The role of Charity in the Mystical Body of Christ according to Saint Augustine

There is perhaps no other doctrinal term which pervades the writings of St. Augustine and permeates the whole structure of his doctrine to the extent that the word « charity » does. The place that is accorded to it is evident from the fact that he calls it « a great good » and placing it in the catagory of virtues he characterizes it as « a great and true virtue ». There is nothing more excellent than charity; it exceeds all of God's natural gifts. For that reason it is landed as the excellentissima charitas constituting the supereminen vs via toward salvation. The Bishop asks: « What is more precious? What more luminous? What more solid? What more useful? What more safe? » « What is dearer than charity? » To state it simply, it is « the greatest divine gift ».

It constitutes a vital part of religion. In the early days of his regained Christianity, St. Augustine gives expression to his conviction of the necessity of charity in the religion of man. The God of a Christian, he maintains, cannot be worshipped rightly except through faith, hope and charity. The life-giving element, the meritorious factor in such worship is charity. « What is piety », asks the Bishop, « but the worship of God? Whence is He worshipped except through charity? »

Charity constitutes not merely a part of Christian morality but the very core of it. It is the innermost and the most radical act of the soul of man. By its permeating power it affects the will whereby man offers himself and his acts to God. For this reason charity is the highest expres-

1. Ep. 185, 10, 43 (PL 33, 811-12; CSEL 57, 37) : « magnum bonum »; Sermo 145, 4 (PL 38, 793); De grat. et lib. arb. 18, 39 (PL 44, 903).
2. Ep. 167, 3, 11 (PL 33, 737; CSEL 44, 598) : « magna et vera virtus ».
3. Enar. in Ps. 105, 9 (PL 37, 1342-3).
4. Sermo 145, 4 (PL 38, 793) : « omnia superantem ».
7. Sermo 138, 3, 3 (PL 38, 764).
8. In Io. Ev. tr. IX, 8 (PL 35, 1462).
sion of morality and in it lies the acme of perfection. Christian morality and Christian charity belong to one and the same order and to one and the same organic unity: for just as the soul unites the various members of the body and gives them life and purpose, so too charity is the principle that pervades, animates, and unites all the Christian virtues, giving them both genuine value and direction towards life eternal. All morality can be summed up in a single principle: to love those things which ought to be loved.

Charity is an indispensable part of the inner life of the soul. The supernatural life of grace cannot be infused into the soul unless in the companionship of charity; nor can the life of grace abide in the soul despoiled of charity. To live the life of God means to have grace and to have charity. Likewise faith and hope—the two other great elements of the internal life reaching out to God—are ineffective in attaining justice and salvation if unaccompanied by charity. Christian life is founded on faith, Christian hope gives it direction, Christian charity the living power unto salvation.

No less important is the role played by charity in the corporate spiritual life of the Church which is the Mystical Body of Christ. To be sure the Holy Ghost is the soul of Christ’s Body but the charity which He diffuses through the members of that Body constitutes, in union with the grace of Christ, the life-giving blood-stream vivifying such members as do not obstruct its flow into their souls. It is with this role of charity in the souls of the faithful as members of Christ’s Mystical Body that we are principally concerned. This corporate function of charity cannot however be severed from a study of its nature and effects in general.

No work on Christian charity can be historically complete without a study of St. Augustine who has so engrossed himself in St. John and St. Paul that he can be called another St. John and St. Paul. The Bishop of Africa presents us with a complete doctrine. More than that, charity has permeated all that he has written to such an extent that Gilson could say that « a doctrine is Augustinian in the measure that it tends to organize itself completely around charity ». And Switalski states: « Charity or love of God and the neighbor, the queen of virtues, occupies a central position in Augustine’s ethics which are saturated with it and which can be entirely reduced to it ». Indeed, he is the doctor of charity. Christian art portrays him with a heart radiating with the flames of charity.

SOURCES

If St. Augustine lavishes unstinted praise upon Christian charity he is consciously reflecting the sentiments of Holy Writ. He asks what is higher than the Scriptures and what is higher in the Scriptures than charity, which "the divine Scriptures praise and preach so much." In the Bishop's appraisal, charity indicates the most excellent way and occupies the most excellent place in the books of the Bible. Their pages command nothing but love (charitas) and condemn nothing but covetousness (cupiditas); they have as their purpose the inspiration, nourishment and strengthening of charity on the one hand, and the overcoming, diminution and extirpation of cupidity on the other. The Bishop thus envisages the Christian religion, morality and piety as converging upon charity, whereas the world, flesh and satan as nurtured upon cupidity.

It is true that to the Old Testament belongs fear and to the New charity, nevertheless both Testaments are relevant to charity because Christ belongs to both. Whatever is contained in the Old Testament presages the advent of Christ and therefore prepares the way for charity; whatever is contained in the New Testament embodies Christ who is the very personification of charity. If Christ is the central figure of the New Covenant then His unqualified and all-embracing recommendation of charity is the focal point of His moral doctrine and worship, and the New Testament is a guarantee of its excellence.

There is no passage bearing on charity in the Gospels that Augustine does not exploit to the full over and over again in his voluminous works. The words of the Deuteronomy 6:5, containing the first and greatest commandment, and those of the Leviticus 19, 18, containing the second great commandment—both as quoted by the Synoptics—form the very heart of his religion, spirituality and mysticism. For both St. John and St. Paul charity is unquestionably the greatest virtue, and Augustine realizes this fully well. St. Paul's sublime canticle of charity runs

17. Enar. in Ps. 103, 9 (PL 37, 1342-3).
19. Enar. in Ps. 103, 9 (PL 37, 1344): In omnibus Scripturis supereminentissimam viam, supereminentissimum locusam charitas obtinet.
22. Mt 22:37; Mc 12:30; Lc 10:27.
through Augustine's writings like the ever-recurring refrain of a sweet melody. From St. John the African Bishop draws deeply of the quickening waters of charity. In the Gospel, he finds a solemn and manifest recommendation of this great virtue in the Joannine apothegm « God in charity », for « it is a brief praise and a great one : brief in speech, great in thought ». In the First Epistle he finds charity to pervade its whole content : even when the Apostle appears to be speaking of other things, he instinctively (in St. Augustine's opinion) returns to charity so that every idea expressed there is impregnated with the spirit of charity.

The question now arises whether St. Augustine was beholden to the Greek philosophers for some ingredients of his notion of charitas. For Plato eros was an inward force driving man to an attainable good. Since there are three parts to the Platonic soul, the motive force is put into the service of that part that gains the upper hand in man : it can be used by the base part for lust, by the « spirited » part for honor, or by reason for reaching « the sea of beauty » — the world of forms. And, thus because eros is an endeavor, an urge, a thriving, it cannot be ascribed to God : Plato states that if we were divine, « then we would not love ».

Plato's eros takes on a new form in Plotinus without change of essential traits : it is an enthusiasm for knowledge, an impulse for the good, an urge for the beautiful. The stages of Plotinian eros consist in an emancipation of the lower or baser forms of being in order to attain the nobler or higher forms : by this innate motive power the will raises itself from corporal beauty to that of the soul, and then from the soul to the original Beauty. This highest stage is reached by philosophy and art. In its noblest form, therefore, eros-love is an unrest of the soul toward « the One » — God.

Balducelli maintains that the eros-love of the Neoplatonists and the charitas-love of St. Paul were understood by St. Augustine as being basically the same. Nygren contends that the Bishop fused the Hellen-
istic eros and the Christian agape into one, so that his charitas is neither eros nor agape but a synthesis of them. St. Augustine's concept of charity is above all a synthesis of the revealed sources — it is to these that he constantly appeals for this doctrine — but the metaphysics of the more intricate nature of charity and the dynamics of its act and assimilative power are not without Platonic and Neoplatonic direction.

A marked difference between the Greek eros and the biblically-Augustinian charity is the diverse point of their origination. Their starting-points are poles apart. The eros-love of the Greek philosophers takes its origin in man, and sweeps upward, if it is to seek the noblest and the highest goal; the Christian love of charity descends from above, anchors in man, and then moves upward to the source of its origin, thus creating a complete circuit embracing earth and heaven.

DIVINE ORIGIN

Being and all the endowments of nature are usually called "goods" ( bona) and they proceed from God: "ex te bona omnia Deus." Endowments of a superior order, gratuitously conferred upon man, are usually designated as "gifts" ( dona). Charity is such a gift of God, who has gratuitously bestowed it upon the recipient. By the new power conferred upon man in charity he transcends the natural powers innate in his soul; he is now enabled to reach out for God in a manner that tends to possess Him in immediate vision. Among all the gifts bestowed upon man with the intention to sanctify him charity is the outstanding real gift: with it all the other gifts attain the purpose for which they have been given, without it they become worthless. Charity is the gift which is proper to those who are holy.

Charity, therefore, is not a product of man's efforts, it does not originate in man's free will. It cannot arise from the sufficiency of our own
will nor from the letter of the law. Charity is not from man — "non ex nobis", but from God — "ex Deo est". If charity is a divine gift, then the capacity for loving God is not from us, but from Him who has given us the power to love Him. "Deus non amatur, nisi de Deo". Expressing this doctrine in the words of St. John, Augustine says that we would not be capable of loving God unless He loved us first, and in loving us transmitted the power to love Him. "Man has not the where-with to love, unless from God".

In the gift of charity God furnishes us with the subject of love which is God Himself and with the power of loving. The fulfillment of His will is rendered possible by this power of love: "da quod jubes, et jube quid vis". In order that we may love God in a salutary way He must abide in us through grace, and (so to say) love Himself from and through us by the charity which is infused into our hearts. He operates in us by arousing, enlightening, and stimulating us to His love.

There is of course a divine charity with which God loves Himself and us: this is a divine act. But the charity of which we speak is the love which He bestows on us and with which we are enabled to love Him. Justice is another classical example at hand. There is an essential difference between justice which is the cause of justification and justice which is the effect of the justifying cause. God alone is just by that justice which is His inviolate sanctity and His very Being, wherefore He can be the sole justifying agent for others. Man is just by that justice which comes to Him from God and renders him intrinsically just. God is charity; subsisting love, the sole and whole fountain of love; being and love are identical in Him. From Him descends into the soul of man the virtue of love — a spark of His own love — to render our hearts capable of loving Him who is the sole beatifying object of man.

Charity is especially associated with the person of the Holy Ghost.

41. De spir. et lit., I, 33, 59 (PL 44, 240; CSEL, 60, 279) : nec per sufficientiam propriae voluntatis, nec per litteram legis.
42. De grat. Christi, 27, 22 (PL 44, 370; CSEL 42, 141); Sermo 145, 4 (PL 38, 793).
43. Ep. 228, 7 (PL 33, 1016-7; CSEL 37, 489).
44. Ep. 140, 37, 85 (PL 33, 576-7; CSEL 44, 233).
45. Sermo 169, 11, 14 (PL 38, 923); Sermo 34, 2, 3 (PL 38, 210).
47. De grat. et lib. urb., 18, 38 (PL 44, 904).
51. Sermo 128, 2, 4 (PL 38, 715) : Ut ergo ames Deum, habitet in te Deus, et amet se de te; id est, ad amorem suum moveat te, accendat te, illuminet te, excitet te.
52. Confer. XII, 15, 20 (PL 32, 833; ed. M. Skutella, 508) : i Quantum interest... inter justitiem justificantem, et justitiam quem justificatione faciunt est.
53. Ep. 185, 9, 37 (PL 33, 809; CSEL 57, 33) : "Justas enim et justificans non est, nisi Deus."
CHARITY AND MYSTICAL BODY ACCORDING TO ST AUGUSTINE

It is said to be « the greatest gift55 » of the Holy Ghost who is its « singular source56 ». We are told to hold fast and forever in our minds the solemn truth that charity is diffused in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. This Pauline doctrine, contained in the Epistle to the Romans 5 : 5, is quoted a countless number of times in Augustine, defending the gratuity of the divine gift against the Pelagians, and for this purpose the said verse affords him a classical proof57.

The Holy Ghost and charity are not identified in the writings of St. Augustine except metonymically. The third divine Person is the source, the cause of charity, and charity is the concomitant element, the effect. They must coexist: wherever the effect is found there too the cause will be present. Where charity is present in the soul there too is the inhabiting person of the Holy Ghost58. Charity is said to be inspired by the Holy Ghost59, and to be « a certain aspersion » of the Holy Ghost in our hearts60. « When a person begins to have charity, he will have the Holy Ghost; if he should not have it, he will be without the Holy Ghost61. »

Charity, therefore, is present in our souls not by human but by divine power which enables us to reach out to God and to attain Him not by our own strength but by His62. Because the moral precepts cannot be fulfilled without the aid of divine grace, man is constrained to acknowledge his own weakness and to seek the aid of the Savior. In this manner the constraints of the law lead man to faith, faith brings him hope and the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost diffuses charity in man's heart, and charity fulfills the law. And thus charity becomes the « fulness of the law »63. Man's eternal destiny is the result of a concatenation of causes: salvation results from the fulfillment of God's will by man and from the performance of good deeds; these in turn are dependent upon charity, and charity is from the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost is God from God. The circuit from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven is consummated64.

56. In Io. Ep. tr. 7, 6 (PL 35, 2032) : Hoc est proprium donum ; ipse Spiritus Sanctus est singularis bonus.
58. Sermo 169, 12, 15 (PL 38, 923-24).
59. De mor. Ecc. I, 17, 31 (PL 32, 1324) : « charitas Dei, qua inspirata Spiritu Sancto... ».
60. Sermo 378 (PL 39, 1673-4) : « Arríam habemus aspersionem quandam in cordibus nostris Spiritus Sancti. »
61. In Io. Ev. tr. 9, 8 (PL 35, 1462).
62. Ep. 218, 2 (PL 33, 990 ; CSEL 57, 426) ; Ep. 145, 7 (PL 33, 595 ; CSEL 44, 272).
63. Ep. 145, 3 (PL 33, 593 ; CSEL 44, 268).
64. Sermo 156, 5, 5 (PL 38, 852-3).
Although the diffusion of charity in the heart of man is intimately associated with the person of the Holy Ghost, it is a gift which proceeds from the Father and the Son as well. Augustine fully recognizes the principle that all extra-divine works are common to the three persons of the Trinity even if they are predicated usually of one. If certain actions are appropriated to one person in preference to the other two, the reasons are to be sought in the eternal trinitarian processions. Charity is attributed to the Holy Ghost by reason of His peculiar procession and of His relationship on that account to the first two divine persons. For He proceeds from the divine will (as the Son does from the intellect as the Father's Word) and is the mutual love of the Father and the Son. Hence the Holy Spirit is the subsisting Love and the Uncreated Gift of the Father and Son, whereas His appropriated product — charity — is the created and finite gift produced in the heart of man.

St. Augustine's doctrine on the origin of charity and his frequent allusion to Romans 5:5 can be better understood if they are considered in the perspective of the Pelagian heresy which provoked the emphasis placed upon this doctrine. The point of contention between the Bishop of Hippo and Pelagian naturalism was precisely whether charity was from God or from man. The Pelagians maintained that our knowledge of the law came to us from God, but that charity from ourselves. St. Augustine's answer is that charity which does not come from God cannot be true Christian virtue.

The Saint argues that if knowledge of the law comes from God and causes charity which is from ourselves, then that which is less is from God and that which is more is from ourselves. A paradoxical situation develops: without the knowledge of the law (which knowledge is from God) we cannot know, and yet without the gift of charity from God we can love. « What is more stupid, ye more insane than to profess that knowledge which without charity puffs up is from God, and that charity which causes knowledge not to be puffed up is from us? »

If God is the cause of every salutary action because He supplies the power that is necessary to execute the action, what is the role of the human recipient under such causality? Man is not merely a passive agent making use of the administrated power but a cooperating agent adding

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66. *In Io. Ev. tr. 110*, 17, 3 (PL, 35, 1922) : « Inseparabilla manque sunt opera non solum Patris et Filii, verum etiam Spiritus Sancti. »
69. *De grat. et lib. arb.*, 19, 40 (PL, 44, 905).
71. *De grat. et lib. arb.*, 19, 40 (PL, 44, 902).
his share of action in the production of the effect. The divine action and power antecedent to the action of the human will are those of God, and Him alone. Once man is aroused and moved, and finds himself in the process of action, God continues to work conjointly with the spiritual faculties of man. The effect may thus be ascribed entirely to God, or from the standpoint of man’s cooperation as being the joint effect of God and man.

However, without God’s instigation of the will and without His continuing cooperation in the process when man has already acceded to the divine solicitations, man can perform no deed that is conducive to life eternal72. « God performs many good deeds in man which man does not perform; man however performs none that God does not cause man to do73 ». When we deal with God’s aid as it is applied to the free will and moves it salutarily, and try to distinguish what is God’s and what is man’s we enter into a domain where some things are pervious to man’s understanding while others are veiled in mystery. Augustine, the genius of Western Christianity, came to such impasses in his doctrine on efficacious grace, free will, and predestination74.

Summarily, charity which is the key-word in the salvation of man must originate with God because it is not a part of man’s natural endowments. If God is the source of all good in the natural order, the more so in the gratuitous order. The will, the desire, the urge to do good emanate from Him who is goodness by essence. These acts of the will are nothing else but charity which is the mainspring of all our actions75.

KINDS OF LOVE

In one of his sermons76 St. Augustine carefully distinguishes between different kinds of love and goes to the trouble of explaining them. The love that has been hitherto spoken of as a gift of God is the divine love, whose most proper name is charity. Together with faith and hope, it forms the heart of the Christian religion and piety; in a sense, it is even greater than they, because faith and hope are to no avail if this most excellent gift is wanting; and if possessed, all the other divine gifts will not be wanting77. With charity one is just, without it unjust even if gifted with faith and hope. In final analysis the virtue of charity determines whether one is holy, lives in union with God, is one with Christ or not.

73. Contra duas ep. Pel. II, 9, 21 (PL 44, 586; CSEL 60, 482).
75. Contra duas ep. Pel., II, 9, 21 (PL 44, 586; CSEL 60, 482).
76. Sermo 349 (PL, 39, 1529).
77. Sermo 349, 1, 1 (PL 39, 1529) : « Ubi autem ipsa est, sola esse non potest ». 
In contradistinction to divine love, stands human love which is subdivided into licit and illicit love. Licit human love is not culpable; on the contrary, to be wanting in such love is reprehensible. This type of love surrounds us in our daily lives: a wife, children, friends, citizens are to be loved with such a love. In these relationships there exists a certain spiritual bond by which men are united in mind and heart. The expression of this bond is love. This kind of love does not belong to Christians exclusively, but is the common property of all men — infidels, Jews, Heretics. Do not also these men love their wives, children, brothers, neighbours, relatives, friends? It is, therefore, natural and human to possess this love, for it serves an important purpose in society. In fact, such as are devoid of it should not be reputed men.

Illicit love, for example the love of another's wife, a prostitute, is sinful. In warning Christians against illicit love, the Bishop appeals, in the manner of St. Paul, to the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ. Just as through licit intercourse man and wife become one body, so also through illicit intercourse man and prostitute are made one body. But this is unbecoming for one who is a member of Christ, one with His Body, and purchased by His blood. Furthermore such illicit love is a negation of the love of God and cannot coexist with it in the same soul.

Between licit and illicit human love is found what St. Augustine terms a *turpis amor* by which the spiritual faculty of the human soul debases itself by seeking as its end values lower than itself. The soul by the innate power of its free will can tend downward or upward. By the very fact that it is spiritual and indestructible it must have a spiritual and indestructible good as its final end: God. No inferior or intermediate good must hinder it from tending toward the Supreme Good. In the vocabulary of the Bishop there is a proper (and almost technical) term to express this degradation of the human soul: cupidity. It is the root of all evils: « you hear the Apostle saying that cupidity is the root of all evil. »

Augustine defines cupidity as the love of seeking and obtaining temporal possessions. This does not mean that the possessions of this world and temporal things cannot be loved at all, but it does mean that our love cannot rest in them as in an end or make them the sole purpose of life, but must refer them to the creator. Augustine's morality and

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78. Ibid., 2, 2 (PL 39, 1530).
79. I Cor. 6: 15-16.
81. De div. quaest. LXXXIII, 35, 2 (PL 40, 24): « Est enim turpis (amor), quo animus se ipsa inferiora sectatur... »
82. Ibid.
84. De Trin., IX, 8 (PL 42, 967-8): « Aut cupiditate, aut charitate: non quo non sit (MS Lov.: non quod non sit) amanda creatura; sed si ad creatorem refertur ille amor, non jam cupiditas. »
division of mankind revolve around two concepts: charity and cupidity. The terms stand out in his writings as two opposing poles, and mankind is divided, according as it possesses the one or the other, into two world-camps. *The hope of obtaining and keeping temporal things is charity's poison; the diminution of cupidity is charity's nourishment; want of cupidity is charity's perfection*.

St. Augustine makes use of the term *amare* or *amor* indiscriminately for the love of God, of man (be it licit or illicit love), and of temporal things. He defines sin as being an inordinate love of creatures. The term *charitas* is hallowed, in its use, for the love of God, and of oneself and of neighbor for God's sake. This is salutary love: it is conducive to eternal salvation. The substantive *dilectio* is equated with *charitas* although it bears no technical character. Even within the domain of charity there are degrees of the perfection of love; these are determined by the manner in which we love the object and by the intensity of that love. If the soul loving God is able to ascend the heights where she loves the Supreme Good and nothing else, she has attained the purest and consummate charity. The perfection of charity lies therein that the subject that loves and the object that is loved are in possession of an eternal element: the everlasting, spiritual soul embracing in love an eternal and immutable Spirit.

A VIRTUE

What is the nature of charity in the writings of St. Augustine? The definition of charity is brought within the sphere of the definition of a virtue, or inversely virtue is defined in terms of charity. The works of Plotinus failed to provide Augustine with an adequate definition of a

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88. *Sermo* 22, 3 (PL 38, 143-4): *Amando ergo creaturam inordinat, contra usum honestum, contra licitum, contra ipsius creatoris legem et voluntatem amando creaturam peccas*.
89. *Enarr. in Ps.* 30, 5 (PL 36, 260): *Amor Dei, amor proximi charitas est*.
93. *De Trin.*, XV, 8, 32 (PL 42, 1083): *Charitatem voco, qua amantur ea quae non sunt prae ipso amante contemenda: id est, quod aeternum est, et quod amare ipsum aeternum potest. Deusigitur et animus quo amatur, charitas proprie dicitur purgatissima et consummata, si nihil aliud amat*.
virtue⁹⁴, so that he borrows that of Cicero⁹⁵: «Virtus est animi habitus, naturae modo atque rationi consentaneus⁹⁶ Cicero, in turn, was beholden for his definition to the writers of the early Stoia who envisioned the purpose of life as consisting in virtue, and consequently defined virtue as life according to nature⁹⁷. Augustine would have given his full approval to this definition of a virtue if there were but a natural order. He asserts that the pagan by his natural reason alone could not know what was in accordance with that nature of man who was freed from the bonds of sin, raised to the dignity of a new life, and destined to eternal bliss by the power of the death of Jesus Christ⁹⁸.

St. Augustine did find a study of the four cardinal virtues among the Greek philosophers⁹⁹, but his Christian sense was able to reduce these to some phase of charity. His integration of these virtues into the Christian pattern of life involves charity as the focal point. Man's supreme end is happiness which lies in the attainment and fruition of the highest good. In this life as well as the next, if man is to unite himself with God, he must do this through charity. But here below, created in the midst of rational and irrational creatures, which can either serve and further him in the attainment of God or stem and obstruct him, he must be possessed with the four virtues¹⁰⁰.

Viewing the cardinal virtues from the vantage-point of charity, temperance is love that devotes itself wholly to the object that is loved; fortitude is love which willingly suffers all on account of the object that is loved; justice is love which gives itself to the service of the subject that is loved; prudence is love that distinguishes correctly between that which is useful and harmful, and makes the right choice¹⁰¹.

For St. Augustine there is no distinction between a natural virtue and

⁹⁴. Cf. H. VAN LIESHOUT, La théorie platonicienne de la vertu, Fribourg, 1926, p. 76; B. SWITALSKI, Neoplatonism and the Ethics of St. Augustine, New York, 1946, p. 11: «One cannot find in his writings (i.e. of Plotinus) any deep reflections on the definition of virtues, their division, natural relations, etc.».

⁹⁵. De inventione, I, 2.

⁹⁶. E.g., De div. quad. LXXXIII, 31, I (PL 40, 20); Contra Jul. Pelag., IV, 3, 19 (PL 44, 247). De civ. Dei, IV, 21 (PL 41, 128; ed. Dombart-Kalb, I, 170): «Ars quippe ipsa bene recteque vivendi, virtus a veteribus definita est». Ibid., IX, 4, 1 (PL 45, 253): «eo quod nullum bonum volunt esse hominis praeter virtutem, tamquam artem bene vivendi, quae nonis in animo est». These words are reminiscence of Seneca for whom not only the ethical part of philosophy but the whole of it consists in virtue. Frag. 17: «Philosophi nihil alius est quam recta vivendi ratio vel honeste vivendi scientia vel ars rectae vitae agendae non errabimus, si dixerimus philosophiam esse legem bene honesteque vivendi, et qui dixerit illam regulam vitae, suum illi nomen reddidit».


¹⁰⁰. De div. quad. LXXXIII, 30 (PL 40, 20).

a supernatural virtue since there is but one ultimate good toward which all virtue is ordained. A rational nature can have no other good than God. Virtue and charity coincide, or at least consort with each other, in the attainment of the highest good. Hence every virtue is impregnated in some way by the virtue of charity. Thus only he who has faith and charity can rightly have prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice. Since the purpose of virtue is to attain God, it can be defined through the prism of charity, for by charity we are united to God and attain Him consummately in the next world. Wherefore, in a general way, the Bishop defines virtue as «charity by which, that which is to be loved, is loved». And elsewhere, he ingeniously defines virtue as an ordo amoris, crisply stating that «a brief and true definition of virtue is well-ordered love».

St. Augustine conceives charity as a «habit of the soul» rendering it good; the new condition of man is thereby well-ordered toward God. And thus charity cannot consist in some transient act alone but in some permanent reality pervading the soul and giving it a new abiding orientation from the one it had before. Its general realm is the soul, specifically the will — the appetitive or voluntary faculty of the soul. Just as justification cannot be ascertained by any experimental means, so also charity is an invisible virtue and an invisible union of the Holy Ghost. If God infuses the virtue of charity into the soul of man it is with the purpose that man bring forth the fruits of charity. Static charity is the

102. De mor. Ecc., 15, 25 (PL 32, 1322) : «Nunque illud quod quadrupartita dicitur virtus, ex ipsius amoris vario quodam affectu, quantum intelligo, dictur. Itaque illas quatuor virtutes, quum utinam sit in mentibus vis, ut nomina in ore sunt omnium, sic etiam definire non dubitum, ut temperantia sit amor iterum se praebens ei quod amatur; fortitudo, amor facile tolerans omnia propter quod amatur; justitia, amor soli amato serviens, et propers recte dominans; prudentia, amor ea quibus adjuvatur ab eis quibus imputatur, sagaciter solvendi.»

103. De mor. Ecc., 1, 15, 25 (PL 32, 1322) : «Quod si virtus ad beatam vitam nos ducit, nihil omnino esse virtutem affirmaverim, nisi summum amorum.»

104. Ep. 157, 4, 15 (PL 33, 739; CSHL 44, 502) : «Et ut generaliter breviterque complectar, quam de virtute habeam notionem, quod ad recte vivendum attinet, virtus est charitas, qua iu quod diligendum est diligitur.»

105. A. FREEMANTLE, «And Heaven Too», The Commonweal, LX (1954), no. 2, p. 38 states: «For me the greatest sentence ever uttered by a human being (outside Holy Writ) is St. Augustine's statement: «Virtue is the order of love.»


107. De mor. Ecc., I, 6, 9 (PL 32, 1314) : «Nemo autem dubiaverit quin virtus animam faciat optimam.»

108. VAN ROEY, De virtute charitatis, Mechliniae, 1929, p. 102 : «Virtutem S. Doctor (Augustinus) vocat illam tantum animi habitum, qui ordinem et rectitudinem habet ad finem ultimum seu beatitudinem.»

109. In To. Ev. tr. 3, 12 (PL 35, 2004) : «Unionis sacramentum est, virtus ipsa invisibilis, uactio invisibilis, Spiritus Sanctus; uactio invisibilis, charitas illa quae in quoccunque fuerit, tamquam radix illi crat, quamvis ardente sole aescere non potest.»

110. Confes. IX, xii, 28 (PL 35, 775; ed. M. Skutella, 202) : «Ego vero cogitans doma tua, Deus invisibilis, quae inmittis in corda fideli tuo, ut proveniant inde fruges admirables.»
fountain of dynamic charity. The fruits of the habit of charity is charity in action and behavior — *charitas in moribus*111. "Charity is now practiced in the good works of love"112. This is the charity that constitutes religion and piety113.

**UNITIVE POWER**

In his work "On the Trinity", the profoundest piece of Christian speculative literature, St. Augustine analyzes the unitive quality of love, and discovers a certain vestige of the Trinitarian doctrine in it. Where there is love, three things are involved: namely, the one who loves, the object which is loved, and the act of love. The act of loving, says the Bishop, is a "certain life" (*quaedam vita*) which unites two objects: the one loving, and the thing loved, or at least seeks to unite them. Such is the nature not only of internal and spiritual love, but also of external and carnal love. In the case of spiritual love the unitive factor is a certain spiritual power whereby the subject, going outside of himself as it were in quest of the object, assimilates himself to it. "What does the soul", asks Augustine, "love in a friend except his soul? And therefore there are three things: the one loving, the thing loved, and love"114.

It is characteristic of natural love to effect a certain oneness between the person loving and the one loved. When two persons are of the same mind and mutually love each other they become as it were one spirit115. Speaking of his own friendship, St. Augustine says that he felt his soul and that of his friend to be one in two bodies116. It is through unity of mind and harmony of aspirations that sweetness is brought to friendship117. But natural friendship is but a faint image of the true supernatural friendship. In the latter we adhere to God because we are united by an inward, spiritual bond of life, communicated to us by Christ, the Savior, and sealed by the Holy Spirit118.

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111. *Sermo* 350, 2 (PL 29, 1534); *De mor. Ecc.*, I, 17, 31 (PL 32, 1324): "simplex et pura charitas Dei, quae maxime spectatur in moribus."
113. *Ep.* 167, 4, 14 (PL 33, 739; CSEL 44, III, 502): "Nam et, major est in toto charitas, quam in illo, recte possimun dicere; et, aliqua in isto, nulla in illo, quantum pertinent ad charitatem quae pictas est."
115. *In Io. Ev. ir.* 18, 5 (PL 35, 1538): "si ergo anima mea et anima tua, cum idem sapimus nosque diligimus, fit anima una..."
118. *Confes.* IV, 4, 7 (PL 33, 696; ed. M. Skutella, 58): "non est vera (amicitia), nisi cum eam tu agglutinas inter laerentes sibi charitate diffusa in cordibus nostris per Spiritum Sanctum."
It is also the property of supernatural love that all upon whom the gift of charity is bestowed possess a unifying principle by the fact that wills animated by a new life and capacity are enabled to reach out toward, and adhere to, the same highest good. The descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles serves as the most illustrious historical example of the unifying and transforming power of God. Through the charity which God diffused in the souls of men, the hearts and wills of an assembly of men were renewed, animated and made one, as it is revealed in the Acts (4:32). « Having received the Holy Ghost by whom spiritual love was inflamed in their hearts, by this very charity and fervor of the spirit, they have been formed into a oneness.»

St. Augustine adduces some of these examples of the unifying power of charity in connection with the doctrine of the unity of the life in the most holy Trinity. If the charity possessed by men does not divide but unite them, how much more is the all-perfect charity of God a preserver and not a destroyer of His unity? Because the Father and the Son have but a single mutual love which is at the same time self-subsisting and personal, they are one to the consummate degree in possessing identically the same nature. « If in coming to God many souls are made one in charity, and many hearts are made one, what does the very source of charity not do in the Father and the Son? Is it not true that the Trinity is one God? »

Love is, as was already noted, divine and human; human love can be licit and illicit. Whatever the love, there will be one element common to them all: a power to unite. Love is love because it unites the lover with the object loved. This is its essential characteristic. Charity is reserved to designate that union which takes place between the soul of man and the highest good: God. It is also, as we shall hear later, the bond of union between members and Head, or members and members in the Mystical Body of Christ. Its unifying power is said to be the concordatissimum vinculum, the dulce et salubre vinculum mentium, and the unitatis sanctissimum vinculum. Scanning through Augustine’s works we discover various other terms, such as copulatio, glutex, junctura, taken principally from the physical and visible world, to

120. In Io. Ev. tr. 18, 4 (PL 35, 1538).
121. In Io. Ev. tr. 40, 8, 5 (PL 35, 1684).
122. Sermo 349, 2, 2 (PL 39, 1530): « Omnia enim ista nomina habent necessitudinis vinculum, et gluten quodam modo charitatis ».
123. Sermo 372, 6, 6 (PL 38, 1422).
127. Enarr. in Ps. 69, 77 (PL 36, 758); Confess. IV, 10, 15 (PL 32, 700; ed. M. Skutella, 63).
128. Enarr. in Ps. 39, 1 (PL 36, 433).
portray impressively what takes place in the spiritual domain. Charity has become the very symbol of unity\textsuperscript{129}, for it is the function of charity to bring together and to unite as it is for cupidity to divide and separate\textsuperscript{130}.

The unitive office of charity is twofold: first it unites the possessor of it individually with the object loved, that is with God; secondly, it unites all of those who love the same object into the same catagory. Herein lies the difference between the love of the world and the love of God: in the natural order, by loving created things we are divided, in the process of loving, into many parts according to the types of the objects that are loved; in the supernatural order, we become one by loving the one supreme object\textsuperscript{131}. Since the natural order is not autonomous but subject to the supernatural, man cannot ordinately love created beings without regard to the higher order: it is a subversion of order for inferior love to thwart the love due to the Supreme Being. This is an order not only of right reason but also of revelation contained in the commandment of God who orders continence, by which we withhold our love from creatures, as well as justice, by which we bestow it on the supreme object\textsuperscript{132}. By loving God here upon earth we raise ourselves already now above the innate value of our existence to the level of the divine, and are, in a manner, even now united with the supreme object of our love in heaven\textsuperscript{133}. But the earthly union is only a foreshadowing of the one that will take place in reality for all eternity.

The directive and unitive powers of charity are explained by St. Augustine in comparison with the properties of material bodies as understood by the physics of the age. Material bodies, as observation shows, have their own specific natures and corresponding laws which determine their proper place in relation to other bodies and account for their motions and directions. Each body tends to its proper place by the force of gravity which causes some of the objects to go downward and others to go upward. Thus the nature of a stone is to fall, but the nature of fire is to ascend. If disorder is injected into the proper gravity of beings, disquietude ensues until the order postulated by nature is restored. If oil is brought under water, it will be restless until it makes its way to the surface. Material beings only then find their tranquillity when they find

\textsuperscript{129} Sermo 260, 1, 3 (PL 38, 1286): *Quae autem major est virtus pietatis, quam charitas unitatis*.

\textsuperscript{130} Sermo 265, 9, 11 (PL 38, 1224): *Cupiditas enim cupit dividere, sicut charitas colligere*.

\textsuperscript{131} Confes. X, 29, 40 (PL 32, 796; ed. Skutella, 238): *Per continentiam quippe colligur et redigimur in unum, a quo in multa defluximus*.

\textsuperscript{132} Confes. X, 37, 61 (PL 32, 805; ed. Skutella, 256): *Quia nobis imperasti non tantum continentiam, id est a quibus rebus amorem colibeamus, verum etiam justitiam, id est quo eum conferamus*.

\textsuperscript{133} In Io. Ev. tr. 32, 7, 9 (PL 35, 1645): *Hic enim nascinur et morimur, hoc non amemos: charitate migremus, charitate sursum habitemus, charitate illa qua diligimus Deum*. 
CHARITY AND MYSTICAL BODY ACCORDING TO ST AUGUSTINE

themselves in that condition which is proper to their beings by the laws of nature.

The soul’s gravity is love. This is the psychological or psychologico-
spiritual power which moves the soul in the direction of an object. « Every
love », says Augustine, « has a force of its own. Love cannot be inactive
in a lover, it cannot but lead him in some direction. If you would know
the character of man’s love, see whither it is leading. » The diversity of
loves is commensurate with the varieties of the types of objects that can
be embraced by the will. Through the power of loving the soul can move
downward or upward according as the object of love is below or above
man. If love diffuses itself only upon created objects, it descends into the
abyss of the temporal, mutable, and the destructible. Such love is degra-
ding and not in harmony with the excellence of an indestructible soul.
It has its own name: cupiditity. If love surges upward, it embraces God,
the eternal, immutable and indestructible being. Such love is the Chris-
tian and God-given virtue of charity, and the object it reaches for is
consonant with the aspirations of an immortal soul. Unlike material
bodies and the laws of nature, the soul of man is free and can determine
its course either in one direction or the other.

By virtue of the eternal law and by the power of grace the soul is endow-
ed with a gravity which orients it toward its last end. The charity in-
fluenced into the soul of man elevates it to a place where it can move toward
its transcendent object — the highest good — in an appropriate and
adequate manner. Created to the image and likeness of God and par-
icipating in His life through grace, the soul cannot find permanent
and consummate satisfaction in any good that is below God. And, there-
fore, unless the soul is permanently orientated toward God, like the
needle of a compass toward the north, the equilibrium of the soul is dis-
turbed and is not restored until it is righted to God through charity. This
is the profound meaning of those oft-quoted words of St. Augustine: « You
have created us for Thyself and our heart is restless until it rests in the.»

Charity effects not only the union of the subject loving and the object
loved but also of those, among themselves, who love the same object.
Such a union in the natural order is a moral union — one of mind and
heart, will and sentiment — but in the supernatural order, where an
ontological life-giving bond is involved, the union becomes an inner-

134. Ennar. in Ps. 121, 1 (PL 37, 1618) ; cf. J. Burnaby, Amor Dei: A Study of St. Augustin’s
135. Confes. IV, 14, 22 (PL 32, 702; ed. Skutella, 70) : « Ubi distribuuntur ista pondera
variorum amorum et anima mea ».
136. Confes. XIII, 7, 8 (PL 32, 847; ed. Skutella, 333) : « Quomodo dicam de pondere
 cupiditatis in abruptam abyssum, et de sublevatio nee charitatis per Spiritum tuum ».
137. Confes. XIII, 9, 10 (PL 32, 848-9; ed. Skutella, 335).
138. Confes. I, 1, 1 (PL 32, 661; ed. Skutella, 1) : « quia fecisti nos ad te, et inquietum
est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te ».
reality of the spiritual order. Just as many physical members animated
by a soul form a body, so also many persons vivified by the same charity
form a society, a corporate being, a body. 139

St. Augustine uses the term *compagnare* to designate the formation
of members into one body both of the physical body and of the Mystical
Body. 140 It is not only the object that is loved (i.e. God) that effects
this corporate unity, but also the infused life of charity which is common
to all forming the body (*compages*). Thus all who are animated by cha-
ritv form a single body; but in a body there is compactness, unity;
unity in turn preserves charity. If one separates himself from the body
compacted by charity, he himself is without charity. 141 Just as fire per-
meates many separate pieces of solid metal in a crucible and reduces
them through its heat into a single element, so charity pervades the
soul of the multitudes in order to make but one organism of them. The
analogy is carried further: the iron is inseparable from its heat, but is
one molten mass; charity, too, is not separable from the one body which
it forms. 142

A sequel to this spiritual corporate oneness is that men who form it
and possess the unifying life of charity must manifest it in good deeds
and action toward one another. 143 It also follows that whatever good or
virtue one member possesses all the other members possess for charity
causes that which each member has in the body to belong to all the
members of the body. 144 » Vision is proper to the eye, but does it not
belong to all the members of the body, in which those members are? 
Whilst here upon earth in the kingdom of charity this is not yet realized
in fullness, it will be so in the perfected kingdom of charity in heaven,
where » there will be no envy of unequal charity. » Charity does not
terminate its function in the present life. The body formed of men united
by the bond of charity here below will continue its existence hereafter,
united by the same charity, although its members will be transmuted
into the perfect, forming an immutable and glorious body. 145

139. *Confes.* X, 3 (PL 32, 780; ed. Skutella, 211): » Sed quia charitas omnium credit,
inter cos utique, quos connexos ibi met unum facit. «

140. *Confes.* I, 7, 12 (PL 32, 666; ed. Skutella, 9): » qui dedisti vitam infantii, et corpus,
quo ilia ut videmus instruxisti sensibus, compregisti membris... «

141. *Enar.* in Ps. 30, 1 (PL 36, 239): » Charitas antem compaginam facit, compagines comple-
lituitur unitatem, unitas servat charitatem, charitas pervenit ad charitatem. «

142. In Io. Ep. tr. 10, 5, 3 (PL 35, 2055): » Quomodo ipsa compagnata est in unum, sic
omnes quaes ex illa pendunt, unum facit, et quasi confit illos ignis. Aequum est, confitatur massa,
et fit unum aliquid: sed nisi fervor charitatis accendat, ex multis in unum confici non potest. «

143. In Io. Ev. tr. 66, 13, 2 (PL 35, 1809): » Ad hoc ergo nos dilexit, ut et nos diligamus
invicem; hoc nobis conferens diligendo nos, et mutua dilectione constrin-gamus inter nos, et
tam dulci vinculo connexi membris corpus tantf capitatis simul. «


145. Ibid.

146. De pec. mer. et remis., I, 1, 1 (PL 44, 109; CSEL, 60, 3): » I ipsa charitas in qua in uno
incommutabilium unum sumus in melius commutandis. «
UNION WITH GOD

In a striking passage contained in his Letter to Honoratus — better known as De Gratia Novi Testamenti Liber147 — Augustine deals with the natural superiority of the human nature over other created beings and treats of its elevation by grace and charity. A rational nature excels over irrational beings because it is endowed with a capacity for happiness, but does not contain it within itself. It must seek to satiate its craving for happiness elsewhere, outside of itself. Happiness must consist in the possession of good. There are innumerable goods which can bring satisfactions and contentment to the heart of man, but in order to render the soul completely and perfectly happy the good sought must be of such quality as to fill the heart with satiety. If it is not within him it must be outside him, but it must exist. If such a good should not exist the craving of man’s soul, the highest value in man, would be proof of disorder. Of the goods that lie outside man only an immutable and infinite good can quench the thirst of the soul. It is in the power of the free will of man to reach that good, or not, to choose the immutable good or in its stead some other object which it seeks under the guise of good. The conversion of the will to the supreme good is a virtue, aversion from it is a vice.

Since human nature proceeds by creation from God, it cannot be evil in itself, but like all of God’s creatures is good. Having a spiritual component, human nature is superior to all purely corporeal natures. For example, the soul is more noble than light, which is the most excellent of corporeal beings. The dignity of the soul does not lie in quantity, since it has no tri-dimensional bulk, but in a certain spiritual power with which it is endowed. The power of intelligence, being a faculty of the spiritual soul, is superior to the images drawn from corporeal sense. The intellectual knowledge of man and his volitional power differ essentially from those of animals.

The excellence of the soul thus far considered is native to it, but it is able to rise above this plane of its own goodness by participating in a good that is proper to a superior nature. This can, in some measure, be illustrated by an analogy taken from beings inferior to man. Corporeal natures, such as soil, water, and air, can be ennobled by partaking of the perfection of some higher corporeal being. Add light to them and they become more excellent than they were in themselves. So also incorporeal, rational beings are raised above the excellence and powers inherent in them by participating in the perfections of a pure spirit — even

God Himself. The elevation of man's being takes place when the new life of grace and charity is infused into his soul; it is then that he begins to adhere to God "by a most pure and most holy love.\textsuperscript{148}\)"

In His condescension God allows men to participate in His goodness; more than that He has established the order in which man partakes of such goodness as the only valid one that is conducive and necessary for the attainment of that good which is all-satiating. But, on the other hand, He does not force His gifts and goodness upon men. It lies in the power of man's free will to accept His generous offer. Even if men undertake the means to participate in the divine life whilst here on earth but fail to develope that life to its maturity by good works and virtue, they will not be allowed to participate in the glories of the consummate life in heaven. If rational creatures are devoid of this participation in the life of God, they are without the nuptial garment in which God wants them to be dressed already in His earthly kingdom\textsuperscript{149}. Without charity men cannot be in the possession of the life of grace; they cannot reflect His image in their souls\textsuperscript{150}.

We gain some knowledge of the invisible God from the visible world through reason. We attain a higher knowledge of Him through faith. But it is through charity that we unite ourselves to God and possess Him. "You do not see God; love Him and you have Him\textsuperscript{151}. " Those departed from this life who are separated from Him forever cannot have charity any more\textsuperscript{152}. Through charity we come to God, inhere in Him, and are enlightened by Him\textsuperscript{153}. Charity, therefore, is directly related to God: He constitutes the essential and supreme object of this virtue.

The soul of St. Augustine gives vent to a realization of this intimate relationship, founded on charity, between the soul and God, and this he does with the conviction of one who has wandered far from God. "Thou, God, be my inheritance; I love Thee, wholly do I love Thee, with my whole heart, with my whole soul, with my whole mind do I love Thee. Of what use will everything be to me that Thou shalt give me outside of Thee? To love God gratuitously is to hope for God of God, to hasten to be filled with God, to be satiated with Him. He suffices for Thee; apart from Him nothing is sufficient for Thee\textsuperscript{154}."

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid. : "ipsius creatoris sunt participacione meliores, cum ei cohaerent purissima et sanctissima charitate."

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid. : "qua (charitate) omnimodo si caruerint, tenebrescent, et obdurescunt quoadammodo."

\textsuperscript{150} S. Cuesta, "La concepción agustiniana del mundo a través del amor", Augustinus Magister, París, 1954, I, 355-56.

\textsuperscript{151} Sermo 34; 3; 5 (PL 38, 211).

\textsuperscript{152} Ep. 140, 23; 57 (PL 33, 562; CSEL 44, 203) : "ab illa charitate aversi."

\textsuperscript{153} Ep. 140, 23; 58 (PL 33, 562; CSEL 44, 204) : "accedere ad Deum, et illuminari, et inhaerere illi per charitatem\. Ibid., xx, 53 (PL 33, 560; CSEL 44, 199) : "Amor quo anima inhaeret Deo\ldots."

\textsuperscript{154} Sermo 334, 3 (PL 38, 1469).
The effect of charity is expressed not only in terms of participating in God's nature but also as a certain cohabitation of God with man. "If charity does not dwell there, God does not dwell there." The indwelling of God in man through charity is not in order that God may have a place to stay but in order that the life of the soul may be sustained and nourished by Him. St. Augustine distinguishes clearly between the inbeing of God in all things in the natural order of creation and the living of God in man as in his temple through charity. By His omnipresence God contains all things maintaining them in existence and conserving them, by His inhabitation He animates and fosters: the supernatural life of grace and charity.

The gift of charity is infused into the soul of man together with the gift of faith. By the latter we are converted to God and enlightened by Him, by the former united and assimilated to Him. If man is justified, however, and is through this process in possession of faith and charity, he has not yet attained his goal but merely put in the right direction and in possession of the right means to reach that goal. First the soul must turn to Him from whom it came, and this is accomplished by grace consorting with charity. Then, animated and fortified by God's powers, it must see the light in His light, live its life in His life, exercise its will in accordance with His will, and thus be perfected and made happy.

The gift of charity is not stationary or inactive but grows with deeds of love which emanate from it as water does from a mainspring. "Make daily progress in this love praying and doing well in order that by the aid of Him who commands and gives it, it may be nourished and increased until becoming perfect it perfects you." Thus the image of God which is received in the incipient stage of the reborn life of man becomes a perfect image of God in consummate union with the all-beatifying and highest good.

How is charity related to God? Charity is seated in the will whose mainspring it is. Since all human acts proceed from the will they are affected by charity. Moreover, it is proper for the will to seek that which is good, or to seek evil but under the guise of good. Seeking good, it cannot help but seek that good which is the highest. God is the highest.

155. Enarr. in Ps. 149, 4 (PL 37, 1951).
156. In Io. Ep. tr. 9, 4, 1 (PL 35, 2042); Annot. in Job. I, 38 (PL 34, 878).
160. Enarr. in Ps. 149, 4 (PL 37, 1952): "Tu crescis ex Deo, non ille ex te."
162. Ep. 140, 23, 57 (PL 33, 562; CSEL 44, 203); Sermo 178, 10, 11 (PL 38, 965-6)
good, He is the sum-total of all good. Considering ultimate goals, we should not seek anything that is below God; nor can we seek anything that is above Him. For it is dangerous to seek anything below God, and nothing can be found above Him. It should be the supreme wisdom of man’s life to seek God first and above all, and see in Him that indispensible good which imparts its goodness to everything else that is good in the universe so that nothing can be good which excludes Him. Prius dilige Deum."

Genuine piety will blossom out in a gratuitous love of God. We cannot expect any reward from God that would be a compensation outside of Himself. God rewards with the best and highest reward; there can be no reward which can compare with Himself. He, therefore, is the reward of those who love Him. Behold there is God, the creator, and the earth which created. We may rejoice in the beauty and grandeur of the earth on account of the creator, but we cannot love the earth so as to have the creator replaced by His work. Loving the earth, which is inferior to the spirit loving it, the spirit is debased and becomes earth; for we become what we love. Loving a superior spirit we are elevated and participate in His excellence: in a word, we become divine. If, therefore, we rejoice because God gives us the earth how much more must we rejoice because He gives us Himself in love."

Charity extends itself also to men; it is that virtue « by which we love God and our neighbor.» A good life, says St. Augustine, «consists in this that those things are to be loved which must be loved, namely God and neighbor, and in the manner in which they are to be loved.» As to the manner in which they are to be loved, God must be loved for His own sake, and the neighbor for God’s sake. Besides loving one’s neighbor one must also love oneself since the love of oneself is the measure of the love of one’s neighbor. Here again God is loved for His own sake, whereas we love ourselves on account of God. The love of oneself is not Christian charity if the love of God is impaired by it: if God is loved less because we love ourselves, we have not the right kind of love. In other words, whoever loves himself not in God but in himself has not the charity of a just man, but the vanity of a proud man. «Love God and learn there to love yourselves, so that, when loving God you love yourselves, you may securely love your neighbor as yourselves.»

St. Augustine furnishes us with an answer to the question, much

164. Sermo 90, 10 (PL 38, 566).
165. Sermo 97, 3, 3 (PL 38, 568).
167. Ep. 137, 5, 17 (PL 33, 524; CSEL 44, 121-22); Ep. 167, 5, 16 (PL 33, 739; CSEL 44, 604).
168. De doctr. christ., III, 15, 23 (PL 34, 74).
170. Sermo 90, 6 (PL 38, 563).
desputed among theologians, whether one can possess certainty that he has fraternal charity\textsuperscript{171}. He teaches that upon carefully examining our consciences we may know\textsuperscript{172}, and have confidence\textsuperscript{173}, nay even be certain (\textit{securi})\textsuperscript{174} of being in possession of charity, and thus also of the state of justice in our souls. This opinion does not stand in opposition to the doctrine of the Council of Trent which defined against Luther that man could not have « the certitude of faith » with regard to the possession of justice\textsuperscript{175}. The Council did not have in mind to disavow the various other opinions which were entertained by theologians participating at the Council on this subject\textsuperscript{176}.

The love of any object, which is created, finite, temporal, changeable must not be an impediment to the love of God, the highest and all-satisfying good, but it should be a stepping-stone to that love. If the beauty of the human body is pleasing to man it should lead him to praise its maker. If the soul of man is appealing, beautiful and good, it can be loved but in God. Even the noblest in man, the immortal soul, cannot be loved in itself because it is mutable and can obtain its immutability in God\textsuperscript{177}. A fortiori is this true of all material beings which are much inferior to man because they are temporal, mutable and perishable. If we love them we become subject to them, and being under their spell we cannot rightly pass judgment upon their value but mistake them as an end whereas they should serve only as a means\textsuperscript{178}. How trenchantly is the love of charity relating to God and creatures expressed in this sentence of the Confessions : « For too little doth he love Thee, who loves anything with Thee, which he loveth not for Thee\textsuperscript{179}. »

He who knows how to love God with his whole soul and heart will know how to love his own soul, and he who knows how to love his soul will know how to love his neighbor\textsuperscript{180}. Faultily self-love was the perdition of the first man. The sin of self-love in Adam consisted in this that he cherished his own will above God's. He who truly loves God prefers the will of God to his own, and thus learns to love himself truly by not loving himself. To love oneself without regard to God's will is to love oneself in oneself and not in God, and this is perversion\textsuperscript{181}.


\textsuperscript{172} \textit{In Io. Ep. tr. 6, 10 (PL 35, 2025)} ; \textit{iibid.}, 8, 12 (PL 35, 2043).

\textsuperscript{173} \textit{In Io. Ep. tr. 6, 4 (PL 35, 2021)}.

\textsuperscript{174} \textit{In Io. Ep. tr. 5, 10 (PL 35, 2017)} ; \textit{iibid.}, 6, 10 (PL 35, 2026).

\textsuperscript{175} Dünzinger, \textit{Enchiridion}, n. 802.

\textsuperscript{176} Cf. Van der Meersch, \textit{Grâce et Dict. de Théol. Ca h.}, VI, 1619.

\textsuperscript{177} \textit{Conf.}, IV, 12, 18 (PL 34, 700) ; ed. Skutella, 67).

\textsuperscript{178} \textit{Conf.}, X, 6, 10 (PL 32, 783) ; ed. Skutella, 216).

\textsuperscript{179} \textit{Conf.}, X, 29, 40 (PL 32, 796) ; ed. Skutella, 238) : « Minus te amat qui tecum aliquid amat quod non proper te amat ».

\textsuperscript{180} \textit{Sermo} 90, 6 (PL, 38, 563).

\textsuperscript{181} \textit{Sermo} 96, 2,2 (PL, 38, 584-6).
There are, therefore, three distinct but correlated objects to which charity is referred: namely God, self, and neighbor. There are two precepts: the first is to love God, the second is to love one’s neighbor as oneself. The whole decalogue is founded upon these two precepts. Notwithstanding the three objects and the two precepts of charity there is but one charity and one giver thereof. Wherefore the charity by which we love our neighbor is not diverse from the charity by which we love God. In this doctrine St. Augustine is in accord with the teaching of the early Fathers preceding him. Theologians attempt to explain the unity of the virtue of charity in diverse ways.

UNION WITH CHRIST

If, in addition to the love of God and the love of neighbor, there is a charitas Christi, the latter is reducible to the charitas Dei. St. John’s solemn words that « the Word was made flesh » is equivalent to saying that the Son of God has become the Son of man. The Son of God and the Son of man designate one and the same person possessing a divine and human nature. Just as the union between body and soul in the constitution of man does not form two persons but only one, so also a union between the Word and the assumed human nature does not constitute a new person or supersede the person of the Word. Loving Christ we love the person that subsists in both natures. Since there is only one person and that person is divine, the love we accord to Christ is the same that is accorded to the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost.

In the Incarnation Christ descended in order that we may ascend in the elevation of our nature. He partakes of our human nature in order that we, while retaining our own nature, may partake of His divine nature. However the assumption by Christ of a human nature did not degrade Him for He did not lose what He was, whereas our participation in His

182. Mt. 22 : 37-40; Enar. in Ps. 140, 2 (PL 37, 1816).
183. Ep. 167, 5, 16 (PL 33, 739; CSEL 44, 604).
184. Sermo 265, 8, 9 (PL 38, 1223).
189. St. Augustine, as well as St. Thomas, referring to the human nature alone in Christ call it *man* (*homo*). Cf. L. SELLER, »Homo assumptus», Wissenschaft und Weisheit, XIV (1951), 760-63. Modern theologians disapprove of the terminology on the grounds that *homo* designates the nature and the personhood, whereas Christ only assumed a human nature.
191. De Trin., IV, 8, 12 (PL 42, 890).
nature elevates us. The Word being immutable cannot be changed for the worse, whereas we being mutable can be changed for the better. The union of the human flesh with the Word takes place through the rational soul of Jesus Christ.

If the Son of God by assuming a human nature has become the Son of man, it is not to be thought impossible for man to become the adopted sons of God. By the very fact that man participates in the divine nature of the Word, man becomes the child of God. In order to attain participation in the divine nature and sonship in the family of God man must be reborn by a spiritual birth. There is a difference between the elevation of the first man to the level of the divine life and that of his fallen children. The protoparent was raised in creation from an unsullied natural condition to the glories of the supernatural state, but lapsed mankind must be transformed from the abyss of original sin to the heights of the divine justice. The supernatural elevation is the foundation upon which must be built the structure pointing toward the beatific vision of God. On account of its mutability the human soul cannot be just, wise and happy unless it participates in an immutable and eternal good.

Jesus Christ is the just one and the justifier; we have been justified by His grace as a result of His passion and death. His life has become the life of the reborn in grace and charity. Just as the life of Christ is real to Him it is also real to all the members that participate in it; although it does not manifest itself to the senses, nevertheless it is an invisible reality affecting the souls of men. Reborn souls live by this life not only during their sojourn here upon earth, but will continue to live the eternal life by its salvific power.

Now this new and hidden life of the soul which is a spiritual participation in the life of Christ is rooted in charity. Those who are reborn in Christ belong no longer to themselves but to Christ. Bound to Him by charity they no longer belong to themselves but live for Christ, just as Christ who by His divine life was one with the Father loved Him and performed His will. Thus through charity we adhere to Christ, live His life, are made one with Him. Through effective charity also we confer our will to His will doing good and fulfilling the precepts.

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195. Ibid.
196. Ep. 140, 30, 73 (PL 33, 570; CSEL 44, 221).
200. Ep. 140, 25, 62 (PL 33, 584; CSEL 44, 208); ibid., 25, 62 (CSEL 207).
In a certain passage of his work On the Trinity\textsuperscript{203}, St. Augustine shows at length how all things point to the one mediator and how He reunited all men who have fallen away from God. The diversified events of the Old Testament receive their unity from the fact that they point to the one who was to appear in the future as the savior of all men. Men strayed from a unity and became divided; they were again to be reduced to a unity. The aberration of men was from the one true God to whom while they adhered they were one, when they parted with Him through their iniquities they became many. It was congruous that the appearance of these divisions grown into a multiplicity should herald the advent of the one, and that men delivered from the many encumbrances which divided them should again become one. Many were the sins which brought death to the soul, and were to bring death to the body, but one died to erase them all. Believing in His resurrection and arising with Him in spirit we become one with Him through justification.

This One to whom all the events of revelation point is the Mediator between God and men, Jesus Christ, the sacrificial lamb of the New Testament. Through His life, passion and death we have been reconciled with God. To Him we adhere, Him we possess, through and in Him we are reborn, justified and made one. Thus mankind has unity in its physical origin; unity in its elevation to the sonship of God; unity in its fall; unity in its restoration; unity in its terrestrial institution of salvation; unity in its mystical organism of life; unity in the heavenly life of the saints.

If it is said that we are made one with Christ, there is an essential difference in the unity between Christ and His heavenly Father on the one hand, and Christ and the Apostles together with the faithful on the other hand. By virtue of Christ's union with the Father, Christ can say: I and the Father are one\textsuperscript{204}; by virtue of His union with the Apostles and the faithful, Christ can say: I and they are one body\textsuperscript{205}, because the head and the body form but one body. Christ is the head, whereas the faithful form the body\textsuperscript{206}. The Father and the Son are one because they possess one and the same substance. The Father, Son and the Holy Ghost can be in us as indwellers, but we cannot be of one substance with them\textsuperscript{207}.

Yet Christ wants men to be one with the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost\textsuperscript{208}, but through Him (\textit{in ipso})\textsuperscript{209}. Original sin has severed the bond

\textsuperscript{203} IV, 7, 11-9, 12 (PL 42, 895-6).
\textsuperscript{204} John 10 : 30 : \textit{Ego et Pater unum sumus et}.
\textsuperscript{205} \textit{De Trin.}, IV, 9, 12 (PL 42, 896) : \textit{Ego et ipsi unus, quia caput et corpus unus est Christus et}.
\textsuperscript{206} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{207} \textit{In Io. Ev. tr.} xxi, 17, 1 (PL 35, 1920).
\textsuperscript{208} John 17 : 21 : \textit{Ut unus omnes unum sint et}.
\textsuperscript{209} \textit{De Trin.}, IV, 9, 12 (PL 42, 896.)
of charity and disunited mankind from God. Moreover it left free reins to concupiscence and cupidity. And thus, severed from a unifying object and goal, men divided themselves according to their many inclinations, desires and loves. From their ways of iniquity and cupidity they have been redeemed by the mediator and restored to unity. This unity effected by the merits of the God-Man has a twofold foundation. First on account of the human nature of Christ, man can become one with Him according to that nature. For in as much as He is man, He is the mediator, in as much as He is the Word, He is not the mediator, but equal to the Father and the Holy Ghost.

Secondly, there is a union of wills which have as their ultimate object eternal bliss. And thus a single spirit, a single soul, as it were, is formed by the common glow of charity just as masses of iron are molten and purified in the crucible of fire into one body of steel. « As the Father and the Son are one not only in equality of substance, but also in will; so also those between whom and God Christ is the mediator are one not only because they are of the same nature but also because they are of the same communion of love. » When the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost are said to be in us, dwelling in our hearts as in a temple, this indwelling results from grace and its consort, charity. Both expressions: « God is in us » and « we are in God » refer to the natural order as well as to the supernatural order in which the faithful through grace are made partakers of the divine nature. For God is in such not only preserving them but also enlightening their intellects and affecting their wills.

Charity by its very nature serves rather the common than the individual good. It unites the individual to God and to Christ, and perpetuates this union in the vision of God. But it also unites all men into a body in order to provide for the salvation of all. Christian religion not only promotes the increase of the supernatural life in the individual but strongly inculcates zeal for the growth of the spiritual life of all men, especially of those already united in one body. The union of all members in a body is brought about by charity. This virtue is the

211. De Trin., IV, 9, 22 (PL 42, 896) : « per eadem beatiudinem conspirantem concordissimam voluntatem, in unum spiritum quodem modo igne charitatis confitam ».
212. Ibid.
213. In Io. Ev. Ir. 49, 11, 10 (PL 35, 1745); ibid., 110, 17 (PL 35, 1920) : « Sunt quippe ipsi in nobis, tamquam Deus in templo suo : sumus autem nos in illis, tamquam creatura in creatore suo ».
215. Ibid.
216. Ep. 140, 25, 63 (PL 33, 564; CSEL, 44, 207) : « Charitas in commune magis quam in privatum consulens ».
217. Ep. 140, 25, 63 (PL 33, 565; CSEL, 44, 210) : « id est non commoda privata sectantes, sed in commune, ubi salus omnium est, consulentes ».
218. In Io. Ev. Ir. 32, 7 (PL 35, 1645) : « Unitas enim membrorum charitatem concordat ».
life of hearts by which men live in communion with each other. Charity, therefore, is the great instrument born of God through the merits of Christ for the unification of all men. Men who love God and mutually love themselves form a city of God, a society of Christ. As every city must be governed by laws and subject to authority, so also the city of God has precepts and laws and a founder. Its head is Christ; its supreme law is charity; its God is charity. Whoever is full of God is full of charity and if many are full of charity they form a city of God. If men wish to belong to the communion of the people of God, they must become citizens of this city of God. If they remain outside it they cannot have communion with God.

ONENESS WITH THE MYSTICAL BODY

Charity unites all members to form the Church, the Body of Christ. He who loves and adheres to Christ’s Body will possess the Holy Ghost who is the soul of the Body of Christ. And possessing the Holy Ghost one must possess charity for these are inseparable. It is true that each member has not all the charismatic gifts of the Holy Ghost by the fact that he possesses the divine person, for He bestows them in various measure to various members. Yet because of the communion of life and of the Body’s oneness, that which one member has belongs to all the members of that Body.

St. Augustine adduces an example taken from the human body. The eye alone has the capacity and task of seeing for the body to which it belongs; but does the eye see for itself alone? Does it not see for every member of the body? Indeed, it sees for the hands, the feet, and for the other members. The eye does not turn itself away from a blow which is aimed at the foot. The hand alone works in the body, but does it work only for itself? It works for the eye too; for if a blow is aimed at the face, the hand will not say “I shall not move because it is not aimed at me.” « We have, » says St. Augustine, « the Holy Ghost if we love the Church: we love her, however, if we remain in its unity and charity. » Like St. Paul, he reminds the listeners that charity is superior to all charismatic gifts. They should have it and they shall have all.

220. 1 John 4 : 8.
221. Enar. in Ps. 98, 4 (PL 97, 1261).
222. In Io. Ev. vr. 32, 7, 8 (PL 35, 1645).
223. 1 Cor. 12 : 7-13 : 3.
By the same token that charity unites us with God, it also unites us with Christ; and by the same token that it unites us to Christ, it unites us one with another in the Mystical Body of Christ. Such is the nature of the order instituted by God: union of all men seeking God cemented by charity, forming an institution on earth and animated into a body. Charity must encompass God, Christ and man. Some one could say that his religion consists in the love of God, meaning God the Father. But if one loves at all he cannot love the Father alone, but must also love the Son. If one admits loving the Father and the Son, he must also love our Lord Jesus Christ, loving Christ, the Head of the Mystical Body, he will also love the members of the Head of the Mystical Body. If he does not love the members, he cannot love the Head. For «His members are the Church of God.»

Or, we may proceed with the lowest order and proceed upward to attain God in charity. This virtue is the foundation for the social doctrine of the equality of all men. Gilson sums up Augustine's social teaching (if it may be called so) in the words: opta aequalia. The one I love is my equal, and I am equal to the one I love; that is the reason why I love him as myself. And if one properly loves his brethren, who are members of Christ's Mystical Body, he will love Christ. If one loves Christ, one necessarily loves the Son of God who is Christ. If one loves the Son of God, he will also love the Father.

Charity is the unitive bond which unites many to form not only the Body of Christ but also the Church. The Mystical Body of Christ is at the same time the visible Church of Christ, that is to say, the Catholic Church, the Catholica. Augustine knows one only such Church. Those who are members of the visible and sacramental Church are members of Christ's Mystical Body. Moreover, charity is the mark distinguishing between those who inwardly, truly and really are members of Christ's Body and those who apparently are members of it but who, devoid of charity, in truth do not inwardly constitute it. All members of the Church are united in one visible society, all are bound by a common faith, all participate in the same sacraments, all eat of the eucharistic body and blood of Christ, yet they are inwardly divided into those who have charity and those who have it not.

Whether a member of the visible Church is actually sanctified by grace and the concomitant charity is a thing which in many cases only God can know. Man cannot for certain be aware of who is a living member.

of the Body of Christ and who is not because he cannot fathom the soul of others. But in many instances it is evident that men within the pale of the visible Church, the Body of Christ, are outside of it by their manner of living\textsuperscript{230}. Such is the case with manifest sinners who are not visibly separated from the Church, but who remain members of it. Sinners do not form in the true sense the Body of Christ, for they are not united to it by that internal and life-giving bond which is charity.

Besides sinners there are others who are manifestly wanting in charity. Such are schismatics, who dissociate themselves from the Church of Christ. Just as heretics, being opposed to the body of truths, are outside the one truth-bearing Church, so also schismatics, transgressing against the unity of the one Body, sever themselves from the membership of the one Church of Christ. Heretics sin against the oneness in mind and schismatics against the oneness in heart. Both sinners and schismatics sin against the same charity, each in their own way: sinners default the gift of charity by their way of life, schismatics breaching the unity of the Church, the Body of Christ, sever themselves from that body outside of which there is not charity\textsuperscript{231}.

In the controversy of the Donatist faction the word "charity" is substituted for the word "unity" because charity and unity are so closely associated in the psychology and ecclesiastical terminology of St. Augustine that they can be used indiscriminately in treating of the Mystical Body as a whole. The Bishop reasons that where there is unity among the members, there is charity, and where there is charity there is unity. Charity is the cause of the unity of the Church, unity is the direct effect of charity. The Church as a whole can never be without charity anymore than it can be without the Holy Ghost. Yet in the Church, which is the Body of Christ, there are external and internal bonds. Wherefore it is possible for individual members to be bound to it by external ties without actually being united to it by internal ties, e.g., the bond of charity.

Charity in its unitive power is thus analogous to faith. The same faith unites people into a body of the faithful. Faith is an internal act and its meritorious value derives from the internal act of the individual who makes it. But it is also an external act in as much as all who embrace that faith are joined into a society of men professing the same truths. It makes for a oneness of mind; charity for a oneness of wills brought about by loving the same object.

Charity is a gift of God, a virtue of the soul, a power imbedded in the will. By the act which emanates from such a will animated by charity we love God for His own sake and our neighbor for the sake of God. Its

\textsuperscript{230} \textit{Contra lit. Petili., II, 80, 17 (PL 43, 314).}

\textsuperscript{231} \textit{In Io. Ep. tr. 7, 11 (PL 35, 2035); Enarr. in Ps. 122, 1 (PL 37, 1630).}
life-giving power is rooted in the virtue, the habit, in the abiding spiritual element; its meritorious value in the act proceeding from the virtue. By both elements — the abiding and the active — we are united to God, the highest good, and to Christ, as true members of God's kingdom and true members of the Body of Christ. Nevertheless, like faith, charity is not only an internal and life-giving bond, but also an external tie binding men who belong to the communion of the Catholic Church into a society for the attainment of a common goal.

There are three substantives of which St. Augustine makes metonymic use in his defense of the Catholic Church against the Donatist schism: the Holy Ghost, charity and unity. These three terms have the sequence of cause and effect: the Holy Ghost is the source of charity, and charity is the cause of unity. But the Bishop freely substitutes one for the other, and accuses the schismatics of sinning against either the Holy Ghost, or charity, or unity. The Holy Ghost is the soul of the one Body of Christ dwelling in it as in a temple. Each soul is a temple of the Holy Ghost, but also corporately taken all the souls constitute a temple of the Holy Ghost. Charity is the internal bond by which all men are united to the Body of Christ. It belongs to the nature of a body formed of many members, united by the cement of charity, and animated by a spirit, to be an organism and as such to have unity.

As stated, the key-words in the controversy with the Donatists are the Holy Ghost, charity, and unity. In reference to the Holy Ghost, Augustine argues that those who are outside of the Body of Christ do not possess the Holy Ghost, who « is not received except in the Catholic Church"233 ». « Let them not seek the Holy Ghost except in the Body of Christ"234 ». Being separated from the Church they may possess some things that rightly belong to the Body of Christ, as the Donatists validly administered the sacrament of baptism, but they do not possess the Holy Ghost who, as the soul, is confined to the Body of Christ235. As a principle of life and unity he has compacted the diverse and widely spread peoples of the earth into a single body by diffusing the one and the same charity into their hearts. For this reason both unity and catholicity are distinctive marks of the Church of Christ. Just as the tower of Babel made many languages of one, so the Holy Ghost made one language of many236.

If those separated from the Church have not the Holy Ghost, they will likewise not have charity because both are inseparable. The fact that schismatics did not remain in the Church's unity is sufficient evidence

234. Sermo 269, 1, 2 (PL 38, 1236).
that they are devoid of charity\textsuperscript{236}. Although the Holy Ghost is the soul of Christ’s Body the created bond by which he binds the faithful together is charity\textsuperscript{237}. They may possess other gifts of the Holy Ghost such as faith and hope; to them may also be given the charismatic gifts of which St. Paul speaks\textsuperscript{238}. All of these are indeed great gifts but without charity they are of no avail for salvation. One may even undergo martyrdom but if this in done outside of the Body of Christ it cannot be meritorious for eternal life. « Add charity and all will be of benefit, take away charity, the rest has no value\textsuperscript{239} ».

Salvation cannot be obtained except in and through the Body of Christ. Christ who is by excellence the just one and the justifier, justifies is own Body\textsuperscript{240}. Since no one can be a member of His Body without charity, there can be no righteousness without charity\textsuperscript{241}. No one can be just and pleasing to God who is separated from the Body of Christ. Just as a member that is amputated from a living body can no longer participate in the life of the spirit animating that body, so too a member severed from the Body of Christ cannot have the Holy Ghost, charity or the life of justice. These are the properties of the Body of Christ\textsuperscript{242}.

The sacraments rightfully belong to the Church but they may also be found outside of the Church. Thus the sacrament was valid administered by the Donatists. But charity, like unity itself, is by its nature indivisible, and can only be the exclusive property of the one true Church. As long as one who is within the Church has genuine charity he cannot be moved from the Catholic Church. If someone who is outside the Church begins to have charity he will find his way into the Church\textsuperscript{243}, for whoever comes into the Church has charity\textsuperscript{244}. « Christian charity cannot be preserved except in the unity of the Church\textsuperscript{245}. »

Those who separate themselves from the Church transgress not only against the Holy Ghost and charity, but also against the unity of the Body of Christ. The whole Christ is the Head and the Body\textsuperscript{246}. Schisms divide the Body of Christ\textsuperscript{247}. Severing themselves from the unity of the Church, they also sever themselves from the bond of charity\textsuperscript{248}.

\textsuperscript{236} Sermo 138, 3, 3 (PL 38, 764).
\textsuperscript{237} In Jo. Ev. tr. 6, 1, 10 (PL 33, 1429).
\textsuperscript{238} 1 Cor. 13: 5-3.
\textsuperscript{239} Sermo 138, 2, 2 (PL 38, 764).
\textsuperscript{240} Ep. 185, 9, 40 (PL 33, 810; CSEL 57, 35).
\textsuperscript{241} De Serm. Dom. in monte, I, 15, 13 (PL 24, 1236).
\textsuperscript{242} Ep. 185, 9, 42 (PL 33, 811; CSEL 57, 36-37).
\textsuperscript{243} Enar. in Ps. 21, 19 (PL 36, 176).
\textsuperscript{244} In Jo. Ev. tr. 6, 23 (PL 35, 1435).
\textsuperscript{245} Contra Id. Pet., II, 77, 171 (PL 43, 311).
\textsuperscript{246} Enar. in Ps. 54, 1 (PL 36, 662).
\textsuperscript{247} De Serm. Dom. in monte, I, 5, 13 (PL 34, 1236).
\textsuperscript{248} Ep. 173, 6 (PL 33, 755; CSEL 44, 644): « Foris autem ab Ecclesia constitutus, et separatus a compago unitatis et vinculo charitatis, supplicio punituris ».
« Charity is not possessed except in the unity of the Church²⁴⁹. » « We have charity if we embrace the unity²⁵⁰. »

« The Catholic Church alone is the Body of Christ, whose Head is the Savior of the Body. Outside of this Body the Holy Ghost does not vivify any one; ... no one is a partaker of divine charity who is an enemy of unity. Those who are outside the Church, therefore, have not the Holy Ghost; ... Who, therefore, desires to have the Holy Ghost should take care not to be outside the Church²⁵¹. »

CELESTIAL UNION

In the Mystical Body of Christ here on earth the reborn live an internal life of faith, hope and charity for the purpose of attaining an everlasting life. As the faithful form a terrestrial religious society here upon earth so also the blessed will form a celestial kingdom which is but a continuation of the kingdom below²⁵². But will those bonds by which men have been united in this life be carried into the next? Will they continue to be united by faith, hope and charity? When the blessed see what they once knew by believing, faith will necessarily cease. And likewise when they shall have attained God and with Him all the blessings of the future which they have ardently desired and longed for on earth, there will be no need for hope. Then St. Augustine asks « what about charity? Is it possible that it exists at present and will not exist then? If, we hope whilst believing and not seeing, how (much more) shall we love when seeing and beholding? Therefore, there will be charity, but it will be perfect²⁵³. »

Although the grace of justification is a gratuitous gift of God²⁵⁴, it is still possible for us to merit and get a reward. Just as the justice of some is greater than the justice of others²⁵⁵, so also charity is greater in some than it is in others. Charity can be nourished and augmented only in this life²⁵⁶, but when it has attained its consummation in heaven it will retain that degree of perfection for all eternity²⁵⁷. The measure of the perfection attained here below is determined by the will of God²⁵⁸.

²⁴⁹. Sermo 265, 9, 11 (PL 38, 1223).
²⁵¹. Ep. 185, 11, 30 (PL 33, 815; CSEL 57, 43).
²⁵². Sermo 158, 9, 9 (PL 38, 867).
²⁵⁵. Sermo 332, 3 (PL 38, 1462).
²⁵⁶. Sermo 156, 15, 16 (PL 38, 858).
²⁵⁷. Euar. in Ps. 56, 1 (PL 36, 661).
and the zeal of man. The perfect charity of life eternal will be free from all the encumbrances of sin and united to God in beatific fruition. The blessed then will contemplate forever the immutable reality of God face to face, and, in all peace and tranquillity, will love what they praise and praise what they love.

As one star differs from another in brightness, so also the dwellings of the blessed in heaven will differ in luminousness. The intuitive vision of God possessed by one saint will be greater than that accorded to another. The degree of our possession of God in heaven will depend on the degree of our union with Him here below. The greater the charity in this life, the greater will it be in the future life; and the greater the charity in heaven, the greater will be its eternal bliss. But there will be no envy on account of the inequality or reward for charity will reign supreme in all.

Let us summarize the role of charity in our salvation from its inception to its consummation. The charity by which we, as adopted children of God, congruously love God and our neighbor on account of God is infused into our hearts in baptism fruitfully administered; or if justification can take place extra-sacramentally, in the moment of our justification. Cleansed of original sin and of personal sins (if there are such) we are at the same time incorporated into the Body of Christ. The bond which binds us to Christ the Head and to the other members forming His Body is charity; by virtue of this gift we are able to love God and Christ as God above all things as well as the actual and potential members of Christ's Body on account of God.

The degree of our union with Christ is not the same in all the members of the Body of Christ but is greater or lesser according to the degree of charity that unites us to the Head. One with Christ through charity we are to bear fruit which in turn increases the virtue of charity in our souls and makes our union more intimate with Christ. By growing in charity we become more God-like, for the object of our love transforms us into itself, and more Christ-like, for the life of the Head, like a bloodstream, circulates more vigorously the more healthy the member is and the more capable it is to receive its fulness.

The Church of life eternal will continue to be united by the bond of a
never-failing and ever-glowing charity. The Church here below is marred by the coexistence of sinners with the just but it will be relieved of such in its eternal existence because there will be no room for such as are without the garment of charity. The Church of heaven is without blemish and hence full of charity. Just as the sacred humanity of Christ will eternally remain united hypostatically with His divinity so too the blessed will forever form His Mystical Body and partake of the eternal bliss prepared for the children of God. They will form the spiritual house of God, the city of God, the eternal kingdom, the celestial Jerusalem, the eternal Body of Christ. The union of the blessed will be consummated by perfect charity. For she is the life of hearts and the bond of souls not only in this life but also in the next. Now will begin the communion of a certain divine and heavenly kingdom\(^2\) of which «the king is truth, the law charity, the mode eternity\(^3\).»

Stanislaus J. Grabowski
Detroit, Michigan, U. S. A.

\(^2\) Ep. 140, 26, 63 (PL 33, 563; CSEL 44, 210).
\(^3\) Ep. 138, 3, 17 (PL 33, 533; CSEL 44, 143).