

THE AMBROSIAN ORIGIN OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S THEOLOGY OF THE IMAGE OF GOD IN MAN

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IN RECENT years the theology of the image and likeness of God in the human soul has drawn the attention of a number of distinguished patrologists. A series of important monographs has appeared in which the use of this theme by Clement of Alexandria,¹ Origen,² Irenaeus,³ Athanasius,⁴ Gregory of Nyssa,⁵ Cyril of Alexandria,⁶ and others has been subjected to detailed and careful analysis. The diverse sources of the patristic theology of the soul as the image of God—the Old and New Testaments and the philosophies of Plato, of the Stoics,⁷ and even of Heraclitus⁸—have been painstakingly brought to light, and the important place that the metaphysics of the soul as the image and likeness of God was given in the ascetical and mystical theology of the Greek Fathers has been carefully explained. Recently, as was to be expected, the interest of scholars in this theme has led to further research in the works of the Latin Fathers, especially in those of St. Augustine where its role is of such great doctrinal and historical importance. The publication of Heijke's monograph on the image of God in the works of Augustine exclusive of *De trinitate*⁹ has made a valuable contribution to the growing literature on this topic, which will soon be complemented by Somers' companion study of the image of God in

¹ A. Mayer, *Das Bild Gottes im Menschen nach Clemens von Alexandrien* (Rome, 1942).

² Pierre Crouzel, *Théologie de l'image de Dieu chez Origène* (Paris, 1956).

³ E. Peterson, "L'Immagine di Dio in S. Ireneo," *Scuola cattolica* 69 (1941) 46-54.

⁴ Régis Bernard, *L'Image de Dieu d'après saint Athanase* (Paris, 1952).

⁵ Roger Leys, *L'Image de Dieu chez saint Grégoire de Nyse* (Brussels, 1951); Hubert Merki, 'ΟΜΟΙΩΣΙΣ ΘΕΩ: *Von der platonischen Angleichung an Gott zur Gottähnlichkeit bei Gregor von Nyssa* (Fribourg, 1952).

⁶ Walter J. Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man according to Cyril of Alexandria* (Washington, D.C., and Woodstock, Md., 1957).

⁷ Cf. Crouzel, *op. cit.*, and Merki, *op. cit.*

⁸ Pierre Valentin, "Héraclite et Clément d'Alexandrie," *Recherches de science religieuse* 46 (1958) 27-59.

⁹ J. Heijke, "*Imago Dei* in the Works of Saint Augustine (Exclusive of *De trinitate*)," *Folia*, Special Supplement, 1956.

De trinitate, the Augustinian work in which it is given its richest theological development.¹⁰

The extension of scholarly interest to the Augustinian development of the theology of the image of God in man naturally raises the question of its connection with the image theology of the Greek Fathers. In their works it was an amalgam of scriptural and philosophical elements which had received its first Christian formulation in the Alexandrian Platonism of Clement and Origen. In Augustine's theology of the image of God we discover a similar blending of Platonic philosophy and the truths of revelation. Was Augustine the originator of an independent theological synthesis, or did he simply take over and develop the Eastern image theology which had its roots in the works of Clement of Alexandria and Origen?

The latter possibility poses an interesting problem concerning the sources of Augustine's theology of the divine image in the human soul. If it was derived from the older Greek synthesis, when did Augustine discover the image theology of Alexandria and to whom is he indebted for his knowledge of it? There are indications in his early works from which an answer to these questions can be drawn. Even in the dialogues written at Cassiciacum, Augustine's theology of the image of God in the soul has already taken form. It is a synthesis in which the Christian Platonism of the Alexandrians is smoothly blended with elements taken from the Neoplatonism of Plotinus. That a catechumen recently introduced to the study of philosophy should have discovered the image theology of Alexandria and skilfully combined it with Plotinian metaphysics as a result of his personal reflection is not a very plausible hypothesis. Nor is there any necessity to propose it. For, as will appear in the course of this article, Augustine claims no personal credit for his theology of the image of God in man. On the contrary, as we shall see, he openly admits that it is a doctrine which he had often heard expounded in the discourses of St. Ambrose.

A few years ago the suggestion that Ambrose was the source from which Augustine first drew his knowledge of the theology of the image of God would not have been well received. The early works of

¹⁰ Herman Somers, "*Imago Dei* in Saint Augustine's *De trinitate*," *Folia*, Special Supplement (In preparation).

Augustine are strongly influenced by the Neoplatonism of Plotinus. At one time, in fact, it was even suggested that Augustine had been converted to Neoplatonism before his definitive conversion to Christianity and that the dialogues written at Cassiciacum give testimony to this intermediate stage of his intellectual evolution.¹¹ Whatever Ambrose's personal influence on Augustine might have been, he could not have exerted any important influence on the composition of his early works. Ambrose knew the Scriptures thoroughly; he was well acquainted with the works of Origen; but he was hostile to philosophy and knew little or nothing about Plotinus.¹² If the main outlines of the Augustinian theology of the divine image could be discerned in the dialogues written at Cassiciacum, and if in those dialogues it was formulated in a metaphysical framework taken from Plotinus, then it could not have been derived in its entirety from the writings or discourses of Ambrose. *Nemo dat quod non habet.*

Today, however, such an a priori exclusion of Ambrosian influence from the early works of Augustine is no longer possible. Courcelle has discovered in *De Isaac* and in *De bono mortis*, two Ambrosian sermons preached in 386, the year of Augustine's conversion, extensive citations of *Enneads* 1, 6; 1, 7; 3, 5.¹³ Hadot has discovered in the same discourses extensive citations of *Enn.* 1, 8, and 4, 8. He has also unearthed further citations of *Enn.* 1, 6, and 1, 7.¹⁴ Solignac has uncovered in *De Jacob*, another Ambrosian sermon contemporaneous with *De Isaac* and *De bono mortis*, a third series of extensive Plotinian citations. In this case the citations are all of *Enn.* 1, 4.¹⁵ At times they are practically literal translations of Plotinus. Not only are the three Ambrosian

¹¹ This was the thesis of Prosper Alfaric's famous book, *L'Évolution intellectuelle de saint Augustin* (Paris, 1918). The evidence against this theory is ably presented by Charles Boyer, *Christianisme et Néo-Platonisme dans la formation de saint Augustin* (2nd ed.; Rome, 1953).

¹² Etienne Gilson, *La philosophie au moyen-âge* (Paris, 1944) p. 112: "Ambroise savait le grec; il a longuement étudié Philon et Origène . . . mais il ne s'est pas . . . laissé entraîner au moindre approfondissement métaphysique du texte sacré. Ambroise ne pensait aucun bien des philosophes."

¹³ Cf. Pierre Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin* (Paris, 1950) pp. 93-138.

¹⁴ Cf. P. Hadot, "Platon et Plotin dans trois sermons de saint Ambroise," *Revue des études latines* 34 (1956) 202-20.

¹⁵ Cf. Aimé Solignac, "Nouveaux parallèles entre saint Ambroise et Plotin," *Archives de philosophie* 19 (1955-56) 148-56.

sermons filled with Plotinian citations; they reveal their author's acquaintance with other Platonic philosophers as well. Hadot has found in *De Isaac* and in *De bono mortis* citations of the *Phaedo* and the *Phaedrus*. He suggests that their source may have been the *De regressu animae* of Porphyry.¹⁶ Moreover, Courcelle is convinced that Ambrose was acquainted with Neoplatonism not only through the *Enneads* of Plotinus but through the works of Porphyry and even through those of Macrobius.¹⁷ O'Meara, though not completely in agreement with Courcelle's ideas about the intellectual influence of Ambrose on Augustine, is perfectly willing to concede that Courcelle's "invaluable contribution" to the solution of the problem of Augustine and Neoplatonism has been "the demonstration that Ambrose, consciously or unconsciously, was preaching Christianity in terms markedly Neo-Platonic."¹⁸ It is now certain that Augustine could have found in the works of Ambrose at the time of his conversion a synthesis of Christian revelation and the Neoplatonism of Plotinus. There was never any question about Ambrose's familiarity with Origen. Could not Augustine, then, have found in the discourses of Ambrose the synthesis of the image theology of Alexandria and the Neoplatonism of Plotinus which appears in his early works?

The surmise that Ambrose might be the source of Augustine's theology of the image of God is given further support by Courcelle's discovery that in the former's *Hexaemeron* we have the sermons to which Augustine listened eagerly during the Holy Week of the year 386. Palanque had already proven that the *Hexaemeron* is a series of nine sermons preached on six consecutive days during Holy Week, but he had placed them in the year 387.¹⁹ Courcelle, however, has shown that their true date is the year 386,²⁰ and Palanque has admitted that Courcelle's date is the correct one.²¹ In his *Confessions* Augustine tells us that after St. Monica's arrival in Milan he accompanied her

¹⁶ Cf. Hadot, *art. cit.*

¹⁷ Cf. Pierre Courcelle, "Nouveaux aspects du platonisme chez saint Ambroise," *Revue des études latines* 34 (1956) 220-39.

¹⁸ John J. O'Meara, "Augustine and Neo-Platonism," *Recherches augustiniennes* 1, 100-101.

¹⁹ Cf. Jean-Rémy Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'empire romain* (Paris, 1933) p. 519.

²⁰ Cf. Courcelle, *Recherches*, pp. 101-2.

²¹ Courcelle cites Palanque's article in *Revue d'histoire de l'église en France*; cf. his "Nouveaux aspects," p. 234, n. 8.

each Sunday to the sermons of Ambrose.²² Through those discourses many of the young rhetorician's prejudices against the Catholic faith were dissipated. Listening to them he learned for the first time of the spiritual nature of the divine substance; God is in no way like our corporeal nature. This fact became evident to Augustine through Ambrose's exegesis of Gn 1:26: "Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram."²³ The *Hexaemeron* sermons concern themselves at times with Manichean difficulties. The ninth sermon contains a long excursus on Gn 1:26. The nature of the divine being, the problem of evil, the divine image in man: these are the problems whose solution Augustine attributes to the preaching of Ambrose in the period before his acceptance of the faith. The Ambrosian sermons which dealt most thoroughly with these topics during that period are the nine sermons of the *Hexaemeron*. From this fact Courcelle concludes that Augustine was an attentive member of the congregation when they were delivered in Holy Week of the year 386.²⁴ Before Augustine wrote the first of his philosophical works at Cassiciacum, he had listened to an Ambrosian exposition of the significance of the image of God in the human soul.

De Isaac, *De bono mortis*, and *De Jacob*, the sermons in which Ambrose's dependence on Plotinus is so evident, were also preached in the year 386. One of these sermons, *De Isaac*, deals with the soul's ascent to wisdom and beatitude. In the image theology of Alexandria, that ascent was associated with the soul's acquisition of the greatest likeness to God of which it was capable. In the year 386 Augustine was concerned about the problem of man's creation according to the divine image. Ambrose's sermons, he assures us, were of great assistance to him in his difficulties. Could those admissions mean that Augustine discovered in the Ambrosian homilies preached at that time a theological exposition of the divine image and likeness in the human soul in which the traditional Christian Platonism of Alexandria was given a new expression in concepts borrowed from the *Enneads*?

The sermons of Ambrose did in fact propose a theology of the image

²² Cf. *Confessiones* 6, 3 (CSEL 33, 117): "omni die dominico."

²³ Cf. *ibid.* (CSEL 33, 117-18): "Ubi vero etiam conperi ad imaginem tuam hominem a te factum ab spiritalibus filiis tuis, quos de matre catholica per gratiam regenerasti, non sic intellegi, ut humani corporis forma determinatum crederent atque cogitarent. . . ."

²⁴ Cf. Courcelle, *Recherches*, pp. 98-102.

and likeness of God in which Plotinus' metaphysics had been adapted to the exigencies of the Christian Platonism of Alexandria. Augustine could have discovered it if he listened carefully to the instructions of Ambrose. The latter gives his exegesis of Gn 1:26 in the seventh chapter of *Hexaemeron* 6. Its dependence on Origen's *Homilies on Genesis* is unconcealed. The divine image in the human soul is described in words taken from Origen's thirteenth homily on Genesis. The image is a beautiful supernatural *eikōn* painted by the Son of God. So great is the power and efficacy of the divine Artist that the *eikōn* can never be completely destroyed, although its beauty may be covered over by the image of the earthly man which the soul puts on through sin.²⁵

²⁵ Cf. *Hexaemeron* 6, 7, 42 (CSEL 32/1, 233–34): “Illa est enim plena sapientiae, plena pietatis atque iustitiae, quoniam omnis virtus a Deo est. . . Illa anima a Deo pingitur, quae habet in se virtutum gratiam renitentem splendoremque pietatis. Illa anima bene picta est, in qua elucet divinae operationis effigies, illa anima bene picta est, in qua est splendor gloriae et paternae imago substantiae. Secundum hanc imaginem, quae refulget, pictura pretiosa est. Secundum hanc imaginem Adam ante peccatum, sed ubi lapsus est, deposuit imaginem caelestis, sumpsit terrestris effigiem.” The soul in the splendor of grace is filled with wisdom, piety, and justice because it is an image in whom its divine exemplar dwells. That exemplar is the Word of God, the Splendor of the Father's glory and the Image of His substance. This becomes even more evident as Ambrose continues the development of his theme. “Non est ergo ad imaginem Dei in qua Deus semper est? Sed audi quia ad imaginem Dei. Dicit enim apostolus: ‘nos itaque omnes revelata facie gloriam Dei speculantes ad eandem imaginem reformamur a gloria in gloriam sicut a Domini spiritu’ ” (*ibid.* 6, 8, 45 [CSEL 32/1, 236]). Christ the Son of God is the Divine Image to whose similitude the soul must reform itself, as St. Paul says, if it is to reach perfection and beatitude.

Ambrose's dependence upon Origen is clearly manifested by the following texts from *Hom. in Gen.* 1 and 13, which have come down to us only in Latin translation: “Haec ergo imago est, de qua dicebat pater ad filium: ‘faciamus homines ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram.’ Filius Dei est pictor huius imaginis. Et quia talis et tantus est pictor, imago eius obscurari per incuriam potest, deleri per malitiam non potest. Manet enim semper imago Dei, licet tu tibi ipse superducas ‘imaginem terreni’ ” (13, 4 [GCS 29, 119]). “Non enim dixit quia: fecit Deus hominem ad imaginem aut similitudinem suam, sed: ‘ad imaginem Dei fecit eum.’ Quae est ergo alia imago Dei, ad cuius imaginis similitudinem factus est homo, nisi Salvator noster, qui est ‘primogenitus omnis creaturae,’ de quo scriptum est quia sit ‘splendor aeterni luminis, et figura expressa substantiae Dei?’ ” (1, 13 [GCS 29, 16–17]). “Quicumque ergo veniunt ad eum [Salvatore nostrum] et rationalis imaginis participes effici student . . . renovantur cotidie ‘ad imaginem eius, qui fecit eos . . .’ ” (*ibid.*). For a detailed exposition of the Origenian doctrines of the *imago caelestis* and the *imago terrestris* in the passage from *Hexaemeron* 6, 7, 42 cited above, cf. Crouzel, *op. cit.*, pp. 182–88. Crouzel gives a long exposition of Origen's theology of Christ, the Word of God and the Image of the Father, in the second section of his book; cf. pp. 71–142.

The image in its original, perfect state was, therefore, a work of grace, but there is an element in it which belongs to nature. Its supernatural luster may be concealed by the image of the unregenerate earthly man of whom Paul speaks in 1 Cor 16:49, but the *nous* still remains an image which can be restored by grace to its lost supernatural beauty. Ambrose gives a more detailed description of its nature in words very similar to those employed by Origen in his first homily on Genesis. The divine image is found in the *nous*,²⁶ the true, interior man; it is an image of the Word of God, Christ, our Redeemer, whom Paul has called the first-born of every creature (Col 1:15). The Word Himself is an image, for He is the perfect Image in whom the Father is ever present. That is the meaning of our Lord's remark to St. Philip that whoever sees Him sees the Father also (Jn 14:9); for He is in the Father and the Father is in Him according to the metaphysics of the image and its exemplar; and thus whoever truly sees the image must see the exemplar also.²⁷ The human soul according to the *Hexaemeron* is an image of the perfect Image who is the Word of God. Fallen by sin, it must be restored by grace to the supernatural beauty which is its perfect state.

The soul's return to the state of perfect godlikeness is described in *De Isaac*. This sermon is essentially a commentary on the Canticle of Canticles and treats of the theology of the soul's ascent to union with the Word of God. The highest part of the soul, the *nous*, must turn its gaze away from the objects of the sensible universe and contemplate its own interior. Only thus will it truly learn to know itself.

²⁶ Cf. *Hexaemeron* 6, 8, 45 (CSEL 32/1, 235-36): "Non ergo caro potest esse ad imaginem Dei, sed anima nostra, quae libera est. . . . Ea igitur est ad imaginem Dei quae non corporeo aestimatur, sed mentis vigore. . . ." Ambrose is once more following Origen: "Hunc sane hominem, quem dicit 'ad imaginem Dei' factum, non intelligimus corporalem. Non enim corporis figmentum Dei imaginem continet. . . . Is autem, qui 'ad imaginem Dei' factus est, interior homo noster est, invisibilis et incorporealis et incorruptus atque immortalis" (*Hom. in Gen.* 1, 13 [GCS 29, 15]). "Et multo aptius anima vel homo latine vel graece *anthrōpos* dicitur, alterum ab humanitate, alterum ab intuenti habens vivacitate, quae magis animae quam corpori convenire non dubium est" (*Hexaemeron* 6, 8, 46 [CSEL 32/1, 237]).

²⁷ Cf. *Hexaemeron* 6, 7, 41 (CSEL 32/1, 232). In this passage Ambrose applies to the *Verbum-Imago* the same titles which Origen applied to Him in the Prologue to his *Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles*: "imago Dei sapientia est, imago Dei justitia est." The two Scripture texts which Ambrose cites, Col 1:15 and Jn 14:9, are cited by Origen in the same context in his first homily on Genesis.

This is the contemplative flight of which Plato spoke in his *Theaetetus*²⁸ and which he assures us will lead to godlikeness, holiness, and wisdom.²⁹ In his description of it, as Hadot has shown, Ambrose has drawn upon the text of the *Phaedrus*. From Ambrose's *De fuga saeculi* it is clear, however, that his account of the soul's ascent to perfect godlikeness is inspired not by Plato himself but by the Christian Platonism of Alexandria. The lost state of perfection to which the soul is striving to return is the *homoïōsis theou*.³⁰ Its restoration will be the result not only of moral purification through asceticism but also of intellectual purification through contemplation. The soul must repeat the Platonic ascent to joyful contemplation of the Supreme Beauty. Passing through the contemplation of its own beauty, the soul which truly knows itself will mount toward God through the ascending levels of intelligibility represented by the hierarchy of the sciences. This ascent, however, is not the purely dialectical one of the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*; it requires the eyes of faith, for the sciences referred to in *De Isaac* are the supernatural sciences described by Solomon in his sacred writings;³¹ and the winged horses which bear the soul aloft are not the steeds of the Platonic *eros*; they are the horses of Christ which soar to heaven on the wings of charity.³² For it is God alone who is the Supreme Good; to Him alone the soul must cling if it would reach the *summum bonum* in contemplative beatitude. God is the Good to

²⁸ Φυγή δὲ ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν. ὁμοίωσις δὲ δίκαιον καὶ ὀσιον μετὰ φρονήσεως γενέσθαι (*Theaetetus* 176B).

²⁹ Cf. *De fuga saeculi* 1, 4 (CSEL 32/2, 165): "Denique qui salvus esse vult supra mundum adscendat, quaerat Verbum apud Deum, fugiat hunc mundum, terras relinquat." Also *ibid.* 4, 17 (CSEL 32/2, 178): "Hoc est autem fugere: abstinere a peccatis, ad similitudinem et imaginem Dei formam virtutum adsumere, extendere vires nostras ad imitationem Dei secundum mensuram nostrae possibilitatis."

³⁰ Cf. *ibid.* 4, 17: "Hoc est igitur similem esse Dei, habere justitiam, habere sapientiam et virtute esse perfectum. Deus enim sine peccato, et ideo qui peccatum fugit ad imaginem est Dei."

³¹ Cf. *De Isaac* 4, 23 (CSEL 32/1, 657): "Habes haec in Solomone, quia Proverbia eius moralia, Ecclesiastes naturalis, in quo quasi vanitates istius despicit mundi, mystica sunt eius Cantica canticorum." The Origenian source of this text can be found in the Prologue of Origen's *Commentarium in Canticum canticorum*: "Primo ergo in Proverbiis moralem docuit locum. . . . Secundum vero, qui naturalis appellatur, comprehendit in Ecclesiaste. . . . Inspectivum quoque locum in hoc libello tradidit, qui habetur in manibus, id est in Cantico canticorum. . . ." (GCS 33, 76).

³² Cf. *De Isaac* 8, 66 (CSEL 32/1, 689): "Hi sunt equi Christi. Ascendit ergo Christus equos suos, ascendit Verbum Dei animas pias."

whom the soul must liken itself, Ambrose explains in *De fuga saeculi*, if it would reach perfection in wisdom, justice, and virtue.³³ Yet the soul can only become like God by becoming like Christ, the *Verbum* and Redeemer, he continues in *De Isaac*, and this likeness is acquired through the knowledge and love which are faith and charity. The highest state of wisdom and beatitude is the *osculum Verbi*,³⁴ the mystical insight into the things of God which is the immediate gift of the Word Himself to the soul which reaches the summit of supernatural charity. Wisdom, perfect virtue, and beatitude are beyond the reach of the soul which does not possess that supernatural gift. That is why, even though the ancient philosophers wrote eloquently of the struggle to mount to the Supreme Beauty, none of them ever won the palm of victory.³⁵

Ambrose does not hesitate to cite *Enn.* 1, 6—the famous *Treatise on the Beautiful*—in his account of the soul's ascent to wisdom and beatitude. He is aware, however, that Plotinus' metaphysics must be adapted if it is to serve as a vehicle for his own Christian Platonism.

³³ Cf. *De fuga saeculi* 6, 36 (CSEL 32/2, 192): "Ad illud igitur bonum erigamus animos et in illo simus atque in ipso vivamus, ipsi adhaereamus, quod est supra omnem mentem et omnem considerationem. . . . Hoc est bonum, quod penetrat omnia, et omnes in ipso vivimus atque ex ipso pendimus, ipsum autem nihil supra se habet, sed est divinum; nemo enim bonus nisi unus Deus. . . . Boni ergo illius similes simus, ut quae bona sunt adipiscamur. . . ." This text is a citation of the same passage in *Enn.* 1, 8 (*The Treatise on the Origin of Evils*) which Courcelle found cited in *De Isaac*; cf. *Recherches*, p. 107. It has been altered in the same way as Ambrose altered the *De Isaac* citation to make it harmonize with the Christian Platonism of Origen.

³⁴ Cf. *De Isaac* 3, 8 (CSEL 32/1, 648): "Osculatur enim nos Deus Verbum, quando cor nostrum et ipsum principale hominis spiritu divinae cognitionis inluminat. . . . Osculum est enim, quo invicem amantes sibi adhaerent et velut gratiae interioris suavitate potiuntur. Per hoc osculum adhaeret anima Deo Verbo, per quod sibi spiritus transfunditur osculantis. . . ." Again Ambrose is following Origen's *Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles* 1 (GCS 33, 91): "Sed quoniam in his non est ei plena et perfecta desiderii sui et amoris expletio, deprecetur, ut mens eius pura et virginalis ipsius Verbi Dei illuminationibus ac visitationibus illustretur. Cum enim nullo hominis vel angeli ministerio divinis sensibus et intellectibus mens repletur, tunc 'oscula' ipsius Verbi Dei suscepisse se credat. Propter haec ergo et huiusmodi 'oscula' dicat anima orans ad Deum: 'Osculetur me ab oculis oris sui.'"

³⁵ Cf. *De Isaac* 8, 67 (CSEL 32/1, 690): "Hinc philosophi currilia illa animarum in suis libris expressere certamina, nec tamen ad palmam pervenire potuerunt, quoniam summitatem Verbi et altitudinem illorum animae nescierunt, quam cognovit haec anima, in qua erat Verbi conversio."

The Plotinian passages which Courcelle discovered in *De Isaac* and *De bono mortis* have been altered at times to make them harmonize with Ambrose's Alexandrian theology of the image and likeness of God. The Plotinian fatherland to which the soul must fly has become the home of the Father who created us; the flight to that blessed abode is no longer made by the natural powers of the soul but through the transforming power of charity; its destination is no longer the Plotinian Good, the First Hypostasis, under which are found the two lower hypostases, the Intelligence and the World Soul; it is the unique divine Good, the transcendent exemplar of every created intelligence.³⁶ Ambrose was perfectly conscious of the similarity between the Plotinian Intelligence, the Second Hypostasis which is the image of the First, and the Word of God, the consubstantial Image of the Father; but he was conscious also of the great difference between the Intelligence of the *Enneads* and the *Verbum divinum* of Christian revelation. For Ambrose the *Verbum* is no secondary divinity; He is identified utterly and completely with the infinite substance of the unique, triune Godhead. So strong, indeed, was Ambrose's insistence on the substantial unity of the *Verbum* and the Father that in the very section of the *Hexaemeron* in which we observed his indebtedness to Origen's homilies on Genesis, he explicitly corrects the latter's subordinationism. We should really say that the soul is the image of the Trinity rather than of the *Verbum*, he observes, because its exemplar is the one substantial God, the eternal Truth into whose perfect and changeless eternity no lower being can ever fully enter. The *Verbum* to whose image the soul is made can only be the Son of God who tells us: "I and the Father are one."³⁷ Above the soul, the image of the divinity, there can be no intermediate reality; there can only be the infinite Good itself, the triune God through whose contemplation the soul will find beatitude when it has reached the perfection of its divine

³⁶ The Plotinian and Ambrosian texts can be found in parallel columns in Courcelle's *Recherches*, pp. 106-19.

³⁷ Cf. *Hexaemeron* 6, 7, 41 (CSEL 32/1, 232-33): "Imago Dei est solus ille qui dixit: 'ego et pater unum sumus,' ita habens similitudinem patris, ut divinitatis et plenitudinis habeat unitatem. . . . Sic et in evangelio, ubi dicit 'ego et pater,' utique non una persona est; ubi autem ait 'unum sumus,' nulla est discrepantia divinitatis aut operis. . . . Et bene addidit 'sumus,' quia semper esse divinum est, ut coaeternum credas quem putabas esse dissimilem."

similitude by following Christ through faith under the impulsion of charity.³⁸

That Augustine made his own Ambrose's synthesis of Plotinus and the Christian Neoplatonists of Alexandria becomes apparent when we examine carefully the dialogue he wrote at Cassiciacum on the ascent to wisdom and beatitude. The Neoplatonic character of *De beata vita* is manifested at its outset by its dedication to Mallius Theodorus, and, as if this were not enough, the introduction describing Augustine's troubled intellectual life is cast in the form of a long comparison of his trials to the storm-tossed journey of Ulysses to his fatherland. This is clearly a reference to the eighth chapter of Plotinus' *Treatise on the Beautiful*, in which we find the famous exhortation to "fly away to our dear fatherland" as Ulysses fled from Circe and Calypso, symbols of the pleasures of the corporeal eye and of sensible beauty. This is the same chapter which Augustine would later cite in *De civitate Dei*, and in that later work this contemplative flight from the world of sense would be called becoming like to God: "similem Deo fieri."³⁹ Evidently the subject of *De beata vita* is intended to be the ascent of the soul to the godlikeness which leads to true contemplative beatitude, an ascent like the one described in Plotinus' *Treatise on the Beautiful*.

Yet to Augustine *De beata vita* appeared to be the most religious of his early dialogues;⁴⁰ and the ascent to wisdom and beatitude contains a number of elements which are completely foreign to Plotinus, although they are commonplaces in the theological tradition of Alexandria. The spiritual sun which illuminates the human mind is no longer the First Beauty of the *Enneads*; it is the Son of God, the perfect Wisdom of the Father. The Word of God is the changeless Truth in whom are contained all the truths which our minds affirm and the

³⁸ Cf. *ibid.* 6, 8, 46 (CSEL 32/1, 237): "Melius enim quaerit ista, si sola sit, abducens se a corporis caeno et a cupiditate carnali. Ipsa est ad imaginem Dei conformis Domini Iesu, qui autem conformes filii Dei sancti sunt."

³⁹ Cf. *De civitate Dei* 9, 17 (*Corpus christianorum*, ser. lat. 47, 265): "Ubi est illud Plotini, ubi ait: 'Fugiendum est igitur ad carissimam patriam, et ibi pater, et ibi omnia. Quae igitur, inquit, classis aut fuga? Similem Deo fieri.'" Paul Henry called attention to this Augustinian citation of Plotinus' *Treatise on the Beautiful* in 1934; cf. *Plotin et l'occident* (Louvain, 1934) pp. 107-9. His attention was attracted at that time by its omission of the pagan reference to Ulysses, Circe, and Calypso. It is an interesting and perhaps significant fact that Ambrose's quotation of this passage in *De Isaac* also omits this pagan reference.

⁴⁰ Cf. *De beata vita* 1, 5 (CSEL 63, 93).

perfect Measure to whom our intellects must be conformed. He it is who will give beatitude to the weakened human mind when, strengthened by the supernatural love of piety, its eye will be strong enough to gaze fixedly upon Him; for the Son of God is no secondary divinity like the Plotinian Intelligence; He is a consubstantial Person of the Blessed Trinity.⁴¹

Augustine makes no effort to conceal the fact that Ambrose is the source from whom he has drawn this theology of the ascent to wisdom and beatitude. In the introduction to *De beata vita*, after recounting his victory over the materialism of the Manicheans and the scepticism of the New Academy, he makes a most significant admission to Theodorus. In Ambrose's teaching that the soul is the image of God he found the wind which would waft his bark safely to port in the blessed fatherland: "Deinde veni in has terras; hic septentrionem cui me crederem didici. Animadverti enim et saepe in sacerdotis nostri et aliquando in sermonibus tuis, cum de Deo cogitaretur, nihil omnino corporis esse cogitandum, neque cum de anima; nam id est unum in rebus proximum Deo."⁴²

The discourses to which Augustine is referring are the ones in which Ambrose's exegesis of Gn 1:26 revealed to him the true meaning of the doctrine that man is made to the image and likeness of God. This is the significance of the final clause of the text: "nam id est unum in rebus proximum Deo." According to the Neoplatonic metaphysics of the intellectual image, the spiritual *eikōn* is always in immediate contact with its exemplar, the higher intelligible which is its source.⁴³ The soul is an image of God, Augustine tells us in a later work, because the intelligible source from which it comes and with which it remains in intellectual contact is not any finite spirit but the eternal Truth Itself. "Ergo iste spiritus ad imaginem Dei nullo dubitante factus accipitur, in quo est intelligentia veritatis: haeret enim veritati nulla interposita creatura."⁴⁴ And the beautiful prayer which begins one of his earliest works, the *Soliloquies*, recalls the fact that the soul which by turning within itself perceives its own nature and the change-

⁴¹ Cf. *ibid.* 4, 34-35 (CSEL 63, 114-15).

⁴² *Ibid.* 1, 4 (CSEL 63, 91-92).

⁴³ Cf. Paul Aubin, "L'Image dans l'oeuvre de Plotin," *Recherches de science religieuse* 41 (1953) 348-79.

⁴⁴ *De diversis quaestionibus* 83, 51, 4 (PL 40, 33).

less divine Light above its mind will recognize itself for what it is, an image of the Godhead.⁴⁵

God, the perfect Good and changeless Truth, is in immediate contact with the soul which is His image; He is in consequence the absolute Truth which every intellect perceives and the unmixed Good which every will desires, though not every soul is aware that God is the dimly perceived reality toward which its intellect and will are constantly tending. In this teaching of Ambrose, Augustine tells us, he finally found the wind which would waft him to the blessed fatherland. The despairing doubts of materialism and scepticism were finally allayed. Perfect spiritual truth and good were seen to exist. Perfect contemplative beatitude revealed itself as a possibility; it could be enjoyed if a way could be found to bring the intellect and will to a perfect love and knowledge of the soul's divine exemplar, for then their restless craving for truth and goodness would come at last to rest in perfect satisfaction. The happy life could be attained if the eye of the soul could be made clear and strong enough to see in intuitive vision the divine exemplar with which the soul is in immediate contact.

De beata vita explains how this strengthening of the soul's eye can be brought about. It will be achieved by transforming the soul into a similitude of the divinity. Beatitude can be possessed only by the soul which is wise and strong. Such a soul will be able to possess perfectly the Truth from which it proceeds. This is the happy soul which, by overcoming its passions, has ceased to be a slave to sensual delights; it is the contemplative soul whose gaze is no longer directed toward the vain appearances of the world of sense, those vain images of the true reality, whose weight will drag the soul back to earth, if perchance it should touch the Supreme Truth in a brief intellectual embrace. Happiness is a consequence of godlikeness; for God, the sun who is the light of our inner eye, brings us beatitude only when our

⁴⁵ Cf. *Soliloquia* 1, 2-4 (PL 32, 869-71): "Deus quem amat omne quod potest amare, sive sciens, sive nesciens. . . . Deus pater veritatis, pater sapientiae, pater verae summaeque vitae, pater beatitudinis, pater boni et pulchri, pater intelligibilis lucis, pater evigilationis atque illuminationis nostrae, pater pignoris quo admonemur redire ad te. Te invoco, Deus veritas. . . . Deus vera et summa vita. . . . Deus beatitudo. . . . Deus intelligibilis lux. . . . Deus . . . qui fecisti hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem tuam, quod qui se ipse novit agnoscit."

sick and weakened inner eye is strong enough to gaze upon Him face to face. But that state of perfect wisdom and beatitude will not be attained until the increasing perfection of the soul has reached its culmination, until the soul in its spiritual growth has reached Him who is its measure.⁴⁶

Once again we recognize the Platonic *homoiōsis* theme, whose roots are found in the celebrated passage in the *Theaetetus*: "wherefore we ought to fly away from here to there as quickly as we can: and to fly away is to become like God as far as this is possible: and to become like Him is to become holy and just with wisdom."⁴⁷ Godlikeness is acquired by contemplation of true, intelligible reality, because the objects of contemplation have a transforming effect upon their viewer. The lower objects of sense defile and weaken the soul which turns to them; the higher intelligible objects beautify and strengthen the soul which turns its eyes upwards towards them. The flight of the *Theaetetus* toward the realm of the intelligibles is the flight which Plotinus urged upon his readers in the passage in his *Treatise on the Beautiful* to which Augustine made reference in the introduction of *De beata vita*. In that passage Plotinus urged the soul to undertake the moral purification of asceticism. Let it learn to overcome the attraction of the senses; let it acquire true beauty by adorning itself with virtues. For if it does so, it will have prepared itself for the intellectual purification in which its eye will be strengthened by gazing on the spiritual beauty of its own being and of the world of the intelligibles. When, at the completion of this twofold purification, it has become completely sun-like, it will at last possess the power to gaze in fixed and steady vision on the First Beauty, the sun of the intelligible world.⁴⁸

The eighth chapter of Plotinus' *Treatise on the Beautiful*, which we have just summarized, was partially incorporated by Ambrose into the exposition which he gave of the soul's ascent to wisdom and beatitude in *De Isaac*. If, then, Augustine says that in Ambrose's doctrine of the soul as the image of God he found the wind that would carry him to the blessed fatherland of which Plotinus spoke in his

⁴⁶ Cf. *De beata vita* 4, 33-34 (CSEL 63, 113-15).

⁴⁷ διὸ καὶ πειρᾶσθαι χρὴ ἐπὶ τὸ ἐκεῖσε φεύγειν ὅτι τάχιστα. φύγη δὲ ὁμοίωσι θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν. ὁμοίωσι δὲ δίκαιον καὶ ὀσιον μετὰ φρονήσεως γενέσθαι (*Theaetetus* 176A-B).

⁴⁸ Cf. *Enn.* 1, 6, 8.

Treatise on the Beautiful, what else can he mean except that the Plotinian metaphysics of the *homoiosis theou* was an element of the image theology explained to him "in sacerdotis nostri . . . sermonibus"?⁴⁹

Our conviction that this is the true meaning of the reference to Ambrose in the introduction to *De beata vita* becomes stronger when we observe the modifications which Augustine has introduced into the Plotinian metaphysics of the ascent to wisdom and beatitude in his early works. The Son of God, as we have already seen, plays an important role in the Augustinian ascent. Plotinus would have nothing to do with Christian revelation, and the sage of the *Enneads* owes his beatitude to his own unaided powers. He has no need of grace. For Augustine the Word of God is the Truth, the Supreme Measure, the Power and Wisdom of the Father,⁵⁰ the Interior Master who is Himself the Truth whom all are seeking, though few find Him in the perfect knowledge and love which brings beatitude.⁵¹ All of these titles are given to the Word of God in the image theology of the school of Alexandria. In their adaptation of Philo to the demands of Christian revelation, Clement and Origen conceive of the Son of God as the Word and Wisdom, the perfect Image of the Father of whom our *nous* is an image in its turn.⁵² That Augustine's conception of the part played by the Word of God in the ascent to wisdom and beatitude has been determined by the image theology of Alexandria seems certain from the testimony of his later writings. We must distinguish, he tells us in *De diversis quaestionibus*, between the Son who is the Image of God and man who is merely made to the image of God;⁵³ and, when he remarks again in *De civitate Dei* that the special dignity of the rational creature is due to the fact that no other nature intervenes

⁴⁹ *De beata vita* 1, 4 (CSEL 63, 92).

⁵⁰ Cf. *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 13, 22 (PL 32, 1321).

⁵¹ Cf. *De magistro* 13, 36 (PL 32, 1260-61).

⁵² For Clement cf. *Protrepticus* 10, 98, 3 (GCS 12, 71); *Stromata* 5, 14, 94 (GCS 15, 388); cf. also Merki, *op. cit.*, p. 85. For Origen cf. *Hom. in Gen.* 1, 13 (GCS 29, 17); *Comm. in Cant.*, prol. (GCS 33, 67); cf. also supra nn. 25 and 27.

⁵³ Cf. *De diversis quaestionibus* 83, 51, 4 (PL 40, 33): "Neque inscite distinguitur, quod aliud sit imago et similitudo Dei, qui etiam Filius dicitur; aliud ad imaginem et similitudinem Dei, sicut hominem factum accipimus." For the distinction made by Clement between the Son who is the Image of God and the human soul which is made according to the image of God, cf. Merki, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85. For the same distinction in Origen, cf. Crouzel, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-80.

between it and God (the peculiar characteristic of the soul as a divine image), he adds the observation that this teaching of Plotinus is in conformity with the Prologue of St. John's Gospel, in which the Word of God is called the light which enlightens every man coming into this world.⁵⁴ The Plotinianism of Augustine is a Christian Plotinianism in which the *nous*, true to the tradition of the Alexandrian theologians, is an image of that perfect Image who is the Word, the Power, and the Wisdom of the Father.

Furthermore, in his early works Augustine rejects any possibility of an ascent to beatitude and wisdom through the soul's unaided powers. On this point, too, his Platonism is a Christian one. The road to the good and happy life is found, we are told in *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae*, by following God,⁵⁵ but the soul can follow God only if it submits itself to its Creator through the charity by which it is joined to Him;⁵⁶ for, as Augustine tells us in a text strikingly similar to the famous passage in the *Confessions*,⁵⁷ the soul approaches God when it submits to Him in charity, and it departs from Him, not through any change in place, but by becoming unlike Him if, under the influence of pride and concupiscence, it looks away from Him toward the lower world of sense.⁵⁸ To avoid such a catastrophe we must strive

⁵⁴ Cf. *De civitate Dei* 10, 2 (*Corpus christianorum*, ser. lat. 47, 274): "Dicit . . . magnus Platonius [Plotinus] animam rationalem, sive potius intellectualis dicenda sit, ex quo genere etiam immortalium beatorumque animas esse intellegit, quos in caelestibus sedibus habitare non dubitat, non habere supra se naturam nisi Dei, qui fabricatus est mundum, a quo et ipsa facta est; nec aliunde illis supernis praeberi vitam beatam et lumen intelligentiae veritatis, quam unde praebetur et nobis, consonans evangelio, ubi legitur: 'Fuit homo missus a Deo, cui nomen erat Iohannes; hic venit in testimonium, ut testimonium perhiberet de lumine, ut omnes crederent per eum. Non erat ille lumen. . .'"

⁵⁵ Cf. *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 11, 18 (*PL* 32, 1319): "Secutio igitur Dei, beatitatis appetitus est; consecutio autem, ipsa beatitas. At eum sequimur diligendo, consequimur vero, non cum hoc omnino efficimur quod est ipse, sed ei proximi, eumque mirifice et intelligibili modo contingentes, ejusque veritate et sanctitate penitus illustrati atque comprehensi. Ille namque ipsum lumen est; nobis autem ab eodem illuminari licet."

⁵⁶ Cf. *ibid.* 12, 20 (*PL* 32, 1320): "Ergo cum etiam Deus dignis animis notus non nisi per intelligentiam possit esse, cum tamen sit ipsa qua intelligitur mente praestantior, quippe qui creator ejus atque auctor est . . . cui charitate jungendus est."

⁵⁷ Cf. *Confessiones* 10, 25 (*CSEL* 33, 254).

⁵⁸ Cf. *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 12, 20-21 (*PL* 32, 1320): "Fit enim [animus] Deo similis quantum datum est, dum illustrandum illi atque illuminandum se subjicit. Et si maxime ei propinquat subjectione ista qua similis fit, longe ab eo fiat necesse est audacia qua vult esse similior. . . . Quanto ergo magis longe discedit a Deo, non loco, sed affectione atque cupiditate ad inferiora quam est ipsa, tanto magis stultitia miseriaque completur."

by perfect charity to make ourselves like Christ, the Son of God, the Wisdom, Power, and Virtue of the Father.⁵⁹ Yet, even as we do so, we must realize that the God whom we love through charity is really the Blessed Trinity, the unique God "ex quo omnia, per quem omnia, in quo omnia."⁶⁰ The happy life which was the subject of *De beata vita* was the culmination, as we have seen, of an ascent to wisdom and godlikeness modeled on the ascent of the soul described in Plotinus' *Treatise on the Beautiful*. The ascent described in that dialogue, however, is made with the divine assistance, and the knowledge and love which brings beatitude is the "pious" love and knowledge which Ambrose had attributed to the souls which are being led by Christ to the summits of supernatural contemplation.⁶¹ Only this pious knowledge will enable us to know perfectly by whom we are led to truth, what truth is, and by what we are joined to the Supreme Measure. These three, says Augustine, are one substance and one God.⁶² Pious knowledge alone will enable the soul to contemplate the Trinity, for it is a metaphysical principle that like is known by like. Therefore the

⁵⁹ Cf. *ibid.* 13, 22 (*PL* 32, 1320–21): "Dicat nobis idem Paulus, quis iste sit Christus Jesus Dominus noster: 'Vocatus,' inquit, 'praedicamus Christum Dei Virtutem et Dei Sapientiam.' Quid? Ipse Christus nonne inquit, 'Ego sum Veritas'? . . . Huic haeremus per sanctificationem. Sanctificati enim plena et integra charitate flagramus, qua sola efficitur ut a Deo non avertamur, eique potius quam huic mundo conformemur: 'Praedestinavit enim,' ut ait idem Apostolus, 'conformes nos fieri imaginis Filii ejus.'" The Wisdom, Power, and Image of the Father, as we have seen, are titles given to the Word of God by the Alexandrian theologians; cf. supra n. 52. They are all employed by Ambrose in the sermons which we have considered in this article. For his use of the titles Wisdom and Image, cf. supra n. 27. For his use of the title Power, cf. *De fuga saeculi* 2, 13 (*CSEL* 32/2, 173).

⁶⁰ Cf. *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 14, 24 (*PL* 32, 1321): "Deum ergo diligere debemus trinam quamdam unitatem, Patrem et Filium et Spiritum sanctum, quod nihil aliud dicam esse, nisi idipsum esse. Est enim vere summeque Deus, 'ex quo omnia, per quem omnia, in quo omnia.'" This argument is very similar to the one employed by Ambrose in his *Hexaemeron*; cf. supra n. 37.

⁶¹ Ambrose employed the word *pius* to describe the state of the soul under the influence of the perfect form of charity; cf. supra n. 32. Cf. also *De fuga saeculi* 2, 13 (*CSEL* 32/2, 173): "Vivit igitur Dei Verbum et maxime in animis vivit piorum. . ."

⁶² It is quite significant that when Augustine describes the happy life as supernatural knowledge of the Trinity, he makes use of the Ambrosian term *pius*: "Illa est igitur plena satietas animorum, hoc est beata vita, pie perfecteque cognoscere, a quo inducaris in veritatem, qua veritate perfruaris, per quid conecataris summo modo. Quae tria unum Deum intellegendibus unamque substantiam exclusis vanitatibus variae superstitionis ostendunt" (*De beata vita* 4, 35 [*CSEL* 63, 115]).

triune God is known intuitively only through the supernatural knowledge possessed by the soul whose faith and charity have transformed it into a likeness of the Trinity. It is most illuminating to observe that Augustine not only echoes Ambrose's insistence that the divine similitude is a supernatural state acquired through grace, but also echoes Ambrose's insistence that the divine image in the human soul is an image of the Blessed Trinity. Is not this another indication that Augustine's knowledge of the Alexandrian image theology came to him through the mediation of Ambrose?

It is not surprising, therefore, to discover near the end of *De beata vita* an explicit indication that the Trinitarian image of which Augustine has been speaking in that dialogue was a doctrine which Ambrose was known to hold and teach. At the close of Augustine's exposition in the concluding paragraphs of the dialogue which we have just summarized, Monica, recognizing a familiar element of her Christian instruction, repeats the Trinitarian invocation of Ambrose's hymn, *Deus creator omnium*. "Hic mater recognitis verbis, quae suae memoriae penitus inhaerebant, et quasi evigilans in fidem suam versum illum sacerdotis nostri: 'fove precantes, trinitas,' laeta effudit. . . ."⁶³ This is truly the perfect and happy life, she exclaims, the life to which we are led by faith, hope, and charity.⁶⁴ *De beata vita* began by asserting that the Plotinian ascent to happiness revealed its possibility to Augustine through his discovery of Ambrose's teaching that the soul is the image of God. It repeats Ambrose's contention that this ascent can be made only on the wings of faith and charity and gives as a proof of that assertion that only through these supernatural gifts can the soul which is an image of the Trinity acquire the state of godlikeness required for intuitive knowledge of its triune Creator. At the close of Augustine's exposition of this doctrine, Monica's repetition of a Trinitarian hymn which Augustine explicitly attributes to Ambrose can only mean that the theology of the image and likeness of God presented in this early dialogue should not be considered an invention of Augustine but merely the reiteration of a commonly accepted teaching of Ambrose.

There is some discussion at the present moment concerning the

⁶³ *Ibid.* ⁶⁴ Cf. *ibid.*

precise relation of Ambrose's sermons to Augustine's intellectual evolution during the period of his conversion. It lies beyond the scope of the present discussion to determine whether their role was the primary one in Augustine's intellectual development or whether the influence of several other members of the Christian Platonic circle at Milan played an important complementary part in it. The evidence we have presented does not exclude the possibility that Mallius Theodorus or Simplician may have contributed to Augustine's knowledge of the theology of the image and likeness of God. After all, *De beata vita* is dedicated to Mallius Theodorus, and its introduction testifies that Augustine had heard him speak occasionally of the image of God, albeit less frequently than he had heard Ambrose discoursing on the same subject: "Deinde veni in has terras; hic septentrionem cui me crederem didici. Animadverti enim et saepe in sacerdotis nostri et aliquando in sermonibus tuis, cum de Deo cogitaretur, nihil omnino corporis esse cogitandum, neque cum de anima; nam id est unum in rebus proximum Deo."⁶⁵ Augustine consulted Simplician, who had been Ambrose's teacher, about his own intellectual difficulties.⁶⁶ Did the saintly old priest make use of that occasion to rehearse for his new disciple an image theology which he had already communicated to Ambrose? We do not know. From the evidence we have presented, however, the following facts emerge. In the *Confessions* and in *De beata vita* Augustine claims that he learned the significance of the image and likeness of God in man by listening to the discourses of Ambrose. The texts of Augustine's early works give evidence of the truth of that contention. Their theology of the image and likeness of God is a faithful echo of the Alexandrian-Plotinian image synthesis which is presented in the homilies of Ambrose. Augustine's image theology is clearly in the source from which he claimed to derive it.

In later years Augustine's knowledge of the theology of the divine image would grow deeper and surer. He would correct some misapprehensions.⁶⁷ In the *Confessions* and in *De trinitate* he would make his

⁶⁵ *De beata vita* 1, 4 (CSEL 63, 91-92).

⁶⁶ Cf. *Confessiones* 8, 1 (CSEL 33, 169): "Et inmisisti in mentem meam visumque est bonum in conspectu meo pergere ad Simplicianum. . . ." For a discussion of Simplician's part in Augustine's intellectual formation, cf. Courcelle, *Recherches*, pp. 168-74.

⁶⁷ Cf. J. Heijke, "The Image of God according to Saint Augustine," *Folia* 10 (1956) 3-11.

own great contributions to the development of that theology. But the basic framework on which he would be building would never cease to be the Christian Platonic synthesis to which he gave expression in his early works. The great lines of his theology would stand unchanged. His later works would brilliantly exploit the latent possibilities of the synthesis of Plotinian metaphysics and Alexandrian image theology which he claims to have discovered in the discourses of Ambrose.