

Love of Neighbour in St. Augustine

A preparation for or the essential moment of Love for God?

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Love of neighbour has a role to play within the movement and flow of love to God.

... whatever else (other than God himself) that suggests to our minds that it might be loved should be drawn to the same goal towards which the whole élan of our love is running. Whoever therefore loves his neighbour rightly ought to act in his regard in such a way that the neighbour himself may also love God with all the heart, all the soul, and all the mind. For, loving the neighbour as himself in this way, a person draws all the love he has for himself and for the neighbour into that love for God which permits no trickle to be led off from itself, for by this turning away it would be diminished¹).

¹) *De Doctrina Christiana* 1,43 (CSEL 80,19) = 1,22,21 (CC 32,18. ML 34,27): "... sed quidquid aliud diligendum venerit in animum, illuc rapiatur, quo totus dilectionis impetus currit. Quisquis ergo recte proximum diligit, hoc cum eo debet agere, ut etiam ipse toto corde, tota anima, tota mente diligit Deum. Sic enim eum diligens tamquam seipsum, totam dilectionem sui et illius refert in illam dilectionem Dei, quae nullum a se rivulum duci extra patitur, cujus derivatione minuat". Similarly, *De Doctrina Christiana* 1,58 (CSEL

If any love were to seek to go its own way, to steer its own course outside the stream of love for God, then the latter would not be complete and total as the precept requires. But, if undivided attention to God is the ideal proposed — “*omnes cogitationes*”, “*omnem vitam*”, “*omnem intellectum*”²) — then, as one grows in its realisation by loving God more fully, will real attention not necessarily be distracted from the neighbour? Indeed, at an early stage of growth, love of neighbour might be quite indispensable for the blossoming of love for God; without it one would never find and continue on the right path which leads to God. Once God has been reached, however, once the condition has fulfilled its purpose, may it then be regarded more lightly as of lesser importance? When man has mounted up to God, may the ladder, of which the neighbour (or love of neighbour) is envisaged as one of the rungs, simply be discarded? Is love for neighbour just a stepping-stone to love for God which can be left behind and forgotten when we have come to God? If love of neighbour may be understood as love for God in its infancy, what will become of it when a grown man has put away the things of a child? Or perhaps, conversely, the child is father to the man, all that is best in the child most fully developed in adulthood. Is it imaginable that, by allowing itself to be carried into and along with the strong current of love for God, love for neighbour may be strengthened and enhanced rather than diluted and diminished?

There is a way of approaching love psychologically that portrays it as a means to one's own happiness, as desire and striving for the enjoyment of God, *Summum Bonum* and *beata vita*. On the other hand, love can be understood ethically and ontologically as obedience to the Eternal Law, God himself, and conformity to the *ordo rerum* that is the fruit of God's creation. Both these approaches are employed by Augustine, but there is some controversy amongst scholars concerning their relation to each other, and about which has the upper hand in Augustine's thought. It is not our intention to enter into this question as a whole here, but to detail some of the characteristics of both general schemas, the psychological and the ontological-ethical, and to examine in which manner and to what extent these features are reflected in those

80,23) = 1,26,27 (CC 32,21-22. ML 34,29): “Cum enim praecurrat dilectio Dei, eiusque dilectionis modus praescriptus appareat ita ut cetera in illum confluant ...”.

²) See *De Doctrina Christiana* 1,42 (CSEL 80,19) = 1,22,21 (CC 32,17-18. ML 34,27). See also Holte's commentary, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

Augustinian texts that deal with love for neighbour explicitly as a preparation for, or as a moment of, love for God.

A second pair of possibly conflicting, possibly complementary contexts is involved in this discussion. When love for neighbour is described as a step ("*gradus*") that leads to beatitude, or as wings enabling us to take flight to God, we find ourselves in a context of *ascent*, of moral purification for the vision of God. But when a person, in obedience to what he has discerned of God's will in the access to contemplation which faith grants him in this time of pilgrimage, turns in his active life with love to the neighbour, the context has changed to one of *descent*. Do the contexts of ascent and descent merely stand side by side in Augustine's treatment of love for neighbour? Do they contradict or complement each other? This too will be tested against the Augustinian texts we are concerned with in this chapter.

I. DEFINITION OF APPROACHES AND CONTEXTS

A. The psychological and ontological approaches

For the period 386-400 Gunnar Hultgren in his work, *Le commandement d'amour chez Augustin*³), gives a summary of what he views as two different attempts of *ratio* (as distinguished from *auctoritas*) to provide a motivation for responding to the commandment of love; this is contained in his third chapter entitled: "*Les motifs psychologiques et ontologiques du commandement d'amour*" (p. 18-57). Both tendencies can be traced back to the earliest Cassiciacum works. The eudaimonistic scheme of man's aspiration for his own happiness motivating the philosophical search for wisdom (*sapientia*) and truth appears in *De Beata Vita* and *Contra Academicos*. On the other hand, in *De Ordine*, the ontological and ethical frameworks are more dominant, the key concepts being *ordo*, *disciplina* and *lex*. "If we hold to the order here below, it will lead us to God; if not, we will not reach God"⁴). This argumentation involving the two tendencies is further advanced in the anti-Manichean writings. In *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* happiness (*beata vita*) is

³) Gunnar Hultgren, *Le commandement d'amour chez Augustin. Interprétation philosophique et théologique d'après les écrits de la période 386-400*, Paris, 1939.

⁴) *De Ordine* 1,9,27 (CSEL 63/3,139. CC 29,102. ML 32,990): "Ordo est, quem si tenuerimus in vita, perducet ad deum, et quem nisi tenuerimus in vita, non pervenimus ad deum". For the Cassiciacum period, see Gunnar Hultgren, *op. cit.*, p. 18-28.

linked with the idea of relating all things to man's highest good (*Summum Bonum*) and of clinging to it with perfect love. Man's desire for his own beatitude urges him to love God, his highest good. But what urges him to love the lesser being that is his neighbour? In the eudaimonistic scheme it can only be that such love has a value in promoting the lover's own love for God and thereby in helping him to achieve happiness⁵). But, according to Hultgren, there is a kind of love for neighbour in Augustine which envisages bringing advantage to others by way of increasing their love for God. *Ratio* is utterly unable to find a psychological motivation for such love; Augustine finds no place in the eudaimonistic scheme for this form of love for neighbour⁶). However, *ratio* has another string to its bow i.e. the *ordo rerum* created by God who is *Summum Bonum* and whose commandment of love may be understood as "the eternal law"⁷). Certain texts already quoted in Chapter One are used to illustrate this side of the question⁸). But Hultgren detects here the presence of *auctoritas* (the Christian Scriptures — faith in the *Summum Bonum* as being also the *Deus creator*) already influencing the way *ratio* draws up the order of values and man's place in it⁹). He concludes in fact that "*auctoritas* makes its influence felt in obliging *ratio* to deal with a problem (i.e. love of neighbour) that remains irresolvable if one persists in retaining a eudaimonistic scheme. We even dare to state that it is precisely because *auctoritas* prevented him from eluding the problem that Augustine continued to make it an object of his speculations in his later works"¹⁰).

⁵) G. Hultgren, *op. cit.*, p. 31: "Une fois que la béatitude en possession du souverain bien a été présentée, ainsi que dans le *De Moribus*, comme le but souverain de la morale et que l'on a affirmé que l'amour de Dieu est le seul chemin qui puisse mener à la béatitude, la question de la nécessité de l'amour du prochain se confond forcément avec la question de savoir si cette forme d'amour favorise ou entrave l'amour de Dieu en tant qu'aspiration à la béatitude".

⁶) *Ibid.*, p. 32. Cf. p. 50: "Dans la conception de l'amour d'Augustin, nous trouvons un élément révélateur par excellence de l'importance que l'*auctoritas* présente malgré tout dans l'élaboration de cette conception, c'est le rôle qu'y joue l'amour du prochain. C'est à bon droit que l'on peut souligner que le schéma eudémoniste dans lequel Augustin tâche en premier lieu d'introduire l'amour, est le cadre qui convient le moins à l'amour du prochain".

⁷) *Ibid.*, p. 36-49, especially p. 45-49.

⁸) I.e. *De Quantitate Animae* 34,78 (ML 32, 1078); *De Musica* 6,14,46 (ML 32, 1187); *De Diversis Quaestionibus* 83, q. 35,2 (CC 44A,52. ML 40,24); *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* 22,27 & 28 (CSEL 25/1,621-622. ML 42,418-419).

⁹) G. Hultgren, *op. cit.*, p. 48-49.

¹⁰) *Ibid.*, p. 50: "L'*auctoritas* y fait sentir son influence en obligeant la *ratio* à s'occuper d'un problème qui reste insoluble si l'on persiste à s'en tenir au schéma

The controversy proper arises when the question is asked which of these two approaches is more fundamental to Augustine's thought: the psychological, seeking to relate the love commandment to the human desire for *beata vita*, or the ontological-ethical, which attempts to base it on the *ordo rerum*. The opinions of proponents of the various points of view will be adduced in the actual discussion of particular Augustinian texts. It is of interest, however, to note Hultgren's position at this point. For him, even though they are not essentially opposed to each other, there is no possible agreement between the psychological and ontological-ethical schemas. Looked at in one way Augustine's ethic is eudaimonistic; in another, insofar as *ordo* represents a moral law, it is an ethic of duty¹¹). Clearly this displays quite a different outlook to that maintained by Ragnar Holte whose insistence on the structural correspondence between the different levels of objects and the different functions of the soul as imperative for a proper understanding of Augustine's *dilectio ordinata* was outlined in Chapter One¹²). For Holte, therefore, the psychological and ontological-ethical approaches merge into a harmonious whole. The *ordo rerum* and the differentiated dynamism of the soul are in concert.

B. *The contexts of ascent and descent*

For Holte too the weight of *auctoritas* (especially in the idea of *continuous* creation) in the determination of the methods and directions of *ratio* is far more decisive than Hultgren had been willing to allow. This is particularly clear in Holte's discussion of the contexts of ascent and descent. In general, when, in obedience to the divine law, a virtuous action is performed, e.g. an act of love for neighbour which redounds to his material and spiritual benefit, we can speak of a context of descent i.e. from God to man. The descent context has much in common with the

eudémoniste. Nous oserons même dire que c'est précisément parce que l'*auctoritas* l'empêchait d'éluder le problème que Augustin a continué d'en faire l'objet de ses spéculations dans ses ouvrages ultérieurs". Overall, however, Hultgren does not see the *auctoritas* idea of creation as exercising a determining influence on Augustine's ethic. There is nothing specifically Christian in the psychological-ontological discussion. *Ratio* only allows the idea of creation to play the role of the condition of existence of the *ordo rerum* and of the desire for happiness, but these follow their own laws. "Or, en réalité, c'est la *ratio* qui domine dans la formation théorique de la conception d'Augustin, et ces schémata ne permettent guère au commandement d'amour d'obtenir gain de cause" (p. 56).

¹¹) *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹²) See R. Holte, *op. cit.*, p. 256, 259 and 269.

'*ordo praecipendi*'. When, on the other hand, we pay attention to the fact that a good action of this sort is equally beneficial to the one who accomplishes it, we are in a context of ascent i.e. from man to God. The ascent context is related to the '*ordo faciendi*'. In the following passage both contexts are present together :

When we show compassion to a person and are mindful of his interests we do so to his advantage and it is this we look out for. But — I don't know how — such action benefits ourselves also. For God does not leave unrewarded the compassion we show to the needy. Now, our greatest reward is that we may enjoy Him perfectly and that all of us who enjoy Him may perfectly enjoy one another in Him¹³).

But can a person genuinely concern himself with the real interests of another when he knows — even if not *how* — that God is going to reward him for his good action? Is there not really opposition here between one's own advantage and that of the other? Does this double aspect of descent and ascent not introduce an ambiguity that reveals a basic contradiction, in such a way that the other's benefit will ultimately be the loser?

Holte attempts to resolve this difficulty by indicating the philosophical foundations of ascent and descent in the mutual dependence of the active and the contemplative lives¹⁴). On the one hand, Augustine's neo-Platonic background imposed upon him the demand for moral purification preparatory to contemplation of the truth; thus, virtue is considered a condition for contemplation¹⁵). On the other hand, in *Contra Academicos*, the active life is conceived as dependent on the contemplative life; thus, virtue is not possible until knowledge of the truth has been attained¹⁶). It was this dialectic that led Augustine to assent fully to Christian *auctoritas*, to the truth incarnate¹⁷). A person can believe the

¹³) *De Doctrina Christiana* 1,76 (CSEL 80,27-28) = 1,32,35 (CC 32,26. ML 34,32): "Cuius autem nos miseremur, et cui consulimus, ad eius quidem utilitatem id facimus, eamque intuemur; sed nescio quomodo etiam nostra fit consequens, cum eam misericordiam quam impendimus egenti, sine mercede non relinquit Deus. Haec autem merces summa est ut ipso perfruamur, et omnes qui eo fruimur, nobis etiam invicem in ipso perfruamur".

¹⁴) R. Holte, *op. cit.*, p. 280-281.

¹⁵) Cf. L.M.J. Verheijen O.S.A., "Éléments d'un commentaire de la Règle de saint Augustin. VI. Par les praecepta vivendi à la spiritalis pulchritudo. 'Pythagore', le De Ordine de saint Augustin et sa Règle", in *Augustiniana*, XXII (1972) 469-510.

¹⁶) *Contra Academicos* 3,15,33 (CSEL 63/3,72. CC 29,54. ML 32,951): "qui nihil approbat, nihil agit".

¹⁷) Cf. R. Holte, *op. cit.*, p. 89-93 and 310-317.

truth he is unable to grasp intellectually. And believing he can begin to act and to acquire virtue. This virtue in turn purifies him morally for the vision of God, for the full contemplation of wisdom and truth.

When man submits himself to God and His law in the obedience of faith, the good actions he performs may be seen as the fruit of a *descending* love. Virtue in action accomplishes the will of God and fulfils the relative ends assigned by Him to creation at its various levels; through living virtuously, therefore, man becomes an instrument in the continuous creative activity of God. "But it is precisely in practising virtue (i.e. in fulfilling the relative ends) that man fulfils the end that God has set for him: total abandonment to God in the form of love with the mind, the heart, and the lower soul; in a word, the *fruitio Dei*. In realising the relative ends man also realises the end *par excellence*"¹⁸). This is now an *ascending* love: acting virtuously a person purifies himself morally and gradually becomes capable of contemplating the truth, of enjoying God with his highest faculty. In this context too man can be regarded as a collaborator in God's continuous creation. Man works at his own perfection, but he does so in accordance with the creative will of God¹⁹).

It may be asked how well this theory stands up when confronted with those texts in which Augustine allows love for neighbour to be seen as a step to God or to be caught up into the living stream of love for God. The texts we will present are therefore *prima facie* representatives of the context of ascent, and of the '*ordo faciendi*' which moves from the neighbour to God. There is a question, however, not only of the origin and nature of this movement, but also of its consequences. From both points of view we are inevitably brought face to face with the context of descent, of the '*ordo praecipendi*'.

II. CONFRONTATION WITH THE TEXTS

Although there will inevitably be some overlapping, for the sake of clarity the texts will be dealt with under the following headings: love for neighbour as "*gradus*" to love for God; as a level in Augustine's schemes

¹⁸) *Ibid.*, p. 280: "Mais c'est justement en exerçant la vertu que l'homme remplit la fin que Dieu s'est proposée pour lui, l'abandon total à Dieu sous la forme de l'amour de l'esprit, du cœur et de l'âme inférieure, en un mot la *fruitio Dei*. En réalisant les fins relatives l'homme réalise aussi la fin suprême".

¹⁹) *Ibid.*, p. 281.

of the spiritual life; as virtuous action cleansing the eye and the heart for contemplation; as destined to be rewarded by God; as wings for rising up to God. Unless otherwise indicated, the texts will be presented in chronological order.

A. *Love for neighbour as a step ("gradus") to love for God*

In the period prior to 396 A.D. this image of the step occurs at least four times. On one occasion it is complemented by that of the cradle. The much quoted texts in this regard are those of *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae*:

(1) It is impossible that one should love God and not love oneself. In fact, only he who loves God knows how to love himself. The one who acts with a care to enjoy the supreme and true good has a sufficient love for himself. Since this good is God, as what we have been saying shows, who can doubt that the lover of God loves himself? Ought there then to be no bond of love among people? Most assuredly there ought to be, and such a bond that we cannot believe that there is any surer step to love for God (*nullus certior gradus ad amorem Dei*) than the love (*charitas*) of one person towards another²⁰).

(2) And if we cannot attain to good things without first ceasing to do evil, acts of love for neighbour are a sort of cradle for love to God, such that, since "love of neighbour does not do evil" (Rom. 13.10), we may rise from this to what has been said: "We know that for those who love God all things issue in good" (Rom. 8.28)²¹).

As far as (1) is concerned, there has been a tendency to accept a translation of the final sentence which conveys the unfortunate idea of love for neighbour merely as a hoist to love for God e.g. "*Oui certes il le faut, en sorte qu'il est de foi qu'il ne peut y avoir de degré plus certain, pour s'élever à l'amour de Dieu, que la charité de l'homme à l'égard de*

²⁰ *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,26,48 (ML 32, 1331): "Non enim fieri potest ut seipsum, qui Deum diligit, non diligat: imo vero solus se novit diligere, qui Deum diligit. Siquidem ille se satis diligit, qui sedulo agit, ut summo et vero perfruatur bono: quod si nihil est aliud quam Deus, sicut ea quae dicta sunt docuerunt, quis cunctari potest, quin sese amat, qui amator est Dei? Quid inter ipsos homines nullumne esse amoris vinculum debet? Imo vero ita debet, ut nullus certior gradus ad amorem Dei fieri posse credatur, quam hominis erga hominem charitas". Cf. *Contra Adimantum* 6 (CSEL 25,126, ML 42,136-137) (Date: 394 A.D.): "Dilectio proximi certus gradus est ad dilectionem Dei".

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1,26,50 (ML 32,1332): "Et si ad bona pervenire non possumus nisi mala operari destiterimus, ista sunt quasi cunabula charitatis Dei, quibus diligimus proximum; ut quoniam dilectio proximi malum non operatur, hinc ad illud ascendamus quod dictum est, *Scimus quoniam diligentibus Deum omnia procedunt in bonum* (Rom. 8.28)".

l'homme"²²). My objection is to "*pour s'élever à l'amour de Dieu*" as rendering "*gradus ad amorem Dei*", for it too easily presupposes that love for neighbour is merely a step of the kind by which one climbs to higher things. The impression therefore can very easily be given that one uses the neighbour for one's own advantage, while neglecting the person himself who is just a stepping-stone. This same version ("*pour s'élever à l'amour de Dieu*") has made an earlier appearance in the work of Gunnar Hultgren who sees this representation as assigning a rather negatively subordinate role to love of neighbour, as if it were just the human preparation for love of the divine, or worse, as if it had more in common with the rejection of worldly things than with a human relationship²³). The image of the cradle in (2) is seemingly open to a similar interpretation.

There is certainly not sufficient evidence to show that this view of the early Augustine is quite incorrect; but various indications at least call for its refinement. Firstly, how is the stepping-stone ("*gradus*") to be rightly understood? Secondly, is Augustine's insistence on a bond ("*vinculum*") amongst human beings really just a sop to love of neighbour without any true understanding of the depths of human

²²) French translation by B. Roland-Gosselin in *Œuvres de Saint Augustin* (Bibliothèque Augustinienne, 1), Paris, 1949, p. 209. This rendering is taken over without question by Dany Dideberg, *Saint Augustin et la première épître de saint Jean. Une théologie de l'agapè*, Paris, 1975, p. 138, who elaborates: "au lendemain de sa conversion, il considérait l'amour du prochain comme une œuvre propre de l'homme, un degré pour s'élever à l'amour de Dieu, un moyen de s'y exercer".

²³) G. Hultgren, *op. cit.*, p. 32: "On se trouve, en effet, devant une association défectueuse et de peu de consistance, car il est manifeste que l'amour du prochain que l'on associe ainsi à l'amour de Dieu ne justifie point le nom d'*amour*, étant donné qu'il est conçu négativement comme l'absence de la malveillance et de la ruse méchante (cf. *De Moribus* 1,26,49), et qu'il ne mérite même pas d'être appelé amour *du prochain*, car il n'y a point question de rapports avec le prochain comme tel. On peut encore se demander comment il est possible de faire à l'amour du prochain réduit à une forme d'abstinence du mal une situation tellement à part par rapport aux autres formes d'abstinence que l'on puisse affirmer qu'il ne peut y avoir de degré plus certain pour s'élever à l'amour de Dieu que la charité de l'homme à l'égard de l'homme".

See p. 70 for a precursor of the position stated by Dideberg, *op. cit.*, p. 138, that for the now convert Augustine, love of neighbour was "une œuvre propre de l'homme"; "Cet amour (c'est-à-dire, du prochain) en principe apparaît dans le *De moribus* entièrement subordonné à la charité de Dieu et qu'il n'y constitue qu'un degré sur la voie qui mène à cette charité. Aux yeux d'Augustin, la différence entre l'amour de Dieu et l'amour du prochain réside en ceci que l'amour de Dieu — dans son stade de perfection tout au moins — est l'œuvre du Saint-Esprit survenue par un mystérieux acte de grâce divine, tandis que l'amour du prochain peut être réalisé par l'homme lui-même et ne s'élève jamais au-dessus de la sphère humaine".

interchange? Thirdly, is the supreme and true good a person seeks to enjoy in loving God a private prosession or a good shared in common with others? Fourthly, is love for neighbour just the fine product of human effort, and in no sense at all the gift of God?

1. "Gradus"

For Anders Nygren, "love to neighbour is the ladder on which we can mount up to God"²⁴). It would seem, therefore, that love to neighbour, or the neighbour himself, is to be pictured as a rung on the ladder, or the ladder itself, of man's ascent to God. The "*gradus*" that is love for neighbour would provide the most secure foot-hold to higher things. But a parallel text from another work dating from the same period provides a plausible alternative view. Speaking of the seven levels of the greatness of the soul, Augustine places special emphasis on the fourth i.e. the effort of purification "*ex quo bonitas incipit*". The dispositions of this level can be described in terms of the Golden Rule and the injunction to obey the authority and the bidding of wise men. Thus one is led to a knowledge of the truths preached by the church

(which) cannot be understood unless a person takes a determined stand on the fourth of these seven levels, and, preserving goodness and acquiring the fitness and strength to perceive them, he examines all these truths one by one, most carefully and most judiciously. For each of these levels has a distinct beauty of its own; and these levels (*gradibus*) we would do better to call acts (*actus*)²⁵).

Ragnar Holte perceives these "*gradus*", levels of created reality having their own distinct goodness and beauty, as relative ends to be accomplished, as actions beautiful according to their own kind, and destined in God's providence to be performed by man in his *active* life. Man therefore participates in realising God's plan for His creation. In

²⁴) A. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, p. 552. Nygren's illustrative note to the sentence quoted, p. 552, note 4, assembles the arsenal of the texts that will be dealt with in this section.

²⁵) *De Quantitate Animae* 34,78 (ML 32,1078): "... nisi quisque in illorum septem quarto gradu fortiter agens, pietatemque custodiens, et ad ea percipiendo sanitatem et robur comparans, inquirat omnia singillatim, diligentissime ac sagacissime: namque illis omnibus gradibus inest distincta et propria pulchritudo, quos actus melius appellamus". English translation based on that of Joseph M. Colleran, in *St. Augustine, The Greatness of the Soul. The Teacher* (Ancient Christian Writers, 9), Westminster, Maryland-London, 1949, p. 108-109.

performing a good action a person produces something beautiful of its kind according to a graduated scale, and, in this way, becomes a sharer in God's continuous creation. At the top of the scale of good and beautiful actions a person can accomplish in the realm of God's creation is love for neighbour (side by side with legitimate love of self)²⁶). No other human act will more surely open out into love for God. This still rings of an ascent context, but not such that the act of love for neighbour is necessarily devalued by being reduced to a means, a practice ground, foreplay, a mere stepping-stone to love for God. Not only has this act a beauty of its own which God intends to be realised, but, since it is in the soul's power that the actions corresponding to its seven levels all be at work simultaneously²⁷), it is not unthinkable that the light and quiet strength of the higher acts, i.e. tranquillity, initiation, and contemplation, might reflect back on and fortify the virtuous act *par excellence* which is love for the neighbour. In fact, when our struggling companion souls are helped as they ought to be, we may perceive God Himself working through us²⁸).

No more than this image of love for neighbour as "*gradus*" should be envisioned exclusively in the ascent context should it be conceived as containing only features of the psychological approach, which links the love commandment to the human desire for *beata vita*. There is an ordered hierarchy of reality and a law demanding respect for it. If, out of regard for this hierarchy, a person wishes to be fully devoted to God, to cling to Him in submission to His law, then there is no surer way of doing this than by obeying the precept to love the neighbour as himself.

The soul keeps order in loving with its whole self what is above itself, that is, God, and in loving its companion souls as itself. Indeed, by the strength of this love the soul gives order to lower things, and is not sullied by them ... When we love our neighbour as much as is commanded, this love becomes for us the surest step (*certissimus gradus*) to being constantly intent upon God. And not

²⁶) R. Holte, *op. cit.*, p. 278-279. The author is here also depending on *De Diversis Quaestionibus* 83, q. 30 (CC 44A,38-40. ML 40,19-20) i.e. *Utrum omnia in utilitatem hominis creata sint*, which he quotes at length.

²⁷) *De Quantitate Animae* 35,79 (ML 32,1079): "Quaerimus quippe de animae potentia, et fieri potest ut haec omnia simul agat, sed id solum sibi agere videatur quod agit cum difficultate, aut certe cum timore. Agit enim hoc multo quam caetera attentior".

²⁸) *Ibid.*, 34,78 (ML 32,1078): "... opem ferendam esse sciamus, ita ut hoc ipsum cum bene agitur, Deum per nos agere intelligamus".

only do we submit to His rule, but we also preserve our own order, unshaken and sure²⁹).

In line with the text from *De Quantitate Animae* quoted above, we are justified in regarding the step ("gradus") "to being constantly intent upon God» here in *De Musica* as an act ("actus") bringing beauty and goodness to its own level of creation in accordance with God's will. Maintaining the equilibrium of order in himself by assenting to God's commands, a person would remain unshaken and sure in his capacity to accomplish that goodness God intends for him and for created reality, principally his "companion souls". Shortly prior to the passage quoted above Augustine had noted that the person who is not covetous refers all the harmonies related to souls connected with his own "not to his own proud superiority but to the advantage (*utilitas*) of those souls themselves"³⁰). The very least that can be said then is that Augustine does not intend, in using the step-image, to imply in any way a proud disregard for the good of others; for him the step-image can be coherently reconciled with seeking others' advantage. Moreover, however, if we are right in reading the step-texts in *De Moribus*, *Contra Adimantum* and *De Musica* in the light of *De Quantitate Animae*'s explanation of "gradus" as "actus", then it will be clear that the "gradus" love for neighbour, intent upon the other's good, in these texts is the most beautiful of acts that can be accomplished in accordance with God's will in the realm of His creation. Furthermore, this "gradus"- "actus" love for neighbour can exist simultaneously with the highest act, contemplation, and in the act of love for neighbour God Himself can be perceived working through us. Much of this is explicit only in *De Quantitate Animae*, but it does not conflict with the logic of the other passages we have looked at, and therefore there is no compelling reason to exclude this interpretation in favour of accepting "gradus" love for neighbour simply as a purely human step which is discardable once it has served its purpose of bringing us to God. As we shall discover, the implications of the

²⁹) *De Musica* 6,14,46 (ML 32,1187): "Tenet ordinem, seipsa tota diligens quod supra se est, id est Deum, socias animas tanquam seipsam. Hac quippe dilectionis virtute inferiora ordinat, nec ab inferioribus sordidatur ... A dilectione autem proximi tanta quanta praecipitur, certissimus gradus fit nobis, ut inhaereamus Deo, et non teneamur tantum ordinatione illius, sed nostrum etiam ordinem inconcussum certumque teneamus".

³⁰) *Ibid.*, 6,14,45 (ML 32,1186-1187): "omnesque illos qui de adjunctis animis operantur ... non ad superbam excellentiam suam, sed ad ipsarum animarum utilitatem redigit".

“gradus”-“actus” axis, the embracing of the contexts of ascent and descent, foreshadow Augustine’s later development.

2. “Vinculum”

“Ought there then to be no bond (*vinculum*) of love among people? Most assuredly there ought to be ...”³¹). But has Augustine in mind only the sort of relationship — hardly worth the name as Hultgren suggests³²) — that refrains from harming another and that is destined to be superseded when love for goodness (i.e. God) will have outgrown the cradle³³)? Elsewhere in *De Moribus* Augustine speaks of ties between human beings that both in depth and in extent are uncompromisingly active and positive. Singing the praises of the catholic church, he addresses her :

You unite brother to brother in a religious bond (*vinculo*) stronger and closer than that of blood. While preserving the ties of nature and choice, you bind together in mutual love all who are related by birth and all those related by marriage ... In recollection of their first parents, you join citizen to citizen, nation to nation, and all people to one another, not merely in society, but in a kind of brotherhood ...³⁴)

The common origin of human beings makes them brothers to one another; mutual love fortifies these natural bonds and also deepens family ties; it teaches a right way of acting in regard to every person in every situation. Given this broad and nuanced appreciation of human relationships, it is hard to imagine that in the context of the same work

³¹) *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,26,48 (ML 32,1331): “Quid inter ipsos homines nullumne esse amoris vinculum debet? Imo vero ita debet ...”.

³²) G. Hultgren, *op. cit.*, p. 32: “... l’amour du prochain que l’on associe ainsi à l’amour de Dieu ne justifie point le nom d’amour, étant donné qu’il est conçu négativement comme l’absence de la malveillance et de la ruse méchante (cf. *De Moribus* 1,26,49) ...”.

³³) *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,26,50 (ML 32,1332): “Et si ad bona pervenire non possimus nisi mala operari destiterimus, ista sunt quasi cunabula charitatis Dei, quibus diligimus proximum ...”.

³⁴) *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,30,63 (ML 32,1336): “Tu fratribus fratres religionis vinculo firmiore atque arctiore quam sanguinis nectis. Tu omnem generis propinquitatem et affinitatis necessitudinem, servatis naturae voluntatisque nexibus, mutua charitate constringis ... Tu cives civibus, gentes gentibus, et prorsus homines primorum parentum recordatione, non societate tantum, sed quadam etiam fraternitate conjungis ...”. English translation: Donald A. Gallagher and Idella J. Gallagher in *Saint Augustin, The Catholic and Manichaean Ways of Life* (The Fathers of the Church, 56), p. 48. I have altered the translation slightly.

an author would have prescinded from it entirely and pared down love for neighbour to a mere mechanism for protecting the other from the destructive blows of my wickedness. Is it not more probable that, even at this early stage, such attentive concern and extensive brotherhood are what Augustine envisages when he speaks of the love of one person towards another, the bond of love among people which makes us able to “believe that there is no surer step (i.e. act) to love for God”³⁵? Indeed, such love deals with the neighbour “in such a way that *he too* may love God with perfect love”³⁶).

Moreover — and here we introduce an idea prompted by later texts, but still not totally out of the question as a possibly correct way of understanding communion among human beings (“*vinculum*”) as the most perfect act (“*gradus*” i.e. act) opening out into love for God, in *De Moribus* — might not the openness and the self-giving called for in developing the bonds of mutual love in brotherhood be the fullest human image and foretaste of the total gift of self God calls for in the commandment? Does communion among human beings not bring God nearer to us by offering an experience of attention and fellowship that most closely resembles what love for God will be like? In knowing happiness in the unity of fraternal love are we not in the best possible way initiated into a longing for the fulness of that joy in God? In this manner, therefore, we would have to “begin from the second (love for neighbour) in order to arrive at the first (love for God)”³⁷. Otherwise we would have no human feeling for what the first could mean and little effective promise of delight that could attract us to pursue it. Speaking in 407 A.D. of that inexhaustible fraternal love by which he could see his audience had been enthralled, Augustine asks: “If all our insatiable love so delights us now while we are pilgrims on the way, what will be our rejoicing when we have reached the father-land?”³⁸).

³⁵) “Imo vero ita debet, ut nullus certior gradus ad amorem Dei fieri posse credatur, quam hominis erga hominem charitas”.

³⁶) *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,26,48 (ML 32,1331). 1,24,49 makes it clear that something more than the absence of harm is required by love of neighbour: “... id agendum cum proximo est, hoc est ut ipse etiam perfecto amore diligat Deum”.

³⁷) *Sermo* 265,9 (ML 38,1223): “... a secunda autem incipitur, ut ad primam perveniatur”. It is to be noted that both of these are gifts of the same Spirit.

³⁸) *In Ioannis Epistolam*, tr. 10,7 (ML 35,2059): “Si sic nos delectat peregrinos (i.e. tota dilectio nostra sine satietate), in patria quomodo gaudēbimus?” Cf. *Ibid.*, tr. 5,7 (ML 35,2016): “Modo cum fide vides, tunc cum specie videbis. Si enim amamus cum non videmus, quomodo amplectemur cum viderimus? Sed ubi nos debemus exercere? In amore fraterno”.

In the bond between human beings as Augustine later develops it, therefore, there are elements both of law and order (the double commandment which, in linking the differentiated dynamism of the soul with the hierarchy of the *ordo rerum*, calls for total self-giving) and of the longing that the delight of the pilgrim in the love of his brethren may open out into the rejoicing of being embraced by God when He is seen in the father-land. For the present, however, it is sufficient to have noted that the "*vinculum*" between human beings which makes us able to "believe that there is no surer step to love for God" is not as empty of positive content as laying emphasis on the fact that it is a "step" to something else may at first incline us to think. Even in *De Moribus* the "*vinculum*" appears as *mutual* love and brotherhood, in which one's intention for the other is that "he too may love God with perfect love". If the bond may be believed to be a step for me to God, it may be believed to be so for the neighbour too. In the coming chapters, moreover, the positive meaning of the "*vinculum*" between human beings in the post-*De Moribus* Augustine will appear with greater clarity at various stages — it may be bearing one another's burdens, or enjoying one another in unity of heart and mind, or giving up our lives for the other — such that the kind of relationship envisaged in "*vinculum*"-"*gradus*" love of neighbour evidently becomes more worthy of the name than Hultgren considers. Hultgren in fact gives a limited statement of the distinction between love for neighbour (the avoidance of evil) and love for God (the attainment of good) more independent weight than it deserves. The "*vinculum*"-"*gradus*" as it will certainly become in Augustine may be able to be believed to be an act opening out into total love for God, an act which not only represents the active life at its highest level, but which is itself enriched when a person is as intent as possible on God in this life and perfected when God is contemplated face to face in the next.

3. *Supreme Good: private or common?*

What is the nature of the supreme and true good that a person who has a sufficient love for himself acts with a care to enjoy?³⁹⁾ What is the good in which all things issue for those who love God?⁴⁰⁾ Reconnoitring in the context reveals that it is not to be construed as a private possession

³⁹⁾ *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,26,48 (ML 32,1331); "Siquidem ille se satis diligit, qui sedulo agit, ut summo et vero perfruatur bono ...".

⁴⁰⁾ *Ibid.*, 1,26,50 (ML 32,1332), quoting Rom. 8.28.

merited for his own enjoyment by the person who had been solicitous to keep his love in order.

Now you love yourself in a salutary manner if you love God more than yourself. Therefore, what you do on your own behalf, you must do also for your neighbour; that is to say, you should deal with him in such a way that he too may love God with perfect love. For you do not love him as yourself if you do not strive to lead him towards that which you yourself are setting your course. And this is the one good that is not diminished by the multitude striving to reach it with you⁴¹).

The supreme and true good is therefore also the common good. Anders Nygren remarks of the text quoted above in which love to neighbour is called a cradle of love to God⁴²): "The saying of Paul in Rom. viii, 28, that 'all things work together for good to them that love God', Augustine interprets to mean that everything — and here primarily love to neighbour — serves as a means to the attainment of their 'bonum', the vision and enjoyment of God"⁴³). But the "*bonum*" is not theirs alone; it is also that of the neighbour they love as themselves. The supreme good is not a consumer object that excludes others from my enjoyment of it, or me from theirs; on the contrary.

Again, if all the levels of the soul from vitalisation to contemplation can be at work simultaneously⁴⁴), could not the good ("*bonum*", "*bona*") attained at the highest level be understood as diffusive of itself throughout the other levels? If, as Augustine was to write in the letter to Proba (circa 412 A.D.), happiness and goodness stem from the same source⁴⁵), does it not follow that a heightening of the former, when it is sought in the eternal God where it is truly to be found, fosters the development of the latter to the advantage of one's neighbour? "These good people (i.e. those seeking happiness in God) seem to spread no small comfort about them, even in this life"⁴⁶).

⁴¹) *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,26,49 (ML 32,1331-1332): "Te autem ipsum salubriter diligis, si plus quam te diligis Deum. Quod ergo agis tecum, id agendum cum proximo est; hoc est, ut ipse etiam perfecto amore diligat Deum. Non enim eum diligis tanquam teipsum, si non ad id bonum ad quod ipse tendis, adducere satagis. Illud est enim unum bonum, quod omnibus tecum tendentibus non fit angustum".

⁴²) *Ibid.*, 1,26,50 (ML 32,1332).

⁴³) A. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, p. 552, n. 4.

⁴⁴) *De Quantitate Animae* 35,79 (ML 32,1079).

⁴⁵) *Epistola* 130,2,3 (CSEL 44,43. ML 33,495): "Nam inde necesse est fiat homo beatus, unde fit bonus".

⁴⁶) *Epistola* 130,2,4 (CSEL 44,43. ML 33,495): "Homines autem boni in hac vita videntur praestare non parva solacia".

4. Love for neighbour: the gift of God?

Augustine certainly considered love for neighbour as a gift of God at least from the time of his commentary on the letter to the Galatians (395 A.D.), and possibly earlier. But is there nothing at all to indicate that God might play some role in love for neighbour even as soon as *De Moribus*? Is love for neighbour only the act proper to man preparatory to love for God which in its most perfect form emanates from God himself? Is human activity in love for neighbour seen as an independent factor, a *conditio sine qua non*, of the divine activity which leads to the accomplishment of love for God⁴⁷? Is the one graced, the other ungraced? We have already read in *De Moribus*: "... the main point to be held to is this, that no one should think that while he despises his neighbour he will come to beatitude and to the God whom he loves". The immediate continuation of this text is:

Would that it were as easy to take care of one's neighbour or to avoid injuring him as it is for the kind-hearted and well-instructed individual to love him. But here good-will alone does not suffice, for it is a work demanding great understanding and prudence, which no one can exercise unless they be given to him by God, the fountain of all good⁴⁸).

This is not a completely unambiguous acknowledgement that love for neighbour is the work of grace, but it is to say that human beings (even goodwilled, kind-hearted, well-instructed individuals) are not capable of it without a gift of some kind from God by which they are endowed with great understanding and prudence. Likewise, in *De Quantitate Animae*, God can be perceived acting through us when we love the neighbour as we should⁴⁹). And surely love for the neighbour as for the self does rise

⁴⁷) Cf. G. Hultgren, *op. cit.*, p. 70-71.

⁴⁸) *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,26,51 (ML 32,1332): "Atque utinam ut facile est bene instituto et benigno diligere proximum, ita facile esset vel consulere, vel nihil nocere. Non enim ad haec satis est voluntas bona, sed opus est magna quadam ratione atque prudentia, qua nemo uti potest, nisi Deus, ille fons omnium bonorum, ita tribuerit". English translation: *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 56, p. 41 (with slight changes).

⁴⁹) *De Quantitate Animae* 34,78 (ML 32,1078): "... opem ferendam esse sciamus, ita ut hoc ipsum cum bene agitur, Deum per nos agere intelligamus". In view of what follows it i.e. "neque quidquam nobis proprium indicemus inanis gloriae cupiditate decepti, quo uno malo a summo in ima demergimur", Hultgren, *op. cit.*, p. 73-74, does not consider this text as "l'expression d'une compréhension réelle de l'action cachée de Dieu sur l'amour humaine. Mais elle n'est qu'une autre expression de l'idée que tout dépend de Dieu le créateur et son rôle est de garder l'homme de la *superbia* et de la tentation de se refuser de glorifier Dieu. Elle a donc pour mission d'orienter l'amour du prochain vers l'amour de Dieu comme son

above the sphere of the purely human to the extent that its mission is to "deal with him in such a way that he too may love God with perfect love"⁵⁰).

We have already encountered Augustine's uncertainty in *De Moribus* as to the proper description of the relationship between love for God and neighbour⁵¹). A text further on in this same work argues in favour of love for neighbour being more than an unaided human activity, but the ambiguity as to whether love for neighbour is being compared to our love for God or to His love for us remains. The text reads:

When this human love has nourished and fortified the soul clinging to your (i.e. the church's) breast and made it ready to follow God, and when the divine majesty has begun to reveal itself in the measure proper to man while an inhabitant of this earth, then such ardent love (*charitas*) is engendered, and such a flame of divine love (*amor*) bursts forth that all vices are burned away and man is purged and sanctified. The divine character of these words then becomes apparent: "I am a consuming fire" (Deut. 4.24); and "I have come to cast fire upon the earth" (Lk. 12.49)⁵²).

but final". Quite probably, in view of other similar contemporary texts, it is the creator and provident God who is envisaged here. But does this necessarily exclude for Augustine, even prior to 390 A.D., any real influence of that God in human loving? Although we find time and again in Augustine the declaration that love for neighbour is to be oriented to God as its goal, the final sentence quoted from Hultgren is rather baffling in relation to the text of *De Quantitate Animae* 34.78. Could not the meaning here rather be: right love of neighbour involves the recognition that in its action God is working through us ("ita ut hoc ipsum cum bene agitur, Deum per nos agere intelligamus"); while perverse love ("cupiditas") and vainglory would seek to claim the credit for loving for themselves ("nobis proprium vindicemus")? In other words, our text would be dealing with the whence of love for neighbour rather than its whither. In order than one might love the neighbour properly, it would point away from self-reliance and the danger of pride to complete self-giving trust in God who is to be understood as effecting genuine love of neighbour through us. At this point it would be the self in its loving that is specifically oriented to God rather than the neighbour loved.

⁵⁰) *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,26,49 (ML 32,1331): "Quod ergo agis tecum id agendum cum proximo est; hoc est, ut ipse etiam perfecto amore diligat Deum".

⁵¹) *Ibid.*, 1,26,51 (ML 32,1332): "Sed nescio quomodo aut pariter ista in plenitudinem perfectionemque consurgunt, aut inchoatur prius Dei amor, et prius perficitur proximi. Ad incipiendum enim citius fortasse in se divina charitas rapit, sed facilius minora perficimus". Does "divina charitas" refer to our love for God or his love for us?

⁵²) *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,30,64 (ML 32,1337): "Iam vero cum haec humana dilectio inhaerentem uberibus tuis nutriverit, et roboraverit animum, sequendo Deo factum idoneum; ubi ejus majestas ex tanta parte quanta homini, dum terrae hujus inhabitator est, sufficit, aperire se coeperit; tantus charitatis ardor innascitur, et tantum divini amoris consurgit incendium, ut exustis omnibus vitiiis, et homine purgato atque sanctificato, satis appareat quam divine dictum sit: *Ego sum ignis consumens* (Deut. 4.24) et, *Ignem veni mittere in mundum* (Lk. 12.49)". English translation (with slight modifi-

Human love makes the soul ready to follow God; it brings the materials, as it were, from which divine love can flame forth. But note that the soul nourished and fortified by human love is pictured clinging to the breasts of the church. In the passage preceding our text it is precisely the church that teaches and effects this human love: "In recollection of their first parents, you (i.e. the church) join ... all men to each other, not merely in society, but in a kind of brotherhood"; the church teaches what is due to each and every person⁵³). And this sensitivity to human reality taught by the church can stem only from the understanding and prudence that are the gift of God, not from the sheer determination of human will⁵⁴). Indeed, there is much spiritual and moral suffering that human beings can do nothing to relieve unless humanity is graced with a real and salutary hope of well-being.

... a great number and variety of spiritual maladies are cured only by an extraordinary and ineffable remedy. And if this medicine were not sent by God to the peoples, there would be no hope of salvation, so unrestrainedly do they continue to sin. Even the health of the body, if you wish to trace things to their cause, can only be explained as coming from God, to whom we must attribute both the being and the well-being of all things⁵⁵).

The human love, therefore, that prepares the soul for the ardour of divine love, is already dependent on God for its being, its well-being, and its sagacious and effective exercise. Far more than "mortal affection" is intended. The materials brought by refined and skillful human love to the engendering of divine love are already seen as gifts of God. Besides, we are faced once again with the difficulty of knowing whether the fire of divine love ("*divini amoris*") that is lit when contemplation in faith and the action of human love embrace refers to our love for God or to His

cation): *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 56, p. 48-49. Cf. *Retractationes* 1,6,5 (CSEL 36/2,31-32) = 1,7,5 (ML 32, 593) where, out of fear for a possible Pelagian misinterpretation of this passage, sanctification is said never to be perfectly realised here below.

⁵³) *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,30,63 (ML 32,1336).

⁵⁴) *Ibid.*, 1,26,51 (ML 32,1332): "Non enim ad haec (i.e. taking care of the neighbour) satis est voluntas bona, sed opus est magna quadam ratione atque prudentia, qua nemo uti potest, nisi Deus, ille fons omnium bonorum id tribuerit".

⁵⁵) *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,28,55 (ML 32,1333): "... multimodi varique morbi animorum, magna quadam et prosus ineffabili ratione sanantur. Quae medicina nisi divinitus populis mitteretur, nulla spes salutis esset, tam immoderata progressione peccantibus: quanquam et illa corporis, si altius rerum originem repetas, non invenitur unde ad homines manare potuerit, nisi a Deo, cui rerum omnium status salusque tribuenda est". English translation: *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 56, p. 43; but I have changed "sent to the people of God" to "sent by God to the peoples".

love for us or to both⁵⁶). There can be no doubt that our love for God is involved in the process by which vices are burned away. But when Deut. 4.24 is quoted: "I (i.e. God) am a consuming fire (*ignis consumens*)", Augustine at least implicitly indicates that he considers the flame of divine love ("*divini amoris incendium*") to be God himself. Ten years later, in the *Confessiones*, this is quite unambiguously the case: "O love (*amor*) ever burning, never quenched! O charity (*caritas*), my God, set me on fire with your love"⁵⁷).

⁵⁶) In *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,26,51 (ML 32,1332), as we have seen, "divina charitas" could refer to either one or the other. In the unusual comparison we have looked at in *De Doctrina Christiana* 1,72 (CSEL 80,26-27) = 1,30,33 (CC 32,25. ML 34,32), however, it is clear that love for neighbour is compared to God's love for us.

⁵⁷) *Confessiones* 10,29,40 (Skutella 239. CSEL 33,256. ML 32,796): "o amor qui semper ardes et nunquam extingueris, caritas, Deus meus, accende me". English translation: R.S. Pine-Coffin, *Saint Augustine, Confessions*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1961, p. 233.

It would be a mistake to suppose that human love and love for God in Augustine can be distinguished on the basis of vocabulary. Already in *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* we have met "Dei amor" and "divina charitas": cf. 1,26,51 (ML 32,1332); "charitas" i.e. love for neighbour, as the most certain step to love for God ("ad amorem Dei"): 1,26,48 (ML 32,1331); and now "humana dilectio" as providing the kindling wood, or strengthening the soul, for the fire of divine love ("divini amoris"): 1,30,64 (ML 32,1337). According to the *Confessiones*, "amor" can be identified with "caritas", with God himself. On the point of Augustine's vocabulary of love Etienne Gilson refers to "sa terminologie assez flottante". "Pour lui ... *charitas* = *dilectio*; et *dilectio* = *amor*; puis donc qu'il peut y avoir des amours bons ou mauvais, il doit y avoir des charités bonnes ou mauvaises": *Introduction à l'étude de saint Augustin*, Paris, 1929, p. 169, n. 2. For a full discussion of the matter, see H. Pétré, *Caritas. Etude sur le vocabulaire latin de la charité chrétienne*, Louvain, 1948, p. 89-98. Augustine has rescued the word "amor" for the Christian world. In *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* it seems to be used alongside "caritas" and "dilectio" as a synonym: "Deus cui haerere certe non valemus nisi dilectione, amore, caritate": 1,14,24 (ML 32,1322). Later it is explicitly stated to be a synonym. Cf. *In Ioannis Epistolam*, tr. 8,5 (ML 35,2038); *Tractatus in Evangelium Ioannis* 123,5 (CC 36,678. ML 35,1968). The classic text in this regard is *De Civitate Dei* 14,7 (CSEL 40/2,13. CC 48,422. ML 41,410-411): "Sed scripturas religionis nostrae, quarum auctoritatem ceteris omnibus litteris anteponimus, non aliud dicere amorem, aliud dilectionem vel caritatem, insinuandum fuit". Nygren reckons this occurrence a doubtful boon to Christian love, seeing it as the introduction of "eros" to oust "agape" from its throne, and he claims that Augustine realised that he had to defend himself on this account from "a widespread opinion that this meant a perversion of the Christian idea of love": *Agape and Eros*, p. 557. Ragnar Holte rightly counters that Augustine in *De Civitate Dei*, Book 14, is embroiled in a conflict not with other Christian but with pagan authors. See *Béatitude et Sagesse*, p. 262-263, especially n. 2. For Holte, "si Augustin prend ici la défense de l'amor, c'est pour défendre la conception qui voit dans la vie sensible et corporelle de l'homme quelque chose de bon en soi...": *Ibid.*, p. 263, n. 2. Also "le terme *amor* est ici utilisé par Augustin à l'appui de sa conception chrétienne de la sanctification comme concernant la totalité de l'homme": p. 262. The reference in this latter case is to *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* 1,20,31 (ML 34,188): "Et haec est hominis vita beata atque tranquilla, cum omnes motus ejus rationi veritatisque consentiunt; et

In summary, therefore, we may state that, as a consequence of this review of some of the aspects associated in context with love for neighbour as “*gradus*” or “*cunabula*” to love for God, it will be clear that these images — which, it bears repeating, are found only in the early Augustine — ought not to be understood simply as if they referred to the human effort that provides a means to individualistic love for God leading to enjoyment of Him. Neither the neighbour nor love for neighbour is but a stepping-stone to something greater, just a rung on the ladder of one’s ascent to something higher. On the contrary, the love for neighbour here presented reveals traits of a certain profundity that is God-endowed and that directs others to God as their supreme and true good.

B. LOVE FOR NEIGHBOUR AS A LEVEL IN AUGUSTINE’S SCHEMES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

There are at least three texts in which Augustine systematises the spiritual life according to its various levels (“*gradus*”), one of which is formed by love for neighbour. We have already become acquainted above with *De Quantitate Animae* 78-79: this text is preceded by a presentation of the seven different levels of greatness of the human soul (70-76); love for neighbour (the Golden Rule) makes its appearance on the fourth level in which the soul struggles to be purified from its attachment to the delights of this world (73). And special eminence is accorded to this fourth level:

Let us hate not those who are crushed by vices, but the vices themselves; not sinners, but just sins. We should indeed be willing to help everyone, even those who have harmed us or wish to harm us or wish at least that harm befall us. This is true religion, this is perfect religion, this alone is religion. Thanks to it, the soul whose greatness is the object of our enquiry is made apt to be reconciled to God and makes itself worthy of freedom. For God, whom it is to each one’s greatest advantage to serve, frees us from all things. The only perfect freedom is to be pleasing to him in serving him⁵⁸).

vocantur gaudia, et amores sancti, et casti et boni”. As we have seen in the *Confessiones*, “amor” may even be identified with God himself.

⁵⁸) *De Quantitate Animae* 34,78 (ML 32,1078): “Neque vitiis oppressos, sed ipsa vitia; neque peccantes, sed ipsa peccata oderimus. Omnibus enim subventum velle debemus, etiam qui nos laeserunt, aut laedere, aut omnino laedi volunt. Haec est vera, haec perfecta, haec sola religio per quam Deo reconciliari pertinet ad animae, de qua quaerimus, magnitudinem, qua se libertate dignam facit: nam ille ab omnibus liberat, cui servire omnibus utilissimum est, et in cuius servitio placere perfecta et sola libertas est”.

The neighbour to be loved, therefore, is the enemy, those who wish us ill. Such love is the sole and indispensable way to reconciliation with God and to the fulness of freedom in His service. It is the most excellent act of human detachment from the self-interest of mortal affections and therefore the most thorough purification for serving the interests of God with that highest freedom which in turn unleashes the full capacities of all the other levels of the soul for bringing about the particular goodness and beauty appropriate to them in God's creation. For it is within the soul's power that all its levels of greatness be at work simultaneously⁵⁹). Therefore, the highest can retroactively influence the other levels, promoting their own distinct excellence. Thus, when the soul is concentrated on the love of neighbour appropriate to the fourth level — albeit with difficulty and fear — it can in fact be acting in concert with contemplation which enhances the beauty of that love. Furthermore, in the section in which Augustine deals specifically with the seventh level, contemplation, perhaps we may understand as a new form of love for neighbour the most praiseworthy work of reflecting upon and communicating the truth that is learnt in contemplation of the Power and Wisdom of the Author of life and on which we are nourished by the church⁶⁰). This would constitute a love for neighbour in a new key.

In 394 A.D. Augustine is giving his interpretation of the beatitudes proclaimed in the Lord's sermon on the mount as handed down by Matthew 5.3-10. He finds that the eight assertions correspond to the steps which lead one to happiness: (1) Blessedness begins with humility: "blessed are the poor in spirit"; (2) The study and knowledge of the Scriptures requires the docility and meekness of filial love ("*pietas*") : "blessed are the meek"; (3) Understanding how one is fettered by sins and attachment to lower things leads to lamenting one's loss of the supreme good: "blessed are they who mourn"; (4) A struggle is required to extricate oneself from worldly entanglement; therefore, one needs to hunger and thirst for what is right, and to have the courage to bear the pain of relinquishing the pleasures that keep one from it: "blessed are those who hunger and thirst for what is right"; (5) But the struggle will never be successful unless a person is helped by someone greater than

⁵⁹) *Ibid.*, 35,79 (ML 32,1079): "Quaerimus quippe de animae potentia, et fieri potest ut haec omnia simul agat, sed id solum sibi agere videatur quod agit cum difficultate, aut certe cum timore. Agit enim hoc multo quam caetera attentior".

⁶⁰) *Ibid.*, 33,76 (ML 32,1077): "tractare autem ac dispensare commode, laudis et charitatis plenissimum est".

himself. "Therefore, true prudence is to help those weaker than ourselves in matters in which we are the more powerful, if we wish to be aided by someone more powerful than ourselves"⁶¹). This corresponds to the beatitude, 'blessed are the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them'; (6) This is the stage of purity of heart which strengthens the soul for contemplation of the supreme good; the intellect is pure and serene on account of its undisturbed consciousness of having done good work: "blessed are the pure in heart"; (7) "Finally, the seventh maxim is wisdom itself: it is the contemplation of truth, making the whole man peaceful and taking on the likeness of God"⁶²). "Blessed the peace-makers: they shall be called sons of God".

But thus we seem to have reached the goal without taking the eighth beatitude into consideration at all. In fact, it is to be linked with the first because both of them contains the promise, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven". The eighth maxim is: "blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of right". With this the whole process is said to begin anew: the eighth shows and recommends what has been completed; "commencing again, as it were, from the beginning, (it) makes known and represents what is perfect so that others too may come to perfection by way of these steps"⁶³). Although love for neighbour may have appeared somewhat pale and contrived as we met it on the fifth level — i.e. help your weaker neighbour so that you yourself may receive help from God to overcome your own weakness and to attain to tranquil contemplation of the

⁶¹) *De Sermonibus Domini in Monte* 1,3,10 (CC 35,8. ML 34,1234): "Est autem iustum consilium, ut qui se a potentiore adiuvari vult, adiuuet infirmiores in quo est ipse potentior". Cf. 1,4,11 (CC 35,10. ML 34,1234-1235).

⁶²) *Ibid.*, (CC 35,8-9. ML 34,1234): "Postrema est septima ipsa sapientia, id est contemplatio veritatis, pacificans totum hominem et suscipiens similitudinem dei ...".

⁶³) *Ibid.*, (CC 35,9. ML 34,1234): "Octava tamquam ad caput redit, quia consummatum perfectumque ostendit et probat ... Septem sunt ergo quae perficiunt; nam octava clarificat et quod perfectum est demonstrat, ut per hos gradus perficiantur et ceteri, tamquam a capite rursus exordians". Different English translators have come up with a variety of possibilities for interpreting this text. Two of them challenge the meaning we have chosen: (1) John J. Jepsen in *Ancient Christian Writers*, No. 5, Cork, 1948, p. 18, offers: "Seven in number, therefore, are the things which lead to perfection. The eighth maxim throws light upon perfection and shows what it consists of, so that, with this maxim beginning again, so to speak, from the first, the two together may serve as steps toward the perfection of the others also". (2) Denis J. Kavanagh O.S.A. in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 11, Washington, 1951, p. 26, translates: "Therefore, there are seven maxims which constitute perfection, for the eighth starts anew, as it were, from the very beginning: it clarifies and approves what is already complete. Thus, all the other grades of perfection are accomplished through these seven".

truth⁶⁴) — the last word has not been said about it there. The goodness for which one has hungered and thirst, and with the help of God laboriously reached in peaceful contemplation of the truth, is destined to manifest itself for the sake of others, even to be tried and tested on their behalf, so that they too may become aware of and set out on the true path to holiness. A heightened understanding of how one human being can help and show mercy to another is now possible: even to suffer persecution in order to make known and to prove an example of the way to true goodness. Furthermore, for all those following the way of beatitude, it can be seen at every step as the work of the Holy Spirit⁶⁵). Love for neighbour is therefore conceived in this text as the Spirit's work.

Our interpretation is, of course, based on the reading of "*ceteri*" as 'other people' i.e. those not present at the sermon on the mount. John J. Jepson, however, has perhaps glimpsed a possibility which is not alien to the thought of Augustine, in translating: "The eighth maxim throws light upon perfection and shows what it consists of, so that, with this maxim beginning again, so to speak, from the first, the two together may serve

The former is more plausible than the latter if "*ceteri*" is to be understood as "maxims" or "grades of perfection". Francine Cardman, however, in Jaroslav Pelikan (editor), *The Preaching of Augustine. "Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount"*, Philadelphia, 1973, p. 9, has: "Seven in number, then, are the things which bring perfection; and the eighth illuminates and points out what is perfect, so that through these steps others might also be made perfect, starting once more, so to speak, from the beginning". It is difficult to find any grammatical justification for implying that the "*exordiens*" phrase qualifies "*ceteri*" (in this case, other people) rather than "*octava*". But I believe that the translation of "*ceteri*" as "other people" is more probable than Jepson's version. For, at the beginning of 1,3,10, Augustine makes a distinction between those who were present listening to Jesus' maxims on the mount and those who were absent or would be born later. What it comes down to is that the statements of Matt. 5.3-10 were directed toward mankind in general, even though obviously not all were present; whereas, from 5.11 ("Blessed will you be when men revile and persecute you") on, while Jesus directs his words specifically to those present, this does not mean that the absent ones were excluded. The content of the final beatitude of the first group (Matt. 5.10) and the first of the second group (5.11) is the same: persecution in the cause of right. All, both present and absent, who follow the steps to perfection, will be persecuted. But how are those "others", who were not present at the sermon on the mount, to come to perfection by way of these steps, unless those who were present, through practising the eighth beatitude of the first group ("blessed are those who are persecuted", which corresponds to the first of the maxims specifically directed to those who were present), "make known and represent what is perfect"?

⁶⁴) Or, as this is formulated slightly earlier: "*Beatos esse dicit qui subveniunt miseris, quoniam eis ita rependitur, ut de miseria liberentur*": *De Sermone Domini in Monte* 1,2,7 (CC 35,5. ML 34,1232).

⁶⁵) *De Sermone Domini in Monte* 1,4,11 (CC 35,9. ML 34,1234): "*Videtur ergo mihi etiam septiformis operatio spiritus sancti, de qua Esaias loquitur, his gradibus sententiisque congruere*".

as steps toward the perfection of the others also"⁶⁶). On this reckoning, obtaining the kingdom of God, which is the promise associated with both the eighth and the first beatitude, is not an end that has risen above and has nothing more to do with the other levels. Rather, it too, in bringing the soul back to humility, serves as a step towards the perfection of the other levels of meekness, mourning, courage, mercy towards others, purity of heart, and contemplation of the truth. As far as mercy towards others, love for neighbour, is concerned, this perfection of the other levels could well mean not only that merciful love for neighbour proves once again to be a step to purity of heart, contemplation of the truth, and the obtaining of the kingdom through persecution, in which the perfection achieved is shown and recommended; but also that, when, in contemplation of the truth, the whole person has been made peaceful and has taken on the image of God, love for neighbour itself is perfected at its own level. In obedience to the contemplative reason the active life of love for neighbour is fully freed to share in God's continuous creation by perfectly realising the goodness and beauty appropriate to its domain⁶⁷).

The third passage, from *De Doctrina Christiana*, sets out the dispositions required for the study of Sacred Scripture. The steps correspond *grossomodo* to those indicated above in *De Sermone Domini in Monte*⁶⁸). (1) *Timor Dei*: one seeks to recognise God's will; the thought of our mortality and future death brings about a crucifixion of pride; (2) *Pietas*: with the meekness of respectful love one regards the wisdom of Scripture as superior to one's own; (3) *Scientia*: "Everyone devoted to the study of the Sacred Scriptures trains himself to find in them nothing else except that God is to be loved for his own sake and the neighbour for the sake of God. Indeed, God is to be loved with all the heart, all the soul, and all the mind, while the neighbour as oneself. In this way our entire love for our neighbour and for ourselves is to be

⁶⁶) John J. Jepsen, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁶⁷) See *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* 22,27 & 28 (CSEL 25/1,621-622. MI 42,418-419: "... inque ipsa ratione, quae partim contemplativa, partim activa, procul dubio contemplatio praecellit. In hac enim et imago dei est, qua per fidem ad speciem reformamur. Actio itaque rationalis contemplationi rationali debet oboedire ... Quapropter hominis actio serviens fidei servienti deo refrenat omnes mortales delectationes et eas coercescit ad naturalem modum meliora inferioribus ordinata dilectione praeponens". See also R. Holte, *op. cit.*, p. 261,278-279.

⁶⁸) *De Doctrina Christiana* 2,16-23 (CSEL 80,37-39) = 2,7,9-11 (CC 32,36-38. ML 34,39-40).

oriented to God"⁶⁹). But, embroiled in a love of attachment to temporal things, that is to say, a love far removed from that prescribed by the Scriptures, a person is forced to mourn over his sorry state; (4) *Fortitudo*: but there is hope in the lament. Calling on divine help that despair may not crush us, we begin to hunger and thirst for what is right (i.e. that love for God and for the neighbour commended by the double commandment). This involves turning away from all death-dealing infatuation with the temporal to love for the eternal, for the unchangeable Triune God; (5) *Consilium misericordiae*:

When, as well as he can, he has observed this (i.e. the eternal and unchangeable) gleaming from a distance, and has plainly perceived that he cannot bear that light because of the weakness of his vision, he is at the fifth step, that is, the prudence of mercy. Here he purifies his soul, which is in some disarray and revolt against itself, from the blemishes contracted because of its craving for lower things. It is here that he diligently practises love for his neighbour and perfects himself in it. Now, full of hope and with renewed vigour, when he has come as far as loving his enemy, he rises to the sixth step⁷⁰) ...

(6) "*Ipsum oculum purgat quo videri Deus potest*": however, so long as we walk by faith and not by sight, truth is encountered through a glass darkly. Still,

at this level, a person so cleanses the eye of his heart that he does not put even the neighbour himself before the truth, nor does he compare them with each other; because this is the case with the one he loves as himself, it is to be the case with himself too. Therefore, the holy man will be so sincere and pure of heart that he will not be turned away from truth either by a desire to gratify men or by a care to avoid whatever inconveniences disturb this life. Such a child of God rises to wisdom, which is the last and seventh step, and this he enjoys with calm and tranquillity⁷¹).

⁶⁹) *Ibid.*, 2,18 (CSEL 80,38) = 2,7,10 (CC 32,37. ML 34,39): "Nam in eo se exercet omnis divinarum scripturarum studiosus, nihil in eis aliud inventurus quam diligendum esse deum propter deum et proximum propter deum, et illum quidem ex toto corde, ex tota anima, ex tota mente, proximum vero tamquam se ipsum, id est, ut tota proximi sicut etiam nostri dilectio referetur in deum".

⁷⁰) *Ibid.*, 2,21-22 (CSEL 80,39) = 2,7,11 (CC 32,38. ML 34,40): "Quam ubi aspexerit, quantum potest, in longinqua radiantem, suique aspectus infirmitate sustinere se illam lucem non posse persenserit; in quinto gradu, hoc est in consilio misericordiae, purgat animam tumultuantem quodammodo atque obstrepentem sibi de appetitu inferiorum conceptis sordibus. Hic vero se in dilectione proximi graviter exercet, in eaque perficitur. Et spe iam plenus atque integer viribus, cum pervenerit usque ad inimici dilectionem, ascendit in sextum gradum ...".

⁷¹) *Ibid.*, 2,23 (CSEL 80,39) = 2,7,11 (CC 32,38. ML 34,40): "In hoc autem gradu

Thus, (7) *Sapientia*.

On the fifth level, love for neighbour reaches perfection in love for one's enemies. This inspires us with fresh hope and strengthens us with renewed vigour, because, experiencing ourselves capable of openness and self-denial to this degree, we sense the real possibility of loving God totally as the commandment requires. A certain order and integrity is brought to the soul which enables it to perceive the reality of God and his priorities and demands more clearly. On the sixth level, it bears pointing out that, while truth is to be preferred to and far outstrips the neighbour and the self, this pre-eminence is not attributed to its superior capacity to satisfy our desire for happiness. The sense is rather that we ought not allow our heart's desire and our action in this world to be dictated by a desire to please others or ourselves, but only by the intention to act truthfully and to be pleasing to God. Only with such dispositions, hungering and thirsting for that is right, do we become capable, with God's help (see under step (4) above: "*impetrat sedulis precibus consolationem divini adiutorii*"), of genuinely fulfilling his precepts to love the neighbour and himself. This single-mindedness of intent upon God will not allow love to be lured aside to seek its own pleasure or vanity, regardless of truth. And is not the wisdom, which will be the soul's joy, present from the very beginning, instructing in the way which leads to itself, weaning the soul progressively from self-seeking affections, and encouraging its growth in strength and clarity of vision? For the fear of the Lord (*timor Dei*), the first step, is already *the beginning of wisdom* (cf. Ps. 110.10).

C. LOVE FOR NEIGHBOUR AS VIRTUOUS ACTION CLEANSING THE EYE AND THE HEART FOR CONTEMPLATION

The Cassiciacum conversations (386 A.D.) contain a sketch of a way of life for those who want to contemplate the unalterable law of God more perfectly with their understanding and to observe it more diligently in their manner of living; indeed, to have it printed, as it were, on their souls. Among the many exhortations Augustine makes to youths devoted

ita purgat oculum cordis, ut veritati ne ipsum quidem praeferat aut conferat proximum; ergo nec seipsum, quia nec illum qui diligit sicut seipsum. Erit ergo iste sanctus tam simplici corde atque mundato, ut neque hominibus placendi studio detorqueatur a vero, nec respectu devitandorum quorumlibet incommodorum suorum, quae adversantur huic vitae. Talis filius ascendit ad sapientiam, quae ultima et septima est, qua pacatus tranquillisque perfruitur".

to this “*disciplina*”, which, identified with the unalterable law of God, has both speculative and practical aspects⁷²), are the following:

In case of faults of their associates, let them either cast out all anger, or so restrain it that it will be like anger dismissed. Let them hate no one. Let them not be unwilling to correct vices. Let them take care especially not to be excessive in vengeance or stinting in forgiveness. Let them punish only what can be improved, and favour nothing that may become worse. Let them regard as their own fellow men all those over whom authority has been given to them. Let them be so obedient that it would be embarrassing to give them commands, and let them rule so considerably that it becomes a pleasure to obey them.

Concerning the faults of strangers, let them not be troublesome to a person whose transgression is involuntary. As for enmities, they are to avoid them most carefully, bear them most patiently, and end them most speedily. In every covenant and dealing with men it is enough to observe this one familiar proverb: Let them not do to anyone what they would not have done to themselves ... Let them desire tranquillity and a definite course for their own studies and for those of all their associates; and for themselves and for whomsoever else such things are possible, a good mind and a quiet life⁷³).

⁷²) See *De Ordine* 2,8,25 (CSEL 63/3,164. CC 29,121. ML 32,1006): “Haec autem disciplina ipsa dei lex est, quae apud eum fixa et inconcussa semper manens in sapientes animas quasi transcribitur, ut tanto se sciant vivere melius tantoque sublimius, quanto et perfectius eam contemplantur intellegendo et vivendo custodiunt diligentius. Haec igitur disciplina eis, qui illam nosse desiderant, simul geminum ordinem sequi iubet, cuius una pars vitae, altera eruditionis est”.

⁷³) *De Ordine* 2,8,25: “In peccatis autem suorum vel pellant omnino iram, vel ita frenent ut sit pulsae similis. Neminem oderint. Nulla vitia non curare velint. Magnopere observent cum vindicant ne nimium sit, cum ignoscunt, ne parum. Nihil puniant quod non valeat ad melius, nihil indulgeant quod vertat in peius. Suos putent omnes, in quos sibi potestas data fuerit. Ita serviant ut eis dominari pudeat, ita dominantur ut eis servire delectet. In alienorum autem peccatis molesti non sint invito. Inimicitias vitent cautissime, ferant aequissime, finiant citissime. In omni vero contractu atque conversatione cum hominibus, satis est servare unum hoc vulgare proverbium: Nemini faciant quod pati nolunt ... Optent tranquillitatem atque certum cursum studiis suis omniumque sociorum et sibi quibusque possunt mentem bonam pacatamque vitam”. English translation (with modifications): Robert P. Russell O.S.A., *Divine Providence and the Problem of Evil* (The Fathers of the Church, 5), p. 301-302.

L.M.J. Verheijen, “*Eléments d’un commentaire de la Règle de saint Augustin. VI. Par les praecepta vivendi à la spiritalis pulchritudo. ‘Pythagore’, le De Ordine de saint Augustin et sa Règle*”, in *Augustiniana*, XXII (1972) 469-510, attending particularly to the passage we have quoted and to its conclusion in 2,19,51 (CSEL 63/3,182-183. CC 29,135. ML 32,1019), states: “Nous voyons donc que ce long passage sur l’ordre à suivre dans la quête de Dieu commence par l’énumération d’un certain nombre de *praecepta vivendi*, pour aboutir à la contemplation de la *pulchritudo* divine, qui, elle, se révèle à l’âme quand elle est

Such a style of life promotes growth in the “*disciplina*”, in the knowledge of and life according to the law of God. Fidelity to the familiar proverb, the Golden Rule, the application of which is exemplified here in some detail, thus enables more perfect contemplation of the unalterable law with the understanding and more diligent observance of it in one’s manner of living. The law becomes written on one’s soul, leading to a better and higher life. Contemplation of that Beauty, by which all else in beautiful, becomes possible. The conception found here in *De Ordine* occurs two or three years later in a more formalised fashion in *De Moribus*. A person who loves his neighbour will do all he can to ensure that the other is healthy in body and in soul; he will try to lead the soul from coercion (“*coercitio*”) to instruction (“*instructio*”), from fear of God to love for him. Acting like this with regard to the other constitutes “perfect moral conduct by which that knowledge of the truth, to which all our inclination draws us, comes to us”⁷⁴). It is to be recalled, however, that the good which accrues to others through our care for them really stems from God, the creator and saviour⁷⁵). In this sense, the love for neighbour, by which knowledge of the truth comes to us, also reveals traces of the context of descent: working for the good of others in accordance with God’s plan and with the resources he has made available. This marks the beginning of an evolution over *De Ordine* which is chiefly ascent-minded with regard to love for neighbour.

The *Sermone Domini in Monte* depicts for us the sincere and pure heart in which God is sought⁷⁶). Because our hearts are hidden from our neighbours, it can easily happen that they are divided. Others may be served in the hope of some temporal advantage for ourselves, with the

devenue *pulchra*, belle. Nous avons donc devant nous exactement la même structure de pensée que dans la Règle: par les *praecepta vitae* à la *spiritalis pulchritudo*”. Verheijen detects a strong Pythagorean influence, coming to Augustine by way of Varro, on these “*praecepta vitae*” and on the structure of the movement towards contemplation of the divine “*pulchritudo*” in *De Ordine*. The translation of “... molesti non sint invito” as “let them not be troublesome to a person whose transgression is involuntary” is based on Verheijen, *art. cit.*, p. 494.

⁷⁴) *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,28,56 (ML 32,1334): “Hi mores sunt optimi, per quos nobis etiam ipsa provenit, ad quam omni studio rapimur, agnitio veritatis”.

⁷⁵) *Ibid.*, 1,28,55 (ML 32,1333): “... quae medicina (i.e. disciplina animi) nisi divinitus populis mitteretur, nulla spes salutis esset, tam immoderata progressionem peccantibus; quanquam et illa (medicina) corporis, si altius rerum originem repetas, non invenitur unde ad homines manare potuerit, nisi a Deo, cui rerum omnium status salusque tribuenda est”. The “*disciplina animi*” consists of “*coercitio*” which implies fear and “*instructio*” which implies love: 1,28,56.

⁷⁶) *De Sermone Domini in Monte* 2,22,75-76 (CC 35,173-175. ML 34,1303-1304).

intention perhaps that they praise us and boost our vanity. If we were to put ourselves in their position, we would not appreciate being helped by someone who was secretly looking to his own interests rather than to our well-being. Therefore, "the sincere and pure heart in which God is sought will be like this: that whatever service one renders to another will be done with the same intention with which one wishes such service to be shown to oneself, i.e. that it not be done with the expectation of gaining temporal advantage"⁷⁷). At the same time, the eye of the heart is equipped to look at and to contemplate its own inner light⁷⁸). Regarding the purity of intention in love for neighbour, we are reminded of the characterisation of the perfection of this love as love of enemies which requires such purifying death to self that the vision of God, unhindered by a divided heart, becomes to some extent possible⁷⁹). Regarding the inner light, there is a striking parallel in a love of neighbour context more than twenty-five years later. We have already had occasion to quote from Augustine's commentary on the gospel of John: "But because you do not yet see God, by loving the neighbour you will gain sight of Him. By loving your neighbour you cleanse your eye for the vision of God; as John says clearly: 'If you do not love the brother whom you see, how can you love God whom you do not see? (I Jn. 4.20)'"⁸⁰). A little further on the text proceeds:

Therefore, love the neighbour, and consider the source of love for neighbour in yourself; to the extent that you are capable of it you will see God there. Begin therefore to love the neighbour. "Break your bread with the hungry, and shelter the homeless poor, clothe the person you see to be naked, and do not turn from your own kin". What is the consequence of such deeds? "Then your light will shine like the dawn" (Is. 58.7-8a). Your light is your God⁸¹)...

⁷⁷) *Ibid.*, 2,22,76 (CC 35,174-175. ML 34,1304): "... et quidquid officiorum exhibet homini, hac intentione exhibet qua sibi exhiberi vult, id est, ut non ab eo aliquid commodi temporalis expectet: ita erit cur simplex et mundum in quo quaeritur Deus".

⁷⁸) *Ibid.*: "Mundatus ergo oculus simplexque redditus aptus et idoneus erit ad intuendam et contemplandam interiorem lucem suam".

⁷⁹) See *De Doctrina Christiana* 2,22 (CSEL 80,39) = 2,7,11 (CC 32,38. ML 34,40): "... cum pervenerit usque ad inimici dilectionem, ascendit in sextum gradum, ubi iam ipsum oculum purgat quo videri deus potest, quantum potest ab eis qui huic saeculo moriuntur quantum possunt. Nam in tantum vident in quantum moriuntur huic saeculo, in quantum autem hic vivunt, non vident".

⁸⁰) *Tractatus in Evangelium Ioannis* 17,8 (CC 36,174. ML 35,1531).

⁸¹) *Tractatus in Evangelium Ioannis* 17,8 (CC 36,175. ML 35,1532): "Dilige ergo proximum, et intueri in te unde diligis proximum; ibi videbis, ut poteris, Deum. Incipe ergo diligere proximum. *Frangere esurienti panem tuum, et egenum sine tecto induc in domum*

God then is found and contemplated by a heart purified by sincere loving action on behalf of others; however, this happens not beyond the neighbour, as if one had surpassed him in favour of acquiring something better, but in the very love for neighbour itself God comes to light as its source. God then shines forth in our good deeds performed on behalf of others.

The text of I Jn. 4.16 plays a vital role in this reasoning: "God is love and anyone who lives in love lives in God, and God lives in him". In conjunction with I Jn. 4.20 it is often employed to support the idea of God coming to light and into human focus through love for neighbour⁸²). To complete this present review of the theme of love for neighbour as steadying our sight for the vision of God, it is worth our while looking at a sermon which most authors date between 416 and 418. *Sermo* 126 reflects on Jn. 5.19: "the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees the Father doing ...", and, in answer to the question what it is the Son sees, concludes that his vision coincides with himself⁸³). As far as we are concerned:

My sisters and brothers, the Lord exhorts us to understand that the vision of the Word is beyond our powers. Because our strength is slight it needs nourishing and developing. Where is this nourishment to come from? From the commandments. From which commandments? "He who keeps my commandments is the one who loves

tuam; si videris nudum, vesti, et domesticos seminis tui ne despexeris. Faciens autem ista quid consequeris? Tunc erumpet velut matutina lux tua (Is. 58.7-8a). Lux tua Deus tuus est ...".

Does the discovery of the source of love coincide with the goal of love's journey? Comparing this passage to the following would tempt us to believe that for Augustine source and goal were one. See *Ibid.*, 17,9 (CC 36,175. ML 35,1532): "Diligendo proximum, et curam habendo de proximo tuo, iter agis. Quo iter agis nisi ad Dominum Deum, ad eum quem diligere debemus ex toto corde, ex tota anima, ex tota mente? Ad Dominum enim nondum pervenimus, sed proximum nobiscum habemus. Porta ergo eum, cum quo ambulas, ut ad eum pervenias, cum quo manere desideras". Even before the journey's end love's goal can already begin to reveal itself insofar as it is the source of love for neighbour which is love's journey's hallmark.

⁸²) *In Epistolam Ioannis*, tr. 9,10 (ML 35,2052): "Nam si habeat dilectionem, Deum videt; quia *Deus dilectio est*: et purgatur ille oculus magis magisque dilectione, ut videat illam incommutabilem substantiam, cujus praesentia semper gaudeat, qua perfruatur in aeternum conjunctis angelis ..."; *Ibid.*, tr. 5,7 (ML 35,2016): "Dilige fratrem. Si enim fratrem quem vides dilexeris, simul videbis et Deum; quia videbis ipsam charitatem, et intus inhabitat Deus". Cf. *De Trinitate* 8,8,12 (CC 50,288. ML 42,958-959): "Fratrem autem videt humano visu quo videri deus non potest. Sed si eum quem videt humano visu spiritali caritate diligeret, videret deum qui est ipsa caritas visu interiore quo videri potest ...".

⁸³) *Sermo* 126,15 (ML 38,705): "... ut non aliud sit Verbum, aliud videre Verbi ... Simplex enim aliquid est ineffabili simplicitate ...".

me" (Jn. 14.21). Which commandments? ... "A new commandment I give to you: love one another" (Jn. 13.34). Therefore, sisters and brothers, let us draw this love from its abundant source; let us embrace it and let it nourish us. Enter into it in the way you are capable of doing so. Let love beget you, let it nourish, develop and strengthen you so that you may see the vision of the Word and so that you may understand that the Word and what He sees (the Father doing) are one⁸⁴)...

The commandment(s) themselves are spiritual food and drink, and the love that answers to them is itself derived from a source which not only strengthens us but even brings us to life. Augustine allows himself to be guided by the Johannine discourse. The vision of the Word, the Word himself, which loving one another gives rise to, is that of the Word loving us and revealing himself to us: "He who keeps my commandments is the one who loves me ... and I shall love him and show myself to him" (Jn. 14.21)⁸⁵). In other words, the Lord contemplated as the consequence of our loving action is not something to be grasped as virtue's prize; rather, he lovingly offers the vision of himself to those who have proven themselves begotten by love.

D. LOVE FOR NEIGHBOUR AS DESTINED TO BE REWARDED BY GOD

This current of thought forms an aspect of the theme that relates self-love to love for neighbour and love for God. The difficulty concerning this point, raised among others by Josef Brechtken⁸⁶), is that

⁸⁴) *Ibid.*: "Fratres mei, ad hoc exhortatur, ut videamus, videre Verbi ultra vires nostras esse; quia parvae sunt, nutriantur, perficiantur. Unde? Mandatis. Quibus mandatis? *Qui diligit me mandata mea custodit* (Jn. 14.21). Quae mandata? ... *Mandatum novum do vobis, ut vos invicem diligatis* (Jn. 13.34). Hanc ergo, fratres, charitatem de ubertate fontis hauriamus, istam capiamus, in ea nutriamur. Cape per quod sis capax. Charitas te gignat, charitas nutriet, charitas proficiat, charitas roboret; ut videas videre Verbi, non aliud esse Verbum, et aliud videre ipsius; sed ipsum quod est videre Verbi, hoc est Verbum ...".

⁸⁵) *Sermo* 126,14 (ML 38,704-705).

⁸⁶) Josef Brechtken, *Augustinus Doctor Caritatis. Sein Liebesbegriff im Widerspruch von Eigenmutz und selbstloser Güte im Rahmen der antiken Glückseligkeits-Ethik*, Meisenheim am Glan, 1975. See e.g. p. 136 where *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,25,47 (ML 32,1331) is quoted: "Diligamus igitur Deum ex toto corde, ex tota anima, ex tota mente, quicumque ad vitam aeternam pervenire proposuimus. Vita enim aeterna est totum praemium, cuius promissione gaudemus ...". Brechtken adds: "Der Ansatz ist klar: Hier steht alles in Übereinstimmung mit dem appetitus-System (cf. p. 3: Wir können diese Ethik deshalb der Grundstruktur nach, die im Streben nach der Behebung von Seinsmängel und in der so bewirkten Glückseligkeit ihr Spezifikum hat, im folgenden kurz als appetitus-Ethik bezeichnen), und das ist der Ausgangspunkt für die nun folgende Behandlung von

Augustinian love is ultimately so tied up with the self, that even the passages such as *Sermo* 91,7,9 in which Augustine appears to speak of selfless love of neighbour prove on closer examination to betray a preoccupation with an expected reward. Is it sensible, asks Brechtken, to combine love for neighbour with love for God — as, for example, in the statement of principle in *De Moribus* 1,26,51 (i.e. "... no one should think that while he despises his neighbour he will come to beatitude and to the God whom he loves")⁸⁷) — when the danger exists that the former will end up in the sphere of self-interested love for God, to the neglect and to the detriment of the neighbour?⁸⁸) The thought of the reward of happiness for oneself in God, he maintains, would distract attention from the neighbour in his own right. Now, there is no denying that the idea of beatitude in God as reward in relation to love for neighbour is found in Augustine. The question is, however, how the giving of the reward is construed and in what precisely it consists. Is happiness with God a right that can be claimed by those who practise love of neighbour? Does beatitude in love for God flow from the practice of love for neighbour as a matter of simple effective causality?

A comprehensive answer to these questions will emerge only when the aspect of reward is considered alongside other aspects of the theme, such as the relation between *uti* and *frui* and that between self-love and love for God. Let us, however, make a start by looking at one or two examples of Augustine's conception of reward in connection with love for neighbour that do not specifically belong under the other headings under which this theme will be introduced. For *quaestio* 71, dating from the period 389-396, those who serve one another in love (cf. Jn. 13.34), bearing one another's burdens (cf. Gal. 6.2), fulfil the law of Christ. But this service ("*officium*") does not go on forever; it leads with certainty to that eternal happiness in which there are no burdens we can be ordered to take up. Faithful fulfilment of duty is apparently crowned with eternal relief from duty⁸⁹). But can love of neighbour not thrive even where

Selbst- und Nächstenliebe". For Brechtken, therefore, the "*nullus certior gradus ad amorem Dei*", the bond among men (*De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,26,48) is taken to mean the surest path to the most sublime self-satisfaction. The psychological approach predominates; the ascent context is all.

⁸⁷) *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,26,51 (ML 32,1332).

⁸⁸) J. Brechtken, *op. cit.*, p. 149: "... ob es überhaupt sinnvoll ist, Nächstenliebe so an die Gottesliebe zu binden, wenn doch schon immer die Gefahr besteht, das die Nächstenliebe so in die appetitus-Zone der Gottesliebe gerät".

⁸⁹) *De Diversis Quaestionibus* 83, q. 71,1 (CC 44A,200-201. ML 40,80-81) (Date:

there are no burdens to be borne or duty to be done? For the Augustine of the commentary on 1 John, which dates from 407, love will be more genuine if it is directed towards a happy person to whom we have nothing to give⁹⁰). At least from 407, therefore, burden-free life with God, far from disadvantaging the neighbour when this duty towards him ceases, may actually give rise to a purer and more genuine love. Later on we will at various stages adduce further evidence for this growth of love for neighbour when one has gained the reward of knowing and living with the God one loves. For the present, let us take a second example which offers us a Christological perspective on the role Augustine assigns to the reward for love of neighbour: "by giving to the needy we will gain one who is rich". *Sermo* 91,7,9, a post-400 sermon, encourages people to use the gifts they have for the good of others and so to bear one another's burdens; people are exhorted to love God gratuitously and to give generously to the neighbour. Even here, however, Josef Brechtken discovers a latent concern for one's own gain which for him vitiates gratuity and generosity. The text reads:

This Christ (who is one flesh with his spouse, the church) shows the form of a slave to pilgrims on the move; he saves the form of God for those who reach the journey's end. In the form of a slave he paved the way; in the form of God he kept the fatherland as a treasure. It is asking a great deal of us to understand this, but not to believe it. For "if you have not believed, you will not understand" (Is. 7.9: LXX). Let us then go by faith so long as we are exiles from the Lord until we have reached the vision in which we will see Him face to face (cf. 2 Cor. 5.6-7; 1 Cor. 13.12). Going by faith let us do good. May our love for God be gratuitous and our love for neighbour generous in good works. For we have nothing to give to God, but because we do have something to bestow on the neighbour, by giving to the needy we will gain one who is rich (*praestando indigenti promerebimur abundantem*). Therefore, let everyone who

389-396): "Huius autem dilectionis officium est, invicem onera nostra portare. Sed hoc officium, quod sempiternum non est, perducet sane ad beatitudinem aeternam, in qua nulla erunt onera nostra, quae invicem portare iubeamur. Nunc vero cum in hac vita, id est, in hac via sumus, onera invicem nostra portemus, ut ad eam vitam quae caret omni onere pervenire possimus". Cf. *Tractatus in Evangelium Iohannis* 17,9 (CC 36,175. ML 35,1532) (Date: 418-421): "Porta ergo eum (i.e. proximum) cum quo ambulas, ut ad eum pervenias, cum quo manere desideras".

⁹⁰) In *Epistolam Iohannis*, tr. 8,5 (ML 35,2038): "Germanius amas felicem hominem, cui non habes quod praestes; purior ille amor erit, multoque sincerior". The reason for this is that the possible exploitation of the need of the other is precluded.

has give to others; what he has over let him bestow on the poor⁹¹)...

The explanation of the idea of reward in this text — an idea one might have thought to be excluded by the appeal to gratuitous love for God and generous love of neighbour — depends on the sense of “*praestando indigenti promerebimur abundantem*”. Does this mean simply that by showing generosity to a poor person we make a rich person of him? Possibly. A more likely solution, however, is that the one who is rich (“*abundantem*”) refers to Christ⁹²), for, earlier in the same passage, it is said of him that “in the form of God he keeps the fatherland as a treasure” and “he reserves the form of God for those who reach the journey’s end”. Christ then stores up a treasure for weary pilgrims, himself in the form of God. His abundance is for us. If this is so, it is not improbable that the needy person too is Christ, for Christ forms one flesh with his spouse the church, and “shows the form of a slave to pilgrims on the move”⁹³). In the visible form of a slave in which he appears to us Christ himself is poor and in need. Therefore, the notion of recompense is here closely associated with that of faith that it is Christ who, paving the way, “shows the form of a slave to pilgrims” who are able to show him generosity, and that he will reserve “the form of God for those who reach the journey’s end”; in other words, faith in what *Christ* has done, is doing and will do, not in the efficacy of our beneficence and of duty done to procure rest and riches in the vision of him, provides the context within which “gaining one who is rich” and the treasure he stores up is to be understood.

But does not any hint of remuneration — even though the sovereign

⁹¹) *Sermo* 91,7,9 (ML 38,571) (Date: post-400): “Ipse autem qui ostendit peregrinantibus formam servi, servat pervenientibus formam Dei. De forma servi stravit viam, de forma Dei condidit patriam. Quia ergo multum est ad nos capere hoc, sed non est multum credere hoc: *Nisi enim credideritis*, ait Isaias, *non intelligetis* (Is. 7.9: LXX): ambulemus per fidem quamdiu peregrinamur a Domino, donec perveniamus ad speciem, ubi videbimus facie ad faciem (2 Cor. 5.6 & 7; 1 Cor. 13.12). Ambulantes per fidem, bene operamur. In bonis operibus gratuita sit dilectio Dei, benefica sit dilectio proximi. Deo enim quod praestemus non habemus: sed quia proximo habemus quod praestemus, praestando indigenti promerebimur abundantem. Inde unusquisque quod habet, praestet alteri: quidquid plus habet largiatur inopi ...”.

⁹²) This exegesis is supported by the appearance of a similar form in *Tractatus in Evangelium Ioannis* 17,8 (CC 36,174. ML 35,1531): “Tu autem quia Deum nondum vides, diligendo proximum promereris quem videas; diligendo proximum purgas oculum ad videndum Deum...”. (My emphasis).

⁹³) This text bears traits very similar to those elucidated in Augustine’s use of Matt. 25.31-46.

freedom of Christ's action on our behalf is safeguarded — silence all exhortations to love for God without thought of repayment ("*gratuita dilectio Dei*")? Again it is a question of the content of the reward. For Augustine there would be a contradiction between the gratuity of our love for God and the reward of himself he offers only if we were to seek in God something other than himself⁹⁴), to seek to use him for purposes of our own. This God, moreover, is not only *Summum Bonum* but also *Bonum Commune*; therefore, it is wrong to think that we "gain one who is rich" just for ourselves, or that the burden-free blessedness of the future life when we come to the God we love is to be pictured individualistically, without reference to others⁹⁵). Furthermore, the enjoyment of God, *frui deo*, is synonymous with the total gift of one's life to Him in all its dimensions⁹⁶). In the blessedness of heaven it will be possible to fulfil the first part of the double commandment fully: to love God wholly with heart, soul and mind. When one comes to the God one loves in this way, love of neighbour (i.e. love for God "*ex toto corde*")⁹⁷) can only be heightened. Finally, God's giving himself as the eternal reward, the happy life to be fully enjoyed, is the crowning of his own gifts of life and love. Our very giving in love, the outcome of which is the reward of God himself, is God's⁹⁸).

⁹⁴) *Sermo* 91,3,3 (ML 38,568): "Primo amare Deum gratis; haec est enim pietas: nec sibi extra illum ponere mercedem, quam expectet ex illo. Illo enim melius est nihil. Et quid carum petit a Deo, cui Deus ipse vilis est?". Other texts in which the "gratuitous" love for God occurs are: *De Catechizandis Rudibus* 27,55 (CC 46,177. ML 40,347-348); *In Epistolam Ioannis*, tr. 9,10 (ML 35,2052); *Sermo* 336,2,2 (ML 38,1472): "Amemus, gratis amemus: Deum enim amamus, quo nihil melius invenimus. Ipsum amemus propter ipsum, et nos in ipso, tamen propter ipsum"; *En. in ps.* 134,11 (CC 40,1945. ML 37,1745): "Hoc est gratis amare, non quasi proposita acceptione mercedis, quia ipsa merces tua summa Deus ipse erit ...".

⁹⁵) See, for example, *Tractatus in Evangelium Ioannis* 67,2 (CC 36,496. ML 35,1812): "... atque ita Deus erit omnia in omnibus, ut quoniam Deus Caritas est, per caritatem fiat ut quod habent singuli, commune sit omnibus". Further examples will be introduced when this topic is dealt with explicitly.

⁹⁶) See R. Holte, *op. cit.*, p. 264: "Les objets auxquels s'adresse l'amour d'"usage" sont, chez Augustin, entraînés dans le mouvement d'ensemble de l'amour de Dieu, ils sont inclus dans l'acte d'abandon par lequel l'homme se donne soi-même et tout ce qu'il a reçu, en sacrifice d'action de grâces à Dieu". See also p. 277: "C'est mal comprendre la *fruitio Dei* augustinienne que de l'interpréter dans un sens trop quêtiste ... la *fruitio Dei* comprend, en outre, l'amour de la loi, résumée dans les préceptes de l'amour de Dieu et du prochain, elle implique que l'homme se soumette à la volonté de Dieu — qui inclut l'amour du prochain, — qu'il désire l'accomplir et que, grâce à la force libératrice de la vérité, il en soit rendu capable".

⁹⁷) *Ibid.*, p. 254, 256 and 260.

⁹⁸) *De Doctrina Christiana* 1,64 (CSEL 80,24) = 1,29,30 (CC 32,23. ML 34,30):

Both the contexts of ascent and descent are therefore present in Augustine's treatment of reward. Human beings who practise love of neighbour are indeed destined to cling to God, their supreme Good and reward. But the love of neighbour that leads to God is itself his gift; thought of reward is based rather on faith in the action of Christ than on the success of our own efforts to merit it (cf. *Sermo* 91,7,9); and the blessedness attained by no means excludes the neighbour. Each of these assertions will be further substantiated in due course. Unless they are kept in mind here, however, reward would be distortedly represented as the blessedness effected when one's striving to overcome one's ontological insufficiency is stilled, with the result that love for others in their own right would be reduced to an exceptional marginal phenomenon in Augustine⁹⁹). In this view, the more one's quest for blessedness in clinging to God (cf. Ps. 72.28), the final Good, met with success, the less one would seem to have to be bothered with the neighbour. It is, however, incorrect to look at the desire and quest for God, the final Good, purely from the point of view of ascent to him. While aspiring to the reward of cleaving to him unreservedly, and being as fully intent upon him as in possible in this life, the soul is strengthened and made fruitful for work in the world. This seems to be the import of *De Civitate Dei* 10,3:

For our Good, that final Good about which the philosophers dispute, is nothing else but to cleave to Him whose spiritual embrace, if one may so express it, fills the intellectual soul and makes it fertile with true virtues. We are commanded to love this Good with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength; and to this Good we must be led by those who love us, and to it we must lead those whom we love¹⁰⁰).

"quid nos in societate dilectionis Dei agere convenit, quo perfrui beate vivere est; et a quo habent omnes qui eum diligunt, et quod sunt, et quod eum diligunt ... et qui se vult diligi, non ut sibi aliquid, sed ut eis qui diligunt, aeternum praemium conferatur, hoc est ipse quem diligunt?"; *En. in ps.* 102,3 (CC 40,1452. ML 37,1317): "*Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quae retribuit mihi?* (Ps. 115.12) ... Retribuit ergo ille vere, qui solus donat (i.e. Deus) ...".

⁹⁹) J. Brechtken, *op. cit.*, p. 151: "Wir wissen aber zugleich, dass die Formel selbst (d.h. 'um seiner selbst willen') ausdrücklich nur in der appetitus-bestimmten Gottesliebe, als fruitio-Genuss des höchsten Gutes, vorkommt. Dies ist doch bemerkenswert, wie überhaupt festzuhalten ist, dass die wirklich um des Anderen selbst willen geliebte Liebe bei Augustin im ganzen nur am Rande auftaucht ... Augustins Eigentliches ist und bleibt die appetitus-Ethik ...".

¹⁰⁰) *De Civitate Dei* 10,3 (CSEL 40/1,450-451. CC 47,275. ML 41,281): "Bonum enim nostrum, de cuius fine inter philosophos magna contentio est, nullum esse aliud,

Might not the reward for the love of God we are here capable of redound to the neighbour's good? Might not the virtues with which the intellectual soul is made fertile through cleaving to its final Good, through striving to fulfil the first part of the double commandment in this life — and consequently being embraced by God — include those by which the neighbour is served? God's spiritual embrace, therefore, need not be conceived as giving rise to a kind of ecstasy in comparison to which love for neighbour no longer counts. Rather the powers set free by the soul's clinging to God may impel and energise human beings to lead one another to their final Good.

E. LOVE FOR NEIGHBOUR AS WINGS FOR RISING UP TO GOD¹⁰¹)

Would we not be inclined to except at least here an unmitigated ascent context in which human concerns are progressively shaken off? These texts, however — all of them from sermons — reveal not a deliverance from other human beings, but a liberating detachment from the shackles of "mortal affections", from both presumption and despair. "Let us take on through love the wing we have lost through our selfishness"¹⁰²), Augustine invited his listeners towards the end of 412. Once the wings, that is the two commandments, have been released and made effective through love they do enable us to move heavenwards to God¹⁰³). But what is involved in this heavenward movement? We find it

quam illi cohaerere: cuius unius anima intellectualis incorporeo, si dici potest, amplexu, veris impletur fecundaturque virtutibus. Hoc bonum diligere in toto corde, in tota anima, et in tota virtute praecipimur. Ad hoc bonum debemus, et a quibus diligimur duci, et quos diligimus ducere". English translation: Henry Bettenson, *Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972, p. 376.

¹⁰¹) On the theme in general, see P. Courcelle, "Flügel der Seele I", in T. Klauser (edited), *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, Band VIII, Stuttgart, 1972, col. 29-65. On Augustine, col. 56-60.

¹⁰²) *En. in ps.* 138,12-13 (CC 40,1998-1999. ML 37,1791-1792): "Recipiendae sunt pennae meae non in pravum, sed in directum, ut nec in superbam erigar praesumptionem, nec in perditam mergar desperationem. Quas pennas vult assumere, nisi duas alas, duo praecepta caritatis ... Recipiamus pennas per caritatem, quas amisimus per cupiditatem".

¹⁰³) *En. in ps.* 121,1 (CC 40,1801. ML 37,1618): "Obligata enim anima amore terreno, quasi viscum habet in pennis; volare non potest. Mundata vero ab affectibus sordidissimis saeculi, tamquam extensis pennis et duabus alis resolutis ab omni impedimento, id est duobus praeceptis dilectionis Dei et dilectionis proximi volat. Quo, nisi ad Deum ascendens volando, quia ascendit amando ..."; *En. in ps.* 140,2 (CC 40,2026. ML 37,1816): "Amor iste (i.e. of the wicked) tartareus est: viscum habet, quo deiciat in profundum, non pennas, quibus levet in coelum"; *Sermo Mai* 126,13 (MA I,367): "... sic volabis, sic de terrenis auferes cupiditatem, figes in coelestibus caritatem. Istis duabus alis in quantum niteris, sursum interim cor habebis; ut sursum cor sursum trahat tempore suo et carnem suam ...".

formulated in conjunction with psalm 138 (139).9 (according to the LXX version) in a sermon preached between 396 and 400: "Fulfil then the two wings of love. Love the neighbour as yourself; and do not harbour hatred by which you would flee your creditor (i.e. the neighbour who has a claim on one's pardon)"¹⁰⁴). If, on the other hand, the neighbour is refused forgiveness, the wings are pinned down, movement is restricted, and the rich source of love within is blocked¹⁰⁵). In the same contexts in which the image of the wings occurs as distinguishing *caritas* from *cupiditas* and as raising our love to God, we also meet the following ideas regarding that one wing which is love for neighbour: the goods that a person seeks in God are sought not for himself but for others, his concern is for their ascent to God¹⁰⁶; anxiety that love for neighbour be pure and unfeigned, directing him to God, that it not be a snare for the loved one leading him to destruction¹⁰⁷). Furthermore, at least by 412 A.D., when Augustine is explicitly dealing with psalm 138.9 (LXX), having the wings of love gives us no cause to presume in our own strength for coming to rest in God at the end of the world. God himself has to raise us up, to guide and to help us; as the subsequent psalm verse has it: "For your hand will guide me there, your right hand lead me" (Ps. 138.10)¹⁰⁸). And the attaining of this rest in God is to come about only at the end of the world. Constant hope alone permits us to fly away with the wings of the double commandment and ultimately to find rest in God; such hope safeguards us from resting in or expecting salvation

¹⁰⁴) *Sermo* 352,7 (ML 39,1558): "*Si assumsero pennas meas in directum, et volavero in extrema maris* (Ps. 138.9: LXX): id est, spe mea finem saeculi meditabor, in praeceptis vivam, duabus alis caritatis attollar. Imple ergo duas alas caritatis. Dilige proximum sicut te ipsum; et non teneas odium, unde fugias creditorem".

¹⁰⁵) *Ibid.*, (ML 39,1557): "Unda quaedam charitatis ibat in corde tuo, et tanquam de vena interiore manabat: tenes odium contra fratrem, obturasti fontem. Non solum ergo nihil perdis, cum ignoscis; sed abundantius irrigaris. Charitas non angustatur ...".

¹⁰⁶) *En. in ps.* 121,14 (CC 40,1813. ML 37,1629): "*Propter domum Domini Dei mei, quaesivi bona tibi* (Ps. 121.9). Non propter me quaesivi bona: nam non tibi quaererem, sed mihi; ideo nec ego haberem, quia non tibi quaererem: sed, *Propter domum Domini Dei mei*, propter ecclesiam, propter sanctos, propter peregrinos, propter inopes, ut ascendant ...".

¹⁰⁷) *En. in ps.* 140,2 (CC 40,2026-2027. ML 37,1816): "*Qui autem, inquit, diligit iniquitatem, odit animam suam* (Ps. 10.6). Si ergo diligis iniquitatem, putas quod te ipsum diligas? Erras: ita et proximum diligens, ad iniquitatem duces, et dilectio tua laqueus erit dilecti. *Caritas ergo de puro corde est quae est secundum Deum, et conscientia bona et fide non ficta* (1 Tim. 1.5) ...".

¹⁰⁸) *En. in ps.* 138,13 (CC 40,1999. ML 37, 1792): "... nemo de pennis suis praesumat; quia et pennatos nisi ipse erigat, nisi ipse deducat, praecipitabimur in profunda maris, lassati et fatigati, quasi praesumentes de viribus nostris. Opus ergo est ut habeamus pennas, et opus est ut ipse deducat; adiutor enim noster est ...".

from anyone other than God; if anything other than God is loved unconditionally, we fall into the sea¹⁰⁹).

A late text (425-430 A.D.) paradoxically identifies the burden Christ asks us to bear with the wings of the dove for which one prays in order to fly away and be at rest (cf. Ps. 54(55).6). By its association with wings the load is lightened (cf. Matt. 11.28-30), but only on the condition that it is lovingly taken up. When it is fully accepted, that is, when both commandments are being put into practice, the human heart is freed from the restiveness of covetousness and raised on high to God¹¹⁰). This is patently not just a matter of the burden ("*sarcina*") of loving one's neighbour now being dutifully borne with the prospect of blessed release in shrugging the neighbour off in heaven. For the text sees not only love for neighbour but also love for God in this life as a load ("*sarcina*") that can become a wing and that can aid our search for rest for our souls (cf. Ps. 55.6; Matt. 11.29). "*Accipite hanc sarcinam, has alas*". The load, having been transformed into the wings of love for God and for the neighbour, is indeed finally shrugged off. But this obviously does not entail that love for God finally disappears — even though it may do so specifically as a "*sarcina*". Is there any reason then to presuppose that the same cannot be said of love for neighbour? Indeed, in this life, the wing of love for neighbour may be considered the principle of flight, to this extent: anyone who considers that without it he really has the wing of love for God is mistaken; "for if you think that you have that one alone (*viz.* love for God), you do not even have it" ("*nam si unam habere te putas, nec ipsam habes*"). It is surely not necessary that the principle of

¹⁰⁹) *En. in ps.* 138,12 (CC 40,1998. ML 37,1791): "Quid enim est extremum maris, nisi finis saeculi? Illuc iam volumus spe et desiderio, habentes alas geminae caritatis; non sit nobis requies, nisi in extremo maris. Nam si alibi requiem voluerimus, in mare precipitabimur. Volemus quo usque finiatur mare, suspendamus nos pennis geminae dilectionis; ad Deum interim spe volumus, et illum finem maris spe fidei praemeditemur".

¹¹⁰) *Sermo Mai* 126,13 (MA I,367): "Suscipe hanc sarcinam: non te premet, levabit te; alae tibi erunt, quas ante quam habeas, clama ad vocantem: *Quis mihi dabit pennas sicut columbae?* ... et volabo, inquit. Et quasi quaereres, Ut quid? *Et requiescam* (Ps. 54.6). Ergo per illam sarcinam *invenietis requiem animabus vestris* (Matt. 11.29). Accipite hanc sarcinam, has alas; et si coepistis habere, nutrite. Perveniant istae alae ad tantum modum, quo volare possitis. Una ala est, *Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, et ex tota anima tua, et ex tota mente tua*. Sed noli ad unam alam remanere; nam si unam habere te putas, nec ipsam habes. *Diliges proximum tuum tamquam te*. Nam si fratrem quem vides non diligis, deum, quem non bides, quomodo potes diligere? Accedat et alia: sic volabis, sic de terrenis auferes cupiditatem, figes in coelestibus caritatem. Istis duabus alis in quantum niteris, sursum interim cor habebis ...".

flight cease to be once the flight itself is ended. But it may indeed cease to be, as does love for God, insofar as it is a burden ("*sarcina*").

It is instructive to reflect on the *sarcina-alae* of *Sermo Mai* 126, 13 in the light of *En. in ps.* 118, *sermo* 8,2, another text from the last decade of Augustine's life, which shows that the real burden is loving God and the neighbour while we are still exiles on earth. But, at the same time, hope that we will not be exiles forever and an understanding of ourselves as pilgrims whose hearts are set on heaven make a deeper love possible; and insofar as such love is burdensome in this world, pilgrim hope makes it bearable. Augustine, in this text, is explaining Ps. 118(119).19, i.e. "I am an exile on earth, do not hide your commandments from me". The commandments can only be really known and fulfilled by a person who recognises that he is an exile here and who makes his abode in heaven (cf. Phil. 3.19-20). Without this kind of hopeful heavenly-mindedness he is at a loss to distance himself from earthly things, to take up Christ's burden of love, and to sense the extent of the love to which he is called. Conscious of himself as a pilgrim lover, however, who has set his course for the homeland with God, and whose heart is raised on high to God, he becomes capable of a greater understanding of and fidelity to God's commandment of love. Insofar as he dwells in the heavens, his real homeland (cf. Phil. 3.20), he is truly on the way there as a pilgrim: "*Quorum autem conversatio in caelis est* (Phil. 3.20), *in quantum hic conversantur, profecto peregrinantur*". His pilgrim's progress out of exile is made by obeying the liberating commandments his heart, which has a taste for heavenly things, prays to be shown. In being further weaned by the commandments from his selfish attachment to earthly things he is progressively set free from his exile. Therefore, the real burden which will be shrugged off in his eternal dwelling with God is not the neighbour but this exile from the Lord. Indeed, all the pilgrim's love for the neighbour is directed to the end that he too will be freed with us for life with God¹¹¹).

We may, therefore, conclude briefly with regard to the image of the wings that it does not imply flight from the neighbour; indeed, the

¹¹¹) *En. in ps.* 118, *sermo* 8,2 (CC 40,1686. ML 37,1520): "Recte itaque dicitur Deo: *Incola ego sum in terra; ne abscondas a me mandata tua*. Merito namque absconduntur eis qui non sunt incolae in terra; haec enim mandata etsi audiunt, non sapiunt, quia terrena sapiunt. Quorum autem conversatio in caelis est (cf. Phil. 3.20), in quantum hic conversantur, profecto peregrinantur. Petant itaque ne abscondantur ab eis mandata Dei, per quae ab hoc incolatu liberentur, diligendo Deum, cum quo in aeternum erunt; et diligendo proximum, ut illic sit ubi et ipsi erunt".

fulfilment of the *two* wings of love is summed up in these words: "Love the neighbour as yourself; and do not harbour hatred by which you would flee your creditor (i.e. the neighbour asking pardon of you)"¹¹²). As far as the winging up to God is concerned, there is good reason to believe that only the *burden* of love for neighbour will be then laid aside, not the love itself. Moreover, the accompanying ideas of the wings-image in context offer us a broadened and heightened understanding of love for neighbour, that reaches even to its source and goal. For, "if you hold hatred against your brother, you have blocked up *love's source*. Not only do you lose nothing if you forgive, but you are more abundantly refreshed. Love (with its two wings) is not narrowed down ..."¹¹³); and "I have not sought good things on my own account ... but on behalf of the needy that they may rise up"¹¹⁴), and be freed with us for life with God¹¹⁵).

III. LOVE FOR NEIGHBOUR IS NOT A MERE PREPARATION FOR LOVE FOR GOD

Close acquaintance with the five ascent contexts has led to the growing conviction that Augustinian love for neighbour may not be considered as a self-evident extrinsic condition that is of value only insofar as it prepares for and leads to love for God. Certainly it is easy and customary to understand the early step and cardle texts as if this were their guiding idea. Our analysis, however, has shown that it gives a false impression to view these texts as if they were simply the outcome of an eudaimonistic psychological approach, that is to say, as if the neighbour were just fuel to the fire of longing for one's own fulfilment and happiness, or a mere flexing of the muscles for love for God by which one acquired restful contemplation of wisdom. Almost invariably the psychological goes hand in hand with the ontological-ethical approach which stresses that God has ordered his creation in such a way

¹¹²) *Sermo* 352,7 (ML 39,1558): "Imple ergo duas alas charitatis. Dilige proximum sicut te ipsum; et non teneas odium, unde fugias creditorem".

¹¹³) *Ibid.*, (ML 39,1557): "... tenes odium contra fratrem, obturasti fontem. Non solum ergo nihil perdis, cum ignoscis; sed abundantius irrigaris. Charitas non angustatur ...".

¹¹⁴) *En. in ps.* 121,14 (CC 40,1813. ML 37,1629): "Non propter me quaesivi bona ... sed ... propter inopes, ut ascendant ...".

¹¹⁵) *En. in ps.* 118, *sermo* 8,2 (CC 40,1686. ML 37,1520): "... diligendo Deum, cum quo in aeternum erunt; et diligendo proximum, ut illic sit ubi et ipsi erunt".

that each level has its own proper act; that, when in total submission to God's law the beauty appropriate to a particular level is realised, man participates in God's continuous creation; and that the highest act in the realm of our dealings with other creatures is love for neighbour. The jewel of the active life is not a merely preparatory step on which we can turn our backs once we have taken it, but at the same time a foretaste, a crucible, the closest resemblance to the total self-denial love for God demands, and, in God's providence, the greatest beauty people can bring about in this world. Because all the levels from lowest to highest can be at work together, and because all love has its origin in God, once the highest has been reached, the lower are enlivened and enhanced. When one's heart is cleansed for the vision of God, it is also purified to see the neighbour in a new light. The key passages from *De Moribus*, although they are usually interpreted less broadly, are not in principle closed to a development of this kind. It may be as well to underline again Augustine's own insistence on the tentative nature of his speculations on our theme there. For in later texts there can be no doubt that, as well as love for neighbour bringing us with the greatest certainty to its source and goal in God, growth in my love for God is to the neighbour's advantage, the attainment of the highest level is in the best interests of the other levels.

To show from a number of other points of view that there is no devastating clash between the contexts of ascent and descent in Augustine's conception of love for neighbour will be the task of the following chapters. However, before moving on to this detailed treatment, which in many respects has been foreshadowed here, it will be useful to present in summary fashion a few other texts which explicitly contradict the image of the neighbour as a stepping stone to God in a eudaimonistic scheme¹¹⁶), and point us in the direction of a deeper unity. They may be grouped under the following headings: A. Love itself makes God present; B. To love the neighbour is to follow in Christ's foot-steps; C. Love for neighbour does not disappear in eternal life.

¹¹⁶) A sermon which some authors date from 411 and others from 428 is uncannily telling in this regard: *Sermo Frangipane* 3,3 (MA I, 204): "Commendo, inquis, deo animam meam. Quanto melius illi et aurum tuum, cui et animam tuam? ... Non tamen dicit tibi Christus, In caelo thesauriza, scalas quaere, pennas apta; sed, Mihi in terra da, et ibi servabo".

A. *Love itself makes God present*

While preaching on the first letter of John in 407 the Bishop of Hippo asserts: "God says to you: If you wish to gain the favour of the influential or to make friends of the powerful, you seek to reach them through others who are their subordinates. Love me, God tells you; do not seek my favour through anyone else; love itself makes me present to you. Is there anything sweeter than this love, sisters and brothers?"¹¹⁷) Even though Augustine has God speaking and inviting to love for himself, in the continuation of the same passage this love is presented exclusively in terms of the neighbour, i.e. Jn. 13.34 and Gal. 6.2. In view of this, and because of the strong claim in the previous passage that "love cannot be divided up" ("*non potest ergo separari dilectio*")¹¹⁸), the love that makes God present is that love for neighbour which cannot be separated from love for Christ and for the Father. In this case, however, love for neighbour will not be such as to strive to reach God by way of others; this is expressly excluded: "Do not seek my favour through anyone else; love itself makes me present to you". But nor will it be, as in Augustine's interpretation of the fifth beatitude fourteen years earlier, a way of gaining mercy and help for ourselves in our spiritual struggle¹¹⁹). Rather, simply in loving, and in savouring the sweetness of this love, the reality of God dawns upon us.

There is, however, also a text from an undatable sermon, preached on the feast of the dedication of a church, which makes a point that is not dissimilar:

But yet they do not form the house of the Lord (i.e. the church) unless they are joined together by love. If this wood and these stones were not connected (*cohaererent*) to each other properly (*certo ordine*), if they were not fastened together securely, if in clinging closely together (*cohaerendo*) they did not in some way love each other, no one would enter here. Thus, when you see that the stones and timber of a particular building are well put together (*cohaerere*),

¹¹⁷) *In Epistolam Ioannis*, tr. 10,4 (ML 35,2056): "Dicit tibi Deus, Patronum tibi vis facere, aut amicum potentem; ambis per alium inferiorem. Me ama, dicit tibi Deus: non ad me ambitur per aliquem; ipse amor praesentem me tibi facit. Quid dulcius dilectione ista, fratres? ...".

¹¹⁸) *Ibid.*, tr. 10,3 (ML 35,2055).

¹¹⁹) *De Sermone Domini in Monte* 1,3,10 (CC 35,8. ML 34,1234): "Est autem iustum consilium, ut qui se a potentiore adiuvari vult, adiuvet infirmiore in quo est ipse potentior".

you enter with an easy mind, unafraid that it might collapse. The Lord Christ wished to enter and live in us. Therefore he said, as it were, to those charged with the building: "I give you a new commandment: love one another" (Jn. 13.34) ... For you were old, you had not yet constructed a dwelling for me, you still lay dejected in your ruins. Love one another, therefore, that you may be rescued from your inveterate ruin. Consider maturely that this house has still to be built throughout the entire world, as has been proclaimed and promised¹²⁰).

Love for one another in this passage is looked upon as building a house which Christ himself can enter. This work of building is not yet complete. But, in the construction, which entails being united to one another in love, we are progressively rescued from our inveterate ruin: "*ut eruamini de vestrae ruinae vetustate, vos invicem amate*". Christ enters into this building, which takes shape properly ("*certo ordine*") in the bonds of human love as it is exercised according to the commandment of Jn. 13.34. If we are to understand this as the bond of love among people than which there is no surer step to love for God¹²¹), then the latter has to be seen here as Christ living among us where room has been made for him and freeing us for the building up of the church in unity throughout the world.

Furthermore, various forms of the verb, "*haerere*", preceded by different prefixes, are commonly used by Augustine to express the union of man with God in love, e.g. "*inhaerere*", "*adhaerere*", "*cohaerere*"¹²²).

¹²⁰) *Sermo* 336,1,1 (ML 38,1472): "Verumtamen domum Domini non faciunt, nisi quando charitate compaginantur. Ligna ista et lapides si non sibi certo ordine cohaerent, si non se pacifice innectent, si non se invicem cohaerendo sibi quodam modo amarent; nemo huc intraret. Denique quando vides in aliqua fabrica lapides et ligna bene sibi cohaerere, securus intras, ruinam non times. Volens ergo Dominus Christus intrare, et in nobis habitare, tanquam aedificando dicebat: *Mandatum novum do vobis, ut vos invicem diligatis* (Jn. 13.34) ... Veteres enim eratis, domum mihi nondum faciebatis, in verstra ruina jacebatis. Ergo ut eruamini de vestrae ruinae vetustate, vos invicem amate. Consideret ergo, Charitas vestra, aedificari adhuc istam domum toto, sicut praedictum est et promissum, orbe terrarum".

¹²¹) *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,26,48 (ML 32,1331): "Imo vero ita debet, ut nullus certior gradus ad amorem Dei fieri posse credatur, quam hominis ergo hominem charitas".

¹²²) For "*inhaerere*": *De Musica* 6,14,46 (ML 32,1187): "A dilectione autem proximi tanta quanta praecipitur, certissimus gradus fit nobis, ut *inhaereamus* Deo"; *De Doctrina Christiana* 1,80 (CSEL 80,29) = 1,33,37 (CC 32,27. ML 34,33); *In Epistolam Ioannis*. tr. 9,10 (ML 35,2052) where Ps. 72.28 is quoted i.e. "Mihi autem *inhaerere* Deo bonum est". For "*adhaerere*": *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,16,26 (ML 32,1322) where Ps. 72.28 is again quoted, now with "*adhaerere*". This is again the case in *Sermo*

It is worth remarking that one of these forms, "*cohaerere*", is employed in this sermon to denote the closeness of the mutual love that is to unify Christ's followers¹²³).

B. *To love the neighbour is to follow in Christ's foot-steps*

Around thirty years after *De Moribus*, Augustine, while preaching on the gospel of John, reworked the image of love for neighbour as a step to love for God in a fascinating manner. To love the neighbour is to follow Christ's path to the Father which goes by way of the cross.

Since no one can know such happiness unless he is perfect in love, how can others follow the Lord when he has gone to the bosom of the Father? Indeed he never left the Father's bosom when he came to them, and nor does he abandon them now. And, therefore, teaching them how they can become fit to proceed where he has gone before them, he says: "I give you a new commandment: love one another" (Jn. 13.34). These are the steps (*gressus*) by which Christ is to be followed¹²⁴)...

The step is still love for neighbour, as in *De Moribus*, and it still leads to happiness with God. But this movement heavenwards is now presented strictly as walking in the foot-steps of Christ, that is to say, "the Christ (who) suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His

Wilmart 2,4 (MA I,677) where reference is also made to 1 Cor. 6.17: "Qui autem *adheret* domino unus spiritus est".

For "*cohaerere*": *De Vera Religione* 255 (CSEL 77,65) = 47,90 (CC 32,246. ML 34,163) where it appears as a synonym for "*adhaerere*" and "*haerere*". "*Haerere*" itself is also found in the quotation of Ps. 72.28 in *De Trinitate* 6,5,7 (CC 50,235. ML 42,928). The most remarkable use of "*haerere*" occurs in *En. in ps.* 95,2 (CC 39,1343. ML 37,1227-1228) which dates from 407: "*Cantate Domino canticum novum, cantate Domino omnis terra ... Audi quia canticum novum est: Dominus dicit, Mandatum novum do vobis, ut vos invicem diligatis* (Jn. 13.34). *Omnis ergo terra cantat canticum novum, ibi aedificatur domus. Omnis ergo terra est domus Dei. Si omnis terra domus Dei, qui non haeret omni terrae, ruina est, non domus ...*". In a context reminiscent of our own, a verb, which perhaps under the influence of Ps. 72.28 usually has God as its object, is applied to all the earth i.e. to all human beings. The "*haeret omni terrae*" is in fact here an argument in Augustine's anti-Donatist polemic.

¹²³) *Sermo* 336,1,1 (ML 38,1472): "si non se invicem *cohaerendo* sibi quodam modo amarent ...".

¹²⁴) *Tractatus in Evangelium Ioannis* 64,4 (CC 36,490. ML 35,1807): "Aut iturum Dominum ad sinum Patris, nec relicturum eos, unde nec recessit cum venisset ad eos, quomodo iam fuerant secuturi; cum esse nemo possit in illa felicitate nisi perfectus in caritate? Ideoque docens quomodo idonei esse possint pergere quo ille antecederat, *Mandatum, inquit, novum do vobis, ut diligatis invicem* (Jn. 13.34). Hi sunt gressus quibus sequendus est Christus ...".

steps (*vestigia*)" (I Peter 2.21). This text from I Peter, together with the self-giving until death texts of Jn. 15.13 and I Jn. 3.16, illustrate in a later Augustinian sermon on John's gospel the character of that perfect love which leads to joyful intimacy with the Father¹²⁵). "If you take your seat at a great man's table, take careful note of what you have before you. Knowing that you also ought to prepare such fare, put your hand to the task" (Prov. 23.1-2: LXX). The martyrs, attending to what is set before them at the Eucharist, in laying down their lives for their brothers give the most abundant witness of the fulness of love. This is no easily conquered heaven that skirts along the neighbour as a passage of convenience. On the contrary, the neighbour is to be the beneficiary of the most perfect act of self-giving. In his commentary on the first letter of John (407 A.D.), walking the way of the Lord takes the form of forgiveness of enemies¹²⁶). And, even in this taking Christ's path, Augustine foresees and warns against the possibility of self-seeking¹²⁷). From these few examples it may be seen how the step image can be transformed under the influence of the Christian Scriptures.

C. Love for neighbour does not disappear in eternal life

Because for Anders Nygren Augustinian love is essentially acquisitive desire, it should come to an end when it has acquired the object of its desire.

Perfect *fruitio Dei* means in principle the cessation of love. Alongside this idea, however, there is often found in Augustine quite the opposite idea, that love is to increase when we at length see God face to face. Only then shall we really know what we possess in God as our *summum bonum*; and the more we *know* Him, the more we are bound to *love* Him¹²⁸).

But Nygren does not regard the idea of love's increase as holding the

¹²⁵) *Ibid.*, 84,1 (CC 36,536-537. ML 35,1846-1847). In the following 84,2, Gal. 2.20 is added to this gallery of illustrations: "Christ, the Son of God, loved me and gave himself up for me".

¹²⁶) *In Epistolam Ioannis*, tr. 1,9 (ML 35,1985): "Fixus in cruce erat, et in ipsa via ambulabat: ipsa est via charitatis. Pater, ignosce illis quia nesciunt quid faciunt (Lk. 23.34). Sic ergo, si didiceris orare pro inimico tuo, ambulas viam Domini".

¹²⁷) *Tractatus in Evangelium Ioannis* 84,2 (CC 36,538. ML 35,1848): "Eumque sic imitemur pia obedientia, ut ei nos comparare nulla praesumamus audacia".

¹²⁸) A. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, p. 511. For Nygren's references to Augustine, see his notes 3 and 4.

balance of power in Augustine's doctrine, nor, as is evident from the final sentence quoted in the passage above in which he interprets love's growth within the eudaimonistic scheme, does this often found opposite idea cause him to consider seriously that desire craving for satisfaction might be too narrow a category for Augustinian love. But there are texts in which love for the neighbour, who is not our *Summum Bonum*, continues and develops in eternal life. Nygren actually quoted one of them himself (p. 511-512, n. 4), but without comment; it is *De Spiritu et Littera* 36,64 which sees the commandment to love the neighbour as being perfectly fulfilled only when God, seen face to face, is perfectly loved¹²⁹). If love for neighbour were merely a preparation, it would have been expected to disappear as soon as that for which it was paving the way had been attained. In three short points it will be clear that, at least from 407 A.D., and possibly earlier, Augustine made explicit statements to the effect that this was not the case.

1. The enjoyment of wisdom in eternal life will not be a lone affair, but in the company of friends¹³⁰). In these companions those contemplating God rejoice¹³¹); when God will be all in all, they will love one another

¹²⁹) *De Spiritu et Littera* 36,64 (CSEL 60,225. ML 44,243): "Proinde hoc primum praeceptum iustitiae, quo iubemur diligere deum ex toto corde, et ex tota anima, et ex tota mente, cui est de proximo diligendo alterum consequens, in illa vita implebimus, cum videbimus facie ad faciem". It is not to be excluded that *De Natura et Gratia* 70,84 (CSEL 60,298. ML 44,290) (Date: 415) also envisions love for neighbour growing beyond this life: "Caritas ergo inchoata, inchoata iustitia est, caritas propecta, propecta iustitia est; caritas magna, magna iustitia est, caritas perfecta, perfecta iustitia est: sed caritas de corde puro, et conscientia bona, et fide non ficta (1 Tim. 1.5); quae tunc maxima est in hac vita, quando pro illa ipsa contemnitur vita (cf. Jn. 15.13); sed miror si non habet quo crescat, cum de mortali excesserit vita".

¹³⁰) *Sermo Denis* 16,6 (MA I,79) (Date: 413, at the latest): "Sed illic ubi amicum habebis deum, sine amico proximo non eris: ibi tecum amici erunt, quorum facta et confessiones paulo ante legebantur (i.e. the martyrs)". Cf. 16,7 (MA I,80): "Ibi erit cum istis (i.e. martyrs) illa amicitia, ubi nulla erit carnis concupiscentia, et sola erit cum amicis ad fruendum sapientia". Augustine also speaks of everlasting friendship: in the letter to Martian written after 395 i.e. *Epistola* 258,4 (CSEL 57,609. ML 33,1073): "Haec duo (commandments) si mecum firmissime teneas amicitia nostra vera ac sempiterna erit et non solum invicem nos sed etiam ipsi domino sociabit"; and in a work dating from 420 i.e. *Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum* (CSEL 60,423. ML 44,550-551): "(Amicitia est) amorem rependere impensum. Quid est enim aliud amicitia, quam non aliunde quam ex amore nomen accepit et nusquam in Christo fidelis est, in quo solo esse etiam sempiterna ac felix potest?".

¹³¹) *En. in ps.* 38,6 (CC 38,407. ML 36,417) (Date: 412): "Ibi enim gaudebo de socio, non timebo de adversario; ibi enim contemplator mecum erit amicus, non calumniator inimicus".

full of God ("*omnibus amantibus se, videntibus se plenos Deo*"), as together they contemplate him, possess him and know his peace¹³²). Even our enemies, having become our friends, may reign with us in eternity¹³³). Loving our neighbour, then, who on earth may well be our enemy, calls us to desire that he may share eternal life with us¹³⁴). It is difficult to imagine that, having come to the eternal life which people had desired for one another on earth, they would lose interest in one another, or that the dynamism of love between those who had attained this enjoyment would come to a stand-still. Rather they will love one another full of God ("*plenos Deo*") when God will be all in all. We may add to this the assertion of the *Confessiones* that our dear ones are not lost to us when they are dear to us in God, who can only be lost if we ourselves turn away from Him¹³⁵). If we remain in God, therefore, those dear to us *remain* such in God. On the other hand, however, the love of our dead for us does not pass away. Again in the *Confessiones*, Augustine writes movingly of his departed friend, Nebridius: "He drinks (in wisdom at God's fountain) till his thirst is slaked, and his happiness is never-ending. And I cannot believe that the draught intoxicates him so that he forgets me, for it is you, O Lord, whom he drinks in and you are mindful of your servants"¹³⁶). Similarly, writing to Sapida who was mourning her brother, Timothy, Augustine tells her that the love Timothy had and still

¹³²) *En. in ps.* 84,10 (CC 39,1170. ML 37,1076-1077) (Date: post-410): "Quando ergo absorpta fuerit mors in victoriam ... Erit ergo pax purgata in filiis Dei, omnibus amantibus se, videntibus se plenos Deo, cum erit Deus omnia in omnibus. Commune spectaculum habebimus Deum, communem possessionem habebimus Deum, communem pacem habebimus Deum".

¹³³) *Sermo* 149,18 (ML 38,807): "... quanta sollicitudine placabilem oportet esse hominem, ne forte nesciens qualis futurus sit, cum praesentes ejus inimicitias attenderit, oderit eum cum quo in aeterna felicitate regnabit?". Authors are divided on the date of this sermon. Some say 400, others 412.

¹³⁴) *En. in ps.* 118, *sermo* 8,2 (CC 40,1686. ML 37,1520) (Date: after 422): "Petant itaque ne abscondantur ab eis mandata Dei, per quae ab hoc incolatu liberentur, diligendo Deum, cum quo in aeternum erunt; et diligendo proximum, ut illic sit ubi et ipsi erunt".

In Epistolam Ioannis, tr. 8,10 (ML 35,2042): "opta illi (i.e. the enemy) ut habeat tecum vitam aeternam; opta illi ut sit frater tuus".

¹³⁵) *Confessiones* 4,9,14 (Skutella 64. CSEL 33,75. ML 32,699): "Beatus qui amat ... amicum in te ... Solus enim nullum carum amittit, cui omnes in illo (Deo) cari sunt, qui non amittitur".

¹³⁶) *Ibid.*, 9,3,6 (Skutella 184. CSEL 33,201. ML 32,765-766): "... sed (iam ponit) spiritale os ad fontem tuum et bibit, quantum potest, sapientiam pro aviditate sua sine fine felix. Nec eum sic arbitror inebriari ex ea, ut obliviscatur mei, cum tu, Domine, quem potat ille, nostri sis memor". English translation: R.S. Pine-Coffin, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1961, p. 184-185.

has for her will not perish. Hidden with Christ in the Lord (Col. 3.3), it is laid up as treasure¹³⁷).

2. During his preaching in 407 A.D. Augustine's commitment to the notion of a more genuine love for the neighbour beyond this world is unquestionable:

Benevolence alone is enough for those who love. It doesn't make sense to wish that there should be needy people so that we might have the opportunity to exercise the works of mercy ... All the help that we give is in response to needs. Take away the needy and all the works of mercy become superfluous. *The fact that the works of mercy will no longer be needed* (in the eternal peace of that Jerusalem where there is no longer any discord) *does not at all mean that the fire of your love will be extinguished*. Your love will be the more genuine if it is directed towards a happy person to whom you have nothing to give. Such love will be purer and much more sincere ...¹³⁸)

This possible love for the neighbour in the future is, as we shall see, not without its consequences for the present.

3. Two texts from the first half of the final decade of Augustine's life give a further nuance to the argument: when the grounds of sin and suspicion have been removed, neighbours will be an open book to one another and unstinting in their love and praise. Because God is loved fully when seen face to face, there will be no fear of sin and no room for mortal affections. God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15.28), nothing will be hidden; therefore, there can be no possible reason for harbouring suspicions about our neighbour¹³⁹). The heart of a mortal human being on earth is not fully open to that of another; therefore, it is possible to suspect that

¹³⁷) *Epistola* 263,2 (CSEL 57,632. ML 33,1082-1083) (Date: post-395): "Neque enim ... periit illa caritas, qua Timotheus Sapidam dilexit, et diligit; manet illa servata in thesauro suo, et *abscondita est cum Christo in Domino* (Col. 3.3)".

¹³⁸) In *Epistolam Ioannis*, tr. 8,5 (ML 35,2038): "Sola benevolentia sufficit amanti. Non enim optare debemus esse miseros, ut possimus exercere opera misericordiae ... Haec enim omnia officia necessitatum sunt. Tolle miseros; cessabunt opera misericordiae. Opera misericordiae cessabunt; numquid ardor charitatis extinguetur? Germanius amas felicem hominem, cui non habes quod praestes; purior ille amor erit, multoque sincerior ...".

¹³⁹) En. in ps. 118, *sermo* 13,4 (CC 40,1707. ML 37,1538): "Neque enim praecepta legis, sicut hic, etiam ibi accepturi sumus quae custodiamus, sed ipsam legis ... plenitudinem sine ullo peccandi timore servabimus: quia et Deum plenius, cum viderimus, amabimus, et proximum, quia Deus erit omnia in omnibus (1 Cor. 15.28); nec falsae cuiquam de proximo suspicioni erit locus, ubi nullus ulli erit occultus".

the other's love for us is not genuine, and vice versa. But it is also possible that his good and praiseworthy qualities are hidden from us, and ours from him. God will illuminate these hidden dark corners and reveal the thoughts of the heart (cf. 1 Cor. 4.5), so that, when people's struggles with mortality are behind them, they may be unrestrained in their praise and love of one another¹⁴⁰).

It can be noted that the majority of texts that we have called upon in making these three points date from Augustine's post-407 period. Only *Confessiones* 4,9,14 and 9,3,6 from 397 A.D., and probably also *Epistolae* 258,4 and 263,2, are earlier than 407. Of these, *Confessiones* 9,3,6 and *Epistola* 263,2 speak of the blessed dead's love for the living, and *Confessiones* 4,9,14 of the living's not losing their dead loved ones. *Epistola* 258,4, to Martian, specifically envisages the case of ever-lasting ("sempiterna") friendship in relationship to the Lord, an idea which is indeed implicit in the other three texts, but which is more explicitly worked out in later texts. Admittedly, however, the *De Moribus*, where love for neighbour appears as step and cradle, gives no witness to assertions of this kind. But it has to be remembered that, at the time of its writing (388 A.D.), Augustine still held that a person could love God perfectly on earth, and that already here he could, purified of all vices and sanctified, be perfectly wise in the possession of his Supreme Good¹⁴¹). The question for the early Augustine then becomes: does he

¹⁴⁰) *Enchiridion* 32,121 (CC 46,114, ML 40,288): "Non enim scimus mortales corda mortalium, tunc autem illuminabit Dominus abscondita tenebrarum, et manifestabit cogitationes cordis; et laus erit unicuique a Deo (1 Cor. 4.5): quia id laudabitur et diligetur a proximo in proximo, quod ne lateat, ab ipso illuminabitur Deo. Minuitur autem cupiditas caritate crescente, donec veniat hic ad tantam magnitudinem, qua maior esse non possit: Maiorem enim caritatem nemo habet, quam ut animam suam quis ponat pro amicis suis (Jn. 15.13). Ibi autem quis explicet quanta caritas erit, ubi cupiditas quam vel coercendo superet nulla erit, quoniam summa erit, quando contentio mortis nulla erit".

¹⁴¹) See *Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1,25,47 (ML 32,1331): "Quid ergo agendum est, quid quaeso, nisi ut eum ipsum quem cognoscere volumus, prius plena caritate diligamus?"; 1,30,64 (ML 32,1337): "... dum terrae hujus inhabitator est ... tantum divini amoris consurgit incendium, ut exustis omnibus vitiis, et homine purgato atque sanctificato, satis appareat quam divine dictum sit: *Ego sum ignis consumens* (Deut. 4.24) ...". In 394 we find Augustine still holding fast to this view-point; see *De Sermonibus Domini in Monte* 1,2,9 (CC 35,6, ML 34,1233): the peace that comes with being sons of God (i.e. in subjecting all our lower faculties to the highest, and in subjecting the highest, mind and reason, to the Son of God, Truth himself) is given to men of good-will on earth: "Et haec est pax quae datur in terra hominibus bonae voluntatis, haec vita consummati perfectique sapientis". Cf. 1,4,12 (CC 35,12, ML 34,1235): "Et ista quidem in hac vita compleri possunt, sicut completa esse in apostolis credimus ...".

The *Retractiones* (Date: 426-427) corrects the three assertions we have referred to

understand such perfect possession of Wisdom on earth to reduce or to enhance the vitality of a person's relationship with his neighbour? We have seen that, because it belongs to the greatness and power of the soul that all the acts characteristic of its seven levels can be at work together, love for neighbour benefits when such perfection is achieved at its highest level. Moreover, already a year or two before *De Moribus*, in the *Soliloquia* (396-387 A.D.), the very quest for Wisdom is seen as having a communitarian nature and the love and enjoyment of Wisdom as strengthening the bonds of friendship among those who are together intent upon it¹⁴²). We have seen in our comments on the step and cradle texts that *De Moribus* is not closed to an interpretation in this line, so that the idea of community among the devotees of Wisdom need not necessarily be conceived of as forgotten or excluded there.

To conclude this section on the love for neighbour that endures when God has been reached, we will quote a text from *De Doctrina Christiana* which will allow us to re-initiate the discussion of the relationship of love for neighbour to love for God from another angle. *De Doctrina Christiana* was begun in 396, but, because it was composed and revised over a period of more than twenty-five years, it is difficult to determine the date of origin of its particular expressions. One such expression favours the position we are defending here: love for neighbour continues when one has achieved beatitude with God. We read there that "our greatest reward is that we may enjoy Him perfectly and that all of us who enjoy Him may enjoy one another in Him"¹⁴³).

in 1,6,4 (CSEL 36/2,31) = 1,7,4 (ML 32,593); 1,6,5 (CSEL 36/2,31-32) = 1,7,5 (ML 32,593); and 1,18,2-3 (CSEL 36/2,88-89) = 1,19,1-2 (ML 32,614), respectively: such perfect peace and wisdom cannot be had in this life. An early text reflecting this shift of opinion in Augustine is *De Consensu Evangelistarum* 4,10,20 (CSEL 43,416. ML 34,1227-1228), dating from about 400 A.D. This change was therefore in process during the time Augustine began the composition of *De Doctrina Christiana* i.e. 396 A.D. Perhaps we may see it heralded in the distinction he draws between contemplation through faith and through vision in *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* 22,27 (CSEL 25/1,621. ML 42,418) dating from 397-398: "Actio itaque rationalis contemplationi rationali debet oboedire sive per fidem operanti, sicuti est, quamdiu peregrinamur a domino, sive per speciem, quod erit, cum similes ei erimus, quoniam videbimus eum, sicuti est ...". Is there not a shift here from a model of the spiritual life as an ascent to God attainable in this life to that of a pilgrimage through life in faith ("quamdiu peregrinamur a domino") which reaches perfection only at life's end?

¹⁴²) *Soliloquia* 1,13,22 (ML 32,881): "Quem modum autem potest habere illius pulchritudinis amor, in qua non solum non invideo ceteris, sed etiam plurimos quaero qui mecum appetant, mecum inhient, mecum teneant, mecum perfruantur; tanto mihi amiores futuri, quanto erit nobis amata communior".

¹⁴³) *De Doctrina Christiana* 1,76 (CSEL 80,28) = 1,32,35 (CC 32,26. ML 34,32): "Haec autem merces summa est ut ipso perfruamur, et omnes qui eo fruimur, nobis etiam invicem in ipso perfruamur".

Because Augustine speaks elsewhere in the same first book of this work of our enjoyment of God in this life being “through a glass darkly” (“*vel per speculum vel in aenigmate*”: cf. 1 Cor. 13.12)¹⁴⁴) — and presuming consistency of thought on the matter within Book I — we may take ‘the perfect enjoyment of Him and of one another in Him’ of 1,76 to refer to the life beyond this life. It was in any case around the time he began *De Doctrina Christiana* that Augustine was coming to reject his earlier view that one could love God perfectly and be perfectly at peace in this life. If then our reward in heaven is perfect enjoyment of God and the neighbour, how, we may ask, is love for one another here in this life to be viewed? Is it simply to be assigned to the category of use (“*uti*”) and understood as a means to fruition (“*frui*”) of God and the neighbour in Him in the future life? If this is the case, the argument of this chapter that love for neighbour on earth is not, arguably in the early Augustine and certainly in his later period, just a preparation for love to God but more like an integral moment of it, would be considerably weakened. It is time then to explore this relation from that other angle.

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¹⁴⁴) *Ibid.*, 1,66 (CSEL 80,25) = 1,30,31 (CC 32,23-24. ML 34,30-31).