

The Development of the Idea of Involuntary Sin in St. Augustine

In Christian thought in the West, before the time of St. Augustine, man was generally held to have inherited from his first ancestor a nature corrupted by Adam's fall into sin¹. It was usually believed that, though it was the soul which had initiated that first sinful act, it was in the flesh that sin had established itself. It was through this inherence of sin in man's flesh that the corruption was passed on from generation to generation by means of man's physical procreation. This inherited weakness of the flesh was such that all men had a strong tendency to sin. So great was this tendency that man could even be depicted as being enslaved by sin, despite desiring to be free, and indeed as being unable to avoid sinning even against his will. Further, for sins committed unwillingly man could properly be held responsible because it was thought that, by virtue of the solidarity of the human race, all men existed in Adam, and thus all men shared in his sin. Thus, man's nature since the fall was seen, not only as including a propensity to sin, but also as bearing a certain responsibility for this very situation by reason of the involvement of the whole race in Adam's sin. A distinction was drawn, however, between inherited corruption, and guilt. Man was not generally held to be guilty for the flawed nature which he inherited, only for the actual sin which he committed. Also, though man at times was described as being totally subject to sin unless freed by grace, this was not consistently maintained, and his freedom to do good was also defended.

It was in the works of St. Augustine, whose view has dominated later tradition, that the ideas of the solidarity of the race in Adam's sin, and the subjection of man to the corrupted nature he inherits, were developed

1. These comments on pre-Augustinian Western thought, which particularly reflect the writings of Ambrose and Ambrosiaster, are indebted to the summary of J.N.D. KELLY, *Early Christian Doctrines* (2nd Edition London 1960), p. 353-357.

in a thoroughly consistent and extreme way². Not only does Augustine see man as sharing in the guilt of his first ancestor, but he also believes that man, whilst retaining his freewill, has lost his liberty to use it for anything but wrong. Man's will is now so entrammelled by the consequences of the first sin that he cannot avoid wrongful acts. For such unavoidable acts man is culpable, they are truly sins. Thus, in the year 415, writing against a definition of Cœlestius, in which the Pelagian claims that only that which can be avoided is sinful, he says :

Our answer to this is, that sin can be avoided, *if our corrupted nature be healed by God's grace*, through our Lord, Jesus Christ. For, in so far as it is not sound, in so far does it either through blindness fail to see, or through weakness fail to accomplish, that which it ought to do ; « for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh », so that a man does not do the things which he would³.

Though Augustine here agrees that only the avoidable can be sinful, by his qualification — « if our corrupted nature be healed by God's grace » — he takes a position diametrically opposed to that of Cœlestius. The very fact that sin can be avoided, « if our corrupted nature be healed by God's grace », emphasises that if our nature is not healed, sin cannot be avoided. Scriptural support for this view is adduced from Galatians 5. 17 : « for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh ». Unaided human nature, despite its possession of freewill, inevitably falls into sin. So in the same treatise, he writes :

The answer to this is, that sin is not natural ; but nature (especially in that corrupt state from which we have become by nature « children of wrath ») has too little determination of will to avoid sin, unless assisted and healed by God's grace through Jesus Christ our Lord⁴.

Man is thus placed in the unfortunate position of being bound to sin even though he wills not to do so, and of being unable to free himself from this disability⁵. Scriptural evidence is again offered, this time from Ephesians 2. 3 from which the words, « children of wrath », are taken.

Whilst it is true that Augustine consistently maintains that sin is based upon will ; the ability not to sin, with which Adam was created, was impaired by his subsequent transgression. The consequence of Adam's sin was the corruption of the will inherited by all later generations of mankind. Augustine held that though this corruption was caused by Adam's free and wilful sin, the result in his descendants was to be that

2. *Ibid.*, p. 361-366.

3. *De perfectione iustitiae hominis* 2. 1. Italics are added.

4. *Ibid.* 2. 3.

5. Cf. *Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum* 1. 3. 7 and 3. 8. 24, *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 4. 7-8, *De perfectione iustitiae hominis* 6. 12, *In Ioannis evangelium tractatus* 124. 5.

they could sin without willing to do so. It remains therefore that, on the one hand, Augustine avoided any suggestion that there could be sin which does not proceed from will. On the other hand, he admitted that the individual could sin *without* willing to sin. Thus, in his *Retractations* (I. 15. 2), commenting on the words of St. Paul in Romans 7. 16-18, he wrote : « For this sin is to such an extent involuntary (*hoc enim peccatum usque adeo non est in voluntate*), that he [i.e. Paul] says : ' What I will not, this I do ' ». It is the development in Augustine's thought on this seemingly paradoxical concept (here described as « involuntary sin ») which is the subject of this present treatise.

The Early Works ; Only that which is Voluntary is Culpable.

That this view of man was not one which Augustine had held from the beginning becomes apparent from an examination of his early works. His earliest writings contain descriptions of the difficulties besetting the man who wishes to live the good life, but there is no suggestion that a man can be held responsible for that which he cannot avoid. In the Cassiciacum writings of 386 he is aware of the need for the wise man to extricate himself from the entanglements of the body⁶. He sees too that it is necessary for the soul to acquire virtuous habits⁷. This task of moving from error to virtue would have been impossible for human reason had God not sent the authority of the divine intellect into a human body⁸. The question of culpability for that which is involuntary is not raised, however, for it is accepted that men sin by deliberately willing to do so. Thus a little later, in 388, it is asked whether it is just that a man who has never been wise, and thus never been virtuous, should be punished by being held subject to lust⁹. The answer, in brief, is that nothing is more within a man's power than his own will. At this stage, though Augustine is aware of the difficulties which may impede the exercise of freewill, he is unwilling to accept that a man can be held responsible for that which he did not will. Indeed, in his last work before his ordination in 391, he writes :

If the defect called sin overtook a man against his will, like a fever, the penalty which follows the sinner, and is called condemnation, would rightly seem to be unjust. *But in fact sin is so much a voluntary evil that it is not sin at all unless it is voluntary... Lastly if it is not by the exercise of the will that we do wrong, no one at all is to be censured or warned*¹⁰.

The reference to censure points to the possibility of amendment and thus indicates that man is free. At this date, although the fall is accepted

6. *Contra academicos* I. 8. 23.

7. *De ordine* 2. 19. 49.

8. *Contra academicos* I. 8. 23.

9. *De libero arbitrio* I. 12. 24-26.

10. *De vera religione* 14. 27. Italics are added. Cf. *ibid.* 23. 44.

as a fact¹¹, the result of which is to increase the propensity of man to sin, not only Adam, but also his descendants, are seen as having a genuine freedom of choice between good and evil.

It must be observed here that it is not inconsistent to maintain both that man has free choice whether to sin or not, and also that he does do things against his will. Augustine himself showed how the two could be reconciled when, shortly after his ordination, he defended the view that a man who acts against his will does not sin, using the example of a man asleep or bound whose hand is moved by someone else¹². There is no condemnation for the man who is compelled by another to do something evil whilst he is unconscious or unable to resist, for such an act is not sinful on the part of the man who is subject to the compulsion. Empirical problems arising from man's observed inclination to sin could have been explained on the basis of this position. Thus, for an act to be sinful it would have to be either freely willed, or the result of a habit which was freely acquired, for it is a sin for a man to place himself willingly in a position where he is compelled to commit a sinful act¹³. By the same token, an unwilled act would not be sinful, no matter what its consequences.

Observation of human behaviour alone, therefore, would not have forced Augustine to introduce into his thought the idea of culpability for that which is involuntary. Whatever he might have observed could have been accounted for on the lines of his earlier position. If experience suggested that there were many things which man cannot avoid doing, the answer would be that these things were not sinful.

The Change between 391 and 393 ; Involuntary Sin is Part of Man's Nature.

It has already been observed, however, that in the later works Augustine's position did change. The change, indeed, was drastic. Sin ceased to be that which must be freely willed, and became *that which man's unaided will alone cannot avoid*. If observation of human behaviour could not have brought about this change by itself, it may be asked what did lead to such a dramatic shift of position. To try to answer this question, it is first necessary to pin down more exactly why and when the change occurred.

The idea that man can lose the power to act rightly is stated by Augustine, with a force exceeding that used on later occasions, at least as early as the third book of *De libero arbitrio*, which was completed in 395, though probably containing material from an earlier date¹⁴. In that

11. *Ibid.* 12. 25.

12. *De duabus animabus* 10. 12.

13. *Ibid.*

14. This was pointed out by Eugene Portalié in his art. « Augustin (Saint) », *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* (Paris 1902), I, 2268-2472. The present reference is found in the translation by Ralph J. BASTIAN, *A Guide to the thought of St. Augustine* (Chicago 1960), p. 224.

work the freewill position of the earlier writings is restated : « Whatever be the cause of willing, if it cannot be resisted no sin results from yielding to it¹⁵ ». A very different emphasis is also found, however. Almost immediately after the passage last cited, Augustine continues, with apparent inconsistency : « Nevertheless, some things are done in ignorance which are held to be wrong... wrong things are done by necessity when a man wills to do right and has not the power¹⁶ ». This is supported by a reference to the authoritative texts of Scripture, particularly the writings of St. Paul. Among the passages which Augustine quotes are : Galatians 5. 17, « For the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, so that you do not do the things you will » ; Romans 7. 18 « To will is present with me ; to accomplish that which is good I find not » ; and Romans 7. 19, « For I do not the good which I will to do and I do the evil which I hate ». At first sight, these passages seem to stand in obvious contradiction to the position taken by Augustine in the earlier works, that only that which is voluntary can be sinful. They are explained in *De libero arbitrio* by the suggestion that man is justly punished for sinful acts done by necessity against his will, because such acts are the result of man's punishment for sin. Man can by ignorance lose the power of free choice. He may will to do right, yet be unable to do so because of the power of carnal habit :

So we apply the word « sin » not only to that which is properly called sin, that is, what is committed knowingly and with free will, but also to all that follows as the necessary punishment of that first sin. So we use the word « nature » in a double sense. Properly speaking, human nature means the blameless nature with which man was originally created. But we also use it in speaking of the nature with which we are born mortal, ignorant and subject to the flesh, which is really the penalty of sin. In this sense the apostle says : « We also were by nature children of wrath even as others¹⁷ ».

Here is seen, in the clearest possible manner, an extension of the definition of sin to include not only freely committed acts, but also acts committed against the will. The word « sin » in its primary sense describes the free choice of evil by primal man. Part of the punishment for that sin was the loss of man's freedom to do what he willed. This loss of freedom has resulted in later generations doing wrong acts even when they willed not to do so. The acts are described as « sin » in a secondary sense. Augustine's explanation for the fact that man commits sin against his will is that he has inherited a corrupted nature. Ephesians 2. 3 is cited in support of this view : « We also were by nature children of wrath even as others ».

The same passage of Scripture is found in an earlier work of Augustine,

15. *De libero arbitrio* 3. 18. 50.

16. *Ibid.* 3. 18. 51.

17. *Ibid.* 3. 19. 54. Italics are added.

in which also the possibility of man sinning against his will is recognised¹⁸. In *De fide et symbolo*, preached on 3rd. December, 393, he said :

Moreover, the soul, when as yet it lusts after carnal good things, is called the flesh. For a certain part thereof resists the Spirit, not in virtue of nature, but in virtue of the custom of sins ; whence it is said, « With the mind I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin ». And this custom has been turned into a nature, according to mortal generation, by the sin of the first man. Consequently it is also written in this wise, « And we were sometime by nature the children of wrath », that is, of vengeance, through which it has come to pass that we serve the law of sin¹⁹.

In addition to Ephesians 2. 3, « And we were sometime by nature the children of wrath », this passage quotes Romans 7. 25, « With the mind I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin ». The latter citation shows that man sirs against his will by virtue of the flesh, the former explains this by connecting man's necessity with Adam's sin, through mortal generation.

Thus, by the time he preached *De fide et symbolo* in 393, Augustine had come to concede that man *could be held responsible for sins committed against his will*. It has already been shown that he did not accept this view when he wrote *De duabus animabus* in 391/2. The change in his thought occurred, therefore, in the period between these two works. In that period he had produced only one opus — the *Acta contra Fortunatum Manichaeum*. It is possible, then, that an examination of this work will help to place more precisely the moment at which his thought changed.

The Debate with Fortunatus.

a — *The Background.*

Before such an examination is made, something of the background of the debate recorded in the *Acta* must be recalled, in order to appreciate its full significance. It was held on the 28th and 29th August, 392, in Hippo Regius, a populous and important seaport, and the second city of Africa²⁰. This was a town in which the people were divided deeply in religious matters. Christians were numerous but a deep schism existed between the Donatist and Catholic churches²¹. These two groups vied for the ascendancy in the city, using tactics which were often far from edifying — some years before the debate, the Donatists, who at that

18. *De fide et symbolo* 10. 21 : « And until we reach the perfection of this new life, we cannot be without sins. »

19. *Ibid.* 10. 23.

20. Henri MARROU (et A.-M. LA BONNARDIÈRE), *Saint Augustin et l'Augustinisme*, p. 35.

21. *Epistolae* 33. 5 ; 93. 17 ; 29.

period held the upper hand, had prevented the Catholics from having their bread baked²². In addition to these two major divisions of the Christian church, the remaining pagans, and the smaller groups which would always be found in a large city and seaport, there was another faction which was meeting with some success — the Manichees²³. In North Africa, even more than elsewhere in the Roman Empire, Manicheism took a form which caused it to resemble yet another fragment of the Christian church²⁴. Despite the apparent local success of this party, however, the feud which was to settle the future allegiance of most of the citizens of Hippo, as well as of other parts of North Africa, was that between the two main Christian groups: « At the end of the fourth century Donatist and Catholic groups still faced each other on either side of a wide neutral zone of pagans yet to be converted²⁵. »

These religious divisions were clearly an important factor in the life of the town, and the situation was such that each group would look for any opportunity to win advantage over the others. The population they tried to persuade was a volatile one. Though law and order were generally maintained in Hippo, the crowd could be moved to violent action, as was evidenced some years later when the commander of the garrison was lynched²⁶. They were a fickle people, of whom Augustine was to say that a clown would appeal to them more than God²⁷. The circumstances of Augustine's own ordination suggest the power of the spoken word over them at a critical moment. They seized him and insisted that he be made a priest immediately, and this despite the fact that their Bishop Valerius, whose words had led them to this action²⁸, could hardly have been, with his limited command of Latin²⁹, the most persuasive orator. They were a people accustomed to enjoying public debates over religious differences, lovers of verbal subtlety and wordplay, open to the influence of ear-pleasing sermons and especially of concatenations of scriptural texts³⁰. This interest in Scripture had been fed by generations of controversy over the meaning of the sacred text³¹.

22. *Contra litteras Petiliani* 2. 84. 184, *Retractationes* 1. 15.

23. *Sancti Augustini Vita Scripta a Possidio Episcopo* (hereinafter : *Vita*) 6.

24. F.C. BURKITT, *The Religion of the Manichees* (London 1925), p. 42-43. See also : L.H. GRONDIJS, *Analyse du manichéisme numidien au IV^e siècle*, in *Augustinus Magister* (Paris 1954), p. 391-410.

25. Peter BROWN, *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (London 1972), p. 288.

26. *Sermo* 302. 6.

27. *Enarratio in Psalmum* 32, 2 serm. 1. 1.

28. *Vita* 4.

29. *Vita* 5.

30. Peter BROWN, *Augustine of Hippo : A Biography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1967) p. 254.

31. BROWN, *Religion and Society*, p. 291.

The text over which they disputed was held in common by Donatists and Catholics, and part of it was accepted, though with reservations, by the Manichees. Although there was not yet a fixed canon, the Donatists and Catholics agreed in accepting both Old and New Testaments. The Manichees differed somewhat, in rejecting the Old Testament in its entirety, and in denying the authenticity of parts of the New Testament³². In rejecting the authority of the Old Testament they appealed, most significantly, to the words of St. Paul³³. The Manichees used the writings of Paul with great frequency, particularly passages which appeared to support their dualistic tenets³⁴. In doing so they appear to have used the same texts as the Christians, despite the fact that they denied the authority of those parts which disagreed with the Manichean doctrine³⁵. What is of the greatest importance, however, is that for Christian North Africa the Bible held an absolute authority. Even the Manichees, though they possessed their own writings, and though, as noted above, they accepted as authentic only parts of the New Testament, still had to seek the support of that authority³⁶ if they were to win converts from the Christian churches. The meaning of the texts might be disputed, but there could be no question that it was the final court of appeal in any argument : « Now one of the distinctive features of Christianity in the ancient world as a whole, and in North Africa in particular, is that it was a Religion of the Book³⁷. »

In addition to this shared belief in the authority of a book, the three groups, Donatists, Catholics and Manichees, had in common also the Latin language and culture³⁸. This meant that they were *not* appealing to distinct cultural or linguistic segments of society, rather they were introducing those whom they converted to a common culture. Though social factors may have influenced a man's choice of religion³⁹, there was, nevertheless, a direct confrontation between three religious groups with but one language and culture. It is against this background that the inability of the elderly Bishop, Valerius, to speak Latin adequately, acquires particular significance. Through this deficiency, he was largely excluded from meeting the pressing challenge of the other groups on the very ground where alone it could be met.

32. François DECRET, *Aspects du Manichéisme dans l'Afrique Romaine : Les controverses de Fortunatus, Faustus et Felix avec Saint Augustin* (Paris 1970), p. 123-182 presents a valuable discussion of the Manichean use of Old and New Testaments.

33. *De utilitate credendi* 3. 8.

34. J. RIES, *La Bible chez saint Augustin et chez les manichéens*, in *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, 10 (1964), p. 309-329.

35. DECRET, *op. cit.*, p. 152

36. BROWN, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 42-45.

37. BROWN, *Religion and Society*, p. 288.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 279-300.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 294.

b — *The Participants.*

Part of this challenge came from the other protagonist in the debate, Fortunatus the Manichee. This man had lived in Hippo for a number of years, and was said by Augustine and Possidius to have met with a great deal of success⁴⁰. He undoubtedly would have been well accustomed to public debate, for this was a method of considerable importance to the Manichees⁴¹. He was reputed to be a learned man, and seems from the evidence of the debate itself to have been well versed in Scripture. Manicheism at this period in Africa was, as observed above, a crypto-Christianity. It drew its Hearers no longer from the ranks of the pagans, but from the fringes of the Christian church⁴². An able leader such as Fortunatus would pose, if not a great threat, at least a considerable nuisance to the Christians.

It was in large measure to meet the threats posed by both Manichees and Donatists (a task which was beyond Valerius because of his deficiency in the Latin tongue) that Augustine had been ordained. Despite his professed reluctance to submit to ordination, he was obviously the great hope of the Catholics of Hippo. Not only could he speak the essential language, Latin, but also he came to his task with a considerable reputation as a professional rhetorician, an accomplished orator who had practised in Carthage, Rome and Milan. He had also the advantage of a background in philosophy. Not all was in his favour when he faced Fortunatus, however. Against an opponent as able as Fortunatus, in a situation where the Bible was the supreme authority, any deficiency in scriptural learning would be a serious one, and it is questionable whether Augustine had an extensive knowledge of Scripture. He had started to study the Bible at Milan⁴³, and in his earliest work at Cassiciacum he accepted its authority⁴⁴. Between two and three years of the period preceding his ordination in 391 had been spent at Thagaste, but, despite the relative seclusion in which he lived there, much of his time seems to have been occupied with affairs other than the study of Scripture⁴⁵. Apart from one scriptural work, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*, there is nothing in his writing of this time to suggest that he was able to make any deep study of the Bible. Indeed, soon after his ordination he wrote to his Bishop to ask for some time free from his duties :

For I was ordained at the very time when I was thinking of having, along with others, a season of freedom from all other occupation, that we might

40. *Vita* 6 ; *Retractationes* I. 15.

41. *De duabus animabus* 9. 11. Cf. the evidence cited by Brown in *Religion and Society* p. 265 footnote.

42. BROWN, *Religion and Society* , p. 110.

43. *Confessiones* 6. 3. 3 ; 7. 20. 26. Cf. 3. 5. 9 in which he recounts his earlier rejection of the scriptures.

44. *Contra academicos* 3. 20. 43.

45. *Epistolae* 5 and 13.

acquaint ourselves with the divine Scriptures, and was intending to make such arrangements as would secure unbroken leisure for this great work⁴⁶.

He hoped to be restored to Valerius, «thoroughly furnished for His service by the profitable counsels of His written word⁴⁷». We do not know what the response of Valerius to this appeal was. As Augustine was ordained in the spring of 391, however, and as there was an interval between the ordination and the writing of this letter, and as he asks to be spared no longer than until the following Easter (presumably of 392), the longest respite he might have been granted would have been a few months. Such a period would hardly be adequate to acquire a mastery of Scripture equal to that of one as imbued with its texts as Fortunatus.

Some poignancy is added to the confrontation of Augustine and Fortunatus by the fact that they had known each other some years before in Carthage, when both had been within the Manichean fold⁴⁸. For nine years Augustine had been a Manichee, and for a long time had revelled in taking part in public debates for that cause, debates which he usually won⁴⁹. Finally, however, he had betrayed the Manichees. Whether justly or no, it was even suggested that he had done so in fear, fleeing to Rome in 383, following the anti-Manichean edicts of 381 and 382⁵⁰. Certainly, having gone to Milan under Manichean patronage, once there he not only failed to promote that religion, but was converted to Catholicism⁵¹. At the time of the debate against Fortunatus, Augustine had been baptised for a little more than five years, and ordained priest for about eighteen months.

His first public debate against a member of the faith he had deserted must have been a testing occasion for Augustine. There were, however, additional reasons for him to feel the greatest possible concern about the outcome. Though his ordination had marked him as the hope of the Catholics of Hippo, the letter to Valerius previously cited refers to the fact that his post-ordination experience had revealed his unfitness for the work of a priest⁵². To a man of his abilities and self-assurance, whatever difficulties he had encountered in exercising the comparatively humble office of priest must have come as a shock. The setback which he suffered was no doubt a matter of general knowledge, for, as a priest, he was a community figure. His place in the public eye was greater because, after his ordination, his Bishop had taken the unprecedented step of allowing him to preach, thus underlining his importance, but at

46. *Epistola* 21. 3.

47. *Ibid.* 6.

48. For a discussion of their previous acquaintanceship, see DECRET, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

49. *De duabus animabus* 9. 11.

50. *Secundini Manichaei: Ad Augustinum epistola*.

51. *Conf.* 5. 13. 23 - 5. 14. 25; 9. 5. 13 - 9. 6. 14.

52. *Epistola* 21. 23.

the same time increasing his exposure to possible criticism. All this occurred soon after a period in which his life had undergone a total transformation. In 385 he had dismissed his consort of fifteen years, under the influence of his mother's plans for his marriage. In 387, soon after his baptism, his mother had died. Within no more than a year or two of this, his son, Adeodatus, and one of his closest friends, Nebridius, had also died. Nothing of his past life remained. Even the plans which he had made for his community at Thagaste had been shattered with his ordination. The possibilities of the past were now permanently closed, and his future life was clearly to be that of a Catholic priest. Success in that role in Hippo must have been all important. On the one hand, victory in the debate against Fortunatus could greatly enhance Augustine's reputation and sweep away the remembrance of past difficulties; but on the other hand, defeat could shatter all his hopes, to say the least.

The immediate occasion of the debate was the coming of a mixed delegation of Donatists and Catholics to ask Augustine to challenge Fortunatus to a public confrontation⁵³. The most unlikely make-up of the delegation perhaps can be explained in the light of the religious situation prevailing in Hippo. The Donatists certainly would have seen that, in this talented young priest, the Catholics had acquired a new lease of life, which meant that the Donatists had acquired a new threat. Fortunatus, meanwhile, presented at least a cause of major irritation to the other two groups. The Catholic members of the delegation would be looking to Augustine to prove himself by defeating the Manichee. Although Possidius suggests that it was the need of the Donatists for an able champion which brought them to the Catholic priest⁵⁴, we should recognise that whoever won such a debate, the Donatists would profit. If Augustine won, Fortunatus would be at least discredited, and so less of a thorn in the flesh of the Donatists as well as of the Catholics. If Fortunatus won, the Catholic's new hope would have suffered a severe setback. Even a draw would leave each side with rather less lustre, and thus leave the Donatists looking somewhat more attractive in contrast. All present would have enjoyed a debate of the kind which they found so attractive, and the Donatists would have the pleasure of witnessing the piquant sight of Augustine, the ex-Manichee, being faced with his past⁵⁵. No matter what the outcome, the Donatists would benefit.

It can be seen that the debate was crucial for the two groups represented by the protagonists. Augustine and Fortunatus were both experienced debaters, with different talents but seemingly equally matched. Such a meeting would be a tense occasion, with the arguments taking

53. *Vita* 6.

54. *Ibid.*

55. Cf. later Donatist taunts that Augustine remained a Manichee in outlook: *C. lit. Pet.* 3. 16, 19.

place at a serious level but with neither allowing the other to develop his points at leisure. The audience might miss some of the finer points of the reasoning, but it would be roused by telling points well made. As the debate itself shows in one place, it would be a vocal audience. Most important of all, the members of all three religious groups immediately concerned would accept the authority of the New Testament, though the Manichees would deny the authenticity of parts of the text. Hence, for either participant to win the debate, it would be necessary for him to show that his position was supported by the mutually accepted Scripture.

*The First Day of the Debate ; Despite Challenges from Scripture,
Augustine Maintains that Sin must be Voluntary.*

The contest was held on neutral ground, at the baths. Its subject is nowhere spelled out, but from its content it would seem to have centred upon the Manichean doctrine of the two natures⁵⁶. In the opening stages Augustine attacks Manichean doctrine, whilst Fortunatus asks for a vindication of Manichean morals from the former member of that sect, perhaps having in mind the charge that human semen was consumed at their eucharist⁵⁷. Augustine guardedly admits that he has no knowledge of Manichean immorality, whilst implying that much may have occurred of which he, as an Auditor, was not aware⁵⁸. He is in difficulty and tries to insist that the debate should be about faith not morals. After further verbal parrying, he succeeds in placing Fortunatus on the defensive with questions on the Manichean mythological explanations of the coming of souls into the world. Fortunatus, in attempting to regain the advantage, quotes Scripture⁵⁹, but, more important, he begins to probe weaknesses in Augustine's position, questioning the relationship of the soul to God in order to show that Augustine's view makes God the author of the soul's sin. The debate now moves on to the central issue.

Augustine affirms that all things, including the soul, are created by God *ex nihilo*. Fortunatus points to empirical evidence (the existence of contrary things in the world), and to Scripture (Matthew 15. 12 ; 3. 10 and 7. 19 — the two trees), to support his belief in two opposing natures. The Manichean scriptural exegesis is not challenged by August-

56. *Acta contra Fortunatum Manichaeum* (hereinafter : *Acta*) 19.

57. *De moribus Manichaeorum* 18. 66, *De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum* 46.

58. For the implications of this passage and its inconsistency with Augustine's statements in other works, see DECRET, *op. cit.*, p. 44-47.

59. Fortunatus had previously (3) quoted several passages from the Fourth Gospel on the person and work of Christ. Here (7) he makes a sustained quotation from St. Paul — Philippians 2. 5-8. This passage is an early Christian hymn, probably adapted from the myth of the Heavenly Redeemer, possibly Iranian in origin. F.W. BEARE, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians*, p. 74-75. Beare also gives a select bibliography of recent works on this hymn, 40-62.

ine, and the quotation is not answered. The empirical evidence is dealt with on the basis of man's freewill, in line with the position of the earlier works : « For God made all things good, and ordered them well ; but He did not make sin, and our voluntary sin is the only thing that is called evil⁶⁰. » Man was given freewill so that he might have merit by freely serving God, but, because he has chosen to disobey, those things that should have served him become his punishment. In the ensuing exchange, Fortunatus quotes *in toto* Ephesians 2. 1-18, a passage containing the words, « by nature the children of wrath ».

Augustine's reply is extremely interesting. He claims that the passage supports his position. Thus, he says that the place where sins are mentioned shows that men have freewill — not a fair reading of the words in Ephesians :

And you did he quicken, when ye were dead in your trespasses and sins, wherein aforetime ye walked according to the rulership of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the souls of disobedience⁶¹.

Taken by themselves these words say nothing of the cause of sin. In talking of man's reconciliation to God, Augustine strays yet further from the writer of the Epistle :

For by sinning we were brought into opposition to God ; but by holding to the precepts of Christ we are reconciled to God ; so that we who were dead in sins may be made alive by keeping His precepts, and may have peace with Him in one Spirit, from whom we were alienated, by failure to keep His precepts ; as is set forth in our faith concerning the man who was first created. I ask of you, therefore, according to that passage which has been read, how can we have sins if contrary nature compels us to do what we do ? For he who is compelled by nature to do anything, does not sin. But he who sins, sins by free-will⁶².

The suggestion in this passage that we are reconciled to God by holding the precepts of Christ misses entirely the emphasis upon grace in the Epistle : « For by grace have ye been saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves, for it is a gift of God ; not of works, lest anyone should glory⁶³ ». Several other comments may be made on Augustine's reply. The passing reference to « the man who was first created » suggests that he recognised that the Ephesians passage could not be answered simply in terms of individual freewill. He does not develop this point, however. Next, despite that reference, his statement that only that which is not compelled by nature can be sinful, strongly suggests that he is still thinking of sin as a failure on the part of the individual man. Perhaps

60. *Acta* 15.

61. *Acta* 16 (Ephesians 2. 1-2).

62. *Acta* 17.

63. *Acta* 16 (Ephesians 2. 8-9).

most important of all, is the very fact that Augustine tried to deal specifically with the passage of Scripture quoted. In the earlier part of the debate, Fortunatus had quoted Scripture directly on four occasions, and Augustine had not responded to any of the quotations. He in turn has quoted the Bible only once, a passage from the Psalms. When he answers the citation from Ephesians, it would seem to be at least a strong possibility that he had to do so, in order to remain credible before an audience which had seen the use of Paul by Fortunatus as a compelling argument.

Having made some defence, Augustine returns to the attack, pointing to the difficulties in the Manichean belief in two souls, and asking in conclusion how Paul could say we were « children of wrath », if the soul was part of God, as the Manicheans claimed. In his final speech of the first day on the debate, he begins :

That we should discuss on rational grounds the belief in two natures, has been made obligatory by those who are hearing us. But inasmuch as you have again betaken yourself to the Scriptures, I descend to them, and demand that nothing be passed by, lest by using certain statements we should bring confusion into the minds of those to whom the Scriptures are not well known⁶⁴.

The suggestion that the debate should be at a rational level, which by implication Fortunatus was not maintaining, was no doubt a direct challenge to the exponent of a sect which claimed above all to be able to offer rational grounds for faith⁶⁵. The reference to *descending* to the Scriptures can perhaps be understood as an insinuation that Fortunatus was misusing the Bible to mislead the audience⁶⁶. It must have been, nevertheless, a dangerous thing to say before an audience for most of whom Scripture was the final arbiter. It gives the impression that Augustine felt the pressure of his opponent's use of the sacred text. This impression is re-inforced by the fact that in his concluding remarks he quotes, for the first time in the debate, a passage from the New Testament. The passage quoted, Romans 1. 1-4, is not germane to the debate at this point, but it embarrasses Fortunatus through its description of Christ as being of the seed of David according to the flesh. Augustine claims that Fortunatus will not accept this and so has no right to appeal to Scripture at all. After a brief reply by Fortunatus, the debate breaks up in clamour.

The cause of this clamour is intriguing. It appears from the observation of the notary that the uproar was not caused by any matter of substance in the argument, but, « because they saw that Fortunatus was not willing to receive all things that are written in the *Codex* of the Apostle⁶⁷ ». It is

64. *Acta* 19. It is interesting to contrast this remark with the description by Possidius of Augustine's use of solid argument and the authority of scripture against the Arian Pascentius in 404 : *Vita* 17.

65. *Conf.* 3. 6. 10.

66. Cf. *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* 22. 13 and 22. 15.

67. *Acta* 19.

when the substance of the argument is again raised, by Fortunatus saying that the Word of God has been fettered, that the debate is adjourned. François Decret's suggestion, that perhaps at this point a clique of Catholic parishioners came to the aid of its beleaguered priest, could well be correct⁶⁸. Most significant, however, is the fact that Augustine had deliberately seized upon a well known difference in the use of Scripture by the Manicheans on the one hand, and the Donatists and Catholics on the other. The two latter groups accepted the whole New Testament corpus. The Manichees found it necessary to deny the authenticity of those parts which conflicted with their teachings. The particular passage from Romans which Augustine cited could not be accepted by Fortunatus, for it conflicted with the Manichean belief that Christ was not a man⁶⁹. The predictable result of the introduction of this text would be a split between the groups in the audience, with feelings running high and the majority opposed to the Manichee. It is difficult not to believe that this was a deliberate ploy by Augustine, who had been placed in a difficult position through the use of Scripture by Fortunatus (especially the Ephesians passage), to bring the debate to an end for the day, with his opponent compromised in the eyes of many of those present. Above all Fortunatus would be compromised over the crucial issue of the authority of Scripture. If Augustine had not shown himself to be yet a master of scriptural exegesis, he had shown that he well deserved his reputation as a crowd swaying orator.

*The Second Day of the Debate ; The Authority of the Pauline
Texts Persuades Augustine that Men Sin of Necessity.*

The matter of the authority of Scripture is raised again early on the second day of the debate. At the beginning of the day, Augustine again seems to suggest that an individual sins only if he does so freely : « Because he who sins not voluntarily, sins not at all. This I suppose to be open and perspicuous to all⁷⁰ ». He also uses again the argument that a bound man is not responsible for acts he is compelled to commit unwillingly⁷¹. Fortunatus responds by pointing to a problem in Augustine's view — if God created man with freewill which man then used to sin, was not God responsible for sin ? Sin must have some origin, otherwise a free soul would not choose to sin. It is in the course of this argument that he again refers to Scripture . « And because I can in no way show what I rightly believe unless I should confirm that belief by the authority of the Scriptures, this is therefore what I have insinuated⁷². »

68. DECRET, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

69. BURKITT, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

70. *Acta* 20.

71. Cf. *De duab. anim.* 10. 12.

72. *Acta* 20.

The debate now enters the decisive stage. Answering his antagonist, Augustine says that sin must be of freewill or else it would not deserve punishment. God created all, but the creature is inferior to the creator. The origin of evil is sin, and, following I Timothy 6. 10, the root of all evils is covetousness. There can be no root of a root, so it is unnecessary to look any further for the cause of sin. He concludes by pointing again to weaknesses in the Manichean argument, and demands a reply without evasion, as he claims to have replied to Fortunatus. In truth, however, his answer cannot be said to be satisfactory. Fortunatus asked for the reason why a free soul would choose to sin. Augustine pointed to covetousness. He does not probe the nature of covetousness, indeed he closes the way to such questioning by his insistence that a root cannot have a root. To satisfy Fortunatus, however, it would be necessary to show the origin of covetousness. If it is of God, then God might be said to be responsible for evil. If covetousness arises in the human will (and this is clearly what Augustine intends), then the initial difficulty remains of explaining how a truly free soul could ever give birth to covetousness. Despite his own undoubted problems, however, Augustine can escape for the moment by pointing to equally glaring problems in his opponent's position.

Challenged to deal with these problems, Fortunatus pursues some rather tortuous reasoning, but concludes with a strong defence of the dualist position based on the authority of St. Paul. This defence presents Augustine with a dramatic challenge :

For it is said by the Apostle, that « the mind of the flesh is hostile to God ; is not subject to God, neither indeed can be. » Therefore it is evident from these things that the good soul seems to sin not voluntarily, but by the doing of that which is not subject to the law of God. For it likewise follows that « the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh ; so that ye may not do the things that ye will. » Again : « I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and leading me captive in the law of sin and death. Therefore I am a miserable man ; who shall deliver me from the body of this death, unless it be the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ », « through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world⁷³ ? »

The force of this argument can hardly be overstated. Even viewed in the most dispassionate way, it can be seen that the Pauline texts tell against Augustine. The passages cited are : Romans 8. 7 — « the mind of the flesh is hostile to God ; is not subject to God, neither indeed can be » ; Galatians 5. 17 — « the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh ; so that ye may not do the things that ye will » ; Romans 7. 23-25 — « I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and leading me captive in the law of sin and death. Therefore I am a miserable man ; who shall deliver me from the body of this death, unless it be the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ » ;

73. *Acta* 21.

Galatians 6. 14 — « through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world ». Paul was not a dualist, and certainly Fortunatus was misusing the Epistles. These passages, however, do point to man's helplessness before the law, from which only the grace of God can free him. Thus far in the debate Augustine has maintained that man is separated from God by freely choosing to sin, and that he is saved by his response to the coming of Christ, which coming is itself God's act of grace. He is now challenged to account for a fact which he had previously denied, that men do sin without a free act of the rational will. He is challenged, not by empirical examples, which, as remarked earlier, could have been explained without any change in his position, but by no less an authority than that of the Apostle Paul. Answer had to be made, and it had to deal with the problems raised by the specific texts. When we remember the occasion of the challenge, and the nature of the audience which will judge the response, the urgency of the situation becomes apparent.

The beginning of Augustine's reply shows that he is well aware of the nature of the challenge :

I recognize and embrace the testimonies of the divine Scriptures, and I will show in a few words, as God may deign to grant, how they are consistent with my faith. I say that there was free exercise of will in that man who was first formed. He was so made that absolutely nothing could resist his will, if he had willed to keep the precepts of God. But after he voluntarily sinned, we who have descended from his stock were plunged into necessity⁷⁴.

The debate was soon to conclude, but whether Augustine had really demonstrated the desired consistency, or whether he spent the rest of his life trying to do so, is an open question. Superficially the objections of Fortunatus have been met admirably. For the first time in the debate, or elsewhere, Augustine clearly describes man as being bound to sin as a result of Adam's transgression, thus accounting for the slavery described by Paul. Adam's descendants did not create this slavery for themselves, thus they could not help sinning, but *sin still stems from freewill, for Adam was free*. Closer examination, however, shows that, though the immediate and crucial difficulty of explaining the Pauline texts has been surmounted, the most basic question posed by Fortunatus still has not been answered. Why did a totally untrammelled free soul ever fall into sin ? Whether men fall individually or whether the race fell in Adam, this question remains equally vexing. Augustine himself was certainly aware of the need to say more about it in his later works⁷⁵.

This weakness in the reply may arise in the mind of the reader of the debate, and one may conjecture that it also arose in Augustine's. It is indeed fascinating to speculate on what reading he might have done, or what discussions he might have had, in the period between the sessions

74. *Acta* 22.

75. E.g. *De lib. arb.* 3. 24-25.

of the debate. Fortunatus, however, was given no chance to raise such questions even if they occurred to him. Augustine had made a scoring point in the debate, and he now continues in such a way as to carry his audience with him, using an argument which is not fully consistent, but which must have been influential in the heat of the contest. He appeals directly to the experience of his hearers, to show how freedom to sin can be turned into necessity. Their minds will move from his argument to their own behaviour, they will see that what he says is true, and they will be given no opportunity to reflect that the truth of his empirical description in no way leads to an understanding of how a truly free soul first comes to sin :

But each of us can by a little consideration find that what I say is true. For to-day in our actions before we are implicated by any habit, we have free choice of doing anything or not doing it. But when by that liberty we have done something and the pernicious sweetness and pleasure of that deed has taken hold upon the mind, by its own habit the mind is so implicated that afterwards it cannot conquer what by sinning it has fashioned for itself⁷⁶.

Augustine is here claiming that the observable power of habit demonstrates the truth of what he had said previously about mankind being bound by the sin of the first man. In point of fact, however, far from demonstrating it, it would seem that he has made it incumbent upon himself to show how the two things are consistent. If we are « plunged into necessity » by the sin of Adam, how can we be said to have « free choice of doing anything or of not doing it »? It might be argued that Augustine is applying Paul's description of man's bondage only to man under the law, the man who is under grace being free. This would be consistent with his writings in the years following the debate, and with what he later says of his position at that time⁷⁷. But, if it is man under grace who is free to form habits by sinning, then that part of the argument which showed how man was bound to sin has lost all value. In that case, Augustine would have explained the Pauline text by seeing man under the law as bound to sin, but would be left with the problem of explaining why a free soul (in this case one under grace), chooses to sin. Further, the passage itself suggests that Augustine is not saying that the power to form habits belongs only to man under grace, for he points to the fact that Fortunatus (presumably not considered by Augustine to be under grace) swears by the Paraclete, as evidence of the power of habit. In this case his argument would be flawed, for he has already held that the descendants of the first man were bound by necessity. If Fortunatus was bound by necessity how did he have the freedom to form the habit of

76. *Acta* 22.

77. Thus : *Expositio* 84 *propositionum epistolae ad Romanos* 44 and 45, *Expositio epistolae ad Galatas* 46, *Ad Simplicianum de diversis quaestionibus* 1. 9. For his later comments : *Retract.* 2. 1, *C. duas ep.* *Pel.* 1. 22. 10 and 1. 24. 11, *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 8. 4.

swearing? An alternative defence of Augustine's words might be based on the argument that the necessity of which he talks is not such as to remove all freedom. Thus man (whether under law or grace) might be plunged into necessity yet still retain enough freedom to form habits. The onus would remain upon Augustine, however, of showing how this is possible.

There is a yet greater difficulty in Augustine's reply. He did not claim merely that the free formation of habits is consistent with the fact that man is bound by the sin of Adam. He said that the way men freely form habits *demonstrates* the truth of the statement that we are bound by necessity in that way: « But each of us can by a little consideration find that what I say is true⁷⁸. ». This attempt to give original sin some kind of empirical grounding clearly fails. The power of habit is incontrovertible and certainly can result in man doing things which he feels to be against his will. This in no way shows, however, how the sin of primal man could plunge his descendants into necessity. We know that we can create a form of compulsion through habit within ourselves, but how such compulsion could be passed from generation to generation requires to be explained. It is not demonstrated as a fact merely by an appeal to our cognisance of the fact that we do form habits. Augustine saw this difficulty and tried to meet it in his subsequent works⁷⁹ but at this point explanation was lacking.

The deficiency in the argument is supplied by the subtlety of the rhetoric. Augustine could have lighted upon no more effective illustration of the power of habit than that of swearing, for swearing was a notoriously deeply ingrained and intractable habit amongst the people of Hippo⁸⁰. He has shown his ability as an orator, the ability which made him so important to the Catholics of the town. Fortunatus, in quoting the Pauline texts, was perhaps guilty of a debating error, by giving his opponent the opportunity to divert the argument in such a way that the audience would lose sight of a weakness in his position. What is of significance to our understanding of Augustine's development, however, is the fact that Fortunatus had compelled him to face the challenge of the words of St. Paul. Had Fortunatus kept demanding that Augustine explain how a truly free soul comes to sin, the Manichean might have ended the day in a more favourable position. On the basis of his earlier position, Augustine could not offer this explanation. In the debate he did not offer a consistent view of the origin of evil or of the freedom of the will. What he did do, and what was vitally important to him in the context of the debate, was to show why some Pauline texts were not incompatible with his position. To do this, he brought together the power of habit, with which he had long been familiar, and the doctrine

78. *Acta* 22.

79. E.g. *De lib. arb.* 3. 20.

80. *De sermone Domini in monte* 1. 17. 51, *Exp. ep. ad Gal.* 9, *Vita* 25.

of the fall, to which he had referred in earlier works whilst never working out its implications.

Within the debate, this was enough to save the day. Having seized the initiative, he pursues it vigorously. He at last takes up the reference to the evil tree, which Fortunatus had made on the first day, a move which suggests that he needed to answer the Manichean interpretation of the Gospel passages, if he was to satisfy the audience. In developing his position on the relationship of freewill, necessity and habit, a relationship which still does not become fully clear, he quotes freely from the Scriptures, in marked contrast to the earlier stages of the debate when he had quoted only twice from the New Testament⁸¹. From this point on, he harries his opponent with increasing brusqueness: « Since I see that you cannot reply to my enquiries⁸²... » « Again you are questioning me. Reply to my enquiries⁸³ », until the latter is forced to yield: « What then am I to say⁸⁴ ? » This admission of defeat may reflect his inability to carry the day for the Manichean cause in this particular debate, rather than an acknowledgement that his position has been shown to be inadequate⁸⁵. In any event, the debate is over. The Catholic priest has triumphed, greatly enhancing his own position. The Manichean missionary leaves town. The Donatists have enjoyed a lively debate, are rid of a nuisance, and are at least no worse off vis-à-vis the Catholics.

The Aftermath of the Debate ; The Crucial Pauline Texts.

For Augustine, however, a question has crystallised which must be dealt with immediately. St. Paul demands a more adequate answer. The words of the Apostle quoted by Fortunatus point clearly to the fact that man does sin against his will: « The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh ; so that ye may not do the things that ye will » (Galatians 5. 17)⁸⁶ ; « I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and leading me captive in the law of sin and death » (Romans 7. 23, which is part of an extended description of man in bondage to sin — Romans 7. 15-25) ; « (We) were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest » (Ephesians 2. 3). Before the debate, in the works in which he still maintained that only that which was freely willed could be sinful, Augustine never quoted the Galatians or Ephesians verses, and he quoted from Romans 7. 15-25 only once directly and once in

81. Romans 1. 1-4 at the end of the first day (19), and 1 Timothy 6. 10 on the second day (21).

82. *Acta* 25.

83. *Acta* 31.

84. *Acta* 36.

85. DECRET, *op. cit.*, p. 325-327.

86. The meaning of Paul's words in Galatians 5. 17 is open to question but Augustine certainly understood them to indicate a restriction on man's ability to do good. e.g. *Exp. ep. ad Gal.* 46.

paraphrase⁸⁷, in neither case suggesting that man is culpable for acts committed against his will. No doubt his own integrity of thought would have led him eventually to see the difficulty of reconciling his position with such Pauline texts. In the crucible of public debate, the matter was precipitated.

The fact that, in his next works after the debate, Augustine was willing to accept that man could be held culpable for acts committed unwillingly, has been noted above. In view of the nature of the challenge which caused him to shift his position in the debate, it is highly significant that in these subsequent works he uses the very passages brought against him by Fortunatus, as the ground of his argument: in *De libero arbitrio*: Galatians 5. 17, Romans 7. 15, 18 and 19, Ephesians 2. 3; in *De fide et symbolo*: Romans 7. 25, Ephesians 2. 3. It is noteworthy too, that in the years following the debate, up to 394/5, he was writing books on two of the Pauline Epistles: Romans and Galatians⁸⁸. The undertaking of these projects so soon after the debate suggests that that event was at least partly responsible for Augustine's new approach to St. Paul. The works themselves support this view. In his comments on Romans 7. 23-25, Augustine relates man's captivity under the law of sin, to the transgression of Adam, and concludes the section by quoting Ephesians 2. 3⁸⁹. In the exposition of Galatians 5. 17, the Epistle to the Romans is quoted six times, including Romans 7. 25, which occurs in a passage which states that the body even of a man under grace serves the law of sin⁹⁰. The three texts, by this time, clearly have become closely associated with each other in his mind, and each can play an important role in explicating the others. It is significant also, that all or part of the same three texts are used repeatedly by Augustine in his contention with the Pelagians, whose position on freewill bore considerable resemblance to his own early position⁹¹.

Once Augustine had come to accept that men do sin against their will, as a result of inheriting a nature corrupted by the sin of Adam, it became necessary for him to deal with further questions which arose from this. The most difficult was that of explaining why a free soul ever chose to sin,

87. *De vera relig.* 53. 103, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* 1. 25. 43.

88. *Exp. ep. ad Gal.*, *Expositio 84 propositionum epistolae ad Romanos*, *Epistolae ad Romanos inchoata expositio*.

89. *Exp. 84 prop. ep. ad Rom.* 45-46.

90. *Exp. ep. ad Gal.* 46.

91. E.g. *De natura et gratia* — Galatians 5. 17 occurs at 50. 58; 53. 61; 54. 63; 55. 66. Ephesians 2. 3 at 3. 3; 67. 81. Romans 7. 25 at 53. 61; 55. 65. *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* — Galatians 5. 17 at 1. 4. 5; 1. 31. 35; 2. 10. 23. Ephesians 2. 3 at 2. 13. 20. Romans 7. 25 at 1. 21. 36; 2. 11. 24. *De perf. iust. hom.* — Galatians 5. 17 at 2. 1; 6. 12; 8. 17. Ephesians 2. 3 at 2. 3. *De gratia Christi et de peccato originali* — Ephesians 2. 3 at 1. 50; 55. Romans 7. 25 at 1. 39. 43; 2. 42. 29. (For the purpose of these examples the only citations from Romans listed are those of 7. 25. The list would be greatly extended by the inclusion of all the citations from Romans 7. 15-25).

but he also had to show how the consequences of the first sin are transmitted to later generations, and why it is just for Adam's descendants to be punished for his sin. It has been observed above that these problems arose, overtly or covertly, in the debate. It is with precisely these same problems that the last chapters of *De libero arbitrio* wrestle. Whilst it is not suggested that these chapters give the last word of Augustine on any of the questions, they do indicate the main lines of his final position.

It is plain that the stimulus to the evolution of his view of the situation of man, at this point in his career, was given by the need to cope with undeniable scriptural authority, and that this was first forced upon him in public debate by Fortunatus. Though Augustine's interpretation of Paul entirely rejected the Manichean mythology, it cannot be denied that it involved an understanding of man as pessimistic as that of the Manicheans. Since, in the end, man's understanding of his own position is considerably more important to him than the mythology with which he accounts for his being in such a position, Augustine's encounter with Paul, in the debate against Fortunatus, was a momentous one for the later Western tradition, over which he was to exercise such dominance.

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