

Augustine, *Confessiones* 10.1.1-10.4.6

The introductory chapters of the tenth book of Augustine's *Confessiones* are of considerable interest, both intrinsic and relative to the rest of the work. The coherence of the tenth book with those around it has been questioned; I offer some evidence to indicate that those questions are perhaps overstated. More pertinently, I hope that this commentary shows something of the essential function which the tenth book performs in the whole work as Augustine conceived it. Even if the book was added to the other twelve after the fact, it can be demonstrated that Augustine realized that its presence was a matter of necessity, not of superfluity.

The tenth book comprises chiefly the lengthy examination of conscience by which Augustine brought his readers up to date, so to speak, after the revelations about his past life contained in the first nine books. The resolute honesty of his scrutiny of self is never more pronounced than at this juncture. At the time of writing the *Confessiones* in the late 390's, Augustine had recently been elevated to his bishopric; but he greeted the elevation with something less than unalloyed glee. He knew his own unworthiness for the position, he felt the bitterness of some of his colleagues and enemies in the North African church, and he was struggling to explain to himself how he could go about doing his job as bishop while still a sinner himself¹). (It is for that reason that I would

Sigla:

- C + Parisinus 1913 (saec. 9)
- D + Parisinus 1913A (saec. 9)
- G + Parisinus 12193 (saec. 9)
- O + Parisinus 1911 (saec. 9)
- S + Sessorianus sanctae crucis 55 (saec. 5/7)

Abbreviations:

- G-M: *The Confessions of Augustine*, edited by J. Gibb and W. Montgomery (Cambridge [second edition] 1927).
- Knauer: G.N. Knauer, *Psalmenzitate in Augustins Konfessionen* (Göttingen 1955).
- Sk: References to passages of the *Confessiones* not printed here are given first by book, chapter, and section and then (in parentheses) after this abbreviation by page and line to Skutella's edition (note 4 above). These page numbers also appear in the margins of the bilingual editions of A. Solignac (Paris 1962) and M. Pellegrino (Rome 1965 [third edition: 1975]).

¹) P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (London 1967) 161-164.

argue, but reserve the detailed documentation for another place, that the last three books of the *Confessiones*, an exposition of scripture [that is, of a part of scripture neatly chosen to be an epitome of the whole of salvation history], are a sample of the way in which Augustine saw it was possible for himself as a bishop to go on confessing his own sinfulness and God's glory in the remainder of his life. He could succeed as a bishop if he succeeded as a preacher of the word of God²).

I present the text in an unfamiliar fashion³). Since Augustine's prose throughout this passage is consciously rhetorical and elevated, I print it *per cola et commata* with a minimum of other punctuation, in an attempt to recreate some of the effect which the text must have had on its first readers. Any such arrangement of text is subjective and arbitrary; it is itself a form of commentary on the text. The notes in my commentary indicate, however, that I think the practice is not uninstrusive.

My text is essentially that of Skutella's 1934 Teubner edition as reprinted in 1969⁴). My reports of manuscripts (included principally to demonstrate the authority and reliability of the transmitted text) are selected from his apparatus, which reports all cases where the primary manuscripts (CDGOS) diverge from the printed text. In limiting myself to these manuscripts, I have consulted with immense profit the important articles of L. Verheijen on the text of the *Confessiones*⁵). His principles seem to me sound, but I take them one step further than Verheijen himself has gone.

The material is present in Verheijen's articles to demonstrate that the manuscript identified as G is almost as important in determining the authentic tradition as CD (treated as one MS by editors, since both are copies of one exemplar but while C is the better manuscript it is also lacunose and D is needed to fill its gaps); the two together are slightly less important than O and S. This is important in cases where the three

²) Cf. *Conf.* 1.1.1 (Skutella's ed., 1.13-2.6) for the fundamental role of preaching in any sequence leading to confessional praise.

³) The only preliminary essay along these lines of which I know appears in A. Solignac's edition of the *Confessiones* in the *Bibliothèque Augustinienne* (volumes 13-14); but there only the translation is set in this fashion.

⁴) Augustinus, *Confessiones* (Leipzig 1934) ed. M. Skutella; reprinted with corrections by H. Jürgens and W. Schaub (Stuttgart 1969).

⁵) L. Verheijen, «Contributions à une édition critique améliorée des *Confessions* de saint Augustin», *Augustiniana*, 20 (1970) 35-53, 329-335; 21 (1971) 405-416; 22 (1972) 35-52; 23 (1973) 334-347, 348-368; 24 (1974) 217-233; 25 (1975) 5-23, 205-209.

witnesses favored by Verheijen (CD, O and S) disagree two against one, particularly when CD is opposed to OS. By my calculations, CD is right against GOS only 5 % of the time, but CDG are right against OS in 20 % of cases. Similarly, S is right against CDOG only 12 % of the time, but GS are right against CDO 40 % of the time. Verheijen has already demonstrated that G is the closest representative in our surviving Augustine manuscripts to the tradition represented for select passages of the *Confessiones* by Eugippius' sixth-century excerpts.

In sum, then, I would hold that O and S are the most important manuscripts, but they are to be checked at every turn against CD (closer to O) and G (closer to S).

TEXT

- 10.1.1 Cognoscam te, cognitor meus,
cognoscam
sicut et cognitus sum.
Virtus animae meae
5 intra in eam et coapta tibi
ut habeas et possideas sine macula et ruga.
Haec est mea spes
ideo loquor
et in ea spe gaudeo
10 quando sanum gaudeo.
Cetera vero vitae huius tanto minus flenda
quanto minus fletur
et tanto magis flenda
quanto minus fletur in eis.
15 Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti
quoniam qui facit eam
venit ad lucem.
Volo eam facere
in corde meo coram te in confessione
20 in stilo meo coram multis testibus.
- 10.2.2 Et tibi quidem, Domine,
cuius oculis nuda est abyssus humanae conscientiae
quid occultum esset in me
etiamsi nollem confiteri tibi?
25 Te enim mihi absconderem
non me tibi.
- 16 qui S s.l. eam] ea CD
19 confessione OS confessionem CDG

- Nunc autem quod gemitus meus testis est displicere me mihi
 tu refulges et places et amaris et desideraris
 ut erubescam de me et abiciam me atque eligam te
 30 et nec tibi nec mihi placeam nisi de te.
 Tibi ergo, Domine, manifestus sum
 quicumque sim.
 Et quo fructu tibi confitear, dixi.
 Neque id ago verbis carnis et vocibus
 35 sed verbis animae et clamore cogitationis
 quem novit auris tua.
 Cum enim malus sum
 nihil est aliud confiteri tibi quam displicere mihi;
 cum vero pius
 40 nihil est aliud confiteri tibi quam hoc non tribuere mihi
 quoniam tu, Domine, benedixisti iustum
 sed prius eum iustificas inpium.
 Confessio itaque mea, Deus meus,
 in conspectu tuo tibi tacite fit et non tacite.
 45 Tacet enim strepitu
 clamat affectu.
 Neque enim dico recti aliquid hominibus
 quod non a me tu prius audieris,
 aut etiam tu aliquid tale audis a me
 50 quod non mihi tu prius dixeris.
 10.3.3 Quid mihi ergo est cum hominibus
 ut audiant confessiones meas
 quasi ipsi sanaturi sint omnes languores meos?
 (Curiosum genus ad cognoscendam vitam alienam
 55 desidiosum ad corrigendam suam.)
 Quid a me quaerunt audire qui sim
 qui nolunt a te audire qui sint?
 Et unde sciunt
 cum a me ipso de me ipso audiunt,
 60 an verum dicam
 quandoquidem nemo scit hominum
 quid agatur in homine
 nisi spiritus hominis
 qui in ipso est?
 65 (Si autem a te audiant de se ipsis
 non poterunt dicere
 Mentitur Dominus.)
 27 mihi] tibi O *in ras.*
 28 refulgens et placens C¹D
 30 mihi nec tibi G
 31 tibi ergo tibi C²
 34 Neque] neque enim O¹
 53 sunt C¹D

Quid est enim a te audire de se
nisi cognoscere se?

70 Quis porro cognoscit et dicit

Falsum est
nisi ipse mentiatur?

Sed quia caritas omnia credit
(inter eos utique,

75 quos conexos sibimet unum facit)
ego quoque, Domine, etiam sic tibi confiteor
ut audiant homines

quibus demonstrare non possum
an vera confitear;

80 sed credunt mihi
quorum mihi aures caritas aperit.

10.3.4 Verum tamen tu, medice meus intime,
quo fructu ista faciam
eliqua mihi.

85 Nam confessiones praeteritorum meorum
quae remisisti et texisti
ut beares me in te
mutans animam meam fide et sacramento tuo
cum leguntur et audiuntur

90 excitant cor
ne dormiat in desperatione et dicat
Non possum
sed evigilet in amore misericordiae tuae
et dulcedine gratiae tuae
qua potens est omnis infirmus
qui sibi per ipsam fit conscius infirmitatis suae.

Et delectat bonos audire praeterita mala eorum
qui iam carent eis

nec ideo delectat

00 quia mala sunt,
sed quia fuerunt et non sunt.

Quo itaque fructu, domine meus,
cui cotidie confitetur conscientia mea
spe misericordiae tuae securior quam innocentia sua

5 quo fructu, quaeso,
etiam hominibus coram te confiteor per has litteras
adhuc qui ego sim
non quis fuero?

Nam illum fructum vidi et commemoravi.

87 bearis S

98 quia G

99 delectant G

- 10 Sed quis adhuc sim
 ecce in ipso tempore confessionem mearum
 et multi hoc nosse cupiunt
 qui me noverunt
 et non me noverunt
- 15 qui ex me vel de me aliquid audierunt
 sed auris eorum non est ad cor meum
 ubi ego sum quicumque sum.
 Volunt ergo audire confitente me
 quid ipse intus sim
- 20 quo nec oculum nec aurem nec mentem possunt intendere;
 credituri tamen volunt
 numquid cognituri?
 Dicit enim eis caritas
 qua boni sunt
- 25 non mentiri me de me confitentem
 et ipsa in eis credit mihi.
 10.4.5 Sed quo fructu id volunt?
 An congratulari mihi cupiunt
 cum audierint
- 30 quantum ad te accedam munere tuo
 et orare pro me
 cum audierint
 quantum retarder pondere meo?
 Indicabo me talibus.
- 35 Non enim parvus est fructus, domine deus meus,
 ut a multis tibi gratiae agantur de nobis
 et a multis rogeris pro nobis.
 Amet in me fraternus animus
 quod amandum doces
- 40 et doleat in me
 quod dolendum doces.
 Animus ille hoc faciat fraternus
 non extraneus
 non filiorum alienorum
- 45 quorum os locutum est vanitatem
 et dextera eorum dextera iniquitatis
 sed fraternus ille
 qui cum approbat me
 gaudet de me
- 50 cum autem inprobat me
 contristatur pro me
- 18 confitente CDS confitentem GO
 24 quia G
 30 ad te *om.* CD

- quia sive approbet sive inprobet me
diligat me.
- Indicabo me talibus:
- 55 respirent in bonis meis
suspirent in malis meis.
- Bona mea instituta tua sunt et dona tua
mala mea delicta mea sunt et iudicia tua.
- Respirent in illis
- 60 et suspirent in his
et hymnus et fletus ascendant in conspectum tuum de fraternis cordibus
turibulis tuis.
- Tu autem, Domine,
delectatus odore sancti templi tui
- 65 miserere mei secundum magnam misericordiam tuam propter nomen tuum
et nequaquam deserens coepta tua
consumma imperfecta mea.
- 10.4.6 Hic est fructus confessionum mearum
non qualis fuerim
70 sed qualis sim
ut hoc confitear non tantum coram te
secreta exultatione cum tremore
et secreto maerore cum spe
sed etiam in auribus credentium filiorum hominum
- 75 sociorum gaudii mei et consortium mortalitatis meae
civium meorum et mecum peregrinorum
praecedentium et consequentium et comitum vitae meae.
- Hi sunt servi tui
fratres mei
- 80 quos filios tuos esse voluisti dominos meos
quibus iussisti ut serviam
si volo tecum de te vivere.
- Et hoc mihi Verbum tuum parum erat
si loquendo praeciperet
- 85 nisi et faciendo praeiret.
- Et ego id ago factis et dictis
id ago sub alis tuis nimis cum ingenti periculo
nisi quia sub alis tuis tibi subdita anima mea
et infirmitas mea tibi nota est.
- 90 Parvulus sum
sed vivit semper Pater meus
et idoneus est mihi tutor meus;
- 52 approbet me *editores prisca*
60 et *om. G*
64 odorem CD sancti templi] templi sancti S
77 vitae OS viae CDG
78 Hii G

idem ipse est enim
 qui genuit me et tuetur me
 95 et tu ipse omnia bona mea
 tu omnipotens
 qui mecum es et priusquam tecum sim.
 Indicabo ergo talibus
 qualibus iubes ut serviam
 00 non quis fuerim
 sed quis iam sim
 et quis adhuc sim;
 sed neque me ipsum diiudico.
 Sic itaque audiar.

93 idem *om.* O

94 et tuetur me *om.* S (*per homoioteleuton*)

1 sim *om.* CD

3 diiudico] iudico O (*et Vulgata*)

COMMENTARY

10.1.1

Cognoscam te... cognitus sum. Cf. 1 Cor. 13.12; this verse is often echoed in the *Confessiones*, but this phrase of it appears only here. Just as the theme of the *Confessiones* was the praise of God and the blame of self, so also knowledge of God and knowledge of self (to the limited extent possible in this life) were important preliminary stages. Cf. *Conf.* 1.1.1 (Sk. 1.13-16): «da mihi, domine, scire et intellegere, utrum sit prius invocare te an laudare te et scire te prius sit an invocare te». (The rhetorical inquiry is answered in favor of the sequence: *scire* — *invocare* — *laudare*). In that passage, however, *scire* refers to an imperfect form of knowledge of God (and is probably to be equated in fact merely to *credere*, as Augustine himself says at *Retract.* 1.14.3). *Cognoscere* here, following the scriptural text, has an eschatological sense.

The repetition of *cognoscam* may be significant. The context in the first instance at least requires that the word be taken as subjunctive; in the second instance, however, it may still be the future indicative of the passage from Corinthians. The effect then would be that of using the word as a key to recalling a scriptural passage which gives assurance (in the indicative) that what one has been praying for (in the subjunctive) will indeed come to pass. That this can be done merely by repeating the same word without altering a letter is an elegant touch.

virtus animae meae. For God as *virtus* see *Conf.* 1.13.21 (Sk. 16.11) and 11.2.3 (Sk. 265.6) and compare 1.1.1 («magna virtus tua» — Sk. 1.6). On the whole *topos* see Knauer, 46-48, esp. 48 n. 1.

sine macula et ruga. Cf. Eph. 5. 27: «gloriosam ecclesiam, non habentem maculam, aut rugam, aut aliquid huiusmodi, sed... sancta et immaculata». Augustine seeks to model his soul after the perfect purity of the church.

spes. The word furnishes a kind of theme for all of book ten. Cf. 10.43.69 (Sk. 262.15), on the last page of the book: «merito mihi spes valida est». (Knauer 148) Thus «in ea spe gaudeo» echoes Rom. 12.12, «spe gaudentes», which is elsewhere used by Augustine (e.g., *De civ. Dei* 18.32, 18.51) as a kind of catch-phrase summarizing the typical and fitting attitude of Christians towards life in this world. It is in fact an oxymoron, since one customarily in this life postpones joy until hope is fulfilled; the quality of Christian hope, however, is clearly so strong and certain that the Christian can begin to rejoice even before his hopes are realized.

quando sanum gaudeo. Here an idea enters Augustine's mind which runs counter to what has gone before. Two kinds of joy are possible for man: joy inspired by Christian hope and the more familiar joy of delight in earthly things. Only the former is healthy (note *sanum* as an adverb, not attested in Latin before Augustine). Cf. *De civ. Dei* 4.26.28.

cetera vero ... in eis. The adversative force of *vero* introduces an antithetically balanced and (for that very reason) somewhat gnomic reflection on the other kinds of joy, the unhealthy kinds. The obscurity is enhanced by the choice of negative forms of speech, concentrating on tears (the opposite of joy). Behind both tears and joy lies the same attitude, that of emotional attachment to and dependence on the thing that can inspire the extremes of emotion. The sense of the sentence, then, is that the things of this world (things other than the objects of Christian hope) are less to be cherished in the heart to just such a degree as the mass of men (implied in the impersonal *fletur*) is attached to them. (Cf. *Conf.* 10.28.39 [Sk. 238.1]: «laetitiae meae flendae». *Flere* is common elsewhere in Augustine for the Christian's dismay at the world's injustice; e.g., *En.Ps.* 38.20 and esp. *Tr.inIoh.* 49.19: «Quare enim flevit Christus, nisi quia flere hominum docuit?»). The things of this world (to resume Augustine's argument) are so much the *more* to be cherished (*et*

tanto magis flenda) by how much less the world at large weeps over them (*in eis*). In other words, the mass of men generally direct their emotional attachments wrongly. The Christian can hence safely direct his own attachments if he takes care simply to keep them the opposite of what he sees around him. (The rhetorical effect of the phrase *in eis*, not necessary for the content, is striking: it keeps the neat antitheses from becoming too facile and at the same time insinuates a reminder that one does not weep for good things *in themselves* but only for their relation to ultimate value).

Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti. This exactly quotes the text of Ps. 50.8, including the causal particle, which is appropriate in this context as well (cf. Knauer 96 n. 2), since it takes up again the hopefulness of the last sentence but one and proceeds to explain it by means of scriptural authority. This passage is in turn explained by the further scriptural allusion to Jn. 3.21, which reads, «qui facit veritatem, venit ad lucem, ut manifestentur opera eius, quia in Deo sunt facta». Augustine's exegesis of these two scriptural passages elsewhere makes their function here intelligible.

Aug., *Tr. in Ioh.* 12.13 interprets that part of the John passage quoted here thus: «ad lucem, id est, ad Christum... Initium operum bonorum, confessio est operum malorum... Qui autem facit veritatem, accusat in se mala sua: non sibi parcit, non sibi ignoscit ut Deus ignoscat». At *Tr. in Ioh.* 12.14, the man who walks in the love and mercy of God thus «facit veritatem confessionis, et venit ad lucem in operibus bonis». 'Doing the truth' for Augustine, therefore, means 'confession'. He has the warrant of his interpretation of John to assure him that this 'confession' leads to the 'light', that is to Christ.

Thus the John passage provides support and explanation (the connection is made by the *quoniam*) for the Psalmist's statement that God has loved the truth. (That the two quotations occur to Augustine's mind together is further facilitated by the half-verse which follows the section of Ps. 50.8 which is cited: the Psalmist goes on, «incerta et occulta sapientiae tuae manifestasti mihi»). In both Ps. 50.8 and Jn. 3.21, therefore, there is mention of both *veritas* (in the sections quoted by Augustine) and the *manifestatio* of God's work to man (in the sections not quoted by Augustine). In expounding Ps. 50.8, Augustine makes the connection to confession clearer (*En. Ps.* 50.11): «veritatem dilexisti: ... Ignoscis confitenti, ignoscis, sed seipsum punienti: ita servatur misericor-

dia et veritas; misericordia, quia homo liberatur; veritas, quia peccatum punitur». God's love of the truth is hence verified by his willingness to forgive the sins of those who confess their own sins (but his justice is preserved because, in this view, confession is self-punishment). The hope Augustine cherishes at this point, therefore, is that through confession he will find forgiveness and thus come to the light, which is Christ.

(A somewhat different approach to this sentence, less closely adhering to the exposition of the scriptural passages, may be found in J. Ratzinger, «Originalität und Überlieferung in Augustins Begriff der *confessio*», *REA* 3 (1957) 375-392, esp. 385-389. I have not been able to examine G. Schmaltz, «Das 'veritatem facere' des Augustinus als Wesen des Reifungsvorganges (mit einem klinischen Beitrag zur 'Kurztherapie')», *Psyche* 6 (1952) 306-319.

volo ... testibus. Augustine's confession is twofold: before God and before men. The following paragraphs commented on here will attempt to understand the purpose of this twofold confession in terms of these audiences. The first audience (God) can be treated here rather briefly, for the purpose of confessing to God has already been discussed elsewhere. To what end Augustine confesses before men as well is the principal object of discussion. The rationale of the whole work is at stake here as nowhere else in the *Confessiones*.

confessione. Instrumental rather than purposive (as *confessionem*, in the less accurate manuscripts, would be).

10.1.2

oculis nuda. These words are the only verbal echoes of Heb. 4.13 in this passage, but the whole tenor of Heb. 4.12-14 supports their use here: «Vivus est enim sermo Dei, et efficax et penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti: et pertingens usque ad divisionem animae ac spiritus: compagum quoque ac medullarum, et discretor cogitationum et intentionum cordis. (13) Et non est ulla creatura invisibilis in conspectu eius: omnia autem nuda et aperta sunt oculis eius, ad quem nobis sermo. (14) Habentes ergo pontificem magnum, qui penetrauit caelos, Iesum Filium Dei, teneamus confessionem». Here again a passage of scripture having some direct bearing on the idea of confession is cited at the outset of Augustine's discussion of the value of confession in general. (Noteworthy is the notion expressed at Heb. 4.12 of the power of the *sermo Dei*. Augustine's use of scriptural language throughout the

Confessiones seems clearly inspired by a similar notion: it is the language of scripture that allows him to penetrate the mysteries of his own soul.

occultum. Echoes Ps. 50.8 again (quoted above), confirming the power of God to make all things manifest.

abyssus. Ecclesiasticus 42.17-18: «Nonne dominus fecit sanctos enarrare omnia mirabilia sua, quae confirmavit Dominus omnipotens stabiliri in gloria sua? (18) Abyssum et cor hominum investigavit, et in astutia eorum excogitavit». It is not necessary to assume that Augustine explicitly considered each of these verses scripture before placing a word here, a phrase there into his discourse in the *Confessiones*. At the same time, he must have had some idea of the resonances of his vocabulary, the way in which that vocabulary came directly from just those passages of scripture most in harmony with his purpose at this point in the argument.

etiamsi nollem confiteri tibi. God derives no benefit from confession; the emphatic irreality of the condition underlines the negative answer anticipated to the rhetorical question.

absconderem. Still governed by the *etiamsi* clause.

tu refulges ... placeam nisi de te. Four verbs applied to God are answered by the four verbs immediately applied by Augustine to himself. Compare *refulges* with *erubescam* (verbs whose visual images contrast vividly), *amaris et desideraris* with *abiciam me atque eligam te*, and *places* with *nec tibi nec placeam nisi de te* (postponed to the end of the sentence because of the complexity of the idea expressed in its nest of pronouns).

tibi ergo, domine, manifestus sum. Cf. 2. Cor. 5.11, «Deo autem manifesti sumus. Sero autem et in conscientiis vestris manifestos nos esse». Just that hope of the apostle (to be visible to his fellow men as well as to God) is shared by Augustine, who justifies it in this paragraph and the next.

et quo fructu tibi confitear, dixi. Cf. *Conf.* 10.3.4: «nam illum fructum [sc. confessiones] vidi et commemoravi». It is not clear what past statements Augustine has in mind in these two passages. G-M hold that *dixi* here refers to the last sentence but one («nunc autem, etc.»). Pellegrino, in his edition of the *Confessiones* (Rome 1965; third edition 1975), 299, refers to passages earlier in the whole work, such as 2.3.5,

2.7.15, 4.1.1, 5.1.1, and 9.12.33. In any event what is clear is that it is the *fructus* of confessing to God that is in question; perhaps Augustine meant to do no more than allude to the whole scope of the earlier books of the work, which do reflect a concern with confession particularly to God and the purpose thereof. In both cases here in book ten, such back-references precede discussions of the particular import of confession to Augustine's fellow men. (The difficulty with Pellegrino's cited passages is that in some of them both kinds of confession are on Augustine's mind, e.g., in *Conf.* 2.3.5 (Sk. 27.15-18): «cui narro haec? neque enim tibi, deus meus, sed apud te narro haec generi meo, generi humano, quantulacumque ex particula incidere potest in istas meas litteras. et ut quid hoc? [etc.]»).

cum enim malus sum ... Cum-temporal with the indicative, almost meaning 'whenever'. The two *cum*-clauses are carefully balanced word for word, but then the second opens up another thought, itself expanded in two well-balanced clauses (see next note). Augustine rarely balances clauses exactly without some addition like this, which exploits the surprise the reader feels when the symmetry is broken to emphasize the additional idea. Cf. my note above on *cetera vero ... in eis* in 10.1.1.

quoniam tu, domine, benedixisti iustum. This echoes Ps. 5.13, «Quoniam tu benedixisti iustum, domine, ut ...». The word order has been rearranged here to make a clause which balances the next clause in length and also rhymes with it:

Quoniam tu, domine, benedixisti iustum (13 syllables)

sed prius eum iustificas impium. (12 syllables)

(See Knauer 178-179) That second clause itself echoes Rom. 4.5; this is no surprise after we examine the *Enarrationes* on the Psalm passage in question. There Augustine makes essentially the same point as here about the precedence of justification over benediction; in support of that typically Augustinian doctrine (that God does not choose to bless those who have made themselves just, but first makes them just and then blesses them) he quotes at *En. Ps.* 5.17 numerous passages from Romans not including 4.5, but others which make essentially the same point about the role of God in justifying the impious.

mea ... meus. The variety of Augustine's forms of address for God (Knauer 31-74) allows him to use rhetorical devices as simple as this variation in gender of the personal pronoun, which underscores the very different senses in which the word is used in each case.

in conspectu tuo. Cf. Knauer 75 n. 3, who finds the phrase 14 times in the *Confessiones* (and that does not count parallel phrases like «in vultu tuo» at *Conf.* 10.5.7 [Sk. 214.12]). The most pertinent parallel in scripture is probably Ps. 95.6: «confessio et pulchritudo in conspectu eius». In commenting on that passage (*En. Ps.* 95.7) Augustine interpreted *confessio* as our action in response to God's grace, which fits neatly into the sequence just established, whereby God's action precedes man's response.

audieris ... dixeris. Perfect subjunctives following the indefinite antecedent, *aliquid*. The sentence is thus of a generalizing nature ('Whatever I say ...') and not a promise of particular action on Augustine's part.

10.3.3

quasi ipsi sanaturi sint omnes languores meos. This phrase recurs thematically throughout book ten. The Psalm text to which it alludes (Ps. 102.3) is part of a long sequence of characterizing relative clauses (Ps. 102.3-5) and it reads: «Qui sanat omnes languores meos». In this first appearance in book ten it is ironically reversed: Augustine speaks *as if* (*quasi*) men were to do that which (because we know the origin of the quotation) is only God's business. (A similar reversal occurs in the next line with «ad cognoscendam», which imitates the true cognition of 1 Cor. 13.12, already cited at the beginning of *Conf.* 10.1.1 [see above].)

In *Conf.* 10.30.42 (Sk. 240.6-7), Augustine is asking whether God can in fact perform this feat: «Numquid non potens est manus tua, deus omnipotens, sanare omnes languores animae ...»? The *numquid* gives away the negative answer to this rhetorical question. (Note as well that *Conf.* 10.33.50 [Sk. 247. 16-18], along the course of the description of Augustine's sickness, closes with an analogous prayer, verbally drawn from Ps. 6.3 *inter alia*, for healing: «domine deus meus, exaudi respice et vide et miserere et sana me ...»). By the end of the book, however, Augustine is ready to state confidently that God can do what men cannot, what he has been asking whether God can do (*Conf.* 10.36.58 [Sk. 253.14-22]). There Augustine quotes all of Ps. 102.3-5 with no sense of question or ironic reversal. (On this whole theme, see Knauer 144-148).

The theme of disease is common in the *Confessiones* and particularly common in other ways in book ten. Just in the immediate vicinity of this

first occurrence of Ps. 102.3, note that the next paragraph begins by addressing God as *medicus*. In the same way, we saw how Augustine used an uncommon adverbial form to describe the kind of joy which is positive and valuable in 10.1.1: «quando *sanum* gaudeo».

What is the disease Augustine sees in himself? In commenting on the Psalm (*En. Ps.* 102.5) he describes it in detail. «Post remissionem peccatorum corpus infirmum geris: necesse est sint quaedam desideria carnalia quae te titillent, et quae tibi suggerant delectationes illicitas; de languore tuo veniunt. Adhuc enim infirmam carnem geris, nondum est absorpta mors in victoria, nondum corruptibile hoc induit incorruptionem [cf. 1 Cor. 15.53-54 — which also came to mind for Augustine when quoting Ps. 102.3 later in the tenth book: *Conf.* 10.30.42 (Sk. 240.25-26)]: adhuc quibusdam perturbationibus etiam ipsa anima quatitur post remissionem peccatorum; adhuc in periculis tentationum versatur, quibusdam suggestionibus delectatur, quibusdam non delectatur, et in eis quibus delectatur, aliquando quibusdam consentit, capitur. Languor est; sanat et omnes languores tuos». (Cf. *Conf.* 10.5.7 [Sk. 214.3-5]: «ego vero quibus temptationibus resistere valeam quibusve non valeam, nescio»). Augustine then develops the image of God the *medicus* at some length in the passage from the *Enarrationes*.

What Augustine describes in the *Enarrationes* is of course precisely the kind of disease under discussion in book ten (and despite its frequency of citation in this book, the Psalm was not quoted earlier in the *Confessiones*). For book ten represents Augustine's turning from his past to his present, from the sin which preceded his conversion to the ugly realization that he remained a sinner and liable to temptations.

(*Curiosum genus ...*) I have added the parentheses here and at «Si autem ...» below to emphasize that the paragraph is essentially a succession of five questions, all answered in the last sentence (beginning «Sed quia ...»).

et unde sciunt ... an verum dicam. From here to the end of this paragraph, Augustine is strictly digressing into a preliminary question. Before deciding with what profit he can confess to his fellow men, he must decide whether and why they can even believe what he says to them.

nemo scit hominum ... This passage quotes 1 Cor. 2.11, changing it from a rhetorical question to an assertion. Here the distinction is between what one man knows of himself and what other men know of him. The

phrase will be recalled at *Conf.* 10.5.7 (Sk. 213.21-23) to change the perspective to a comparison of what one man knows of himself to what God knows of him.

quid est enim a te audire de se nisi cognoscere se? An allusion to the ancient proverb, «Know thyself», on which see P. Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi-même de Socrate à saint Bernard* (Paris 1974-1975).

cognoscit. Sc. «*se cognoscit*», as the previous sentence makes clear.

sed quia caritas omnia credit. As so often in the *Confessiones*, a scriptural tag provides the answer to a question which Augustine has been examining from different angles. Compare, for example, *Conf.* 1.1.1 (Sk. 1.18-2.1), where a sequence of rhetorical questions is disentangled and the key to a solution provided by two quotations from Rom. 10.14 (abridged for the purpose) and Ps. 21.27, after which point what had been obscure is all made clear. Here Augustine has been worrying, as a preliminary point to settling what the benefit of his confessing to men will be, whether men will even believe what he has to say. It seems that they will not, particularly the evil-minded among them. But *caritas* believes all things (1 Cor. 2.4-7). That is all the answer Augustine needs. Those who are bound to him through *caritas* will believe the truth of what he says. (Other men, we are left to deduce, are alienated so far from God that it is of no pertinence whether they will listen to Augustine. This is evidence of Augustine's envisioned audience for the work as a whole: it is to be read by Christians and those favorably disposed to Christianity and is not meant as an apologia for the religion to a decidedly non or anti-Christian audience).

(*inter eos utique, quos conexos sibimet unum facit*). These clauses need to be set off by parentheses (which former editors have neglected) to make clearer the relation between the scriptural tag and the confident determination to confess which follows.

10.3.4

Verum tamen. Sometimes used in Latin to resume a train of thought after an interruption (see Leumann-Hofmann-Szantyr, *Lateinische Grammatik* (Munich 1965), 2.495-496, and cf. Cic., *Att.* 1.10.1). Here it returns to the point of the third paragraph (before «et unde sciunt ...»), asking what is the point of confession before men.

nam confessiones praetoritorum malorum meorum ... excitant cor. This phrase has been used (first by E. Williger, «Der Aufbau der Konfessionen Augustins», *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 28 [1929] 81-106, supported most authoritatively by P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de S. Augustin* [Paris 1950, rev. ed. 1968], 25) in an attempt to demonstrate that the first nine books of the *Confessiones* (*conf. praet. mal. meo.*) had been in circulation before book ten was written; that book ten was in fact interpolated into an earlier 12-book version of the whole work. It should at least be pointed out that the phrase does not flatly demand such an interpretation. First, the earlier books could have been read as they were being written to a narrow circle of Augustine's intimates, prior to any formal 'publication' (on which see H.-I. Marrou, «La technique de l'édition à l'époque patristique», *Vigiliae Christianae* 3 [1949] 208-224). Similarly, even if the tenth book was in fact the thirteenth in order of composition, nothing in the evidence advanced by Williger or Courcelle refutes the possibility that it was still written and included before the work as a whole began to circulate.

The parallels this passage exhibits with Augustine's remarks on the *Confessiones* in his *Retractationes* (2.6) are striking: «Confessionum meorum libri XIII et de malis et de bonis meis Deum laudant iustum et bonum atque in eum excitant humanum intellectum et affectum; interim quod ad me adtinet, hoc in me egerunt cum scriberentur et agunt cum legentur». This passage was written approximately thirty years after the composition of the *Confessiones*.

quae remisisti et texisti. Ps. 31.1: «Beati quorum remissae sunt iniquitates et quorum tecta sunt peccata». When God covers sins, Augustine holds (*En. Ps.* 31.2.9), he looks the other way, that is to say, he does not punish them; hence the logical connection between remission and covering. The scriptural context of Ps. 31.1 is the source as well for «beares» in the next line, the unusual verb occasioned by the presence of «beati» in the quotation. (On this passage, see also Knauer 187-188).

mutans animam meam ... sacramento tuo. The allusion is to baptism.

ne dormiet ... sed evigilet. Whether Augustine had Cant. 3.2 («ego dormio et cor meum vigilat») in mind or not cannot be demonstrated by such a remote allusion; but the passage is thus a stronger demonstration of the pervasive influence of scripture on Augustine's style less than a decade after his elevation to the priesthood.

gratiae tuae, qua potens est omnis infirmus qui sibi per ipsam fit conscius infirmitatis suae. Here Augustine reworks and condenses 2 Cor. 12.9-10: «Sufficit tibi gratia mea: nam virtus in infirmitate perficitur. Libenter igitur gloriabor in infirmitatibus meis, ut inhabitet in me virtus Christi. (10) Propter quod placeo mihi in infirmitatibus meis, in contumeliis, in necessitatibus, in persecutionibus, in angustiis pro Christo: cum enim infirmor, tunc potens sum».

per has litteras adhuc quis ego sim, non quis fuerim? A comma after *adhuc* which appears in the critical editions of both Knöll and Skutella is clearly misplaced. «*Adhuc quis ego sim*» is a phrase to be taken together, as indicated three lines further on by the recurrence of the phrase in «*sed quis adhuc sim*». The correction already exists in the edition of A.C. Vega: either delete the comma or make it precede *adhuc*. (On the «*grosse Bedeutung des 'adhuc' beim Augustin*», see Knauer 126 n. 2).

sed quis adhuc sim ecce in ipso tempore confessionum mearum. I.e., in the late 390's A.D. Augustine had not long before been elevated to the bishopric. The desire of «many» to hear of Augustine's conversion history is at least paralleled, if not precisely documented (Alypius is the individual under discussion) in the letter of Paulinus of Nola to Alypius (published with Augustine's letters, *Ep.* 24.4-5) and Augustine's response (*Ep.* 27. 4-5).

et multi hoc nosse cupiunt ... quicumque sum. The Latin connectives do not suffice to make Augustine's meaning unmistakable here. The best interpretation reads the collective *multi* as divided into two groups (each introduced by a *qui*-clause, then each *qui*-clause's positive statement is undercut by a further clause loosely connected to the first). The two groups: (a) those who have known Augustine (but they have not really known him); and (b) those who have heard something from or about him (but they have not really heeded the voice of his heart).

confitente. Surely the right reading (first printed by Knöll), for the next sentence is nonsense (see following note) unless the understood object of *volunt* there is not «*confitentem me*» but rather the whole indirect question, «*quid ipse intus sim*».

credituri tamen volunt, numquid cognituri? A difficult, allusive phrase. The meaning almost surely is: «They who will believe me still want [to hear what I am like]: but are they really going to *know* [what I

am like]? [Answer understood to numquid: No.]» This gnomic conclusion to the paragraph ties together two earlier ideas of the book: first, from the end of the preceding paragraph, the notion that only those who are joined to Augustine in *caritas* will believe his account (thus he goes on after the sentence just translated to say, «dicit enim eis caritas, qua boni sunt, non mentiri me de me confitentem, et ipsa in eis credit mihi»). But no man can really *know* what goes on inside the heart of another (10.3.3: «nemo scit hominum ...»).

10.4.5

The fourth paragraph has succeeded in demonstrating *that* good men will want to read Augustine's account of his past. The question *why* still lingers, and Augustine brings it back into the foreground: «Sed quo fructu id volunt?» By this time it is almost certain that the repeated use of *fructus* is meant as an at least subliminal allusion to the Augustinian doctrine of *usus* and *fructus* (most clearly expounded in *De doctrina christiana* 1.3.3-1.4.4). Augustine's kindly audience, if they are correctly disposed, will *use* Augustine's narrative to enhance their *enjoyment* of God's grace and goodness. To the extent that the allusion is discernible, it is a reminder that what the reader finds in this work is not to be taken as valuable in itself (as most non-Christian modern readers are constrained to take it) but rather is to be referred to the source of all the goodness which Augustine can find in his life, God. Moreover, the reader should be concerned with whether the work has a saving effect on the state of his own soul and his own prospects for achieving true *fruitio Dei*.

All this is made explicit in the content of this paragraph. The work is designed to make men love what is lovable, grieve over what is to be grieved over, and to do so as brethren bound in *caritas*. Identifying and limiting this audience to those who will be properly disposed is important to Augustine: he repeatedly interrupts his lengthy, ornate statements of their qualities with the almost antiphonal phrase *indicabo me talibus* (twice in paragraph five, once again with minor variation in paragraph six).

non enim parvus est fructus ... pro nobis. Here the way in which the *fructus* is contained in the transferring (Augustine would say 'referring') of the benefits of the *Confessiones* to God is made clear.

fraternus animus. That is, one bound by *caritas* (*vide supra*).

filiorum alienorum. From Ps. 143.7, which introduces this description of the Psalmist's enemies as a prayer: «eripe me ... de manu filiorum alienorum ...».

bona mea ... iudicia tua. Every word in the first of these lines has its parallel in the second line in the same order (the first line totals 16 syllables, the second 17). But while the first line says that «*bona mea*» are to be described as possessions of God («*instituta tua*» and «*dona tua*»), the second line changes things slightly, in a way the reader does not expect. The parallel is kept up, but with the significant change of the possessive pronoun following «*delicta*» (*mea*), which leads the reader to anticipate *mea* again at the end of the line. When *tua* occurs instead, the reader is brought up short and forced to consider more carefully than he might have otherwise done the precise implications of what Augustine is saying.

turibulis tuis. The image comes from the liturgy, but has scriptural authority in Apoc. 8.3-4: «Et alius angelus venit, et stetit ante altare habens turibulum aureum: et data sunt illi incensa multa, ut daret de orationibus sanctorum omnium super altare aureum, quod est ante thronum Dei. (4) Et ascendit fumus incensorum de orationibus sanctorum de manu angeli coram Deo». Augustine makes the implied metaphor of the scriptural text more explicit by making the hearts stand in apposition to the thuribles. Having interjected that phrase makes it possible to speak of God's delight in the *odore sancti templi*, which deepens and enchances the metaphor; for the phrase *sancti templi* can be taken as an allusion to 1 Cor. 3.17: «templum enim Dei sanctum quod estis vos» (emphasis added).

tu autem, domine. A common formula of address in the *Confessiones*; see Knauer 32 n. 2.

miserere mei secundum magnam misericordiam tuam. The beginning of Ps. 50.3, a penitential Psalm attributed to David after Nathan had reproached him in the matter of Bathsheba. Augustine pleads for mercy in the words of a model also caught just at the moment of repentance, of turning towards God. (Cf. Knauer 71, 82).

propter nomen tuum. A perfectly scriptural phrase (e.g., Mt. 10.22, Jn. 15.21), but stood on its ear in a way that shows the freedom Augustine felt with respect to his scriptural language. In every passage where the phrase occurs in scripture it refers to actions of followers of

Christ who endure suffering *for his name* (Mt. 10.22: «et eritis odio propter nomen meum»). The situation is quite different here. A theological explanation could perhaps be constructed for applying the phrase in an almost completely reversed situation, but the strain on such an explanation would be great. It is more profitable simply to observe that Augustine can and does use the language of scripture to say things which are not precisely scriptural (though they contradict nothing in scripture, to be sure). He will often use scriptural language to call forth the resonances of the interpretations that particular language had for him in its original context, but he can just as easily use them out of context to give his discourse (on a subject where pertinent scriptural allusions escaped his memory, perhaps) greater authority, in sound at least.

et nequaquam deserens coepta tua consumma imperfecta mea. This echoes Phil. 1.6: «qui coepit in vobis opus bonum, perficiet usque in diem Christi Iesu». Cf. *Conf.* 10.30.42 (Sk. 240.19-23): «nunc tamen quid adhuc sim ... dixi bono domino meo ... lugens in eo, quod inconsummatus sum, sperans perfecturum te in me misericordias tuas usque ad pacem plenariam ...». Augustine is now aware, as he perhaps was not during his early years as a Christian when he still considered theological issues from a philosophical (and somewhat Platonic) perspective, that the perfection of the good works we begin *in hoc saeculo* is something reserved for the time when this *saeculum* will be consumed and brought to the fulness of peace in itself. The context of the Philippians passage here makes it clear that Augustine understands, even as he makes this prayer, that the consummation for which he prays is not to be granted immediately.

10.4.6

This whole paragraph is, in continuation of the developments of the last part of the preceding paragraph, rhythmically constructed. It is worthy of such artful composition because it represents a summary of the argument of the last five paragraphs and an important turning point in the composition of book ten. There are few new ideas in this paragraph, but the purpose of the summary is to state what has been learned clearly and vividly.

hic est fructus. This is Augustine's way of saying, «here then is the answer agreed upon to the question we have been pursuing so far in this book».

non qualis fuerim [cf. 10.3.4], *sed qualis sim*. Confession is to include not just the past but also the present, not only the sins from which one has escaped but those to which one is still liable. Hence the need for book ten in the first place.

non tantum coram te. Cf. 10.1.1 (above).

secreta exultatione cum tremore et secreto maerore cum spe. Both phrases verge on oxymoron, justified by the allusion to Ps. 2.11: «servite Domino in timore et exultate in tremore». See the same verse recalled again at *Conf.* 10.30.42 (Sk. 240.19-21), near the end of the examination of conscience, where Augustine is summarizing his confession: «nunc tamen quid adhuc sim in hoc genere mali mei, dixi bono domino exultans cum tremore in eo ...». Note also that the positive elements in this expression are *exultatio* (approximately the same thing as *gaudium*) and *spes*; cf. my note on 10.1.1 above.

sed etiam auribus credentium. Here Augustine has something new to add. In the first paragraph of the book, he simply distinguishes his audiences between God and «multis testibus». One of the principal results of his inquiry has been to identify who those witnesses will be (believers: those bound to him in *caritas*), whom he now describes at some length.

filiis hominum. Cf. the antiphonal verse of Ps. 106 (repeated at Ps. 106.8, 15, 21, 31): «Confiteantur Domino misericordiae eius, et mirabilia eius filiis hominum» - clearly a verse much on Augustine's mind in the writing of the *Confessiones*; the first line of it is echoed five times clearly in the work as a whole: *Conf.* 1.15.24 (Sk. 18.23), 4.16.31 (75.25-26), 5.1.1 (77.2), 5.10.20 (93.13), 6.7.12 (110.21-23).

mortalitatis meae. Mortality is a *testimonium peccati* (*Conf.* 1.1.1 [Sk. 1.8-9]), hence the whole phrase («sociorum gaudii mei et consortium mortalitatis meae») includes all men as sharers in both sin and redemption.

civium meorum et mecum peregrinorum. Sharers in the heavenly city and wayfarers in the earthly; the whole of the central metaphor of the *De civitate Dei*, which Augustine began writing more than a decade after this work, is contained in this phrase. Cf. *Conf.* 10.5.7 (Sk. 213.28-214.2): «et certe videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate, nondum facie ad faciem [1 Cor. 13.12]; et ideo, quamdiu peregrinor abs te [cf. 2 Cor. 5.6], mihi sum praesentior quam tibi».

vitae meae. *Vitae* and the variant reading, *viae*, both represent the same metaphor, with the latter reading showing a more explicit and literal-minded form of the idea. Given therefore that *vitae* is a slightly more difficult reading and that it is attested by the more authoritative pair of manuscripts (OS), it is almost certainly the correct reading.

dominos meos. The first clear allusion in all of the *Confessiones* to Augustine's new position in the church as bishop. In this paragraph as rarely elsewhere we see the deep unease he felt at his elevation to a position from which he was expected to care for the souls of others being uncertain of his own. The same people in one sentence are changed from *servi* to *fratres* to *domini*.

Verbum tuum. The capitalization is usually neglected by editors, but is important. Augustine is punning: not only did he have need of the word of God through revelation, but also did he require the example of that Word (in the person of Christ) going before him on the way. Just so (in the next sentence) Augustine hopes to «tecum de te vivere» both in words and in deeds — this is indeed the center of the dilemma. He could easily preach the Gospel, but he realizes he must live it as well.

sub alis tuis nimis cum ingenti periculo. An obviously scriptural phrase, but it cannot be determined whether Ps. 16.8 («sub umbra alarum tuarum proteges me») or Ps. 35.8 («filii autem hominum in tegmine alarum tuarum sperabunt») is closer to the surface of Augustine's mind. The former contains the idea of protection, but the latter contains the phrase *filii hominum* already used in this paragraph.

Might one choose to interpret the *alae* as an allusion to the manifestation in dove-like form of the Holy Spirit? In the surrounding sentences one has seen the second person of the Trinity («Verbum tuum») and is about to see the first («sed vivit semper pater meus»); the presence of the third would not be surprising. Unfortunately, Augustine's exegesis of the «wings» (*En. Ps.* 16.8) only sees them as the «caritas et misericordia Dei».

tibi subdita est anima mea. Ps. 61.2: «Nonne Deo subiecta erit anima mea». See Knauer 97 n. 1.

idem ipse est enim. One of many allusions (at least nine) in similar form which can probably be referred to Ps. 101.28, «tu autem idem ipse es» (Cf. Knauer 109). In commenting on the Psalm (*En. Ps.* 101.2.12), Augustine saw the passage as an allusion to Exod. 3.14, «Ego sum qui

sum», and hence as a statement of something fundamental and central about the nature of God; thus the phrase's prevalence in the *Confessiones*.

qui genuit me. Cf. Ps. 2.7: «Dominus dixit ad me: filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te». Though the prevailing interpretation of the second Psalm in the fathers is Christological, such passages can always be referred to the individual Christian soul on the argument that Christ has made us all sons of God through his redemptive mission.

sed neque me ipsum diiudico. After a final summation of what he is doing in this book («indicabo ergo talibus, qualibus iubes ut serviam, non quis fuerim, sed quis iam sim et quis adhuc sim» — almost every phrase of that sentence can be paralleled from earlier paragraphs), the paragraph concludes with this final catch-phrase which opens the way into the rest of the book, explicitly tied to the beginning of the next paragraph by the parallelism of the citations (Cf. 1 Cor. 4.4: «qui autem iudicat me Dominus est»). At the end of his discussion of the value of confession, Augustine therefore admits that his task here is *only* to confess; in the next paragraph, at the beginning of book ten's confessions proper, he admits that God is the one who judges him.

audiar. The paragraphs here commented upon began with a subjunctive of prayer (*cognoscam*) and end with a similar one. After the long, complex periods of this paragraph, the paragraph ends with a sentence of three words, the simplest of prayers. In the next paragraph Augustine represents himself before the judgement seat of God and begins the process which leads (after the long digression on memory) into the confession of his present state, a state in which he has to make the terrifying admission: «ego vero quibus temptationibus valeam, quibusve non valeam, nescio» (*Conf.* 10.5.7 [Sk. 214.3-5]).

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