus, quam tamen in eis per corpora remota omni ambiguitate conspiciamus: ita quacumque spiritualia illa lumina corporum nostrorum circumferemus, incorporeum Deum omnia regentem, etiam per corpora contuebimur"; *ibid.*, n. 6 (col. 800).

world clearly surpasses the original—"mirabilis reformasti." Not only is the incorruptibility and eternity of man in soul and body more perfect, but now for the first time the material world, for the sake of man, shares the divine prerogatives. In the final stage of the drama of salvation all is divine, immutable, eternal—God, man, the world.

#### CONCLUSION

An eminent student of St. Augustine has eloquently summed up the intrinsic and historical significance of the crucial "noverim me, noverim te." Because his statement so aptly summarizes the results of the present study, at least in its negative aspect, we may be pardoned a lengthy citation and brief comment by way of conclusion.

We must pause a moment over this formula which sums up everything original in St. Augustine's thought. We can see at once what it excludes, "God and the soul. Nothing more? Nothing!" It leaves no room for a *Peri Kosmou* (about the universe), for a philosophy of Nature and the world. How different from the Greek Fathers, brought up on the comprehensiveness of Stoicism, who love to dwell on the splendour of the created world in order to draw from it a hymn of praise to its Creator. Compared with them, Saint Augustine certainly appears more narrow-minded ["rigid" would perhaps be better here for the French "étroit"]. He is obviously blind to the cosmic aspect of salvation, so strongly emphasized by St. Paul. Nothing is more disappointing than the treatment he inflicts on those sublime verses in the Epistle to the Romans (8:18-24) about the "eager longing of the creation" (*creatura* in Latin) which "has been groaning in travail together until now." But with Augustine it all falls flat. The "creature" is simply man himself, the "eager longing" is only for *his* salvation: the "travails" are the pains of asceticism. Nothing more than that!

. . . We cannot too strongly insist on this negative, or at least suspicious, attitude, towards every kind of knowledge which is not very directly ordained to the supreme and only end of Man, to eternal salvation, to God. All this is so much vain, weak curiosity, the unhappy consequences of man's disordered desires. Here indeed we have one of the really essential notes of Augustinian thought, and posterity was to be in no doubt about it. Generation after generation, this note of severity and uneasy harshness will recur, troubling it to make a choice which is, in fact, fundamental. It is hard to form a just estimate of this influence, to measure how much of good or evil it has produced, but none can doubt of its far-reaching effects.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>119</sup> H. Marrou, *Saint Augustine and His Influence through the Ages* (New York and London, 1957) pp. 72 f.

To which we wish only to add that this "blindness to the cosmic aspect of salvation" is to be conceived not as a neutral oversight but as a charged, embattled disregard, quite comprehensible in the light of Augustine's Manichean experience and of his long and tortured efforts to subdue the flesh. Perhaps we may say that he felt no affinity in redemption with the infrahuman world simply because he did not dare. As long as the body remains mortal and corruptible, it is unsafe for man to play with creatures. The physical world is good, but man's *cupiditates* forever threaten to transform it into "the world" which is evil, into "vanitas vanitantium."

But only until the resurrection. Once the whole man is renewed, the danger of betrayal ceases, and that embrace of man and cosmos which was formerly "mundus" and "vanitas vanitantium" now becomes vision of God in the new heavens and new earth. The eternal City of God, the goal of human history and of divine counsel, includes the material world, physically transformed to harmonize with the transformation of man in soul and body.

One may have reservations regarding certain aspects of this conception. It may be that the "mutability-immutability" framework of Augustinian soteriology bears the mark and the limitations of Platonic essentialism. It may be, too, that there is a Christian and pre-resurrectional fraternization with the cosmos which, for explainable reasons, fails to find a place in the partial vision of Augustine. But, if nothing else, his thoughts in this area are a perennial reminder to Christian humanism of how hazardous indeed is its task.