Divine Providence in Augustine's *City of God*: A Doctrine of *Confessio*

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> "The grace of God could not have been more graciously commended to us than it was. For the only Son of God, remaining immutable in Himself, put on humanity and bestowed upon mankind the spirit of His love through the mediation of a Man. Through this, it was made possible for us to come to Him...to the immutable from the mutable…But you need humility if you are to acquiesce in this truth…"[2]

I.) Introduction

My thesis is that Augustine's doctrine of divine providence in *De Civitate Dei* (*Civ. Dei*) is structured, decisively for the better but sometimes for worse, by his *confessio*-centered *intellectusfidei*.[3]The latter consists in two unequal but co-implicate and mutually supporting components, namely (i) a metaphysics-compatible piety (*confessio*) that is ultimately determining, and (ii) a piety-compatible metaphysics of being, i.e. of what exists, that provides *confessio*'s basic intellectual context and much of its content. While *confessio*, grounded in real assent to the doctrine of divine incarnation in Christ, consists in active gratitude to God for one's existing and opportunity for full existing (essentially, love of God and neighbour), Augustine's ontology distinguishes the fundamental structure of reality concerning God, creature, and the inter-relationship between God and man. As such, the latter includes both a paradigm of being and a closely related paradigm of worship explaining the nature, means, and structure of happiness. The former paradigm holds, *inter alia*, that (i) God is omniscient, omnipotent, all-good, triune, provident, creator, and (ii) man is created for union with God and owes to Him a debt of gratitude that is repaid in divine worship. By contrast, Augustine's paradigm of worship maintains, *inter alia*, (i) that Christ is the incarnate Word, i.e. the divine-human mediator between God and man, (ii) that man repays his debt of gratitude by worshipping Christ, and (iii) various important trinitarian paradigms. The latter not only distinguishes (i) God in Himself, (ii) man as *imago trinitatis*, and (iii) divine creating and providence but (iv), most importantly, Augustine's *intellectusfidei* itself so far as *esse*=being, *nosse*=the truth of being, and *velle*=*confessio*, i.e. the love of God and neighbor, man's proper response of gratitude for his existing and ability to know the truth of being (e.g. *Confessiones* [*Conf.*] 13.11.12).

Confessio, therefore, is an intelligible disposition towards God and being, but it can vary by degree. It is more reasonable, i.e. has compelling content and practical value, when its paradigm of worship coheres with its paradigm of being, but is less so, i.e. has vitiated content and value, when its paradigms contradict.

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[2]*Civ. Dei* 10.29, from *Augustine: The City of God against the Pagans*, translated and edited by R. W. Dyson, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 436.

[3] Concerning Augustine's *intellectusfidei* see *inter alia*: R.E. Cushman, "Faith and Reason in the Thought of St. Augustine," *Church History*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Dec., 1950), 271-294; R. Teske, "Saint Augustine as Philosopher: The Birth of Christian Metaphysics," *Augustinian Studies* 23 (1992), 7-32; J.M. Rist, *Augustine* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1994) 1-22, 290-313; R. Crouse, "*Paucis Mutatis Verbis*: St. Augustine's Platonism," in *Augustine and His Critics*, eds. R. Dodaro and G. Lawless (New York; Routledge, 2000/2), 37-50; J. Wetzel, "Snares of truth: Augustine on free will and predestination," in *Augustine and His Critics*, *op.cit.*, 124-141, 130-4; F. Van Fleteren, "Augustine and Philosophy: *IntellectusFidei*," in *Augustine and Philosophy*, eds. P. Cary, J. Doody, and K. Paffenroth (Lanham, Md; Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2010), 23-40; and B. David, "Feature Book Review: *Inner Grace*," *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 50:2, Issue 198 (June 2010), 257-269, 262-9. With Rist, Teske, and Van Fleteren, I understand that Augustine's *intellectusfidei* matures over the course of his career yet (see Rist) has weak spots; and, with Cushman, Crouse, and Wetzel, I hold that Augustine's *intellectusfidei* is essentially confession/*confessio*, a form of Christian-Platonism anchored in pursuing truth and love for God (properly recognized as incarnate and triune) and neighbor.

Why is *confessio* the determining factor in Augustine's *intellectusfidei*? He understands that the unmerited divine gift of right love not only disposes the soul to receive requisite knowledge but guarantees the most important thing of all, viz. right relationship with God.[4] As Augustine's own personal experience[5] and the example of Monnica taught him, right living has right love for its sufficient condition and knowledge for its necessary condition.[6] Hence, although *confessio*'s immediate content, viz. its paradigm of worship, is measured by a defensible normative ontology, it is the standpoint of *confessio* that determines Augustine's *intellectusfidei* as a whole.

Most importantly, by the time Augustine writes *Civ. Dei* his *intellectusfidei* displays a significant tension since at certain points its paradigm of worship overtly denies his normative ontology. Where is this problem found in Augustine's work? What causes it? What is its effect? It is located in a portion of his eschatology but has as its proximate cause a doctrine of grace first developed in *Ad Simplicianum* (*Simpl.*) 1.2 (~395-6 A.D.).[7]In that context, Augustine proclaims a teaching of divine-human interaction that both deepens and contradicts his understanding that (i) God is the sufficient condition i.e. creator, and therefore governor, helper, and goal of human being; and (ii) human will is a secondary, essentially responsive, cause of human action and events. While Augustine consistently maintains that will's co-operation with God always depends on His initiative and power,[8] he also holds that (i) Original Sin[9] makes humanity into a "mass of sin" (*massapeccata*) condemned to eternal misery[10] and consequently (ii) that God intends beatitude for some persons rather than all giving His elect good will[11] while leaving everyone else (for the remainder of time and for eternity) with an evil will.[12] Despite Augustine's claim to the contrary (he maintains his doctrine upholds the divine sovereignty),[13] these latter teachings contradict his normative ontology because they imply (i) that human willing, rather than God, is the sufficient condition for human being and (ii), on the flip side, that God is responsible for moral evil. By contrast, the metaphysics disclosed in Augustine's treatment of God's elect makes it evident that He (i) leads all humans to beatitude and (ii) permits human will to frustrate itself for a time rather than forever. As such, Augustine's profound insight into the depths and particularities of God's work in (i) will's co-operating with divine grace and (ii) establishing His eternal community (church) is at the expense of recognizing the scope of God's work with humanity as a whole. For if God is the sufficient condition for human being it logically follows that (i) His church is (somehow) universal rather than particular and (ii) His ultimate purpose in establishing some therein before others is to ultimately include all others (presumably, both in this life and in the afterlife). Therefore, while the unmerited generosity and particular application of God's help in this life is one thing, its *ultimate* (i.e. eternal) extent is another. Augustine, however, mistakenly conflates the one with the other to the effect that since God 'calls' some before others, He ultimately gives eternal bliss to some rather than to all.[14]Consequently, Augustine's interpretation of God's relationship with those He helps is insightful and coherent, but his teaching that God is finally unwilling to provide the same aid to all is problematic.[15]

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[4] See Cushman, *op. cit.*, esp. 273-4, 285-94. Augustine's standpoint (290) is that "The Word made flesh, the Mediator, so moves the will that man is enabled to love the good of which he has been aware without acknowledgement, without *caritas*."

[5] *See inter alia: Conf. 3.5.9-7.9.13; 7.9.13-15; 7.17.21-8.12.28; Civ. Dei 8.10-12.*

[6]E.g. *De Beata Vita* (*Beata V.*) 2.10, 3.21; *De Ordine* (*Ord.*) 2.1.1; *Conf.* 3.11.19-20; 9.10.23-25; *cf.De Vera Religione* (*Vera Rel.*). 1.1; *De Doctrina Christiana* (*Doc. Chr.*) 2.7.9-10; *Conf.* 7.21.27; *Civ. Dei*21.27)

[7]On the importance of *Simpl.* 1.2 in Augustine's intellectual development see, *inter alia*, E. TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (New York; Herder and Herder, 1970), 176-182;Rist, *Augustine*, 14, 148-185; Wetzel, *op. cit.*, 128-130; Bonner, *Freedom and Necessity: St. Augustine's teaching on Divine Power and Human Freedom* (Washington, D. C.; Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 42-46; and P. Cary, *Inner Grace: Augustine in the Traditions of Plato andPaul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 51-62.

[8]*Simpl.* 1.2.3-12.

[9]For helpful discussion of Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin see P. Rigby, "Original Sin," in*Saint Augustine through the Ages: an Encyclopedia,* ed. A. Fitzgerald, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), 607-614.

[10]*Simpl.*, 1.2.16 (*Augustine: Earlier Writings*, translated with introductions by J.H.S. Burleigh [Philadelphia; The Westminster Press, 1953], 385-405, 398). *Cf.Ibid.*, 1.2.21.

[11] Hence, P. Cary ("Augustinian Compatibilism and the Doctrine of Election" in *Augustine And Philosophy, op. cit.*, 79-102) writes that divine grace is (80) "not simply a necessary but a sufficient cause of our freely willing the good and making the necessary contribution"; and Wetzel (124-125) claims that "In the dance of redemption…God does all the dancing."

[12]*Ibid.*, 1.2.13-16. As Bonner (44) writes, "In the *Ad Simplicianum* every trace of human initiative, independent of God's prompting, is swept away. Left to itself the fallen human will avails only for evil, and this is just, because God is the creator of man."

[13]*Retractationes* (*Retr.*) 2.1 (*Augustine: Earlier Writings*, o*p. cit.*, 370).

[14] For discussion see Cary,"Augustinian Compatibilism and the Doctrine of Election," *op. cit.*, 91-97.

[15] On this point see Wetzel (129-130, esp. 130): "The doctrine of reprobation is not an ill-conceived rider to his doctrine of predestination; it is profoundly in contradiction with it. Predestination affirms God's priority as a lover by acknowledging this inspiration behind all human love of God; the doctrine of reprobation subverts this priority by affecting to make a hell out of

This principle also informs Augustine's doctrine of providence in *Simpl.* 1.2.17-20. His teaching here also has intimately related ontological and practical dimensions. The former is that God has divided humanity into two eternal groups,[16] viz. the "vessels made unto honor" (those whom He aids towards eternal happiness) and the "vessels of perdition" (those whom He does not aid). Its practical dimension is that God uses the aforementioned division to teach His vessels of honor two things, viz. (i) "that a man should fear and turn to God in piety …" and (ii) "that thanks should be given for his mercy to God who shows by the penalty inflicted on some the greatness of his gift to others."[17] Augustine's emphasis on piety and co-implicate claim that God employs interaction between contrary or antithetical mind-sets to cultivate divine worship, i.e. His church, coheres with his normative doctrine of God. But his teaching that God disposes the opportunity to worship Him exclusively rather than universally is problematic. Therefore, while the essential motive beneath Augustine's doctrine is to cultivate love of God and neighbour, key aspects of that teaching contradict God's love since it places an exaggerated emphasis on right will. Hence, *Simpl.* 1.2 exposes a significant tension in Augustine's *intellectusfidei* that is transposed into his concomitant teaching on providence.

Augustine develops his *intellectusfidei* together with aspects of his doctrine of providence in *Conf.* (397-401 A.D.), but the weaknesses therein mostly lie dormant due to the subject matter at hand, viz. God's relationship with His elect. To begin with, as the name of his treatise shows, Augustine formally identifies his *intellectusfidei*as *confessio*;[18] and his text works through the historical implications (books 1-9), psychological ramifications (book 10), and metaphysical ground (books 11-13) of God's loving relationship with His elect. As before, Augustine's *intellectusfidei*consists in two co-implicate and mutually-related components, viz. ontology and piety, but his paradigms of being and worship are developed in significant ways. His ontology identifies God as immutable or uncreated *esse*[19] and creatures in general and man in particular as participated or created *esse*,[20] and each is specified in a trinitarian manner by his employing the primary analogue *esse-nosse-velle* (being-knowing-willing) disclosed as such in 13.11.12 but grounding the entire account of conversion, creation, and divine-human interaction structuring the whole book.

On the human side, the trinitarian analogue describes man's ontological structure and the essential make-up of his mind as *imago trinitatis*. On the divine side, the analogue signifies the Father (*esse*) as eternal creator of being, the Word (*nosse*) as cause of intelligibility, i.e. the form and matter comprising things, and Spirit (*velle*) as cause of the love or motion in things towards their end, viz. God.[21] Hence, man's innate love of what is (*esse*) should move him to understand (*nosse*) the causes of being and respond to God, the source of being, with praise and gratitude, viz. *velle* or *confessio*. As always, then, Augustine's paradigm of worship depends on a right understanding of human being as created by God and owing Him a debt of gratitude repaid in worship. However, he underscores and develops *Simpl.*'s

desire." By contrast, P. Rigby ("Augustine's Use of Narrative Universals in the Debate over Predestination," *Augustinian Studies*, Vol. 31:2 [2000], 182-194, and "The Role of God's "Inscrutable Judgments" in Augustine's Doctrine of Predestination," *Augustinian Studies*, Vol. 33:2 [2002], 214-222) tries to make Augustine's teaching more palatable by reminding us of his wisdom-perspective. He considers Augustine's appeal in *Simpl.* (and elsewhere) to the "inscrutable mystery" (2002, 215) surrounding divine justice and predestination as part of Augustine's dictum that one must always submit, in humility, to God's wisdom. In Rigby's words (2002, 219):"Wisdom teaches submission before an unverified faith, an inscrutable measure beyond measure." Rigby is certainly right about Augustine's appeal to divine wisdom, but what he describes belongs to a *confessio* mind-set; it doesn't change the inherent difficulties in Augustine's teaching on election and predestination. I can love God and neighbor when doctrine transcends or contradicts my understanding, but does that mean I should abandon my quest for truth as such—or should I instead pursue it with humility?

[16]*Cf.Ecclesiastes*33.14 *f.*

[17]*Simpl.* 1.2.18, 400-401. *Cf.Civ. Dei* 11.18, 15.1; 21.12; *Contra DuasEpistulasPelagionrum* (*C. Ep. Pel.*), 2.14-15; *De DonoPerseverantiae* (*Persev.*), 35.

[18]*Conf.* 1.1.1. *Cf.* 1.2.2; 1.6.10, 1.7.12; 1.20.31; 2.4.10; 4.11.16-12.18; 7.11.17; 7.15.21; 11.9.11; 13.1.1-2.2; and 13.31.46.

[19]*Ibid.,* 7.10.16-11.17; 7.15.21; 11.4.6; 13.1.1-2.2; and 13.11.12. *Cf.* J.-L. Marion, "*Idipsum*: The Name of God according to Augustine," in *Orthodox Readings of Augustine*, edited by A. Papanikolalu and G.E. Demacopoulus (Crestwood, N.Y.; St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2008), 167-189.

[20]*Ibid.,* 1.2.2; 1.6.10; 1.20.31; 2.6.13; 4.10.15; 7.11.17; 7.15.21; 13.1.1-2.2; and 13.11.12.

[21]*Ibid.,* 13.5.6-11.12. For helpful discussion of Augustine's trinitarianism in *Conf.*, see C.J. Starnes, "The Unity of the *Confessions*," *StudiaPatristica*, vol. 18:4 (1983), 105-111; R.D. Crouse, "'In AenigmateTrinitas' (*Confessions*, XIII, 5, 6): The Conversion of Philosophy in St. Augustine's *Confessions*," *Dionysius*, vol. 11 (1987), 53-62; and W.J. Hankey, "*Recurrens in teunum*: Neoplatonic Form and Content in Augustine's *Confessions*," in *Augustine and Philosophy, op. cit.*, 127-144.

doctrine of providence by maintaining that(i) humanity is structured by two opposed mind-sets, viz. *confessio* (the desire to serve God) and *praesumptio* (the desire to be God);[22] (ii) God's choice, apart from any human merit.

Determines who embraces *confessio* and who doesn't;[23] and (iii) God uses moral evil and the morally evil, i.e. the vessels of condemnation, for the sake of His elect, the vessels of honor.[24] Thus, by the time Augustine finishes *Conf.*, the essential structure of his *confessio*-based doctrine of providence has been formed. How, then, does *confessio* structure Augustine's teaching on providence in *Civ. Dei*? It orders his entire presentation and determines its fundamental strengths and attendant weaknesses.[25] From the outset, Augustine asserts that (i) a Christian doctrine of providence will detail God's creation of His eternal community comprising the humble and (ii) recognizing this requires humility in the percipient (*Civ. Dei*, 1, pref.). Augustine's argument for providence, however, has an uneven quality. While his presentation in books 1-10 consistently maintains a rational, i.e. philosophically defensible, standard, its counterpart in books 11-22 does not. At its best, the latter contains the deeper insight into the nature of providence since it adheres more rigorously to the aforementioned standard; at its worst, it contradicts that standard. The odd content of Augustine's argument is partly caused by a significant difference in emphasis in these sections of *Civ. Dei*; the more significant reason, though, is the aforementioned tension within his brand of *confessio*. Concerning their respective emphases, the earlier argument intends to prove the fundamental premise of a Christian doctrine of providence, viz. that Christ structures human experience to engender divine worship. By contrast, Augustine's subsequent argument tries to demonstrate the coherence of Christianity by showing that its account of providence distinguished into a study of the origins, developments, and ends of two eternal cities, viz. the city of God and city of Man agrees with and develops 'right' ontology. Most importantly, the argument found in books 1-10 works because, spurred on by Augustine's engagement with key aspects of Neo-Platonic philosophy, it measures the basics of *confessio*'s paradigm of worship by a philosophically verifiable ontology. The second argument, however, has mitigated success since its defensible trinitarian impetus and ontology is sometimes subordinated to an eschatology that embodies and develops the vitiated paradigm of gratitude developed in *Simpl.* 1.2. So whereas Augustine's presentation in books 1-10 consistently identifies (i) divine being as the sufficient condition for providence and (ii) creaturely choice-making as a necessary condition thereof, his teaching in 11-22 sometimes does the opposite by asserting that God ultimately aids some towards beatitude rather than all. Indeed, while Augustine's account of God's treatment of His elect the high point of *Civ. Dei*'s doctrine of providence develops for the better his paradigm of divine-human/angelic interaction from books 1-10, his treatment of the non-elect contradicts that paradigm. Taken altogether, then, the significant merit and difficulty of Augustine's argument for providence in *Civ. Dei* is determined by the way(s) it instantiates *confessio*.I will show this in what follows.

II.) Books 1-10: defending a Christian doctrine of providence *nosse* and *velle* conform to *esse*

There are several passages in books 1-10 illustrating that Augustine's argument is informed by his *confessio*-based concept of providence. Not only does he commence his *magnum opus et arduum* by contrasting two cities/mindsets, viz. the city of humility (*humilitas*) anchored in Christ and His church, and the city of pride, exemplified in the Roman lust for domination (*libido dominandi*) (*Civ. Dei*, 1, pref.), but he also finishes book 1 by citing his doctrine of the two cities (1.34) and, in 5.12-21, presents an account of God's reasons for the rise, development, and success of the Roman empire that follows closely the paradigm of mercy and condemnation explicated in *Simpl.* 1.2.17-20.[26]

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[22]*Ibid.,*2.4.9-10.18; 4.10.15-12.19; 7.9.13-15; and 7.20.26.

[23]*E.g.Conf.* 1.1.1; 1.5.5; 7.18.24; 7.21.27; 8.12.28-30; and 13.1.1.

[24]*Ibid.,* 5.8.14-9.17; 9.8.18.

[25] For discussion of the background and nature of *Civ. Dei's* formal structure see J. Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study into Augustine's City of God and the Sources of his Doctrine of the Two Cities* (Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 1991); G. O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God: A Reader's Guide* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1999), 53-66, 265-272; and P.L. MacKinnon, "Augustine's *City of God*: The Divided Self/The Divided *Civitas*," in *The City of God: A Collection of Critical Essays* (New York; Peter Lang, 1995), 319-352. My interpretation is unique since it explicitly traces Augustine's formal cause both to his *intellectusfidei* and to the doctrine of providence he develops in *Simpl.* 1.2. In the latter regard, my point is not that Augustine invents the/his two communities paradigm in *Simpl.* 1.2.17-20—as Van Oort and O'Daly illustrate, that has numerous parallels in Augustine'searlier work and elsewhere. Rather, I argue that Augustine's notion of the aforementioned paradigm is decisively determined by his re-thinkingthe nature of divine-human interaction in *Simpl.* 1.2. Taken altogether, this has the fortuitous consequence of showing how Augustine's mature *intellectusfidei* instantiates his doctrine of providence.

[26]In 5.14-19 Augustine argues that God ordained Rome's rise for the sake of spreading Christianity, viz. so that Christian and pagan alike can (i) see the greatness and limitations of pagan, i.e. of'false,' virtue and its rewards and punishments, and (ii) be

Nevertheless, Augustine quiets this perspective on providence in books 1-10 because his principal object is to show that there is one, true God (named Christ) who ought to be worshipped for happiness (1.36; 6.1; 10.32). Most importantly, the latter claim has its foundation in book 1 and is supported in subsequent books by explicit and concise philosophical proof. Notably in 5.9-11, 8.5-6, and 10.22-32, Augustine furnishes significant evidence to support his assertion that providence has (i) Christ, the God-man mediator between God and man, as its sufficient condition and (ii) human willing as its necessary condition. By focusing on the ontology Christianity shares with Platonism especially on the status of non-divine being as created, Augustine makes clear, on the one hand, that human being and choice-making depends decisively on the creative activity of an omnipotent and omniscient God and, on the other hand, that the Christian doctrines of divine worship and incarnation follow suit. As such, Augustine's approach in books 1-10 has the advantage of hiding the problematic aspects of his teaching on providence, thereby bringing the salutary consequence that his primary interpretative principles, viz. ontology and gratitude, cohere rather than contradict. Consequently, his predominant doctrine includes both (i) that all owe Christ gratitude for their being and (ii) that Christ encourages all (rather than some) towards happiness.

In book 1, therefore, Augustine responds to pagan and Christian reactions to suffering temporal calamity at the hands of Alaric the Goth (an Arian Christian) and his tribesmen by maintaining that each party owes gratitude to the Christian God for what they (i) have and (ii) haven't suffered (1.1, 3, 7, 8-9, 29, 34). According to Augustine, the key to interpretation is that all human experience including the loss of (i) physical goods, viz. the body or parts thereof (1.11, 15, 16, 28), and (ii) goods of fortune, viz. friends, wealth, reputation, power, and homeland (1.8, 10, 14, 19) is intended to encourage virtue. By this, Augustine means the worship of the one, true God, named Christ, who (i) has founded a community of worshippers, His church, within the Roman Empire and (ii) governs all human thoughts and events (1.29, 34). Christ, says Augustine, structures each of the relationships or interactions between and among the virtuous and the non-virtuous including their gain or loss of bodily and/or external goods to engender divine worship. While pagans, then, ought to render thanks to Christ for (i) sparing their lives during Alaric's sack of Rome (1. 1-7) and (ii) giving them the opportunity for penitence and conversion (1.34), Christians should recognize that He permits them to suffer the loss of temporal goods to "raise them up" (1.9, p.13).[27]

This account of providence, however, is asserted rather than proved for *is* the Christian God? Is there a divinity named Christ who governs humanity as book 1 claims? In 5.9-11, Augustine defends a large part of his doctrine by showing that that there is an omnipotent and omniscient God who causes and governs human choice-making. The proximate cause of his argument lies in refuting two closely related claims. These are, on the one hand, Cicero's "ungodly" assertion that the existence of human responsibility within 'fate' (*fatum*), i.e. the universal order of causes, precludes that fate is known and governed by omniscient divinity (5.9, pp. 198-201)[28] and, on the other hand, a Stoic position that denies omniscient divinity by teaching that fate excludes human acts of will since these occur by choice rather than by necessity (5.9-10, pp. 199, 203-4). Augustine responds, however, that (i) omniscient and omnipotent divinity has created fate, (ii) fate includes human responsibility, and (iii) human responsibility is known, caused, and governed by the aforesaid divinity. By this route, Augustine formally establishes the correlate philosophical claims standing at the heart of his argument in books 1-10 (and *intellectusfidei*), viz. that (i) man is created by God and (ii) owes him a debt of gratitude repaid in divine worship.

In 5.9, Cicero's argument against divine omniscience is reported thus:

(i) Nothing "can come about which is not preceded by some efficient cause" (*nihil fierisi causa efficiens non praecedat)* (5.9, p. 200).
(ii) The order of future events (*omniafutura*), the Stoics say, is foreknown by omniscient divinity.

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motivated to embrace 'true,' i.e. Christian, virtue and receive its reward of eternal life. In this passage, the ancient Romans are the vessels of wrath; Christians are the vessels of mercy.

For commentary on Augustine's indictment of pagan virtue see B. J. Shanley, "Aquinas on Pagan Virtue," *The Thomist* 63 (1999): 553-577, esp. 563-572. However, another way of considering Augustine's view on whether there can be virtue, i.e. explicit orientation towards God, apart from receiving sacramental grace given in Christ, is articulated by G.W. Schlabach, "Augustine's Hermeneutic of Humility: An Alternative to Moral Imperialism and Moral Relativism," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 22:2 (1994), 299-330. According to Schlabach, Augustine leaves open the possibility that,apart from Christ's sacramental grace, man can have a positive relationship with Godby practicing humility.

[27] All quotes are from *Augustine: The City of God against the Pagans*, *op. cit.* Latin is added.
[28] For recent commentary, with bibliography, see B. David, "Divine Foreknowledge in *De civitate Dei* 5.9: The Philosophical Value of Augustine's Polemic," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 75:4 (2001), 477-493.

(iii) Whatever is foreknown to occur must happen by fixed, necessary, or certain (*certus*) causes rather than by voluntary or efficient causes (*non aliquaefficiens*).

(iv) Consequently, if the causal order is foreknown by God, then (a) He is the only efficient cause of all events, (b) the order of causes consists in fixed causes (*certusestordocausarum*), and (c) human responsibility is excluded (*nihil est in nostra potestatenullumqueestarbitriumuoluntatis*).

(v) However, (counterfactual) humans have "free choice of the will" (*uoluntatisarbitrium*) (*Ibid*.).

(vi) Therefore, the causal order is not completely foreknown by God. In other words, (a) there is not omnipotent and omniscient divinity, and (b) the causal order includes human responsibility.

Augustine answers Cicero by claiming that the very *existence* of a causal order including human responsibility depends on the creative activity of an un-created God. Stated in logical form, his response is this:

(i) Nothing "happens unless preceded by an efficient cause (*causa efficiens*)." (5.9, p. 202).

(ii) Since mutable efficient causes (e.g. humans and angels) cannot cause themselves to be, their existing must depend on some efficient cause who makes and governs every nature (*qui estauctoromnisconditorquenaturae*).

(iii) That first efficient cause, "which makes and is not made (*facitnec fit*), is God." (5.9, p. 203).

(iv) Therefore, an omnipotent (*summa potestasest*) and omniscient God has created a causal order which includes voluntary agents, and governs each of its causes and events. With respect to voluntary causes, God orders all wills, assisting good wills, judging evil wills, giving the power of achievement to some while denying it to others.[29] Since God causes voluntary agents' being, He causes whatever is in their power, and governs their exercise of power. If He does not will it, they are not and can neither will nor act; in this sense, He is as much the creator of their actions as their being.

In 5.10, Augustine finishes his refutation of the Stoics by showing that if everything in the order of fate 'happens by necessity (*necessitas*),' so does human responsibility. On this score, Augustine argues that human willing is by necessity so long as 'necessity' is applied to the will *de re* signifying "it is necessary, when we exercise will, that we do so of our own free will (*necesseesse, ut, cum volumus, libero velimusarbitrio*)" rather than some kind of causal necessity, viz. "that which is not in our power (*quae non est in nostra potestate*)." (5.10, p. 204). In short, human acts of will occur by 'necessity' since they are necessarily carried out by will. As such, they are included in the order of fate. Therefore, since God's willing of events *includes* human willing, these events are the result of a confluence of causes; God's will is the sufficient condition, created wills are the necessary condition.

Why does Augustine's argument work? Unlike Cicero and the Stoics, he brings into focus not just the efficient causes of events but a supreme efficient cause of efficient causes. By illustrating that the principle 'nothing happens unless preceded by an efficient cause' applies even more to *the very being of causes* than to the events they bring about, Augustine discloses that the existence and activities of efficient causes depend on the creative activity of an uncreated first efficient cause, viz. God. Therefore, since voluntary causes and key aspects of their effects are *created*, Augustine has (i) answered Cicero's claim that fate can't be governed by omniscient divinity and (ii) refuted the Stoic assertion that fate excludes human responsibility by showing that each error has the same root, viz. deficient ontology.

In 5.11, Augustine finishes his defense of providence by stating some of its key characteristics. For the most part, these are implications of what's been argued in 5.9-10. Hence, the "supreme and true God…with His Word and Holy Spirit, which three are one…" (i) is the "almighty…Creator and Maker of every soul and every body…"; (ii) empowers and governs the being and activity of each creature; and (iii) makes those participating in, i.e. worshipping, Him "happy in truth" while punishing sinners with "mercy." (5.11, p. 206). Augustine's argument in 5.9-11, therefore, supports the fundamental ground of book 1's doctrine of providence but, when compared with his *confessio* concept of providence, it also discloses a key characteristic and significant advantage of his current project. On the one hand, we find basic agreement with *Simpl*. 1.2; God is understood as the sufficient condition for His voluntary creatures hence, His knowledge and will is supreme. On the other hand, however, Augustine's teaching in 5.9-11 does not explicate *Simpl*. 1.2's account of the essential difference between God's treatment of the good and bad, viz. the interplay between Original sin and God's unmerited grace. That omission illustrates the unique context of Augustine's discussion in *Civ. Dei* 1-10 he is more concerned with establishing the existence of providence than expressing his opinion on its ultimate content.

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[29] For discussion of Augustine's doctrine of predestination in 5.9-11 see: H. A. Wolfson, "Philosophical Implications of the Pelagian Controversy," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 103 (1959): 554-562, 559-561.

It also provides an important philosophical advantage: since Augustine's paradigm of gratitude is restrained by his paradigm of being, his teaching that God is the sufficient condition of human being and action implies, in tandem, both that (i) God aids all persons towards happiness and (ii) all owe Him gratitude. Nevertheless, despite its explicit and implicit philosophical merit, Augustine's doctrine in 5.9-11 has not completely justified book 1's teaching on providence. What hasn't been shown is that Christ is God's mediator and should be worshipped for eternal happiness. Augustine gives evidence for this claim in books 8-10 while trying to show the superiority of Christian to pagan-Platonist teachings on divine mediation and beatitude.[30] His argumentfor Christ has four principal components, viz. that (i) an incorporeal and immutable God is the creator of the universe, rule of life, and light of the mind; (ii) the Godhead consists in three co-equal divine persons or relations Father, Word, and Holy Spirit in one divine substance; (iii) the doctrine of the Word's incarnation in Christ is cogent, and (iv) worshipping Christ is right practice. While the first component in Augustine's argument might be easily accepted by his audience (since explicating an ontology shared by pagan and Christian alike), the others are supported by dialectical arguments showing how the Christian doctrines of the Godhead, divine incarnation, and worship stand in conformity with the aforementioned ontology. Most importantly, the upshot of Augustine's argument is that, by specifying God's identity and the character of divine worship, it both supports and augments the twin claim that man (i) is created by God and (ii) owes Him devotion.

In 8.5-6, Augustine distinguishes (i) that God is incorporeal and immutable, and (ii) key aspects of the Godhead by tracing the reasoning whereby the Platonists, the best of the non-Christian philosophers (8.1, 9-11), understand God as "the cause of existence, the ground of understanding, and the pattern according to which we are to live" (8.4, p. 317). Augustine's argument proceeds from effect to cause, showing that (i) since 'what judges is ontologically superior to what is judged' (8.5), and (ii) 'mutable depends on immutable being' (8.6), (iii) there must be a supreme divinity whose thought and will causes to be and governs all mutable realities (8.6). God, therefore, is conceived as He "Who truly is, because He is immutable (*qui vereestquiaincommutabiliterest*)", and His existing is specified by His attributes of life, understanding, and happiness. Augustine writes: "For, to Him, it is not one thing to exist and another to live (*non aliudilliestesse, aliudvivere*) … nor is it one thing to live and another to understand ... Rather, to Him, to exist is to live, to understand and to be blessed (*quod estillivivere, intelligere, beatumesse, hoc estilliesse*)" (8.6, p. 321). Most importantly, Augustine uses this Platonic doctrine of God known by way of analogy from creatures as foundation and referent for his subsequent teaching on the Godhead.[31] While relying on this notion of divinity, he juxtaposes similar accounts of the Godhead provided by (i) Porphyry (10.23; *cf.* 10.29, 18.41) and (ii) Christian orthodoxy (10.24) to support his claim that the Godhead consists in three consubstantial and co-equal 'principles' (*principia*) or relations, viz. Father, Word, and Holy Spirit.[32] Hence, Augustine's teaching on divine being in general and the Godhead in particular has as its philosophical standard a shared Platonic ontology and theology. It is one thing, however, to assert the consubstantiality of the divine Word with the Father and Spirit but quite another to defend the claim that He is incarnate and the proper object of worship.[33] Is Augustine's teaching on Christ defensible? Once again, he supports his assertion by appealing to Platonic ontology but in this instance it is also used to adjudicate between rival modes of worship.

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[30] For helpful assessment of Augustine's engagement with pagan-Neoplatonism in *Civ. Dei* see: R. Russell, O.S.A., "The Role of Neoplatonism in St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*," in *The City of God: A Collection of Critical Essays*, *op. cit*., 403-413.

[31] In 11.25 (482) Augustine holds that the Platonist account of God as (8.4) 'source of existence, light of the mind, and rule of life' is an adumbration of the divine trinity conceived as "[Father] the author of nature, [Word] the giver of intelligence and the inspirer [Holy Spirit] of the love by which life is made good and blessed." As Russell, *op. cit.*, writes (410), it was from Platonism that Augustine "appropriated the threefold conception of God as the source of being, truth and happiness, a fundamental metaphysical insight that became the point of departure and unifying principle of in his exposition of a Christian philosophy in *The City of God*."

[32] For textual evidence and discussion of the Porphyrean triad and its approximation to the Christian Trinity see J.J. O'Meara, *Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine* (Paris; ÉtudesAugustiniennes, 1959), 118-122. Commentary is found in J. Dillon, "Logos and Trinity: Patterns of Platonist Influence on Early Christianity," in *The Philosophy in Christianity*, ed. G. Vessey (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne; Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1-13, 8-13; S.R.C. Lilla, "The NeoPlatonic Hypostases And The Christian Trinity," in *Studies in Plato and The Platonic Tradition*, *essays presented to J. Whitattaker*, ed. M. Joyal (Ashgate Publishing Co.; Brookfield, Vermont, 1997), 127-189, 155-158; and M.J. Edwards, "Porphyry and the Intelligible Triad," *Journal of Hellenic Studies,* vol. 110 (1990), 14-25.

[33] Augustine, of course, understands the doctrine of 'the Word made flesh' as the central difference between Christianity and Platonism (e.g. *Conf.* 7.9.13-15).

On the one hand, the common doctrine is this: Christians and Platonists (i) seek "the blessed life which is to come after death…"; (ii) hold that the immortal and rational human soul can only attain happiness "by participation in the light of that God by whom both it and the world were made"; and (iii) maintain that the "happy life" is achieved by adhering "with the purity of chaste love to … the immutable God." (10.1, p. 390). The crucial difference, however, is that while Christians worship God alone, the Platonists worship either (i) spirits and demons (10.1) or (ii) spirits and God (10.2-6). Augustine makes his point by tackling Porphyry's claim that Christian worship is irrational since its object is a man/creature rather than God (10.24; *cf.* 19.23). His response is that Porphyry misunderstands the teaching that Christ is fully God and fully man. Therefore, while Porphyry rejects Christ as 'the principle' of purification (10.24) since viewing Him strictly as man, Christians embrace Christ as *principium* since holding that He is divinity, viz. the divine Word, assuming manhood (10.24)[34] to establish a universal way of salvation (10.24; 32). What makes *reasonable* the doctrine that Christ is the God-man mediator between God and man? It shares with Platonism the teachings (i) that purification is through the Father's Intellect/Word (*patrikos nous*) (10.28); (ii) that divine grace is needed to achieve purification (10.28); and (iii), with respect to Christ's humanity, that soul *and* body can share in eternal blessedness (10.29; *cf.* 22.25-28). So, the Christian doctrine of Christ and worship is credible since it maintains rather than contradicts the Platonic ontology concerning God and man.

By the end of book 10, therefore, Augustine has justified book 1's doctrine of providence by employing a Platonic ontology which gives demonstrative proof for some things and grounds dialectical proof for others. On the one hand, Augustine has implied and/or provided *a posteriori* arguments showing that 'if nothing happens unless preceded by an efficient cause' (5.9) and if 'mutable depends on immutable reality' (8.5-6) then there is an immutable, omniscient, omnipotent, incorporeal, God who creates the causal order, governs all agents and events, and ought to be worshipped for happiness. God, in other words, is the sufficient condition for human being. On the other hand, that this God is Christ, the divinely established mediator between God and man, is supported by showing that the intimately-related doctrines of divine trinity, divine incarnation, and Christian worship accord with the commonly accepted ontology. As such, Augustine's teaching on providence is well-defended: it is reasonable to maintain that human experience is ordered by and for Christ.

All told, Augustine's *confessio* perspective on providence in books 1-10 succeeds because its primary philosophical referent is a verifiable ontology shared with pagan Neo-Platonism. Since Augustine's principal aim is to show his pagan and Christian audience that there is one true God, manifested in Christ, who structures human experience to cultivate divine worship, his argument's scope is not the entirety of divine-human interaction but the latter's basic ontological parameters. This has the positive effect that Augustine subordinates his vitiated paradigm of mercy and condemnation to a reasonable ontology. Therefore, although it is sometimes evident that Augustine's fundamental standpoint is the faulty eschatology found in *Simpl.* 1.2, the latter is limited for the better by the immediate circumstances of his discourse. Consequently, Augustine's reader is left with the coherent impression that (i) God, the sufficient condition of human being and action, aids all persons towards beatitude; and (ii) all owe Him worship. In this context, ontology and gratitude, *nosse* and *velle*, harmonize rather than contradict.

III.) Divine providence in *Civ. Dei* 11-22: *velle* in tension with *esse* and *nosse*

Augustine's positive account of providence in books 11-22 has two principal components, viz. the creation of and distinction between (i) the angels, found in 11.7-12.9, and (ii) humanity, located in 12.10-22.30. What unites these presentations is that they are explicitly informed by the vitiated paradigm of mercy (city of God) and condemnation (city of Man) distinguished in *Simpl.* 1.2 (11.1). In one respect, this has the superb advantage of developing coherently the essentials of the paradigm of divine-human/angelic interaction established in books 1-10; in another respect, it has the disadvantage of contradicting it. The strength of Augustine's teaching is not only its emphasis on gratitude but its account of God's (i) raising certain members of His rational creation, angels and humans, to eternal beatitude and (ii) ordaining a moral division within His rational creation for the sake of encouraging divine worship. These claims work because they explicate logically the doctrine that God is the sufficient condition for His rational creation.

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[34] Augustine writes (10.24, 426): "But Porphyry the Platonist did not recognize Him as the *Principium*; otherwise, he would have recognized Him as the one Who cleanses us. For it is not flesh which is the *principium*, and not the human soul, but the Word, through Whom all things were made."

The weakness of Augustine's argument, however, is that only some angels and humans can achieve beatitude since this contradicts its governing ontology and, in some respects, the impetus for gratitude.[35] In the spirit of *Simpl.* 1.2, Augustine's problematic doctrine arises because he wrongly subordinates the sufficient condition for human and angelic being as such, viz. right union with God, to the proximate cause for their evil-doing, viz., deficient choices in their original, pre-lapsarian state. Whereas God's reason for creating angels and humans, viz. His immutable goodness, has ultimate sway over their welfare, their choice-making has only secondary or participated sway since the latter is essentially a means to the end of attaining bliss. In books 11-22, therefore, ontology and gratitude harmonize in one respect but contradict in another respect.

A.) *The distinction between the angels*

After citing Scripture (11.1-3) and Platonic philosophy (11.5) as his authorities, Augustine justifies his account of an eternal distinction between the angels by stating the latter's ostensible necessary and sufficient conditions. The primary necessary condition is that the angelic nature, being created from nothing by God, is "mutable" (*mutabilis*), i.e. subject to change (12.1, p. 499; *cf.* 11.10). Augustine makes it clear, then, that his standard of measurement is uncreated, immutable divinity. God, he claims, is "simple" (*simplex*) substance (11.10, p. 462), meaning that (i) there is no difference between what He is and has and (ii) is completely incapable of losing any attribute He possesses (11.10). While these characteristics apply to each divine person since Father, Son, and Spirit is co-extensive with the divine nature, the first characteristic does not apply to each "insofar as one Person is spoken of in relation to another" (11.10, p. 462) Father is relative to Son and Spirit, Son is relative to Father and Spirit, and Spirit is relative to Father and Son. By contrast God's creatures are changeable, meaning that 'being and attribute are not the same', i.e. they are able to lose what they have and/or gain what they don't have (11.10). While God, then, is the self-sufficient, immutable, triune creator of mutable natures, the latter have their being from Him, are intrinsically incomplete, and therefore require development. Hence, the most basic necessary condition for a moral distinction between the angels is that they are *mutabilis*.

A second necessary condition is that the angels change for better or worse due to their original responses to divine goodness. Since they are rational natures, the angels' happiness is not found in their own being but is received from God on the provision that they co-operate with Him. Therefore, while those embracing His goodness will attain happiness (eternal bliss), those rejecting it in favor of some created good will become sunk in "misery." (12.1, p. 498).

Augustine's third necessary condition is that each angel, in its original state, is morally good, i.e. adhering to God, and therefore innately disposed to love the divine goodness and attain happiness. While this underscores the fallen angels' responsibility for their sinning, its proximate cause is to defend against Manichaean-like notions that God created or confronted evil angels (11.11, 13-17), i.e. angels opposed to Him by nature (12.1). Augustine supports his teaching on the original goodness of the bad angels by explaining (i) how the divine goodness structures creaturely ontology, (ii) the beneficial use God's providence makes of the angels' original choices, and(iii) that the character of the evil angels is not their nature but a perversion thereof.

To begin with, Augustine argues that all creatures are ontologically good because God's motive for creating lies in His creating "good things" (11.22, p. 478). God did not create "from any necessity" (11.24, p. 481), such as to repel some contrary evil principle or evil natures (11.23), nor because "He had need of any benefit," but "simply from His own goodness (*sedsolabonitate*); that is, so that it [i.e. the creature] might be good" (11.24, p. 481). Most importantly, the goodness of God's motive is manifest in the goodness of the things made. Therefore, says Augustine, if God's own goodness "is rightly understood to be the Holy Spirit" (*Ibid.*), His creatures' goodness is shown in their having trinitarian ontological structures. That each creature is made *by* the Father, *through* His Word/Son, and *because* of His Spirit (11.21, 23-24) is manifested in their existing, having form, and aspiring to order (11.28) and is specified in (i) the rational creature's existing, knowing its existing, and delighting therein (11.26) and (ii) the non-rational creature's existing and self-preserving (11.27). Hence, since each creature has a trinitarian ontology, the fallen angels cannot have been created with an evil nature or inclination.

According to Augustine, the original goodness of the angels is also manifest in the good use God makes of their original choices. In this regard, Augustine follows exactly his account of providence in *Simpl.* 1.2.17-20. While

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[35] In 21.17-27 Augustine rejects the doctrine of unlimited or universal salvation because he thinks it is contrary to the teachings of Scripture and reason. I discuss this important claim towards the end of section III.

God gives the obedient angels the benefit of eternal bliss (12.1), He gives the bad angels the good of eternal punishment (12.3) and uses their "wicked wills" to encourage obedience in His saints (11.17, p. 471). In the latter regard, God uses the devil's wickedness to aid His elect thus, the devil "has become the sport of His angels" and his role as tempter brings "good to the saints whom the devil wishes to harm…" (*Ibid.*).

In terms of His providential plan, God employs the fallen angels to adorn "the course of the ages like a most beautiful poem set off with antitheses (i.e. *antithetis…opposita…contraposita*)" (11.18, p. 472; *cf.* 11.23).[36] By opposing the morally good with the evil, God accomplishes the beneficial result of (i) punishing the latter while (ii) encouraging the former in worship (11.33). Hence, God did not create angels as or to become morally evil that is not their final cause; nor, therefore, did He make the wicked angels for the use to which He now puts them. While they are responsible for their evil-doing, He is responsible for their good nature and the beneficial use to which He places their evil deeds. Therefore, if these angels had not disobeyed, they would have enjoyed a completely salutary role in God's providence. Rather than being opposed to God and His saints they would be united with them in a relationship of mutual conformation akin to, because sharing properly in, the divine trinity. Hence, Augustine's claim that the angels were created adhering to God is anchored in his teaching that their ontological structures and moral experience are completely governed by His goodness.

Augustine also supports his doctrine of the angels' original goodness by explaining how the evil character of some is not their nature but a perversion thereof (12.1). Since God creates all natures, and any perversion is contrary to nature, the cause of the bad angels' failure to adhere to God is somehow from themselves. Hence, the evil angels' very existence proves they were once morally good. Taken altogether, then, the original rectitude of the angels is manifest in (i) their trinitarian ontological structures, (ii) the good use God's providence makes of their original choices, and (iii) the perversion of nature found in the evil angels. To hold otherwise denies that angels are created by God.

What is the sufficient condition for an *absolute* moral distinction between the angels? As implied above, it is their very own "wills and desires" (12.1, p. 498); while the bad made "ill use of good natures," the good made right use of their good nature (11.17, p. 471). Consequently, the latter became united with God through participation in His "eternal Light" but the former became separated from Him since spurning that light (11.9, p. 461). The angels, therefore, are not divided by their mutable natures, choice-making capacities, or original state but due to the quality of their original responses to God's goodness.

Analyzed in terms of its key ontological doctrines, Augustine's argument elucidates the necessary and sufficient conditions for a moral distinction between the angels but fails to show that this division is absolute, i.e. eternal. Why so? On the one hand, that the angelic nature is mutable means that by the same principle it can become vitiated it can also be healed. On the other hand, that God's motive for creating is to share goodness means that His *immutable* goal for the angels is that each participates fully in His bliss. Therefore, since God's *immutable* goodness causes and governs the mutable angels, the true sufficient condition constituting His providence over the angels are not their own original choices of will but His reason for their existing. As such, that the obedient angels are rewarded with eternal bliss implies that the wicked receive the good of punishment (really, of a temporary punishment) in order to desire and ultimately enjoy that same bliss. In other words, Augustine's governing ontology suggests that the divine goodness permits the bad angels to fail as a means to the end of their attaining true happiness. Augustine's trinitarian ontology, therefore, establishes necessary and sufficient conditions for an interim division between the angels because it implies that each angel attains bliss. However, it gives no grounds for an eternal division. All things considered, Augustine's teaching on the angels under-achieves because it under-emphasizes the primacy of divine being. While his trinitarian ontology supports a moral distinction between the angels including that some angels attain bliss, it cannot sustain an absolute division since the sufficient condition for angelic being as such consists in its attaining bliss and therefore an eternal community, mirroring triune divinity, wherein each angel enjoys the fullness of its being.

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[36] On Augustine's structuring *Civ. Dei* according to the manner of antithesis see the fine comments of McKinnon ("Augustine's *City of God*: The Divided Self/The Divided *Civitas*," *op. cit.*, 319-352, 322-323), who explicitly underscores H.-I. Marrou's similar insight in *Saint-Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris; E. De Broccard, 1938), 80. In her words (322), "…the conceptual and structural order of the work as a whole…may be described as an example of *syncrisis*, or concatenated antitheses, on a grand scale. Implicitly, Augustine's reliance upon this rhetorical strategy is an imitation of the creative signature of God discernible within the logic of human history."

Looked at from this perspective, Augustine's principal error lies in subordinating the sufficient condition governing angelic being, viz. God's immutable good will for the angels, to a necessary condition thereof, viz. the angels' own choices of will. Augustine's treatment of the angels stresses well the importance of proper response to God. Butthis is at the cost of emphasizing the primacy of divinity.

B.) *The eternal distinction between humanity*

A similar judgment applies to Augustine's teaching on God's providential care of man in 12.22-22.30. In this instance, his positing an *eternal* division within humanity relies on three intimately related necessary conditions and two sufficient conditions. The former are that (i) human nature created and governed by the immutable, good, and triune God is mutable, i.e. made to change for better but able to change for worse (11.10; 14.1, 10); (ii) man, in his original state, was both morally good and constituted to choose between enjoying greater proximity to God or suffering misery (14.1, 10-11; 13.1); and (iii) because man chose to live according to his standard rather than God's, he was condemned to misery (14.1), i.e. to life apart from divine grace (*cf.* 22.24). On the other hand, Augustine maintains that the sufficient condition for humanity's eternal division is twofold: for the condemned (the majority) it is man's original choice of will in Adam but for the blissful it is God's choice in Christ (21.12). Most importantly, while Augustine's trinitarian ontology resolutely (i) emphasizes gratitude, (ii) maintains that humans attain eternal beatitude, and (iii) justifies a moral distinction between humans, it cannot support an absolute or eternal division sincehumanity's true sufficient condition consists in attaining bliss. Augustine's principal error, therefore, lies in subordinating the sufficient condition governing humanity, viz. God's *immutable* good will, to a necessary condition thereof, viz. Adam's deficient choice of will. As his positing two sufficient conditions viz. God's will and human will for humanity's eternal destiny shows, Augustine's miscue is ultimately caused by stressing piety at the cost of divinity. I will illustrate this by analyzing three key passages in *Civ. Dei* 12-21.

The problematic aspect of Augustine's doctrine is plainly visible in 21.12 since it follows exactly his teaching in *Simpl.* 1.2.We distinguish four essential characteristics:

(i) Original sin condemns the entire human race to eternal misery (Adam "became worthy of an eternal evil [*maloaeterno*]", 21.12, p. 1070) so that it is 'a condemned lump' (*massadamnata*).
(ii) By God's "mercy and undeserved grace" some are released from eternal condemnation (*Ibid*).
(iii) God releases the latter to *show* humanity His mercy and retribution. If all had been left condemned, His mercy would not have been made known'; if all had been given mercy, "the truth of [God's] retribution (*veritasultionis*) would have appeared in no one" (*Ibid.*).
(iv) To*show* that condemnation was due to the whole of mankind, "many more are left under punishment than are redeemed from it." Consequently, those emancipated from condemnation "have reason to give most heartfelt thanks" to Christ "for His free gift in delivering so many…" (*Ibid.*).

Augustine's teaching entails several difficulties because it contradicts:

(i) the immutable divine goodness, God's motive for creating humanity since claiming that He condemns some persons to eternal misery.
(ii) divine omnipotence and omniscience since asserting that God uses His knowledge and power to condemn some to eternal misery.
(iii) human ontology by claiming that Adam's sin makes humanity into a 'condemned lump.' If humanity, created *imago trinitatis*, is a 'condemned lump', it *is* not.
(iv) human responsibility by making it a secondary cause of predestination but a primary cause of eternal condemnation.
(v) divine being by making God, in the same respect, both the primary and secondary cause of human destiny.

However, what gives Augustine's teaching some coherence is its practical dimension, viz. that man owes to God a debt of gratitude which is repaid in divine worship. This supports our claim that Augustine's account of providence eclipses his own ontology by over-emphasizing gratitude, but how is this manifested doctrinally in his account of God's plan for humanity in *Civ. Dei*? In other words, by what teaching does he contradict his ontology? Together with 21.12 above, our analysis of relevant passages in books 12 and 14 will show this occurs because Augustine's doctrine of Original sin alternately affirms and denies his normative trinitarian ontology. More than anything else, an over-

emphasis on the effect of Adam's sin both instantiates and signifies Augustine's subordination of ontology to gratitude.

In 12.22-28 Augustine's treatment of God's creation of humanity is characterized by prominent aspects of his paradigms of being and worship. On the one hand, Augustine manifests his metaphysics of *creation* by making clear that human existing depends ultimately on God; and he specifies human being (*esse*) in a trinitarian way by asserting that God fashioned the human race from one man, Adam, in order to "show mankind how highly He prizes unity in multitude [plurality] (*in pluribus unitas*)" (12.23, p. 534). While speaking in a manner strongly reminiscent of 5.9, Augustine writes that since God "causes all that exists in any way to have whatever degree of being it has" (12.26, p. 537), He alone has created human nature (12.25-26). Additionally, Augustine's employing the trinitarian principle 'unity in plurality' allows him to provide an account of the ideal structure of human community (i) between spouses, like Adam and Eve (12.22, 28), (ii) for the race as a whole (12.22-23); and (iii) between the redeemed portion of humanity and the blessed angels (12.23). On the other hand, Augustine manifests his vitiated paradigm of gratitude by maintaining that because of Adam's Original sin, there is found in him the origin of the human members of two eternal cities (12.28), viz. (i) those who, by God's inscrutable choice (*Ibid.*), will enjoy eternal bliss (12.23, 28) and (ii) those who will not (12.28).

In this passage, Augustine's paradigm of worship subordinates his paradigm of being. While a consistent metaphysical account of humanity's origin in Adam would hold that God foresaw how He would bring about the complete 'unity in plurality' (between humanity and God) intended from the beginning, Augustine asserts that God foresaw how He would bring about both *eternal* unity *and* eternal division. Although the doctrine of two opposing mind-sets/communities and their development in the *saeculum* can be defended (insofar as the elect, the city of God, are such for the sake of *all others* rather than for *only some* others), that of two mind-sets in eternity is not. Indeed, an eschatology following Augustine's normative theological doctrine would maintain (i) that Original sin placed humanity in an *estranged*, rather than *lost*, state and that (ii) God shares His goodness with all men in an ultimately progressive manner which, in some instances, extends into eternity, i.e. beyond the domain of this world. This implies, then, that while those receiving His grace before others are 'first-fruits', those not yet having received His grace are 'future-fruits' rather than 'non-fruits.' In 12.22-28, therefore, Augustine emphasizes worship over ontology but in this instance we see that his trinitarian ontology is both (i) reasonable to the extent it gives primary status to divine creating, and (ii) contradicted by assigning primary status to human sinning since making the latter a sufficient, rather than necessary, condition of human being.

A similar judgment applies to Augustine's doctrine of providence in book 14 (14.1, 10-11, 26-28). This passage, however, is especially illuminating since it shows unequivocally the central role which Augustine's doctrine of Original sin plays in his supplanting the trinitarian paradigm *which should inform his doctrine of providence* with his vitiated paradigm of mercy and condemnation. According to Augustine, God's creating humanity in Adam intended that the entire race would be united in a constant bond of peace (14.1) and progress as a unified whole to the enjoyment of eternal bliss (14.10; *cf.* 13.1).[37] Augustine asserts, though, that due to God's foreknowledge of the first couple's disobedience in the Garden of Eden (14.11, 27) and despite the fact that His omnipotence could have restored His original plan! (14.27), God chose instead to divide the race against itself both in this world *and in eternity* (14.1, 10, 28). At this point Augustine's explanation follows the familiar script of *Simpl.* 1.2 and *Civ. Dei* 21.12.

While the first couple's heinous sin merited that the entire race suffer corporeal and eternal death (14.1, 26), God chose to share His "unmerited grace" with a portion of humanity (14.1, p. 581) so that, by displaying to them His merciful forgiveness and justice, He would encourage their gratitude (14.26, *cf.* 15.6, 15.21). Consequently, there originates from the first couple two eternal communities which, in this world, dwell side-by-side and are co-mingled but will be separated in eternity (14.1, 28). These are: (i) the heavenly city (*civitas caelestis*)/city of God, consisting in those loving God to the contempt of self, and (ii) the earthly city (*civitas terrena*)/city of man, consisting in those loving

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[37] Augustine's teaching at the end of 14.10 can be read in two distinct ways, viz. (i) that the entire race would progress to eternal bliss or (ii), because he mentions "the number of predestined saints" (14.10, p. 603), that only some humans would progress thereto. By combining 14.10 with his accounts of (i) God's purposes in creating the entire race from one man, Adam, in 12.22-28, and (ii) divine omnipotence in 14.27, I take (i) as Augustine's meaning. It would make no difference to my argument if Augustine meant (ii) since my point is that his trinitarian ontology implies that God would have offered eternal bliss to each and, in the end, each would have attained it.

self to the contempt of God (14.28, p. 593). While the former live by the spirit (i.e. according to God's standard) (14.4) and share eternal bliss with the blessed angels, the latter live by the flesh (i.e. according to man's standard) (*Ibid.*) and suffer eternal misery with the wicked angels (14.28).

Augustine maintains, then, that God's 'original', i.e. pre-lapsarian, plan for humanity is trinitarian in goal and means. On the one hand, the race would gradually achieve complete *unity* (i.e. perfect love of God and neighbor); on the other, this would occur through the trinitarian interaction of its members. Based on Augustine's teaching explicitly stated in 11.18 that God's providence employs antitheses, i.e. interaction between opposed mind-sets, to grow divine worship in His predestined, we can distinguish three important characteristics of the ideal, i.e. pre-laspsarian, plan that he has implied. First, the historical interaction between humans would be complementary rather than contradictory, i.e. the differences between the interacting agents would consist in degree of worship rather than between worship (virtue) and non-worship (vice). Second, the differences would be developmental rather than ultimate, i.e. each party would explicitly encourage the other(s) in worship so that the more mature would encourage their inferiors according to the model of love characterizing the relationship between the holy angels and humans described in *Civ. Dei* 10.15-16. And third, the aforementioned developmental differences would disappear when the entire race is established in eternity.[38] As such, humanity would progress in an orderly manner to eternal blessedness wherein and whereby it is structured in a fashion that mirrors its source, goal, and aid, viz. the divine unity-in-plurality.

This shows, therefore, that Augustine's post-lapsarian doctrine of providence has weakness since its emphasis on human sinfulness, anchored in his teaching on Original sin, contradicts his very own normative trinitarian ontology. We see this at once in its claim that God changes the means and outcome of His plan for humanity from trinitarian to non-trinitarian on account of His 'foreknowledge' of human sinfulness. Augustine's governing ontology implies, however, that the presence of human sinning can't be something that causes God to alter His 'unchanging' plan for humanity. Rather, it signifies *on the theoretical level* that His means are not as trinitarian as they *would have been* if the original couple had obeyed.

Based on Augustine's ideal or pre-lapsarian notion of providence, what should his post-lapsarian notion of providence look like? It should betrinitarian in its outcome and means but attenuated since employing sin, i.e. division-in-plurality, to elicit the result of eternal unity-in-plurality. On this basis, God would permit human sinning for a phase to teach that sin is self-contradictory but divine worship brings fulfillment. As such, the plan's outcome would betrinitarian, i.e. humanity eternally worships God, and its means would also be essentially trinitarian. God, therefore, would employ (i) a primary community composed of worshippers (the moral), to develop them to maturity and (ii) secondary interactions between (a) the moral and the immoral and (b) the immoral themselves. Most importantly, sinceGod has structured man for worship, (i) the immoral party's relations with (a) themselves and (b) their opposites would ultimately cause them to embrace God; (ii) the moral party's interactions with all others would increase their own divine worship; and (iii) those in eternity would encourage divine worship in their temporal counterparts. In the long run, then, the secondary communities/interactionswould be phased out, leaving one supreme community whose developmental phase terminates when the entire race is established in eternity. Although this plan is not as efficient as Augustine's ideal plan, its outcome and means cohere with it since God woulduse human sinning, and therefore all interactions, for the end of eternal divine bliss. Despite its imperfect means, this plan would be as good as can be in light of human sinning.

How does Augustine's teaching on providence, in light of his judgement on humanity's post-lapsarian state, compare to the above? It shows well in some respects but badly in others. To begin with, our analysis of *21*.12, *12*.22-28, and *14*.1, 10-11, 26-28 discloses that Augustine's account of God's plan consists in one non-trinitarian antithesis, comprised of two primary communities that are opposite in quality and related hierarchically. These are (i) a trinitarian community (the predestined), and (ii) a non-trinitarian community (the non-predestined) ordained to encourage the former in divine worship. On the one hand, God establishes a primary eschatological community, the city of God, wherein each member is formed in worship and that culminates in eternity. Due to human sinning this community employs interaction between antithetical mind-sets (good vs. evil) whereby (i) the explicitly predestined interact with the wicked and (ii) the wicked with each other, thereby effecting worship both (a) in the converted and (b) in the latent predestined numbered amongst the wicked.

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[38] My paradigm focuses on the central moments of eschatology rather than on the dynamics found in particular eras, e.g. the era of historical life (embodied existence in this world), the era of the last judgment, and eternity (*cf.* 20.27).

On the other hand, God governs another primary eschatological community, the city of Man, which comprises the wicked and (as 21.12 shows) enforces their condemnation. This community entails historical interactions wherein (i) the apparently (i.e. non-predestined) good interact with themselves and the explicitly predestined, (ii) the apparently good mix with the wicked, and (iii) the wicked interact with themselves.

This brings the result that (i) the apparently good embrace wickedness and (ii) the wicked are eternally punished. Taken altogether, then, the ultimate outcome of Augustine's interpretation of God's plan is one eternal antithesis composed of two non-interacting eternal communities, viz. the cities of God (book 22) and Man (book 21). God, therefore, both does and does not guide humanity to eternal divine worship. Hence, while Augustine's teaching concerning the predestined matches up with his guiding trinitarian ontology, his overall teaching does not becauseits exaggerated emphasis on human sinning rooted in the doctrine that Original sin makes humanity *massadamnata* subordinates trinitarian ontology to a paradigm of worship.

Nevertheless, Augustine's doctrine of providence has significant merit. To begin with, its (i) centerpiece thesis, the city of God, is coherent and (ii) essential *purpose* and *methodology* is likewise. Taking its cue from the divine example (11.18), Augustine's argument for the city of God is, from beginning to end, a trinitarian thesis employing subsidiary antitheses encouraging divine worship. Augustine's methodology is trinitarian since he intends to present the reasonableness of divine worship by contrasting 'true' with 'false' doctrine. As such, his common approach not only in 11-22 but in *Civ. Dei* as a whole consists in positing antitheses to show how one contrary is either right or more right while, depending on the circumstances, the other is less right, less wrong, or wrong. In book 1, for example, he asserts that his pagan audience lacks the virtue (i.e. lesser wickedness) of its predecessors, the latter lack true (i.e. Christian) virtue, and his entire audience, pagan and Christian alike, ought to embrace the fullness of Christian virtue. Likewise, Augustine's arguments for (i) divine providence in 5.9-11, (ii) the Christian doctrines of incarnation and worship in books 8-10 and (iii) moral distinctions within and between certain angels and humans in books 11-22, have a similar structure. In each instance, Augustine's argument for the city of God employs a primary antithesis, contrasting truth with falsity, and sometimes subsidiary antitheses contrasting (i) greater with lesser truth and (ii) greater with lesser falsity. Therefore, although Augustine's positive doctrine of providence contradicts key aspects of his account of divinity, its central thesis, the city of God, and the aims and essential structures of its supporting arguments agree with his cardinal teaching on divinity. In the latter regard, it is a happy irony that Augustine's purpose and methodology is more coherent than his positive doctrine! For whereas his eschatology teaches that God only structures some interactions for divine worship, each of his own arguments is ordered to that end.

In addition, Bishop Augustine's doctrine of limited salvation displays a reasonable measure of prudence. He makes this point in 21.17-27 by arguing that unlimited salvation is contrary to Scripture and reason. While Scripture speaks often and unequivocally of the eternal suffering of angels and humans (21.23-4), reason understands that no one can be saved who doesn't have Christ 'as their foundation' (21.26). When it comes to humans, Augustine's teaching is that unless someone dies in the state of friendship with Christ, one does not have Him as foundation. On the other hand, Augustine allows that some who don't have Christ as their foundation at death will be saved through the intercession of the saints, but cautions his reader that the prudent course is to worship God, i.e. have Christ as foundation, rather than to presume upon the aforementioned intercessors (21.27, pp.1105-6). On this matter, Augustine's prudence dovetails with his pre-eminent emphasis on gratitude and worship.

As we have shown, however, Augustine's normative ontology implies unlimited salvation and consequently that the ultimate destiny of many willsomehow be determined by events after this life. For the reasons stated above, Augustine could label this teaching presumptuous. Nevertheless, a doctrine of unlimited salvation might be more efficacious at engendering gratitudesince God's goodness is more manifest. Indeed, if worship is fostered by recognizing God's goodness, then Augustine's doctrine of the post-lapsarian God militates against worship (since He withholds aid from some of His creatures). What about the implication that unlimited salvation can be used as a pretext for sloth and presumption? By Augustine's own principles, this wouldn't occur if one has Christ for one's foundation.

Yet, Augustine's teaching on restricted salvation is obviously useful in engendering 'Christ as foundation' in the first place since it emphasizes both (i) the ontological difference between practicing virtue rather than vice and (ii) the importance of embracing virtue without delay. In this respect, Augustine's doctrine has the advantage of including the decisive practical dimension that also belongs to the doctrine of unlimited salvation. Therefore, although unlimited salvation is more accurate than restricted salvation, wisdom resides in each teaching while one has a superior

speculative dimension, the other has a superior practical dimension. This shows that the difference between them is not simply a matter of truth as such but also of context/audience. According to the latter standard, Augustine's argument has unquestioned merit; nevertheless, its speculative dimension needs to be improved by developing an eschatology that places a greater focus on divinity but without teaching unlimited salvation.

Paradoxically, that is done by emphasizing that God aids all persons towards beatitude while, at the same time, downplaying the cardinal truth that He is the sufficient condition of creaturely being and action. As such, Augustine's doctrine can and should be enhanced by degree.

All told, therefore, Augustine's *confessio* approach to providence in books 11-22 has mitigated success. Unlike his argument in 1-10 that uses a philosophically defensible (and implicitly trinitarian) ontology to defend the fundamental ground of a Christian teaching on providence, 11-22's argument alternately affirms and denies, develops and contradicts, the principle that an omniscient, omnipotent, triune God is the sufficient condition for rational beings and their actions. The difference is partly caused by a shift in context. In books 1-10 Augustine defends the very existence of providence; however, in 11-22 he attempts to present a persuasive account of its positive content, i.e. of its decisive events, means, and ultimate outcome. The principal reason, though, consists in the degree to which Augustine's concept of providence is structured by *confessio*. In the earlier books this is restricted since his analysis is consistently governed by a philosophically verifiable ontology. By contrast, Augustine's explication of providence in 11-22 has *confessio* itself as its referent but, in this instance, *confessio* is essentially self-verifying. This has mixed results due to the mixed character of *confessio*. While its unassailable advantage, love for God that conforms to trinitarian ontology, produces a coherent doctrine of God's relationship with His elect, its disadvantage, love for God that subordinates ontology, brings a vitiated teaching on God's overall relationship with His rational creation. Hence, although Augustine's (i) trinitarian methodology intends to encourage his reader to worship God and (ii) trinitarian ontology shows that God, and therefore eternal bliss, is the sufficient condition for angelic and human being, his eschatology, made in light of his judgement concerning the nature of humanity's post-lapsarian state, holds that some angels and humans are their own sufficient condition. Furthermore, Augustine's subordination of ontology also has the negative effect of contradicting part of the impetus for gratitude itself, viz. recognition of divine goodness. In these respects, then, Augustine's *confessio* approach to providence in books 11-22 functions as a double-edged sword.

IV.) Conclusion

Our study illustrates that Augustine's profound doctrine of providence in *Civ. Dei* is structured, given merit, and weakened by *confessio*. As stated at the outset, the latter brings an approach consisting in two co-implicate components essentially responsive to *esse* (being). These are: (i) *nosse*, comprised of knowledge and/or doctrine of God, creature, and their inter-relationship including that man owes a debt of gratitude to God for his being that is repaid by worshipping Christ; and (ii) *velle*, the actual response to God of worship, i.e. love of God and neighbor in Christ, which is the determining aspect of Augustine's *intellectusfidei*. As the term *confessio* meaning praise and worship of God shows, *velle* is pre-eminent since Augustine maintains that the sufficient condition for true relationship with God is not knowledge but His unmerited gift of right love which is manifested in divine worship. Moreover as *Simpl.* 1.2 and *Conf.* show, Augustine's closely related eschatology embodies this standpoint, teaching that God (i) distinguishes those He aids towards beatitude (vessels of mercy) from those He leaves behind (vessels of condemnation) and (ii) displays this distinction to His elect to encourage divine worship. However, while Augustine's doctrines of God's (i) relationship with His elect and (ii) employing interaction between the virtuous and non-virtuous to encourage divine worship agrees with his normative ontology, his teaching that God ultimately aids some rather than all does not. In the former respect, Augustine's eschatology succeeds because it orders gratitude to truth; in the latter, it fails since it does otherwise. Although Augustine's prime motivation in forming his doctrine is to encourage his reader to love God, aspects of his teaching undermine that object.

Most importantly, it is for these reasons and others that *confessio* informs, makes advantageous, and impacts negatively *Civ.Dei*'s doctrine of providence. This is visible by analyzing and comparing Augustine's teachings in books 1-10 and 11-22. In the earlier part, Augustine's account of providence is generally coherent because its standard of reference is a defensible ontology rather than his paradigm of mercy and condemnation. Due to the immediate circumstances of his discourse, Augustine both (i) explicates and justifies a philosophically verifiable (implicitly trinitarian) ontology of God, man, and their interactions shared with pagan Neo-Platonism and (ii) uses it as the measure of Christian doctrine and worship. This has the salutary result of upholding the consistent teaching that an omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, triune, creator (i) is the sufficient condition for human being and action; (ii) offers a universal way to beatitude in Christ, His mediator; and (iii) structures *all* human experience including all

interaction between alike and antithetical mind-sets to encourage divine worship. In this context, *esse* is the true and practiced standard for *nosse* and *velle* because Augustine engages and defends a philosophically justifiable doctrine of Christ.

By contrast, his account of providence in books 11-22 has a defensible trinitarian impetus but sometimes subordinates *esse* and *nosse* to *velle***.** Since Augustine's teaching on providence, made in light of his view that humanity has a severe post-lapsarian condition, is explicitly governed by his paradigm of mercy and condemnation, it holds that the sufficient condition for human and angelic being is divinity for some (the elect) but creaturely being for others (the non-elect); and therefore that only some interactions are structured for divine worship. This gives Augustine's post-lapsarian doctrine of providence botha notable advantage and a notable disadvantage. On the one hand, since its essential purpose, methodology, and treatment of God's elect is informed by trinitarian ontology and gratitude, its analysis thereof provides greater insight into providence than in books 1-10. Augustine's treatment of God's elect discloses not only that He is the sufficient condition for His rational creation and therefore leads it to eternal bliss, but also how and why He creates and therefore governs it for this end. This is because as (Father) immutable and omnipotent being, (Son/Word) truth, and (Spirit) goodness He creates angels and humans in His image and likeness. In this respect, Augustine's teaching supersedes its counterpart in 1-10 since its trinitarian ontology makes it more evident that God is the sufficient condition for rational being. On the other hand, however, Augustine's analysis of God's relationship with a significant portion of His rational creation is governed by a focus on gratitude that opposes (i) trinitarian ontology and consequently (ii) the philosophically defensible insights into providence explicated throughout *Civ. Dei*. Here, Augustine's over-emphasis on right willing, i.e. on *velle* over *esse* and *nosse*, produces a vitiated paradigm wherein, both on the divine and human side, goodness is ultimately subordinate to being and truth. In this respect, Augustine's bedrock doctrine that right love is the sufficient condition of right life contradicts his principal aim to manifest God as the sufficient condition of angelic and human being. While gratitude is the rational response to God, it consists in conforming to His truth rather than making the latter conform to it.

In Augustine's defense, however, the difficulty in his teaching is not pervasive, has a noble motive, and is easily fixed. As we have seen, his primary teaching distinguishes and applies consistently what he identifies as the genuine first principles of divine providence, viz. divine supremacy and, because of that, creaturely conformity thereto. Additionally, Augustine's overall eschatology is imperfect not because it intends to contradict the primacy of divinity but because its attempt to uphold divinity over-emphasizes creaturely conformity to God. On that score, it is probably because Augustine so much wishes to share God's love that his doctrine sometimes goes astray. Is this the "the work of a man whose energy has burnt itself out, whose love has grown cold"?[39] All things considered, that appears unlikely. It seems more fitting to say that Augustine's teaching represents the fruit of a wisdom which, in certain respects, needs to achieve a better balance between ontology and gratitude. And, since Augustine has placed that balance near at hand, improving the problematic aspect of his teaching is relatively simple.

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[39] J. Burnaby, *Amor Dei; A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine*, (Eugene, Oregon; Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2007—previously published by Canterbury Press, 1938), 231.