ST. AUGUSTINE:

HIS LIFE AND TIMES.

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ST. AUGUSTINE

His Life and Times

BY THE

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"Eximuis Pater, inter summa Ecclesiæ ornamenta ac lumina princeps."—(ERASMUS.)

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

"In such an age, when all was insecure,
Did human genius, touched by God's own fire,
Emerge from darkness, to delight the world,
Give strength to love, stability to faith,
And be for centuries a radiant light,
Guiding men's footsteps on the road to heaven."

COLE'S *St. Augustine.*

THERE are few indeed, if any, on the roll of theologians who have exerted as great and as permanent an influence, not only on their contemporaries, but also upon all subsequent generations, as St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. This high estimate of his life and his teaching has been almost universally admitted, even by writers of differing creeds, ages, and countries. Thus a well-known modern author has remarked, that his "spiritual history has probably had more influence on the Christian life of fifteen centuries, than the history of any other human being except St. Paul;"[1] while another distinguished writer of older date calls him "the greatest of all the Fathers, and the worthiest divine the Church of God ever had since the apostles' time."[2] In the same spirit, and almost in the same words, Luther says of him: "Since the apostles' time the

[1] See *The Voice of Christian Life in Song*, p. 75.
[2] Dr. Field, *Of the Church.*

Church never had a better doctor than St. Austin;" and again: "After the sacred Scriptures, there is no doctor in the Church who is to be compared to Austin." The judicious Hooker's testimony to his merits is equally strong: "Without any equal in the Church of Christ from that day to this." And so also the calm and dispassionate Dean Milman has not scrupled to assert that "Augustine, by the extraordinary adaptation of his genius to his own age, the comprehensive grandeur of his views, the intense earnestness of his character, his inexhaustible activity, the vigour, warmth, and perspicuity of his style, had a right to command the homage of western Christendom."[1]

Such is the exalted testimony borne to Augustine by writers in different ages of the Church of Christ,—a testimony which sufficiently proves that no attention paid to his character, his writings, or his genius can possibly be bestowed in vain.

But although so great and conspicuous a character in himself, it must not be forgotten—and it is a circumstance which only tends to enhance his remarkable reputation—that the age in which he was born, and the social state from which he emerged, were probably of a lower character than had ever been the case since Christianity leavened the world; and that Augustine's piety, and the world's standard of morality, must be estimated accordingly. It would, indeed, seem evident that already, even in the fourth century, "such corruption of the principles of Christ had taken place, as to require the reader to be on his guard against those fundamental errors into which the Gulf Stream of the Church soon afterwards poured itself."[2]

[1] Milman's *History of Christianity*, vol. iii. p. 271.

[2] See *Present Day Papers*, edited by Bishop Alex. Ewing, 3rd series.

Christianity had undoubtedly at that time become the sovereign religion of the Roman world. It had been constituted the religion of the State by Constantine the Great, although he manifested at the same time a spirit of toleration towards the advocates of Paganism. But nevertheless, though Christianity was thus dominant, it exerted comparatively little influence upon the religious life of the chief cities, whether in the East or West, and still less among the inhabitants of the country districts or the more remote provinces of the Empire. There was, no doubt, in some of the great cities a leaven of Christianity which diffused itself through a certain portion of the population; but even under these more favourable circumstances a large Pagan as well as Jewish element co-existed, which was unaffected by the teaching of the dispensation of Christ. But in the more uncivilised parts of the country the old idolatry still prevailed, and the institutions, customs, and feelings of a long-existing Paganism continued to hold a firm and tenacious grasp upon the popular mind.

Such was the relation of Christianity towards the antagonist forces without its pale. But within the Church itself there were causes at work which hindered the development of Christianity, and marred the effect which it might otherwise have exerted upon the followers of the elder creed. At first persecution had tended to keep the Church of Christ pure and undefiled. False professors were eliminated by this fiery trial. The faith of those who continued staunch was deepened and strengthened. No one would care to join the ranks of a despised and persecuted sect, unless he were deeply impressed with a firm conviction of the truth of the principles which it maintained. But

when the religion of Christ became also the religion of the State, then many were willing to enter the ranks of the Church, who were only half-hearted in their profession of Christianity, or who conceived that an entrance into its pale might prove in their case a path to secular preferment. Thus the primitive simplicity, earnestness, and constancy of the Christian brotherhood had declined, and love in many cases had waxed cold, and faith had grown inoperative and lifeless.

But this was not the only source of internal weakness that existed in the Church. Various phases of theological doctrine—or rather, various forms of heresy —had also sprung up, which tended to rend the once seamless robe of Christian unity, and thus to paralyze the harmonious action of the Church, to lessen its organic efficiency, and to distract that zeal and holy ardour which might otherwise have been displayed in a united assault upon the strongholds of heathenism, or in active efforts for the internal purification and the increased spirituality of the Christian community.

Such a passing reference to the condition of the Church in that age is necessary, in order to enable us, as we proceed, to form a clear and distinct idea of the life and teaching of that great man who has been justly styled the "Monarch of the Fathers," and who may fairly be said to have been the "great instrument of reviving the knowledge of evangelical truth," and by the remarkable work of Divine grace on his own soul, to have been eminently qualified to contend with the growing corruptions which at that time so extensively prevailed.

CHAPTER II.

THE BIRTH AND PARENTAGE OF AUGUSTINE.

> "A life that all the Muses decked
> With gifts of grace, that might express
> All-comprehensive tenderness,
> All-subtilizing intellect."
>
> TENNYSON, *In Memoriam.*

WE have to carry our thoughts back, in point of time, to a period when scarcely more than three centuries and a half had rolled by since the birth of Christ; to transport ourselves, in place, to another and a distant continent, across the waters of the Mediterranean Sea; and to be introduced to circumstances which wear a somewhat strange and novel dress to those whose lot in life has been cast in the present day.

It was on the 13th of November, in the year 354 A.D., at the small Numidian country town of Tagaste, close bordering on the sands of Northern Africa, some hundred miles away from the far-famed city of Carthage, that Aurelius Augustinus first saw the light. He was not nursed in the lap of luxury, nor, on the other hand, rudely reared amidst poverty and want. His home, though it may have been somewhat humble in appearance, was no doubt free from all traces of sordid penury. For his father Patricius—though far from wealthy, and obliged to husband his resources with economy and care—was nevertheless a man of good

family, a freeman of Tagaste, and one of the "curiales," or burgesses, of the place. And in the pure, holy, and devout Monica, his mother, we may feel sure that there was a source and well-spring of refinement, which could not but have exercised a great influence for good on the tastes and feelings of the young Augustine. What child could ever have been watched over, during its earliest years, by that tender, loving mother, and not have imbibed a tinge and colouring at least of purity and refinement which no after viciousness of life could ever utterly obliterate? Monica was indeed to Augustine what Anthusa was to Chrysostom.

His father Patricius, at the time of his son's birth, was still—notwithstanding the prayers of his loving and gentle wife—living in heathenism. He was a man of high courage and daring spirit, fond of the excitement of the games, and easily aroused to passion; but still of that generous nature with which men of his temperament are not unfrequently endowed,—a nature which, in the eyes of companions and relatives, often atones for other and serious faults of character. He would appear to have been liable to sudden outbursts of temper, and to fits of irritability, which it required all the efforts of his long-suffering wife to soothe and pacify. She was, moreover, grieved to see him not unfrequently return from the houses of his more dissipated companions and friends wild with intoxication, a plague to himself and a terror to others. Monica, however, behaved towards him with the greatest tact and the most consummate skill. She never thwarted or irritated him on these sad occasions, and by this judicious line of conduct she often led him, after the violence of his passion had passed away, to regret his

conduct, and to promise future amendment. We are somewhat quaintly and naïvely informed by her son in his *Confessions* (ix. [ix.] § 19), that, in consequence of this gentleness on her part, her husband never used to beat her in his drunken moments,—an exemption which apparently few of the married women of Tagaste could boast of under similar circumstances. Poor Monica must have lived a bitter life at this time;

> "Needs must it have been
> A sore heart-wasting."

She a Christian, born of Christian parents, living near to God, had to endure, as the result of her unequal marriage with an unbeliever, this fight of affliction and all these daily trials of domestic life. Her home, after her marriage, must have contrasted painfully with the Christian home in which her childhood had been spent, under the tender care of her mother, and the severe though still loving discipline of an old Christian nurse, whom she used to call in affection her "second mother," and by whom she was trained up in habits of rigid self-denial.

Even in her early days of childhood Monica would seem to have exhibited a loving, affectionate, and devotional temper. She was the friend of the poor; the peacemaker in the quarrels of her young companions; as well as a frequent attendant at church.

Monica had also in her new home to encounter the bitterest opposition from her mother-in-law, whose temper resembled, in many of its worst features, that of her husband; but notwithstanding all the jealousy, malevolence, and unkindness shown towards her by her mother-in-law, she was enabled, by the ornament

of a quiet spirit, to live down the opposition raised against her. "She used," it has been said,[1] "almost superhuman efforts to soften the hearts of the uncongenial inmates of her home. Her mother-in-law was the first to yield to this loving stratagem. Her prejudices by degrees disappeared before the unalterable patience, sweetness, and respectful attention of her daughter-in-law."

In trusting hope Monica lives on,—in hope that she may one day trace the fruits of her many prayers in the conversion of her husband from heathenism to Christianity. With undaunted spirit, and fervent prayers, and in gentle perseverance in well-doing, she proceeds along her weary way, "indefatigable as Charity," never fainting, hoping against hope, if perchance God would grant her the desire of her heart, and turn her husband from darkness to light. Bravely did she bear up under her trials, not knowing whether in the after time, her prayers may not be heard, and her time of reaping come.

Such, then, was the home in which Augustine, as a child, lived and grew. It was a home which could hardly exert a mere negative influence upon his young heart. He was exposed to a double influence. He saw his gentle, loving, Christian mother living a life which lifted her high above the vanities of the outer world, into a region of faith unrealized by those around her. He saw his father, with all the licence of heathenism, indulging his passions, unrestrained in his anger, often maddened with wine, yet still at times exhibiting that Esau-like generosity and frank acknowledgment of his faults, which made him loved by his companions, and which furnished a ground of hope

[1] By Lady Herbert, *Life of St. Monica*, p. 27.

to the devoted Monica in regard to his future state. It is perhaps possible to trace in the after life of the young Augustine the effects of the twofold example which was thus placed before his mind in the plastic time of childhood and youth.

We can well imagine the ever-hoping Monica—saddened by the violent outbreaks of her husband's ill-restrained temper and the reckless defiance in his conduct of all right principle—turning with a fond and yearning heart towards the beautiful boy whom God had given her, and finding in his love a comfort and consolation which kept her heart from sinking into despair. We can imagine, too, how earnestly she prayed that he might be preserved free from the contamination of those heathen vices which she saw so sadly developed in Patricius, and that he might be led to embrace that gospel of a crucified Saviour, which she had found so precious to her own soul.

One friend at least she had in Tagaste, who loved and admired her, even though that friend was not yet brought to the knowledge of Christianity; and into the sympathizing ear of Calanthe she doubtless poured out her sorrows and her hopes.

Gradually, indeed, it would seem that Monica drew within the sphere of her loving sympathy not only her relatives and the servants in her own home, but also her friends and her neighbours. Just as, in her childhood, she had been the peacemaker, so now she was called upon to comfort the spirits of those around her in all their troubles and vexations, to reconcile differences, to give advice in difficulties; and thus she became a very angel of peace to all who fell within the range of her influence. The description given by Wordsworth

of a creation of his own fancy, might, in many respects, be well applied to her:—

> "She was a woman of a steady mind,
> Tender and deep in her excess of love;
> Not speaking much, pleased rather with the joy
> Of her own thoughts: by some especial care
> Her temper had been framed, as if to make
> A being who, by adding love to peace,
> Might live on earth a life of happiness."
>
> *The Wanderer.*

It was during the time of Augustine's home-life at Tagaste, while yet a child, that he was seized with a sudden and violent illness. The fear of death fell upon him, and in his distress he fervently longed to be baptized. "Thou sawest, my God," he exclaims,[1] "for Thou wert my keeper, with what eagerness and what faith I sought from the pious care of my mother, and Thy Church, the mother of us all, the baptism of Thy Christ, my God and Lord." The sickness, however, quickly passed away, and his baptism, as was so commonly the case at that time, was deferred to a future period, from the notion that all sins previously committed were washed away by baptism,—a notion that led them to put off this ceremony to later years, or even to the approach of death.

He remained only a catechumen, taught in the truths of Christianity, but making no open, probably even no secret, profession of the faith of Christ.

[1] *Confessions*, i. [xi.] § 17. The translation of the *Confessions* commonly used is that of Dr. Pusey, in the *Library of the Fathers*.

CHAPTER III.

THE BOYHOOD AND SCHOOL-DAYS OF AUGUSTINE, AT TAGASTE AND MADAURA.

Augustine's Friendship with Alypius—His Father gives him a good Education—at Tagaste—then at Madaura—Augustine as a Boy—His reputation—His pre-eminence.

> "'Tis not enough that Greek or Roman page,
> At stated hours, his freakish thoughts engage;
> Even in his pastimes he requires a friend
> To warn, and teach him safely to unbend,
> O'er all his pleasures gently to preside,
> Watch his emotions, and control their tide."
>
> COWPER, *Tirocinium.*

As Augustine passed from the child into the boy, he began to display qualities and propensities which caused Monica both to tremble and rejoice. Bold, impassioned, high-spirited, and reckless, there was still in his bright eye and handsome features ever a look of love for his mother, and a gentleness of feeling towards her. He manifested also a quickness of apprehension, though at times a want of application, which, while it aroused her fears as to the effect which the society of the gay and licentious might have upon her beloved boy, yet led her to hope and expect great things of him in his after life, and to pray all the more earnestly that those high talents might be devoted to the service of Christ. Monica's most intimate friend, Calanthe, had a son named Alypius, who, though five years younger than

Augustine, became his staunch and bosom friend. They were separated, to their mutual sorrow and regret, for a time, when they emerged from boyhood, because, while Alypius continued to reside in Tagaste, till he left his native town for what might be called his university career at Alexandria,[1] the youthful Augustine was sent away from home by his father Patricius to a school in another place. Augustine (*Epist.* 28, cap. 1) thus describes his affection for Alypius, and how that affection was reciprocated: "Any one who knows us may say of him and me, that in body only, and not in mind, we are two; so great is the union of heart, so firm the intimate affection existing between us; though in mind we are not alike, for his is far above mine."

His father saw clearly the dawn of a high intellectual development in his son, and generously and wisely gave him the best education that he could afford. To Monica it must have been a bitter moment, when the son, in whose welfare she took so deep an interest, was first sent away from her, and cast upon the dangerous paths of an untried life alone, with no fond mother's hand to shield him from the temptations strewn so thickly around him, and with no mother's voice to whisper loving warnings in his ear. How greatly she must have dreaded (like so many mothers in after days) that all those early lessons in religion, which she had instilled into his mind from his very infancy, would now melt away and be forgotten! She must have seen by this time how much he needed the restraining influence of a mother's presence to be exercised over him; how readily he was led away by the

[1] See *Alypius of Tagaste, a Tale of the Early Church*, by Mrs. Webb.

persuasions of others with whom he was thrown into contact; and what great fear there was lest his ardent feelings and passions should hurry him along into sin and guilty indulgence. Still, notwithstanding all her anxieties in his behalf, he was sent to school to a neighbour city, called Madaura, where heathenism extensively prevailed. It lay some six miles from Tagaste, and was famous for its schools, its intellectual culture, and its historical traditions. A fine Forum, enriched by statues of the gods, was surrounded by colleges. Here Patricius determined in the first instance to send his son; and here, accordingly, Monica left him, with the wise and loving counsels which mothers ever pour into their boys' hearts under similar circumstances, and without foreseeing the terrible havoc which sin and self-indulgence were soon to make in her child's soul. He was now about thirteen or fourteen years of age, in 367 A.D.; and in the school at Madaura he studied rhetoric, and poetry, and grammar.

His previous school-days at Tagaste had been far from agreeable to the lively and imaginative Augustine. The severity of the discipline to which he had been there exposed left a painful impression upon his mind during the whole of his after life, and he tells us of the "cruel terrors and punishments" by which he was made to learn Greek,—a language which was foreign to him, and in which, owing to its difficulty to him and its strangeness, as well as to the severe discipline by which the learning of it was enforced, he never seems to have made any great progress. "Difficulty," he says, "the difficulty of a foreign tongue, dashed, as it were, with gall all the sweetness of Grecian fable. For not one word of it did I understand, and, to make

me understand, I was urged vehemently with cruel threats and punishments."[1] And again he says: "I was put to school to get learning, in which I, poor wretch, knew not what use there was; and yet, if idle in learning, I was beaten."[2]

But we may conclude that, at Madaura, his dislike to work had to a great extent vanished, and that his intelligence had begun rapidly to develop. In Latin literature there can be no doubt that he now made the greatest advance. The great Latin writers opened out a new world to Augustine's vivid imagination. "The Latin," he tells us, "he loved."

And yet he acknowledges that it was well for him that he was made and compelled to learn when at school. In his *Confessions* he tells us in his own words: "In boyhood itself I loved not study, and hated to be forced to it. Yet I was forced; and this was well done towards me, but I did not well; for, unless forced, I had not learned."

He mentions also in his *Confessions*, that during his boyhood he was given up to play; that he hated those studies which gave him trouble; that he was mischievous and frolicsome, envious of those who excelled him in games, addicted to the theatre, full of vanity and the love of praise. He tells us, moreover, that he filled his imagination with the wanderings of Æneas, and forgot his own wanderings; and that he shed tears over the death of Dido, while he had no tears to shed over his own moral death.

Still we cannot doubt that this acquaintance with poetry gave that richness of imagination to his speeches, sermons, and writings, for which they are so remarkably conspicuous.

[1] *Confessions*, i. [xiv.] § 23. [2] *Confessions*, i. [ix.] § 14.

He describes, too, with minute particularity, the raid which he, together with some youthful accomplices, made upon a certain pear-tree that grew in a neighbour's garden, "compelled by no hunger nor poverty, but through a cloyedness of well-doing and pamperedness of iniquity."

His faults, at this time, were those of a high-spirited, self-willed boy, with the dawning of genius and imagination showing itself, and with a conscience not yet hardened, and surrounded by the checks with which a mother's love still fenced him round.

It has been strikingly said by Schaff, that even in the midst of his farthest theoretical and practical wanderings, he still heard the low, sad echo of his youthful religious impressions, was attended by the guardian genius of his praying mother, and felt in the depths of his noble spirit the pulse-beat of that strong desire after God, to which, in the opening of his *Confessions* (i. 1, § 1), he gives utterance in the incomparable words: "Thou, God, hast created us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." [1]

It is impossible to doubt that his intellectual training had, on the whole, been going on satisfactorily during these school years. He gained credit and applause both from his fellow-students and his masters. He excelled in rhetoric and in declamation. Virgil evidently produced upon him the deepest impression, as we have already seen. We hear that "it was the custom of the school for the students to represent different scenes from Virgil and other classical poets, in prose, and the prize was awarded to the one who

[1] "Fecisti nos ad Te, et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in Te."

best awakened the passions of love, anger, or hatred in the spectators. Augustine excelled in this: he threw his whole soul into his acting; and, not content with following the instructions of his masters, he frequented the theatre, in order to learn the secrets of passions which as yet he scarcely understood."

CHAPTER IV.

A GLOOMY INTERVAL IN HIS SCHOOL CAREER.

"Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

TENNYSON, *Morte D'Arthur.*

AFTER remaining some time at Madaura, he returned, in his sixteenth year, to his native town,—"a season of idleness being," as he tell us, [1] "interposed through the narrowness of his parents' fortunes;" and Monica had the bitter sorrow of seeing him give himself up to idle habits and vicious courses, while "the briers of unclean desires grew rank over his head." She must have been deeply grieved at this fresh accession to her anxieties, and it required the exercise of all her faith to keep her from despondency. Augustine must have spent some considerable time at Tagaste after returning from school at Madaura,—time that was devoted to anything but that discipline of the heart and mind, in which it might have been profitably spent. His father—delighted at his successful career

[1] See *Confessions*, ii. [iii.] § 5.

in eloquence and rhetoric—would seem to have been over-indulgent and careless, only desirous that his son should turn out a brilliant and accomplished orator. His mother, delighted to have her son once again under her own roof, knew but little at first of the different passions that preyed upon his mind, and saw in him only the idol of his masters and his companions. His companions, however, led him astray into licentious indulgences; and a period of idleness at this important period of his life caused for him—what it too often does for those of his age—incalculable harm, perverting and warping the habits of years. His soul was set on pleasures, diversions, and guilty excesses. Monica entreated, exhorted, warned him, but to no effect. He became a prey to that false shame, which made him dislike to be considered under the guidance and tutelage of a mother, under petticoat government. Things began to wear a serious aspect. He was now emerging from the boy into the youth,—that most critical age, and one that needs the greatest caution and wisdom for its guidance on the part of parents, relatives, and instructors.

But all the while his mother's prayers for him never flagged. Cast down she may have been, but not in despair. Faith still buoyed up her frail bark with hopes in the future.

What an incentive to ceaseless, effectual prayer is the case of Monica! What a reward did she receive in the after-time! What a harvest of blessings was she privileged to reap!

In the midst, however, of all his gaiety Augustine was not happy. Ever and anon the terrible precipice upon which he was standing stood out before his startled imagination. A prayer for temperance and

chastity would then cross the threshold of his lips. But the desire of sin within him was still strong, and he would exclaim in the struggle—that struggle between right and wrong that was of early growth in his mind—"Not yet, not yet." But Monica's spiritual work was not doomed to perish utterly. The seed planted by God, and watered by a mother's tears, —as it has been well said,—may remain dormant for years; the floods of passion and of sin may pass over it; but the day will come when it will revive again, and put forth leaves, and bring forth fruit a hundredfold.

CHAPTER V.

HIS FATHER'S CONVERSION.

Monica's Sorrow—Blended Joy—Her Husband's Conversion—His Death.

> "Oh, sir! the good die first,
> And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
> Burn to the socket."
>
> WORDSWORTH, *The Excursion.*

IT was about this time, in the midst of her despondency respecting her son, that Monica had the infinite satisfaction of seeing her long-continued prayers on behalf of her husband first meeting with an answer. She had never perversely wrangled with him about his evil ways; never had she opposed his views or wishes; but had behaved with a loving meekness and gentleness that almost disarmed opposition. "She had spoken little, never preached, loved much, and prayed always." She had never obtruded her own principles offensively upon him,—had never querulously complained of his conduct to her or to others,—had never returned taunt for taunt,—never coldly reproved nor passionately censured him; but she had done what was far better and wiser: she had held up before his eyes a picture of virtue, and goodness, and gentleness, which he could not but admire in his sober and thoughtful moments; she had made religion pleasant and sweet to his eyes; she had shown its loveliness

and its attractiveness in so seductive a manner, that he could not at last escape from the influence of such a living exemplification of genuine Christianity; and he began to remark, with sorrow and pain, the contrast which his own heathenism presented to her religion, and to pine after such a temper, and such a life, as she possessed and manifested; and thus he would seem to have fallen, gradually and gently, under her gracious influences, and to have been guided by a higher than any human power to seek for repose, rest, hope, and safety, from that heavenly Source from which she had long since drawn them for herself.

For more than sixteen years—long and weary years—she had been praying for this blessed consummation of her hopes, and now she had lived to see it accomplished. What a moment of inexpressible joy to that long-suffering, patient, much-enduring saint! Now, at last, she and Patricius were one in heart, one in hope, one in life's object. One great cloud that darkened her domestic happiness had rolled off. She seemed married anew, in the bonds of the gospel, to her husband, now no longer a heathen idolator, but a catechumen of the Christian Church, and an inheritor with her of the same blessed hopes and glorious promises. It was probably in the year 371 A.D. that this most happy event took place.

But sorrow, alas! still seemed to hang over her destiny. Still, through much tribulation must she enter the land of rest. Just when the hopes of her wedded life had been gratified,—just when she can take sweet counsel together with the partner of her sorrows and her joys, and converse on all the great things which they had each severally received from their Heavenly Father,—just when her home seems

bright with a glory and a radiance which had never before shone upon it—"bright with something of celestial light,"—in the very midst of her crowning joy and supreme happiness, she is destined to see the worm preying upon the root of her gourd.

For, day by day, she marks the bodily strength of her now reconciled husband grow less and less. She notes the paleness of his cheek, the fluttering breath, the enfeebled frame. And soon, like a shock of corn in his time, he, over whose new birth she had been called upon to rejoice, is taken from her by the Great Reaper, and she is left a forlorn and desolate widow.

CHAPTER VI.

UNIVERSITY LIFE AT CARTHAGE.

Augustine at Carthage—He becomes a Libertine—A Seeker after Truth—A Manichee.

"Such is the world's gay garish feast,
In her first charming bowl
Infusing all that fires the breast,
And cheats th' unstable soul.

And still, as loud the revel swells,
The fevered pulse beats higher,
Till the seared taste from foulest wells
Is fain to slake its fire."

KEBLE, *Christian Year.*

BUT the afflicted Monica has no time for vain lamentations and regrets over the loss of a companionship which had become hallowed by the sanctifying influences of a common faith and a common Christianity. Her thoughts are all at Carthage. There she heard, with the deepest sorrow and alarm, that her son Augustine was leading a still more dissolute life than that which he had led at Tagaste, in the interval that elapsed between his school-life at Madaura and his higher culture and training at the capital of Africa.

On the conversion of her husband she had been almost ready and prepared to sing her "Nunc dimittis;" but no, not yet; for she passed away in imagination to that city—the queen of Africa, built on the blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea—Carthage, once the

rival of victorious Rome, and there her heart yearned over her eldest son Augustine, exposed to temptations of the most fascinating kind, and yielding, with a terrible facility, to all the seductions of that profligate city. Still was she praying, with importunate and impassioned cry, "O God, convert my son!" What a talisman may we believe that he found in those fervent outpourings of his mother's heart!

However dark his present looked, still she continued her prayer that he might be converted from the error of his ways, and that he might be allowed no peace or comfort while still in the bondage of his sins.

Augustine had once more left his home, and had gone, in his seventeenth year, for his university course to that "Rome of the African world,"[1]—not equal, perhaps, in "royal prerogatives" to Constantinople, or in trade to Alexandria, or in grandeur to Antioch, but still abounding with splendid architecture, traversed by magnificent streets, watered by fountains, rich in marts and shops, with a shady grove planted in its centre, and with secure and spacious harbours for the reception of fleets from every quarter of the world; founded anew by Augustus about a century after its destruction, in the teeth of Scipio's anathema against its builder, on the very site and on the selfsame lines as those on which the ancient city was planned by its Punic founders,—its citadel (Byrsa), temples, baths, and reservoirs being all restored in the new city.[2] Carthage had at that time its schools and its gymnasia, instituted for the education of the youth of Africa;

[1] See Gibbon's *History of the Roman Empire*, Milman's ed., vol. iv. p. 186.

[2] See Dr. N. Davis, *Carthage and her Remains*, who dwells a good deal on the "disputed topography" of the place.

and in those schools, said to have been distinguished by long white banners floating over their entrances, the liberal arts, grammar, philosophy, and rhetoric, were taught publicly to numerous classes of students in the language of Greece and Rome.

Carthage, too, could exhibit splendid games in its circus, and plays in its theatres. But at this time luxury had degenerated into licentiousness, and the morals of the people—according to Salvian, the great preacher of the age—had become shamefully corrupted. When Augustine was exposed to its seductions, it had in fact become, as regards its moral condition, the very sink of Africa.

But notwithstanding the sad accounts that reached her from Carthage, Monica felt that her son must be kept there. It had been the earnest desire of him who had been taken from her, that Augustine should pursue his studies there. She regarded it as a sacred trust bequeathed to her. Her means, however, were small; and, had it not been for the liberality of a rich relative, named Romanianus,[1] she could scarcely have carried out her husband's anxious wish. But we can readily imagine how she denied herself, and how she patiently bore privations with an unmurmuring spirit, in order to continue her son's education there. She pinched herself in every way to provide the requisite funds for his college expenses at Carthage; just as we have known more than one widowed mother labour, with the most self-sacrificing efforts, to maintain her son at the university,—a son who, like Augustine, ungratefully squandered those hard-earned pounds in riotous living, and in all the extravagances that idleness begets.

[1] Compare *Against the Academicians*, Book ii. ch. xii., for the *gratitude* felt by Augustine for this liberality on the part of Romanianus.

Carthage—like great cities in all ages—was rife with dangers to an impetuous and ill-governed youth. It had its luxuries to tempt the gay and thoughtless, its lower and baser seductions to fascinate the ill-regulated feelings of the sensual and headstrong. Augustine plunged into vice with reckless impetuosity. He sought pleasure where pleasure should not be sought. He lived in open sin, and in contempt of all the restraints which morality, not to say Christianity, imposes. When he was only eighteen years old, he was the father of a child of sin, to whom he gave the strange and unseemly name of Adeodatus—the "gift of God." We learn that he frequented the theatre[1] and other questionable places of amusement with which Carthage abounded; that he indulged in revels with his reckless companions, who were nicknamed "Eversores," or "upsetters of everything;" and that he sacrificed his health and strength, and blackened his character and reputation.

But, nevertheless, he prosecuted his studies in rhetoric, oratory, and poetry; it may be, as he says, "out of a vainglorious end, a joy in human vanity."

His mind, indeed, was of too active a turn to allow him to abandon his intellectual culture. He attended classes, he listened to professors, he criticised orators, and startled all by his brilliant eloquence, his metaphysical skill, and his subtle appreciation of everything that was

[1] See *Confessions*, iii. [ii.] § 2. The Christian Church, it has been said, "abhorred the pagan theatre. The idolatrous rites, the lascivious attitudes, the gladiatorial shows, which were its inseparable accompaniments, were equally opposed to the dogmatic monotheism, to the piety, and to the mercy of the gospel." One of the most significant signs of a man having become a Christian, was his habitual absence from the theatre. No one was more emphatic on this point afterwards than Augustine himself (see *Encyc. Brit.*, art. "Augustine").

beautiful either in art or in nature. It was predicted by all at Carthage that a distinguished future awaited him.

But during all this sad time of sin, and folly, and dissipation, we find that he was dissatisfied with himself, dissatisfied with his companions, dissatisfied with his teachers, dissatisfied with his own belief or unbelief. He felt that neither games, nor spectacles, nor theatres, nor dissipation, nor luxurious living, nor unhallowed attachments, could give that peace, or repose, or joy to his inmost soul after which he craved.

At times the words of Scripture—the Old Testament history, or the miracles and parables of Christ in the New—which had been dropped into his ear while he still stood as a child by his mother's knee, came home to him, and he felt the vanity of those pursuits in which he was seeking for happiness. "This name of my Saviour had my tender heart, even with my mother's milk, devoutly drunk in and deeply treasured."

He says himself that he kept within his soul the echo of the name of Jesus Christ, which he had so often heard his mother pronounce; and, like those melodies which suddenly conjure up before us a whole phase of our past life, that sacred name, whenever it resounded in his ear, recalled to him his mother's piety and the God of his infancy.[1]

He was, indeed, the first among the many distinguished pupils in the school of rhetoric at Carthage; he was vain of his position there, and puffed up with intellectual pride, and "swelled with arrogancy;" he was charmed with the applause that greeted his successful efforts in oratory; but still none of these things

[1] See E. de Pressensé's art. on "Augustine," in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, edited by Dr. Smith and Dr. Wace.

gave him a satisfying pleasure, or filled the void of which he was conscious in his own heart. His active, restless, thoughtful mind was in a dissatisfied and inquiring state. He craved for some better way. He was searching for light, but could only find broken, shattered gleams of light, alternating with deep darkness. He seemed to be following after a shadow, that always eluded his eager grasp.

The incipient germs of his spiritual life, as it has been remarked,[1] were unfolded in the unconscious piety of childhood. This period of childlike, unconscious piety was followed in his case by a period of self-disunion, inward strife and conflict. His great but wild and ungoverned energies, after having involved him in many a stormy conflict, must be sanctified by a higher spirit before he could find peace. As it often happens that a human word, of the present or the past, becomes invested with important meaning for the life of an individual by its coincidence with slumbering feelings or ideas, which are thus called forth at once into clear consciousness, so it was with Augustine.

For it was at this time, when he was now in his nineteenth year, that a treatise of Cicero, named *Hortensius*, which is unfortunately lost, written with the view of encouraging men to the pursuit of philosophy, fell in his way. He read it with the deepest interest, and it would seem to have had a very great effect upon his mind at the time, though it did not yield that full satisfaction and repose after which he was seeking. Still, the higher wants of his spiritual and moral nature were in this way brought clearly before him. The true and the good filled his heart with an indescribable longing; he had presented (remarks

[1] See Neander, *Church History*, vol. iv. p. 15.

Neander) to the inmost centre of his soul a supreme good, which appeared to him the only worthy object of human pursuit; while, on the other hand, whatever had until now occupied and pleased him, appeared but as vanity.

Nevertheless he tells us: "This alone checked me thus enkindled, that the name of Christ was not in it;" "for," he adds, "whatsoever was without that name, though never so learned, polished, or true, took not entire hold of me." He was, however, greatly charmed with its teaching, and affected by its tone of morality, and he was led by it to look down with contempt upon all those honours and distinctions after which the world seeks so zealously.

The language which he employs in his *Confessions* in regard to *Hortensius* is very striking and graphic. "This book," he says, "altered my affections, and turned my prayers to Thyself, O Lord, and made me have other purposes and desires. Every vain hope at once became worthless to me; and I longed with an incredibly burning desire for an immortality of wisdom, and began now to arise, that I might return to Thee. For not to sharpen my tongue did I employ that book; nor did it infuse into me its style, but its matter. How did I burn then, my God, how did I burn to remount from earthly things to Thee, nor knew I what Thou wouldest do with me! For with Thee is wisdom. But the love of wisdom is in Greek called 'Philosophy,' with which that book inflamed me. I was thereby strongly roused, and kindled, and inflamed to love, and seek, and obtain, and hold, and embrace not this or that sect, but wisdom itself, whatever it were."

Still dissatisfied, he began to call to mind the teaching of his earliest days, and to study the Holy

Scriptures in his search after truth. He found, however, the style and manner of the Holy Scriptures too simple and plain for his philosophic tastes, and yet withal too deep for his knowledge to master; "for," he says, "my swelling pride shrunk from their lowliness, nor could my sharp wit pierce the interior thereof;" and, moreover, their inculcation of the grace of humility offended him, and hurt the sensitiveness of his intellectual pride. It was, in fact, this absence of humility and lowliness of heart that offered the greatest barrier to his acceptance of the Word of life. The time had not yet come for his admission of scriptural truth. How differently he felt in after times, when grace had penetrated his heart, we shall see by and by.

This episode in his life has been forcibly described by Dean Milman:[1] "He was first arrested in his sensual course, not by the solemn voice of religion, but by the gentler remonstrances of Pagan literature. He learned from Cicero, not from the gospel, the higher dignity of intellectual attainments. It was the *Hortensius* of Cicero which awoke his mind to nobler aspirations, and the contempt of worldly enjoyments. But philosophy could not satisfy the lofty desires which it had awakened: he panted for some better hopes and more satisfactory objects of study. He turned to the religion of his parents, but his mind was not subdued to a feeling for the inimitable beauty of the New Testament. Its simplicity of style appeared rude, after the stately march of Tully's eloquence."

It was in this stage of his search after truth that he unfortunately fell in with the professors of Manichæism. "Men," he tells us in his *Confessions*,

[1] *History of Christianity*, vol. iii. p. 274.

"proudly doting, exceeding carnal and prating, in whose mouths were the snares of the devil."

Manichæism was a mixture of Oriental and European philosophy blended together. It arrested his fervid and yet metaphysical temperament, and for nine long years his mind wandered among the visionary, vague, and fantastic reveries of Oriental philosophy.

The Manichæans were subdivided into two distinct classes,—the "elect" and "hearers." Of these the "elect" made a high profession of ascetic sanctity; they had to live in abstinence, in celibacy, and in poverty. They were supported and waited on by the "hearers," who were not subjected to such rigid and severe rules of life. The Manichæan hierarchy is said to have consisted of a chief, twelve masters, and seventy-two bishops, with their subordinate priests and deacons. The system of Manes was strictly dualistic. In accordance with his theory, the realms of light and of darkness were separated from each other, originally and externally, by a line of demarcation that could not be overstepped. Manichæism appealed to the prevalent principles and tendencies of the age. It appeared to render reconciliation possible between the faith of heathenism and that of Christianity. It sheltered (so Pressensé remarks) the old substratum of heathen ideas under the standard of faith. The old Eastern dualism was revived, sometimes under its grossest form, sometimes with extraordinary subtlety, evil being uniformly stripped of its moral character, and represented as a metaphysical necessity.

The professors of Manichæism appealed to the pride of Augustine's intellect. They professed to be able to show him everything by demonstrative reasoning; they banished all mystery; and they regarded faith as

credulous ignorance. They pretended that they could lead men to God, and free them from all error by the force of reason alone. "They cried out," he tells us in a most striking passage of his *Confessions*,[1] "'Truth, truth,' and spake much thereof to me, yet 'it was not in them.' . . . O Truth, Truth, how inwardly did even then the marrow of my soul pant after thee, when they often and diversely, and in many and huge books, echoed of Thee to me, though it was but an echo! And these were the dishes wherein to me, hungering after Thee, they, instead of Thee, served up the sun and moon, beautiful works of Thine, but yet Thy works, not Thyself, no, nor Thy first works. For Thy spiritual works are before these corporeal works, celestial though they be, and shining. But I hungered and thirsted not even after those first works of Thine, but after Thee Thyself, the Truth, 'in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.'"

They professed also a solution of that question which greatly perplexed him,—the question of the origin of evil. They, moreover, assumed the existence of two principles, "diverse and adverse to each other, and these eternal and co-eternal,"—the one, the good principle, or God; the other, the evil principle, or matter.

They taught, as Schaff has remarked, that man occupied a middle place between the kingdoms of light and darkness; that he possessed a spark of light in him, which longed after redemption; but that, at the same time, his body was originally and substantially evil, and that his soul also was corrupt, and to be gradually annihilated. To a certain degree they acknowledged Christ as a Saviour, but confounded Him

[1] iii. [vi.] § 10.

with the sun, for it was the tendency of their system to drag down the spiritual ideas of the gospel into the sphere of natural life. Thus, in the entire economy of nature, which along with the perfume of the flower sends the miasmatic breath, and causes the gloomy night to succeed to the clear day, they traced a conflict between these two kingdoms, in every plant a crucified Christ, an imprisoned spirit of light, which worked itself up from the dark bosom of the earth, and strove toward the sun. The class of the perfect among them durst slay or wound no animal, pluck no flower, break no stalk of grass, for fear of injuring the higher spirit dwelling in it.

Their teaching, obscure and mystical in itself, was a corruption of the ancient belief of the Persians and of the creed of Zoroaster, and its tendency was both materialistic and pantheistic. Their God was, in fact, corporeal and impersonal, and each of their two principles alike God, though not a personal but an abstract God. They held, moreover, the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and travestied the sacred names of Jesus and of Christ in their speculations. Manichæism held out the promise of conviction, but demanded from its adherents an unreasoning and absolute assent. It resembled the spirit of modern Rationalism, in endeavouring to make its way by criticising the truth and concealing itself, as well as by suspecting everything which it believed to be at variance with its own preconceived ideas.

Manichæism, "that wonderful misbelief," had then existed for nearly a hundred years. Nor was its influence short lived, for we can trace its existence during the Middle Ages in France; nor has the unbelief of modern days been exempt from its subtle

influence. It has been well described by Archbishop Trench, in his *Hulsean Lectures*, as "the attempt to array a philosophy of nature in a Christian language, to empty Christian truths of all their ethical worth, and then to use them as a gorgeous symbolic garb for clothing a system different to its very core."[1]

Manes, the original founder of the heresy, was a man of very considerable powers of intellect, of a scientific turn of mind, and yet at the same time endowed with a fertile imagination and a rich fancy. He regarded himself as inspired; and not only claimed for himself and his followers the possession of a sovereign knowledge, released from all dependence on, or need of, faith, but he also asserted that he could teach a Christianity entirely liberated from all the principles of Judaism. Such arrogant claims as these dazzled the ardent mind of Augustine. He was deceived by the hollow appeals which they made to the names of the second and third Persons of the blessed Trinity; eager to grasp at a fancied freedom of the mind, and imposed upon by the assumption that the soul of man was an emanation, or a "fragment," from the "bright body" of the Divine essence (*Conf.* iv. 31), and "that it was not we that sin" (*Conf.* v. 18), but that "sin was the outcoming of a dark element separate from man's personality."

Augustine, however, found to his sorrow that the professions of the Manichæans were vain and empty

[1] See on Manichæism an elaborate and learned note A, pp. 314–346, in Dr. Pusey's Translation of the *Confessions*; also Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i. pp. 258–263, with notes; also a long note in A. Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, vol. viii. pp. 413–421. Cf. J. C. Robertson's *History of the Christian Church*, pp. 127–132; and Professor Bright's *History of the Church*, pp. 182–184; and especially Dr. Burton's *Bampton Lectures*, note 13 on Lect. ii.

after all. He felt, in his own consciousness, that he was only feeding upon ashes. This was the conclusion at which he at last arrived. We are, however, anticipating his final convictions, and antedating the judgment which at length, after many wanderings, and much perplexity and great mental distress, he formed on this point.

But at first, with the natural zeal of a new convert, he employed that persuasive power with which he was so richly gifted, in inducing his friend Alypius, and his friend and patron Romanianus, and others, to believe in these same wild doctrines, these "glittering phantasies" of Manichæism.

Thus he tells us that "for the space of nine years we lived seduced and seducing, deceived and deceiving, in divers lusts; openly, by sciences which they call liberal; secretly, with a false-named religion; here proud, there superstitious, everywhere vain."[1] What a graphic picture have we here of the wretched condition of his mind, seeking indeed after the truth, but never finding it!

And now, in his twentieth year, he leaves Carthage, in order to relieve his mother from the expense of his further maintenance at the University. He had by this time mastered all the subjects of study which were usually taught in that day,—"omnes libros artium, quos liberales vocant." In rhetoric, indeed, he stood on the topmost step of the ladder of fame, far above all his fellow-students.

And here terminates what may be called the educational career of Augustine, and with it closes the first period of his life.

[1] *Confessions*, iv. [i.] § 1.

We have watched him under his parents' roof at Tagaste; followed him to school at Madaura; seen him revisit his home again; and then marked his devious course during his university life at Carthage. The first twenty years of his life have passed, and they present a picture on which the lights and shadows are strangely and mysteriously blended together. There is somewhat to admire; there is much to grieve over. It is the portraiture of one who, though a seeker after truth, is yet at the same time the slave of the lower feelings and instincts of a corrupted humanity. We may learn much from this strange mixture of good and evil,—a lesson of hope, and a lesson of warning.

PART II.

AUGUSTINE'S PROFESSORIAL LIFE AT TAGASTE, CARTHAGE, ROME, AND MILAN.

CHAPTER I.

AUGUSTINE A PROFESSOR AT TAGASTE.

Severed, as a Manichee, from his Mother's Home—Her Application to the Bishop for Guidance—Her Dream—The Death of his Friend.

"Vetabo sub isdem
Sit trabibus."—HOR. *Carm.* iii. 2.

AND now the second great period of the life of Augustine opens out before us. His childhood, boyhood, and youth have passed. His education—strictly so called—has drawn to a close. He is in his twentieth year, and he feels that he ought no longer to depend upon his loving mother's efforts and self-sacrifice for his support and maintenance. He is desirous now of imparting to others the results of what he himself has acquired or been taught.

He returns, accordingly, to his native town, and opens a school for instructing the youth of Tagaste in grammar and rhetoric.

But perhaps the saddest incident in his life now occurs. All through his sinful excesses his loving mother had never ceased to offer day and night earnest prayers for his conversion. Her zeal for his best interests never flagged; her hope (notwithstanding all her disappointments) never died out. "For she," he exclaims,[1] "by that faith and spirit

[1] *Confessions*, iii. [xi.] § 19.

which she had from Thee, discerned the death wherein I lay, and Thou heardest her, O Lord; Thou heardest her, and despisedst not her tears, when streaming down, they watered the ground under her eyes in every place where she prayed; yea, Thou heardest her."

Up to this time she had ever been at his side, when it was possible, to warn, admonish, and, if necessary, to reprove him.

But when she heard that her son had not only fallen into the error of the Manichees, but was openly, and with all the pride of a newly-made convert, professing their doctrines as a "student" or "auditor," —though never probably admitted into the number of their "elect,"—then she felt that, as an orthodox believer, she could not admit him under her roof, or allow him to share her table. The pang to her must have been bitter indeed,—more bitter than can be expressed in words. Her strong sense, however, of the duty which she owed to her God supported her at this trying moment; and she was probably also influenced by the desire that he might be led to renounce his errors, if thus openly separated from his mother, to whom, through all his wanderings, he had always been deeply and sincerely attached. It could not fail to be bitterly painful, as well as sadly humiliating, both to mother and son, to be living in the same town and yet to be prevented from dwelling under the same roof-tree. But Augustine continued inexorable. He could not be persuaded to abandon his heretical views.

Monica's faith and hope were sadly tried, and in her despondency she had recourse to a certain bishop, well known for his love for the souls of men. She

knocked at his door, and with streaming eyes besought him to converse with her unhappy son, and endeavour to reclaim him from his erroneous opinions. The good bishop, however, firmly but kindly refused the task, alleging that Augustine was now puffed up by pride in consequence of his successes in arguing with opponents more zealous than learned, and that he was as yet unfit for instruction, because intoxicated by the novelty of the heretical tenets which he had adopted. The fond mother was still importunate, entreating him to address her son; but he dismissed her with the remarkable words: "Go your way, and God bless you; it is not possible that a child of these tears should perish." She received these words as if they were an oracle from heaven.

She had also a second source of comfort in her despondency.

In a dream she seemed to see a youth of shining aspect coming towards her, cheerful and smiling, who, after inquiring into the cause of her tears and sorrow, said to her, "Be of good courage," for "where thou art, there he is also." On looking about her she sees Augustine standing upon the same plank of wood as that upon which she stands. Upon this Monica awoke from her sleep. With deepest joy she hurries to her son and tells him the vision. "Ah!" said Augustine, "it implies rather that you should not despair of being one day what I am." "Nay," replied Monica, "it was not told me, that 'where he, there thou also;' but 'where thou, there he also.'" [1]

Still, however, she is doomed to watch, and wait, and pray. No answer yet to all her supplications.

Augustine was still engaged at Tagaste in his work

[1] *Confessions*, iii. [xi.] §§ 19, 20.

as professor of grammar and rhetoric, when a very severe blow fell upon him in the loss of a very dear friend, whose name we know not, a schoolfellow and playmate, to whom he was wont to unbosom all his thoughts and feelings. This friend fell ill, and was converted to the faith of Christ. Augustine addressed him, during a lucid interval, with some raillery respecting his conversion; but, to Augustine's astonishment, his friend told him to cease, saying that he should be compelled to shun him entirely if he spoke thus. After the lapse of a few days his friend was again attacked by fever, and cut off in the absence of Augustine, whose grief at his loss was most deep and sincere. Everything at Tagaste, after his death, seemed to Augustine shrouded in sadness, and every familiar scene appeared to call up before him the face of his much-loved friend. He could at last bear it no longer. Tears seemed his meat and drink day and night.

He would have sympathized with the plaintive regrets of a mourner of modern days:—

> "Ah yet, e'en yet, if this might be,
> I, falling on his faithful heart,
> Would, breathing through his lips, impart
> The life that almost dies in me;
>
> That dies not, but endures with pain,
> And slowly forms the firmer mind,
> Treasuring the look it cannot find,
> The words that are not heard again."
>
> TENNYSON, *In Memoriam.*

As yet Augustine had, alas! no firm hope in his God to comfort him; and other comforters were vain. He determined, therefore, in compliance with the solicitations of friends, to leave Tagaste for the present, with all its painful associations.

CHAPTER II.

AUGUSTINE A PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC AT CARTHAGE.

He wins Prizes—Studies Astrology—Becomes an Author—Faustus and Manichæism—Annoyed by his Pupils.

"Let the tear
Still drop, deserted Carthage, on thy bier;
Let mighty nations pause as they survey
The world's great empires crumbled to decay;
And, hushing every rising tone of pride,
Deep in the heart this moral lesson hide,
Which speaks with hollow voice, as from the dead,
Of beauty faded, and of glory fled.
Delenda est Carthago."

ONCE again do we find Augustine at Carthage,—"the ocean's earliest queen,"—no longer as a student, but as a teacher of rhetoric.

He soon became famous for his skill in disputation, he carried off the prizes in the theatre for oratory and poetry; he hunted after the applause of men,—"hunting," he says, "after the emptiness of popular praise, down even to theatrical applauses, and poetic prizes, and strifes for grassy garlands, and the follies of shows, and the intemperance of desires."

He also at this time, perhaps to lull his grief, devoted himself to a new pursuit. He was led captive by "Impostors," men "whom they style mathematicians," and became the dupe of astrologers and star-gazers. He refused to listen to reason on this

point, even though he was urged to abandon the pursuit by a Roman Proconsul himself, named Vindicianus, a "wise man, very skilful in physic, and renowned therein, who had put the Agonistic garland upon his distempered head."

It was at this time, when he was probably about twenty-six years of age, that he composed a treatise on "The Beautiful and Fitting," unfortunately not extant, which he dedicated to Hierius, a Roman orator, whom he knew only by report. He would appear to have been so indifferent to this treatise, that, in his *Confessions*, he tells us he had lost sight of it altogether, and could not say whether it was in two or three books. It is impossible not to regret the loss of this treatise, which, though it may have failed in exact logical treatment, is sure to have been marked by genius, eloquence, and learning.

It was also about this time that Augustine's mind began to waver and hesitate respecting the truth of the Manichæan doctrines. It may be that his devotion to physical science since his return to Carthage had opened his mind to certain grave errors of the Manichees on these points. It may be that his confidence in the sanctity of the elect among the Manichees was rudely broken by reports, which appeared authentic, of vicious conduct prevalent among them. It may be that their theory of evil being co-eternal with God, jarred and grated on his mind when seeking for the Divine unity. He was now in his twenty-ninth year, and he conversed much at this period of his life with Faustus, a bishop of the Manichees, and their great authority, who happened to arrive at Carthage, while he was there. Faustus was of "African origin, born at

Milevis, of sweet discourse and clever wit." But though Augustine acknowledged that Faustus had a greater command of language, and more delicacy in treating subjects of discussion, than others who held the same views, and though he approved of his modesty and candour, yet he felt that Faustus was destitute of that vigorous power of thought, that solid basis of argument, and that scientific knowledge, without which the masculine mind of Augustine could not be satisfied. "What availed," he plaintively asks, "the utmost neatness of the cup-bearer to my thirst for a more precious draught? Mine ears were already cloyed with the like; nor did they seem to me therefore better, because better said; nor therefore true, because eloquent; nor the soul therefore wise, because the face was comely and the language graceful."

At this period in his moral history Augustine appears to have been swayed to and fro in his views and sentiments. He could not tear himself away from the Manichees, for he knew as yet no better way, but still his mind and reason dissented from many of their opinions and theories.

While in this hesitating and unsettled condition of mind, he would appear to have grown disgusted with Carthage in general, and with his pupils[1] in particular. They were noisy, undisciplined, and disorderly; and their conduct vexed and irritated him. Such conduct was probably all the more annoying to him, from the very restlessness and dissatisfied condition of his own mind at the time. We know from experience how the subjective state of our own

[1] Among his pupils was Licentius, the son of that Romanianus who had exhibited such marked kindness towards him.

minds gives a colouring to everything, and how often external objects cause us annoyance in certain states of our moral being, when they would be powerless to annoy us at another time.

> "Our eyes see all around in gloom or glow,
> Hues of their own, fresh borrowed from the heart."

CHAPTER III.

AUGUSTINE A PROFESSOR AT ROME.

His Deceit towards his Mother—His Illness—Disappointment in regard to his Pupils—General Dissatisfaction.

"The City which thou seest no other deem
Than great and glorious Rome, Queen of the Earth,
So far renowned, and with the spoils enriched
Of nations."—MILTON, *Par. Reg.* Book iv.

"Scilicet et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma,
Septemque una sibi muro circumdedit arces."
VIRG. *Georg.* ii. 534.

AND now another phase in Augustine's many-sided life is presented to our view.

Unsettled, vexed, and disquieted in mind, he determines once again to change the scene of his labours, and resolves to proceed to Imperial Rome itself.[1]

Such a visit must indeed have held out bright hopes and visions to the imagination of the unsettled student and disappointed teacher. It would prove, at any rate, a complete change of scene. He would see new faces—gaze upon that city from whence had come forth the conquerors of Carthage—contemplate works of art, of which he had heard, and probably read much—meet with the most distinguished literary men—

[1] *Confessions*, v. [viii.] § 14. But the sentiment still held true in his case, that "Cœlum, non animum, mutant, qui trans mare currunt" (*Hor. Ep.* i. xi. 27).

and once again renew his pursuit after truth. No doubt he entered upon this scheme with all the energy and fervour of his African nature. He was now all eagerness to be off; anxious to be pacing the banks of the yellow Tiber; and gazing on the Colosseum; and wandering through the Forum, so rich in memories of the past; and walking along the Appian Way,—that "Queen of Roads;" and looking on the arches, temples, basilicas, baths, aqueducts, and tombs of the Imperial City. If it is difficult to describe the outward aspect of the city, it is a still more difficult task to trace, as it has been well remarked,[1] the distinctive features of all the parts of that colossal population which filled it. Within a circuit of little more than twelve miles, more than two millions of inhabitants were probably crowded. It is evident that this fact is only explicable by the narrowness of the streets, and the peculiar character of the houses.[2] In this prodigious collection of human beings, there were of course all the contrasts which are seen in a modern city,—all the painful lines of separation between luxury and squalor, wealth and want. But in Rome all these differences were on an exaggerated scale, vividly marked and accentuated, and the institution of slavery modified further all social relations.

His mother naturally dreaded, with an intense apprehension, the prospect of his plunging into all the dangers of the mighty capital of Italy. She could see the realization of that for which she had prayed for so many long years further off than ever. She protested; she entreated him to reconsider his design. She even accompanied him to the sea-shore, striving

[1] See Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 376.

[2] The huge lodging-houses for the poor were called "Insulæ."

in vain to induce him to alter his course. Night came upon them. They retired to an oratory, erected to the memory of Cyprian, which was hard by the place where the ship lay at anchor.[1] In the darkness of the night, when Monica had retired to pray, with all a mother's love, that God would be pleased to interpose and prevent Augustine's departure, that faithless son had hurried off with rapid, stealthy steps to the ship, with no farewell spoken to that loving parent; and, a wind having sprung up in the night, the vessel sailed away in the darkness, and Monica, when the day dawned, was overwhelmed with grief at finding that her son had cruelly deceived her, and was now far from the land, on the waters of the Mediterranean, on his way to that city from which she had so earnestly, but ineffectually, striven to keep him back. Sad Monica had cause enough to pour out her soul in grief. The terrible deception practised upon her by her son—her dread at the thought of the temptations to which he was about to be exposed[2]—combined to afflict her with overwhelming sorrow. Back to her home she returned in solitude,—that hardly-used and shamefully-deceived mother; and once more do her tears flow for her son's hardness of heart, and her prayers ascend to the mercy-seat on high for his conversion.

And Augustine,—he has crossed those waters on which Monica had gazed so sadly and so earnestly, trying in vain to catch a parting view of the ship which conveyed him from her sight. And now he has reached the goal of his desires. He has entered the

[1] *Confessions*, v. [viii.] § 15. "I lied to my mother, and such a mother, and escaped!"

[2] For a graphic sketch of the awful state of depravity into which Rome had sunk even at a still earlier period, see Canon Farrar's *Early Days of Christianity*, Introduction.

capital of Italy. All its grandeur has struck upon his astonished gaze. He there took up his abode in the house of a Manichee; but very shortly after his arrival he lay prostrate on a bed of sickness, attacked by fever, in dread of death, trembling at the recollection of all the sins of which he had been guilty, and still finding no peace. "And lo," he exclaims, in his wonderful autobiography, "there was I received by the scourge of bodily sickness, and I was going down to hell, carrying all the sins which I had committed, both against Thee, and myself, and others, many and grievous, over and above that bond of original sin whereby we all die in Adam." . . . "But Thou, everywhere present, heardest her where she was, and, where I was, hadst compassion upon me; that I should recover the health of my body, though phrenzied as yet in my sacrilegious heart." [1]

A great work, however, lies before Augustine in the future; and he is spared—spared to his mother's tears and prayers.

Immediately on his recovery, he began to undertake the teaching of rhetoric, which was one of the chief objects for which he had desired to go to Rome. At Carthage—as we have seen—he had been annoyed at the licence, and the unruly, nay outrageous conduct of the pupils whom he taught. "The scholars there," he tells us, "burst in audaciously, and with gestures almost frantic, disturbing all order which any one hath established for the good of his pupils."

He had heard better things of the students at Rome, many of whom flocked to hear him, delighted by his brilliant talents, and charmed by the winning persuasiveness of his manners; but he was soon also

[1] *Confessions*, v. [ix.] § 16.

disappointed with the students at Rome, though in a different way and from a different cause. After a very short time he found that many of his class left him, in order to avoid paying the fees which were his due. This was no inconsiderable shock to his feelings.

In addition to this, his mind was ill at ease. He held fresh discussions with the professors of Manichæan views, but he continued to be disappointed and dissatisfied with their teaching, and yet he could not attain to clearer views of truth. He indulged at this time in the most visionary speculations respecting evil, and the nature of God Himself; and his perverted mind offered every species of opposition to the plain doctrines and the simple truths of Christianity. He was still wandering restlessly in search of truth,—which at times appeared like a mere phantom to his wearied mind; still balancing conflicting opinions in his jaded judgment; when once more, in the midst of his deep melancholy, the notion of change of scene presented itself to his imagination.

And this desire for change was almost immediately gratified; for Symmachus, the Prefect of Rome, who had been Proconsul in Africa,—a man of eloquence, a scholar and a statesman, and of very great honesty and integrity, though zealous for the ancient faith of Rome,—having been at this time appealed to by certain deputies sent from Milan, where Valentinian the younger held his court, to supply them with a professor of rhetoric, Augustine sent in an application for the position, supported by influential and weighty credentials, and, after a public trial, was in the most honourable manner appointed to the post.

CHAPTER IV.

AUGUSTINE A PROFESSOR AT MILAN.

The Influence of Ambrose on Augustine—Monica arrives at Milan —Augustine's Anxious Search after Truth—His Separation from the Mother of Adeodatus—Alypius—Nebridius—Simplician—Pontitianus—The Great Crisis in his Moral History —His Conversion.

"The biographies of Ambrose and Augustine might be combined into a complete compendium of the ecclesiastical history of their times, the one reflecting its more *external* features, and the other its *inward* spiritual conflicts; Ambrose representing the relations between Church and State, bishops and emperors, and Augustine the relation between the soul and truth."—*Voice of Christian Life in Song*, p. 75.

ONCE again our scene changes. We find Augustine in the famous city of Milan, looking out over the broad plain of Lombardy, and gazing at the snow-clad mountains that hemmed in his northern horizon, and stealing glances southward over the purple Apennines. Mediolanum was the principal city of the Insubres in Cisalpine Gaul, and had for a long time been the capital of Cisalpine Gaul itself. It was situated in a wide and fertile plain, between the rivers Ticinus and Addua, about thirty miles from the foot of the Alps, midway between those mountains and the Padus, and it was the central spot from which the roads in Northern Italy radiated. The place was no doubt founded by the Gauls, when they first established

themselves in the plains of Northern Italy.[1] It afterwards became by Roman conquest a "municipium" of the empire; but it grew in greatness and eminence when the Roman emperors fixed their imperial residence there, as Maximian, in 303 A.D. Hence it rose to the dignity of being the capital of Northern Italy, and was regarded by the poet Ausonius[2] as the sixth among the great cities of the Roman Empire. It was surrounded by a twofold range of walls, adorned with splendid mansions, conspicuous for its temples, circus, theatres, mint, baths, porticoes with their marble statues, and the palace of the Emperor. Nor did it seem at all crushed even by the proximity of Rome itself.[3]

By the inhabitants of this distinguished city was Augustine favourably, and even enthusiastically, received.

At this time the high-spirited and devoted Ambrose filled the episcopal chair at Milan. Augustine was deeply anxious to be introduced to him, for he had heard much of his learning, his eloquence, and his powers of persuasion. Ambrose, like Augustine, had in his early life devoted himself to the study of rhetoric, and had attained also to distinction at the bar. There was therefore a link of sympathy between these two remarkable men, who now for the first time met. A mother's influence, too, had done much also for Ambrose.

Ambrose was born, in all probability, at Augusta Trevivorum (Trèves), at which place his father was the

[1] See Livy, v. 34, and Pliny, iii. 17, § 21.

[2] *De clar. urb.* v. The passage is quoted in the original by Gibbon, *History*, vol. ii. p. 90, note (Milman's ed.).

[3] Compare the language of Ansonius: "Nec juncta premit vicinia Romæ."

prefect, about 340 A.D. On his father's death he went to Rome with his mother, was educated there as an advocate, and afterwards acquired a high reputation as a pleader at Milan, in consequence of which he was made (*circ.* 370 A.D.) a consular prefect of Liguria and Æmilia, residing at Milan.

Ambrose would seem to have been the man of all others for Augustine to meet with at this critical period of his life. He had all the wisdom of a statesman, all the courage of a warrior, all the holiness of a saint, and all the endurance of a martyr. At the age of thirty-four, as we learn from the author of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*,[1] and before he had received the sacrament of baptism, Ambrose, to his own surprise and to that of the world, was suddenly transformed from a governor into an archbishop. Without the least mixture, as it is said, of art or intrigue, the whole body of the people of Milan unanimously saluted him with the episcopal title, the concord and perseverance of their acclamations being ascribed to a preternatural impulse, a child having called out from amidst the crowd, which he, as governor, was endeavouring to pacify during a struggle that took place between the Arians and the orthodox on the death of the Bishop Auxentius, "Ambrosius Episcopus!" He was reluctantly compelled to undertake this high spiritual office; but he was soon qualified by the activity of his genius to carry out, zealously and yet prudently, the duties of his ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and, while cheerfully renouncing all outward greatness, he was able to direct the conscience of emperors, and control the very administration of the empire. For his God and his Church he was ready

[1] Gibbon, vol. iii. p. 376

to brave and suffer anything. Learned as a divine, persuasive as a preacher, indefatigable as a priest, he naturally possessed the greatest influence at Milan amongst men of every rank.

It was indeed fortunate, or rather most wisely overruled, that Augustine at such a moment of oscillation, doubt, and mental distress, should have been introduced to him and fallen under his mighty influence. He would seem to have been the very man—perhaps the only man—fitted to do him real good in the present frame of his heart and mind.

Augustine paid him a visit of respect on his arrival at Milan. He was received by the archbishop with the greatest friendliness and courtesy, and from that time there sprang up a mutual feeling of sympathy and affection in the hearts of each. But Augustine was not content with visiting the good bishop privately Not unfrequently he went to hear him preach. He was charmed with the bishop's eloquence and learning, though as yet he paid, at least intentionally, but little regard to the doctrines which he taught. Still he could not but be affected, to a certain extent, by the teaching of Ambrose, nor could he fail to observe that very many of the charges made by the Manichees against the orthodox were utterly destitute of foundation,—mere "chimeras of a fleshly imagination;" and thus (as he afterwards tells us in his *Confessions*), while he opened his heart to admit "how eloquently he spake," there also entered, "how truly he spake;" but this by degrees. Thus was Augustine gradually brought "within the magic circle of the great ecclesiastic of the West."[1]

Still, however, was the mind of Augustine perplexed

[1] Milman's *History of Christianity*, vol. iii. p. 275.

by those difficulties which the question of the "origin of evil," or of the "nature of God," furnished. Still was he asking for demonstration, when he should have come to the search for truth in the spirit of faith.

It is the remark of Professor Bright, that Augustine was now working his way towards Catholic belief. He took his place for the present among the Church catechumens; but worldly passions, and difficulties raised by Manichæism, destroyed his peace of mind, and made him fearful of "dying before he had found the truth" (*Conf.* vi. 10, vii. 7). His friends Alypius and Nebridius were partners in his search for it (*ibid.* vi. 11). He discovered the falsehood, it is said, of the Manichæan taunt, that Scripture debased the Deity by human limitations; but Manichæism also had its own material conceptions of Deity, from which Augustine found it hard to emerge (*ibid.* vi. 4, v. 25, vii. 1). His perplexities, however, steadily diminished. Firmly believing in God's providence, looking for a judgment to come (*ibid.* vi. 26, vii. 11), and seeking for help in his sore need, he began to see (adds the Professor) that free-will was a reality, that the principle of faith was reasonable (*ibid.* vii. 5, vi. 7), that the true God was in truth a Spirit (*ibid.* vii. 16), that those Scriptures which heresy had disdained, but which a Christendom had attested, gave that answer to his deepest cravings which the noblest heathen books could never supply (*ibid.* iii. 9, vi. 8, vii. 13, 14, 27). The doctrine of Christ's Divinity was for some time foreign to his thoughts; and he tells us that Alypius imagined the Church to be committed to the untenable Apollinarian theory (*ibid.* vii. 25).[1]

[1] See Bright's *History of the Church*, p. 190.

During, however, this inward struggle, the acquaintance which he had gained, by means of Latin translations, with works relating to the Platonic and neo-Platonic philosophy, proved of great service to him.[1] He says himself that they enkindled in his mind an incredible ardour (*Contra Academ.* ii. 5). They addressed themselves to his religious consciousness. Nothing but a philosophy which addressed the heart, —a philosophy which coincided with the inward witness of a nature in man akin to the Divine,— a philosophy which, at the same time, in its later form, contained so much that really or seemingly harmonized with the Christian truths implanted in his soul at an early age;—nothing but such a philosophy could, it has been said, have possessed such attractions for him in the then tone of his mind. In such a philosophical system, indeed, Augustine could never have discovered the rest and repose which he so ardently sought for; but still it was not without its advantages to his wearied mind. Thus, while pondering on the "impersonal Logos of Philo and Plotinus, he gradually rose to an ideal which connected itself with the reminiscences of his childhood, and, thus prepared, he returned to the perusal of Holy Scripture." No Christian student of philosophy can doubt that "Platonism is beyond dispute the noblest product of heathen speculation, and stands in closer contact with revelation than all the other philosophical systems of antiquity," and that it is, in some measure, an "unconscious prophecy of Christ, in whom alone its bold ideals can ever become truth and reality." And yet "there half arose a thought in me," he says, "that those philo-

[1] Compare Neander's *Church History*, vol. iv. p. 17.

sophers, whom they call Academics,[1] were wiser than the rest, for that they held men ought to doubt everything, and laid down that no truth can be comprehended by man." [2]

It was at this moment of cruel doubt and hesitation, when subjective probability, and not absolute truth, was all that neo-Platonism could offer to his restless, pining, unsettled mind, that Monica arrived at Milan. She could no longer repress the longing which she felt to see her son, whose letters had too clearly conveyed to her the deep melancholy which was then preying upon his heart, and to judge for herself of his moral condition; and so she dared to cross the sea, and encounter the perils of a journey by land. She started from that very harbour where she had been so cruelly deceived by her son not long before, and during the raging of a storm to which the vessel in which she sailed was exposed, she—a weak and frail woman—comforted and consoled the fainting hearts of the sailors, as the great Apostle of the Gentiles had done before, and promised them a safe voyage. At length Milan is reached, and mother and son once again meet with truest and most unfeigned delight. She hears from his lips that he has ceased to be a Manichee. Her joy at this announcement was calm and tranquil. He might have expected a greater demonstration of satisfaction on her part; but to her no mere negation of untruth sufficed: she wanted to

[1] *Confessions*, v. [x.] § 19, where see a note on the "Academics," in the Oxford translation, in which the general opinion that they were universal sceptics is refuted by the testimony of Augustine.

[2] It has been remarked by Milner (*History of the Church*, ii. 2, note, p. 134): "When a man attempts to discover and adjust religious truth by leaning to his own understanding, he frequently finds *scepticism* the sole result of his most painful investigations."

hear from him the assertion of his positive belief in the truth. Still she rejoiced, believing that she should yet live to see her great wish and desire gratified, and to look upon her son as a hearty believer in the true faith. But unceasingly did she continue to offer up prayers for the fulfilment of this desire of her soul, and she listened with earnest attention to the words that fell from Ambrose, whom she "loved as an angel of God" for having rescued her son from the errors of Manichæism.

Nor was Ambrose indifferent to her many excellences, and to her devoted love for her son, for he often congratulated Augustine on having such a mother. He marked her devoted piety—her ready obedience—her deep humility—the growing graces of her character; and his interest in her and in her son deepened daily.

Often did Augustine at this time wish fully and freely to disclose his state of mind to Ambrose; but that indefatigable bishop was so engaged, that he could never find an opportunity thus to reveal his inner consciousness to him. When, in the intervals of his public labours, Ambrose sought for comparative privacy in his chamber (the door of which, however, always stood open), that he might refresh his mind by reading the Holy Scriptures and devotional books, Augustine did not dare to disturb the current of his thoughts and break in upon his retirement.

But now to the mind of Augustine a different view of Scripture began to present itself to what it did when last he consulted the oracles of God. He then despised their simplicity; but now, after having heard many passages of Scripture explained by St.

Ambrose, he tells us that the authority of God's Word appeared to him more venerable, and more worthy of religious credence, in that while it lay open to all to read, it reserved the majesty of its mysteries within its profounder meaning, stooping to all in the great plainness of its words and lowliness of its style, yet calling forth the intensest application of such as are thoughtful. "These things," he adds, "I thought on, and Thou wert with me; I sighed, and Thou heardest me; I wavered, and Thou didst guide me; I wandered through the broad way of the world, and Thou didst not forsake me."

But still Augustine—though feeling after the truth, if haply he might find it—was only as yet groping his way in darkness.

Metaphysical arguments respecting the substance of God, and how that substance was extended through space, disturbed him,—visionary arguments after all, incapable of proof or disproof. Questions, again, concerning the origin of evil, and the nature of free-will, haunted his metaphysical intellect. Astrological speculations, and theories of the Platonists, tortured him; and the anxious thought that he should never discover the truth before his death, preyed upon his excited mind.

The difficulties which prevented him from embracing Christianity were in appearance intellectual, but in reality moral. He did not believe (it has been thoughtfully said), because he would not believe; and if he would not, it was because he felt at what a cost he must follow Christ. Hence he still kept dragging along the chain of guilt, and, in order to deceive himself, he opposed to the gospel objections of a metaphysical kind. Meanwhile the call from above

resounded with increasing strength; Augustine was at the same time roused and irritated, attracted and repelled.[1]

At this time Augustine was in a state of profound despondency, envying the poor beggar, whom he saw in the streets, his happiness.

There was also another cause for his despondency at this time. Urged to take the step by the earnest entreaties of Monica, he now freed himself from the bondage of sin, under which he had been enthralled for fifteen years, and permitted a separation to take place between himself and the mother of his son Adeodatus. He says, "I allowed myself to be torn from her who shared my life; and as my soul was one with hers, my riven heart shed tears of blood."

At this period of his life he was much thrown into the society of Alypius of Tagaste and Nebridius of Carthage or its neighbourhood.

Alypius was his dear friend and pupil, who had attended his rhetoric classes at Tagaste and at Carthage, was with him at Rome, and was now by his side at Milan. He had a sweet earnestness and simplicity of character, though inclined at one time to an excessive passion for the spectacles in the circus and the theatre, and estranged temporarily from Augustine in consequence of some family disagreement.

He was bound to Augustine by the strongest of all bonds, as his father in the faith, and never willingly forsook him. He became in the after time the Bishop of Augustine's and his own native place.

Nebridius, too, had left his home near Carthage, and

[1] Compare art. on Augustine, in Dr. Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.

an "excellent family estate" in Africa, to follow Augustine, and join with him in the pursuit after truth and wisdom. "Like me," writes Augustine, "he sighed, like me he wavered, an ardent searcher after true life, and a most acute examiner of the most difficult questions." [1]

At this stage, Augustine, as it has been well said,[2] in his feverish agitation took up the Epistles of St. Paul, the great theologian of the incarnate Word. It was meet, observes Fletcher, that the greatest of doctors should be conquered by the greatest of the Apostles. For the first time, the tremendous mysteries of man's fall, and his redemption by Jesus Christ, became revealed to him in all their inscrutable depth and glory. But still Augustine could not throw himself on the mercy of Christ. Still were purity and humility lacking. Not yet could he sell all and buy the pearl of great price.

Such is his own account of his state at this time: —"While I went over these things, and these winds shifted and drove my heart this way and that, time passed on, but I delayed to turn unto the Lord; and from day to day deferred to live in Thee, and deferred not daily to die in myself. Loving a happy life, I feared it in its own abode, and sought it, by fleeing from it" (*Confessions*, vii. [xi.] § 20). Nevertheless, in the Epistles of St. Paul he "found all those truths which addressed him in Platonism, no longer obscurely foreshadowed, but fulfilled, and yet much more besides. Here he found Christ, as the Mediator between God and man, between heaven and earth, who alone can

[1] Cf. Aug. *Ep.* 98, § 8. "Nebridius, my friend, who, being a most diligent and acute inquirer in difficult questions, hated a brief answer on a great subject."

[2] *Life of Monica*, by Lady Herbert, pp. 84, 85.

give us power to attain those lofty ideals, and embody them in life. Here he read that masterly delineation of the conflict between the spirit and the flesh (Rom. vii.) which was literally confirmed by his own experience. Here he learned to know aright the depth of the ruin, and the utter impossibility of being delivered from it by any natural wisdom or natural strength, and at the same time the great remedy which God graciously offers to us in His incarnate Son. Such light, such consolation, and such power, the Platonic writings had never yielded."[1]

There was at this time at Milan an aged priest, named Simplician, wise and learned, of great knowledge of the human heart, who had formerly instructed Ambrose himself in theology, and had also been the instrumental means of converting Victorinus, the learned professor of rhetoric at Rome, to the faith of Christ, which he confessed before all, with the utmost boldness and unflinching openness, "Rome wondering, the Church rejoicing."

To Simplician, Augustine related the mazes of his wanderings, and opened his heart in the fullest confidence. Simplician related to him the conversion of Victorinus, who had followed the same career as Augustine himself, and the touching pathos of the narrative deeply affected Augustine's sensitive mind. But, nevertheless, not yet was his will brought into subjection to the gospel of Christ.

But at this crisis there chanced to call upon him and Alypius—Nebridius being absent—a countryman of theirs, a devout Christian, and attached to the Emperor's court, named Pontitianus. He was greatly

[1] See Dr. Schaff's *Life of Augustine*, p. 44 et seq.; and compare *Confessions*, vii. [xxi.] § 27.

delighted to take up from the table of Augustine the Epistles of St. Paul, which he had supposed was some rhetorical treatise that Augustine was reading. He then led their thoughts to all that Antony, an Egyptian monk, and his followers, had done and suffered, and by recounting a story of self-sacrifice in connection with this subject, made a very deep impression upon the mind of Augustine, who was not only fired with ardour at the recital of such deeds of Christian heroism, of which he had never heard before, but also deeply humbled at the thought of his own coldness, impurity, and sin.

Pontitianus left them; and Augustine, turning to Alypius, spoke of their lethargy and indifference, with strangely altered voice and with a changed countenance, asking why *they* did not emulate the example which had been set them by the monks in Egypt, and start up at once and "take heaven by force"?

Upon this Augustine went out with Alypius into the garden, at a distance from the house (for how could Alypius fail to accompany his friend in this agony of mind?), and earnestly questioned his own soul on his sins and shortcomings.

So violent was the struggle that he went through in probing into the vileness of his heart, that the tears poured down his face in streams. He then hurried still further into the garden, at a distance even from his friend. He cast himself under a fig-tree, and bemoaned his sins, entreating, in agonizing language, that God's mercy might be bestowed *at once* upon him. "Be it done now, be it done now!" he exclaimed. "How long? How

long? To-morrow, and to-morrow? Why not now? Why is there not this hour an end to my uncleanness?"

"Thus," it has been well said, "he prayed, supplicated, sighed, wrestled, and wept bitterly. They were the birth-pangs of new life. From afar he saw the Church in the beauty of her holiness. The glorified spirits of the redeemed, who had been snatched from the abyss by the All-merciful, and transplanted into a heavenly state of being, beckoned to him. Still more powerfully the longing burnt within; still more hot and rapidly beat the pulse of desire after the Saviour's embrace; as a weary, hunted stag after the fresh water-brooks, so panted his heart after the living God, and a draught from the chalice of His grace. The hour of deliverance had now come. The Lord had already stretched out His hand to tear asunder the last cords that bound His prodigal son to the world, and press him to a warm, true Father's heart."

While thus weeping and lamenting in the depth of his contrition, "hesitating to die to death and to live to life," the voice of a child—whether of a boy or girl he knew not—fell upon his excited ear, uttering the words, "Take up, and read; take up, and read." He pondered on these words, but could think of no child's play in which they occurred, and he felt sure he had never heard the like before. Instantly he hurried back for St. Paul's Epistles which he had been reading with Alypius, and opened the book at the place in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, xiii. 13, 14: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,

and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

Upon this light seemed to break at once into his dark soul, and his doubts to vanish away like morning mist. It was indeed a terrible and an awful struggle through which he passed, while agonizing in that garden under the fig-tree. His heart's fibres seemed breaking with the tension to which they were subjected. It has been spoken of as "the throes and pangs of his final conversion."[1] And so Neander[2] strikingly remarks:—We have seen how it was only after a long and violent conflict with a fiery nature, but which struggled against the God-like in a wild feeling of power, that Augustine attained to inward peace. Through many years tossed one side and the other, between the ideals which attracted the cravings of his spirit, and the desires and passions which held him chained to the pleasures of the world, he experienced in himself the conflict between the spirit and the flesh. From his own inward experience he learned how to understand the fundamental ideas of the Christian, more particularly of the Pauline, doctrine concerning man; and with the study of St. Paul's writings he was, in fact, particularly occupied at the time when that great crisis occurred in his inner life. As he found these two great divisions in his own life,—the nature which, after all the efforts in his power, still remained impotent, and struggled in vain for holiness, and the nature subordinate to faith, and victorious over sin through the power of redemption,—so he found once more the same two main divisions in the development of human nature as a whole. This opposition, which he had

[1] By Dean Milman, *Church History*, vol. p 275.
[2] In his *Church History*, vol. iv. p. 288.

learned from his own inward experience, came to be the central point in his system of faith.

As we can readily believe, his first act—after devout communion with his Lord in prayer—was to hasten to Alypius, and tell him of the great things which the Lord had done for him. When he found his friend, Augustine, with a calm countenance, told him all. Alypius, observing the book still in his hand, asked to see the place where he had been reading; and in glancing down the page his eye fell upon the words following: "Him that is weak in the faith receive" (xiv. 1), and with a simple, confiding faith, "without any turbulent delay," he joined himself to Augustine.[1]

And then Augustine hastened to communicate these "glad tidings of great joy" to his anxious and expectant mother. Ah! Monica, how thy heart must have leaped

[1] Compare Milner's language (*History of the Church*, ii. 2, p. 159, note): "I would suggest four particular remarks on the narrative of our author's conversion—(1) That it does please God in every age to distinguish some of the works of His Holy Spirit by extraordinary circumstances. It is of little consequence to debate whether the voice heard in the garden was miraculous or not; whether literally true, or an impression on his mind. Either way it was equally from God, and sheds a lustre on the conversion of a great and eminently holy personage, who was called to testify remarkably for God in his day. (2) There is generally some master-sin which impedes the work of God in all His people; Augustine's was sensuality, and in the mortification of that master-sin the grace of God is peculiarly illustrated. (3) The great medium of deliverance always is the written word of God testifying of Jesus, and salvation only by putting Him on through faith. (4) Man's extremity is God's opportunity. In our weakness thoroughly felt God appears. Is it to be wondered that the saint before us proved so strong and zealous a champion of the effectual grace of God, and was made use of to revive the clear doctrine of it in the Church, and was trained up by his own experience to defend it against the subtilties of Pelagius? He who foresaw what Pelagius would introduce, in His adorable wisdom, thus provided an experienced pastor of His Church, who in due time should withstand his corruptions."

for joy, when thy son confided to thee the tale of that conversion for which thy heart had been looking forward for so many long and weary years! What a glorious return for all thy troubled, anxious hours! Thy mourning has now been converted into joy unspeakable. The agony of years has rolled away.[1]

[1] *Confessions*, viii. [xii.] § 30.

PART III.

The Interval between Augustine's Professorial and Ministerial Life.

CHAPTER I.

AUGUSTINE IN RETIREMENT IN CASSIACUM.

His Bodily Weakness and Resignation of his Professorship—Select Circle of Friends—His Writings at this Period—He reviews his Past Life.

> "Then why should gentle hearts and true
> Bare to the rude world's withering view
> Their treasure of delight?"
>
> KEBLE, *Christian Year.*

IT was now scarcely twenty days till the time of the vintage vacation.[1] Augustine felt some scruples as to the propriety of any longer teaching what he called mere tongue-knowledge. He did not, however, like to disappoint those who had placed their sons under his care, and therefore he determined to go on with his daily task in quietness to the vacation;—"not," as he expresses it, "tumultuously to tear, but gently withdraw, the service of his tongue from the marts of lip-labour."

It had been a question with Augustine, even before his conversion, whether he ought not to resign his chair of rhetoric, since symptoms of an affection of the lungs had already shown themselves. His breathing had become short and laboured, and pain ensued when he exerted his voice for any length of time. This,

[1] The lawyers had their vacations in the harvest and vintage season.

then, was another reason which would have induced him to relinquish, at least for a time, the labours of his public professorship.

At length those twenty days had passed,—August was over, and half September had gone by,—and the wished-for vacation had arrived. Joyfully, therefore, did he avail himself of the offer of his friend Verecundus—a noble and wealthy citizen and grammarian of Milan, and his intimate associate, though, unlike his wife, not yet a Christian—to accept for the present the use of his country villa, in the neighbourhood of Milan, called Cassiacum. It was just the quiet retreat that the jaded body and mind of Augustine needed, after the awful struggle of the flesh and spirit through which he had so recently passed, "where from the fever of the world," he says, "we reposed in Thee, with the eternal freshness of Thy paradise."

Cassiacum was a noble mansion standing amid the lower slopes of the mountains, some two days' easy journey from Milan, with lovely views all around of lake, and wood, and flowery glades, the pure air cooled by breezes from the snowy heights in the distance, while the mantling vine hung from tree to tree, and the song of the birds came sweetly from the thickets near at hand, to break the stillness which reigned in that peaceful and secluded spot. All this would be in harmony with the tastes of Augustine, whose whole soul so keenly sympathized with all that was beautiful, whether in nature or in art.

To that quiet resting-place a happy party soon set off. With him went his beloved companion Alypius, now a gentle, calm believer; his son, the gifted Adeodatus, not yet quite fifteen years old; his brother Navigius, whose gentle life was wholly devoted to

meditation and prayer; his mother Monica, with heart overflowing with deep and tranquil joy, that lit up her beautiful but careworn countenance with a heavenly radiance. To this more select circle we may probably add the youthful Trigetius, who had tried for a time a soldier's life; and Licentius, the son of Romanianus, his pupil,—gay, bright, poetic; and two relatives of Augustine, Rusticus and Lastidianus. Their host, Verecundus, was subsequently seized with an illness that proved fatal, but his friends had the joy of learning that he had died in the faith, trusting in the merits of his Redeemer.

No words can adequately describe the peaceful joy and quiet repose which those loving hearts realized in happy communion and sweet converse at that country villa of Cassiacum.

The treatise *Against the Academics* is founded on one of the discussions, which, after the manner of the Platonic dialogues, was held during several days amid the peaceful seclusion at Cassiacum; and it was addressed to his fellow-countryman and patron Romanianus, as an inducement to the study of philosophy. His friends Licentius, Trigetius, and Alypius are introduced as taking part with him in the dialogue, which, as its title implies, was directed against the scepticism of the New Academy.

We learn that several other treatises also formed the subjects of discussion at Cassiacum; for example, that *Concerning the Blessed Life*, addressed to Theodorus, commenced on his birthday, and finished in a discussion which lasted three days; and the treatise *Concerning Order*, in two books. Moreover, in the preface prefixed to the two books of *Soliloquies*, it is stated that they were composed when Augustine was

at Cassiacum; in which books, "being alone, he held a dialogue with himself, he and his reason, as though they were two." We are informed in another of his writings (*Retract.* i. 4), that "in the first book of his *Soliloquies* he investigated what sort of person *he* ought to be who would apprehend wisdom, and in the end is an argument that things which truly are, are immortal." In the second book is a long discussion, in which he comes to no conclusion, on the immortality of the soul. He tells us (i. 10) that he was in his thirty-third year when this treatise was composed. It has been said, and probably with truth, that there are "few traces of a specifically Christian and Catholic character in these writings, and that they exhibit rather a Platonism, full of high thoughts, ideal views, and subtle dialectics, informed and hallowed by the spirit of Christianity." Many views, indeed, which are stated in them he subsequently retracts.

This retreat formed a landing-stage in the eventful history of Augustine,—a pause in the agitation under which he had long been driven to and fro, like a ship upon a stormy sea.

"What I there did in writing," thus he speaks in his *Confessions*, "which was now enlisted in Thy service, though still, in this breathing-time as it were, panting from the school of pride, my books may witness, as well what I debated with others, as what with myself alone, before Thee: what with Nebridius, who was absent, my epistles bear witness."

Augustine was now enabled, in this quiet retreat, to review the mercy of God, who had led him by a slow and painful process, but such perhaps as his proud heart needed, to a knowledge of the truth. He could now trace all the intricate mazes through which his

restless spirit had been seeking after light, from his youth up to the present time. He could review his search after truth in the *Hortensius* of Cicero, in the works of Plato and the neo-Platonists, in the *Categories* of Aristotle,[1] and in the wild and visionary speculations of the Manichees. He could perceive, throughout all his devious wanderings, the leading of God's providence in convincing him, step by step, of the emptiness of all other systems, till he found rest at last in Holy Scripture and the true faith. But all such reflections as these would fill his mind with a deep sense of humility, when he thought of all the time and care which he had expended in this long struggle after truth,—an end which others dear to him had reached so far more quickly and easily than he had done.

It was a breathing-space most profitable to Augustine, —spent in prayer, in self-examination, in holy converse with his spiritually-minded mother, in earnest discussions with his chosen companions, and in the study of Holy Scripture, especially of the Psalms; and of them the fourth was his favourite one. Ambrose had advised him to study the prophecies of Isaiah; but as he found that he could not understand them thoroughly, he chose the Psalms, for devotional reading, instead. In those sacred writings he found what he desired,—"the hallowed expression of his deepest religious feelings, from the low, sad wail of penitence and contrition up to the inspiring song of praise to the Divine mercy." "Oh!" he exclaims, "in what accents spake I unto

[1] When only twenty, he heard his masters speak with boastfulness of their knowledge of Aristotle's work on *The Ten Categories or Predicaments;* he eagerly read and understood it *without* a tutor. This book led him to place God in the category of substance, and to reason of Him in a corporeal manner (see *Confessions*, iv. [xvi.] § 28).

Thee, my God, when I read the Psalms of David, those faithful songs, and sounds of devotion, which allow of no swelling spirit, as yet a catechumen, and a novice in Thy real love, resting in that villa, with Alypius, a catechumen, my mother cleaving to us, in female garb with masculine faith, with the tranquillity of age, motherly love, Christian piety. Oh! what accents did I utter unto Thee in those Psalms, and how was I by them kindled towards Thee, and on fire to rehearse them, if possible, through the whole world, against the pride of mankind."

All Augustine's difficulties, all his doubts, all his agonies, had now vanished away, and his whole soul was engrossed with the absorbing thought of the wondrous love which God had manifested to one who so little deserved it as himself.

CHAPTER II.

AUGUSTINE'S BAPTISM BY AMBROSE AT MILAN.

Augustine resigns his Professorship—Requests Baptism—Church Service at Milan — Augustine's Influence on Hymnology—Baptized on Easter Eve—The Legend.

"Thus outwardly and visibly
We seal thee for His own;
And may the brow that wears His cross
Hereafter share His crown."

THE vacation had drawn, or was fast drawing to its close, when Augustine wrote to the authorities at Milan, requesting them to provide a successor to fill his chair of rhetoric. He wrote also at the same time to Ambrose, disclosing to him the state of his mind, and praying to be openly admitted into Christ's Church by baptism. A cordial and warmly-expressed response on the part of the bishop, expressive of his readiness to admit him into the Church, gave the greatest joy to the heart of Augustine.

His conversion had probably taken place in August, in the year 386 A.D., when Augustine was in the thirty-second year of his age. It was said that he was baptized by the venerable archbishop on Easter Eve in 387 A.D. Together with him were baptized his friend in Christ, Alypius, and his beloved son Adeodatus, who was not quite fifteen,

but who "in wit surpassed many grave and learned men."[1]

They were to be baptized at Easter, but they had to "give in their names" before the Second Sunday in Lent. The rest of the time they were to spend in fasting, humility, and prayer, as well as being examined in the "Scrutinies."[2] Therefore they went to Milan, in order that the bishop might watch over their preparation for the sacrament.

Before his conversion Augustine and his mother had deeply enjoyed and valued the services at the cathedral of Milan. They had witnessed the fervour with which the Christian population of the city chanted antiphonal hymns, after the manner of the Eastern Church, in the midst of all the cruel persecutions to which they and their bishop were exposed from the relentless hatred of the Arians, and of Justina, the empress-mother of Valentinian. These solemn chants and hymns had a deep effect, not only on the mind of Monica, but also upon the impressionable temperament of her son; and tears often poured down his face as he listened to those fervid outpourings of Christian devotion. "How did I weep," he writes in his *Confessions*,[3] "in Thy hymns and canticles, touched to the quick by the voices of Thy sweet-attuned Church! The voices flowed into mine ears, and the truth distilled into my heart, whence the affections of my devotion

[1] *Confessions*, ix. [vi.] § 14. Augustine, in the *De Vitâ Beatâ*, § 6, says: "There was also with us, in age the youngest of all, but whose talents, if affection deceives me not, promise something great, my son Adeodatus."

[2] See Tertul. *Lib. de Bapt.* cap. 20.

[3] ix. [vi.] § 14, and [vii.] 15. See *Voice of Christian Life in Song*, p. 87 et seq. See also *Confessions*, x. [xxxiii.] 49, 50, on the effect which church music exerted upon him, and his opinions upon it.

overflowed, and tears ran down, and happy was I therein."

Not long had the Church of Milan begun to use this kind of consolation and exhortation, the brethren "zealously joining with harmony of voice and hearts."

Augustine, it has been remarked,[1] can hardly be numbered among the hymn writers; the only hymn attributed to him, and frequently introduced amongst his works, is said to have been written six centuries later by Cardinal Daminani. He speaks of himself in his *Confessions* as having "indited verses," but that was before his conversion. Yet, as one of the mightiest instruments in fitting the Latin language to spiritual uses, and as the great channel through which the doctrines of grace flowed to the Middle Ages, and thus doubtless, the source of many hymns, his name should scarcely be omitted among the number of those by whom the sacred song was uttered. Many passages of his *Confessions* have the deepest melody of the heart; indeed, are not the whole of the *Confessions*, with their constant "departing of the heart to God," one continuous hymn, one constant ascending of the soul from the creature to the Creator, from self to the Saviour?

It was probably late on Easter Eve, in accordance with the ancient usage, that Augustine and the others received baptism at the hands of the saintly Ambrose himself, who, he tells us, "in Christ Jesus begat me through the gospel."

We gather from ancient accounts that the candidates for baptism, with faces looking towards the west, renounced the devil and his works, the world, its luxury, and its pleasures; that, in this remarkable instance, Ambrose performed the solemn benediction of

[1] By the Author of *Voice of Christian Life in Song*, p. 81.

the font, and as each candidate descended into it, the question was asked, "Dost thou believe in God, the Father Almighty?" to which he replied, "I believe," and was immersed in the water; that in like manner, after having professed his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, he was immersed a second and a third time; that Ambrose then anointed the head of each, praying that it might be "unto life eternal;" that, in accordance with a special usage of Milan, their feet were washed, white garments put on them, and that, after receiving "the spiritual seal," they were led in procession up the church, chanting the 43rd Psalm, while Augustine's happiness is said (*Confess.* ix. 14) to have overflowed in tears.[1]

There is a legend that, when the ordinance of baptism had been administered,

> "St. Ambrose stood
> Beside the altar, looking up to heaven,
> And from his lips burst forth triumphantly
> The first lines of the anthem called *Te Deum;*
> At sound whereof Augustine instantly
> Chanted the second verse, as one inspired.
> Ambrose then sang the third; and thus the two,
> Chanting alternately verse after verse,
> Jointly composed that glorious song of praise."[2]
>
> COLE, *St. Augustine.*

[1] See Canon Bright's *History of the Church*, pp. 198, 199.

[2] Comber, in his *Companion to the Temple*, vol. i. p. 224, speaking of the *Te Deum*, has remarked: "Although this song of praise be not of Divine authority, yet it is said to have been miraculously composed, and first sung by St. Ambrose and St. Augustine after the baptism of that illustrious convert; and it is placed among the undoubted works of holy Ambrose, who, in times of general calamity, first brought the use of hymns into Latin churches." Cf. Orig. *Liturg.* i. p. 228. It has been stated by Professor Bright, that the *Chronicle* of Dacius, Bishop of Milan, which spoke of Ambrose and Augustine as composing the *Te Deum* on this occasion, is spurious.

We learn from Augustine himself,[1] that on his return to Milan from Cassiacum, after having finished his *Soliloquies*, he wrote the treatise on *The Immortality of the Soul*,[2] in order to correct errors respecting his views on this subject, which had been circulated abroad, and to exhibit in clearer and fuller language what he had previously stated too concisely on a subject so difficult and mysterious.

And now Augustine's work at Milan was over. He could not, however, leave the city without a feeling of fond regret. It was a holy brotherhood that had been gathered together there. What a debt of gratitude, also, did he owe to that church, and to that apostolic archbishop!

There had his troubled soul found peace at last.

[1] *Retractations*, v. 1.
[2] *De Immortalitate Animæ.*

CHAPTER III.

THE DEATH OF MONICA.

Departure of Augustine and Monica from Milan — Sojourn at Ostia and Monica's Illness—Her Happy Death—Augustine's Grief.

> "And ready for her last abode
> The pale form like a lily showed:
> The light from those soft-smiling eyes
> Had fleeted to its parent skies."

BUT notwithstanding all the attractions and deeply interesting associations of the city of his conversion and baptism, Augustine determined to leave it, and to return to his native land and to his native city. Accordingly, towards the end of the year 387 A.D., his party started off towards Africa. In addition to the saintly band that was gathered together at the country villa of Verecundus, one or two others of kindred heart and spirit, as well as fellow-countrymen, joined them, —Nebridius, who had once held erroneous views respecting the body of Christ, and Euodius, who, from being an officer of the court and soldier in the army, had become a soldier of the Cross.

They started off on their way to Ostia, where they hoped to find a vessel to convey them to the shores of their fatherland. "How unlike," it has been well said,[1] "were those two journeys! Three years before,

[1] See *Life of Monica*, p. 104.

they had all come separately: Augustine flying from his mother, and having deceived her; Monica, undeterred by dangers and tempests, following in the wake of her son, and watering her path with what then appeared to be fruitless tears. And now they were come back happy and peaceful, hand in hand, their countenances stamped with a like peace and a like heavenly light. And Monica herself, how she had opposed the voyage, how she had prayed to God, in that little chapel of St. Cyprian, that He would prevent her son from leaving Africa! And now she saw clearly that it was from love that God had turned a deaf ear to her prayer, and that untold mercy had been hidden in the very event which had caused her such suffering. Surely this thought should make us more ready to give up our will to Him, and to say, 'Do, O Lord, as Thou wilt, and when Thou wilt; for Thou knowest all, and lovest us more than all.'"

They had already reached Ostia, on their way to Carthage, and were staying there for some few days to recruit themselves for their voyage across the sea, when an event occurred more sad and bitter than any other event which could possibly have happened to Augustine.

They were resting in a quiet retreat, and Augustine and Monica had, during the peaceful eventide, been looking out of the window of the house where they were staying into the secluded garden below them, and talking of higher themes than this lower earth can furnish, and yet regarding all the beauties of nature around them as parts of the creation of Him whose they were and whom they served. High thoughts of God's love and mercy, of the eternal life, and of subjects which only faith could grasp,

filled their hearts on that lovely evening. The face of the saintly Monica was observed to glow with an almost supernatural light. Her eye seemed to gaze into the distant heaven, and an unearthly brightness appeared to irradiate her countenance. Her spirit seemed far away in the heavenly city, and to have joined, as it were by anticipation, the heavenly throng. In fact all her earthly hopes had now been realized. She had seen her husband and her son brought into the fold of the Great Shepherd. Her mission was accomplished. The chains that bound her to earth were now fast loosening, and she was possessed by a strong presentiment that her days were quickly drawing to a close. She was not, as yet, suffering from any illness; but still there was something about her that told loving hearts around her that she was fast ripening for the celestial city. Ere they parted that night, she said to her son Augustine: "Son, for my own part, I delight now in nothing in this life. What I do here yet, and why I am here, I know not, hope of this world being now destroyed. One thing there was, on account of which I desired to tarry a little while in this life, that I might see thee a Catholic (or believing) Christian before I died. More abundantly hath my God bestowed this upon me, that (earthly felicity being contemned) I shall also see thee His servant; what do I here?"[1]

The sorrow-stricken son tells us that he remembered not what answer he made to her in reply to these words. The sad suspicion, however, that had haunted those loving hearts around her, was soon to be too certainly confirmed. Scarcely five days had passed away before fever laid its hand upon her. Her

[1] *Confessions*, iv. [x.] § 26.

illness soon assumed a serious character. She fell into a swoon, and it became evident to all that the holy Monica was very soon to be called away to her eternal rest. As they were watching by her bedside, with hearts overwhelmed with grief, she observed Augustine and Navigius standing by, and said to them, like, as it were, one inquiring, "Where was I?" Then looking upon them, she suddenly said, "*Here* shall you bury your mother." Augustine held his peace and refrained from weeping; but Navigius spoke something, in which he desired as the happier lot, that she might die, not in a strange place, but in her own land. On hearing this, with anxious countenance, reproving him with her eyes, that he still "savoured such things," and then looking at me (Augustine tells us), she said, "See what he says." And presently she said to both of them, "Lay this body anywhere; let nothing in the care of it trouble you; only this I ask you, that at the altar of the Lord you will remember me wherever you may be." Strange words these to fall upon the ear of Augustine, for she had frequently spoken to him of her desire to repose in the soil of her native Africa, and she had pointed out the spot, in the quiet cemetery at Tagaste, where she wished to rest by the side of her husband Patricius. He learnt, however, afterwards, that Monica in his absence had lately in Ostia discoursed to those around her "about the contempt of this life, and the blessing of death," and that when they were amazed at such courage on her part, and had asked "whether she was not afraid to leave her body so far from her own city?" she had replied, "Nothing is far from God; nor is it to be feared that, in the end of the world, He will not know from whence to raise me up."

Her time was now short. On the evening of the ninth day of her illness, her spirit gently departed to Him who first gave her life. She was in her fifty-sixth year, her son Augustine being in his thirty-third year. The autumn of 387 A.D. was far advanced.

Augustine closed her eyes, and then there followed withal a mighty sorrow into his heart, which was overflowing into tears; his eyes at the same time, by the violent command of his mind, drunk up their fountain wholly dry; "and woe was me," he says, "in such a strife!"

But his son Adeodatus burst forth into loud lamentations. He was silenced, however, by those present. To them it seemed inconsistent to sorrow thus for one who had now gained the shore of the better land.

And now, while the preparations for her burial are taking place, Euodius commenced singing the 101st Psalm: "I will sing of mercy and judgment; unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing." Those around the bed took up the strain; and this outburst of holy melody summoned to the room where Monica rested in the sleep of death many Christian brethren, who joined in the sacred hymn.

Augustine's heart was torn with inward sorrow, yet he manifested an outward calmness, and endeavoured to refrain from all expression of his intense grief.

That very evening the mournful procession followed her body to the burial, "without tears," and at her tomb the ceremonies which were customary in that day were observed.[1]

Augustine, on his return from the funeral, went to

[1] Cf. *Confessions*, ix. [xii.] § 32.

the Baths,[1] to soothe his grief, but found no solace there. Sleep, however, mitigated the bitterness of his sorrow; and on his bed he remembered the verses of Ambrose. For Thou art the

> "Maker of all, the Lord
> And Ruler of the height,
> Who, robing day in light, hast poured
> Soft slumber o'er the night;
> That to our limbs the power
> Of toil may be renewed,
> And hearts be raised that sink and cower,
> And sorrows be subdued."[2]

But he could not maintain this calmness; and he tells us: "I gave way to the tears which I before restrained, to overflow as much as they desired; reposing my heart upon them; and it found rest in them, for it was in Thy ears, not in those of man, who would have scornfully interpreted my weeping."

The loss of such a mother must have been a bitter blow to Augustine, and all the more bitter, since now they could take sweet counsel together, and sympathize in all their objects, wishes, and hopes, in time and in eternity.

On her death-bed she had called him "dutiful," and had "mentioned (he writes) with great affection of love, that she never had heard any harsh or reproachful sound uttered by my mouth against her."

He concludes the account in his *Confessions* by pouring out prayers and intercessions on her behalf.

[1] "Having heard that the Bath had its name (Balneum) from the Greek βαλανεῖον, for that it drives sadness from the mind." See *Confessions*, ix. [xii.] § 32.

[2] So rendered in the Oxford edition of the *Confessions*.

CHAPTER IV.

HIS RETURN HOME BY WAY OF ROME AND CARTHAGE.

Stay at Rome—Death of Adeodatus—of Nebridius—Augustine's Estate at Tagaste—The Books composed at this Period.

Φεύγωμεν σὺν νηυσὶ φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν.
HOM. *Il.* ii. 140.

A FEW days have passed since the sad ceremony at Ostia, and Augustine and his remaining friends might have been seen wending their mournful way from Ostia to Rome. But their sadness was relieved, as they thought of the happiness of the departed one.

Augustine's stay at Rome was brief, it did not exceed the space of a year, and we have few, if any, trustworthy events to record in connection with his sojourn there. We miss the information which his *Confessions* have before so richly supplied. The shadow of his great loss may naturally have rested heavily upon him, and he may have passed his time in privacy and seclusion, either self-absorbed or in lonely converse with his God, or in quiet communion with the dear friends who accompanied him, whose hearts were no doubt weighed down by the great loss which they, as well as Augustine, had sustained.

When the summer was verging to its close, he left the Imperial City, and set out for Carthage. He spent but a short time in the capital of Africa, staying while

there in the house of one named Innocentius, who had also been converted to Christianity since they had last met. It was here, probably, that in the year 388 A.D. his son Adeodatus, in whom his affections were so bound up, passed away at the early age of sixteen. He was a youth of the greatest promise, and was brought up in the discipline of Christianity. In a work of Augustine's, entitled *The Master*, the dialogue is carried on by Augustine and Adeodatus, and it contains the ideas of his son when in his sixteenth year. In this treatise (as we learn from the *Retractations*, i. 12) "it is disputed, and sought, and found, that there is no master who teacheth man knowledge, but God, according to that also which is written in the gospel: 'One is your master, Christ.'" The work is still extant; and we can scarcely wonder at the admiration with which the fond father regards the genius of his youthful son, which, he tells us, "struck awe" into him,—a genius of which he felt that God alone could have been the "workmaster."

It was probably, too, about this same time that he lost by death his friend Nebridius, to whom he was deeply attached. He was a man of gentle and modest disposition and character; irreproachable in his conduct; of distinguished abilities; holding sound doctrine; opposed to the theories of the Manichees and the astrologers; who quitted his home and family estate in order to pursue with Augustine at Milan the search after true wisdom. Though once in error on the nature (as we have already remarked) of the incarnation of Christ, he afterwards became a sound and orthodox believer, serving God faithfully amongst his family and relatives in Africa, and being permitted, by the grace of God, to be the instrument by whom all his family

were brought to the knowledge of the Saviour. We have already referred to the fact that some of the epistles of Augustine were addressed to him.

It is impossible to doubt that three such losses as Augustine sustained in such quick succession must have had a deep and solemnizing influence on such a heart as his. His sensitive and affectionate disposition must have been acutely impressed and touched by the death of such a mother, such a son, and such a friend. It is perhaps to these bereavements that we may ascribe to some degree the strong desire that he felt at this time to estrange himself as much as possible from the outer world, from all its pomps and vanities, and to devote himself to a life of seclusion and retirement.

His father had left him a small estate in his native town, and it was to Tagaste that he now eagerly pressed on. He was there joined by a small body of devoted Christians, to whose maintenance he applied his paternal property; and there, for the space of three years, he gave himself up to a life of seclusion and privacy,—clothed in the garb worn by those devoted to a monastic life; passing his time in retirement and meditation; probing the secret depths of his heart; searching into his motives and principles; and in fact preparing himself in this quiet solitude for his future work (unconsciously, perhaps, though not the less effectually), like John Baptist in the wilderness, and Elijah at Sarepta, and like One greater than either of the two, who passed long nights in prayer and meditation on solitary mountain heights.

Thus, no doubt, in this quiet retreat, did his religious experience deepen, his sense of sin grow clearer, his repentance become more real and heartfelt, his faith

strengthen day by day, and his love towards his Father in heaven expand increasingly. What preparation of heart could be better than this for the peculiar work of his after life? He now could find ample time for the study of God's Word, and for thinking out, at least in germ, those theological views and systems for which he has become famous even down to the present day.

It is to this period of his life that the date of several of his very important treatises has been assigned.

It would seem evident that the works about to be referred to were composed either during his brief stay at Rome, or more probably brought out, after correction and revision, during his retirement at Tagaste.

(1.) His work on the *Greatness of the Soul*[1] would naturally succeed closely to that on the *Immortality of the Soul*, the subjects being of so kindred a character. It consists of a dialogue between himself and Euodius, in reply, it would appear, to some difficulties on the subject, of which the latter asked for a solution (cf. *Epist.* 162). We are told in his *Retractations* (i. viii.) that the dialogue was composed during his stay at Rome.

(2.) What has been before stated will hold true respecting his two works—*On Genesis, against the Manichæans*,[2] and *On the Morals of the Catholic Church and on the Morals of the Manichæans*,[3] which, though stated by him to have been written, the former when in Africa, the latter when in Rome, would appear to have been thought out and elaborated during his resi-

[1] *De quantitate animæ.*

[2] *De Genesi contra Manichæos.*

[3] *De Moribus Ecclesiæ Catholicæ et de Moribus Manichæorum.*

dence in Rome after his baptism, but to have been published, after revision and correction, during his monastic life at Tagaste. This opinion derives strength from internal evidence, circumstances being referred to which he had lately heard of at Carthage, and language being employed which would imply that he was away from Rome when certain statements were made. In his treatise *On Genesis,* in two books, he refutes certain erroneous assertions of the Manichees respecting the facts mentioned in the commencement of the book of Genesis,—objections which have been brought forward by freethinkers from that early age down to the present day.

In his work *On the Morals of the Catholic Church,* he first lays down the principle that the "chief good" (the *summum bonum*) of man can only be God; and then glances at the Christian law of love towards our neighbour, and, in opposition to the Manichees, shows what bright instances of continence and of Christian morality have been displayed in the holy lives and conversation of the Anchorites and Cœnobites of the Catholic Church. Afterwards, in his book *On the Morals of the Manichæans,* he begins by refuting their false views on the origin and nature of evil, and points out subsequently various errors discernible in their practices and in their conduct.

(3.) It is probable that his treatise called *The Master,* consisting, as we have seen, of a dialogue between himself and his son Adeodatus, owes its origin or its publication to this period of ascetic retirement.

(4.) His elaborate work *On Music,* in six books, must also be referred for its composition to this period in the life of Augustine. He refers to this work in his 101st Epistle, and also in his *Retractations* (i. 11).

In it he treats of the definition of music; of metrical feet; of the difference between rhythm, metre, and verse; and of the nature of each severally; and concludes, in his sixth book, with a lofty theory on the subject.

(5.) His treatise also, in three books, *On Free-will,* was commenced about this time, in the year 388 A.D., but it was not completed till the year 395 A.D. In the first book, the abstruse question of the origin of evil is discussed; in the second, questions and objections flowing from the freedom of the will are treated of; and in the third, the consideration of God's fore knowledge, and man's free agency, and other kindred subjects and difficulties, occupy his attention.

(6.) One more work by Augustine was published about this time, viz. his treatise *On True Religion,* in one book. He informs us in his *Retractations* (i. xiii.) that this work was chiefly intended to show that the Trinity is to be worshipped,—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,—having first argued that true religion can only be found in the Catholic Church, and refuted some of the false tenets of the Manichees respecting the origin and nature of evil.

From this sketch of the works of Augustine which in all probability are to be referred to this epoch in his history, we may judge how rich and prolific in literary effort was this particular period of his career.

PART IV.

AUGUSTINE AS PRESBYTER AND BISHOP OF HIPPO.

CHAPTER I.

AUGUSTINE AS PRESBYTER AT HIPPO.

"Lord, pour Thy Spirit from on high,
And Thine ordained servants bless;
Graces and gifts to each supply,
And clothe Thy priests with righteousness."

THREE years had been spent in this most valuable training for his future life, when Augustine received a request from the "Imperial Commissioner" at Hippo to give him the benefit of his teaching and instruction. Hippo was a city on the coast of Africa, built upon a headland that jutted out into the sea, an outlying spur of Mount Atlas, and overshadowed by the lofty mass of Mount Papua, the modern town of Bona occupying its ancient site.

Augustine could not but feel some hesitation in quitting a retreat which had been so blessed to his own soul; but at last he decided that the call was from God, and that it ought to be obeyed.

On his arrival at Hippo, he received a kind and hearty welcome both from the commissioner and the people at large. Such zeal as he had displayed could not fail to attract the attention of many in that city towards him.

Hippo, we hear, had lately experienced a revival of religious life. Valerius, the old and revered bishop of the Church, felt that a firmer will than his was needed

to guide the flock of Christ aright in that city, and to shield them from the different forms of heresy that abounded there. He accordingly laid his wishes and his desires before the people, who with one voice named Augustine as the one of all others most fitted to discharge the duties of presbyter at Hippo.

Overcome by the thought of such a responsibility, Augustine is said to have shed tears abundantly; but he nevertheless regarded the call as a voice to which he could not fail to hearken.

Once more he retired to his former seclusion at Tagaste for prayer, and to meditate on the nature of the step he was about to take; and after a few months spent there in this manner he returned to Hippo, when, to the joy of the venerable bishop, and of all the Church, he was ordained to the sacred office of the ministry, in the thirty-ninth year of his age, and in the early portion of the year 392 A.D.

Augustine soon made full proof of his ministry. The aged bishop, without a spark of jealousy, called upon him frequently to address the people, even in his own presence,—a rare compliment in that age and Church, when the bishops alone were in the habit of preaching; and right earnestly, zealously, and wisely did he perform the duty of a preacher of the Word of life, captivating his hearers by his intellectual powers, his fervid eloquence, and his exalted piety. He spoke from his own heart to the hearts of his hearers. Nor did his words return to him void. Many hearts were touched and arrested by his loving and pathetic words; many converted to the faith of Christ by his preaching; many, like Firmus the Manichee, were led to discard their erroneous doctrines, and to join the side of the orthodox.

Such was Augustine's course of life and ministry for some years, when Valerius, feeling his bodily strength daily decreasing, thought it well to associate with himself a coadjutor bishop, to assist him in his responsible duties, and to succeed him in the bishopric, when the time of his departure hence should come. The aged bishop felt that such an appointment was due to himself, and due also to the See.

CHAPTER II.

AUGUSTINE AS BISHOP OF HIPPO.

"A bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."—Ep. to Tit. i. 7–9.

THE choice of Valerius fell, without any hesitation, upon Augustine, who, after some genuine reluctance to undertake such a responsibility, accepted the high office which was offered him in so gratifying a manner.

Valerius had not long to live; and in the year 395 A.D. Augustine became the sole Bishop of Hippo Regius, in the forty-second year of his age.

And now we enter upon the last period in the life of Augustine,—the period of his episcopate at Hippo.

Forced by the devout admiration of the people, observes Dean Milman,[1] to assume the episcopate in the city of Hippo, he was faithful to his first bride, his earliest, though humble See.

The uneventful personal life of St. Augustine, at least till towards its close, contrasts strongly with that of Ambrose and Chrysostom. After the first throes and travails of his religious life, described with such dramatic fidelity in his *Confessions*, he subsided into a

[1] In his *History of Christianity*, vol. iii. p. 282.

peaceful bishop in a remote and rather inconsiderable town. He had not, like Ambrose, to interpose between rival emperors, or to rule the conscience of the universal sovereign; or, like Chrysostom, to enter into a perilous conflict with the vices of a capital and the intrigues of a court. Not that his life was one of contemplative inactivity, or tranquil literary exertion; his personal conferences with the leaders of the Donatists, the Manichæans, the Arians, and Pelagians, and his presence in the councils of Carthage, displayed his power of dealing with men. His letter to Count Boniface showed that he was not unconcerned with the public affairs; and his former connection with Boniface, who at one time had expressed his determination to embrace the monastic life, might warrant his remonstrance against the fatal revolt which involved Boniface and Africa in ruin.

"Uneventful," in one sense, that life of his may have been, as Bishop of Hippo, inasmuch as each successive day found him engaged in the same class of duties, and moving on in the same consistent course; but yet we scarcely dare to call it "uneventful," when we think of the vast amount of good that he was able to effect, and of the many souls which it was his high privilege to have been permitted to win over to Christ.

His palace was a home for pious students who were training for the ministry. He, in fact, established a college or monastery for the education of those destined for clerical life; and such success attended the training and instruction they received, that, it is said, at least ten of those who lived with him became bishops of the Church. His efforts in this respect were so distinguished, that neighbouring bishops imitated, in

their own Sees, what had proved so beneficial at Hippo.

He had given his own private fortune to the support of the poor, and he also bestowed upon them all that he could spare from the revenues of the Church.

He often, like Ambrose, made intercession with the civil rulers in behalf of those who were accused; and even melted down the holy vessels, as the Bishop of Milan had done, in order to redeem captives and aid the suffering poor.

In his natural disposition Augustine was loving and affectionate, and grace had made him more so, though he never hesitated to rebuke vice without partiality or favour. He was ready and willing to spend and be spent in his Master's service.

"In him, as in a mirror," writes Erasmus, "may be seen a perfect bishop, such an one as St. Paul describeth." His visits were almost all paid to sick persons, to widows, to orphans, and to the friendless. He spent long hours in endeavouring to reconcile those who were at enmity. But he liked, it is said, much better to decide between strangers than between friends; for of the two strangers (he remarked) I make one a friend; of the two friends, I shall make one an enemy. As "one of God's poor," he loved the poor.

Thus passed the life of this excellent man in the duties of his bishopric.

Ever ready to drive away all erroneous doctrine from the Church—ever desiring to build up believers in the truth—composing many works on some of the deepest and most abstruse theological subjects—living a life of abstemious rigour, though untinged by the moroseness of asceticism — praising, indeed, the un-

married state, but far from blaming the married—he was, day by day, growing more prepared for the heavenly kingdom.

In the year 426 A.D., when he had reached the age of seventy-two, Augustine eagerly desired that Eraclius (Aug. *Op.* ii. pp. 1195, 1196) should succeed to the bishopric of Hippo on his death, and prevailed on the people to ratify his choice in a most solemn manner in the chief church of the place.

In his mode of living he was plain and frugal, though he was not regardless of appearances. In his dress, also, he was plain, "without affectation either of fineness or of poverty." We learn, both from the records of history and from the evidence of his own writings, some particulars of his private life. He wore, like other people, a linen garment underneath, and one of wool without; he wore shoes and stockings; and exhorted those who thought better to obey the gospel by walking with naked feet, to assume no merit from that practice. "Let us observe charity," he said; "I admire your courage—endure my weakness."[1] His table, as we have remarked, was frugal. Vegetables were always there; meat but seldom, except for the infirm or for guests; wine was always there, but in moderation. The service on which his food was served was either of earthenware or of wood or marble; the spoons were of silver. He was, as a bishop should be, given to hospitality. There was nothing of the coldness or isolation of a later monasticism in his bright and cheerful home.[2] Calumny and detraction he could not endure; and on his table,

[1] See Waddington's *History of the Church*, ch. xi. p. 173, and *Life* by Possidius, sect. 27.

[2] See Baillie's *St. Augustine*, p. 222.

which was without a cloth, according to the custom of antiquity, he had the following lines inscribed:[1]—

> "This board allows no vile detractor place,
> Whose tongue shall charge the absent with disgrace."

It mattered not who they were in rank or position, if they talked scandal at his table, he immediately rose from his seat and left them. This statement is made on the authority of his disciple and biographer, Possidius,[2] Bishop of Calama, who had witnessed such conduct on his part.

Such was the great and good bishop in his private and social life, during his long episcopate at Hippo.

[1] "Quisquis amat dictis absentem rodere vitam,
Hanc mensam indignam noverit esse sibi."
Translated, as above, in Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, p. 461.

[2] He says: "Quod *ego* et alii, qui illi mensæ interfuimus, experti sumus."

CHAPTER III.

THE CLOSING SCENE OF AUGUSTINE'S LIFE.

"No smile is like the smile of death,
When all good musings past
Rise wafted with the parting breath,
The sweetest thought the last."
KEBLE, *Christian Year.*

A DARK gloom now fell on Africa. Count Boniface, the general of the Roman forces,—a Christian, and formerly a friend and correspondent of Augustine,—being led into a position of almost inextricable difficulty, in relation to the royal family, by the artful stratagems of his rival Aëtius, adopted the cruel and unrighteous expedient of calling in the Gothic forces from Spain to aid him in his contest with his opponent. Thus Boniface, as Dean Stanley has remarked, though uniting true Roman courage and love of justice with true Christian piety, yet by one fatal step brought on his Church and country the most severe calamities which it had been in the power of any of the Barbarian invaders to inflict on either of them.

In the early part of his career Boniface had been conspicuous for his prompt administration of justice, and also for his activity against the Barbarians. His high character obtained for him the friendship of Augustine, whom he consulted both with regard to the treatment of the Donatists, and also in connection

with scruples which he entertained about continuing in the army. His marriage with an Arian lady, of the name of Pelagia, and of large fortune, would seem to have caused a deterioration in his moral and religious character.

The Gothic forces, to whom he had appealed, cross, only too gladly, in the early summer of 428 A.D., under their Vandal leader, Genseric,—a warrior, says Gibbon,[1] whose ambition was without bounds and without scruples,—from 50,000 to 80,000 strong.

On their arrival they ravage every district through which they passed. Those "blue-eyed warriors of Germany," aided by the swarthy Moors who crowded to their camp, supported too by the persecuted Donatists, lay waste all the monuments of Roman art and magnificence along the seaboard. They devastate the country, and slay the inhabitants, without distinction of age or sex. Upon the orthodox fell the brunt of their anger, for they themselves were Arians. The once prosperous and fruitful region—observes Dean Milman[2]—presented to the view only ruined cities, burning villages, a population thinned by the sword, bowed to slavery, and exposed to every kind of torture and mutilation. With these fierce Barbarians, the awful presence of Christianity imposed no respect. The churches were not exempt from the general ruin, the bishops and clergy from cruelty and death, the dedicated virgins from worse than death. In many places the services of religion entirely ceased from the extermination of the worshippers, or the flight of the priests. To Augustine, as the supreme authority on matters of faith or con-

[1] In his *Decline and Fall*, vol. iv. pp. 177, 178.
[2] *History of Christianity*, vol. iii. p. 283.

duct, was submitted the grave question of the course to be pursued by the clergy,—whether they were to seek their own security, or to confront the sword of the ravager. The advice of Augustine was at once lofty and discreet. Where the flock remained, it was cowardice, it was impiety, in the clergy to desert them, and to deprive them in those disastrous times of the consolatory offices of religion, their children of baptism, themselves of the Holy Eucharist. But where the priest was a special object of persecution, and his place might be supplied by another; where the flock was massacred or dispersed, or had abandoned their homes, the clergy might follow them, and, if possible, provide for their own security.

Augustine did not fall below his own high notions of Christian and of episcopal duty. When the Vandal army gathered around Hippo,—one of the few cities which still afforded a refuge for the persecuted provincials,—he refused, though more than seventy years old, to abandon his post. Only three cities escaped, —Carthage, Cirta, and Hippo Regius.

Count Boniface—deeply grieved at the distress which he could not help feeling that he had himself occasioned—endeavoured, but in vain, to oppose the progress of the Vandals. He saw his fault, and repented, when too late, of what he had done. He now strove by force, by bribes, and by threats to induce them to return to Spain; but all to no purpose. He then retired to Hippo, which was, as we have already seen, a maritime colony, about 200 miles west of Carthage, and named "Regius," as having formerly been the residence of Numidian kings. It was the strongest city in that part of Africa, and the best fitted to stand a siege. But

soon the army of the Goths was collected before it. Many bishops and others from the dismantled cities and villages had already taken refuge within its walls. During the early progress of the siege, the venerable Augustine, grieved at the sight of the disasters which had befallen his country and the city in which he lived, and deeply anxious for the future safety of the flock which was committed to his charge, prayed that he might be spared the bitter spectacle of seeing the city of his adoption captured by the ruthless Vandals, and overwhelmed with destruction. He prayed God that, if it pleased Him, he might be taken to Himself, ere such a calamity visited himself and his flock.

Not long after this his health showed symptoms of failure, and sickness seized upon that frame which had been so long tried by labours, vigils, and care. His strength gradually failed; not, however, the clearness and vigour of his mind, for that lasted to the end. He continued to preach, says his biographer Possidius, to the time of his last illness without intermission. He still continued sound in understanding, and with a good deal of the power of his best days still remaining.

We must, however, pass to his death-bed. The noise of the conflict sounded louder and yet louder in his ears. At the end of the week in which his illness had come upon him, fever supervened. He knew full well that it was the herald of his departure. The light of another world seemed to irradiate his pale countenance, like it had shed before a halo of glory over the face of the dying Monica. His sick chamber was bright with the reflected glory of the Celestial City. He was unable—says Possidius—to restrain his longing to be with his Lord. With per-

fect calmness and entire resignation to the will of his Heavenly Father, the dying saint lay on his bed, surrounded by weeping friends, amongst whom was Possidius, his disciple and his subsequent biographer, with whom he had lived on terms of intimate and loving friendship for a period of nearly forty years. He broke forth at times into almost ecstatic longings for the heavenly city. Even to the last he endeavoured, with all the energy of his soul, to lead Boniface,[1] the Roman general, to whom he was still much attached, to a saving knowledge of Christ's salvation.

Around the walls of that plain and homely chamber in which the great Augustine lay dying, the seven penitential Psalms of David had, by his instructions, been so placed that he might read them as he lay on his bed. And we hear that he did read them with weeping eyes, especially when he was alone, engaged in secret prayer and meditation. The tenth day came, and we find him still longing to be taken, in order that he might behold the heavenly Jerusalem, and join in the songs of the redeemed and of angels around the throne. As the night came on, he burnt still more with the desire for the "immediate vision of the Lord."

He was thus "gently released" in his seventy-sixth

[1] Boniface escaped, at the end of a year, from the siege of Hippo; crossed to Italy; was restored to the favour of Placidia; and, after a single combat with his rival Aëtius, either from a spear-wound received in that combat, or from consequent illness, he expired, expressing his forgiveness of his rival, and exhorting his wife to accept Aëtius as a second husband after his death.

Aëtius—called by Procopius the last of the Romans—was of Scythian extraction. He rose at last to the highest position in the Empire, and was slain, through jealousy, by Valentinian. With him (says Marcellinus, his contemporary chronicler) "cecidit Hesperium Imperium, nec potuit relevari." His early crimes were obscured by the usefulness and the glory of his later life.

year, and in the thirty-fifth of his episcopate. The saintly bishop departed on the twenty-eighth of August, in the year 430 A.D.[1]

Thus died Augustine; and thus passed to his rest one who has left the impress of his piety, genius, and learning deeply and ineffaceably stamped upon the religious history of Christendom. He was, in very truth, a burning and a shining light,—"the light and pillar," so Gibbon[2] acknowledges, "of the Catholic Church." Age after age has gone by, and still he, "being dead, yet speaketh." His mighty influence has descended to one generation after another. It affected his own more immediate successors: it is visible in the writings of the mediæval Schoolmen: it is conspicuously seen in all the theology of the early Reformers: it may be clearly traced in the composition of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England; and "even in the Roman Catholic Church his authority is professedly held in high esteem; although his late theological system has in reality been proscribed by every party in that communion, except the learned, philosophic, and devout fraternity of the Jansenists."[3]

By the religious and thoughtful of every age, whether they have adopted the views which he maintained during the latter period of his life on the subject of grace, and free-will, and predestination, which have received

[1] He left no will behind, for he had relinquished all his property during his lifetime. His manuscripts and books he bequeathed to the Church. It is the remark of his biographer Possidius (*Vit. August.* cap. 31):—"Testamentum nullum fecit, quia unde faceret, pauper Dei non habuit. Ecclesiæ bibliothecam omnesque codices diligenter posteris custodiendos semper jubebat."

[2] *History*, iv. p. 182.

[3] See Dr. Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography*, art. "Augustine."

the name of Augustinian, or whether they have rejected them; by the religious and thoughtful of every age of the Church's history since his day; the highest praise has always been unhesitatingly bestowed upon the marvellous energy of Augustine's character, upon the breadth and depth of his theological acquirements, and upon the unspotted purity of his life after his conversion.

"To remarkable acuteness and depth of intellect," observes Neander, "he united a heart filled and thoroughly penetrated with Christianity, and a life of the most manifold Christian experience."

"He certainly possessed," says another Church historian,[1] "many and great excellences, a superior genius, a constant love and pursuit of truth, admirable patience of labour, unquestionable piety, and acuteness and discrimination by no means contemptible." He qualifies, however, his statements by remarking, that his power of judging was not equally great; and that often the natural ardour of his mind carried him farther than his reason and distinct comprehension could go. To many, therefore, he adds, he has afforded much ground for controversy respecting his real sentiments; and to others, occasion to tax him with inconsistency, and with hastily throwing upon paper thoughts which he had not himself duly considered. There may be some truth in this qualification, though it is expressed somewhat too strongly and unconditionally.

We sympathize with the judgment of Gibbon,[2]—that Augustine possessed a strong, capacious, and argumentative mind; and that he boldly sounded the

[1] See Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i. p. 336 et seq.

[2] *History*, iv. p. 183.

dark abyss of grace, predestination, free-will, and original sin.

It is (says Pressensé) as a divine that Augustine has left the most lasting proofs of his genius: in the theological field all his moral and intellectual qualities found free scope, and his authority there still remains unchallenged. He has accomplished for Christian psychology what Athanasius did for Christian metaphysics.

He may fairly be regarded as one of the four great fathers of the Latin Church, and indeed the greatest of the four. He was more profound than Ambrose, his spiritual father; more original and systematic than Jerome, his contemporary and correspondent; and intellectually far more distinguished than Gregory the Great, the last of the series. In fact, his theological position and influence may be said to be unrivalled. No single man has ever exercised such power over the Christian Church, and no one mind has ever made such an impression upon Christian thought. None (it has also been said[1]) can deny the greatness of Augustine's soul, his enthusiasm, his unceasing search after truth, his affectionateness, his ardour, his self-devotion. And even those who may doubt the soundness and value of some of his dogmatic conclusions, cannot hesitate to acknowledge the depth of his spiritual convictions, and the strength, solidity, and penetration with which he handled the most difficult questions, and wrought all the elements of his experience and of his profound scriptural knowledge into a great system of Christian thought.

Such is the judgment of the wise, the intelligent, and the good respecting this eminent servant of God.

[1] By Principal Tulloch, *Encyc. Britan.*, "Augustine."

He is gone; but, as it has been strikingly said,[1] the light that was in him was not extinguished by his death, but only ascended to a higher place, and has been shining through the centuries ever since.

[1] See *Imperial Dictionary of Universal Biography*, art. "Augustine."

PART V.

A Review of the Leading Characteristics of Augustine.

CHAPTER I.

AUGUSTINE AS A PREACHER.

"He stands above the marvelling multitude:
. . . Mute expectancy
Waits on his words; bright flashes from his eye
The light of inspiration; . . .
And on his brow, as in a sanctuary
Of purest marble, deep enshrined Thought
Dwells a divinity; while over all
Broods an unearthly, awful majesty,
Meetest for him who comes Ambassador
To speak the message of the King of kings!"

SHEPPARD, *St. Paul at Athens.*

WE would, in the first place, speak of St. Augustine as a preacher of that gospel which he so eminently adorned in his personal character and private life.

His published sermons have come down to us in large numbers,[1] so that we are enabled to form a reliable estimate at least of their style and subject-matter, even though we lose the flashing eye, the thoughtful brow, the animated action of the fervid preacher, and are not privileged to witness the wrapt attention of the listening throng who hung upon his lips.

[1] In the Benedictine edition (Paris) of his works, his sermons addressed to the people (*Sermones ad Populum*) are arranged under four heads:—(1) "De Scripturis veteris et novi Testamenti;" (2) "De Tempore;" (3) "De Sanctis;" (4) "De Diversis." They number 363 sermons, and occupy 2136 pages of vol. v., 1st and 2nd Part. There are, besides, other sermons, several of doubtful authority.

So great was the fame of Augustine as a preacher, that he not only preached to the delight of all in his own episcopal city, but was also frequently invited to address congregations in other places, even at Carthage itself, at which city, when he was simply a presbyter, he is said to have been requested to speak on a definite thesis before the members of a council assembled there.

We learn, moreover, from his *Retractations* (i. 17), that he was asked by the bishops, when he was still a presbyter, to deliver an address before them at the Council of Hippo Regius, convened in 393 A.D., which address was afterwards published as a separate treatise at the earnest request of his intimate friends. This discourse was on the subject of "Faith and the Creed" ("De Fide et Symbolo"), based on the different clauses of the Apostles' Creed; and in it he enters very fully into the question of the mutual relation of the three Persons in the blessed Godhead.

The desire to hear him preach was so generally felt, that those accounted heretical, equally with the orthodox, flocked to his church; and not only did they endeavour to imprint his sermons on their memories, but also carefully took down notes of the same for their own future profit, and for the benefit of others; so that "thence, in the language of Possidius, through the body of Africa excellent doctrine and the most sweet savour of Christ was diffused and made manifest, the Church of God beyond the seas, when it heard thereof, partaking of the joy."

There can be no doubt of the surpassing power of Augustine's eloquence, and of the effects which it not unfrequently produced upon his hearers, melting them at times to tears. Two instances of this marvellous influence of his over men's minds are handed down,

which it may be well to quote in illustration of the above statement.

It is said that he was deeply pained during the lifetime of Valerius, and while he was still a presbyter, at the intemperance which was not unfrequently indulged in at the celebration of the "Agapæ," or love-feasts, both in churches, cemeteries, and at the graves of martyrs. He preached earnestly to his people upon this abuse,—so earnestly that both he and they wept; and he had, moreover, the satisfaction of seeing them abandon this custom, which had the sanction of a long usage.

A second instance of this persuasive power on the part of Augustine may be related.

There was a custom long prevailing at Cæsarea, in Mauretania, not only for citizens, but also relatives, and even brothers, and fathers and sons, to range themselves against each other at a certain period of the year, and to carry on a fight with stones. Such contests not unfrequently lasted—to the great satisfaction of the witnesses—for several days. Again Augustine raised his voice, loudly and earnestly, against this inveterate practice; and again he had the pleasure of finding his appeal successful, and of seeing the vile custom abandoned.[1]

He was, as we have seen, everywhere popular as a preacher; and, well or ill, he was always ready to address the people. At that time the congregation testified their approval by clapping their hands and by acclamation. Thus he was often greeted; but

[1] Cf. Aug. *De Doctrinâ Christianâ*, lib. iv. cap. 24. We may remark that at the end of this treatise, he, as bishop and an old man, lays down rules for the instruction and guidance of Christian preachers in their sermons.

what he delighted in most was the remarkable effect upon the hearts and lives of his hearers which, through God's grace, his sermons were privileged to produce. Versed as he was in rhetoric, and skilled in the practice of debate; gifted as he was with all the graces and all the qualities of the refined and accomplished orator; yet he never preached with the view of displaying these powers, but only with the one grand object that his hearers might both understand and profit by what he said. We are informed that he often preached for five days successively,—at times, twice in one day.

Even when so weak that he was scarcely able to preach, he still persevered in the attempt, and he seemed to gather strength from the very act of preaching; and his ardour for the salvation of souls, we are told, made him forget the pains of sickness and the debility of age.

Augustine possessed in profusion all the chief requisites for a successful orator. His mind was richly stored with varied knowledge. His imaginative powers were of the highest order. He was not only a philosopher and metaphysician, but a real poet. He was deeply versed in the mysteries of the human heart. His fervid African temperament infused into his language a fire and energy that carried away those whom he addressed. His rich stores of knowledge were ready at hand and always available. His intelligent countenance and interesting appearance enlisted sympathy on his side. He had always before him a great end and object, which gave a reality and a practical character to all that he said. And, moreover, all these natural qualities and endowments had been carefully and scientifically cultivated, when he was a

student, during his younger days, in the schools of rhetoric.

When, therefore, he was inspired by the high and unselfish aim of urging those whom he addressed to devote themselves to the loftiest and the noblest life that the heart of man could conceive or his tongue describe, his eloquence, as might naturally have been expected, proved almost irresistible.

It has been well said by one, who drank deeply of the spirit of Augustine, that his sermons, besides their other excellences, furnish a beautiful picture of the way in which the most powerful mind in the Western Church adapted itself to the little ones of Christ. In those sermons, Augustine, who has furnished the mould for all the most thoughtful minds for fourteen hundred years, is seen forming with loving tenderness the babes in Christ. Very touching is the child-like simplicity with which he gradually leads them through what to them were difficulties, watching all the while whether he made himself clear to them, keeping up their attention, pleased at their understanding, dreading their approbation, and leading off from himself to some practical result. Very touching, also, is the tenderness with which he at times reproves, the allowance which he makes for human infirmities and for those in secular life, if they will not make their infirmities their boast, or in allowed duties and indulgences forget God. As a preacher, he was emphatically *biblical*, his sermons forming a consecutive exegesis of the Old and New Testament. So simple were they, that we scarcely ever think, while reading them, of the accomplished rhetorician and scholar of Carthage or Rome

CHAPTER II.

AUGUSTINE AS A WRITER.

His "Confessions"—The City of God—"Retractations"—The Holy Trinity—Letters—Exegetical Writings.

"The pen of a ready writer."—Ps. xlv. 1.

BUT besides being a preacher, Augustine was what many, even celebrated, preachers are not, a distinguished writer. In fact, he was a great, a learned, a massive, and a voluminous writer.

It has already been mentioned that Augustine—though a diligent reader and student of Latin literature, and devoted, more particularly in his youth, to Virgil—had a decided dislike to Greek, and seemed to acquire what he knew of that language only by compulsion. Some knowledge, without doubt, he possessed of the grammar and elements of that magnificent language, which, as Clausen has remarked, enabled him to be a "subtle distinguisher of words;" but we cannot infer from the information which is handed down to us on this subject, that he was sufficiently acquainted with the Greek tongue to appreciate all the niceties of the language, or to master Greek treatises in the original, more especially if written in the Hellenistic dialect. Nor, again, was he acquainted with the Hebrew language. Hence he was

probably unable to read in the original languages the Scriptures either of the Old or New Testament.[1] Accordingly his knowledge of Plato[2] and of Aristotle was probably derived from a Latin version of those writers' works.

In this respect we cannot but admit his inferiority to his contemporary Jerome, who was well acquainted both with the Greek and Latin languages. Philosophy and theology in those days were chiefly enshrined in the language of Greece. And hence we must admit that Augustine laboured under a certain defect—so far as theology was concerned — from his comparative ignorance of Greek. But granting this deficiency, Augustine no doubt possessed a higher order of mind — more analytical and dialectical powers — greater depth of moral and religious feeling—a more suasive, as well as genial, temper and disposition — than Jerome could ever lay claim to.[3]

Augustine's style is, indeed, at times somewhat laboured and artificial, and, as a result, he is difficult to understand; but we cannot agree with the criticism of Gibbon (iv. p. 183), that his style is "usually clouded by false and affected rhetoric." This would rather be the exception than the rule.

[1] Rosenmüller, in his *Hist. Interpret.* iii. 40, observes, speaking of Augustine: "Imperitus non tantum Hebraicæ sed etiam Græcæ linguæ, ipsos fontes adire non potuit, sed solam fere translationem Latinam explicare conatus est." Cf. also Walch, *Bibl. Patrist.* p. 352: "Augustinus extitit, ut alii, Ebrææ ac Græcæ linguæ ignarus."

[2] Compare *Confessions*, vii. [ix.] § 13, where he speaks of reading "certain books of the Platonists, translated from Greek into Latin."

[3] In their discussion on Ep. to Gal. ii. 11, it is generally allowed that Augustine successfully exposed and defeated the interpretation given by Jerome, which rested for its establishment on an "economy," or "pious fraud." See Waddington's *History of the Church*, ch. xi. p. 172, note.

Few men have handed down to posterity so great a body of writings as Augustine. Fortunately for mankind, when Hippo, some few months after the death of Augustine, was burnt down by the Vandals, his library containing his various works—two hundred and thirty-two separate books or treatises on theological subjects, besides an exposition of the Psalms and Gospel, with epistles and homilies in addition—was saved from destruction.[1]

From this statement it will be evident that to attempt a review of *all* his writings would be entirely inconsistent with the nature and design of the present monograph. But, on the other hand, to pass over all his works with merely a general notice, would be equally to fall short of the object contemplated.

It will accordingly be our aim to direct attention to some of the principal works of which Augustine was the author, which are either too remarkable in themselves to be passed by, or which throw special light upon his life, his character, and his opinions.

(1) His *Confessions* will naturally claim our first attention. This wonderful work — from which so many details respecting his outer and inner life are drawn—was probably written soon after he was made bishop, in the year 397 A.D. It was written when he was at the very acme of his reputation for sanctity and holiness. "His great design," says his biographer Possidius, "in writing this famous work, was that men should not think more highly of him than he deserved. And consequently he divulged all the sins of his youthful days, and the weaknesses to which he was subject, and the mercies which he received from God,

[1] See Gibbon's *History*, vol. v. pp. 182, 183, and note.

principally during the time preceding his conversion, when he was engaged in his search after truth."

The work consists of thirteen books, and reaches down to the time of the death of Monica. The three last books are chiefly occupied with an "allegorical explanation of the Mosaic account of the Creation." The narrative is constantly interrupted by addresses to God and by reflections, which, though they break the thread and continuity of the work, are too beautiful in themselves—apart from the intimate knowledge which they furnish of the inner life and feelings of this most distinguished servant of God—to allow us to offer any objection to their being so freely and lavishly interspersed into the text.

We have, therefore, in the *Confessions* a history of the mode in which the greatest theologian of the ancient Church was led out of a state of darkness into the light of truth, and how, from being an opponent of Christianity, he became, like St. Paul, one of the noblest and most conspicuous champions of the faith. Hence the deep and absorbing interest which this work has ever possessed for all minds impressed with a love for God and truth. It is not, indeed, in the strictest sense of the word, an autobiography,—though very closely akin to it,—but rather an ascription of praise to God, together with an acknowledgment of His undeserved mercy and goodness; while of himself he only says what is just sufficient to throw light on the dark abyss out of which God's infinite love had rescued him. He would desire to free his fellow-men from all despair in regard to their salvation, and from all inclination to say, "I cannot" (*Conf.* x. 4), in the work of repentance and faith. Nor, again, can the *Confessions* be accurately regarded as a systematic biography,

since they do not give an account of all the incidents of his life, but only illustrate general principles by particular facts and occurrences in his life. With extreme naturalness (it has been remarked)—as one to whom absence of self had become nature—he passes at once from the immediate subject or fact to the principles with which it is connected, thus giving instruction as to man, or rising to the reverent, though eloquent, or rather to the eloquent because reverent, praise of God.

It has been strikingly said,[1] that many passages of the *Confessions* have the deepest melody of the heart. And thus Augustine is one of the very few men of past times whose heart we seem to know, whose writings are not preached to us from the pulpit of history, but spoken in the voice of a friend.

Another writer[2] has remarked that, since Augustine, this internal autobiography of the soul has always had the deepest interest for those of strong religious convictions; it was what multitudes had felt, but no one had yet embodied in words; it was the appalling yet attractive manner in which men beheld all the conflicts and adventures of their own spiritual life reflected with bold and speaking truth. Men shrank from the Divine and unapproachable image of Christian perfection in the life of the Redeemer, to the more earthly, more familiar picture of the development of the Christian character, crossed with the light and shade of human weakness and human passion.

It would, of course, be wrong to suppose, from the strongly-worded account of the sins, and follies, and disobedience of Augustine when a boy, that he was a

[1] See *The Voice of Christian Life in Song*, pp. 75 and 81.

[2] Milman, *History of Christianity*, vol. iii. p. 273.

miracle of youthful wickedness; but to treat these revelations of Augustine with contempt or levity would indicate a very low standard of moral feeling. The *Confessions* throughout ought to be viewed as the devout aspirations and the pious utterances of a true and earnest and God-fearing soul; and such a personal revelation and autobiography of a great saint cannot but call forth the sincere admiration of every heart that beats true to piety and holiness.

It is interesting to know that Augustine has himself furnished us with a sketch of this work on more than one occasion. In his *Retractations*, ii. 6, he says: "The thirteen books of my *Confessions* praise God, holy and good, on occasion of that which has in me been good or evil, and raise up man's understanding and affections to Him; for myself, they did so while they were being written, and now do when read. Let others think of them as to them seems right; yet that they have pleased and do much please many brethren, I know.' Again, in one of his epistles (*Ep. ad Darium*, 231) he has remarked: "Accept the books of my *Confessions*, which you wished for. There see me, and praise me not more than I deserve; there believe, not others about me, but myself; there mark me, and see what I was in myself, and by myself; and if aught in me please thee, there praise with me, whom, and not myself, I wished to be praised for me. For He 'made us, and not we ourselves;' but we had destroyed ourselves; and who made, re-made us. But when you have then learnt what I am, pray for me, that I fall not away, but be perfected." Adding in yet another place (*De Dono Perseverantiæ*, chap. 20), "What of my smaller works could be more widely known or give greater pleasure than my *Confessions?*"

(2.) His great and masterly work—in fact, his greatest, most elaborate, and most characteristic work—on *The City of God*, will obviously claim our notice in the next place. In some respects it is a greater work than his *Confessions;* but we are so indebted to this last-named treatise for our intimate knowledge of Augustine's spiritual life and history, it is so filled with the fire of the love of God, and it has made so profound an impression upon the heart and mind of so many generations, that it fairly seems to claim the first place in our estimation.

The City of God consists of twenty-two long books. Augustine composed this splendid monument of his genius and piety—"the Encyclopædia of the fifth century"—in the leisure hours which he could secure during thirteen years of his episcopate, having commenced it in his sixtieth year, from A.D. 413 to 426.

This treatise, in the judgment of Waterland (iv. p. 760), may be called his "masterpiece," being his most learned, most correct, and most elaborate work, and here we may expect to find his maturest sentiments laid down with the utmost exactness. It was not published all at once, but came out in separate portions, as each part was completed by Augustine. It would seem probable that it owed its origin to Augustine's desire to bring over Volusian, the proconsul of Africa, to the true faith. This desire had been stimulated by Marcellinus (*Letters*, 132–138), who was the friend of both. It was evident that no simple treatise on any one particular doctrine or tenet of Christianity was enough to convince a cultured Roman of wide views, whose interests were all bound up with the well-being of the imperial city and government, to abjure his Paganism and accept Christianity. And hence the origin of this the greatest

of apologies which the Christian world had ever seen, so different to the apologies confined to special and particular points which had preceded it from the pen of a Tertullian or a Justin Martyr. This comprehensive treatise seems to embrace all the history, all the theology, and all the philosophy that were then known, so that it has been said with probable truth that it has preserved more on these subjects than the whole surviving Latin literature. Moreover, it came out at a great crisis in the history of the world. The minds of men were agitated to their lowest depths by the startling and terrible spectacle of the ruin and destruction of that city which was deemed the empress of the world,—a ruin which was viewed, no less by Christians than by Pagans, as the precursor of the destruction of all things. It was at such a time most fitting, and to the Christian mind most consolatory, to be reminded of another and a greater city than that of the Seven Hills, one which had foundations, whose builder and maker was God.

We are convinced, from internal evidence, that in its nature, character, and object it was clearly, as we have already said, an apologetic treatise. Moreover, *The City of God* is the first contribution that we have to the philosophy of history. Such a class of writing is common enough in our days, and has not been uncommon during more modern ages; but Augustine's great work may fairly be regarded as the herald and precursor of all this class of literary composition.

Taken as a whole, it is a remarkable monument of genius, learning, and piety united, and deserves well both of the classical scholar and the theologian.[1] Even

[1] See Milner's *Church History*, vol. ii. chap. v. p. 208 et seq., who has given an analysis of this treatise.

if we concede that the learning displayed in this work is extensive rather than profound; that its contents are too desultory and miscellaneous, and that its reasonings are not unfrequently more ingenious than logical; that Augustine, from not being acquainted with the original languages of Scripture, is not unfrequently driven to pass over questions which relate to the interpretation of Scripture, and to have recourse to allegorical explanations; and that the learning displayed, which appears to be so vast and copious, is not unfrequently derived from other writers;—even if we allow this, yet, after every due abatement has been made, it will maintain its reputation as one of the most extraordinary productions of human intellect and industry.

Augustine's object in writing it was to vindicate the Christians and the Christian Church from the charge made against them, that the calamities which befell the Empire, and the sacking of Rome by the Goths, originated in Christianity.

Augustine has himself explained the structure of the work, as well as his object in its composition, in the 43rd chapter of his *Retractations*, where he gives us a carefully-arranged analysis and summary of the contents of all the twenty-two books, telling us that though it treats of two cities,—the city of God and the city of this world,—he has nevertheless called it after the name of the nobler and worthier city.[1] Augustine's own language deserves to be quoted: "Rome having been stormed and sacked by the Goths under Alaric their king [A.D. 410], the worshippers of false gods, or

[1] "Ita omnes viginti et duo libri, cum sint de utraque Civitate conscripti, titulum tamen a meliore acceperunt, ut 'de Civitate Dei potius vocarentur."

Pagans, as we commonly call them, made an attempt to attribute this calamity to the Christian religion, and began to blaspheme the true God with even more than their wonted bitterness and acerbity. It was this which kindled my zeal for the house of God, and prompted me to undertake the defence of the city of God against the charges and misrepresentations of its assailants. This work was in my hands for several years, owing to the interruptions occasioned by many other affairs which had a prior claim on my attention, and which I could not defer. However, this great undertaking was at last completed in twenty-two books. Of these, the first five refute those who fancy that the polytheistic worship is necessary in order to secure worldly prosperity, and that all these overwhelming calamities have befallen us in consequence of its prohibition. In the following five books I address myself to those who admit that such calamities have at all times attended, and will at all times attend, the human race, and that they constantly recur in forms more or less disastrous, varying only in the scenes, occasions, and persons on whom they light, but, while admitting this, maintain that the worship of the gods is advantageous for the life to come. In these ten books, then, I refute these two opinions, which are as groundless as they are antagonistic to the Christian religion. But that no one might have occasion to say that, though I had refuted the tenets of other men, I had omitted to establish my own, I devote to this object the second part of this work, which comprises twelve books, although I have not scrupled, as occasion offered, either to advance my own opinions in the first ten books, or to demolish the argument of my opponents in the last twelve. Of these twelve books,

the first four contain an account of the origin of these two cities,—the city of God and the city of the world. The second four treat of their history or progress; the third and last four, of their deserved destinies. And so, though all these twenty-two books refer to both cities, yet I have named them after the better city, and called them *The City of God*" (Dod's Translation). It is Dean Milman's[1] deliberate judgment, that *The City of God* was unquestionably the noblest work, both in its original design and in the fulness of its elaborate execution, which the genius of man had as yet contributed to the support of Christianity. *The City of God* (he observes) is at once the funeral oration of the ancient society, the gratulatory panegyric on the birth of the new. It acknowledged, it triumphed in the irrevocable fall of the Babylon of the West, the shrine of idolatry; it hailed at the same time the universal dominion which awaited the new theocratic polity. The earthly city had undergone its predestined fate; it had passed away with all its vices and superstitions, with all its virtues and its glories (for the soul of Augustine was not dead to the noble reminiscences of Roman greatness), with its false gods and its heathen sacrifices; its doom was sealed, and for ever. But in its place—even on its crumbling ruins — had arisen the city of God, the Church of Christ; a new social system had emerged from the ashes of the old; that system was founded by God, was ruled by divers laws, and had the Divine promise of perpetuity.

(3.) Nor shall we pass over without remark that

[1] *History of Christianity*, vol. iii. pp. 277 and 280.

singular and remarkable work of his called his *Retractations*,—singular because so few men, even of the highest character and the most devoted piety, have ever had the moral courage and deep and intense love for truth necessary for writing such a work. It is no exaggerated language that has been employed when speaking of this work, that "it is one of the noblest sacrifices ever laid upon the altar of truth by a majestic intellect acting in obedience to the purest conscientiousness."

Augustine published this treatise about the year 428 A.D., when he was past seventy years of age, with the expressed object of correcting (so far as he was able) the errors and mistakes into which he thought that he had fallen when composing his different works.

(4.) He also published a masterly, exhaustive, and systematic treatise on the *Holy Trinity*, in fifteen books, which engaged and occupied his attention for nearly thirty years. He informs us in his *Retractations* (ii. 15), that he commenced when he was a young man, and published in his old age, his work on the *Holy Trinity*. He tells us, moreover, that when he had not yet completed the 13th book, and some of his friends were very anxious to have the work, it was surreptitiously taken from him, and made public in a less correct state than it would have been if it had appeared when he had intended that it should have been published. In consequence of this (having other copies of the work) he determined to correct and finish it, prefacing it with a letter to Aurelius, Bishop of Carthage, by way of prologue, in which he tells him what had occurred, and what he had himself intended to do, had

he not been forced to act differently by the love of his brethren.

This most important dogmatic treatise of his—a work which has proved a storehouse of information for all after-writers—was not composed under the pressure, and with the stimulus of theological controversy, like so many of his treatises, but would seem to have been gradually elaborated from his own stores of knowledge, without deriving much assistance from the Greek writers on the subject, and to have grown up, quietly and placidly, to its full maturity. While, therefore, it possesses a more systematic completeness and a more perfect arrangement than most of his writings, it is not free from that prolixity and superabundance of detail into which a work often falls, when the writer is unrestrained by the pressure of time and other circumstances. His motive for writing on the subject (observes the Rev. A. W. Haddan) may be learned from the treatise itself, which was not directed against any individual antagonist, or occasioned by any particular controversial emergency. Certain ingenious and subtle theories respecting types or resemblances of the Holy Trinity, traceable in human nature as being the image of God, seemed to him to supply, not indeed a logical proof, but a strong rational presumption, of the truth of the doctrine itself; and thus to make it incumbent upon him to expound and unfold them in order to meet rationalizing objections upon (so to say) their own ground. He is careful not to deal with these analogies or images as if they either constituted a purely argumentative proof, or exhausted the full meaning of the doctrine, upon both which assumptions such speculations have at times been the fruitful parent both of presumptuous

theorizing and of grievous heresy. He takes, however, especial pains to dwell upon the incapacity of human thought to fathom the depths of the nature of God; and he carefully prefaces his reasonings by a statement of the Scripture evidence of the doctrine as a matter of faith and not of reason.

(5.) The *Letters* of Augustine breathe a spirit of love, and Christian charity, and sound doctrine.

The letters of distinguished men are always interesting; but those of Augustine, from their fulness and richness of scriptural knowledge, and from the deeply affectionate spirit which characterizes them, are peculiarly interesting as well as valuable. They are very numerous; at least two hundred and seventy are extant. They are not at all like the brief and hurried notes of the present day. Many of them are complete treatises, carefully prepared, as different as possible to the slipshod style of the communications of our time. They were written to persons scattered widely through every part of the world. Amongst those with whom he corresponded we may name Simplician, the successor of Ambrose, Paulinus of Nola, and the distinguished Jerome. The letters of such a man as Augustine—the foremost champion of the truth in his day—are naturally most interesting as containing so many references to the Church history of that age, and to contemporary events. The letters are, as has been said, of a very elaborate character, and full of information; but they lack, perhaps, the vivacity and lively tone which his contemporary Jerome evinced so markedly in his correspondence.

(6.) The *Exegetical* writings of Augustine will claim a passing notice.

Chief amongst them are his *Commentaries* on the Psalms, which occupy two volumes; his work *On the Agreement of the Evangelists*, in four books; also two books on the *Sermon on the Mount;* and his *Commentaries* on different books of the Old and New Testament.

We have already seen that Augustine was intensely interested in the Psalms of David. Whilst at Milan the chanting of the Psalms in the cathedral was always a great source of pleasure to him; and when he was in quiet seclusion at Cassiacum, preparing for his baptism, he was deeply affected by reading them, and earnestly desired that the knowledge of them might extend throughout the world. We cannot wonder, therefore, that he should have devoted so much time to a lengthened commentary upon these sacred songs, which would have been to him only a work and labour of love.

His work on *The Agreement of the Evangelists* was undertaken with the view of defending the gospel from the calumnies of the heathen. He refers to this treatise in his *Retractations* (ii. 16), mentioning the motive with which he wrote it.

The treatise or commentary on the *Sermon on the Mount* was written about 393 or 394 A.D., and it is referred to in his *Retractations* (i. xix.).

His *Commentaries* will always have a peculiar value, from the deep knowledge which they display of Holy Scripture, and also because they enable us to form a judgment of the manner in which one of the great minds of that age interpreted the sacred writings; but they can scarcely be said to stand in the highest class of the exegetical literature of the Bible.

In his *Commentaries* on the Old Testament, he

laboured under the disadvantage of being unacquainted with the original language in which it was written. This, without doubt, must detract from the strictly critical value of his remarks. But such exact criticism does not enter very largely into the method of interpretation or exposition of which he makes use. His *Commentaries* are, for the most part, scriptural and practical. He undoubtedly indulged in a more allegorical, typical, and mystical mode of interpretation than is common in this our day; but nevertheless this allegorical method of exposition is not merely arbitrary or fanciful, but proceeds upon a uniform principle and plan, which is carefully carried out throughout the whole book on which he may have been engaged. He was, moreover, one of the first to advocate the plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture. He exercised also a "considerable influence on the final settlement of the canon of Holy Scripture, whose limit was so firmly fixed at the Synods of Hippo, in the year 393, and of Carthage in 397, that even now it is universally received in the Catholic and Evangelical Churches, with the exception of the difference of the two Confessions in regard to the value of the Old Testament Apocrypha."

CHAPTER III.

AUGUSTINE AS A SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGIAN.

"If Revelation as a whole does not speak explicitly, Revelation did not intend to do so; and to impose a definite truth upon it, when it designedly stops short of one, is as real an error of interpretation as to deny a truth which it expresses."—MOZLEY, *Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination*, ch. v. p. 156.

WE can scarcely suppose that the theological opinions of Augustine were rigidly fixed immediately after his conversion. It would be much more reasonable to imagine that the views of a man of his wide knowledge and diversified attainments, who had been long engaged in an earnest and intense search after truth, would gradually settle down into a system of theological belief, after much thought, and care, and patient investigation. To suppose that his religious and theological sentiments would at once become unalterably stereotyped, would be opposed to all the conceptions that we should antecedently form of such a mind, and heart, and spirit as those possessed by Augustine. We can much more readily conceive that the peculiar views by which he has become known to posterity, were not held by him as dogmatic doctrines in the first instance. It is more probable that they were gradually and almost imperceptibly moulded into the form which they finally assumed, after much thought, much study and comparison of Scripture, and many

arguments with those with whom he was engaged in controversy. In fact, to imagine that his systematic views on the subject of original sin, the freedom of the will, predestination, and final perseverance, were each and all developed at once when he became a Christian and then crystallized, would be in antagonism with all the theories which are commonly held on the growth of opinions, and to the judgment which we should *à priori* be likely to form in such a case.

Augustine's views on the points just mentioned were no doubt changed and modified to a considerable extent during the controversial struggles in which he was engaged, especially with the Pelagians.

In agreement with this statement, it is remarked by Dr. Shedd:[1] "In the first part of his Christian life, Augustine was influenced by the views of his teacher Ambrose, and occasionally attributed a certain amount of co-operating efficiency to the human will in the work of regeneration. In his earlier writings, some tendency to synergism is apparent. For example, in his exposition of certain points in the Epistle to the Romans, he remarks: 'It is nowhere said that God believes all things in us. Our faith, therefore, is our own; but the good works that we perform are of Him who gives the Spirit to those who believe. . . . It is ours to believe and to will; but it is His to give, through His Spirit, to those who believe and will, the power of performing good works. . . . God gives His Holy Spirit to one whom He foreknows will believe, so that by performing good works he may attain eternal life.' The two last statements Augustine formally retracts in his final revision of his works (*Retract.* i. 23, ii. 3). The external cause of this synergism in Augustine's

[1] In his *History of Christian Doctrine*, vol. ii. p. 51.

earlier writings (adds Dr. Shedd), besides the influence of the undecided views of Ambrose and Hilary, was the Manichæism from which he had just escaped, which disposed him to emphasize the doctrine of free-will and human responsibility. On the other hand, his growing experience of the depth of evil in his own soul, was forcing upon his notice the fact that the will, the higher spiritual faculty, as well as the lower sensuous nature, has felt the effects of the apostasy in Adam."

Thus it has, with good reason, been supposed[1] that when Augustine at first entered into the discussion of the doctrine of predestination, he held the view that predestination was contingent on the foreknowledge on God's part of the faith or want of faith of each individual.[2] When, however, he had advanced farther into the Pelagian controversy, in which he had to contend with those who abused the doctrine of man's free-will, he was led to reconsider the questions concerning the grace of God and His predestination, and subsequently retracted the views which he had before held respecting God's foreknowledge as antecedent to His predestination.[3] His belief, after this, would appear to have been[4] that Adam fell freely, and that, since all mankind were born in sin, God's inscrutable wisdom and mercy determined to rescue some from sin and condemnation. "Accordingly, He prepared His Church, and predestinated some to be admitted into

[1] See Bishop Harold Browne, *Articles*, xvii. sect. 1.

[2] His language at first was: "Ut quem sibi creditурum esse præscivit, ipsum elegerit (Deus) cui spiritum sanctum daret, ut bona operando etiam vitam æternam consequeretur."

[3] Cf. *Retract.* i. xxiii. His language changes to: "*Non* ergo elegit Deus opera cujusquam in præscientiâ, quæ ipse daturus est; sed fidem elegit in præscientiâ," etc.

[4] See Harold Browne, *ut supra.*

that Church. These, and these only, could be saved. Yet there was a further decree, even concerning the regenerate, viz. that some of them should die before committing actual sin, and therefore be saved; but that, of those who grew up to maturity, some should be led on by the grace of God to final perseverance, and therefore to glory; whereas others, not being gifted, according to God's eternal purpose, with the grace of perseverance, would not persevere at all; or if they persevered for a time, would in the end fall away and be lost. It would have been just that all should be damned; it is therefore of free mercy that some should be saved. God therefore graciously frees some, but leaves others by just judgment to perdition. 'Of two infants, both born in sin, why one is taken and the other left; of two grown persons, why one is called so as to follow the calling, the other either not called, or not called so as to follow the calling;—these are in the inscrutable decrees of God. And of two godly men, why to one is given the grace of perseverance, but to another it is not given,—this is still more in the inscrutable will of God. Of this, however, all the faithful ought to be certain, that one was predestinated, and the other not,'[1] etc. Those admitted into the Church and regenerate may be called of the elect, when they believe and live according to God; but they are not properly and fully elect, unless it is also ordained that they shall persevere and live holily to the end."[2]

"The following," according to Shedd, "are the several degrees of grace, which mark the several stages in the transition of the human soul from total depravity

[1] *De Dono Perseverantiæ*, § 21.
[2] *De Correptione et Gratiâ*, § 16.

to perfect holiness. The first is that of *Prevenient Grace* ('gratia præveniens'). In this stage of the process, the Holy Spirit employs first the moral law, as an instrumental agent, and produces the sense of sin and guilt; and then, by employing as a second instrumentality the gospel promise of mercy, it conducts the soul to Christ, in and by the act of faith. The second stage in the transition is the result of what Augustine denominates *Operative Grace* ('gratia operans'). By means of faith, thus originated by prevenient grace, the Divine Spirit now produces the consciousness of peace and justification through Christ's blood of atonement, and imparts a new divine life to the soul united to Christ. In this manner, a will freely and firmly determined to holiness is restored again in man, and the fruits of this change of heart and will (*μετάνοια*) begin to appear. But the remainders of the apostate nature still exist in the regenerate soul, though in continual conflict with the new man. In the lifelong struggle that now commences, the now renovated and holy will is efficiently operative for the first time, and co-works with the Holy Spirit. Hence this third degree of grace is denominated *Co-operating Grace* ('gratia co-operans'). The final and crowning act of grace results in the entire cleansing of indwelling sin from the soul, and its glorified transformation into complete resemblance to its Redeemer,—a state of absolute perfection, as distinguished from the relative perfection with which man was created, and characterized by the incapability of sinning and dying ('non posse peccare et mori'). This grade of grace is never witnessed this side the grave."[1]

These statements on the part of Augustine caused

[1] ii. pp. 68, 69.

no little uneasiness in various quarters,[1] and in order to pacify this feeling of uneasiness and dissatisfaction, and at the same time to justify and confirm the views which he had laid down, he wrote several treatises on the questions at issue.[2]

In maintaining the views which he had propounded, Augustine brings forward certain passages from some of the Fathers who preceded him, as confirmatory of his own opinions, namely, from Cyprian, Gregory Nazianzen, and Ambrose.[3] It has been generally thought that the passages which Augustine quotes are, with the exception perhaps of the last from Ambrose, somewhat weak, and that if he had not adduced stronger arguments from Scripture than he did from the Fathers,[4] he would scarcely have succeeded in fixing his system as firmly in the minds of his followers as he has done.

It is a question of very considerable interest, whether Augustine's predecessors held the same views as he did, or whether he himself first elaborated them out of the Scriptures. That he should have advanced such weak passages in support of his opinions as he has from the writings of the Fathers who were before him, would almost seem to prove the truth of the latter of the two alternatives above mentioned.

[1] Some monks of Adrumetum in Africa were much disturbed by Augustine's views, *circ.* 426.

[2] For instance, *De Gratiâ et Libero Arbitrio*, *De Correptione et Gratiâ*, *De Prædestinatione Sanctorum*, and *De Dono Perseverantiæ*.

[3] From Cyprian he quotes: "In nullo gloriandum, quando nostrum nihil sit;" from Gregory: "δώσει γὰρ ἐὺ οἶδα ὁ τὸ πρῶτον δοὺς, καὶ τὸ δεύτερον, καὶ μάλιστα;" and from Ambrose, "A Deo præparatur voluntas hominum. Ut enim Deus honorificetur à sancto, Dei gratia est;" and, "Deus quos dignatur vocat, et quem vult religiosum faciet."

[4] On the tenets held by the early Fathers on this subject, see Faber's *Primitive Doctrine of Election*, Book i. ch. viii.

On the general argument embraced by the views of Augustine, we may quote two or three passages from the work of one[1] whose writings are now regarded as the grand text-book on this deep and difficult question.

In his *Examination of the Argument for Predestination* (ch. ii. p. 29), Canon Mozley observes: "The two ideas of the *Divine Power* and *Free-Will* are, in short, two great tendencies of thought inherent in our minds, which contradict each other, and can never be united or brought to a common goal; and which, therefore, inasmuch as the essential condition of absolute truth is consistency with other truth, can never, in the present state of our faculties, become absolute truths, but must remain for ever contradictory tendencies of thought, going on side by side till they are lost sight of and disappear in the haze of our conceptions, like two parallel straight lines which go on to infinity without meeting. While they are sufficiently clear, then, for purposes of practical religion (for we cannot doubt that they are truths so far as and in that mode in which we apprehend them), these are truths upon which we cannot raise definite and absolute systems. All that we build upon either of them must partake of the imperfect nature of the premiss which supports it, and be held under a reserve of consistency with a counter conclusion from the opposite truth."

In regard to Augustine's view of *Original Sin*, the same writer has remarked (ch. iv. p. 125): "Thus philosophically predisposed, the mind of Augustine took up the doctrine of original sin as handed down by the voice of the Church and by a succession of

[1] See J. B. Mozley's *Treatise on the Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination.*

writers, and brought the whole mass of language which three centuries had produced, and which up to his time had advanced in copiousness and illustration, rather than in strength of meaning, to a point. He explained the corruption of human nature to mean the loss of free-will; and this statement was the fundamental barrier which divided the later from the earlier scheme and *rationale* of original sin. The will, according to the earlier school, was not substantially affected by the fall. Its circumstances, its means and appliances, were altered, not itself. But in Augustine's scheme the will itself was disabled at the fall, and not only certain impulses to it withdrawn, its power of choice was gone, and man was unable not only to rise above a defective goodness, but to avoid positive sin. He was thenceforth, prior to the operation of grace, in a state of necessity on the side of evil, a slave to the devil and to his own inordinate lusts."

"Augustine's attention," remarks Shedd, "was directed to the reflex influence of sin itself upon the voluntary faculty, whereby its energy to holiness is destroyed, and it becomes by its own act an *enslaved* will. His experience of the truth that even after regeneration, 'to will is present,' but 'how to perform,' the will 'finds not,' led Augustine to his fundamental position, that original sin is in the *will* as well as in the sensuous nature, and has vitiated the *voluntary* power along with all the other powers of man. This practical experience, and the important speculative conflict with Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism, were the causes of Augustine's transition from the Greek anthropology of his earlier days, to that other view to which his own name has been affixed" (ii. pp. 53, 54).

With reference to Augustine's views on *Predestina-*

tion, it is said:[1] "The characteristic of St. Augustine's doctrine, compared with the scriptural one, is, that it is a definite and absolute doctrine. Scripture, as a whole, only informs us of a mystery on the subject; that is to say, while it informs us that there is a truth on the subject, it makes no consistent statement of it, but asserts contrary truths, counterbalancing those passages which convey the predestinarian doctrine by passages as plain the other way; but St. Augustine makes predestinarian statements, and does not balance them by contrary ones. Rather he endeavours to explain away those contrary statements in Scripture. He takes that further step which Scripture avoids taking, and asserts a determinate doctrine of predestination. He erects those passages of Scripture which are suggestive of predestination into a system, explaining away the opposite ones; and converts the obscurity and inconsistency of Scripture language into that clearness and consistency by which a definite truth is stated."[2]

[1] See J. B. Mozley's *Treatise on the Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination*, ch. v. p. 155.

[2] "Augustine accounts for the fact that some men are renewed, and some are not, by the unconditional decree (*decretum absolutum*), according to which God determines to select from the fallen mass of mankind (*massa perditionis*), the whole of whom are alike guilty and under condemnation, a portion upon whom He bestows renewing grace, and to leave the remainder to their own self-will and the operation of law and justice. This is a method of pure sovereignty upon His part, wherein are manifested both the 'goodness and severity of God.' The ground and reason of this selection of only a portion of mankind, according to Augustine, is God's wise good pleasure, and not a foreseen faith upon the part of the individual man. For faith itself is the gift of God. 'Predestination,' says Augustine, 'is the preparation for grace, but grace is the gift itself.' 'God elected us in Christ before the foundation of the world, predestinating us to the adoption of sons, not because He saw that we should become holy and spotless through our-

Once again: "*Final perseverance* is, upon the Augustinian doctrine, the true and absolute gift of God to certain members of the human race; to whom, according to an eternal decree, He has determined to give it; and it has that promised place which it has in the predestinarian scheme, because it is that measure of Divine grace which is sufficient for salvation. The gift of final perseverance is the great gift which puts into execution God's eternal decree with respect to the whole body of the elect." [1]

And, to conclude this review of the dogmatic theology of Augustine, we may quote one more passage (ch. viii. p. 226). "His *doctrine of Free-will* does not come up to that which is ordinarily understood as that

selves, but He elected and predestinated us that we might become so.' The unconditional decree, in reference to the non-elect, according to Augustine, is one of preterition or omission merely" (Shedd, ii. p. 70 seq.).

[1] "The Latin anthropology presents the following points:—1. Man was created holy, and from this position originated sin *de nihilo* by a purely creative act. Original sin is voluntary, in the sense of being self-will, and is therefore properly punishable as guilt. 2. Man was created as a species, in respect to both soul and body; and hence the Adamic connection relates to the entire man,—to the voluntary and rational nature, equally with the corporeal and sensuous. 3. By the Adamic connection, the will, the πνεῦμα, is corrupted, as well as the ψυχή and σῶμα. 4. Infants are guilty, because they possess a sinful bias of will, and not merely a corrupt sensuous nature. 5. The corruption of the sensuous nature is the consequent, and not the antecedent, of apostasy in the rational and voluntary; so long as the voluntary and rational powers are in their created holy condition, there is nothing disordered or corrupt in the lower nature. The corruption of the flesh (σῶμα) is not the cause, but the effect, of the corruption of the reason and will (πνεῦμα). 6. The Holy Spirit takes the initiative in the change from sin to holiness, and there is no co-operation of the human with the Divine agency in the regenerating act. The efficiency or activity of the human will up to the point of regeneration is hostile to God, and therefore does not co-work with Him" (Shedd, ii. pp. 91, 92).

doctrine; not advancing beyond that point up to which the doctrine of free-will and the opposite doctrine agree. He acknowledges a will in man, that which makes him act willingly, as distinguished from acting by compulsion and constraint; but this is saying nothing as to how that will is determined." "Whether," adds the same writer (ch. xi. 339), "the time will ever come when men in general will see that on this and some other questions truth is twofold, and is not confined to either side singly,—that our perceptions are indistinct and contradictory, and therefore do not justify any one definite position,—remains to be seen. Philosophers have from time to time prophesied a day when a better understanding would commence of man with himself, and of man with man. . . . It only remains that those who differ from each other on points which can never be settled absolutely, in the present state of our capacities, should remember that they may differ, not in holding truth and error, but only in holding different sides of the same truth."

CHAPTER IV.

AUGUSTINE AS A CONTROVERSIALIST.

Manichæism—Donatism—Pelagianism.

"Fidei Defensor."

WE have now reached the last of those different phases of character for which Augustine was specially conspicuous.

We have spoken of him as a preacher, as a writer, and as a systematic theologian. It now only remains for us to view him as a *controversialist.*

He may be said, without exaggeration, to have been the greatest controversialist of the age in which he lived.

Whether he had any natural affinity or attraction towards controversy, like some men of combative propensities, may be regarded as doubtful. His disposition was naturally sensitive and affectionate—his tastes were those of a student and a recluse—the tendency of his mind was analytical, introspective, and metaphysical. On the other hand, he had the fervour and energy derived from his African descent, and possessed in an eminent degree all the highest qualities of an orator and rhetorician, combined with a capacity for writing with readiness and facility, and a rich store of information upon which he was able to draw without effort in argument and discussion. These somewhat different and opposite characteristics might seem

to counterbalance each other and produce an equipoise. But, superadded to all this, he was a devout and ardent lover of the truth, and therefore could not willingly see that truth misrepresented or maligned without standing up, boldly and undauntedly, in its defence. It was probably this last-named trait in his character that caused him to be involved so continuously in so many controversies during his episcopal life at Hippo.

Augustine became the great stay and support on which the orthodox party leaned for the establishment of their cherished views; and, on the other hand, his name and his reputation, as well as his personal presence, were a source of fear to the unorthodox.

He was engaged, to speak generally, during his career in three great controversies, viz. with the Manichæans, the Donatists, and the Pelagians.[1]

SECT. 1. His controversy with the *Manichæans* was the first in which he was engaged.

It was a controversy for which he was peculiarly qualified, since, for many years of his life preceding his conversion, he had, with more or less earnestness and enthusiasm, embraced Manichæan views. He had therefore a real and practical acquaintance with the arguments that he had to combat, and with the views under discussion. His previous advocacy of their tenets rendered him a formidable antagonist.[2] So

[1] Augustine did indeed come into conflict with, and write against, the *Arians* (*e.g.* "Contra Sermonem Arianorum liber unus," in A.D. 418; as also "Collatio cum Maximino Arianorum Episcopo habita anno 427 aut 428 A.D."), and against some other forms of heresy; but these controversies are not of sufficient importance to be classified under a separate division.

[2] From a decree or edict of Diocletian, it is evident that Manichæism

had it been before with the great apostle, whom Augustine so much resembled, St. Paul, who, in consequence of his learned education and his previous training in the school of Pharisaism, was able to contend with such distinguished success against the righteousness which is of the law, and the false views and theories which prevailed amongst the Jewish teachers of his day.

A good deal has already been said of the peculiar errors and false doctrines of the Manichees, and hence it will not be necessary to go into the question with any minuteness of detail. We could not, in the previous portion of his life, speak of Augustine as a Manichee, without at the same time referring to the particular errors into which he plunged. Manichæism would appear, at one period of his life, to have had a singular affinity to his vivid fancy, his enthusiastic temperament, and his passion for metaphysical inquiries and subtle speculation. So strongly, nay, so passionately, had he clung to these views at one portion of his career, that he would not, as we have seen, relinquish them, even though he was in consequence isolated from the mother whom he so fondly loved, and exiled from her home. Though these views never, to all appearance, satisfied his heart or mind, when he was a

appeared in Proconsular Africa very shortly after its founder's death. This decree condemns the doctrine as unchristian and as Persian; and orders that its books should be burnt; that its disciples should be sent to the mines, or at least be banished, and that their property should be confiscated. There can be no doubt that, in the time of Augustine, the sect had many adherents both in Italy and Africa. We learn from Tillemont, that even clergy of the Church were amongst its secret members. In spite of many severe edicts of Christian emperors, Manichæism survived, and appeared afterwards amongst the heresies of mediæval times (see Robertson's *Church History*, pp. 131, 132).

searcher after truth, and though he felt convinced, after a closer intimacy with the chief professors of the sect, that they could not be supported on a sound and substantial basis of argument, yet there seemed to be a fascination in their wild, visionary, and dreamy theories, which, though it did not convince, nevertheless beguiled and bewitched him. His mind was not at the time sufficiently disciplined by a practical knowledge of Christianity, and of the principles of true religion, to be able to resist the glamour which these wild and fanciful views threw around him; and at first he rushed, with all the ardour of a new convert, into this false system of belief, and by his influence was sadly successful in persuading many others to join the ranks of the Manichæans.

The lofty pretensions and promises of Manichæism (observes one who has carefully studied the subject) to unravel all the riddles of existence, the longing after redemption characteristic of the system, its inward sympathy with the life of nature, the dazzling show of its subtle dialectics and polemics against the doctrines of the Church, and the ascetic severity of its course of life, explain the attractive powers which it exerted over many of the more profound spirits, and the extensive propagation which it met with even in the West. We can readily imagine, therefore, how Augustine, taken up with his struggles after truth, but at the same time full of intellectual pride, as he then was, should be won over by its delusive charms, and enrol himself in the class of the *auditors* or catechumens.

But although for nine long years he was a professed convert to these heretical doctrines, yet he would not appear, during the greater part of that time, to have been entirely and unreservedly convinced of their

soundness and truth. His personal intercourse with Faustus, the great leader and teacher of Manichæism, tended to shake his faith in their views. He did not find that this famous professor could satisfactorily reply to the questions which he put to him.

But the origin of evil, which the Manichees professed to account for on philosophical principles, still tortured and harassed him. No speculation would appear to have exercised his mind in so great a degree. It was continually cropping up in his mental experience. And it was in all probability to the difficulties which he felt on this abstruse point of doctrine, that the long hold which Manichæism had on his mind may be attributed. It offered some solution at least of the perplexities which racked his mind on this subject; and though he was not, probably, fully satisfied with the proposed mode of unravelling the tangled web of this speculative mystery, he was nevertheless unable to discover any better explanation of the enigma that was perpetually torturing and disturbing him.

It was when he was at Tagaste, after his conversion, and when he had abjured the errors of Manichæism, that he wrote a treatise against the Manichees,[1] directed in a great degree against the false views which they entertained respecting the early history of the Bible contained in the Book of Genesis. He wrote also a treatise on "Two Souls,"[2] levelled against the Manichæans, about the year 391 A.D., in which he refutes the notion that there are in man two souls,—one good, of the nature of God; the other bad, the product of darkness. He published also at this time a treatise containing the account of his discussion with Fortun-

[1] It was styled, *De Genesi contra Manichæos.*

[2] *De duabus animabus contra Manichæos.* Cf. *Retract.* i. 15.

atus,[1] the Manichæan, a presbyter of Hippo, in the year 392 A.D.

Another work written against Manichæan views, was his treatise on the benefit of belief or faith,[2] addressed to Honoratus, and published in 391 A.D. We have, moreover, a treatise of his in answer to a letter of a Manichæan,[3] which was written about 397 A.D., in which he states, that instead of the clear and certain knowledge which his opponent professed to give, his letter only contained uncertainty and practical absurdity.

We must not omit his long and elaborate work against Faustus the Manichæan,[4] in no less than thirty-three books, written about the year 400 A.D. Faustus had been his old friend and associate in the past. In December 404 A.D., Augustine held a discussion with Felix the Manichæan, who avowed (as Professor Bright has observed) that the chief attraction of Manichæism in his own case was its promise of gratifying curiosity about the material world. One main point raised in this debate was (we find) whether the soul were part of the Divine essence, and required to be freed from contact with "the nation of darkness" by such means as Manichæan fancy represented. Felix, like Fortunatus, was silenced; but we hear that, unlike him, he had the candour to embrace the side of the orthodox.

[1] *Acta seu disputatio contra Fortunatum Manichæum.* Cf. *Retract.* i. 16, and *Possidius*, chap. vi.

[2] *De utilitate credendi, ad Honoratum.*

[3] *Contra Epistolam Manichæi quam vocant Fundamenti*, referred to in *Retract.* ii. 2.

[4] *Contra Faustum Manichæum;* cf. *Retract.* ii. vii. In lib. i. cap. 1 of his work, Augustine says of Faustus: "Faustus quidem fuit, gente Afer, civitate Milevitanus, eloquio suavis, ingenio callidus, secta Manichæus, ac per hoc nefando errore perversus. Noveram ipse hominem, quemadmodum eum commemoravi in libris (v. 3, 6) Confessionum mearum." Cf. *Retract.* ii. vii.

We may also refer to his treatise concerning the nature of the "Chief Good,"[1] which he wrote after the year 404 A.D., its subject being, "God, the Chief Good," in opposition to Manichæan doctrines.

To this list may be added a treatise against Secundinus the Manichæan,[2] written about the year 405 A.D., in which Augustine states why he abandoned the sect of the Manichees.

We have already referred to Augustine's work on the *Morals of the Catholic Church and on the Morals of the Manichæans*, in which he defended the Catholic Church against the assaults of the Manichæans.[3]

Such is the chief literature, out of the works of Augustine, bearing specifically upon this controversy, which has its peculiar interest from the fact that for so many years the distinguished Father of the Church of whom we write was, as we have already seen, involved and entangled in the meshes of this wild Eastern philosophical heresy.[4]

It was in his controversy with the Manichæans that Augustine was permitted to do such good service to the cause of religion as the champion of the Word of God. He was enabled to vindicate the truth of those

[1] *De naturâ Boni contra Manichæos.* He remarks at the beginning of the treatise, "Summum bonum, quo superius non est, Deus est."

[2] *Liber contra Secundinum Manichæum.*

[3] Cf. *Retract.* i. 7.

[4] "In that singular system (says Pressensé) the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness are seen to stand out in bold contrast to one another. Between them a war has broken out, and by means of evil spirits, darkness has invaded light; out of that twofold element the world has been formed. Jesus Christ and the Paraclete come from the sun, to teach us how we should cast aside the principle of night. This principle being assimilated by the Manichæans to matter, the result was the encouragement of asceticism, and then, by a natural reaction, the indulgence of licentiousness."

Scriptures to which Christianity appealed, and to bear his strong and vigorous testimony to the inspiration of the sacred volume, against which the Manichæans had made such reckless and wanton assaults. He was enabled also to prove to the minds of thoughtful men that different portions of Holy Writ which the Manichæans had denounced as futile and childish, or as opposed to the very nature of a pure and holy God, contained their own special lessons to the humble seeker after truth, and were to be received in faith as the teaching of infinite Wisdom and Holiness, even though we might not be able to solve all the difficulties connected with them, or to explain them with such critical accuracy and logical exactness as to satisfy the curious and self-reliant reasonings of the pure intellect. Thus was Augustine able to set forth in clear light the real object and final end of Holy Scripture.

Before closing this section, we may observe that Manichæism did but follow in the steps of the Oriental and imaginative creed of Gnosticism in its struggle to solve the dark secret of the origin of evil. In all the Oriental philosophies, the idea of the malignity of matter[1] haunted the imagination of their respective votaries. Thus the highest and sublimest doctrines of the Old Testament—God's sovereignty, His almighty power in creation, as well as His providence—were all remorselessly excluded from a creed in which it was deemed wholly derogatory to the Deity to be connected, even in the slightest degree, with the material fabric and organism of the world. Hence Gnosticism rejected not only portions of the Old, but also of the New Testament, and concluded by regarding the union of the material and human form of Christ with His Divine

[1] The Greek term was ὕλη.

nature as a mere illusion, daring even to assert that it was but an "apparent human being, an impassive phantom, which *seemed* to undergo all the insults and the agony of the cross."[1]

SECT. 2. Augustine's controversy with the *Donatists* succeeded to that which he had carried on with the advocates of Manichæism. It was a controversy which would have a special interest for him, inasmuch as all the important questions concerning the idea, as well as the actual constitution, of the Catholic Church would naturally fall under it. The "idea of the Church" was, as Pressensé has remarked, the great point at issue between Augustine and the Donatists. With the latter, holiness was the supreme characteristic mark of Christ's Church. If its holiness be obscured or dimmed, then it at once ceases to be the true Church. From hence followed their dogma that "Catholicity is independent of external circumstances." As a natural consequence, they denied that a Church which admitted within its pale faithless or undeserving members could be a true Church, and from such a corrupted Church they deemed it right at once to separate. In reply to such a notion, it was the opinion of Augustine that "the Church is founded by God upon the rock of an immutable and sovereign will; and that if we make it depend upon the disposition of men, we shift it from the rock to the quicksands."

The Donatist schism had its rise in North Africa. In not a few particulars it was closely akin to the Novatian schism which preceded it. We cannot fail to see in each the conflict, as it has been called,[2] of

[1] See Milman's *History of Christianity*, vol. ii. chap. v.
[2] See Neander's *Church History*, vol. iii. p. 244.

Separatism with Catholicism. It brought out into prominence the idea of the outward and visible unity of the Church, and the objective element in the things of the Church and of religion. In the present controversy, the ideas of men concerning inalienable human rights, and liberty of conscience, and the freedom of religious convictions, were brought out in distinct prominence. The origin of Donatism was, as we have already hinted, local. It may to some extent have been engendered by the fanaticism to which Montanism had given rise in Africa, but it clearly owed its form and complexion to circumstances springing out of the Diocletian persecution.

We are told that there was a strong party in the Church of Carthage, who were actuated by the most fanatic zeal in favour of those who, during the persecution, had rendered themselves conspicuous by their opposition to the imperial edicts, and by courting martyrdom. This party was very indignant at the appointment of Cœcilian, who held moderate views, to the bishopric on the death of Mensurius; and declaring that his consecration had been performed by a "Traditor," namely Felix, Bishop of Aptunga, they elected Majorinus, a bishop holding their own views. But Donatus, who succeeded him in 315 A.D., was in fact the great head and leading spirit of the sect. And he was admirably suited for such a work, being possessed of a fervid style of eloquence, and being a man of great determination and energy. The Donatists —like the followers of Montanus—laid great stress on the purity of their discipline; and although both Constantine, to whom they had made an appeal, as well as the Bishop of Rome, had pronounced decisions adverse to the sect, they nevertheless rose higher and

higher in the estimation of the people. The Donatists, after their condemnation by the Emperor Constans in 348 A.D., continued in banishment till Julian's reign. This last emperor's edict, recalling the exiles, inasmuch as it only applied to those banished by his immediate predecessor, did not confer any advantage on the Donatists, since they had been sent into exile previous to that time. They presented, therefore, with no little flattery, a petition to Julian, entreating him to allow them to return. He granted their request; but they were very soon guilty of savage acts of violence on their opponents, being described as "subtle in seduction, pitiless in bloodshed." In a comparatively short time, however, they became the dominant party in Numidia. On the death of Julian, penal edicts were directed against them by Gratian, and even by Valentinian I. After this time very violent dissensions rent the Donatist party, quarrel succeeded quarrel, and bishops were appointed and deposed by the rival factions amongst them. Such is a brief sketch of the Donatist party previous to the time of Augustine. He found them in the ascendency at Hippo, where they displayed a bitterly sectarian spirit, their bishop even refusing to allow his adherents to bake bread for the orthodox. Augustine first endeavoured to oppose their views by publishing a metrical Psalm, which was divided into twenty-four portions, each commencing with a letter of the alphabet. This was intended as a means of instruction for those who were imperfectly educated, showing that good and evil always existed in the visible Church, and strongly advocating unity. Augustine carried on the controversy with them in a spirit of courtesy and moderation, and endeavoured to bring them to a conference, but

generally without success. The real cause of their refusal was the known and felt dialectical power which Augustine possessed, though they often put forward the impudent pretence that they, as descendants of the martyrs and confessors, did not wish to unite with those who were not only sinners, but also "Traditors." The orthodox party, it can scarcely be doubted, were most lenient in their conduct towards the Donatists, and, as a result, brought many over to their side. This success excited the indignation of the more violent members of the sect, who indulged in furious assaults upon their opponents. Very severe and stringent edicts were in consequence published against the Donatists. Their clergy were banished, their churches forfeited, and their property confiscated. Augustine addressed the Proconsul of Africa in mitigation of the severe sentences inflicted upon them, and at length Honorius published an edict of toleration for Africa. It was, however, very shortly revoked.[1]

At the time of Augustine, the Donatists were a large and influential party in the north of Africa. They even boasted of reckoning five hundred bishops amongst their partisans. At Hippo they were particularly numerous; and it was due to the singular piety, the suasive power, and the argumentative skill of Augustine, that their numbers in that city were considerably reduced. A famous conference was convened by the Emperor, A.D. 411, at Carthage, under the presidency of the Tribune Marcellinus, at which five hundred and sixty-five bishops were present,—two hundred and eighty-six belonging to the Catholic party, and two hundred and seventy-nine to that of the Donatists. After careful discussion,—in which

[1] See Robertson's *History of the Christian Church*, p. 368 et seq.

Augustine took the lead on the orthodox side, and Petilianus on the other, — the decision was given against the Donatists, and they were subjected to very severe and stringent regulations.[1]

The Donatists were, indeed, so arrogant and noisy in their pretensions, that they not unfrequently called down upon themselves the anger of the different emperors.

It was the lawlessness and the violence of the party that so powerfully affected Augustine in his controversy with them.

He directed against them no less than seven treatises on Baptism;[2] a lengthy and elaborate answer to Petilian,[3] the Bishop of Cirta, who was the foremost champion on the side of the Donatists; a treatise, in three books, against the Letter of Parmenianus, the Bishop of the Donatists at Carthage, and the successor of Donatus, written about the year 400 A.D., which he subsequently refers to in his *Retractations* (ii. xvii.); a letter concerning the "Unity of the Church," against the Donatists;[4] an answer to Cresconius, the grammarian, of the party of the Donatists, in four books, written about 406 A.D.; and some other treatises. In several of the above-named works, Augustine had put forward a strong protest against the Donatist view that the wickedness of the minister hindereth the effect of the sacraments, more par-

[1] For a minute account of this Council, see Professor Bright's *History of the Church*, pp. 263-268. Many Donatists joined the orthodox Church, as the result and outcome of this conference.

[2] *De Baptismo contra Donatistas libri septem;* written about 400 A.D., and referred to in *Retract.* ii. xviii.

[3] *Contra litteras Petiliani Donatistæ, Cirtensis Episcopi, libri tres;* written about 400 A.D., and referred to in *Retract.* ii. xxv.

[4] *De Unitate Ecclesiæ contra Donatistas.*

ticularly in his answer to the Letters of Petilian and Parmenianus, and in his treatise on Baptism. He believed that the Church was not robbed of her spiritual privileges by the fact of there being sinful members within her fold, inasmuch as she possessed within her the presence of an "all-holy Mediator," who "secured for His Church a perpetual acceptance, and to His ordinances a perpetual vitality." In his arguments with the Donatists, Augustine maintained that it was vain to expect to find on earth a Church perfectly pure and faultless, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing; showing by analogy that in the ark unclean as well as clean animals were found, that in the field the tares grew together with the wheat till the time of harvest, and that the net drew to the shore fishes both bad and good.

Nor did he allow that the fault of the minister invalidated the grace of the sacraments, which he deemed to be effectual because of Christ's institution and promise, even though they might be administered by evil men,—a system of teaching which was developed in the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Church, and admitted to be true by the principal Reformers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Nor, again, did he admit that it was legitimate to depart from Church communion (as the Donatists were in the habit of doing) on such a ground as this. By such teaching he established principles which have guided the minds of men through the long centuries ever since his day.

Nor was this all; for about the year 417 A.D. he wrote his famous treatise on the "Correction of the Donatists."[1] Augustine, though at first he disapproved of all per-

[1] *De Correctione Donatistarum.*

secution of the Donatists, and advocated a conciliatory policy, yet afterwards, in his zeal, would appear to have imagined that it was not only the function of the State to repress schism, but that persecution would be beneficial to the Donatists themselves, since it might lead them to embrace Christianity in its purest form![1] We cannot but deeply lament that he was ever induced to adopt such an opinion; for persecution, wrong in itself, can never do any real good to the truth; and, as a matter of fact, no little evil resulted in consequence of the promulgation of such views by so distinguished a man, in the after history of the Church.

There can be no doubt that the Donatists were almost fierce in the advocacy of their opinions, and were very difficult to repress or keep in check. "The moral ground-work (it has been said[2]) of this Numidian sect was a gloomy zeal, without humility or love, for the purity of the Church; a zeal which could ally itself with the grossest violence and injustice, and with personal spite of the basest kind."

They maintained a body of men in connection with them, called "Circumcelliones,"[3] who more nearly resembled a banditti than a set of religious devotees. These men were utterly reckless and desperate, caring neither for the property nor the lives of their opponents. On more than one occasion they attempted the life of Augustine, and his escape was almost

[1] He started with a forced interpretation of the passage in Luke xiv. 23: "*Compel* them to come in."

[2] See Professor Bright's *History of the Church*, p. 4.

[3] So named from their begging *around* the *cells* or cottages of the country people, instead of earning their own livelihood by industry. "Genus hominum (says Augustine) ab utilibus operibus otiosum, victûs sui causâ *cellas circumiens* rusticorum."

miraculous. They maltreated Possidius, the Bishop of Calama; and also Restitutus, who went over from them and joined the Catholic Church; and Maximian, the Bishop of Bagai, whom they cruelly beat with the timbers of his own altar (Aug. c. *Cresc.* iii. 47), wounded him with their swords, "left him for dead, seized him again and flung him from a tower." The "care of a peasant and his wife (we are told) enabled Maximian to travel to Italy, where he showed his ghastly scars to Honorius." So violent was their conduct, that it was deemed necessary, in a Council held at Carthage in 404 A.D., to entreat the Emperor Honorius to repress these acts of violence by some definite measures, and in consequence several edicts were published which bore with much severity upon the Donatists.

Puffed up by spiritual pride, the Donatists believed themselves to be the only true Church of Christ, and they consequently re-baptized all those who came over to their ranks from the body of the orthodox. In arguing with them, it would seem that Augustine was remarkably successful, and that many of their members came over to the orthodox party in consequence of his persuasive reasoning.[1] In these treatises of Augustine on the Donatist controversy, we see a "good example both of the strength and the weakness of Augustine's writing,—its strength, in the exhaustive way in which he tears to pieces his opponent's arguments, and the clearness with which he exposes the fallacies of their reasoning; its weakness, in the persistency with which he pursues a point long after its discussion might fairly have been closed, as though he

[1] For an account of the Donatist schism, see Neander's *Church History*, vol. iii. pp. 244–291.

hardly knew when he had gained the victory; and his tendency to claim, by right of his position, a vantage-ground which did not in reality belong to him till the superiority of his cause was proved."[1]

SECT. 3. His controversy with *Pelagius* is the last to which we shall refer.

It was during Augustine's episcopate that Pelagius,[2] a British monk, the first native of our island who had gained literary or theological distinction, travelling from Rome to Africa, after the sack of that city by the Gauls, attracted the attention of the Church in Africa. Pelagius taught that, though the fall had taken place, men still could of their own power and strength, without any need of grace, turn from their sins to do the will of God. Such, to speak very briefly and simply, was the nature of his heresy. He was summoned before a Council in Palestine, consisting of fourteen bishops, whom he deceived by his plausible use of the term "grace," which he employed, not in its scriptural sense, but as referring to whatever was the gift of God, so that any one by his natural powers, in addition to the teaching of the Bible, might be said to

[1] See preface to Augustine's *Writings in connection with the Donatist Controversy*, by Rev. J. R. King.

[2] Pelagius was called "Brito," to distinguish him from another person of the same name. Jerome calls him "Scotorum pultibus prægravatum" (Præf. in Jerem.) [which Wall, *Infant Baptism*, vol. i. p. 354, translates, "filled and bedulled with Scotch porridge"], and again says of him, "Habet progeniem Scotiæ gentis de Britannorum vicinià." But the Scots and North Britons were not always very carefully distinguished. His name (observes Neander, *Church History*, iv. p. 313, note) might also be a mark of his country, even though the English legend, that he bore amongst his own countrymen the name of "Morgan," were without foundation. *Morgan* signifies *Sea-born*, i.q. Πελαγιος.

be saved by grace. The members of the Council, misled by his specious statements, pronounced him a Christian brother. But Augustine's penetrating mind was not thus imposed upon, and he wrote to a member of the Council to prove to him how he had been deceived. Jerome expressed himself strongly on the admirable manner in which Augustine had conducted the controversy.

Pelagius practically denied, as we have seen, the corruption of our nature. He supposed that Adam's sin did not affect his posterity, except as an *example*. His teaching was, in fact, a reaction from the arguments that Origen had used in confuting the Manichees.

Up to the time of Pelagius, the speculations of theologians had been for the most part of an objective character. They had dwelt chiefly on the nature and attributes of the persons of the Godhead. But Pelagius introduced a more subjective element into theological discussion; and man's relations to God now occupied the prominent attention, superseding the "Christology" which had been before the great subject of discussion.[1]

We might have imagined that Augustine himself, in his rebound from Manichæan heresy, might naturally have plunged into the tenets of Pelagius, and, from the desire to prove that man's will was not under the

[1] "The fundamental points in the theory of Pelagius are the following: The soul of man by creation is neither holy nor sinful. His body by creation is mortal. The fall of Adam introduced no change of any kind into either the souls or the bodies of his posterity. Every man, therefore, when born into the world is what Adam was when created. At birth, each man's physical nature is liable to disease and death, as was Adam's at creation; and, at birth, each man's voluntary faculty, like Adam's at creation, is undetermined either to sin or holiness" (Shedd, ii. pp. 93, 94).

control of an evil spirit, might have believed that there was no natural corruption of the will, caused by the fall of Adam.

But his mind was too discriminating, and too evenly balanced, thus to be led from one extreme to another. And, moreover, he was too conscious of the bitter fountain in his own heart,—too practically, as well as theoretically, a religious man,—to be led into such error as this in regard to the fundamental principles of the faith of Christianity.

The Pelagian controversy was undoubtedly the greatest and the most important in which Augustine was engaged, and manifested in the highest degree his powers and abilities as a theologian.

It was a controversy that was probably more congenial to his mind than that which he carried on with the Manichees. His logical skill (it has been acutely asserted) and his knowledge of Scripture were of more avail in contending with opponents who employed the same weapons, than in dealing with a system which threw around its positions the mist of Gnostic speculation, or veiled its doctrine under a grotesque mythology, or based itself on a cosmogony too fantastic for a Western mind to tolerate.[1]

He had himself—it has been said—been brought out of darkness into "marvellous light," only by entering into the depths of his own soul, and finding, after many struggles, that there was no power but Divine grace, as revealed in the life and death of the Son of God, which could bring rest to human weariness, or pardon and peace for human guilt. He had, in his own experience of the human heart, threaded all the devious and intricate mazes of man's conscious-

[1] Cf. Böhringer, p. 390.

ness; and so, in building up his doctrinal system, he was, in the main, "as true to the philosophy of fact, as he is to the statements of revelation." He had found human nature in his own case too weak and sinful to realize any good for itself. In God alone he had found good. This deep sense of human sinfulness coloured all his theology, and gave to it at once its depth—its profound and sympathetic adaptation to all who feel the reality of sin—and that tinge of darkness and exaggeration which has equally repelled others. When the expression Augustinianism is used, it points especially to those opinions of the great Teacher which were evoked in the Pelagian controversy, to which he had devoted the most mature and powerful period of his life.[1]

His opponent in this controversy—according to the candid estimate of his character by Augustine himself[2]—lived the life of a rigid monk; had acquired general respect; was of blameless character; anxiously desired the amelioration of mankind; a philanthropist for whom he entertained much love and affection; a man full of enthusiasm, confident in the honourable motives and impulses of other men. Pelagius was not, indeed, gifted with that deep spirit of metaphysical analysis and speculation which Augustine possessed in so eminent a degree; nor was he actuated by the ardent and fiery feelings by which Augustine was swayed. He had not been called upon—as the Bishop of Hippo had—to pass through that awful self-conflict in the

[1] See Principal Tulloch's art. on Augustine in *Encyc. Britan.*

[2] Augustine says of him: "Istum, sicut eum qui noverunt, loquuntur, bonum ac prædicandum virum. Ille tam egregie Christianus," etc. (*De Peccat. Mer. et remis*, i. iii. 3). In his *Epistle*, 186, he writes of Pelagius thus: "Non solum dileximus, verum etiam deligimus eum."

attainment of his knowledge of the truth. His life had been of a more peaceful and quiet character; and he had probably, from the first, striven after virtue and moral excellence in the calm seclusion of a monastic life, probing the depths of his own self-consciousness, and endeavouring to frame his life and conversation after the pattern of an ideal standard which he placed continually before him. Such being his life, we can easily see that it might most naturally have exerted no little influence in the formation of the opinions which he held; just as the peculiar character of the life through which Augustine passed might have given the colour and complexion to his theological system.

To one like Pelagius, trained in a course of ascetic discipline, it might most easily and naturally become the leading idea, how far any one might advance towards perfection by "a self-active development of the germs of goodness lying in his own moral nature, by the superior energy of the will, by self-control."[1] In the very struggle of the soul to subdue all outward and sensual impulses,—in the silent conflict with self in the ascetic life,—it is quite natural to understand that the true motive-principle of the Christian life, the faith that works by love, might have been passed over, and the operation and effects of mere human effort have been exclusively, or too exclusively, dwelt upon.

Strict and earnest in practical religion, Pelagius (to employ the language of Professor Bright) heard with indignation the feeble self-accusing to which indolent Christians had recourse. His feeling was, "You deceive yourselves by talking thus about your weakness. You *can* serve God, if you have the will." A bishop one day quoted to him Augustine's prayer

[1] Neander, vol. iv. p. 315.

recorded in his *Confessions* (x. 40), and already, it seems, proverbial: "Give what Thou commandest, and then command what Thou wilt" ("Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis"). Pelagius could not endure such language. It seemed to him to cut at the root of all personal exertion, and to encourage listlessness under the garb of piety. And thus, about 405 A.D., he was led on, by a defect of humility in his moral nature, and by an intellectual tendency to exaggeration and one-sidedness, into a view of human capabilities which left no place for supernatural help, and narrowed the gulf between Christianity and heathenism. He began, as Augustine heard, to "dispute against the grace of God," but not so as to cause any public agitation. His view was, in few words, "We need *no inward grace*, for we have *no inborn sin*."

But, as is so frequently the case, the pupil and follower of Pelagius, namely Cœlestius, carried out and developed in a much more rigid and polemical manner the doctrines of his master.

It has been often remarked that "Pelagius is scientifically defective in the very centre of his doctrine,"—on the freedom of the will. His theory, especially in the hands of his vigorous followers Cœlestius and Julianus, "ignored the influence of habit on human volition, and the development of habits from action, isolating human acts, making man's power of choice (his *liberum arbitrium*) a mere natural faculty, of physical, not moral operation." Nor was he less scientifically incorrect in his view of sin. We see, then, in Pelagianism a "disjointed and unconnected theory,—a creed which stands apart from practical life, and is not allowed to shape man's conduct,—a system, in short, which falls to pieces for want of the coherence

of the true 'analogy of faith' which worketh by love." It was by exposing this incompatibility in the doctrine of his opponents, that Augustine showed how irreconcilable with revelation were the deductions of their rationalism. The popularity of Pelagianism no doubt arose from the pretended dignity which the system offered to human nature, flattering thereby its powers and its capacities.[1]

Cœlestius had been an advocate at Rome, when he was induced by the teaching and practice of Pelagius, on his visit there, to adopt a higher religious life, and to follow the ascetic rule. He was a man in the prime and vigour of life, trained in dialectical subtleties, and more inclined than his master, who was now advanced in years, to follow out the principles which he had adopted to their strict logical conclusions.

The master and pupil visited Carthage together in the year 411 A.D. The former soon left, but the latter made a longer stay there. In fact, Cœlestius, on the advice of friends in that city, offered himself as a presbyter in the Church there. Reports, however, of his Pelagian views were spread abroad, which would be of a damaging tendency in a Church where the mind of Augustine exerted a paramount influence over the tone of thought and feeling.

The Deacon Paulinus, of Milan, brought forward, in a Synod held at Carthage in 412 A.D., a list of six heretical propositions which Cœlestius was charged with holding, of which the following were the principal:— (1) That Adam's sin had injured only himself, not the whole human family; (2) That children came into the

[1] See the preface of Dr. Holmes to the *Anti-Pelagian Writings of Augustine*, p. xviii. et seq.

world in the same state in which Adam found himself before the fall.[1]

His replies to the questions put to him were regarded as evasive, and he was excluded from church membership.

Pelagius, however, himself was more successful in the advocacy of his tenets in a journey which he made, in 415 A.D., to Palestine. John, Bishop of Jerusalem, exonerated him from the charge of heresy, which was brought against him by Orosius, a young Spaniard,—a judgment which was subsequently confirmed by the Synod at Diospolis (the ancient Lydda), notwithstanding the strong and even violent opposition of Jerome to the views of Pelagius. An appeal, however, is made by both parties to Innocent, Bishop of Rome, who formally condemns the Pelagian doctrines. But when Cœlestius appeared at Rome before Zosimus, the successor of Innocent, and enlarged on his views and principles, he was acquitted by the Bishop of Rome, who wrote to the North African bishops in favour of the orthodoxy both of Pelagius and Cœlestius. Such a judgment struck the African bishops, who were accustomed to vindicate their independence of the See of Rome, with the most grave astonishment, and they held in consequence a Council at Carthage, and, in a letter addressed to Zosimus, protested against his judgment. This letter had the effect of modifying his views; but, nevertheless, the African bishops summoned another Council in 418 A.D., in which they drew up nine canons, wherein the doctrines of grace

[1] Cf. Bright's *History of the Church*, pp. 269, 270, where all the six or seven propositions are given. He infers from these propositions that Pelagianism is reducible to two principles,—the denial of supernatural grace, and the denial of original sin.

and free-will and baptism were laid down in a way which was quite opposed to Pelagianism. But, not content with this, the African bishops appealed to the Emperor himself, and prayed him to oppose the views of Pelagius and his followers.

As we have already seen, in the account of the controversy with Donatus, Augustine felt no scruple in calling in the authority of the civil power in order to check any errors that he regarded as unchristian; and hence he now employed the interest he had with Count Valerius to procure the interposition of the authority of the State.

His efforts succeeded; and several edicts were promulgated in the year 418 A.D., and subsequently, by the Emperor in opposition to the views of Pelagius and Cœlestius,—the Bishop of Rome, Zosimus, having also yielded a weak assent.

As a sequel to this, a circular letter was sent by Zosimus to all the bishops of the West, requiring them to sign a paper condemnatory of Pelagianism, on peril of deprivation. Of these bishops, eighteen who refused to sign, and were deprived of their benefices, wrote a letter—composed by Julian, the Bishop of Eclanum in Apulia—addressed to Rufus, Bishop of Thessalonica, to complain of the manner in which they had been treated. Julian was a man of high scientific attainments, of great zeal and determination, and wrote in a bold and unflinching tone. He did not feel inclined to yield to the acknowledged reputation which Augustine enjoyed in this particular line of controversy.

It is possible, as Neander has remarked, that Pelagius, Cœlestius, and Julian were not distinctly and fully conscious to themselves of the principles lying at the basis of their tenets, and of all the consequences which

flowed from them. They came to their principles, not by impartial reflection, proceeding solely from a scientific interest, on the principles of the system of faith, but by a polemic interest in behalf of practical Christianity; and they applied those principles only to just the extent which this interest called for.

But the views advocated by Pelagius and his followers were not only most strongly opposed to the bitter conflict and sad experience through which Augustine had passed in his search after truth, but also to the views which he entertained of the catholic doctrine of the Church of Christ. Augustine's sad and painful recollection of the Manichæan heresy would make him shrink from such a theory as that of Pelagius,—"a theory which lessened men's dread of sin, fostered a heathenish self-reliance, and nullified the mystery of the new creation." He realized the importance of the crisis, and braced himself up to the contest with this new development of misbelief. Hence he felt constrained by every motive to endeavour to expose the hollowness and untruthfulness of these opinions. On no controverted subject did he devote his intellectual energies with greater force or vigour, and hence on no subject have his doctrinal opinions exercised a greater influence and authority on the Church of Christ through the centuries down to the present time.[1]

But though we believe that no one mind has exerted such a predominant influence on Christian thought,

[1] "When confronted by Pelagius' denial of Divine grace, St. Augustine could not assume the calm attitude of a theologian. We feel that his indignation masters him: he longs to beat down human pride; he follows it from one lurking-place to another; and he stops only when he has annihilated both pride and man himself in the presence of God and of His sovereign grace" (*Dictionary of Christian Biography*, by Dr. Smith).

especially in reference to the doctrines which Pelagianism brought under review, yet we cannot close our eyes to the fact that, in relation to the absolute nature of grace, and perhaps also in relation to man's corruption, Augustine was hurried, by the force of the spirit of controversy, into unqualified statements and rigorous logical deductions, which thoughtful minds in the present day would hesitate unconditionally to assert or maintain, especially on the point of the salvation of infants.

Augustine's views respecting the grace of God and the free-will of man, and also on the subject of predestination, may perhaps be legitimately regarded as theoretical, doctrinal, and speculative, rather than as essentially practical. It is a singular fact that, notwithstanding all that he wrote on the subject, and all the arguments and controversy in which he was engaged, he scarcely ever allowed these opinions to enter into the domain of practical life and conduct. In his Sermons—so varied in their topics and so rich in their subjects of thought—we find the fewest possible allusions to these more peculiar doctrines. The same may be said of his Homilies and of his Epistles. Though he held his own opinions, clearly and sharply defined, on grace, free-will, predestination, and election, he does not seem to have employed such doctrines, except on rare occasions, with the view of influencing the conduct or guiding the wills of men. He was convinced of the difficulty of making such debateable points clear to the minds of the ordinary run of men, and hence in his appeals to their hearts and consciences, and in his exhortations to them to live a virtuous and godly life, he abstained for the most part from such high and speculative doctrines and theories. They assumed in

his teaching such a form as, "O God, give me what Thou commandest, and then command me what Thou wilt;" or, again, "When God rewards your actions, He crowns His own gifts." They do not, in his practical teaching, stand out as naked logical propositions, but they are clothed in the garb of axiomatic truths and principles of action and conduct. He frankly tells us that the *reason* why God shows mercy to some but not to others, we cannot venture to pronounce; but whether He acts mercifully or punitively, we are convinced that His conduct is guided by the strictest principles of justice, and that men receive only what they deserve.

Augustine's later views on the subject of predestination are thus expressed by Hooker (vol. ii. p. 578, Appendix i. to Book v.):—"His latter judgment was, that the whole body of mankind, in the view of God's eternal knowledge, lay universally polluted with sin, worthy of condemnation and death; that over the mass of corruption there passed two acts of the will of God: an act of favour, liberality, and grace, choosing part to be made partakers of everlasting glory; and an act of justice, forsaking the rest, and adjudging them to endless perdition; these vessels of wrath, those of mercy: which mercy is to God's elect so peculiar, that to them and to none else (for their number is definitely known, and can neither be increased nor diminished), to them it allotteth immortality and all things thereunto appertaining; them it predestinateth, it calleth, justifieth, glorifieth them, it poureth voluntarily that Spirit into their hearts, which Spirit so given is the root of their very first desires and motions, tending to immortality; as for others, on whom such grace is not bestowed, there is justly assigned, and immutably to every one of them, the lot of eternal condemnation."

We may add that the views so ably and forcibly advocated by Augustine in his controversy with Pelagius, more especially on the subject of preventing grace, have been the basis of the teaching of all the highest intellects and the noblest characters that have done honour to the cause of Christ and of His Church during all subsequent time. We are indebted to him for having carefully elaborated and formulated the system of religious doctrine on these abstruse and perplexed questions, which has been maintained as true (though with exceptional disagreement on the part of some) by the greatest theologians that have shed glory on the Church of Christ from his age to the present day.

On this controversy generally Augustine lavished much time and thought. Treatise followed after treatise in vindication of his views. We have, in the first place, his work in three books, written in 412 A.D., on "Forgiveness of Sins and the Baptism of Infants,"[1] addressed to Marcellinus, who was a friend of his, in which he vindicated the necessity of the baptism of infants, on the ground of original sin, and by reason of the grace of God by which man is justified. Then followed, at the close of the same year, another treatise, addressed to Marcellinus, on "The Spirit and the Letter."[2] This was succeeded by another work on "Nature and Grace,"[3] against Pelagius, in the year 415 A.D.

The controversy — carried on first against Pelagianism, and subsequently against that modification of

[1] *De Peccatorum meritis et remissione, et de Baptismo Parvulorum, ad Marcellinum, libri tres.* Cf. *Retract.* ii. 33, in 412 A.D.

[2] *De Spiritu et Litterâ, ad Marcellinum.* Cf. *Retract.* ii. 37.

[3] *De Naturâ et Gratiâ, ad Timasium et Jacobum contra Pelagium, liber unus.* Cf. *Retract.* ii. 42.

Pelagianism which has gained for itself the title of Semi-Pelagianism, which held a middle position between Augustinianism and Pelagianism, its essence consisting in a mixture of grace and free-will—extended over a long lapse of time, and during that period Augustine poured forth from the rich and copious stores of his knowledge a large number of treatises and letters to different persons, and on different specific points of doctrine, the mere titles of which we can scarcely venture to give.[1]

Thus closes the last controversy in the life of Augustine, whose position as a theologian, whose influence upon the Christian Church, and whose power over the minds of men in every age, may be fairly said to stand unrivalled.

> "Mind sways both time and matter; still the man
> Mouldeth the age; nor doth the dull blind force,
> And cycle of unspiritual circumstance,
> Fashion the living spirit of the man,
> Making him victor o'er itself; and thus
> Occasion ever finds its instrument,
> Foreknown and foreordained, to work the work,
> And shadow forth the image of the time,
> And shape its destiny. E'en such was he."

[1] *E.g. De Perfectione Justitiæ Hominis*, at the close of 415 A.D.; *De Gestis Pelagii*, at the beginning of 417 (cf. *Retract.* ii. 47); *De Gratiâ Christi et de Peccato Originali*, 2 books, in 418 (cf. *Retract.* ii. 50); *Contra duas Epistolas Pelagianorum, ad Bonifacium*, 4 books, *circ.* 420 (cf. *Retract.* ii. 61); *Contra Julianum, Hæresis Pelagianæ Defensorem*, 6 books, *circ.* 421 (cf. *Retract.* ii. 62); *De Gratiâ et Libero Arbitrio, ad Valentinum*, in 426 or 427 (cf. *Retract.* ii. 66); *De Correptione et Gratiâ*, to same, in 426 or 427 (cf. *Retract.* ii. last chap.); *De Prædestinatione Sanctorum*, in 428 or 429; *De Dono Perseverantiæ*, in 428 or 429; *Imperfectum Opus, contra Julianum*, in 6 books, written in the last year of his life.

CHAPTER V.

AUGUSTINE'S INFLUENCE ON HIS OWN AND ON AFTER AGES.

"Dicitur, æternumque tenet per sæcula nomen."
VIRG. *Æn.* vi. 235.

THOUGH we have already alluded to the vast and commanding influence which Augustine exerted over all sections of the Church, not only during his own lifetime, but throughout all subsequent ages, we should nevertheless be doing him an injustice, if we did not devote a somewhat larger share of attention to this remarkable feature in the character of the renowned Bishop of Hippo. Since the days of the apostles, no Christian writer or ecclesiastic has gained and secured an influence equal to that of Augustine. This influence diffused itself throughout the whole extent of Western Christendom, pervading and permeating the wide area over which Latin Christianity and the Latin tongue prevailed.

When Christian doctrine and dogma began to be evolved, and more elaborate systems of belief succeeded to the greater simplicity of the early Creeds and Confessions of Faith, then immediately theologians had recourse to the writings of Augustine for the formulated statements of doctrine which he had so carefully and accurately worked out and developed.

In the first ages of Christianity, the doctrines that occupied the foremost place and claimed the most undivided attention were naturally those elementary ones which treated of the unity of the Godhead, as opposed to the polytheism of the heathen world; of the immortality of the soul, a tenet which found but little place in the religion of Paganism; and of a future judgment, together with its consequent issues of reward and punishment.

But when these became the recognised and established doctrines, which demanded the general assent of the whole Christian world, a further development of thought grew out of these primary and elementary truths.

As the mind speculated on these first principles, and dwelt upon the consequences that resulted from their belief or rejection, there arose in the soul, when agitated and excited by such thoughts and inquiries, the perception of a new class of responsibilities, and, as a consequence, either of fresh hopes and anticipations of happiness, or of fresh fears and dread of punishment. Men now began to speculate deeply and seriously on the Divine attributes of love, and mercy, and justice,—on man's accountableness in the sight of God,—on his inherent capability or incapability of saving himself from the wrath to come,—on God's sovereignty and man's free agency, and to what extent they were compatible the one with the other,—of the natural condition of man's heart, and how far he had fallen from primeval uprightness,—and of the degree of assurance he might be able to realize respecting his adoption into God's family, and his ultimate hopes of salvation.

Such questions as these grew naturally out of the

consideration of those cardinal doctrines of a future state of reward and punishment, of the soul's immortality, and of the grand Oneness of the Godhead. Christians could now no longer, with the calmness of an unimpassioned philosophy, scrutinize the motives, feelings, affections, and propensities of the human heart, or devote their time and attention to a mere logical inquiry into the final end and tendency of the different emotions traceable in man's constitution. They could no longer continue to pursue, in a simply speculative spirit, the metaphysical reasonings of Aristotle and Plato on the chief good of man, or on the theory of the habits, or on the nature of the different passions that swayed man's heart. When the professor of Christianity dwelt on such questions as these, he found that they moved and stirred the very depths of his being. He could therefore no longer calmly and dispassionately philosophize on subjects which were so intimately connected with his eternal weal or woe; he could no longer spend his time (of which each moment seemed to him so infinitely precious) in reducing his feelings, or emotions, or passions, or habits, to a classified order and arrangement, by means of cold analysis or mental generalization. He had no time and no heart for such abstract considerations as these, which now appeared to him to savour of laborious trifling and mere intellectual subtlety, when he fully realized that on the state of his heart, on the character of his feelings, on the condition of his temper, hung the momentous issues of either communion with or alienation from the one true God, and of his preparation for that awful judgment to come, at which all the thoughts, motives, and intents of his heart would be subjected to a searching

scrutiny, on the result of which would depend the irrevocable award either of happiness or misery. When viewed in such a solemn light as this, and when thus looked at in the mirror of eternity, theory, logic, analysis, and disquisition gave way before the supreme importance of the practical, the spiritual, and the eternal interests which surrounded the subjects of investigation.

In such a course of thought and speculation as we have here indicated, Augustine must have been long and anxiously engaged. Long had he been searching after truth, and endeavouring with a feverish excitement to attain to the real end and object of his being. He had, in this pursuit after truth, striven to make the philosophy of the heathen a guide to lead him to the great final end of his desires, and he had courted also the specious knowledge which Manichæism held out to his acceptance; but both equally in vain. When, however, he found in Holy Scripture the only solution of the problems that agitated his whole being, and strove to bring his views into conformity with its teaching, he at once, from the instinctive character of his mind, endeavoured to classify into a system the truths which he found scattered in unsystematic simplicity throughout the length and breadth of the Divine records, and to tabulate those truths for his own good and that of others. And hence the secret of his power over the hearts of men in his own day and in after-times. He had himself worked out from his own consciousness—in which an awful struggle had been carried on between light and darkness, truth and error, good and evil—a system of views and doctrines based upon what he felt assured in his own mind was the teaching of Scripture. He could rest in

this system which he had evolved with comfort and assurance. Accordingly, when others had to pass through somewhat of the same mental and moral struggle which he had undergone, we can readily conceive what a consolation it must have proved to them to find a system of doctrine worked out for them on which they could lean, principles ready at hand for their guidance, a solution of their difficulties presented to them, and a rest discovered for their laborious and toilsome searching after truth.

Hence the secret of his influence with his fellow-men; hence the commanding position which he assumed through the long centuries. The troubled mind found repose in the dogmatic and definite deductions and generalizations which Augustine had worked out for his own peace, comfort, and happiness. The clear, unhesitating nature of his theological opinions, in which a fixed and precise system prevailed, could not fail to possess a charm and attraction for the distressed and agitated minds of searchers after truth, who were passing through the same phases of thought through which he had passed before; and so they instinctively clung to his tenets, and embraced his views, and adopted his system, and regarded him as a teacher and a guide, whom they looked upon as Heaven-sent, in this their time of perplexity and mental strife.

They were willing to admit and allow the mighty influence of the Divine power; to place themselves under its wide-reaching sovereignty; and, at the same time, even to offer up (if needs be) their free agency on the altar of Omnipotence and infinite Prescience. Moved, therefore, by the grand and comprehensive genius of Augustine, by the energy and activity of his mind, and by the intense earnestness of his moral

character, not only his contemporaries, but the men of succeeding generations, gave themselves up, spell-bound as it were, to his teaching, and elevated him to the highest pinnacle of fame.

He had expressed his thoughts and elaborated his system in a language far purer and richer than that in which his fellow-countrymen Tertullian and Cyprian had written. The faults and blemishes which had disfigured their style were not reproduced, or very rarely, in his works. The warm fervour of his African temperament still remained, but it was combined with the subtlety of the logician, the perspicuity of the rhetorician, the mental breadth and grasp of the real philosopher, and the vast attainments — scriptural, historical, and literary — of the man of profound learning. Such an enthusiasm as he possessed, such a fervour of disposition that rose above the trammels of logic and metaphysical nicety of statement, eminently fitted him to be the acknowledged leader of his fellow-men, and to give a tone and direction to the thought and feeling of the age in which he lived. And no doubt it was this impassioned eagerness of Augustine, this practical estimate of theoretical questions, this earnest human appreciation of the doubts, and difficulties, and speculations of man's nature, that caused him to acquire the gigantic and marvellous influence which he wielded over the hearts, and souls, and intellects of other men. That age of Christianity was, as we have before hinted, stirred to its very depths, and was heaving with the suppressed volcanic fires that were smouldering within it. Therefore no calm and cold abstract arguments were suited to such an age. It required the earnest fiery zeal, devotion, and piety, as well as the scriptural knowledge, which

had given birth to his *Confessions;* and men affected by a similar sense of the vileness of their nature, and of the deliverance which the grace of God could alone effect, found in Augustine the very leader whom they desired, and the counsellor whom they needed,—one who, from an intimate experience of the same torturing doubts and perplexities, could minister advice and consolation to them, when suffering under the burden of a similar mental and spiritual malady.

And the influence exerted by Augustine has always been dominant at all great crises of religious thought. It has been felt in the greatest degree when the hearts of men have been stirred and agitated by the waves of religious enthusiasm, change, or excitement. He then appeared to stand forth as their acknowledged guide and leader, and to be recognised as the directing spirit in regulating and controlling the storm of feeling in their hearts.

We may observe that, in his own case, his vast range of knowledge and of philosophy never seemed to weigh down or embarrass his power of reasoning. He could make an easy and unfettered use of all the accumulated stores of information which he had acquired.

His life (it has been remarked by Dean Milman) was the type of his theology; and as it passed through its various changes of age, of circumstance, and of opinion, it left its own impression strongly and permanently stamped upon the whole of Latin Christianity. The gentleness of his childhood, the passions of his youth, the studies of his adolescence, the wilder dreams of his immature Christianity, the Manichæism, the intermediate stage of Platonism, through which he passed into orthodoxy, the fervour with which he

embraced, the vigour with which he developed, the unhesitating confidence with which he enforced his final creed, — all affected more or less the general mind.

And thus it was that Augustine's doctrinal views, his expositions of Scripture, and his general theological system, exerted an incalculable influence on the mind of Luther at the Reformation, moulding his theories and affecting his language in a marvellous manner. Nor can any one who has studied the logical development of doctrine set forth by Calvin fail to see how deeply the influence of Augustine penetrated his mind, modified his reasoning, and directed his line of thought, even though he carried his theories beyond the principles laid down by his great Master. Nor can we read of the Jansenist movement in the Church of Rome without observing how greatly its advocates were impregnated and influenced by the line of argument, the tone of feeling, and the cast of thought, which they found in the writings of this great Father, their founder Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres, having by his book, named *Augustinus*, in the year 1640, revived the doctrines and opinions of Augustine. The same influence may be traced throughout mediæval literature and theology. The greatest of the doctors that Scholasticism could boast of—Thomas Aquinas, the Dominican Friar, named *Doctor Universalis* or *Angelicus*, the *Angelic Doctor*, the *Angel of the Schools*, in his *Summa Theologiæ*, and before him Peter Lombard, called *Magister Sententiarum* or *Master of the Sentences*, whose great work was regarded as the "Storehouse for Scholastic polemics"—both testified by their writings, and in their disputations, to the mine from whence they had drawn their subtle speculations on

theological subjects, and to the source from whence they had derived their power of analyzing the human heart and unravelling the secret motives and principles which affect and influence human thought and action. Both may fairly be called disciples of Augustine.

Nor was Augustine's sway over the mystical school of the Middle Ages less conspicuous and admitted. They naturally went to his writings for that exalted tone of religious fervour, that exhibition of the higher life, that looking beyond the gross boundary of this world into the supersensuous region of faith and spirit, that surrender of the heart with all its affections to the service and worship of God, that deep spirit of piety and holiness which could be found in such abundant measure in Augustine's writings. It was to these well-springs of devotion and piety that Hugo of St. Victor (who, from his adoption of the theological views of Augustine, and his expression of them in his writings, was named *Augustine the Second*, and also the *Mouth of Augustine*), and Bernard of Clairvaux, whose influence throughout Christian Europe was immense, and who was regarded as the great oracle of the Cistercians, as well as other writers of the mystical school, had constant recourse and resort.

As we descend down the stream of time, we find that the opinions of the chief leaders of the Reformation in the sixteenth century were moulded and framed to a great degree on the principles and language of Augustine. His views on the corruption of man's nature—on the efficacy of the grace of God—on the necessity of a living faith as opposed to the dull formality of a lifeless Pelagianism—influenced alike their doctrines and teaching. It has been observed

by Böhringer[1] that "Luther cannot be understood without Augustine, nor the Reformation without Augustinianism. The most important contents of Augustinianism are, we think, anthropological (grace and freedom); and these contents, comprehended not in its external authority, but in its innermost substance, are first fairly brought to life and light in the Reformation, and develop and complete themselves in the Evangelical Church." And so Bindemann has said: "St. Augustine is one of the most extraordinary lights in the Church. In importance, he takes rank behind no teacher who has laboured in her since the days of the apostles. It may well be said that the first place among the Church Fathers is due to him; and, at the time of the Reformation, only a Luther, by reason of the fulness and depth of his spirit, and his nobleness of character, was worthy to stand at his side. He is the highest point of the development of the Western Church before the Middle Ages. From him the Mysticism no less than the Scholasticism of the Middle Ages has drawn its life; and the leaders of the Reformation derived from his writings, next to the study of the Holy Scriptures, especially the Paulinian Epistles, those principles which gave birth to a new era."

It may fairly be added, in proof of Augustine's influence, that in several cases the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England express dogma and doctrine through the medium of Augustine's language. It is an assertion founded on truth, that "whatever basis of doctrine exists in common between the great sections of Catholicism and Protestantism, was laid at first by the genius and piety of St. Augustine. How unique

[1] Quoted in Schaff's *St. Augustine*, p. 94.

the influence which directed the minds of Anselm, and Bernard, and Aquinas, and Bonaventure, with no less power than it swayed the thoughts of Luther, and Melanchthon, and Zuingle, and Calvin!"

Such, then, was the many-sided influence which he exerted. He was held in esteem and veneration by those who were the representatives of different schools of thought, and different phases of theological sentiment.

As he was a living power during his lifetime with his contemporaries, and as the different bishops of his day sought his advice and let him formulate their views for them, so was it in the long centuries afterwards. We have seen how Possidius of Calama, his intimate friend and biographer, revered and reverenced him; how Euodius of Usala, and how Alypius of Tagaste, loved and followed him; and, we may add, how Aurelius of Carthage, and Fortunatus of Cirta, accepted his views and acquiesced in his opinions. We have seen how he was put forward as the spokesman of the orthodox in Synods and Councils; how he was requested to systematize their views and to put into form and shape their decisions; how he was sought for as a preacher far and near; how he exerted an influence even on the distant bishop of the Roman See, and manifestly, in more than one instance, affected his decisions.

"His vehement and intrepid dogmatism," it has been said, "hurried along the unresisting mind. The imagination was at the same time kept awake by a rich vein of allegoric interpretation, dictated by the same bold decision, and enforced as necessary conclusions from the sacred writings, or as latent truths intentionally wrapped up in those mysterious phrases."

Such a mastery over the hearts and minds of men has been accorded to very few, if any, uninspired teachers,—a mastery reaching from Augustine's own day to the very age in which we live,—a mastery over the leaders of thought, and the greatest, the most distinguished, and the most religious men of every generation, — a mastery which we may venture to predict will last till the end of time.

" He hath built up, glorious architect, a monument more durable than brass;
His children's children shall talk of him in love, and teach their sons his honour:
His dignity hath set him among princes, the universe is debtor to his worth,
His privilege is blessing for ever, his happiness shineth now,
For he standeth of that grand Election, each man one among a thousand,
Whose sound is gone out into all lands, and their words to the end of the world!"

CHAPTER VI.

EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF AUGUSTINE.

'Reading is an unremembered pastime; but a *writing* is eternal:
For therein the dead heart liveth, the clay-cold tongue is eloquent.
As a fossil in the rock, or a coin in the mortar of a ruin,
So the symbolled thoughts tell of a departed soul:
The plastic hand hath its witness in a statue, and exactitude vision in a picture,
And so, the mind that was among us, in its *Writings* is embalmed."
—MARTIN TUPPER'S *Proverbial Philosophy.*

IT is difficult to render with spirit and yet with accuracy the writings of one who wrote in the Latin language, and to present them to English readers in an English dress. This difficulty is increased when the author—chargeable, it may be, at times with a richness of language that borders closely on redundancy and verboseness,[1] and perhaps guilty of an occasional carelessness of expression—abounds in antithesis, in a play on words, in poetic imagery, and in an oratorical style, his subject-matter also being not unfrequently deep, abstruse, and philosophical.

Nevertheless it may interest those who do not care to consult the original works for themselves, to have some specimens presented to them of the very words and thoughts—so far as they admit of reproduction in

[1] Erasmus, in his *Epistles* (xx. 2), speaks of him as a writer "obscuræ subtilitatis et parum amænæ prolixitatis."

a translation—of the great and distinguished theologian whose life they have been reading. The following extracts are not abridgments or abstracts of his writings, but are literal translations of particular and selected passages, by which it is conceived that the English reader will form the truest and best idea of his style, expression, and mode of thought.

I. His *devotional* and *doctrinal* works will claim our attention first; and of these we place in the foreground that "matchless autobiography," so admirably adapted to cure self-love, and to lead away the human heart from the passing frivolities of earth,—a work translated into almost every European language, and which ranks for spiritual influence with the *Imitation of Christ* of Thomas à Kempis, and with Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*,—his inimitable and deeply instructive—

(1) *Confessions.*

(*a*) His misery consequent on the death of his friend (iv. 11, 12):—"But what speak I of these things? for now is no time to question, but to confess unto Thee. Wretched I was; and wretched is every soul bound by the friendship of perishable things; he is torn asunder when he loses them, and then he feels the wretchedness, which he had, ere yet he lost them. So was it then with me; I wept most bitterly, and found my repose in bitterness. Thus was I wretched, and that wretched life I held dearer than my friend. . . . O madness, which knowest not how to love men, like men! O foolish man that I then was, enduring impatiently the lot of man! I fretted then, sighed, wept, was distracted; had neither rest

nor counsel. For I bore about a shattered and bleeding soul, impatient of being borne by me, yet where to repose it, I found not. Not in calm groves, not in games and music, nor in fragrant spots, nor in curious banquetings, nor, finally in books or poesy, found it repose. All things looked ghastly, yea, the very light; whatsoever was not what he was, was revolting and hateful, except groaning and tears. For in those alone found I a little refreshment. But when my soul was withdrawn from them, a huge load of misery weighed me down. To Thee, O Lord, it ought to have been raised, for Thee to lighten; I knew it, but neither could nor would; the more since, when I thought of thee, Thou wert not to me any solid or substantial thing. For Thou wert not Thyself, but a mere phantom, and my error was my God."

(*b*) Benefit of the lowliness and yet the depth of Scripture (vi. 8):—"For now what things, sounding strangely in the Scripture, were wont to offend me, having heard divers of them expounded satisfactorily, I referred to the depth of the mysteries, and its authority appeared to me the more venerable, and more worthy of religious credence, in that, while it lay open to all to read, it reserved the majesty of its mysteries within its profounder meaning, stooping to all in the great plainness of its words and lowliness of its style, yet calling forth the intensest application of such as are not light of heart; that so it might receive all in its open bosom, and through narrow passages waft over towards Thee some few, yet many more than if it stood not aloft on such a height of authority, nor drew multitudes within its bosom by its holy lowliness. These things I thought on, and Thou wert with

me; I sighed, and Thou heardest me; I wavered, and Thou didst guide me; I wandered through the broad way of the world, and Thou didst not forsake me."

(*c*) The fear of death and judgment checks to Augustine in his sin (vi. 26):—"To Thee be praise, glory to Thee, Fountain of mercies. I was becoming more miserable, and Thou nearer. Thy right hand was continually ready to pluck me out of the mire, and to wash me thoroughly, and I knew it not; nor did anything call me back from a yet deeper gulf of carnal pleasures, but the fear of death, and of Thy judgment to come; which, amid all my changes, never departed from my breast. And in my disputes with my friends Alypius and Nebridius, of the nature of good and evil, I held that Epicurus had in my mind won the palm, had I not believed, that after death there remained a life for the soul, and places of requital according to men's deserts, which Epicurus would not believe."

(*d*) Memory, though boundless, reaches not to God (x. 26):—"What shall I do then, O Thou my true life, my God? I will pass even beyond this power of mine which is called memory: yea, I will pass beyond it, that I may approach unto Thee, O sweet Light. What sayest Thou to me? See, I am mounting up through my mind towards Thee who abidest above me. Yea, I now will pass beyond this power of mine which is called memory, desirous to arrive at Thee, whence Thou mayest be arrived at; and to cleave unto Thee, whence one may cleave unto Thee. . . . I will pass then beyond memory also, that I may arrive at Him who hath separated me from the four-footed beasts, and made me wiser than the fowls of the air; I will pass beyond memory also, and where shall

I find Thee, Thou truly good and certain sweetness? And where shall I find Thee? If I find Thee without my memory, then do I not retain Thee in my memory. And how shall I find if I remember Thee not?"

(2) *Soliloquies.*

The Invocation to God (i. 3):—"Thee I invoke, O God of Truth, in whom, and from whom, and by whom all things, which are true, are true: O God of wisdom, in whom, and from whom, and by whom all things, which are wise, are wise: O God, Thou true and supreme Life, in whom, and from whom, and by whom all things live, which truly and supremely live: O blessed God, in whom, and from whom, and by whom all things, which are blessed, are blessed: O God, good and glorious, in whom, and from whom, and by whom all things, which are good and beautiful, are good and beautiful: O God, Thou intelligible Light, in whom, and from whom, and by whom all things, which shine intelligibly, do intelligibly shine: O God, whose kingdom is the whole world, whom sense knows not: O God, from whom to turn aside, is to fall; to whom to turn, is to rise again; in whom to abide, is to stand secure: O God, from whom to depart, is to die; to return to whom, is to be restored to life; in whom to dwell, is to live: O God, whom no one loses, except deceived; whom no one seeks for, unless encouraged; whom no one finds, unless he be cleansed: O God, whom to abandon, is indeed to perish; whom to think of, is indeed to love; whom to see, is indeed to possess: O God, to whom faith incites us, hope raises us, and charity unites us:—Thee, O God, I earnestly supplicate. O God, to whom it was owing that we did not utterly perish: O God, by whom we are exhorted to

watch: O God, by whom we distinguish good from evil: O God, by whom we avoid what is evil and follow what is good: O God, who callest us back to the right way: O God, who leadest us to the gate: O God, who causest the gate to be opened to us when we knock: O God, who givest us the bread of life: O God, by whom we thirst for that water, of which having drunk, we can never thirst again: O God, who reprovest the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: O God, through whom we are not in bondage to weak and beggarly elements: O God, who cleansest us, and preparest us for Divine reward; O do Thou draw nigh and be favourable to me."

(3) His work "On Christian Doctrine," in four books, finished in 426 A.D.; on which compare *Retract.* ii. 4.

(*a*) Love never faileth (i. ch. xxxviii.):—"But sight shall displace faith; and hope shall be swallowed up in that perfect bliss to which we shall come: love, on the other hand, shall wax greater when these others fail. For if we love by faith that which as yet we see not, how much more shall we love it when we begin to see! And if we love by hope that which as yet we have not reached, how much more shall we love it when we reach it! For there is this great difference between things temporal and things eternal, that a temporal object is valued more before we possess it, and begins to prove worthless the moment we attain it, because it does not satisfy the soul, which has its only true and sure resting-place in eternity: an eternal object, on the other hand, is loved with greater ardour when it is in possession than while it is still an object of desire, for no one in his longing for it can set a higher value on it than really belongs to it, so as to

think it comparatively worthless when he finds it of less value than he thought; on the contrary, however high the value any man may set upon it when he is on his way to possess it, he will find it, when it comes into his possession, of higher value still."

(*b*) On the duty of the Christian teacher (iv. ch. iv.):—"It is the duty, then, of the interpreter and teacher of the Holy Scripture, the defender of the true faith and the opponent of error, both to teach what is right and to refute what is wrong, and in the performance of this task to conciliate the hostile, to rouse the careless, and to tell the ignorant both what is occurring at present and what is possible in the future. But once that his hearers are friendly, attentive, and ready to learn, whether he has found them so, or has himself made them so, the remaining objects are to be carried out in whatever way the case requires. If the hearers need teaching, the matter treated of must be made fully known by means of narrative. On the other hand, to clear up points that are doubtful requires reasoning and the exhibition of proofs. If, however, the hearers require to be roused rather than instructed, in order that they may be diligent to do what they already know, and to bring their feelings into harmony with the truths they admit, greater vigour of speech is needed. Here entreaties and reproaches, exhortations and upbraidings, and all the other means of rousing the emotions, are necessary."

(4.) The *Enchiridion:* a treatise on Faith, Hope, and Love.

Love, which is greater than faith and hope, is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost (ch. cxvii.):—"And now as to Love, which the Apostle declares to

be greater than the other two graces, that is, than faith and hope (1 Cor. xiii. 13), the greater the measure in which it dwells in a man, the better is the man in whom it dwells. For when there is a question as to whether a man is good one does not ask what he believes, or what he hopes, but what he loves. For the man who loves aright no doubt believes and hopes aright; whereas the man who has not love believes in vain, even though his beliefs are true; and hopes in vain, even though the objects of his hope are a real part of true happiness; unless, indeed, he believes and hopes for this, that he may attain by prayer the blessing of love. For although it is not possible to hope without love, it may yet happen that a man does not love that which is necessary to the attainment of his hope; as, for example, if he hopes for eternal life (and who is there that does not desire this?) and yet does not love righteousness, without which no one can attain to eternal life. Now this is the true faith of Christ which the Apostle speaks of, 'which worketh by love' (Gal. v. 6); and if there is anything that it does not yet embrace in its love, asks that it may receive, seeks that it may find, and knocks that it may be opened unto it (Matt. vii. 7). For faith obtains through prayer that which the law commands. For without the gift of God, that is, without the Holy Spirit, through whom love is shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. v. 5), the law can command, but it cannot assist; and, moreover, it makes a man a transgressor, for he can no longer excuse himself on the plea of ignorance. Now carnal lust reigns where there is not the love of God."

(5) A treatise on "Faith and the Creed."

Of the Son of God, and of His title of the "Word"

(ch. iii.):—"We believe also in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten of the Father, that is to say, His only Son, our Lord. This 'Word,' however, we ought not to apprehend merely in the sense in which we think of our own words, which are given forth by the voice and the mouth, and strike the air and pass on, and subsist no longer than their sound continues. For that Word remains unchangeably: for of this very Word was it spoken when of Wisdom it was said, 'Remaining in herself, she maketh all things new' (Wisd. vii. 27). Moreover, the reason of His being named the Word of the Father, is that the Father is made known by Him. Accordingly, just as it is our intention, when we speak truth, that by means of our words our mind should be made known to him who hears us, and that whatever we carry in secrecy in our heart may be set forth by means of signs of this sort for the intelligent understanding of another individual; so this Wisdom that God the Father begat is most appropriately named His Word, inasmuch as the most hidden Father is made known to worthy minds by the same" (Salmond's Translation).

(6) On the Trinity.

(*a*) The object of the treatise (i. 1):—"The following dissertation concerning the Trinity, as the reader ought to be informed, has been written in order to guard against the sophistries of those who disdain to begin with faith, and are deceived by a crude and perverse love of reason. Now one class of such men endeavour to transfer to things incorporeal and spiritual the ideas they have formed, whether through the experience of the bodily senses, or by natural human wit and diligent quickness, or by the aid of art, from things

corporeal, so as to seek to measure and conceive of the former by the latter. Others, again, frame whatever sentiments they may have concerning God according to the nature or affections of the human mind; and through this error they govern their discourse, in disputing concerning God, by distorted and fallacious rules. While yet a third class strive indeed to transcend the whole creation, which doubtless is changeable, in order to raise their throughts to the unchangeable substance, which is God; but, being weighed down by the burden of mortality, whilst they both would seem to know what they do not, and cannot know what they would, preclude themselves from entering the very path of understanding, by an over-bold affirmation of their own presumptuous judgments, choosing rather not to correct their opinion when it is perverse, than to change that which they have once defended" (Haddan's Translation).

(*b*) Conclusions on the Trinity (viii. 1):—"We have said elsewhere, that those things are predicated specially in the Trinity as belonging severally to each person, which are predicated relatively the one to the other, as Father and Son, and the gift of both, the Holy Spirit; for the Father is not the Trinity, nor the Son the Trinity, nor the gift the Trinity: but that whenever each is singly spoken of in respect to themselves, then they are not spoken of as three in the plural number, but one, the Trinity itself, as the Father God, the Son God, and the Holy Spirit God; the Father good, the Son good, and the Holy Spirit good; and the Father omnipotent, the Son omnipotent, and the Holy Ghost omnipotent: yet neither three Gods, nor three goods, nor three omnipotents, but one God, good, omnipotent, the Trinity itself."

II. From his great *Apologetic* treatise, the *City of God*,—"a work alike noble in the conception and in the execution,—the *last* and most important of the apologies against Paganism,—the *first* of professed treatises on the Church,"[1] the Latinity of which is superior to that of his other treatises, as having been written for a more learned class of readers,—some brief extracts must be made.

(*a*) From the Explanatory Preface (i. 1):—"The glorious City of God is my theme in this work, which you, my dearest son Marcellinus, suggested, and which is due to you by my promise. I have undertaken its defence against those who prefer their own gods to the Founder of this city,—a city surpassingly glorious, whether we view it as it still lives by faith in this fleeting course of time, and sojourns as a stranger in the midst of the ungodly, or as it shall dwell in the fixed stability of its eternal seat, which it now with patience waits for, expecting until 'righteousness shall return unto judgment,' and it obtain, by virtue of its excellence, final victory and perfect peace. A great work this, and an arduous; but God is my helper."

(*b*) On the reward of the inhabitants of the celestial city (v. 16):—"But the reward of the saints is far different, who even here endured reproaches for that City of God which is hateful to the lovers of this world. That city is eternal. There none are born, for none die. There is true and full felicity,—not a goddess, but a gift of God. Thence we receive the pledge of faith, whilst on our pilgrimage we sigh for its beauty. There rises not the sun on the good and the evil, but the Sun of Righteousness protects the good alone. And therefore it was not only for the

[1] See J. C. Robertson's *History of the Christian Church*, p. 367.

sake of recompensing the citizens of Rome that her empire and glory had been so signally extended, but also that the citizens of that eternal city, during their pilgrimage here, might diligently and soberly contemplate these examples, and see what a love they owe to the supernal country on account of life eternal, if the terrestrial country was so much beloved by its citizens on account of human glory."

(*c*) Of the everlasting felicity of the City of God (xxii. 30):—"How great shall be that felicity, which shall be tainted with no evil, which shall lack no good, and which shall afford leisure for the praises of God, who shall be all in all! For I know not what other employment there can be where no lassitude shall slacken activity, nor any want stimulate to labour. I am admonished also by the sacred song, in which I read or hear the words, 'Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord; they will be still praising Thee' (Ps. lxxxiv. 4). All the members and organs of the incorruptible body, which now we see to be suited to various necessary uses, shall contribute to the praises of God; for in that life necessity shall have no place, but full, certain, secure, everlasting felicity. . . . True honour shall be there, for it shall be denied to none who is worthy, nor yielded to any unworthy: true peace shall be there, where no one shall suffer opposition either from himself or any other. God Himself, who is the Author of virtue, shall there be its reward; for, as there is nothing greater or better, He has promised Himself. He shall be the end of our desires, who shall be seen without end, loved without cloy, praised without weariness. This outgoing of affection, this employment, shall certainly be, like eternal life itself, common to all" (Dods' Translation).

III. Augustine's *Letters* are so elaborate and long, that it is difficult to give any sufficient idea of them by short extracts. Still, they constitute too important an element in his writings to be passed over unnoticed.

Whether he writes to Paulinus on his consecration to the episcopal office, or to Valerius on the subject of his ordination; whether he speaks of the necessity of adopting coercive measures against the Donatists, not from a vindictive spirit, but with a view to their correction; whether he treats of persecution, or denounces the error of the Donatists in re-baptizing those who had been previously admitted into Church communion; whether he addresses Casulanus or Januarius on the question of the varieties of ecclesiastical ritual; whether he is led to speak to Volusianus on the profoundness and depth of Holy Scripture, of the difficulties to be found therein, or of the peculiarities which mark off and contra-distinguish the Bible from all other books; whether he dwells on baptism, or the mixed condition of the visible Church, or on marriage, virginity, or sisterhoods, or on the angelic life on earth, or on the state of infants dying when unbaptized; whether, as in his reply to Honoratus, he discusses the question of flight during persecution, or alludes to heathen sacrifices, or the nature of the happy life, or the condition of our bodies at the resurrection; whether he considers the origin of the soul, or the subject of eternal punishment, or prayer in general, or prayers for the dead in particular; whether he speaks of his own *Confessions*, as in his letter to Darius, or of coadjutor bishops, or the partition of dioceses; whether, as in his Epistle to Consentius, he treats of the relation that exists between faith and reason, or writes to Dioscorus of the various philosophies that have prevailed in the world, or to Count Boniface

respecting the lawfulness of war, or to Hesychius on the end of the world,—whatever subject Augustine handled in these *Letters,* he threw an interest around it from the largeness of his grasp and the rich stores of his own mind, and laid down principles which the Christian Church has referred to ever since with respect, gratitude, and deference.

(*a*) To Euodius (Letter clxix., 415 A.D.):—"If acquaintance with the treatises which specially occupy me, and from which I am unwilling to be turned aside to anything else, is so highly valued by you, let some one be sent to copy them for you. For I have now finished several of those which had been commenced by me this year before Easter, near the beginning of Lent. For, to the three books on the *City of God,* in opposition to its enemies, the worshippers of demons, I have added two others, and in these five books I think enough has been said to answer those who maintain that the heathen gods must be worshipped in order to secure prosperity in this present life, and who are hostile to the Christian name from an idea that that prosperity is hindered by us. In the sequel I must, as I promised in the first book, answer those who think that the worship of their gods is the only way to obtain that life after death with a view to obtain which we are Christians. I have dictated also, in volumes of considerable size, expositions of three Psalms, the 60th, the 72nd, and the 78th. Commentaries on the other Psalms — not yet dictated, nor even entered on — are eagerly expected and demanded of me. From these studies I am unwilling to be called away and hindered by any questions thrusting themselves upon me from another quarter; yea, so unwilling, that I do not wish to turn at present

even to the books on the Trinity, which I have long had on hand, and have not yet completed, because they require a great amount of labour, and I believe that they are of a nature to be understood only by few; on which account they claim my attention less urgently than writings which may, I hope, be useful to very many."

(*b*) To Alypius (Letter ccxxvii., *circ.* 428 A.D.):—"Brother Paulus has arrived here safely: he reports that the pains devoted to the business which engaged him have been rewarded with success; the Lord will grant that with these his troubles in that matter may terminate. He salutes you warmly, and tells us tidings concerning Gabianus which give us joy, namely, that having by God's mercy obtained a prosperous issue in his case, he is now not only in name a Christian, but in sincerity a very excellent convert to the faith, and was baptized recently at Easter, having both in his heart and on his lips the grace which he received. How much I long for him I can never express; but you know that I love him" (Cunningham's Translation).

IV. From the *Controversial* writings of Augustine it is still more difficult to give short extracts, as the line of argument is by this means broken, and the passages would appear to stand alone and isolated, without sequence and connection. With this caution, however, we may perhaps venture to give one or two quotations on important or interesting subjects. The first passage quoted, with its context, has given birth to much controversy.

(1) *Donatism.*

On the correction of the Donatists (ch. vi.):—"It is indeed better (as no one ever could deny) that men

should be led to worship God by teaching, than that they should be driven to it by fear of punishment or pain; but it does not follow that because the former course produces the better men, therefore those who do not yield to it should be neglected. For many have found advantage (as we have proved, and are daily proving by actual experiment) in being first compelled by fear or pain, so that they might afterwards be influenced by teaching, or might follow out in act what they had already learned in word. Some, indeed, set before us the sentiments of a certain secular author, who said:

> "'"'Tis well, I ween, by shame the young to train,
> And dread of meanness, rather than by pain.'
> —*Ter. Adelph.*

This is unquestionably true. But whilst those are better who are guided aright by love, those are certainly more numerous who are corrected by fear. For, to answer these persons out of their own author, we find him saying in another place:

> "'"Unless by pain and suffering thou art taught,
> Thou canst not guide thyself aright in aught."

But, moreover, Holy Scripture has both said concerning the former better class, 'There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear' (1 John iv. 18); and also concerning the latter lower class, which furnishes the majority, 'A servant will not be corrected by words; for though he understand, he will not answer' (Prov. xxix. 19). In saying, 'He will not be corrected by words,' he did not order him to be left to himself, but implied an admonition as to the means whereby he ought to be corrected; otherwise he would not have said, 'He will not be corrected with words,' but without any qualification, 'He will not be cor-

rected.' For in another place he says that not only the servant, but also the undisciplined son, must be corrected with stripes, and that with great fruits as the result (Prov. xxiii. 14, xiii. 24)" (King's Transl.).

(2) *Manichæism.*

Against the Epistle of Manichæus called fundamental (ch. i.). To restore heretics is better than to destroy them:—"My prayer to the one true, Almighty God, of whom, and by whom, and in whom are all things, has been, and is now, that in opposing and refuting the heresy of you Manichæans, as you may after all be heretics more from thoughtlessness than from malice, He would give me a mind calm and composed, and aiming at your recovery rather than at your discomfiture. For while the Lord, by His servants, overthrows the kingdoms of error, His will concerning erring men, as far as they are men, is that they should be restored rather than destroyed. And in every case where, previous to the final judgment, God inflicts punishment, whether through wicked men or through righteous men, whether through unintelligent agents or through intelligent, whether in secret or openly, we must believe that the designed effect is the recovery of men, and not their ruin; while there is a preparation for the final doom in the case of those who reject the means of recovery. Thus, as the universe contains some things which serve for bodily punishment, as fire, poison, disease, and the rest, and other things in which the mind is punished, not by bodily distress, but by the entanglements of its own passions, such as loss, exile, bereavement, reproach, and the like; while other things again, without giving pain, are fitted to comfort and soothe in distress, as for example consolations,

exhortations, discussions, and such things: in all these the supreme justice of God makes use sometimes even of wicked men, acting in ignorance, and sometimes of good men, acting intelligently. It behoves us, accordingly, to desire in preference the better part, that we might attain our end in your correction, not by contention, and strife, and persecutions, but by kindly consolation, by friendly exhortation, by quiet discussion; as it is written: 'The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle towards all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.' It behoves us, I say, to desire to obtain this part in the work; it belongs to God to give what is good to those who ask for what they desire" (Stothert's Translation).

(3) *Pelagianism.*

From the treatise "On Forgiveness of Sins and Baptism" (ii. 5). The will of man requires the help of God:—"Now for the commission of sin we get no help from God; but to do justly, and to fulfil the law of righteousness in every part thereof, we have no ability whatever, except as God shall help us. For as the bodily eye is not assisted by the light that it may turn away therefrom shut and averted, but gets the assistance of the light in order that it may see,—being wholly incapable of vision without such help,—so God, who is the light of the inner man, aids our mental sight, in order that we do some good, not after our own, but according to His righteousness. Whenever we turn away from Him, it is our own act; we then show carnal wisdom, we then give our consent to the unholy promptings of fleshly concupiscence. When we turn to Him, God helps us; when we turn away from

Him, He forsakes us. But then He helps us even to turn to Him,—an action which that (divine) light of which we speak certainly does not show to the eyes of our body. When, therefore, He commands us in the words, 'Turn ye unto Me, and I will turn unto you,' and we say to Him, 'Turn us, O God of our salvation,' and again, 'Turn us, O God of hosts;' what else do we in fact say than 'Give us what Thou commandest'?" (Holmes' Translation).

V. From his *Sermons* (lxx.).

"It seems strange to some, brethren, when they hear the Lord say: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. Take My yoke upon you,' etc. 'For My yoke is easy and My burden is light' (Matt. xi. 28–30). And they consider that they who have fearlessly bowed their necks to this yoke, and have with much submission taken this burden upon their shoulders, are tossed about and exercised by so great difficulties in the world, that they seem not to be called from labour to rest, but rather from rest to labour. And we hear the Apostle under that easy yoke and light burden say: 'In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions,' etc. All these grievous and heavy trials which he mentioned, did he very frequently and abundantly sustain; but in very deed the Holy Spirit was with him in the washing of the outward man, to renew the inner man from day to day, and by the taste of spiritual rest in the affluence of the delights of God, to soften down by the hope of future blessedness all present hardships, and to alleviate all heavy trials. Lo! how sweet a yoke of Christ did he bear, and how light a burden; so that he could say

that all those hard and grievous sufferings, at the recital of which, as just above, every hearer shudders, were a *light tribulation;* as he beheld with the inward eyes, the eyes of faith, at how great a price of things temporal must be purchased the life to come, the escape from the everlasting pains of the ungodly, the full enjoyment, free from all anxiety, of the eternal happiness of the righteous. Men suffer themselves to be cut and burnt, that the pains, not of eternity, but of some more lasting sore than usual, may be bought off at the price of severer pain. For a languid and uncertain period of a very short repose, and that too at the end of life, the soldier is worn down by all the hard trials of war, restless it may be for more years in his labours than he will have to enjoy his rest in ease. To what storms and tempests, to what a fearful and tremendous raging of sky and sea, do the busy merchantmen expose themselves, that they may acquire riches inconstant as the wind, and full of perils and tempests, greater even than those by which they were acquired! What heats, and colds, what perils, do huntsmen undergo, that they may catch a beast! Now in all these instances, they who do not love these things feel them as great severities; whereas they who love them endure the same; it is true, but they do not seem to feel them severe. For love makes all, the hardest and most distressing things, altogether easy, and almost nothing. How much more surely then and easily will charity do, with a view to true blessedness, that which mere desire does as it can, with a view to what is but misery? How easily is any temporal adversity endured, if it be that eternal punishment may be avoided, and eternal rest procured!" (Translation in *Library of the Fathers*).