

Eliminating and Solving the Problem of Evil

**Mani, Manichaeism
and the Attempted Refutations
of Augustine of Hippo**

by

Amitakh Stanford

This book is dedicated with love to all open-minded seekers of Truth.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the third century A.D., a Persian prophet by the name of Mani began a religious movement with a dualist tradition whose biblical foundational tenets are recognized today as classically Gnostic. Manichaeism, derived from his name, is now a word indicative of movements with a dualist tradition. It is a religion in its own right with some flavour of Gnostic Christian influence. Mani's doctrines flourished in all the countries of the known world from Gaul to China in spite of prejudices and forceful, destructive adversity from its many opponents. Mani's writings had a great impact on the development of Christian heresy from the third century right through till the end of the Middle Ages.

I will explore Mani and his doctrines in the context of some of the main anti-Manichaean writings of Augustine of Hippo which form the major Christian attempted refutation of Manichaeism. I shall begin by explaining a little of the life of Mani and his doctrines, the latter embraced by the title Manichaeism, and from there proceed to:

- i The things I consider especially important about Manichaeism, and my interpretation of it which I intend to defend as a logical, believable, and tenable philosophy for the survival in this harsh reality.
- ii The philosophical objections and attempted refutations to Manichaeism in particular by Augustine of Hippo, and an examination

- of the validity of these disputations.
- iii A discussion of certain philosophical considerations which are pertinent in an examination of Manichaeism, namely, the Problem of Evil and the question of suffering.
 - iv Finally, I will present the key to solving the age old Problem of Evil.

A BRIEF BACKGROUND

The Manichaeans and other Gnostics claimed, mainly through their leaders, that the esoteric knowledge they received came directly from a Divine Consciousness and that salvation was through gnosis (knowledge of an esoteric nature). However, the particularities of the origin of Gnosticism are obscure. According to Irenaeus, it was a sect called the Nicolaites who first proclaimed the doctrine of Gnosticism, the doctrine that the visible world was created not by God but by a demiurge (Irenaeus I, 26, 3, M.P.G. Vol. VII, col 687). However, it appears that this may not be historically accurate, since Gnostic thought was evident in groups such as the Therapeutae centuries earlier (Gruber and Kersten, 1995).

The main western interpretation of the basis of Gnosticism and Manichaeism is that there is a radical dualism of Light and there is a Divine spark from the realm of the Divine Light, imprisoned in each human. However, a deeper understanding of Gnosticism allows one to realize that a very important error is contained in this concept as it is presented in this era to the uninitiated. It appears to have resulted from a major omission or misunderstanding of a fact in Gnostic literature by those who discuss Manichaeism or any other Gnosticism, and that fact is that not all human

beings are ontologically alike. The Principle of Light is referred to as “Good”. By “GOOD” is meant that which appeals to us and that which possesses the true nature of goodness and that which is of Divine Essences. Conversely, “EVIL” is the Principle of Darkness whose nature is opposed to the true nature of goodness. It is of materiality, ignorance, deception, and destructive darkness. It is what displeases us on the level of sense experience.

Conversely, the Encyclopaedia Britannica states that Gnosticism was especially important in the 2nd century A.D. because it contributed to the development of (present-day, mainstream) Christianity by forcing the early Church, in its reaction to Gnosticism, to develop a scriptural canon, a creedal theology, and an Episcopal organisation whose emphasis was not on gnosis but on p̄istis (faith). Some writers such as Gruber and Kersten (1995) claim that what developed appears to have been in contradiction to the revelations of Jesus Christ.

Some of the early Christian leaders looked upon Gnosticism as a subtle, dangerous threat to Christianity during the 2nd century, a period marked by religious aspirations and philosophical preoccupations concerning human nature and the origins of life and evil, and a period then highlighted by overt savagery and profuse intolerance. Gnosticism was perceived as an attempt to transform Christianity into a religious philosophy and to replace faith in the mysteries of revelation with philosophical explanations. Hence, all those who posed as threats or challenges to the early Christian churches, including the Manichees (or Manichaeans), were labelled heretics. Christians often used the word “Manichees” pejoratively in order to describe heretics whose doctrines were not properly understood but were represented unfairly so as to seem to challenge the goodness of God.

Thus, the leaders of the nascent religious movement which took control and labelled itself Christian wanted to rule by dogma under threat of punishment. Manichaeism wanted to flourish by appeal to the intellect and rationality which it did, so much so that the mainstream Christians resorted to violence and assassinations to quash it.

The use of anathemas to condemn heretical views became commonplace; set formulae were developed. For example, among the questionable works of Gregory Thaumaturgus is a short piece entitled **“Twelve Chapters on Faith”** which expounds the orthodox position on the incarnation by anathematising those who held a docetic view of Christ. Those converted from Manichaeism were made to abjure their former beliefs and to anathematise Mani in public with signed statements as a guarantee of the genuineness of their conversion. Many of the conversions were coerced under the threat of death. An early instance of public denunciation of Mani being demanded from those who were converted from Manichaeism is found in Mark the Deacon’s **Life of Porphyry of Gaza**.

MANICHAEAN LITERATURE AND SOURCES

From the survey of literature on Manichaeism, it is obvious that there are many differences of opinion about Mani and his religious system. Material on Mani and Manichaeism may be divided into three main categories:

- i Fragments of Mani’s own writings,
- ii Those by Mani’s disciples on Manichaeism, and

iii Those written by people with different intentions – usually with the intention to discredit Mani and his doctrine.

The main sources of Mani's teaching are these:

- i **The Coptic Kephalaia** is a Middle Iranian book supposedly by Mani. Some claimed that it was the work of a follower and is not wholly a faithful recording of the actual teaching of Mani. The text of the Kephalaia, Chapter CXLVIII, shows that Mani's Twin-Spirit is involved with three particular books: the **Pragmateia**, the **Book of the Secrets** and the **Book of the Giants**. This is to say that these three books were either revealed, dictated or inspired by the Twin-Spirit.
- ii The **Cologne Mani-codex**.
- iii The **Fihrist** or 'Catalogue of the Sciences' [written in Arabic in A.D.988 by Ibn Abi Jakub an-Nadim] (Dodge, 1970);
- iv The **Liber Scholiorum** (written in Syriac in A.D.790-792 by the Nestorian Bishop Theodore bar konai which contains a Christian polemic against Manichaeism); and
- v The **Acta Archelai**, which is a popular but less respectable authority. It is really a polemical fabrication yet it is readily believed by western Christians (Lardner, 1827; Baeson, 1906; Lieu, 1994). It appears to have been composed in the 4th century in Greek and was later translated into all the major languages of the Empire by Archelaus, bishop of Carchar in Mesopotamia. The Acta Archelai is the foremost anti-Manichaean work of the 4th century.
- vi Other writings which include:
 - a) Variations of the story contained in the Acta Archelai which reappear in Epiphanius, Socrates, Theodore, and several later writers.

- b) Fragments of writings supposedly written by Mani's disciples, particularly those which have been found in this century.
- c) The writings by Mani's opponents.

It is now generally accepted that accounts of Mani's life from Greek and Syriac sources are contradictory. Mani's writings have also come down to us in fragments, prescribed by Augustine's citations, notably a letter called the **Fundamentum**. Most of the polemic writings about Mani and his teachings cannot be relied on.

We shall first examine some of the earlier works about Mani. The first scholar who attempted to sketch Mani's life was I. de Beausobre who appears to have accomplished extensive impartial studies about Mani, published in two volumes in 1734-1739 entitled **Histoire Critique de Manichee et du Manicheisme**. His research on the history of Mani was based on references by the Greek and Latin authors and most of the information concerning Mani's life is taken from the Acta Archelai. Most Manichaean scholars such as Ort (Ort, 1967) and Lieu are now of the opinion that the Acta Archelai is not reliable and does not represent Mani or Manichaeism accurately.

(The Acta Archelai monopolized discussions as it was accepted as the only substantial and coherent source on the early history of the sect until the publication in the second half of the 19th century by Gustave Flügel and the Fihrist by an-Nadim. This gave a quite different and more reasonable and believable account of Mani's life based on Manichaean sources). The discovery of written sources and the investigation of them at the start of the nineteenth century are significant in the history of research on Manichaeism.

After de Beausobre, a 19th century Christian Theologian named F.Ch. Baur investigated above all the structure of the Manichaeic system. According to Baur, Mani considered himself to be the interpreter of Divine truth. Most of his writings about Mani and his teachings are taken from the works of Augustine of Hippo. He depended entirely on the Acta Archelai and the early Church literature (Baur, 1831) as there were no other sources available at that time. Thus, like de Beausobre and other early scholars, their sources were references by the questionable Greek and Latin authors.

In 1862 Flügel published from the Fihrist (Catalogue of Sciences) of an-Nadim (written in 988) a version of the life of Mani based on Manichaeic sources.

It is maintained that the Fihrist of an-Nadim is an impartial text. Ort and his associates are of the opinion that most of an-Nadim's communications in his book Fihrist are fully trustworthy.

If this is so, Flügel is indeed fortunate to have access to it, unlike de Beausobre, Baur, Lardner and others who were compelled to rely on the biased material in the Acta Archelai and other polemic writings introduced by other authors.

After Baur, new sources on Mani and the Manichaeic religious system became available. After Baur, with the discovery of numerous new sources, the research on Mani changed rapidly. Dr. Konrad Kessler was able to make use of all the available material for his monograph on Mani (Kessler, 1889), especially the Acta Archelai as well as Syriac and Arabic texts. His research led him to conclude that the religion of Mani is neither a Christian nor a Zoroastrian sect. He regarded Manichaeism as an independent and new religion, a world-wide religion equivalent to Parsism and Christianity. He too based his work heavily on the Acta Archelai and

Arabic and Syriac texts such as sources from an-Nadim's Fihrist, fragments of letters by Mani translated from the Syriac original into Greek, and Mani's writings. Kessler was able to carefully compile the various oriental sources and translate many oriental authors as well.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, with the discovery of the purportedly first original Manichaean texts from Tun-huang and Turfan in Chinese Turkestan and Fayoum in Egypt, scholars were able to rely on relatively more trustworthy sources in their research. These genuine Manichaean texts have added to the sources from which scholars tried to discover the real meaning of Manichaeism. As a result of these findings, the position of Manichaeism within Gnosticism as a whole can be better and more accurately defined.

The new finds in Turkestan revealed the extent of the spread of Manichaeism in China. With the subsequent publication of the Chinese Manichaica in 1987, it is now clear that Manichaeism was very well integrated into the Chinese society in Turkestan.

The texts discovered in Chinese Turkestan, mainly in ancient Qoco (by modern Turfan), were written in three Iranian languages: Middle Persian, Parthian and Sogdian. Among the most important and comprehensive non-canonical literature on Mani and his teachings is a Mani-Vita found in Egypt in a Greek version called the Cologne Mani Codex.

The extensive Coptic manuscripts found in Egypt in 1930 by C. Schmidt made it possible for us to have a greater insight into early Manichaeism to be gained and afforded opportunities to check the many traditions regarding Mani's life and death. **The Medinet Madi Library** from the 1930's, of which the Kephalaia is a part, is quite illuminating. Other scholars, like W.B. Henning, have also continued to publish scores of

Manichaean texts. This makes it possible for us to become familiar with many previously unknown fragments. Others such as Muller and Polotsky also translated and published fragments of the manuscripts that were discovered in this century. Since these new finds in Turkestan and Egypt, scholars like H.J. Polotsky (1935), H. Ch. Puech (1949) H. Jonas (1964), O. Klima (1962) and Klimkeit (1982) have been able to base their expositions entirely on the new sources from the above places.

Klimkeit's volume of sources from the Silk Road reveals a strong Gnostic Christian influence on Manichaeism, whose founder, Mani, appeared to have merged Gnostic Christianity with the radical religious dualism of Zoroaster and Persian religions (Klimkeit 1993). As Manichaeism spread along the Silk Road from Turkey to Asia, it adopted certain aspects of Hinduism, Buddhism and other religions in Asia.

However, the essential elements in Mani's teachings remained uniform throughout the lands where Manichaeism had taken root. At the present time, a considerable number of Manichaean manuscripts have not been translated, edited or philologically treated. In spite of the new finds, scholars are still disputing over which fundamental system Mani himself advocated. Suffice to say, those texts already translated and edited by Ibscher, Polotsky (Polotsky, 1934), Allberry (Allberry, 1938) Böhlig (1980) and Nagel (1980) are sufficient sources for the purpose of this analysis.

CHAPTER TWO

MANI, HIS TEACHINGS AND THE SPREAD OF MANICHAISM

Manichaeism began in the 3rd century A.D. at a time when the great Gnostic schools in the Roman empire came to an end in the 2nd century. Let us now take a glimpse into the life of Mani:

Mani, the founder of Manichaeism, was born on the 14th of April, A.D. 216, in an area of Babylonia (modern Iraq) in the Persian Empire (Widengren, 1965) to Parthians of a royal family. This area formed part of the province of Asoristan, in the Parthian Empire. Mani's name is Aramaic and not Iranian. His father Patik had joined an austere Gnostic "baptist" sect after he received a revelation that directed him to take up the ascetic life.

At the age of four Mani was brought by his father to live in this baptist community (Lieu, 1985). With the availability of new documents (for example: the Cologne Mani Codex) that have come to hand we now know that this baptist sect Mani's father was involved in and one which Mani was brought up in from the age of four was a predominantly Jewish-Christian Gnostic sect whose alleged founder was Elchasai. We can assume therefore that he was nurtured in his formative years in the embracing light of Gnosticism which respected even the Light within animals and vegetation.

When Mani was twelve years old, he received a revelation from the King of the Paradise of Light (God, the Father) through his Divine companion whom Mani called "the Twin" (Henrichs, 1979). Hence, Mani was exposed to Christian Gnosticism through his father throughout the formative years of his life, from the age of four until the time he founded his

own religious movement with its distinctive Gnostic tendencies, embracing as it did, what appear to be basic tenets of Truth found in other religions which existed before Mani formulated his own.

Mani's "Twin" (syzygos) taught Mani the many Divine truths of his religion and also told him to physically remain in the baptist sect for the time being, but spiritually and mentally to dissociate himself from it. He also told Mani that he would protect, guide and accompany him throughout his life. Mani received his second revelation from his "Twin" in April, 240 A.D. at the age of twenty-four (Henrichs, 1979).

From this revelation Mani was given many truths which led him to found a new dualistic religion of salvation which was to embrace all that was true in previous religions. Amongst other things, Mani was instructed by his "Twin" to confront his father and his family with the new knowledge he had received and to leave the baptist sect in order to commence his mission, which was to preach the truths that had been revealed to him to mankind in general. Subsequently, Mani did present his new-found knowledge to his family and was able to convert his father and the elders of his family. The break with the Baptists was preceded by disputes with the baptist community in which he grew up.

On 20th March, 242 A.D. at the age of twenty-six, Mani began to preach his "new religion of which he was the Prophet" to the crowds assembled in the streets and bazaars of Ctesiphon (Burkitt, 1925). His universal religion started as an idealistic ideology for the Persian Empire. Thereafter, Mani embarked on his first missionary journey to India by sea. On his return to Persia, Mani was well received by Emperor Shapur I, who granted him complete freedom to preach his message throughout the Empire. Mani continued to enjoy such privileges under Shapur's successor, Hormizd.

Thus, Mani gained disciples, went on missionary journeys, and wrote a number of books of scriptures. He also produced paintings to accompany the scriptures. However, in 276 A.D., Hormidz's successor, Bahram I, opposed Mani and proclaimed him a heretic, an enemy of the Empire's official fire-worshipping religion, and hence an enemy of the state.

Mani was sixty when Shapur's grandson, Bahram I had him imprisoned and executed in A.D. 276 or 277 after 26 days of prolonged horrific torture in prison. It is recorded that his corpse, or his flayed skin, was stuffed with hay and set up over one of the gates of the royal city of Gunde-Shapur, east of Susa, which in consequence became known as the Mani-gate. Unlike his grandfather, King Shapur I, who favoured Mani, Bahram condemned Mani's religion and he did his best to root out Manichaeism. According to Theodorus bar konai, Mani was executed by King Shapur, but it is now known that historically this is inaccurate.

During Mani's lifetime his religion had already spread throughout Mesopotamia, the adjacent parts of the Roman Empire, into Iran and as far as Jordan. At the time of Mani's death Manichaeism was already well established by Manichaean missionaries throughout the East. Mani's forerunners – Zorathustra (Zoroaster), Buddha and Jesus – preached without writing books so that their teachings were easily corrupted (Kephalaia). Mani was aware of such a danger. Thus, he ensured that his teachings were carefully recorded in books while he was alive, but, true to form in this world, did not prevent his teachings from being corrupted by others.

The missionary success of Mani's teachings in the Roman Empire resulted in the attacks on the Manichaeans as adherents to a subversive foreign religion under King Bahram I, but Bahram's persecution of the Manichaeans only succeeded in driving them underground. Sisinnios

became the main successor after Mani's death and he led the Manichaean community until his martyrdom in 291/2 (Acta Iranica II, 1975). His successor, Innaios, was able to avoid persecution of the Manichaeans until the reign of Hormizd II when new persecutions commenced. This led to a decline of Manichaeism in the Persian Empire.

Four hundred years after Mani's death the Sassanian Empire was overthrown by the Arab conquerors and the Persian territories were once again occupied by the Manichaeans. At first the Moslem Arabs were probably unaware of the Manichaeans' existence. The Arabs started persecuting the Zoroastrians whose supposed fire-worshipping religion was made the national religion of the Persians under the old regime. But as soon as the Moslem rulers became aware of the existence of the Manichaeans, they began to pursue them ruthlessly for they were regarded as dangerous. The Manichaeans were perceived as a danger to the State probably because of their crusading, missionary faith, which made it a lively and extremely active religion.

When the persecutions started, the true Manichaeans hid in Christian and Mahomedan lands. Nonetheless, Manichaean missionary activities which had already started systematically in Mani's lifetime continued to spread to the East into the great Eastern province of Khurasan, and beyond it into the territory of the kingdom of Kushan (Boyce, 1975). Thus, Manichaeism had spread into the Latin-speaking West by the middle of the 4th century. According to W.H.C. Frend there were Manichaeans in Carthage, where Augustine of Hippo encountered it, within twenty years of Mani's death (Frend, 1953).

In about 300 A.D., due to emigration, Manichaeism had spread to Syria, Northern Arabia, Egypt and North Africa (where Augustine of Hippo

joined the sect from 373-382). From Syria, it spread to Palestine, Asia Minor and Armenia. At the start of the 4th century Manichaeism had reached Rome and Dalmatia and then spread into Gaul and Spain.

From the sources that remain, the Manichaeans were regarded as the most pernicious form of Christian heresy. They were mainly wiped out by severe persecution in the fifth and sixth centuries. Nonetheless, Manichaean-Gnostic tenets continued to survive under different names in other sectarian circles (such as the Paulicians, the Bogomils, the Catharists) up to and beyond the Middle Ages.

The Manichaeans were unreasonably feared and hated among medieval churchmen both in the Latin west and the Greek east. It must be mentioned that the alarm that Manichaeism had caused was accompanied by the horror with which the word “Manichaean” came to be regarded (Runciman, 1955); all this was due to effective propaganda by those who wished it harm. However, by the time Manichaeism had disappeared in the West, it had gained popularity in the East. This is possibly because Islam had put to an end the monopolistic positions of Christians and Zoroastrianism beyond Greece.

Hence, once again Manichaeism flourished in Persia. In the seventh century Manichaeism spread from Spain to China and Tibet via Turkestan, and along the very important route known as the Silk Road. The spread of Manichaeism into China was due especially to Sogdian merchants and diplomats, who brought into the Middle Kingdom the news of Mani’s religion of Light which would overcome Darkness. People grasped this news with its promise of an end to their pain and suffering in due course, explained in a manner which made sense.

The dissemination of Mani's teaching reached a peak in 762-763, when Manichaeism was declared the state religion by King Bogu (760-780). After the defeat of the kingdom of Uighurs in 840 by the Kirghiz, Manichaeism was able to remain established in Sinkiang (Eastern Turkestan) until the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century.

In spite of the ban placed on Manichaeism in China in 863, Manichaeism was able to maintain itself until the fourteenth century. Traces of influences of Manichaeism were found in the southern Chinese secret societies of a later period in the southern coastal regions, and traces of it could be found in the province of Fukien as late as the sixteenth century. In fact, two of Mani's works were included in the Taoist's canon (Klimkeit, 1982). Thus, Manichaeism survived for more than a thousand years and disappeared only in the time of conquests by Genghis Khan and Tamerlane. Throughout nearly all that millennium, the Manichaeans, for no reason other than that their beliefs were different, were condemned and persecuted by the religious and civil authorities of the civilized world, and they were forced to take refuge in the remote areas of the civilized world.

It is remarkable that the spread of Manichaeism was achieved without military conquest, without force of any kind, without the advantage of more advanced technology, and in spite of severe persecution by various groups.

Centuries after Mani's death ideas similar to what he had espoused appeared amongst the Bogamils in the Balkans (Obolensky, 1948) and among the Albigensians and Cathari in Provence (Rucimen, 1955). It is not surprising therefore that the Bogamils of Bulgaria, the Cathari and the Patarenes of Lombardy and, in particular, the Albigensians, have often been imprecisely referred to as Manichaeans even up to the modern day. Their tenets of Gnosticism were very similar indeed and provoked the same sort of

senseless and despicable vengeance from the ruling Church authorities, even though these people wanted only to live in peace. It must be mentioned that Mani's religion was persecuted by the religious and civil authorities of the civilized world right from the very beginning. It is a miracle that Manichaeism flourished as it did bearing in mind the fact that it was perceived as a threat to the other important world religions almost instantly.

In brief, Mani's basic religious philosophy is described as "a consistent, uncompromising dualism in the form of a fantastic philosophy of nature" (Puech, 1978) and the influence of his teachings was felt for more than a thousand years, from medieval France to Ming China.

MANI'S IDENTITY

Through his sublimated 'Twin' (syzygos) or 'Toma', Mani proclaimed himself the last prophet and an apostle of Christ, in a succession which supposedly included Zoroaster, Buddha, and Jesus. He claimed that his 'twin' designated him the prophet of a new and ultimate revelation (Rudolph, 1983).

However, by claiming himself to be an apostle of Christ, Mani saw himself as "Jesus of Light", not as the historical Jesus. As Koenen has put it succinctly: [The Nous of Mani and his Twin are two complementary aspects of Mani's identity. Mani saw himself as the Paraclete which Jesus said the Father God would send after Jesus' death] (Koenen, 1978). Alas, a review of the history and fate of Mani and his doctrines, and an analysis of their meaning to most in today's world, only confirms what T.H. Huxley had said:

“It is the customary fate of new truths to begin as heresies and to end as superstitions.”

In the Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis Mani was depicted as specially instructed by the Father (Henrichs and Koenen, 1970). In claiming to be an apostle and a special messenger of God, Mani posed a threat to the Christian Church because it appears that it wanted sole sovereignty over certain ideas and it wanted undisputed authenticity of its claim to be apostolic for the Christians.

Mani had a positive attitude towards his perceived forerunners, which included Zoroaster, Buddha, and Jesus. Although he acknowledged them as the Divine messengers sent by the same Father of Greatness to enlighten mankind, it is said that he stressed the fact of his own unique appearance and the ultimate intention of his preaching.

Mani did not regard himself as a syncretist who built his new religion on the ideas of his forerunners. Indeed, he perceived his mission as similar to that of his predecessors. It appears that he intended to express his teachings in accordance with the concepts and wisdom of particular cultures, nations or religions in specific areas, in a way that people could relate to and assimilate their existing religious influences.

D.A. Scott is of the opinion that Mani used Zoroastrian, Christian and Buddhist religious teachings in order to highlight or demonstrate his own revelation (Scott, 1989). Hence, Manichaeism is no mere syncretic assemblage of disparate elements thrown together from other different religions. Instead, we have a doctrinal solidity on the part of Manichaeism. Scott's studies confirm a combination of Manichaean firm doctrinal stances together with a very flexible presentation, but the actual message being delivered remains firmly Manichaean. This enables Manichaeism to adapt

itself readily to other traditions and religions. Thus, for example, we can detect Eastern Manichaeism adapting to Buddhism as we move from Parthian to Sogdian and then on to Turkish literature (Klimkert, 1993).

It appears that Mani did have direct personal knowledge of what he was to say for he had all his knowledge as soon as he left the sect. He would not have had access to the foreign knowledge as a child and young man in the sect. Also, he would not have had the time to study, syncretize and then pronounce his doctrines after leaving the sect and before he began his mission, as his enemies try to claim. This is mainly because of the fact that he knew what he wanted to say immediately on leaving the sect and because he did begin his work immediately. Sects define their beliefs, and delineate them, and differentiate them from the beliefs of others.

Mani was eloquent, with a mental lucidity that attracted all who heard him, and being of boundless energy, he apparently supervised every facet of his work himself. Wanting to give a message or philosophy as he did, there was no other name for the process at that time but that of a religion. One wonders, after recognizing his life and work as similar to Jesus and other Divine Messengers, whether he too did not have a secret agenda which was to help liberate the Light beings by giving his message. He could not reach each individually so he told all that which he had to say.

His scholasticism attracted intellectuals, which is why his doctrines and teachings spread so far and quickly. However, it is easy to understand how his theology became distorted in the outer groups of those who heard him. It is obvious from reviewing the literature that many things were simply taken out of context and eventually made to sound ridiculous. That a truth will become fable, then myth, and finally absurdity as it is repeated by those without any understanding of the truth is a well-worn path known to many

researchers. After all, Mani did use parables and mythology to instruct an illiterate people, hence, the words cannot be taken too literally. The lack of knowledge at the time was profound, for even the average person in the street today probably knows far more than a highly educated person in Mani's day did.

Mani's was a very serious philosophy which exposed evil and addressed the Problem of Evil. His doctrines explained how evil came into being, what it did to beings of Light, and what would eventually happen to evil in all its forms.

In the Coptic Kephalaia (which, it is claimed, was handed down by Mani's disciples) it is recorded that Mani referred to himself as the great Luminary, and his disciples, the righteous ones, as sun-beams (Kephalaia, 1955). Mani was the Messenger from the Father of Light and his true disciples, beings of Light. In Chapter LXXIII of the Kephalaia (179-180) Mani describes the envy of the worldly matter (matter is an evil creation). He says that this material world is jealous of all spiritual values and therefore it envies him. This is a very clear statement to those who have the nous of Gnosticism. Mani goes on to say that since the beginning of the world, matter has been jealous of all bearers of the elements of Light. Jesus said something very similar about the workers of Darkness hating him and persecuting him and the messengers of the Light from the very start of the world's beginning.

THE COLOGNE MANI CODEX

Scholars have disputed over the essential character of Mani's religion. However, Manichaeism is generally seen as a religion which contained Zoroastrian, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian and Gnostic thought. With the uncovering of new sources, in particular the Cologne Mani Codex, there is a consensus among scholars that Manichaeism is essentially a form of Christian Gnosticism.

The Cologne Mani Codex (CMC) is believed to be written in the late fourth or early fifth century C.E. It gives an account of the first twenty-four years of Mani's life (Cameron & Dewey, 1979) and gives us a good insight into the spiritual world in which Mani grew up. The English version of the CMC has been translated from the Greek version which in turn was derived from the Syriac version. It contains theological nuances of Mani's thoughts, however it must be read with the reservations imposed upon it by the published limitations of repeated translations and the knowledge that it had been subjected to at least three redactions. Hence, its correctness and authenticity can only be assumed at best. The CMC is amongst the most important and comprehensive non-canonical texts about Mani and his teachings found this century in Egypt. It provides the only Greek primary source for Manichaeism.

The Cologne Mani Codex reveals the following points about the life of Mani and Manichaeism:

- i He was promised that a time would come when he would be given knowledge with which to understand the world. In other words, he

would know the reason for the presence of so much evil, suffering and ignorance in the world.

- ii He was given the NOUS – the Divine knowledge in visions and signs – and was given instructions on how to prepare for its reception. This involved a cleansing of his (physical) mind.
- iii He was given the power of reason in the form of childhood knowledge which he had to keep secret until the appropriate time.
- iv It revealed the agony of trees as symbolism for the suffering of human consciousness trapped in lower forms of life – this symbolism is similar to that alluded to by Plato in the story of Er (Plato, 1973). The difference here appears to be that these humans are trapped in the lower forms and made to suffer.
- v The revelation is made that he was protected by the Light in his work. Of course one would have to assume that his time was over and this protection was no longer needed by the time he was tortured and assassinated by Bahram I.
- vi It is revealed that he was told he was to become the Paraclete.
- vii In his twenty-fourth year, it is revealed that he saw, clairvoyantly or otherwise, a mirror-image of himself. One may assume the possibility that he suffered the psychiatric abnormality of dissociation. However, apart from the suggestion by his vitriolic enemies, there is no evidence anywhere that he was mentally abnormal in any way. The evidence points in the other direction. He was regarded as a genius of sorts, a poet, highly skilled as a physician/healer, artist, writer, lecturer, painter, a successful lyricist/songster, the most effective proselytiser in recorded history and an exorcist. Mani was renowned as a painter and he depicted details of his complex system in his Picture-Books. Above

all this, he was reputed to be a miracle worker. This ability was widely acknowledged and not disputed, not even by his most severe enemies.

The fact that we cannot assess with physical parameters and therefore physically prove the value of the information he disseminated should in no way detract from its credibility. It is only by reassessing his healing powers, his confidence in the Divine Light, his prophecies and the chain of events as they unfolded from his eschatological doctrine that we should then dare to reassess the worth of his information, always bearing in mind the validity and worth of the criticisms made by his enemies.

To know more about how Mani saw himself as a religious leader, we need to investigate the material concerning his “Twin” (Twin-Spirit). From M49 II Recto (one of the texts from the catalogue published by Dr. Mary Boyce) we learn that Mani received certain things from the “Twin”. These things were given to Mani before he started to preach. The “Twin” started instructing Mani well before his public appearance, even before Mani shared his religious thoughts with his father and other relations. The “Twin” gave Mani much information which formed the basis of Mani’s teachings. These were totally religious. Mani stated that he received “things of the gods” (that is, revelation of Divine things), wisdom and “knowledge of the gathering of the souls” (CMC).

The “knowledge of the gathering of the souls” can be interpreted as knowledge of the purification and the salvation of the souls of all trapped Light beings. We learn that the “Twin” bestowed “wisdom” upon Mani which enabled him to enlighten other trapped Light beings. The Twin-Spirit also taught Mani how to “gather the souls” of his disciples and to use the knowledge he had received to preach to the world of his day and to shed

light on salvation. Hence the “Twin” revealed the religious and Divine knowledge to Mani. Mani was thus qualified to do his future work as a messenger of God.

Again in M49 II Recto, Mani alludes to the activities of the “Twin” in the present tense when he says, “he accompanies me; he keeps and protects me; by means of his strength I fight the evil powers; with his help I teach and save mankind.” Here we see a man who knows and believes that he is being guided and inspired by a Divine being, contrary to Henning’s (1979) implication that Mani was someone with a split mind. Rather, we see Mani as a man who had complete faith and certainty that the “Twin” would always accompany, guide and assist him through out his mission of the salvation of mankind. He knew that his mission started at home as foretold by the “Twin” (his father and the elders of the family were the first ones to accept his new doctrine). Mani explicitly says that his doctrine consists of the Twin-Spirit’s teaching.

Chapter VII of the Kephalaia talks about the “five Fathers” :

The first Father is the Father of Greatness. He is above all emanations. From him all other “Fathers” descend. The second emanation of the Fourth “Father” is the Twin-Spirit.

Ort says that the description of this Twin-Spirit fully corresponds with the data of the Middle Persian text M49 II (Ort, 1967).

The Twin-Spirit is also described in the Psalms of the Bema and in other texts. In Bema – Psalm CCXXVI – is seen that the Twin-Spirit’s involvement with Mani continued even in the hours of Mani’s suffering and death. Hence, the Twin-Spirit was with Mani before the start of his public work till the end of Mani’s mission and life. Thus,

the Twin-Spirit fully accomplished his work with Mani. The Bema psalm, in depicting the last hour of Mani's death, records Mani as saying: ["I was gazing at my Twin-Spirit with my eyes of light, beholding my glorious Father, Him who waits for me ever, opening before me the gate into the Light. I spread out my hands, praying unto him; I bent my knees, worshipping him also, that I might divest myself of the image of the flesh and put off the venture of manhood".]

From the text we see a calm Mani who was in full control of himself, even in death, and who was secure in the knowledge and understanding that the Father would take care of him, that his work on earth was finished and that he was about to return to the Father. In fact, there was the implication that Mani was looking forward to the Father's delivery with joy and confidence. If he had simply made things up to con people with falsehood, as some of his opponents had claimed, he would have been terrified at his last hour when he knew he would be executed. However, Mani was consistent with what he preached. He was ready to face his executioner. He was ready to face death. This could only be so because he sincerely believed in what he was doing and sincerely believed he had been truthful. He believed he was doing his Father's work. He believed the Father was waiting to deliver him into His kingdom of Light. Sincere belief would also explain his behaviour in the face of death. If Mani's Twin-Spirit was a part of himself, whether we say Mani wrote all his canon or the Twin-Spirit dictated it to him or inspired him, it really means the same being wrote the canon.

viii What we do know however, is that according to the CMC, this Sassanian syzygos, his "Twin", then instructs him and he acquires an immense amount of knowledge which he is to later disseminate and

which he does in fact disseminate. The “Twin” also reveals to Mani that he will act as a personal shield against the dangers of evil as he engages in the battle against evil on this level, while the Light protects him in general. We are to assume that the consciousness of Mani left the body and joined his “Twin” – his twin self – at the time of his torture and execution. This, too, is precedented in Gnostic literature. In the codices of the Nag Hammadi Library it is written that the Christ spirit of Jesus had already left the physical body and looked down, laughing, as the evil-created sack, the physical body, was tortured and crucified “by the sons of Satan” (The Nag Hammadi Library, 1978).

- ix The origin of True Man was revealed to Mani. How such a Divine Soul came to be trapped in the flesh which appears inimical to his Divine Nature was also explained.
- x It reports Mani’s visions of spiritual worlds, but the personal interpretations of such experiences are not revealed.
- xi The CMC reveals that not only was Mani to extricate himself from worldly life but also that he was to make certain revelations to the world.
- xii As he asked and received spiritual guidance, he also asked for the power to heal the body and to forgive sin (which in a spiritual sense is the power to heal the soul affected by sin). At the same time he asked for wisdom and bodily health to allow him to perform the work that was asked of him. All this is believable.
- xiii It was Balsames, the Greatest angel of Light, which instructed him on writing his revelations. We can readily accept this notion when we remember the claim that the Holy Spirit instructed the evangelists, the

claim that Enosh was similarly instructed to write his apocalypse and so forth.

- xiv Similar to John on the Isle of Patmos, Mani is said to have seen a vision of the Great Throne and the Light in the clouds as the Archangel Michael showed him the two realms of existence – the higher one for the pious and the lower for the impious. This notion is quite acceptable as the concept of Heaven and Hell existed in literature which was far more ancient than this manuscript.
- xv Mani experienced travel through various dimensions. Scientifically, the existence of multiple universes, multiple dimensions, is the most plausible theoretical explanation (to us) for many of the bizarre phenomena met in quantum mechanics (Wolf, 1990). This makes it plausible that Mani was in contact with consciousness in some other dimensions.
- xvi In a quotation from Mani (CMC), he confirms two very important things:
 - a) He was granted the power of healing (laying on of hands). This is an important confirmation because it reveals at least that he, like Jesus, did have the Divine power to heal.
 - b) He refers TWICE to two ontologically different races in human bodies even though they are indirect references.

He referred to the “Children of Peace”, and stated that he brought hope to the “immortal race”. Why would he distinguish an immortal race from a mortal one if there were not two distinct races? It appears that the “Children of Peace” were of the immortal race which he addressed. They were the ones to be liberated. They are the Children, the Sons of God.

He referred to the followers of the Law. This can be taken to mean no other than the children of the god of the Old Testament in which the Law is contained. From a sectarian standpoint, this would apply to those who follow the “rule of law” sentiments.

xvii Later in the Codex instruction on cleansing is given. I mention this because much is made, in a derogatory manner, of the practice of the Manichaeans to cleanse their food, drink and bodies. The tendency of Mani’s sect to combine pureness of the body and purification of the soul can be seen in the adherents of the sect, who used ascetic and cleansing means in order to achieve a state of pureness.

However, if one reads this codex, it is obvious that Mani was referring to the spiritual cleansing that is necessary to avoid the influences of Darkness ever-present in this world which act to contain, restrain and trap the Light beings in “Darkness” and ignorance. It is a cleansing of thought, word and deed. These things are taught symbolically as the story of the Three Seals: of the Mouth, of the Hand and of the Bosom, in the various manuscripts. In other words, the story was to teach followers to speak no evil, to abstain from wrong food and drink; to beware of unclean elements and evil deeds done by hand; and, thirdly, the seal of the Bosom represented the dangers of impurity of the sexual-emotional and mental kind, as well as the impurity of heart, intention, and thought. We can assume that Mani based these tenets on some beliefs known to be beneficial to the material and spiritual components of adherents, as other Gnostics also claimed.

One might say that Mani did have Iranian material to draw on but the boldness and originality of Mani’s work could also suggest that he was in spiritual contact with a Divine source that gave out aspects of the truth found in other works.

He displayed a boldness and originality of conception which entitled him to be regarded as a genius of the first order. To represent his system as a mere patchwork of older beliefs is therefore a total perversion of the facts (Brvan, 1951).

MANICHAISM: AN OVERVIEW

The Manichaeian believers were divided into the “Elect” (monks) and the “Hearers” (seculars). Out of the Elect they formed their own priesthood. The Elect alone were the true Manichaeians, and their number was small. Men as well as women could enter the ranks of the Elect. All Manichaeians were vegetarians and the Elect were to abstain from wine, sex, marriage, and from owning property. They were concerned with the religious aspect of the community. The Hearer was only an adherent. All Hearers were servers to the Elect and food was prepared only by the Hearers.

The Hearers were not expected to adhere to the strict discipline of the Elect. They were allowed to marry and possess property. However, all Manichaeians were encouraged to fast once a week, on Sunday. The Elect received Mani’s teaching directly, whilst the servers did not have direct access – they were given only those aspects of Mani’s teaching deemed appropriate.

Manichaeism was an eclectic doctrine with close affinities to Gnosticism. It was not simply a philosophical distortion of sorts or a heretical aberration. One needs to consider why it did not simply vanish forever once it was dealt with by its enemies.

According to the Kephalaia, chapter LVII, as the end time draws closer, so too will there be a continual reduction of the amount of Light in

the world, as more of the trapped Divine Light is released and saved. As evil comes to predominate in the cosmos, life becomes worse, and the last generations will be a time of increasing deformity, corruption and all forms of evil.

Existentialism as it applies to Gnostic principle implies the existence of consciousness beyond the confines of this material universe. If this is accepted, it would solve the conundrum of those who suspect the universe has a limited life span, and ease the anxiety of those who wonder if consciousness continues outside of the physical. From a religio-philosophical perspective, this would have to be considered, otherwise why would God want to destroy the universe and annihilate us all after going to all the trouble of creating it and us?

It is this belief in extra-mondial existentialism that allows Gnostics to accept all the suffering and pain in this world for they know it is really a temporary measure. They believe that once they are free from Darkness, they will have a True Divine existence. Hence, Gnostic existentialism is the greatest and most progressive of all the aspects of this Kierkegaardian concept. This is the NOUS which allowed Mani to look forward to the Father as he was threatened with persecution and death.

If viewed narrowly as a philosophical system from the literature that remains about it, Manichaeism appears to be full of assertions and riddled with contradictions and illogicalities in a primitive literalism. This literalism made Manichaeism a static religion to many who read the incomplete and/or corrupted manuscripts. However, Manichaeism based on an understood cosmic mosaic was and is a vibrant, evangelising philosophy easily crossing cultural boundaries, and linking, in some beings, with a fundamental

intuitive knowledge which often manifests previously unrecognised precognitive, spiritual nuances.

There are various opinions regarding the essential character of Mani's religion. Kessler ardently claims that the essence of Manichaeism – the religion of Mani – is an independent and new religion, a world-wide religion of salvation equivalent to Parsism and Christianity (Kessler, 1889). This is indeed no exaggeration, for Mani's religion did take its place in the history of religions.

Manichaeism is often seen as an Iranian form of Gnosticism, and some like Burkitt see it as a Christian Gnostic sect (Burkitt, 1925). Yet, Widengren typifies this religion of cyclic revelation with its ancient Indo-Iranian essence as the real background of the doctrine of Mani (Widengren, 1945). His conclusion is that there are many Mesopotamian elements in Manichaeism and that Mani has given an Iranian interpretation of a Mesopotamian myth (Widengren, 1946). This is what he says Mani stood for: “a messenger of God who preached a Divine revelation” (Widengren, 1965). Puech describes Mani's religion as being a missionary religion, a universal religion and a religion of the books (Puech, 1949).

Most, if not all researchers on Manichaeism would agree that the doctrine professed by Mani, and the path to salvation that he revealed, constitute a form of gnosis. Manichaeism was not only a gnosis in the narrow sense, it was primarily “a universal Gnostic religion” – the only great universal religion to arise from the Near Eastern Gnostic tradition (Gnoli, 1986). In fact, Manichaeism was a typical Gnostic world religion which maintained a strict dualism between Matter and Spirit – a dualism that was both metaphysical and ethical. By dualism I mean the thought which sees all reality for man as being a conflict between opposing principles of ‘Light’

and ‘Darkness’, Spirit and Matter. In the West, Manichaeism was traditionally regarded as a Christian heresy, but now with the new discoveries made and after much intensive scholarship, Mani’s own background can be placed in the heterodox Jewish-Christian and Gnostic currents of the Syriac orient (Gardner, 1993).

Manichaeism was fundamentally a religion with a doctrine depicting Divine loss, suffering and redemption, and which stated that all beings, including the heavenly bodies, were products of the history of the mixture and separation of the two Natures of Divine Light and material Darkness (Allberry, 1938; Kephalaia, 1955). Incidentally, Manichaeism emphasizes suffering and the vulnerability of the good more than any other religion.

At the root of Manichaean dualism is a powerful analysis of the human condition which appears to be pessimistic and common to all forms of gnosis (This pessimism pertains to the final destruction as far as the evil aspect is concerned). The belief in the eschatological return of Jesus was intrinsic to Manichaeism (Gardner, 1993). Mani’s religion was an attempt to explain the existence of evil in the world. If evil existed from the very beginning (that is, from the time before the creation of man), then it was a self-originating principle and not the outcome of man’s proclivity to sin. This would lend support to those who see “sin” as an aggressive evil force and not merely the result of human frailty.

The solution to the Problem of Evil, according to Mani, presented a serious challenge to the Church, because acceptance of it would mean contradicting the Christian’s faith which sees God as omnipotent and the source of all good (without understanding the experimental components of God’s manifestations). Such issues gave rise to various polemic writings against the Manichaeans. Most, if not all, polemicists, like Serapion of

Thmuis, wrote a treatise against Manichaeism without any first-hand knowledge of Manichaean writing. Serapion attacked the Manichaean tenets which he had made up for refutation by inference from the general premises of dualism (Casey, 1931). Christianity sought to appeal to Freewill as the solution to evil.

It seems that Manichaeans did not accept any tradition without first discerning what was true and what was false about it and whether distortions by ignorant or insincere disciples had occurred. Only Mani's authority was worthy of trust and it was based on reason and given to him through Divine revelation. Mani did not want his words to be misconstrued after his death. Hence, he did his best to provide his followers with a complete canon of books. He wrote many books of scriptures and, being a practising artist, he was inspired to produce elaborate paintings to accompany them. However, it appears that with the passing of time, his opponents, such as the Roman emperors, Persian rulers and Christian apologists, have successfully destroyed and distorted many of his writings. Ironically, their actions helped save Manichaeism from extinction by writing polemically against them.

Another irony is that we learn more about Mani and Manichaeism from their opponents than from the Manichaeans themselves. Certainly, so-called heresies can arise from different interpretations of Mani's words and from his work which may have been translated from a translation by some non-Manichaean authors. There is no guarantee that the interpretation is accurate, or that it represents Mani's original words. In all probability, there will be misinterpretation. Besides, over a long period of time, the original principles of doctrines often become confused and corrupted. This has happened to Mani's work. According to Four Books Against The Manichees, I, 5; Titus of Bostra says that "the Manichees made every effort

to conceal from outsiders the writing of their founder, apparently in obedience to his expressed orders.” (Titus, n.d.). The details are given in the Fihrist.

In this respect Titus is correct because all true Gnostics were conscious of the need to guard their teachings from outsiders, knowing that their opponents would deliberately distort them to serve their own purposes. People like W.H.C. Frend, who noted that “the Manichees of Augustine’s time were concerned with precisely the same problems as the Gnostics of two hundred years previously, and they answered in precisely the same way” would, in fact, not be surprised if the former were aware of the fundamental tenet of Gnosticism.

When Mani mentioned his forerunners – Zoroaster, Buddha, and Jesus – what he probably meant was that, he too was inspired by God. Mani had always insisted that the God of Light continued to send His messengers to the world to help the trapped beings of Light, and he saw himself as one such messenger.

Manichaeian philosophy is very similar to what Zoroaster and Jesus taught, because their basis was the one truth. Therefore, if the information of these beings was given by the same sender, the same Source, it is not surprising that the terms used, or the ideas and information, should be so similar. I am reminded of a similar case in which W. Brugh Joy, M.D., was accused of drawing his studies from other sources because of the similarity of his findings to others on the same subject. His reply to this was that he made no apology to such a claim as he was unaware that others before him had written exactly what he had. He attributed such a phenomenon to the information having come from the same energy source (Joy, 1979).

One can also argue that there is only a limited number of forms in which the notions of all times and places can be expressed, and Mani was confronted with this problem of limited forms of expression so that his choice tended to overlap with those of other religions with a related point of crystallization. It is not uncommon for religious leaders to draw from the same ethical, liturgical and hierarchical sources. Parallelism of terms does not necessarily indicate plagiarism. The tenets of Gnosticism as they surfaced in various eras have been constant, unlike the various theologies developed in other religions.

In spite of some apparent Bardaisan, Zoroastrian, and Buddhist influence in Mani's cosmogony, it is unmistakable that the inner logic of Mani's teaching has an authenticity of its own that cannot be found elsewhere.

THE MANICHAEAN DOCTRINES

Like all Gnostic teaching, the Manichaean teaching is esoteric. A working knowledge of the doctrines is needed in order to be able to assess for ourselves whether there is merit in them or whether they are rhetorical, illogical nonsense and untruths as Mani's enemies try to convince us. We need to be familiar with these in order to assess the attempted refutations and evaluate the arguments put forward by Mani and Manichaeism in relation to the Problem of Evil and the question of suffering.

In any discussion on religion and philosophy we must bear in mind the fact that there is no definitive proof about any of these subjects on this level. However, people ought to attend as carefully as time and circumstances permit to what they believe to be relevant to their beliefs, for

example, to philosophical argument, historical considerations, textual scholarship and so on. Then people may make up their minds as they see fit.

This brings us to the point of what Mani or any other being has said. They have the right to preach what they think is the truth and people have the right to accept what they want or to reject what they do not want. One may reject a theory (after all, all philosophical and religious speculations are theories) at one time and feel inclined to accept it on another occasion. The problems of religion arise when institutions form dogmas and force their members to believe with the fear of some form of punishment both in this life and the next. This is a very important issue affecting both Manichaeism and traditional Christianity. There is the promise of a heavenly state (the beatific vision and the ‘communion of the saints’ in traditional Catholic terminology). But that promise carries with it a truly terrible thought: ‘Perhaps I, and those I love, might miss out’. There is this terrible thought of missing out on something infinitely better. It is almost inevitable that this fear will result in a kind of tyranny in which those who accept most of the religion feel pressured into accepting the rest. This holds for Augustine’s predestinarianism and for Manichaeism, for, irrational though it seems, the fear of ‘damnation’ has a grip even over those who believe they can do nothing about it.

Mani’s cosmogony, with its extremely strong metaphysical dualism with the co-eternity of two diametrically opposed principles, can be characterized as a radical dualism (Bianchi, 1985). The fundamental concepts of Mani’s doctrine are that of a metaphysical, Gnostic dualism of Light and Darkness, Good and Evil, Spirit and Matter and the teaching of the Three Ages. These give keys to answers as to where evil originates, why it exists and how trapped beings can be liberated from evil. There are two

essential aspects in Manichaeism. Firstly, the individuals who have the gnosis recognise and understand that there are two opposed principles of Light and Darkness, Good and Evil in the universe. These individuals see themselves as parts of the Light (particles of Light) which have been trapped in Matter (Darkness). Secondly, the Manichaean doctrines reveal the history behind this entrapment of particles of Light in Matter. According to the doctrine as it survives today, there are two opposing principles of Good (Light, spirit) and Evil (Darkness, physical matter). These two principles purportedly existed from the very beginning of this world (universe) but not from the beginning of creation. The two opposing principles became mixed in this world through the act of the evil principle (matter or Darkness). Salvation lies in the liberation of Goodness (Spirit or Light) from matter, and its ultimate return to its original state of separation. The two principles of Light and Darkness, though depicted as co-existing eternally, are ontologically different (Asmussen, 1965). [This is a Gnostic distortion, neither of the principles (Light and Darkness) have eternal existence and they are not co-existent or dependent upon one another. I shall explain this in the conclusion and epilogue.] The ontological difference between the two principles is the difference in the original natural make-up of the two principles – their individual reality. Ontologically, the Principle of Light consists of all goodness which includes love, beauty and purity while the Principle of Darkness is deprived of all goodness. Its nature is one of evilness which includes jealousy, dishonesty, selfishness, cruelty and hatred.

[Good and Evil are called the two eternal principles. This is an error repeated ad nauseam (unless evil is only ‘Evil’ in its wrong place). It cannot be so, if one examines the eschatological doctrine which states

that evil will be totally eliminated. To be eternal, there has to be no beginning and no end. But Mani and many other Divine Messengers did prophesize the end for evil. Hence, they knew evil was not an eternal essence. They knew it was a temporary aberration. As such, it would appear that evil is only ‘Evil’ in its wrong place. If it was not an error of the writers and/or translators, it would be nonsensical to insist that Mani said there were two eternal principles and then prescribe an end to evil. If something is eternal, it cannot be destroyed. Further, the principle of Light also has a beginning point. Therefore, it too, is not eternal.]

Mani set out his teaching in an elaborate mythology with its mythic events divided into three ages (Kephalaia, 1955) or three times. These are also known as the three moments – the beginning, the middle and the end (Psalm-Book).

The concept of the “three ages” relates to the whole Manichaean myth and to the whole of existence, beginning from the pre-cosmic state to the eternal end state (Psalm-Book). It begins with the truth about the existence of the two principles.

The beginning or “Golden Age” is the first period in which the two opposed principles were separated but came into conflict and became mixed. [This is yet another corruption of the Gnostic message. As I will explain in more detail later, the Evil Principle came AFTER the Good Principle, and literally out of the Good Principle through an innocent “error” attributed to the Good Principle that was due to naïveté.] The middle, or mixed period, the “Present Age”, is the second period in which the two principles are mixed and the Divine nature is imprisoned or trapped in the world. It is also

the time in which the powers of Light and Darkness battle for ultimate control of the cosmos. [Again, corruption has occurred in the message. The Light is battling with Darkness, not for control of the cosmos, which was created by Darkness. The battle is about freeing Light particles from the bondage of Darkness, and Darkness fights to prevent the release of any of Its prisoners.] The last age, or the end, is the time in which the separation of that which had become mixed, and between the followers of Good and Evil, occurs (Flügel, 1862). This will be the time in which ‘particles of Light’ will have been freed from Darkness and the Light will remain forever uncontrolled by the Darkness.

In the Coptic Psalm-Book we read:

When the Holy Spirit came he revealed to us the way of Truth and taught us that there are two Natures, that of Light and that of Darkness, separate one from the other from the beginning (Psalm-Book 9).

Clearly, the above passage represents the basic concepts of the Manichaeic system (Polotsky, 1935). In the Manichaeic cosmology neither of the two natures derived from the other and neither exists prior to the other. Such teaching about the two principles can be found in the Psalm-Book of Mani, in the Homilies, and in the Coptic Kephalaia. These principles are introduced as substances and represented by various symbols (for example, the image of the good and bad tree). [This is yet another error of the Gnostic truth. Perhaps it was not time to reveal the whole truth on the beginning of Evil. It could have been misrepresented due to innocent mistakes or corruption by others of the message.]

This concept alludes to the existence of other “things” outside the physical which we perceive to be the time-space of our heaven and earth. In other words, one needs to be open to the concept of multiple dimensions and multiple worlds of which the one we are in is only one of many. Should we not be fascinated with the brilliance of Gnostic thoughts and concepts of so long ago which some of our highly skilled scientists and quantum physicists are only now, in this generation, approaching, accepting, appreciating? These far-reaching concepts contradict the postulates of other scientists such as Paul Davies who speculate that the physical universe is its own progenitor and nothing else is needed outside of it (Davies, 1992).

The account according to Jonas (1963) says that the two realms of Light and Darkness are co-eternal as regards the past: they have no origin but are themselves the origins, though it is sometimes said that Satan, as the personal embodiment of Darkness, was procreated out of its pre-existing elements (Anathema XI of Milan, c. 600 A.D.).

The following facts on Manichaeism are drawn mainly from the Kephalaia, the Psalm-Book of Mani, the Liber Scholiorum of Bishop Theodore bar konai, the Fihrist or “Catalogue of the Sciences” of an-Nadim, and the compilation by Hans Jonas.

The two principles in Mani’s cosmogony are associated with certain attributes. The Good Principle (the “King of Light”, the “Father of Greatness”) is assigned the attributes of Light and life. In the kingdom of Light there exist gods and beings of Light, such as angels and other Divine forms. These are the emanations of the Father or his “callings”. There is also the pre-existent form of the “Mother of Life” represented by the “Great Spirit”. The Divine forms which surround the Father are distributed north, south, east and west (Kephalaia, 1955) in the realm of Light. Thus, in the

kingdom of Light dwells the Eternal God (the “King of Light”) with His Light, His Power, and His Wisdom in His five dwellings of sense, reason, thought, imagination and intention. This realm or kingdom of Light is said to be found above the kingdom of Darkness (Psalm-Book). The Father of Light (the king of Light, God) who is the origin and source of love is the ruler in the kingdom of Light (Kephalaia, 1955).

The Principle of Evil (the “King of Darkness”) is assigned the attributes of darkness and death, the nature of which is determined by the “thought of death”. The “King of Darkness” (the Devil) resides in the kingdom of Darkness with its inhabitants of Darkness who are evil and stupid and who are forever quarrelling and fighting one another. These include the five types of creatures and their minor rulers.

In contrast to the kingdom of Light with its light, beauty, and tranquillity, the kingdom of Darkness is a land of Death with its murky, foul, and dense environment. It is found below the kingdom of Light. The kingdom of Darkness consists of five worlds and each of these corresponds by analogy to the five members of the Father of Light: the worlds of smoke, fire, wind, water and obscurity (Kephalaia, 1955). These five worlds of Darkness are differentiated into five ranks. There are five respective rulers in the kingdom of Darkness and these rule over the various types of creatures of that realm; their faces correspond respectively to each of five sorts of creatures. The King of Darkness, the Devil, who emerges from the Mother of all Evil, is personified dark matter and is ultimately the manifestation of the totality of the powers of Darkness. Hence, he is the ultimate ruler of the kingdom of Darkness. These two principles are ontologically distinct, and exist separately but in close proximity to each other.

The Primal condition of the Former Time or Golden Age is characterised by the separation of Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, and each exists independently of the other. The Second Age, or the Middle or Present Time, began when Darkness first became aware of Light; this inflamed the blind grasping desire which is its very essence, and evil sought to possess the good for itself and attacked the realm of Light (Gardner, 1993):

Hence, the passion and envy of Hyle, which is inherent to its being, causes its son to rise up against the kingdom of Light (Kephalaia, 1955).

The attack by Darkness brought an end to the separate existence of the two natures. It brought about the mixing of Light and Darkness (the two creations or essences became mixed) which forms the basis of the whole cosmological and soteriological system. This co-existence of the two natures was also the beginning of “real” time in which events and actions occur.

The history of the Second Age is the history of mixture and the process of redemption as the Divine attempts to purify and gather that part of itself which was lost, whilst Darkness attempts to retain and bind to itself that which it has captured.

Thus, Evil commenced when the denizens of the Dark began to invade the realm of Light. The realm of Light had no natural defences, so the Lord of Greatness evoked the Mother of All who evoked the Primal Man to ward off the attack. It must be mentioned that these beings of Light were evoked by each other, not generated by any sexual union.

Throughout the history of the war between Light and Darkness, the Father of Greatness remained outside in eternity. [This could have been to ensure that the pure realm of the Father would not be contaminated.] All the emanated gods that the Father had sent out to do battle in the realm of the opponents were barred from their own realm and continue to be for the time being. Therefore, a New Aeon (a new paradise with no evil and one which is bound now forever with the Kingdom of Light) consubstantial with the eternal paradise of the Father, was built for the gods for the time of the mixture. Hence, in this New Aeon the gods rest and the ascended Light awaits its final return to the Father of Light. The Manichaean eschatology specifies the salvation of the trapped individuals through gnosis and by right-living as they respond to the Messengers of Light.

Again at this point it seems appropriate to remind ourselves of the inadequacy of words and the distortion that occurs when spiritual concepts are anthropomorphized. The use of gender is obviously also inappropriate, but we have no better way of expressing these thoughts. One ought to concede that the literal translation of these concepts is not as important as their effect in awakening a reader. This is a point at which critics of Gnosticism erred. In their attempt to profane these Gnostic truths, they attacked the absurdity of literal (and usually distorted) renditions, when such literalism was never meant to be accepted as absolutism by the Gnostics at all. This ploy by the critics may have arisen from misunderstanding of the renditions, but the fact that it occurred so often and the fact that these same critics gave themselves immense leeway to interpret the scriptures on which they relied for their Truth tends to suggest quite strongly that this ploy to make the Gnostic writings nonsensical was very much on purpose. It also points to a common double standard whereby people tend to take others

literally (for example: nirvana must mean extinction to the Buddhists) but defend their positions by giving symbolic interpretations of difficult doctrines.

The Primal Man (the primary manifested consciousness to fight the battle against evil) set out to war clothed in the Five Bright Elements: Light, Wind, Fire and Water, and a fifth called variously the Breeze, Air, Ether or Hyle. The Primal Man was defeated in the battle and was left unconscious on the field, and the Five Bright Elements were swallowed (trapped, engulfed) by the princes of Darkness, the Archons. As is stated in the Firhist:

The Primal Man, on his recovery, appealed to God for further assistance. God then evoked more beings of Light, the Friend of the Luminaries, the Great Ban and the Living Spirit (Firhist, 1970).

These beings, by methods never clearly explained in this version, succeeded in defeating and capturing the Archons of Darkness who had by then already digested (incorporated into their systems) the Five Pure Elements. A wall had to be built to prevent the Darkness spreading further, then these mixed elements had to be localised. To do so, the Universe was created (the universe is something physical in the way physical things appear to us in this world, yet it is not material), held in place by five spirits evoked by the Living Spirit, of which Atlas is the most familiar.

Within this universe the Archons were placed. From dismembered parts of the Archons (from aspects of their nature), the sky and the earth were made, so that more Light could be distilled in dew and rain (the concept here is to show that particles of Light were trapped in matter in all

its various states and forms) and, finally, to rescue what remained, God staged a third evocation. This time He called into being the Messenger (The Word), the prototype of the later Messengers that would bring God's word to men. The Messenger appeared in a superlatively attractive form before each of the Archons.

In a moment of intense desire (to be like the Divine Messenger) they began to give out (expose and show) the rest of the Light within them (just as amongst the Nicolaite Gnostics the Great Mother Barbelo had rescued sparks of Divine power from the wicked Archons of Gnostic lore). With this giving out of Light, sin (the polluted energy of the Darkness) was also given out, which was transformed into the vegetable world. However, the King of Darkness was unrepentant. He begat, from his infernal spouse, a fresh being, made in the image of the Messenger, in which he hid most of the remaining Light. This being was Adam. A little later Eve was similarly born, but she contained less Light.

Unlike the powers of Light who created beings by evocation (that is, the manifestation of the beings by an act of Divine Will which does not involve sexual union), the powers of Darkness created beings by generation (by sexual union of zygotes). Creation by evocation is said to be superior to creation by generation because it is an expression of Divine, limitless power.

As Adam lay inert on the ground, God sent one of His heavenly beings, Jesus (The Divine Avatar of Christ energy, not the physical Jesus) to tell him what he was and what Light was, and to make him taste of the Tree of Knowledge. Adam realized the truth and cursed his creation (Darkness).

Eve yielded to the lust (sexual desire) of the Archons and bore them Cain and Abel. Lust stands for eros, famously contrasted with agape. Agape is love for the sake of another as well as oneself (Couliano, 1992). Adam

who had at first abstained from intercourse with Eve had then yielded to the temptation and Seth was begotten; and so the human race continued, with particles of Light still imprisoned in it (Ruciman, 1955). As is contained in The Medieval Manichee (Ruciman, 1955):

[The threatened attack of the Darkness stirs the realm of Light out of its repose and forces something that would not otherwise have occurred to it, namely ‘creations’. The Godhead, to meet the aggressor, had to produce a special ‘creation’ representing his own self and from that, in response to the ensuing fate of this Divine hypostasis, the further multiplication of Divine figures out of the supreme Source comes about (herein we have an explanation of the polytheistic manifestations of the One)].

Thus the first creation (for clarity, here should be added ‘to confront and combat the invading evil’) started when:

The Father of Greatness called forth the Mother of Life, and the Mother of Life called forth the Primal Man, and the Primal Man called forth his five Sons (Kephalaia, 1955), like a man who girds on his armour for battle. The Father charged him with the struggle against the Darkness and the Primal Man armed himself with the five kinds. These are the five gods: the Light, the breeze, the wind, the water and the fire (these are differing aspects of the physical world which one could identify as manifesting superior consciousness and which were of benefit to man).

According to the Kephalaia, the Primal Man was defeated by the Arch-devil who took his five kinds, namely the smoke, the consuming fire, the darkness, the scorching wind, and the fog to confront the Primal Man (these were elements of disservice that could cause disadvantage).

Thereupon the Primal Man gave himself and his five Sons (powers) as food to the five Sons of Darkness as a man who has an enemy mixes a deadly poison in a cake and gives it to him. The Arch-devil devoured part of this Light (namely, his five sons) and at the same time surrounded himself with his kinds and elements. As the Sons of Darkness had devoured them, the five luminous gods were deprived of understanding, and through the poison of the Sons of Darkness they became like a man who has been bitten by a mad dog or a serpent. Consequently, the five parts of Light became mixed with the five parts of Darkness (Liber Scholiorum, and Firhist).

The Primal Man and his soul (made up of the Primal Man's five Sons) lost consciousness and forgot their Divine origin. But before the Living Spirit descended into the depths, he promised the Primal Man that salvation would be imminent when he heard the call which he would send to him (Kephalaia, 1955).

Thus, by the fighting and sacrifice of the Primal Man, the attack from the kingdom of Darkness was diverted from the kingdom of Light. The Mother of Life, who is the beginning of all the emanations from the Father of Greatness and appears as the first "calling" (Kephalaia, 1955), out of her pre-existent form was the one who prepares the Primal Man for war with the Darkness.

The second creation started when:

[The Primal Man regained consciousness and reacted with the answer to the call by addressing seven prayers to the Father of Greatness. The Father heard his prayers and called forth as the second creation the Friend of Lights, and the Friend of Lights called forth the Great Architect, and the Great Architect called forth the Living Spirit. And the Living Spirit called forth his five Sons (one from each of the five spiritual natures of God)] (Kephalaia, 1955).

The Call and Answer as hypostasised Divine beings, strove upwards into the kingdom of Light to the Living Spirit and they are included among the sons of the Primal Man and the Living Spirit (Kephalaia, 1955).

The Sons of the Primal Man and the Living Spirit, including the Call and the Answer as their brothers, were united in a group of twelve, the twelve hours of Light (Kephalaia, 1955). With the issuing of the call and the answer of the Primal Man, the Primal Man was released from Darkness, but his five Sons who comprised his soul remained behind in the Darkness.

The soul represents the totality of all the elements of Light corrupted by the Darkness, and the basic concept of a pan-psychic teaching amongst the Gnostic sphere even before Mani's teaching. Here we see the central role of the Living Spirit in the salvation of the soul left behind in the world of Darkness, and the need for purification and liberation of the Light. The liberation process can be obstructed by people engaging in activities such as sexual procreation, the consumption of meat and other 'unclean' actions. Hence, salvation demands amongst other things, knowledge of the

undesirable situation they are in by being aware of how it happened and how to prepare themselves for liberation from their imprisonment in matter.

The Third Creation:

Then arose in prayer the Mother of Life, the Primal Man, and the Living Spirit, and besought the Father of Greatness and the Father of Greatness heard them and called forth as the third creation the Messenger. The Messenger called the Twelve Virgins [personified virtues and Divine properties] and with them set upon the engine of twelve buckets.

The Messenger revealed his form to the male and the female, and became visible to all the Archons, the children of Darkness, the male and the female. And at the sight of the Messenger, who was beautiful in his forms, all the Archons became excited with lust for him, the male ones for his female appearance. And in their concupiscence they began to release the Light of the Five Luminous Gods which they had devoured (Liber Scholiorum). [This release exposed their true nature and the particles of Light which they had imprisoned and need to be liberated.]

According to Jonas (1963), the escaping Light was received by the angels of Light, purified, and loaded onto the “ships” to be transported to its native realm of Light. But, together with the Light and in the same quantity, Dark substance (“sin”) also escaped from the Archons and, mingled with the Light, endeavoured also to enter the ships of the Messenger. Realising this, the Messenger concealed his form again and as far as possible separated the released mixture. While the purer parts rose upward, the contaminated parts, that is, those too closely combined with the “sin”, fell down upon the earth,

and there this mixed substance formed the vegetable world. Thus, all plants and all the vegetable kingdom, including the trees, are creatures of the Darkness, not of God, and in these and other similar forms of the Godhead is trapped.

Clearly, this latter part is both distortion and exaggeration. It is used to demonstrate the fact that the manifestations in which certain consciousness reside are created from the polluted (evil) energy. The statement that the Godhead is trapped cannot be taken literally. The Godhead cannot be trapped. Rather, manifestations created by the Godhead, that is, its created particles of Light, are trapped.

The King of Darkness, in his last attempt to keep his spoil by binding it in the form most adequate to him, produced Adam and Eve in the image of the glorious form, and poured into them all the Light left at his disposal. The aim of Darkness was the non-separation of Light from Darkness (this is the point at which Genesis of the Old Testament begins. It is a long way from the beginning of the problems of this dimension). Since then, the struggle between Light and Darkness has concentrated upon man, who has become the main prize and, at the same time, the main battlefield of the two contending parties (Jonas, 1963).

The Future Time or the Final Moment in the Manichaeian cosmogony is the eschatological future. This Future Age represents the time when the particles of Light will be almost completely freed from their imprisonment in matter. There is an individual and a collective eschatology.

In individual eschatology, redemption and damnation are the possible fates of the human soul after death. This means that those souls deemed suitable to continue in the kingdom of Light by the “Judge of the Truth” (Kephalaia, 1955) – Jesus the Splendour (not the historical Jesus) – will

return to the kingdom of Light out of which the particles were “thrown”, as part of the Living Soul, into the kingdom of Hyle (Darkness/Evil).

Those souls who fail to continue in the kingdom of Light will be in a state akin to “eternal damnation”. This is referred to as the “second death” in the Coptic texts and it lasts for eternity (Kephalaia, 1955) in the kingdom of Darkness. The “second death” represents the situation in which those souls are refused return to the kingdom of Light and Life forever. The “first death” represents the condition of being trapped into the mixture (Kephalaia, 1955). This is why there is the need for the beings of Light to separate themselves from the beings of Darkness and their activities and the need for purification of the soul through right living.

However, apart from the individual human soul, which is just one part of the Living Soul which has been scattered by this mixing throughout nature, in humans, in animals, in plants, trees and fruits, and that which needs to be freed out of the mixture from the elements of Darkness, the Collective Soul too needs to be redeemed. This process of freeing the trapped Light is slow. The end of the world will take place before the complete separation occurs (Kephalaia, 1955). At the end of the world there will be a collective return of the Light which has remained in the world until that time. However, a small part of the particles of Light (that is, those souls who are damned for eternity) will remain behind in the Darkness.

The end of the world will coincide with world cataclysm and wars (Homilies). The world will finally be destroyed after the return of Jesus to the kingdom of Light. According to Mani’s Psalm-Book, the dissolution of the world will commence from the point of time when the rescue work of the Divine is finished. The liberated beings of Light will enjoy the new aeon (a paradise which is bound now for eternity with the kingdom of Light) and

they will continue to exist in their original Divine condition whilst Evil will be rendered harmless for all time with the imprisonment of the male and female elements of Darkness in the grave (Kephalaia, 1955).

There is no guarantee that Evil will not repeat its action. Therefore, a repetition of the cosmic drama could happen again in the future. Hence, there must be another solution which can safeguard the contamination by Evil in the future. This will entail the eradication of Evil by transmutation. This means that the Principle of Evil cannot be an everlasting Principle.

DUALITY is the foundation of this Manichaeic belief system, as it is in all other aspects of Gnosticism. Hence, the consideration of the concept of DUALITY and its two creations is not an exercise in mythological research. Rather, it is of profound philosophical importance with extremely significant implications for the individual and for humanity in general if the truth is really sought. It has a bearing on how one lives one's life, even if the eschatological aspects are ignored for the present.

Even though all mythology is a distortion of some aspect of basic truths, there are aspects of mythology which support Gnostic Dualism.

Duality of existence is evident in other religio-philosophical texts such as the Avesta (of about 350 A.D.) which depicts creation in abstract physical terms and speaks of the Atman being trapped in matter and needing liberation. In the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Library there are references to the two Natures, the beings of Light and the beings of Darkness. From the above, it can be seen that Manichaeism supplies the knowledge which explains the existence of a DUALITY in essences. The fundamentals of Manichaeism explain that there is a struggle between the two Natures.

Manichaeism is a Gnostic religion both in a structural-systemic and in a historic sense. The dualism in Manichaeism is not simply the Hellenistic one of spirit and matter, but of two essences. Mani preached a salvation through gnosis. He succeeded in establishing a total religion based upon his own comprehensive teaching and preaching.

One can validly simplify the underlying basis of Manichaeism by saying it held a DUALISTIC VIEW OF THE WORLD which determined all its statements on a cosmological and anthropological level.

In spite of all the delays and inconvenience which we humans perceive, but cannot comprehend, in the promise for the resolution of this conflict, Manichaeism, as well as all the other allied aspects of Gnosticism, gives the indelible message that victory for the Light is inevitable. It is this fact, and this fact alone, which allows its adherents to endure anything thrown at them, even physical death, as was seen repeatedly in the history of the Manichaeans and other Gnostic groups who were mercilessly slaughtered.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PHILOSOPHICAL, RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL CLIMATE BEFORE AND AT THE TIME OF AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

It is of paramount importance to know the philosophical, religious, and social climate before and around the time of Augustine in order to place the thoughts of the opponents of Gnostics and the Manichaeans into perspective. Leaving the question of the validity of theological disputations aside for one moment, how much impartiality would one really expect the critics of Manichaeism to show in a climate of intense, unidirectional hatred which culminated in the legal assassination of Manichaeans and others who did not agree with the State-prescribed religious views? It is a fact that such hatred was being fostered, not only by the nascent Christian Church, but also by the Roman State which it then controlled and directed against these targets.

About the end of the first century A.D., a Christian manual called the DIDACHE (The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles) gave instruction in chapters seven to fifteen on how to distinguish between true and false prophets (Puech, 1978). Although this catechismal precursor appears to have been an adaptation of Jewish teachings, which were no doubt adaptations of earlier cultures, as other aspects of their writings show, it needs to be asked:

“From where, from what or from whom did the infallibility to decide such a thing as the testing of apostles and prophets come, especially as it became a matter of life and death for the ones being tested?”

As a result of this and other action, in 143 A.D. the expulsion of Valentinus from Rome occurred, even though the bishop of Rome did not gain his predominant position as pope until c. 200 (Grun, 1982). By 180 A.D., the effort against Gnosticism was in full force as Bishop Irenaeus wrote five volumes entitled The Destruction and Overthrow of Falsely So-called Knowledge.

In an attempt to stifle Gnostic thought and religio-philosophical argument, Tertullian then declared in 190 A.D. that anyone who denied the Resurrection was a heretic. It was this dogma that the Gnostics had called the “Faith of Fools”. Hippolytus continued to attack the Gnostics and called them heretics, thereby insuring their physical deaths if they were caught, and in 230 A.D. he wrote Refutation of all Heresies supposedly to expose and refute the wicked blasphemy of the heretics.

It was about this time (240 A.D.) that Mani is said to have received his call to be an “Apostle of Light” and began his movement to which, in the years 373 to 382, Augustine of Hippo became a Manichaean “hearer”. Thus, Mani began his mission in this risky, hostile climate.

Many manuscripts were indeed destroyed after being deemed unworthy by the Christians. Incidences abound: the library at Alexandria was burned to the ground in 391 A.D. (Doane, 1971). Theodosius I committed this great barbarism, presumably acting under the misguided conception that only what he approved as “Christian thought” should be available. It is recorded that this library was the greatest collection of books of the Ancient World. As early as 382 A.D., the Church officially declared

that any opposition to its own creed in favour of others must be punished by the death penalty (Robbins, 1959). Indeed, Mani's religion became so enormously successful to the extent that during the period 375 to 395 A.D., again under the rule of Emperor Theodosius I, that being a Manichaeon carried the death penalty (Churton, 1987).

Conventional histories presented a picture of early Christians as peaceable souls, unjustly persecuted. This picture could only have arisen because historical writing was monopolized by the Church for many centuries, and there was no compunction about changing or falsifying records.

It is also reported that Jerome destroyed all the references he used to write the **Latin Vulgate** and that Bishop Theodore of Cyrrhus destroyed two hundred different gospels in 450 A.D. and left the four we have now (Russell, 1964). Eupanius, a historian and guardian of the Eleusinian mysteries, is quoted as saying that the Roman Empire was being overwhelmed by a "fabulous and formless Darkness (the pseudo-Christian philosophy) masking the loveliness of the world" (Pepper & Wilcock, 1977). In the Church's view, every opinion except its own was heretical and devilish, likely to raise doubts in the minds of the believers. Therefore, 'pagan' intellectuals and teachers were persecuted and schools were closed. After many years of vandalism and destruction, St. John Chrysostom proudly boasted, "Every trace of the old philosophy and literature of the ancient world has vanished from the face of the earth" (Doane, 1971). It is no wonder that many have concluded that the Darkness which fell and formed the shameful Dark Ages was all the work of the anti-Gnostic, Christian Church.

An investigation into the first four centuries of Christianity shows there is clearly a long process of critical adaptation, whereby ideas from “pagan philosophy” were selectively employed in commentaries on Genesis and other scriptural references to creation and sin. A well-defined doctrine of creation from nothingness began to emerge by the end of the second century in that Christian tradition. In this respect Origen’s theory of creation is very significant in the development of a Christian doctrine of creation from nothingness (*ex nihilo*). The latter proclaims that God brought matter into being from nothingness without relying on any pre-existent material.

By the fourth century A.D., several commentaries on scriptural teachings concerning creation had been formulated by various Christian Fathers such as Basil of Caesarea and Ambrose of Milan. Basil and Ambrose were both influenced by Platonic thoughts. While they both criticized pagan theories regarding the pre-existence of matter and its co-eternity with God, their own interpretation of matter was based on the philosophical notion of matter, for they both acknowledged that all things are created out of matter and all things created are in need of formation. This is in line with the view held by Church Fathers such as Tatian and Origen.

Commentaries by Basil, Origen and Hippolytus, all of whom drew upon the Middle Platonic thoughts (Platonic thoughts from the time of Cicero on) of Philo Judaeus, had a direct influence on Ambrose’s theory, which eventually influenced Augustine. Marius Victorinus’ writings also had a great impact on the latter. Basil was extremely against the Gnostic dualism and its rejection of the inherent goodness of creation. There are some apparent affinities between Augustine and his predecessors who were influenced by Platonism.

Ambrose's teaching holds the belief that the world is eternal and incorruptible. His critique is mainly against the Platonists and their contention that God created the world out of pre-existent matter. He is against the pagan theories of cosmological origins and believes that God is the creator of everything from nothing. Hence, both Basil and Ambrose maintain that matter and the world had a definite beginning and such a beginning coincided with the origin of temporal process. This means that God is depicted as the creator of the universe.

Undoubtedly, Augustine was influenced by the work of the Church Fathers, in particular by Ambrose's. Augustine says in Confessions that he was converted to Christianity after Ambrose had explained various things in answer to his queries which the Manichaeans could not. He was baptised by Ambrose on the same day Ambrose delivered his Hexameron Homilies (Hexameron, 1961). We can comfortably assume that Augustine would have been familiar with Ambrose's commentaries on Genesis, impressed as he was by the latter's writings. Ambrose was also instrumental in Augustine's familiarity in Neo-platonic theories (Confessions, 1961). On the basis of this line of influence, we can assume that Augustine was familiar with the main interpretation and themes that characterized Patristic discussions of Genesis, and with the main currents of Scriptural exegesis from the Alexandrian and Cappodocian tradition. Augustine also had Stoic influence regarding his theory on creation (Verbeke, 1983).

Since Augustine had read libri platoniorum (writings by authors who were mostly Neo-Platonists), he would have been familiar with Neo-Platonic responses to the question regarding the origin of the universe. He was clearly influenced by Plotinian Neo-Platonism on the notion of creation as a generation of being. He would also have been familiar with the Neo-Platonic

arguments supporting the eternity of the world and the uncreated status of matter, though these views were not exclusively Platonic in origin. The Neo-Platonic views of Sallustius were popular during the time in which Augustine grew up. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that Augustine would have been familiar with these views also.

The late Roman Church actively campaigned against Manichaeism by means of polemics, culminating in the voluminous anti-Manichaean writings of Augustine in the fifth century after his conversion to Catholic Christianity (Reylands, 1938; Frend, 1965). Both Epiphanius and Augustine expended their greatest energy in their polemic writings against Manichaeism, more so it appears than on any other so-called heresy. Their criticism was based on the writings of critics and distorted texts, both of which existed in abundance due to the simple fact that any opponents were silenced one way or another as the incidences contained herein demonstrate:

- i Without authority no one could possess or read a Bible (Smith, 1952).
- ii No one could openly criticize, by word or letter, the new Christian faith or any of its teachings (Robbins, 1959).
- iii Books and libraries of others were destroyed because they expressed un-Christian ideas and images (Sadock, Kaplan & Freedman, 1976).
- iv Many unauthentic writings such as the Acta Archelai were produced.
- v Criticisms were published refuting false data (Doane, 1971). It was through such measures that the Christian Church was to prove victorious.

It appears that the work of other Latin authors in the fourth and fifth centuries was dominated by Augustine. Whether this was true or appears so

because of the failure to preserve the work of others and the representation by the Church of these works only, is a point to be considered.

Ultimately, of more immediate concern is the question of how well Augustine and the Manichaeans argued their positions, and this would include the honesty and the faithfulness with which they reproduced the arguments of others they tried to refute. Augustine of Hippo was a highly regarded member of the institution which not only condoned, but actively pursued, a policy of wanton destruction and philosophical anarchy in order to achieve its own aims, regardless of the consequences to those who did not agree with it. Augustine, like all the other Church Fathers, forced the Manichaeans to renounce Mani and his teachings or face persecution (Ort, 1967).

Thus, there is a great possibility that the enemies of the Manichaeans, including Augustine, would not be scrupulously fair in their representation of the opponents whose doctrines they were trying to refute. One can assume that to some minor degree, and even perhaps to a greater degree, their thinking was coloured by the prejudice of, not only their human aspirations to better others, but also by their zeal to foster the aims of their church and serve it in the manner it had established. After Augustine, most of the polemic literature was based on his writings.

CHAPTER FOUR

AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

Augustine was born at Thagaste in North Africa, in A.D. 354 of a Christian mother and a non-Christian father. He was subsequently brought up as a follower of Christianity. A psychological profile of the personality of Augustine, obtained from his writings – mainly from his Confessions, may be of assistance. Indeed, there is much we can learn about the personality of Augustine of Hippo by examining his writings, particularly his Confessions. Indeed, an examination of his texts allows one who believes in differing ontological natures of human beings to draw conclusions about this aspect of him also.

My assessment of Augustine is motivated by the fact that Augustine has been treated as an authority on Manichaeism because he was involved in Manichaeism for about nine years. He has been treated as an authority on the grounds of his status as a Catholic Saint. By examining his Manichaean and Catholic background, it might give some insight whether Augustine misunderstood Manichaeism.

Augustine grew up at a time when so-called “paganism” was said to be declining. At the age of sixteen he left school due to the financial situation of his family and lived idly at home with his parents. He confessed he fell victim to lust (including his frequent trips to the brothels of Carthage) and worldly desires and he blamed his family, particularly his father, for not making the effort to save him from his fall by marriage (Confessions, 1961). Interestingly, this tendency of finding others to blame for personal afflictions

appears to have been a trait of Augustine's and it repeated itself monotonously throughout his life.

Augustine's Confessions tells of his early life and spiritual struggles. From Augustine's own writing it is obvious he had a more positive view of his mother, particularly in retrospect, after his re-conversion to Christianity. Before his conversions his writings reveal he thought of her as a possessive, neurotic manipulator who could simply not let go of her "little boy" (Confessions, 1961). Conversely, he accused his father of only being interested in him in order to well-educate him. He criticized his father for not bothering to see how he was growing in God's sight or whether he was chaste or not.

Such criticism is most unfair but it sets the scene for other criticisms Augustine was to make of others later in his life (including the Manichaeans and Ambrose of Milan), and demonstrates that, like an unaware infant, he has to be the centre of his universe. His mother, Monica, warned him against seducing other men's wives (Confessions, 1961). From Augustine's account in Confessions, his mother was very possessive and exploitive.

These details are important for they give glimpses of the personalities of these people, so that we do not have to rely solely on the sanctified illusions painted of them by later apologetic scholars.

Similarly, the writings of Mani and his followers discovered in more recent times reveal points closer to the truth of what they themselves wrote and believed.

Augustine managed to go to Carthage to finish his education. From his own account we know that he received some religious instruction in his childhood, but even when he was very ill, his baptism was deferred. He says in Confessions that he was "a great sinner for so small a boy." He mentioned

his sin of robbing a pear tree. This sense of guilt was to haunt him all his life. The pears episode is far more significant than Augustine's problems, one way or another, with his obsession with sex. This did affect his writings and coloured his thinking for the rest of his life.

In 375 A.D., he was inspired by Cicero's Hortensius towards the love of philosophy. As he was only moderately competent in the language of Plato and Aristotle, he was greatly disadvantaged in his search for wisdom amongst the philosophical writings of the past. Consequently, he started looking at the Christian scriptures for inspiration, but, like Jerome, he found the bland and uncouth style of the pre-Vulgate Latin versions of the Bible unworthy of comparison with the writing of Cicero (Confessions, 1961).

He was greatly troubled by the Problem of Evil. The guilt that haunted him and his concern with the Problem of Evil were pointers, already in his early years, to the suggestion that this man would only reach an outer mind peace when he denied the very existence of absolute evil! There are innumerable people afflicted in the same way – with guilt and the Problem of Evil – and their solution to their guilt and evil is similar to Augustine's. They go into denial and state that there is no absolute evil.

So it is that in Book II, stanza 7 of Confessions, Augustine forgives himself completely for all his sins, by declaring to his "God": "I know you forgive me." Henceforth, he works away all his life to deny the existence of evil as anything absolute. He reduces it to a PRIVATION.

At the age of eighteen Augustine first became involved with the Manichaeans in North Africa. According to Confessions, the Manichaeans were a proscribed sect by that time and were obliged to practise their religion in secret with various modifications. Augustine himself must have found

some benefit to himself from the Manichaeans otherwise he would not have risked danger by becoming a Manichaean hearer.

Augustine embarked on a “brilliant” career after his conversion to Christianity, and spoke and wrote strongly against the Manichaeans. He has up to now been regarded, particularly by the opponents of Manichaeans, as the most celebrated of the western authorities on Manichaeism. Of all the Latin authors on Mani and Manichaeism in the fourth and fifth centuries, Augustine (354-430 A.D.) is regarded as the most prominent among the Church Fathers.

According to Augustine, who in fact became a Manichaean for nine years, what attracted him most was the Manichaean claim to subject faith to the critique of pure reason. We must be mindful that he wrote this after leaving them, writing in order to justify his “blunder” of having been involved with them. Naturally he would want to present himself retrospectively in the best possible light, as a great thinker, and also to present the Manichaeans as barbarians, fools and frauds. This is exactly what he does. Augustine wrote that:

What else induced me for nearly nine years to reject the religion which had been instilled in me by my parents and to follow these men and to be a diligent Hearer than their claim that we customarily put faith before reason; whereas they themselves commanded no one to believe until the truth has first been discussed and then explained?
(Augustinus, 1866)

Hailed as a great thinker, one would have to ask why it took Augustine nine years to conclude the Manichaeans had nothing of value for him.

It is noted that there is an inconsistency here. Elsewhere he complained that his father took no spiritual interest in him. If that were the case he could hardly claim his parents (meaning both mother and father) instilled religion in him. This laxity is not unique. It seems to be consistent with Augustine's behaviour and demonstrates that he accepted looseness in his own thinking and writing but condemned it in others.

From A.D. 373 to 382 Augustine was an auditor, that is, he belonged to the outer and not the inner circle of the Manichaean community. Thus, his position in the Manichaean community was a humble one. This meant that he was not a monk, and as an auditor (or hearer) he was only able to obtain his knowledge of Manichaeism among his fellow-Hearers and not directly from the Elect who were privy to the esoteric information and to the explanations of such esoteric secret information.

Therefore, as a hearer, Augustine would not have been given the keys to the mysteries of Manichaeism. This is an extremely important point because he portrayed himself as an expert in Manichaeism. This also meant that whatever Augustine had purportedly claimed he had obtained from the Hearers could be misinterpreted or distorted due to the lack of understanding of the latter. Hence, the claim by some that Augustine, having been a hearer for nine years, was qualified as an authority on Manichaeism is absurd. It is analogous to saying a factory hand working in a spare-parts department has an intimate knowledge of the executive functioning of the factory.

If Augustine was ever really a committed Manichaean why was he not admitted to the inner circle of the Elect? Augustine had expressed that he

was not keen on the Manichaeian discipline of the Three Seals (mouth, hand and bosom) though he tried to be dedicated to his mistress. One would assume that if he was really a committed Manichaeian, he would have had no second thought about the discipline and would accept it willingly.

It is debated whether Augustine's conversion was to Neo-Platonism or to Christianity (O'Meara, 1950) because he relied heavily on Plotinus (Neo-Platonic views) in his arguments against the Manichaeians though he rejected the Neo-Platonic view that evil is a metaphysical necessity. Instead, he saw that physical evil is suffered by man because of his natural limitation and his creative habits and more importantly, because of the sin of Adam. He claimed the writings of the Neo-Platonists and the sermons of Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, convinced him to accept Christianity. He had gone from the Christians to Cicero's thoughts on philosophy via the latter's Hortensius, then to the Manichaeians, to the Academics and their scepticism, to the Neo-Platonists while in Milan, and then, at the age of thirty-two, returned to Catholic Christianity. It would appear that it was he who borrowed from each facet as can be seen from his writings.

From his arguments, we can see that not only had he borrowed the ideas from others, he had on occasion distorted the ideas of others also. Thus, one can argue that he was very much a syncretist. Would he have changed again if a greater position had presented itself in another sect? One could well suspect that, going on his previous history, the answer would be affirmative. This vacillation can be both a weakness and a strength.

It is valid to make the assumption that the tenets of Manichaeism, as the tenets of all other forms of Gnostic knowledge, had esoteric chapters. It would also be valid to assume that these esoteric tenets were given and explained to those of the Inner Circle – the elect, the initiates – and not to

those of the Outer Circle – the hearers, the less qualified. It is to this latter group that Augustine belonged. It bears repeating therefore that he would not have been given intimate details of the Doctrines of Manichaeism. This is an extremely important point, for later he portrayed himself as an expert in Manichaeism, and many others called him this also.

Further, it is rather strange that it took Augustine almost nine years to decide that Mani's teaching was nothing more than a "great fable and a long lie – *Ingens fabula et longum mendacium*" (Confessions, 1961). Perhaps many of the Manichaeans suspected Augustine was not a Light being and suspected him of being an infiltrator. On another occasion he cites the reason for his discontinuing as the inadequacy of explanations given to him by Faustus, the prominent Manichaean teacher. It appears to be a pivotal point in the life of Augustine and hence is of some importance worthy of detailed examination here. However, we only have Augustine's version of events and explanations. Of what we know about the honesty of recorded accounts, his version of events cannot be totally trusted. Augustine's accusations of this point therefore, that the Manichaeans could not provide adequate explanation, are suspect. It seems to be the case that Augustine did not agree with Faustus' explanation answering his questions and not a case of Faustus trying to cover up or avoiding giving a truthful explanation. There is a distinct difference between lying on one hand and giving an explanation that does not suit the other party on the other.

This debate between Faustus and Augustine is referred to often by those who write about Augustine. But again, we only have Augustine's version of what he thought the outcome was. We have no details. Augustine gloats about how he was able to completely demolish Faustus and therefore the whole of the Gnostic tenets. He uses this debate as the point of great self-

justification as to why he, Augustine, is right, and all the other Manichaeans and Gnostics are wrong. A number of points about this encounter are worth considering, for they demonstrate this gloating and self-justification, and Augustine's arrogance-in-ignorance, as well as his misrepresentations.

Firstly, if it was so important, why did Augustine not reproduce accurate details of his discussion? He was able to reproduce at length, details about the most trivial events in his life, such as the pear-stealing incident of his youth. If this encounter with Faustus was such a turning point in his life, he would have given the details. Instead, he uses it as the excuse he needed to turn away from Manichaeism and embrace Christianity.

However, from other details we know that this was not true. He went from the sect to the Sceptics, then to Neo-Platonism, before settling on Christianity again. Besides, he was still very much with the Manichaeans as friends as he looked into other philosophical systems. He admits in his writings that they actually helped him search for his truth and encouraged him to take the teaching position offered. These are hardly the actions of enemies or of brainwashing, ensnaring cultists. These are actions of caring, compassionate, kind and considerate people who allow each to choose what is right for themselves. These actions need to be contrasted with the destructive behaviour of the ruling Christians, for they could not be more different. There is a degree of misrepresentation in this respect in Augustine's writings that is of great significance.

Secondly, of what value could the debate itself have been? To place such grave importance on it as Augustine claims would be foolish in the extreme. What if Faustus was a religio-philosophical imbecile who had been misrepresented by those who praised him to Augustine? Would his answers then hold? Would what one man said be sufficient ground to change one's

life completely? Surely the answer would be negative on all counts. This may be clarified with a simple analogy: Should a student of science denounce the whole of science as fraudulent if a tutor cannot answer some questions the student has about certain aspects of electro-magnetism? One would answer “Surely not! Perhaps the tutor did not have the answers. Perhaps no one had the answers to certain questions. Perhaps the questions were ridiculous or unanswerable.” It could well be that the inquirer was unable to understand the answers. All these possibilities apply in the Faustus-Augustine case.

If Augustine was genuine he would have admitted as much. Instead, he used various excuses to self-justify his stance. For example, in Book 5 stanza 3, of his Confessions, he claims that he knew so much about science that he preferred the theory of the scientists to the knowledge of Faustus to answer questions of a religio-philosophical nature.

This cannot be taken seriously and it would have been written for the benefit of the ignorant masses. What answers could science have provided in the fourth century to allow a view of the nature of God and of Truth? The response could be that it would have provided no answers, just like today, for physical science, by definition, is inimical to the spiritual components of life. Besides, if Augustine was that well educated in science he would have spoken out against Lactantius who used the Bible to “prove” the earth was flat, for Augustine would have known of the ovoid nature of the earth from the discourse by Pythagoras. If he had truly been scientifically educated, he would have been aware of the measurements made of the earth’s circumference by Eratosthenes in 230 B.C. He would have known the Bible myths were scientifically untenable!

Hence, it can be assumed that Augustine did not know these things. His claim about knowing science must be taken for what it is – a misrepresentation. His writings are not scientific or even erudite. They are opinions, and, for the most part, untenable ones. Most of the thoughts which have merit in them have been either distorted by Augustine or he took them from other sources, as shall be seen.

At the opening of the twenty-first century, one can look back at the fourth century and the paucity of the contents of the science of that era and laugh, for one knows how little scientific knowledge existed then. Augustine does not reveal what sections of his great scientific knowledge he relied upon to destroy Faustus' answers (though one suspects it may be knowledge of eclipses). If he was relying on astrological phenomena, these would have been well known to the Manichaeans also because astrology was an important aspect of the Manichaean creed. From the scientific knowledge of today, it would have been impossible for him to use any science of the fourth century to dispute anything of a spiritual and/or metaphysical nature.

If he were really scientific he would not have fallen into the ridiculousness of his explanations, such as that of Genesis, which he has made totally unacceptably interpretative and totally unscientific. He was not aware of modern quantum physics, of course, which invite one to bypass all material scientific knowledge and go beyond that which is known in order to get to the metaphysical and spiritual realms to acquire answers to the most basic questions about our reality, even the physical reality.

The inconsistencies in his arguments are seen clearly in another example which is repeatedly referred to by Augustine and those who write about him. That example is about the corruptibility or otherwise of God.

From the books written by Augustine, one observes that he was a shrewd debater. He applies Christian theology in his arguments to undermine his opponents. The tactic he uses however, is one of “play my rule or else it is invalid”.

Far from being caring, understanding, and compassionate towards his opponents as he and those pro-Augustine writers would have us believe, throughout his writings, we find that Augustine judges and condemns people at the slightest excuse, even, it appears, when he knows nothing about them. He judges repeatedly, but always asserting the claim, or implying it, that he is always right, that he knows better – he knows God, he confesses – therefore, he is better than all of them. That is the mark of not just a dangerous man, but a bigoted one as well.

For example, in Confessions, Book 5 stanza 6, he claims that those who thought Faustus was wise were fooled: “They thought him wise and thoughtful because they were charmed by his manner of speech.” How did he know that was the only reason? His position was an untenable generalization. Yet, this is the man upon whom the Church founded its philosophical thought for seventeen hundred years! In the following paragraph of his Confessions it is written that he asserts that he has the truth and no one else can therefore have it.

He calls astrologers and astronomers lustful fools. He condemns Mani as demented, his writings as nonsensical, yet he was very interested in astrology and he attributed his lust in sex to astrological influence. Hence, there is inconsistency in his criticisms. In Confessions, Book 5 stanza 5, he calls Mani ignorant, even as many others averred to his brilliance. He condemns Mani for claiming Divine inspiration, stating in Book 5 stanza 5

of Confessions that “it was obvious he [Mani] was guilty of sacrilegious presumption.”

One is reminded of the Pharisees condemning Jesus for doing likewise. Perhaps it is of no importance here to question Augustine’s authority to judge Mani or anyone else as not being guided by the Divine. But it appears that Augustine was judging in ignorance and making wild assumptions and presumptions, for, after all, he had not even met Mani.

As he continues his narrative about his meeting with Faustus, Augustine again complains that he, Augustine, was not the centre of the stage. He often repeats this complaint, even when Ambrose ignored him in Milan. This, as much as all the other pointers, reveals the ego-centricity of the man. If it were not so, why would he think he deserved special treatment, better than what others deserved? Why was he to be preferred above the others?

Furthermore, he cannot let go of prejudice. After belittling Faustus and asserting the latter’s lack of knowledge (we only have Augustine’s version; others apparently found Faustus quite erudite) Augustine again shows his prejudice and attacks the Manichaeans by saying that Faustus, judging from his manner, would be “a truly pious man, if he were not a Manichee”! That is akin to saying John Doe would be a good man if he were not black, or Asian, or Irish. These points are being highlighted in order to emphasize the shortcomings of the man and his writings. With such prejudice, and repeated judgments made in ignorance, it is imprudent to take the other things he has said seriously.

He further complains that the Manichaean texts are full of “tedious fictions”. One wonders if Augustine wrote this knowing it was untrue in order to disparage the Mani texts. One is not in a position to judge

theological and philosophical tenets as fact or fiction as Augustine did and make such binding judgements for others. There is no definitive proof of any suppositions.

Reading between the lines, it is obvious Faustus had no time for Augustine, refusing to give him personal attention. Perhaps Faustus was wiser than Augustine gave him credit for and he realized that it was a waste of time talking to Augustine. However, Augustine turned the episode to his advantage and stated that Faustus knew he did not have the answers that he, Augustine, sought, and did not engage in argument because he knew Augustine would win.

Is it not more likely that Augustine had all the questions, silly or otherwise, and refused to accept answers because he had no inner understanding? Moreover, as a spiritual teacher, Faustus would have known that answers and realizations come from within the person, not from the words uttered by another. Augustine indirectly claimed this also, for he stated that, listening to a child's chant in his garden, he made inner realizations that the chant was God talking to him. The child's words were not important, it was the inner significance they had within Augustine that made him understand. Of this understanding he had none when attacking the Manichaeans.

Yet, this reveals another point about his personality, and that is that, according to him, what he thinks is always right. Hence, to him, his experience in the garden is Divine. What Faustus tells him is not. What Mani claimed or wrote is not. Such bias was to set the scene for nearly sixteen hundred years of murder and torture for those who did not agree with these views of Augustine and the institution which embraced him.

One can argue that if Divine providence could give him great realizations, in spite of his great sinning, which he himself admitted: It might also guide others, Mani and Faustus included. Augustine provided the answer himself – he saw these and others as unworthy, far less worthy than himself who confessed and was therefore made great. He called Faustus a great decoy of the Devil (Confessions, 1961). Yet, he contradicted himself later and asserted that Faustus would be a pious man if he were not a Manichee. He also called Mani a demented demon. Because Faustus could not settle the numerous problems within Augustine, Manichaeism was useless according to Augustine.

In stanza 7, book 5, Augustine again contradicted himself. He obviously liked Faustus and called him modest and candid. Then he called him ignorant and described him as a decoy of the Devil. Shortly after, he stated that it was Faustus' enthusiasm for literature that often brought them together. If that were the case, then Faustus must have been a well educated person, for ignorant people rarely have an enthusiasm for literature, and they must have spent a great deal of time together during which Faustus must have given him ample explanations, for Augustine in this stanza goes on to say he cut himself off from the Manichaeans because:

I could find nothing better than the beliefs which I had stumbled upon more or less by chance and I decided to be content with them for the time being, unless something preferable clearly presented itself to me (Confessions, 1961).

This is the writing of a man in retrospect. According to Augustine himself the apologetic skills of Faustus were weak, like all the other

Manichaeans. This weakness was a crucial factor in Augustine's ongoing reluctance to commit himself wholeheartedly to the Manichaean sect. But such a factor, given it is true, should not have affected Augustine's spirituality. Augustine's personal opinion of Faustus' inability to provide him with satisfactory answers to his queries should not have led him to abandon the Manichaean faith. Many people remain faithful to their religion in spite of the fact that they do not fully understand the doctrine, or that their clergy are limited and imperfect. Would God favour someone on condition that the person knows all the concepts of their religious teaching? It would appear that Augustine's reaction to Faustus was a personal one and had nothing to do with spirituality.

He contradicted himself when he claimed that all his efforts by which he had determined to advance himself in the Manichaean sect collapsed utterly as he came to know Faustus (Confessions, 1961). He admitted elsewhere in his writing that he was not too keen on the discipline of the Manichaean sect but nevertheless went along with them. It is generally the case that one who is not really keen about something but nonetheless goes along with it does not make a supreme and determined effort in that activity.

From these episodes we can deduce a number of things on a Manichaean interpretation:

- i Augustine was without Nous. He was not a being of Light in the Gnostic sense, otherwise he would have resonated with the Gnostic tenets in such a way that his inner beliefs would not have been shaken.
- ii Augustine claimed that faith can be understood. However, faith may be based on a reality that cannot be consciously accessed by the

physical mind as defined by even modern Freudian and Jungian concepts. Thus, his claim that faith can be understood is weak.

- iii These statements of his revelation reveal that he had no inner understanding of spirituality, for he was looking for explanations to grasp with his physical mind.
- iv The fact that he accepted Ambrose's explanation of things in Milan reveals he had limited understanding of spiritual matters.

People with some degree of inner spiritual understanding would know that one cannot necessarily reason spiritual things with the outer intellect because not all spiritual concepts can be contained or rationalised to the satisfaction of the limited physical mind. If anything, the outer intellect and its logistics and sensory input contradict the inner faith, knowingness and wisdom. Moreover, epistemological content has erred so often in its explanation of the physical reality that we should be extremely cautious of applying it to explain the unseen realities.

Augustine was happy to accept exoteric explanations from an external source. One wonders if he would accept explanations as readily from someone less socially successful than Ambrose, bearing in mind the fact that he, Augustine, had the burning desire to become someone of importance, judging from his own writings and his own statements of his parents' ambition for him. Ambrose's status contrasts with the social standing of Faustus, who was already a member of a group that was being targeted by the Christian Church and the political forces of that time which were manipulated by the Church.

One can assume that Augustine, through his nine years of association with the Manichaeans, would have been told there were esoteric meanings in

all spiritual tenets. This was the basis of Gnosticism, but Augustine ignored it until it suited him. Having made this realization in his own time, he then set about ascribing his own interpretation to all things as he saw fit, to suit himself and to quieten his inner terror. The two great problems he had to solve within him were:

- i the existence or otherwise of evil, and
- ii the evidence of his own evilness.

If he could answer these two things to his own satisfaction he could quieten his inner torment. This he did firstly by confessing his evilness and claiming he knew God had forgiven him. Secondly, it could be that out of fear, he made evil a privation, so that the thought that he could be a being of Darkness, as the Gnostics maintained some were, would no longer apply.

It is no coincidence that an article in Critique states that Augustine's opposition to Mani and Manichaeism stemmed from the fact that he was unable to overcome the Darkness within himself. He is also described in the article as an ego-bearer who had renounced knowledge and was tortured by unanswerable questions (Critique, 1986). From Augustine's arguments and from his writings, it is obvious that he used a Manichaean basis in his arguments against the Manichaeans and that he had never totally discarded Manichaeism.

Augustine was a great complainer of anything that did not suit him. Some of the things he complained about were very petty, and he misrepresented things to portray himself in the best possible light. So it is that in stanza 8 of book 5 he underplays the importance of more money and more prestige in applying for a teaching post in Rome and says it is the

better behaviour of the Roman students that attracts him. He claims that he himself was certainly not an unruly student. He also admits that lust was a major part of his make-up and an egocentric pursuit of glory was far more central in him. Therefore, it is plausible that he might have been an unruly student.

Augustine tries to paint an unrealistic picture of himself. On the one hand he claims to be a great sinner, unique among sinners. On the other hand, what he wants to show us is the type of person who is a model of etiquette and of the highest motives, with any wrongdoing being the cause of others. He claims that even his move from Carthage to a job in Rome was the instigation of God. Yet, he condemns any claims by others to Divine guidance, even when he knows nothing about them. If God could arrange a teaching job for him why could God not supply theological tenets to Mani?

Augustine claims Mani was a demented demon who wrote nonsense, and, yet, in the same Book 5 of his Confessions he admits that Mani's tenets were the best he had encountered. He not only contradicts himself, is ignorantly judgemental, and ascribes God the full-time role of personally guiding him, but he vehemently condemns any who dare suggest that that could be the case in their lives. Once he has reached a position of authority, he cuts them off by saying no one can have anything to do with God outside of his church and its priests. This needs to be contrasted with the admonition given by Jesus Christ in the Apocalypse of Peter (found in the Nag Hammadi Library) that:

Those who name themselves bishop, priest and deacon, as if they had received their authority from God are in reality waterless canals.

Throughout Confessions along with condemning any he chooses, Augustine tells us what God likes and does not like, how God thinks, who He forgives, why He does certain things, and so on. Even as he tells us in stanza 8 how pure his intentions are about getting a job in Rome, he tells us he lied to his mother about his departure and admits that he is full of detestable impurities.

Perhaps he was worried that his possessive mother would want to follow him to Rome and continue to control his life, or perhaps we are dealing with a bi-polar personality here. Judging from how he vacillates one could reasonably conclude that he had a bi-polar problem. Subsequently, he turns things to his favour, as he does so repeatedly, by saying that God forgave him his sins of lying and for being filled with detestable impurities by allowing him safe passage to Rome. The inference here is that those who are shipwrecked are not forgiven by God for their sins.

The last paragraph of stanza 8 demonstrates Augustine's immature concept of God. He sees him as a manipulative, punishing god who uses emotions and exploitative episodes to do his own bidding. History abounds with the dangers of ascribing emotionalism to God for it then leads to exploitation and favouritism. This is the great danger of ascribing human values to deities. Augustine does just that repeatedly and fanatically. He sets the pattern for self-justification for himself and his church which defends all its atrocities through the ages as if they were works divinely inspired.

Stanza 9 of Book 5 of Confessions reveals the fear which underlies Augustine's need to destroy the concept of evil and assert his forgiveness. Perhaps it is his fear of Hell:

At Rome I was at once struck down by illness, which all but carried me off to hell with all the evil that I had committed against you, against myself, against other men . . .

He does not see God as the God of love, peace, and forgiveness. He sees the God he is praying to as the God of revenge, of spite, of vengeance, of punishment, of exploitation.

He concludes the above stanza by implying that there is no salvation without baptism in the Christian Church, as if this was a special ceremony unique to it. Certainly this was not the case. It was one of many sacraments hijacked from other belief systems. The sacraments were taken from the Mithraic rites. Baptism, confirmation, communion, marriage, Holy Orders and Final Blessing all existed before Jesus' time. Indeed, marriage did not become a Christian sacrament until the sixteenth century (Fielding, 1942; Walker, 1983).

Augustine also alludes to the possibility that he and his mother blackmailed the god he speaks about into acting as he did in Augustine's life by performing little daily self-ascribed functionary acts. If such were the case, one would think that all the flowers, prayers and incense-burning around the world would have certainly forced this "god" to solve all the problems of his creation. But Augustine wants us to believe he is special and what applies to him and his mother will not apply to others.

Some of Augustine's critics remarked that the Augustine when he was a Manichaean was more believable than the Augustine after he was converted to Christianity. It would thus appear that Augustine stopped growing intellectually when he wrote later.

He constantly attacks the Manichaeans and judges them as would-be saints and frauds. Hence, it appears that he takes it for granted that it is proper for him to judge. It is proper for him to seek sainthood but others that do so, unless it is according to his dictates, are frauds. The hypocrisy is again highlighted in this stanza as he readily admits using the safety, care, and hospitality of the Manichaeans and an Elect while now he condemns them.

Many passages relating to Manichaeism are found in Augustine's other writings, as well as in the Confessions. His books concerning Manichaeism are written in two forms – those in purely literary form containing dogmatic and doctrinal essays, and those formed by the personal disputations into which Augustine's Manichaean opponents were drawn. It is claimed that his disputes with Manichaean leaders like Felix and Fortunatus were recorded, and that the transcriptions were added to the corpus of Augustine's anti-Manichaean writing (Coyle, 1978). Yet, it is disappointing that on the whole, so very little positive knowledge is gained from his writings. More would have been expected.

In most instances, he restricts himself to vague generalities, and when he does concentrate on a particular topic, his statements seem mostly to rest on hearsay rather than on facts. One gets the feeling that perhaps even his Manichaean informants were not at all accurately familiar with the history and writing of Mani.

Indeed, although the original Manichaean documents discovered in Turkestan and Egypt show that Augustine's details of Manichaean doctrine were somewhat accurate, some scholars do not think that Augustine really understood the spirit of Manichaeism (Decret, 1978).

Let us now assess Augustine's familiarity with original Manichaean sources to establish the validity or credibility of Augustine's anti-

Manichaean polemics which are heavily dependent on the accuracy with which he depicts Mani's teachings.

Since the Elect were the true Manichaeans and since the Manichaeans went to great lengths to conceal their inner teachings of Mani from the outsiders, including those of the Outer Circle, the Hearers, it is unlikely that Augustine, as a hearer, would have had access to any of the inner teachings of Mani. This view is supported by De Beausobre, the author of the first detailed work on Manichaeism, whose opinion it is that Augustine was inadequate in his knowledge of Manichaeism.

He based this opinion on the grounds that:

- i Augustine had only been an Auditor or Hearer of the Manichaean sect, and therefore, could not have gained access to the esoteric writings known only to the Elect;
- ii The primary Manichaean sources at that time were written in Greek, Persian and Syriac. Augustine could not have investigated these sources because he had no knowledge of these languages (De Beausobre, 1734).

Others, such as Alfarcic, are of the opinion that Augustine lacks objectivity in dealing with the Manichaean sect and thinks the Augustine who believed in Manichaeism while he was a rhetorician at Carthage had more credibility than the Augustine who was converted to Christianity and who would later engage in vehement anti-Manichaean polemics against those Manichaeans with whom he once shared his life (Alfarcic, 1918).

De Beausobre and Alfarcic's statements are challenged by John P. Maher (1979), who contends that Augustine's portrayal of Manichaean

cosmogony was highly accurate and could only have come from a thorough knowledge of Mani's teachings. He refutes De Beausobre's charges by arguing that Augustine's knowledge of Manichaean doctrine should not be assessed on the basis of what he knew or did not know as an auditor, but rather, on the basis of what he had written against the Manichaeans. However, one could ask, "How could anyone write truthfully and sincerely about something they do not know, especially knowing that the implications would bear death threats and executions for those against whom the writings were manufactured?"

Maher speculates that in spite of the fact that Augustine could not read Greek, Persian or Syriac, he might have obtained a Latin translation of the main Manichaean teachings (Maher, 1979). Further, Maher states that Augustine, far from being a critical auditor, was in fact a keen inquirer, as revealed by his desire to confront and question the Manichaean bishop Faustus.

However, being a keen inquirer does not mean or guarantee that one will be able to ascertain the correct conclusions if one has no inner understanding. One could argue that Augustine did, in fact, have difficulty understanding Mani's teachings. If he had difficulty understanding the teaching whilst a hearer in the sect then it would have been most unlikely that he could miraculously have understood Mani's teachings after his conversion to Catholic Christianity. Could one then consider Augustine, in this confused and unsettled frame of mind, an authority on Mani's teachings?

Even if Augustine did have access to a translation of key Manichaean doctrines, reviewing Augustine's own writings, one needs to seriously consider if indeed Augustine had understood the esoteric teachings of Mani.

However, even if we accept the possibility that Augustine did have a Latin translation of some Manichaean manuscript which might have been used as a kind of apologia of the faith, it is unlikely that it would have contained the esoteric teachings of Mani which were selectively reserved for the Elect, possibly to avoid distortion of the doctrine.

Maier has based his speculation on the twentieth-century discoveries pertaining to the Coptic documents found at Fayoum in Egypt, which were published by H.J. Polotsky and Alexander Böhlig as the Kephalaia, and on the original Manichaean documents found at Turfan in Chinese Turkestan. He states the fact that there is a parallel between the names of the five gods listed in the Kephalaia and those on the list presented by Augustine in the Contra Faustum (Maier, 1979) as proof that Augustine knew the doctrines intimately.

One can argue that is it not surprising that, after nine years of being in the sect, such a keen inquirer as Augustine was purported to be did not even know the names of the five gods? That is as ridiculous as a student, in a seminary for nine years, not knowing the names of the persons of the Catholic Trinity, of Jesus' biological mother and father.

The extensive quotes apparently from Mani's own teachings as seen in Augustine's anti-Manichaean polemic are not proof of his authority in Manichaean teaching. Wherever and however Augustine might have received the information on Manichaean teaching, there are distortions (either intentional or due to misinterpretation) in what Augustine has presented in his anti-Manichaean polemic.

It should be noted that the Coptic Homilies, the Kephalaia and the Psalms of Mani were handed down, not by Mani himself, but by his disciples. Some of the biographies of Mani have come from non-

Manichaeism sources. Therefore, it is more than likely that some distortion would have occurred. Given that the Manichaeism which Augustine wrote about was the Manichaeism that was found everywhere (Koenen, 1978), it does not necessarily mean that Augustine really understood the spirit of Manichaeism, a sentiment shared by Francois Decret (1970). Indeed, Augustine was not attempting to dispute Mani's theology, but rather his own misunderstandings of it. On his own admission, Augustine was never acquainted with the Inner Wisdom of Mani's teachings.

Lieu contends that Augustine, having been an auditor for nine years, probably knew too well the falsity of the polemic version (Lieu, 1985). Yet, Augustine made no attempt to correct the errors. Instead, he contributed towards the errors and enhanced them. This is malicious.

Augustine admitted that he could make no progress in the religion of Mani due to the literalism in Manichaeism (Confessions, 1961). It can be argued that spiritual progress is a very personal thing between God and the aspirant, regardless of what religion one may adhere to. Moreover, Mani's teaching is esoteric and not literal at all, as can be judged from the myths, parables, fables and stories used to explain concepts. Hence, Augustine's claim of literalism in Manichaeism doctrines shows that he had not grasped the essence of Manichaeism.

If he claimed he knew what Mani's teachings were all about, then it is probable that he had deliberately set out to discredit Manichaeism and to excuse away his own shortcomings by blaming others. I have already alluded to this trait within him previously.

Anyone who possesses some degree of inner spiritual realization would recognise (even if he or she could not fully grasp the meaning) that Mani's cosmogony is esoteric and that the explanations of Mani show that

he, Mani, knew the esoteric meaning of the various events in his cosmogony. Hence, Mani's opposition had misunderstood him and his doctrines.

Examples given above reveal that Augustine exhibits inconsistencies and contradictions in what he says and in his arguments against the Manichaeans. Such incidences will become obvious in my later discussions on Augustine and his attempted refutations against the Manichaeans. However, these examples are worth repeating here:

- i In Augustine's Confessions VIII, he claimed he heard a child's voice chanting words which he took to be a Divine message to himself in spite of the fact that he had confessed that he was a great sinner. What makes his experience valid, or more valid, or more spiritual than that of Mani's? If he could not accept Mani's revelations to be from the Divine and regarded Mani's teachings as a great fable and a long lie, even though the accounts were highly believable, why should anyone take Augustine's experience to be valid or authentic? One could say Augustine contrived it or that he could have had a hallucination.
- ii He asserted that the Manichaeans were inconsistent and contradictory in their claim that, unlike the Christians who customarily put faith before reason, the Manichaeans commanded no one to believe until the truth had first been discussed. In keeping with this promise, it appears that Faustus did in fact discuss and explain various things to Augustine in answer to his queries. It was just that Augustine did not accept Faustus' explanation and wanted to argue the point. Indeed, Augustine is inconsistent in his reporting of the meetings. As was stated above, Augustine wrote that Faustus did not satisfy him, and in the same book of the Confessions admitted they had spent much time

together. Perhaps Augustine was the type who, lacking inner understanding, could not benefit from any answer.

Manichaeism, which by the time of Augustine had become actively anti-pagan and anti-Jewish, would not have been seen by Augustine as an exotic oriental cult like Mithraism, but as a higher and purer form of Christianity. The name of Christ was not only omnipresent amongst the Manichaeans, their Christ was also the personification of the mind, which was not a degraded, suffering saviour, but a Gnostic redeemer, who imparted special wisdom to those who had been initiated into the faith.

It is said that Augustine was drawn to Manichaeism as much by its aggressive, evangelistic medium as by its message. Augustine himself admitted that he was attracted to Manichaeism by the critical and the sectarian appeal of it. However, it was an intellectual evangelism, not an extremist fundamentalist evangelism.

If Augustine did not want to believe the tenets of Manichaeism, but believed there were no evil men as such and no evil essence apart from the illusion man created for himself, why did he and the Church not treat the likes of Mani and the other Manichaeans and Gnostics with the patience, love, care and compassion that Christ taught?

The claim by the supporters of Augustine that he had a complete grasp of the fundamental teachings of Mani is not only debatable but untenable in light of the errors Augustine made. The debate with Faustus was reported unilaterally to favour Augustine, even though his supporters tried to establish its authenticity by asserting that it was recorded with a stenographer taking notes on the spot. However, no Manichaean or Gnostic has ever confirmed the truthfulness of it. If this meeting ever happened and records of it were

kept, the Manichaeans would treasure it, for it would espouse a great deal of Manichaeism through Faustus' speech.

THE REASONS WHY AUGUSTINE WAS ATTRACTED TO MANICHAISM

According to Augustine's own account he was attracted to Manichaeism when he was eighteen or nineteen (the exact age is disputed in the literature) for the following reasons:

- i He says he was impressed by the Manichaeans' claim that they would teach truth by plain reason alone. Given this is true and given that the truth could be acquired by reason, one could assemble a very strong argument that there would be no need for the Inner Nous, the Inner Gnostic spiritual realization, for ecclesiastical institutions as distinct from schools of reason; no need for consecrated clergy, or Divine Grace, or spiritually enriching Sacraments. If they maintained this, the Manichaeans would be contradicting themselves by saying that a salvific Nous was what the Elect and Hearers and all others who sought Liberation needed to awaken to. This claim was a fabrication by Augustine in order that the opponents of Manichaeism could easily knock it down to show how ridiculous this false "Manichaean" claim was.
- ii According to Augustine's own account, he claimed that he found the Manichaean criticisms of the Old Testament mirrored his own thoughts

and questions about the Scriptures. For example, he agreed with the criticism that the Manichaeans made against the morality of the patriarchs in the Old Testament. In Confessions, Augustine gives us part of the Manichaean criticism of the Old Testament:

Whether they were to be considered just who had many wives at the same time, and killed people, and sacrificed animals (Confessions, 1961).

The above was asked by the Manichaeans who rejected the Old Testament because it gave approval to such immoral activities as the polygamy of the patriarchs, incest, and the slaughtering of people in the land they conquered, such as in the conquest of Canaan, and the animal sacrifices of the temple worship.

- iii He was attracted to the “sharing and loving” of the Manichaean community. This invalidates the criticisms he made of them later when he called them unloving, barbaric, uncharitable and merciless.
- iv He was attracted to the answer the Manichaeans gave to the question of “where does evil come from?” (Confessions, 1961). The Problem of Evil was constantly on Augustine’s mind and he thought the Manichaeans had provided him with the answers he wanted to hear regarding this question.

Augustine had difficulty with the stylistic inferiority of the Latin Scriptures (Confessions, 1961). He says that he found the Scriptures unworthy of comparison with the “dignity” (eloquence) of Cicero. Here we see the man Augustine criticizing the Christian Scriptures as he later would

the Manichaean Scriptures. One wonders what his real motives were behind his conversion to Christianity after abandoning the Manichaean religion. Moreover, he was making a fundamental mistake similar to judging the worth of a man by the quality of his clothes.

How could the manner of expression in any scripture alter the worth of the truth contained therein? This was an unreasonable pre-judgment by him. It demonstrates in a highlighted manner that he did not recognize any truth contained in those pages. Certainly, the evidence indicates as much.

After his conversion to Christianity, Augustine stated that he considered the Scriptures to have their own way of revealing truth, a way not accessible to the proud but to the humble. He said that the Scriptures did not always present a rational argument, but that the doctrines and narratives in the Scriptures contained meaning which was unclear at first. However, if one first believed the Scriptures and obeyed the laws that were set forth, one could begin to understand the hidden meaning in them.

In the same manner, one can argue that Mani's doctrines do not all appear to present a rational argument when glanced at superficially and taken literally, but that they contain meaningful messages to those who can understand the inner meaning of the doctrines. Indeed, it cannot be said that there is a difference. Surely if the argument holds for one it holds for the other.

Augustine admitted he had the problem of approaching the Christian Scriptures. For example, he had trouble accepting the contradiction between the genealogies of Christ in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, until the Manichaeans solved the problem for him by explaining that some parts of the Scriptures were either corrupted, unauthentic or contained interpolations.

Augustine went to great lengths to inform us that he had a tendency to reject accepted authorities. Thus, he was a self-admitted anti-establishment rebel. After reading Cicero's Hortensius, he was inspired by the desire for a truth that was not determined by the contingency of particular sects, institutions, or cultures but by the need to separate only what was congruent with his own thoughts. Since the Manichaeans professed (that is, according to Augustine) to accept nothing until it could be rationally argued, Augustine thought he had found the religion which supported and satisfied his tendency to reject accepted authorities. This also led him to believe that the Manichaean teaching was true and positive.

From Augustine's testimony in Confessions, his main reason for being attracted to Manichaeism was that which he thought at the time to be the satisfaction of his critical mind made possible by the critical dimension of the Manichaean teaching. He thought he had at last found a philosophical and religious completeness in Manichaeism, a wholeness which included the human relationships, the affections, the relationship with God in which Christ is the mediator, and things which brought all of his life into it, for this was the wholeness Augustine was seeking.

He saw the Manichaean religion as one which provided an intellectual, philosophical, and religious wholeness, one in which Christ was being included (Confessions, 1961). This he claims was the reason he renounced the Christianity he was brought up with and embraced Manichaeism, becoming a Manichaean hearer. We must bear in mind that he himself states that his involvement with Christianity, as a youth and before joining the sect, was minimal.

However, W.H.C. Frend argues that Augustine, in becoming a Manichaean, would not have renounced Christianity (Frend, 1953). It seems

that Augustine's problem was related to his own confusion in matters relating to his own misinterpretation of what Manichaeism stood for. If he had initially rejected his Christian faith due to his own misinterpretation of the Scriptures, particularly the Old Testament, and if he later abandoned the Manichaean faith because he thought he had been misguided, and thus had made another mistake by believing in the Manichaean teaching which did not in fact have the answers to his questions, there is no guarantee that Augustine really knew what he wanted. One wonders if he had had the freedom to express his doubts against the Christian religion after his re-conversion to it, as he had done with Manichaeism, whether he would have expressed his regrets against Christianity also.

Clearly, Augustine's commitment to his Christian faith was based on obedience and faith and not based on rational answers as he so claimed he admired and which he could not find in Manichaeism. Moreover, to become a priest and then bishop in the Christian faith at that time meant great power, prestige, influence and wealth, as well as forced recognition of vested authority. As we can deduce from his writings, these were certainly the things Augustine pined for all his life to satisfy his ego. When offered such a position he would have eagerly accepted it, for it satisfied all his desire for self-aggrandizement and egocentricity. It was what he had wanted all his life. He was now the centre of attention, and it suited him and his ambitions. It is very probable that he joined the community as a priest and was made bishop, not because of any recognition of the truth he made within the Scriptures that he had previously condemned, but because he sought the temporal powers afforded by the Church.

One could well ask, "Are we underestimating Augustine and not giving credit where credit is due?" This is certainly not so. Remember that

he complained that the Manichaean Elect took no notice of him, that Faustus took no notice of him, that Ambrose took no notice of him, and so on. He then set about justifying his moves. This again points to an egotistical man who always has to be right. This self-justification required the misrepresentation of that which he was attacking, all the while passing off ideas of others as his own, as will be seen with his notions on predetermination, time, Genesis, and other concepts.

Pine-Coffin, (Confessions, 1961) in his introduction to Augustine's Confessions, highlights this very choice of Augustine's and claims that the latter was reluctant to become a Christian priest. If this were true, we can deduce that the reluctance may well have come from the fact that Augustine saw no truth for him anywhere. It is more likely that the statement about his reluctance is false, for Augustine would have welcomed the opportunity, especially as the Christian movement was such a powerful force that was capable of overcoming any opposition.

It is in the reading of Confessions and the various books written about him that it becomes obvious that Augustine had an intense desire for personal recognition. He had a burning ambition to be someone of note. He wrote that when he arrived in Milan, no one of note greeted him, and that Ambrose had little time for him. These complaints again indicate an inflated ego and a person who had to be noticed. He admits that his parents shared his ambition to be someone great in rhetoric and public speaking (Confessions, 1961). It appears that, apart from other metaphysical reasons, it was this egotistical expressiveness that might have prevented his nomination as an Elect by the Manichaeans.

His beliefs included these points:

- i God existed in the soul of every human being. This is to counter the belief of the TWO NATURES and the existence of Good and Evil beings.
- ii People should direct their attention to God and not be distracted by the cares and pleasures of the world. This is not an original thought, and, it is inconsistent with his “God made everything” postulate. If God did make everything, then He made the cares and pleasures of this world also and they should be embraced as part of God’s creation. It is consistent, in fact, with the Gnostic notion of the evil demiurge creating the cares and pleasures of this world as traps from which the true seeker should detach, as Buddha and Jesus taught (Gruber and Kersten, 1995).
- iii The Doctrine of Predestination or Election – People could not change their sinful ways unless helped by the Grace of God, and God chose only certain individuals to receive this grace – a doctrine which intimated that God’s grace was biased and not universal.

According to Augustine, people could not receive God’s grace unless they belonged to the Church and received its sacraments. God could bypass human weaknesses through the sacraments. This made the Church indispensable in people’s lives and placed enormous power in the hands of the clergy. Indeed, the whole concept can easily be perceived as fallacious, self-serving, self-aggrandizing, vindictive, and destructive.

The theory of predetermination was inconsistent with the one of re-incarnation which appeared more acceptable. Hence, the church did what

was predictable under the circumstances. It attempted to expunge all obvious references to re-incarnation at the Council of Constantinople in 553 A.D.

In 391, Augustine was ordained a priest in Hippo (North Africa) and served as bishop from 395 till his death in 430. His writings influenced medieval religious thought, and also John Calvin, Martin Luther and other Protestant reformers. Both Protestant and Catholic traditions still base many of their assumptions upon the writings attributed to Augustine. Among many other things, Augustine also claimed that the Book of Enoch could not be included in the Canon of Scripture because it was too old (*ob nimiam antiquitatem*). This is nonsense! He was censoring.

CHAPTER FIVE

AUGUSTINE'S ATTEMPTED REFUTATIONS AGAINST THE MANICHAEANS

The attempted refutations of Augustine against the Manichaeans are mainly based on these points:

- i THE IMMUTABILITY/INCORRUPTIBILITY OF GOD: the certainty about God's immutability which Augustine reached in his study of the books of the Platonists and from which he never deviated.
- ii CREATION FROM NOTHING – this is Augustine's notion of absolute non-being in creation.
- iii EVIL AND THE EVILNESS OF MATTER: Augustine attacked the Manichaean concept of Evil. He argued that Evil was not a separate principle but rather a privation or lack of good.
- iv SUFFERING AND SIN: Augustine maintained that all suffering was due to Original Sin and mankind's separation from God, from a misuse of free will.
- v SENSE WORLD ATTACHMENT OF MANICHAEISM: that as a religion and as an intellectual proposition, Manichaeism was the product of an inordinate attachment to the sensible world.

All these points form a conglomerate in Augustine's theories, which will be addressed individually, even though they are interrelated. However, a few minor criticisms of Augustine against the Manichaeans will be briefly

mentioned in order to reveal some of the basis of his arguments and how his pre-conceived ideas and prejudices might have influenced his arguments against his opponents.

Like most of the other Christian opponents of the Manichaeans, Augustine was not happy that Mani claimed himself to be the Paraclete and an apostle of Christ. But the real question to be asked is “Why were they so jealous?” The reason is to give exclusivity to a manufactured Jesus myth, and to the Christianity that developed under the auspices of these enemies of Mani (Gruber and Kersten, 1995).

Augustine contended that he could not believe what he could not know to be true. In this respect he said that the Manichaeans promised to provide nothing less than the knowledge of truth which was based on rationality. He challenged the Manichaeans to provide proof of Mani’s apostleship, but he would not allow them to rely on their Scripture to find testimony in support of this. He contended that their claim would lack sufficient authority.

He declared that the only authority was that of his church, which had the sole right to ensure the truth of the Gospel. This was most unfair bigotry at its worst. Yet, even if the Manichaeans had been able to discover sufficient testimony from the Scriptures for him, he would have contended that they would still be unable to establish the credibility of their claim. He would simply not have believed them, and this was so because the authority of the Church in which Augustine had invested his belief would have to be invalidated.

The following passage by Augustine clearly demonstrates his intention:

If no clear proof of the apostleship of Manichaeus is found in the gospel, I will believe the Church rather than you. But if you read thence some passage clearly in favour of Manichaeus, I will believe neither them nor you: not them, for they lied to me about you; nor you, for you quote to me that scripture which I had believed on the authority of those liars. (Contra epistulum).

Here we see the unreasonableness of Augustine. In this case he was prepared to blame the Scriptures also if he had been wrong. It can also be deduced from this quote that he was not prepared to accept Mani as genuine under any circumstances.

The validity of Augustine's contention, that the Manichaeans attempted to link Mani directly with the Holy Spirit (by their assumption that Mani was taken up by the Holy Spirit at his moment of death) and by which attempt they would be allowed to claim that the names Manichaeus, and Holy Spirit were alike, and that they also implied the apostle of Jesus Christ (Contra epistulum) is seriously questioned by Ludwig Koenen in his monograph (1978). Koenen argues that "Augustine did not understand or did not want to understand what the Manichaeans meant by Mani's apostleship" (1978). Koenen says that for the Manichaeans, Mani was the apostle of "Jesus the Splendour" rather than the apostle of the historical Jesus as Augustine apparently believed. It appears that Augustine had no understanding of the concept of "Jesus the Splendour", or else simply refused to accept it as a valid possibility.

The Manichaeans regarded Mani as the apostle of Christ because he was the Paraclete, the "Spirit of Truth" whom Jesus promised to send (John 16, 17). Koenen further shows that for the Manichaeans, the "Spirit of

Truth” was sent into the world at various times and was manifested through different apostles in different generations. Since Mani was identified as the “Spirit of Truth”, the Manichaeans believed that Mani’s revelation was true.

On the basis of various writings such as the Kephalaia, neither Mani nor his Nous were identified with the Paraclete, but with the alter ego of the Paraclete (the “Twin”) who was supposedly responsible for Mani’s revelation. In fact, Mani’s Nous and “Twin” were viewed as two aspects of his identity. In this respect, if the “Twin” was the Paraclete, the Nous was also the Paraclete.

Koenen states that Augustine’s insinuation that Mani equated his relationship with the Paraclete, with the relationship between Christ as the second Person of the Trinity and Christ as Mary’s son, was justified by what was most probably a later development in Manichaean theology in the West (Koenen, 1978). He also maintains that Augustine’s interpretation of the trinitarian formula was shaped by the beliefs of the Manichaeans of Augustine’s own time, and coloured by his own misunderstanding of Manichaean theological terms. It is possible that some of the Manichaeans themselves have misinterpreted Mani’s teachings.

Augustine attacked the Gnostic and Manichaean notion that Christ did not really die on the cross. He rejected the docetic nature of Christ. To paraphrase him: “How could I be saved, if Christ on the cross was a mere phantom, as I believed then?” It could be that Augustine misrepresented the Gnostic notion of the docetic nature of Christ, or else he reported correctly his misunderstanding of the concept. Like all Gnostic sects, the Manichaeans possessed a Christology in which Christ’s redemptive role was not dependent on his having an earthly existence. This docetic view of Christ upset the Christian polemicists and it had particular relevance to the

Christological debates of the sixth century. The Manichaeans were compared to extreme Monophysites since their belief in the Primal Man as an emanation of the Father of Greatness was seen as profession of the one-nature doctrine of the Trinity.

The Gnostics maintained that the body of the earthly Jesus died on the cross, but that the Christ was not of the body made, as it was of evil matter. He was the Divine Consciousness which used the physical body and could not be affected by the “torture of the demons”. Mani, his followers, and the Gnostics did not believe that literally a phantom was on the cross as Augustine claimed. To be sure, a mere body is not a mere phantom. Augustine’s rejection of docetism had to do with his belief that the docetism of Jesus was in contradiction of the Gospel: See my hands and my feet, feel and see that a spirit had not bones and flesh, as ye see me to have (Luke 24:29).

Augustine claimed that he addressed the so-called errors of the Manichaeans “not by contention . . . strive, and persecutions, but by kindly consolation . . . friendly exhortation . . . and quiet discussion . . .” Contra Epistulum I (1). Far from being what he claimed in the above, Augustine was unnecessarily hostile, aggressive, rude, damning, spiteful, and sarcastic in his polemic writings against the Manichaeans.

In Confessions III (vi, 11), Augustine said that as a religion and as an intellectual position, Manichaeism was the product of the inordinate attachment to the sensible world. He accused the Manichaeans of being carnals, men attached to the senses. He further compared the Manichaeans to the bold adulterous woman of Proverbs, chapter 9, and said that “she” (the Manichaeans) seduced him because “she” found him living too much in the world of the senses:

The bold woman seduced me because she found me living out of doors in the eye of the flesh, and ruminating on such things as I had swallowed through it (Confessions, 1961).

Manichaeism in the days of Augustine did not really have a “carnal” view of things. Augustine’s view of the friendships he had in the Manichaean community was that they were too tied to the senses. Yet Augustine had admitted on various occasions that one of the things that attracted him to Manichaeism was the friendship and warmth in the Manichaean community. If warm friendship is considered sensual, and Augustine loved it, then Augustine should not have complained and blamed the Manichaeans for having seduced him. It appears Augustine chose to do and accept what suited him. One gets the feeling in his accusations that he is untruthful and hypocritical.

The Manichaeans could argue that Augustine did not understand the Manichaean doctrine. If he did, he would have understood that it was because of His love for His own beings that the Manichaean God was forced to allow His own kind to temporarily suffer in the hands of Darkness in order to rescue the trapped beings of Light in matter. According to Mani, it was the invasion by Darkness on the kingdom of Light that resulted in the mixing of Light and Darkness and forced the King of Light to respond.

Augustine’s vivid sense of sin drove him to discuss its origin at length. He came down strongly on Original Sin. He compared the teachings of Mani to a “harlot” (Confessions, 1961). This shows he was tormented by his own sins and could not live with the torment. It is hard to believe that Augustine, who claimed to be a rational, intellectual man with a highly

inquisitive mind, would take some nine years to come to the conclusion that he was seduced by the Manichaeian teachings, having believed what the Manichaeians purportedly claimed – that their teachings would transcend the finite world immediately.

His excuse was that he believed their claim and thought he was pursuing God and following God's truth when, in fact, he was pursuing the Manichaeian deceptive, lower images – the phantasmata. On another occasion in Confessions VIII, Augustine confessed that he was not happy with the Manichaeian myths even shortly after he became a Manichaeian. Augustine would have us regard him as a critical thinker. It is doubtful a critical thinker, unsatisfied with the Manichaeian “myths”, would remain a Manichaeian for nine years.

Though there seems to have been a prevalence of anti-materialism of a broadly speaking Platonic kind, which infected Gnosticism and orthodox Christianity, however, from the writings of Augustine, it is clear that he never totally abandoned Manichaeism, nor was he totally a Christian. Neither did he truly believe that he had found an intellectual and religious “whole” in the Christian Scriptures as he claimed.

It should be mentioned that Mani, like all Gnostics, believed that God alone existed for all time. The orthodox Christians believed that the Trinity was eternal. Given this, the fact that Mani, like all Gnostics, believed in the one Supreme and eternal God makes the attacks by his enemies on the polytheistic manifestation of the One God absurd. Hence, Augustine's claim that the Manichaeians worshipped many gods is not accurate.

Augustine complained several times in his writings that the Manichaeians did not deliver what they promised – to present their truths by reason. To this, Decret (1970) replies that the Manichaeians never claimed to

present their truth with reason alone, and without recourse to authority in the manner expected by Augustine. Thus, Augustine had misunderstood the Manichaeans' presentation of truth via the Manichaean Gnosis of intuition. Decret supports his argument by quoting Secundinus, (the Manichaean hearer who wrote to Augustine to persuade him to return to Manichaeism) who told Augustine that:

. . . there are some things which cannot be expounded so that they can be understood:

for the Divine reason exceeds the capacity of the breasts of mortals: such as this, how there are two natures, or why he fought who was unable to suffer . . . (Epistula Secundini).

Thus, the Manichaean explained that it was beyond the scope of the human mind to understand spiritual concepts except through gnosis. But Augustine demanded rational, scientific proof concerning spiritual things, not Gnostic intuition. Having been a Manichaean hearer for nine years, was Augustine really unaware of the Gnostic element in Manichaeism, or was he being purposely difficult? Another possibility is that Augustine did in fact misinterpret the Manichaean position. Yet, another possibility is that Augustine was lacking in mental capacity to grasp the obvious.

Augustine might have been aware of the Gnostic character in Manichaeism (though he probably did not understand the hidden meaning in the Manichaean teaching) because in Contra Epistulum Fundamenti XIV, 18, Augustine wrote:

For the one who “knows”, is the one to whom these things are shown in all clarity, but when he tells someone about them, he does not put the knowledge in them, but persuades them to believe.

If, in fact, Augustine was aware of the Gnostic element in Manichaeism, then he must not have appreciated this Gnostic illumination. Perhaps Ambrose helped him to achieve it where the Manichaeans had not. The Manichaeans’ claim that Gnostic intuition cannot be grasped by the rational mind is self-evident.

Since Augustine repeatedly criticised the Manichaeans for not delivering what they promised, namely, that they would explain the truth to him by reason alone, it is not unreasonable to conclude that Augustine, while he was aware of the Gnostic character of Manichaean truth, and while he was also aware that the Manichaeans claimed that such Gnostic intuition could not be grasped by the rational, physical mind, insisted on the explanation of Manichaean truth by rational reasoning. That is, he demanded that the truth be demonstrated and explained in the way he perceived it ought to be, not in the way the Manichaeans perceived it. It appears the problem lies in the difference between the Manichaeans’ interpretation of truth and Augustine’s perception of the Manichaean explanation of truth.

Considering Augustine’s debates with the Manichaeans, Fortunatus and Felix, one can indeed find the Manichaeans claiming they could explain, by plain reason, issues pertaining to the two Principles, the immutability of God, and other philosophical concepts. Indeed, such reasoning would have probably been an explanation of the Gnostic understanding of things and not

a physical, rational-mind reasoning. Besides, one has to consider whether these texts are corrupted, polemical baits.

Augustine affirmed that the Manichaean gnosis could be shown to be in error on rational grounds, and ignored the Gnostic claim that Gnostic intuition went beyond reason because he could see that such a claim was undebatable, since it was, in principle, unarguable. On the other hand, if the Manichaeans had, in fact, claimed to use reason to explain spiritual things, their reasoning was really an exposition based solely on their gnosis.

Therefore, Augustine's refusal to accept the Manichaean interpretation of their position was due to his reluctance to appreciate a non-rational Gnostic understanding. In this respect, Decret's argument is valid. Augustine's argument is over-simplified.

THE IMMUTABILITY/INCORRUPTIBILITY OF GOD

In his debate with Faustus, Felix and other Manichaeans, Augustine repeatedly criticised the Manichaean standpoint concerning the Light-particles which were consumed by the realm of Darkness. He argued that God is incorruptible and cannot be harmed by Darkness at all.

He believed that the nature of God was incorruptible (immutable, unchangeable). The Manichaeans believed that the nature of God was unknowable. They considered their God, the Father of Greatness, the Supreme God as the "Unknowable" (Jonas, 1963).

The nature of God may be totally incorruptible, but his created manifestations may be subject to a process of corruptibility. If this were so, how would or could he create manifestations different to his nature, which could be corrupted? If he could create such things, and he can because he is

said to be omnipotent, then it could be argued that not all things created are of the nature of God.

Consequently, if one argues that corruptibility cannot occur anywhere, one is then negating the existence of anything contrary to God's nature. In that case, either Evil does not exist, or else Evil has to be taken as part of God's nature. Both these conclusions are absurd, for evil exists and evil is opposite to what we assume we know the Divine to be.

One might argue that God might have a corruptible (changeable) nature. Perhaps God is free to allow change in Himself. The nature of God may be corruptible in the sense that at some level it can accommodate change in its nature at some point, for a period, and it can then self-correct and become pure again. Augustine may well have been mistaken in assuming that God is unchanging, but corruption is not just any change. It did not suit him when the Manichaeans told him that answers about the nature of God were unknowable (Confession, 1961), for indeed the nature of God is unknowable. He wanted to convince us that the Manichaeans were grossly ignorant when, in fact, the Manichaeans' answer that they did not know God's nature was a valid answer in its own right. Certainly it was one of honesty. Being dissatisfied with their answers, Augustine creates the nature of God to suit himself.

When discussing this topic one is reminded of the conundrum which confronts first year philosophy students: Can God create a room small enough that even He cannot enter into? Of course there is no satisfactory answer because either possible answer is a contradiction to the other part of the proposition. If He can create such a room, he is not omnipotent because he cannot get into it, and if he cannot create such a room, he is not omnipotent because he cannot create everything. One answer is that God can

cease to be omnipotent (by creating the room) but He does not. In fact it may well be that God does restrict His own omnipotence.

EVIL AND THE EVILNESS OF MATTER

The Manichaeans believed that there are two self-existent Natures, one good, the other evil. [This is clearly a distortion, as I will explain in the conclusion and epilogue.] Augustine believed in only one Nature – the God of all goodness. In calling God good, Augustine ascribed to God his own moral principles. He was also committed to saying that God’s reasons for permitting evils must be reasons that are acceptable according to his own set of moral standards. Therefore, any evil that God allows to exist in the world must be permitted by God because its presence is compatible with the furtherance of those ends regarded on the very scale which classes the evils as evils, as being supremely good (Penelhum, 1966-7). The Neo-Platonists view from which Augustine derived his knowledge on the argument states that everything that exists does so by its participation in the One. This source of all-being is all-powerful, intuitive and immutable. Augustine argued that unless evil had positive attributes as good, it could not be an independent first principle. He argued that self-existent must be a nature, a being, a substance, something that belonged to itself and was in its own right, something that was not of another nor in another. He rejected the notion that evil was a self-existent nature. He was convinced that evil was not a substance, but a falling away of some subsistent being from higher to lower, from greater to less, which Thomas Aquinas called a defect of fullness of being which was due to that substance. Augustine believed that evil could

not exist of its own but could exist only in good. Thus, according to him, Manichaeism pivoted on an impossibility and an absurdity.

A major component of Augustine's theory of creation is the notion of absolute non-being which he carried over into his interpretation of Evil as a corruption of the good. In De Vera Religione it is written:

In all cases divine providence . . . really to its true and essential nature whatever manifests defect, [i.e. tends to nothingness, and so strengthens it] . . . why do they become defective? Because they are mutable. Why are they mutable? Because they have not supreme existence. And why so? Because they are inferior to him who made them. Who made them? He who supremely is. Who is he? God, the immutable Trinity, made them through his supreme wisdom and preserves them by his supreme loving-kindness. Why did he make them? In order that they might exist. Existence as such is good, and supreme existence is the main good. From what did he make them? Out of nothing. That out of which God created all things had neither form nor species, and was simply nothing. Therefore, the world was made out of some unformed matter, that neither was made out of absolutely nothing.

The above statement gives the explanation of creation from nothing in its literal sense and contains two salient points:

- i God is the ultimate creator of all things from nothing through a free act of Divine will;

- ii Everything created by God depends upon good for its very existence.

Thus, for Augustine, God's omnipotence was correlative with creation from nothing, and God was causally responsible for the existence of everything. Accordingly, anyone who rejected this theory denied God's supreme power.

He also held that everything was created from matter. (This later becomes a basis for Darwinian evolutionary theory.) In this regard, God had to create matter first before He formed it. If we argue that matter is the basis of created reality, then the creation of matter and its formation can be regarded as phases of a creation in its totality and originates from the Divine will. But Augustine insisted that God's creation of matter prior to its formation into the world must not be taken in temporal terms (Confessions, 1961). Instead, it should be understood as two distinct phases of the act of creation. This shows that Augustine interpreted the entire theory of creation from nothing on his analysis of God's action in creating and forming matter. His understanding of matter was influenced by Greek philosophy. If matter is made from absolute nothing as Augustine believed, everything that is made from this matter is nothing for this matter itself was made from absolute nothing. This is rather obscure of Augustine. Scholars were later to divide reality into a '*se*' and the '*ab aliud*'. That which is a '*se*' is that which has its being from itself, or intrinsically.

CREATION FROM NOTHING

Augustine's theory of creation from nothing was a major component in his response to the central theological point generated by the Manichaean cosmology: the Problem of Evil. The Manichaean position is a radical dualism which recognises Evil being an independent ontological principle directly opposed to the Good principle. They claimed that the world was created as a result of necessity after the entrapment of the 'particles of Light' by Darkness. (This is either an error made by Mani or a corruption of his teaching because the Earth was created by Darkness, as will be shown later.) Augustine's response to this position from the contention that God created matter (the fundamental component of all things) from absolutely nothing. According to him, the corruption of nature was a direct outgrowth of the creation of things from nothing. He argued that matter, being the constituent of spiritual and corporeal natures, affirmed the total ontological dependence of all things upon God, the Creator. This also presupposes an ontological distinction between God as creator and that which God creates. He maintained that God freely creates owing to the goodness of his nature. But, Augustine's God and Mani's God are two different beings. To confirm this, Mani asserted that matter was created by Darkness, and Augustine believed his God created matter.

Augustine's attempted refutation of the Manichaean cosmogony hinges upon the theory of creation from nothing, which holds that God created all things from nothing by a free act of the Divine will. Therefore, it neither required corporeal things nor spatial relations nor time for its manifestation. The attribution of Divine will to creation does not allow one to further question the causes of God's will, for such questions would lead to

the argument of God's supremacy as the first and ultimate cause for the existence of everything. Perhaps Whittaker was right in saying that the need to establish an ultimate cause of the universe was closely connected with the basic human desire to find meaning and intelligibility in the world (Whittaker, 1881). This is in contrast to the common belief that the dualism in Manichaeism, like every form of Gnosticism, arose out of the anguish inherent in the human condition.

By acknowledging that God might have created everything from matter, Augustine would have to acknowledge that God would have created from nothing as well, since everything was created from nothing. If matter was made from absolute nothingness, then everything that was made from this matter was nothing, for this matter itself was made from absolutely nothing (On Genesis, 1991).

Augustine does show inconsistencies with regard to his treatment of the nothingness theory. He contended that he could not believe what he could not know, but did he really know that God created everything from nothing? Could he back this up with some hard evidence? If he could not, then he could not be certain that his claim was true or any truer than the Manichaean claim that evil constituted an independent reality that stood in radical opposition to God.

For Augustine, God is all Goodness. Since God is the creator of all things, therefore, everything which exists is fundamentally good. Thus, according to him, evil cannot exist as a principle directly opposed to God except in a subordinate relation to that which is existent, as a deficiency of the good. However, his concept of all created things as being good does not require that they must be perfectly good as God is. In other words, while created things are good by virtue of the fact that they exist, they are

susceptible to defects or deficiencies of the good. This is in contrast to the Manichaeian view of things as absolutely good or absolutely evil.

Accordingly, Augustine's theory of creation from nothing excuses God from all responsibilities for evil. Any physical and moral evils committed or suffered by people are entirely due to the misuse of free will. By adopting a hierarchical understanding of reality with its varying degrees of goodness, Augustine hoped to explain the Problem of Evil.

Augustine demanded that the Manichaeians back their arguments with evidence from the Christian Scripture. This was a ridiculous criterion, because, ultimately, it would position the Scriptures as the only reliable source of information.

Subsequently, Augustine's accounts of creation on all subsequent levels were based on his notion of the origin of matter. According to him, Genesis' reference to "formless matter" implied that "formless matter" was created from nothing. Hence, this formless matter represented a potential, seminal state of being before the formation of specific things. He argued that the statement from Genesis, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth," implied what will be, rather than what was already formed. He believed that formless matter provided the ultimate constituent for created things.

Augustine also claimed that the act of creation transcended time and all temporal designations even though its effects were realized in the temporal order:

then can be movements in the temporal order in beings subject to time that are to be formed and governed (De Genesi ad litteram).

In this respect, temporal considerations are associated with the motion of creatures. If this be the case, it is a waste of time discussing temporal relations prior to creation. However, in Genesis the Scripture clearly declares that heaven and earth were created first.

In Confessions XII and XIII, Augustine gives a very extensive account on unformed matter. He imparts to us a quasi-existence to matter, and places formless matter as ontologically close to non-being. In this sense, matter is not totally a nothingness but at the same time it is not anything specific either. This seems to imply that formless matter does not have the intelligibility which would allow us to designate it as any specific thing. In such an event one could argue that unformed matter cannot be knowable since it is not a specific thing.

Augustine further maintained that even quasi-existence of formless matter totally depended on God for existence. Thus, it did not exist as an independent existent, rather, it was created out of nothing into a “near-nothing”, and, according to Augustine, this contingency extended to both spiritual and temporal matter. Augustine held that it was impossible for human beings to conceive primordial matter which was “neither formed nor nothing”, yet unformed matter had the potential for intelligible formation by God (Confessions, 1961).

Thus, according to Augustine, matter (spiritual and corporeal) was created out of nothing into a “near-nothing”. This notion of matter definitely has a Neo-Platonic influence. It is neither pure negation nor a reality in its own right. Rather, it is negativity associated with mutability and its attendant corruption, and the potential for the reception of forms. If matter is almost nothing as Augustine says, it cannot be classified as absolute nothingness at all for absolute nothingness is totally removed from the realm of being. In

this sense, matter is not an absolute nothingness for absolute nothingness cannot exist in the realm of being – nothingness negates existence. Yet Augustine’s theory of creation maintained that God created all things from nothing. Since nothingness is the antithesis of that which exists, we cannot really discuss that which does not exist in an intelligible manner. It is obvious Augustine’s metaphysical rationalism and essentialism runs into difficulty here. There are clearly some inconsistencies with regard to his treatment of “nothingness”. His differentiation between being and non-being, of existent reality and nothingness, seriously weakens his claim in his argument on creation from nothing.

If all natures were creations of God and all matter was also, and if these were of the nature of God, then according to Augustine they would be part of God and therefore incorruptible. But we know and experience corruption in nature and matter. Hence, they are either not part of God, and the existence of the evil demiurge-creator is therefore a necessity, or else aspects of God are allowed to be corrupted on some level, for some time, for reasons we do not know. In any case, if this is so, and we can see that it is because of our experiential reality of corruption of nature and matter, then Augustine is wrong whichever is the case, both in his rejection of a demiurge if it is demanded, and in his maintenance of his concept of incorruptibility if he insists God is the creator of all things.

Contrary to the Neo-Platonic view, Augustine rejected the notion that God creates in response to necessity. However, his notion of creation from nothingness is an expression of Divine goodness. Such a view is also prominent in Neo-Platonism. His creation theory affirms the omnipotence of God as the Creator of all things, the Supreme Good at the heart of his creation, and that the existence of all things is dependent upon God. This

theory is monotheistic in essence and is diametrically opposed to Manichaeism and its conception of Matter (Darkness) as an independent ontological principle that is co-eternal with God (Light). His arguments on creation clearly reflect a strong Patristic background also. His interpretation of the creation theory clearly indicates an apologetic goal in defining the Christian teaching against the Manichaean cosmogony.

Augustine believed that all things which were created from nothing were susceptible to mutability, imperfection, deficiency, and non-being. Hence, there was a negative tendency for created things to coincide with finitude and contingency. Elsewhere he contended that God created all things from nothing. Therefore, God created all things with the capacity for corruption. Given this, we are to assume, according to his logic, that God has created inbuilt imperfection in all things. This is absurd. One must ask why he would do this. If accepted, this would mean that God is either incapable of creating perfection or else is malicious in his intent.

Augustine's position was that God was incapable of creating perfection because to create perfection would be to create another God which God cannot do. Augustine held that God could continually intervene in creation to prevent corruption, but that God was not evil if God did not so intervene. It appears that the opponents of Mani saw the Manichaean theory as denying the omnipotence and perfection of God as a Creator. But the Manichaean contention is clear: the Unknowable God of Goodness and Light is not the creator of the imperfections and Evil. The creator of these things is the inimical King of Darkness.

The Manichaeans said that matter, a product of an evil principle, was evil. Hence, everything that was created out of matter was evil. Augustine rejected the Manichaean belief that matter was evil. He said matter was good

and that creation with all its flaws, shortcomings, inconsistencies, and injustices, was associated with goodness. Since Neo-Platonists saw creation as the emanation of the goodness of the One, evil was un-regenerative and negative. Though it may be opposed to good in a moral sense, it was not of the same nature as good. Some people may argue that things that are placed in opposing categories must have a common ground or genre. They claim that only things which differ greatly from each other, yet remain in the same genre, are opposites. Hence, if Good and Evil are opposites they must have a common ground between them. Presumably on the Manichaeic view, the Good and the Evil would have as common ground **being** powers. But it can be argued that Good and Evil are opposites only makes sense if all evils originate from an evil God.

It can also be argued that if differences do not always imply contrariety, it is therefore possible to have differences without sharing a common ground. One can apply this argument also if evil has a common ground with an evil God.

Contrary to the Manichaeans, Augustine perceived matter as good because to him it was the ultimate constituent of all things in the universe. He emphasised the creation of matter from nothing and affirmed that all things were created by God. He argued that if matter was created out of nothing, then everything was created out of nothing since all was matter (with this argument, it is he who is the materialist). Since everything was created by God and since all things created by God were good, therefore, evil could not exist as a principle that impinged on good. Thus, Augustine claimed that God was not responsible for any evil if evil did not exist.

This identification of creation with goodness was fundamental to Augustine. To Augustine, matter was not in itself evil but formless, and it

did not lack proper goodness whereas the Manichaeans argued that matter was evil. Perhaps matter lacks goodness, but that does not necessarily make it evil. So on either Augustine's views or those of the Manichaeans, matter is neither good nor evil. If evil did not exist as Augustine claimed, why did he bother to try and convince anyone that creatures who succumbed to corruption and the effects of evil (because of their inherent mutability and because they were created from nothing) could not exist on the same moral level as God, their creator? One might say that for Augustine evil exists in the same sense that a hole exists – it is the absence of something. Compare: 'You say there is a hole in my jumper, but holes do not exist, they are nothing. Therefore, there cannot be one in my jumper!' The response could be that a hole cannot do anything but evil does express.

The thought of Timaeus is found in all forms of Neo-Platonism and Augustine's commentaries on Genesis clearly reflect its influence. Ernest W. Rarly mentions that in the Timaeus, it was the Demiurge who set up rational order in the face of chaos (1964-1965). The receptacle, which had no qualities of its own, assumed the role of relative non-being and was receptive of all others (Timaeus 48E; 53B). In Stephen Mackenna's translation of Enneads, it says:

What, then, is . . . this matter, described as one stuff, continuous and without quality? Clearly since it is without quality it is incorporeal . . . It must be the basic stuff of all the sense world . . . We must therefore refuse to it all that we find in things of sense – not merely such attributes as colour, heat or cold, but weight or weightlessness, thickness or thinness, shape

and therefore magnitude . . . It cannot be a compound, it must be a simplex.” (Plotinus, 1916).

Thus, any form or quality predicated of matter was received in matter only through a mind-principle extrinsic to it (Plotinus, 1916). Matter was deprived of sense, of virtue, of quality, of beauty, of ideal principle and pattern. It was unredeemed evil. Plotinus defended the goodness of material things by saying that they were good, intelligible, and beautiful through their participation in goodness, in Mind and in Beauty. But unformed matter, as evil, is opposite to good. This was very much the Manichaean stance. Obviously, Augustine’s position on his theory of matter had intrinsic difficulties. He vindicated the glory of God against the Neo-Platonists by attributing the Creator God as the basic being and goodness in all things.

As for Mani, he defined matter as “random motion” (Van Der Horst and Mansfield, 1974). Alexander of Lycopolis took exception to the Manichaean use of the word “matter” to designate the evil principle, but the Manichaeans, although they may have used the phrase from Plato, were probably using it in a sense to express their belief in an active source of evil in the world.

Augustine was against the Manichaean notion of uncreated matter. He accused the Manichaeans of elevating matter to the status of a god who was the creator of the bodies. He supported his claim that all things were created through the Word and that without the Word “nothing was made”, referring to John 1:1-3. Augustine’s reasoning is flawed. The Greek word “logos” was translated into English to mean “word”, but in Greek, logos means “thought” or “mind”. Therefore John 1:1-3 deals with creation coming from a thought, which is something.

By the time Augustine started his attempted refutations against the Manichaeans, he would have been familiar with the traditional Christian refutations of Gnostic dualism through the writings of Tertullian. Augustine's exegesis clearly reflects the work in the Hexaemeron tradition when he firmly declares the creation of all things from absolute non-being in its most literal sense. His theory that matter was created out of absolute nothing corresponds to the Hexaemeron tradition which depicts creation as a formation of formless matter.

Augustine's claim that the Manichaeans viewed the creation of matter as a Divine accident is mistaken. In Mani's writing it is stated that matter was created by evil to trap the particles of Light. It makes no sense therefore, for the Manichaeans to then say that matter was created due to a Divine accident. This appears to be another Augustinian blunder. In fact, his refutation of the notion of uncreated matter was that of Manichaeism.

CHAPTER SIX

AUGUSTINE ON EVIL

On the subject of particles of Light being entrapped by Darkness (Evil), Augustine argues that evil was not a separate principle but rather a privation of good, a non being. He believes in the necessity and gratuitousness of divine grace, antecedent to all human volition for good. He further states that all apparent evil originates in the human will. To him, nothing could exist other than God and what he created. There was only one principle, and that principle was God and all things were created by Him. A corollary to this is that we should embrace evil as much as good, but this becomes nonsensical. Nonetheless, this is the New Age concept many follow today.

The Manichaeon position on evil states that evil is a principle in the universe. It is a being absolutely evil in itself. In reference to this, Augustine accused the Manichaeans for denying the omnipotence and the perfection of God for he believed in the perfectibility of God and the existence of God as the ultimate cause of the universe. The Manichaeans believe that this evil principle exists as an independent principle. The principles of Good and Evil have been at “war” since the creation of the worlds (Manichaeon Psalm Book). The Manichaeon view tends to remove the personal responsibility for the state of one’s soul because the source of evil is the Evil principle and man is not the agent of evil. However, this does not mean that human being is excused to neglect his duty of rejecting evil.

The Manichaean explanation of evil contains a mixture of the Christian explanation that God is wholly and supremely good, incapable of any evil, opposed to evil; a human being is a compound creature, made up of body and soul; that it is the human being's responsibility to seek the Good through divine illumination which leads that human being to the Light (Manichaean Psalm Book).

Thus, to the Manichaeans, only good could come from God. Evil is the result of the existence of an opposing principle independent of the Good, not created, but a First Principle like God Himself. [This is another corruption I will address in the conclusion and epilogue.]

Augustine's theory of privation is indeed in opposition to Manichaean dualism. According to Augustine, evil was not to be found in creation but in the way a certain object was deficient in its measure, form or order, that is, evil as a privation (Cooper, 1953); evil was a negative force because it was a privation of good. Therefore, he stated, one could not say that evil existed in the same way as good exists because it was a corruption of good. If it can be argued that evil exists of its own accord, then his argument fails. Augustine's defence against the Manichaean position was based on the goodness of the world. This position that everything that exists is good was strategically important to Augustine, because it was inconsistent with Manichaean dualism. It was entailed by the doctrine that there is a highest good, a doctrine to which the Manichaeans themselves were committed (MacDonald, 1989).

This position was one of the central themes of Augustine's thought. His discussion of the nature of goodness was shaped by Christian orthodoxy and the so-called Manichaean heresy. Augustine stated that everything (other than God) that existed was good, and within the context of Christian doctrine

this asserted a necessary connection between being and goodness. This was so because Christian teaching stated that God was the sole creator and source of all things other than Himself, and that God was the highest good.

Given that God did, in fact, create, it followed that what He creates is good. Since God was good, He would only create good things. Therefore, everything that existed, must be good since everything that existed had the virtue of being created by a good God. Such an argument showed a necessary connection between being and goodness. That God was good was only a datum. However this account as a theory of goodness is unsatisfactory. It is unsatisfactory because:

- i As a most plausible motive for creation it is not morally a good one.
- ii It does not tell us what the goodness of everything consists of.

According to Augustine, the Manichaeans believed that the cosmos consisted of good things and evil things (cosmological dualism); there were two basic principles which accounted for this composition of highest good and an evil nature opposed to the highest good, the existence of which accounted for evil (theological dualism). However, there is some dispute concerning the accuracy of Augustine's description of Manichaean views.

The Manichaean position was that there was a highest good (which was by definition, the Supreme God) and two distinct opposing principles of Good and Evil (below the level of the Supreme). All the good things in the cosmos (other than the True God Himself) must have come from the highest good. However, Augustine said that God, the highest good, was the sole principle of things other than Himself. He argued that the Manichaeans contradicted themselves in their claims.

The Manichaeans agreed that there was a highest good, but the Good and Evil Principles are below the level of the Supreme Good (the Supreme God). In saying this, they acknowledged the omnipotence and goodness of the Supreme God while at the same time admitting the principles of Good and Evil as separate radical principles below the Supreme God.

However, according to Augustine, they failed to understand it precisely, and so they failed to see an inconsistency in their views. He argued that EVERY NATURE could exist only from the highest good, and so the evil principle opposed to the highest good could not play the explanatory role proposed by the Manichaeans. He argued that the Manichaeans' dualism was inconsistent. In Confessions VII, Augustine wrote:

But if [things] were deprived of every good, they would not exist at all; for if they existed and could not be corrupted further, they would be better because they would remain incorruptible – and what is more absurd than saying that those things have been made better by losing all good? Therefore, if they were deprived of every good, they would be nothing at all; therefore, while they exist they are good. Therefore, whatever things exist are good.

Thus, for Augustine, the definition of evil was as a privation of good, a corruption of the nature in which the evil was perceived. This is a broad definition of evil. Augustine says that corruption entails a displacement of a natural state or condition and it does not identify with any given nature. But why should it not? By the fact that what results from the absence of good

manifests evil gives it an evil nature. Evil exists for it expresses. Hence it must have a nature which expresses this evil.

Further, the mere fact that the privation (which now manifests an evil nature) exists, makes it something, and all “somethings”, by using his definition, are created by God and are good, for he claimed that all things which existed were good. Thus, he said no nature was evil. Since no nature was evil then every nature, everything created, was good and whatever underwent corruption was deprived of a good, which it already possessed. Hence, anything we call evil, since it existed, was essentially good.

Augustine’s privation theory was essentially that of Neo-Platonism. According to Augustine, when something good does not have the degree of goodness that it ought to have, then the privation of good is what we call evil (Evans, 1982). He believed that corruption implied that there was some good otherwise things would not be said to be corrupted. In this case, corruptible things were not absolutely evil. Hence, evil did not and could not exist as an independent principle as the Manichaeans maintained and all things created by God out of nothing did not have to be totally perfect as God was all perfect. The real issue between Augustine and the Manichaeans was not the nature of Divine Goodness, but instead it was the idea of everlasting unredeemable badness, and this is what Augustine appeared to dread most of all in his writings. Having seen the evilness and lust within himself, he needed to eliminate the possibility of his own evilness. One may argue that if Augustine were guilt-ridden, he would probably be attracted to the idea of redemption rather than the idea of evil as privation. For why should anyone be consoled with the thought that their evil is corruption and privation rather than a positive principle? Augustine was unable to completely sever his tie

with Manichaeism, and he was worried that he could be judged as evil and subsequently be transmuted.

Why was Augustine so obsessed with evil? The answer may lie in the answer to this question: Why would Augustine be rejected after nine years as a hearer?

Why was he not admitted to the elect group? Manichaeans would have been aware of the existence of beings of Darkness. Is it not probable that at least some of the electi perceived Augustine's ontological nature and therefore refused him access to the Inner Circle. It is possible that they regarded him as evil.

And could it be that Augustine himself suspected as much? It would be a fair assumption. This would explain Augustine's obsession with evil, with his own sins, with his need for salvation, and with his overpowering need to reject evil as anything but an unreal illusion. By doing this he then could dispense with his own inner thoughts that he was perhaps evil! Such argument does not imply that anyone who sees evil as a privation is evil or is afraid of hell. Also, could it be that he saw a great future in career advancement in the Christian institution and that by attacking Manichaeism viciously he would gain favour with the Christian Church and its authorities?

It appears from his own writings that Augustine did pursue a path to self-interest and self-glory. He was swollen with pride and "fell among men proudly raving". He complained of Manichaean carnality. But they abstained; he was the one wrecked by lust for carnal knowledge and for prestige.

He sought ego satisfaction: "Not because I knew it to be true, but because I wished it to be . . ." Obviously, he did not have INNER NOUS.

Given the Manichaean view of the two principles, it is plausible that the Manichaeans would have regarded Augustine, not only as an extremely unaware person, but also as a being of Darkness, for they would have expected a being of Light to have demonstrated at least some enlightenment after nine years of instruction in Manichaeism.

In the end, the Manichaeans were able to argue that evil exists of its own accord by attributing the highest goodness to the Supreme Good (the Supreme God) and the existence of the principles of Good and Evil as principles below the Supreme God – thus, maintaining the omnipotence and the goodness of God. Hence, Augustine’s perceived inconsistencies in Manichaeism fade away. Since the Manichaeans effectively argue that evil exists of its own accord, Augustine’s argument fails.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DE NATURA BONI CONTRA MANICHAEOS (Augustine Concerning The Nature of the Good Against The Manichees)

Augustine's anti-Manichaean philosophy stands out clearest in his De Natura Boni. The De Natura Boni (A.D. 397) gives a summary of Augustine's main arguments against the Manichaeans' response to the Problem of Evil, arguments which are based on the teachings of the Bible. It provides a comprehensive account of evil as a corruption or displacement of the nature of an existent good. Though it is primarily a recapitulation of earlier anti-Manichaean arguments, it is most precise in its treatment of evil as a privation of good.

A major component of Augustine's attempted refutations against Manichaean dualism is the definition of evil as a corruption or displacement of the good – a privation. In the De Natura Boni, Augustine continues his discussion on the nature of evil and discusses the various sources of evil against the Manichaeans' dualist theodicy. The concept of evil as a corruption of the nature of an existent good is closely associated with Augustine's concept of fundamental goodness in everything God creates and affirms the following:

- God is good.
- God is the creator of all things.
- Everything God creates is essentially good.

Therefore, according to Augustine, everything created by a good God is essentially good, and God is the supreme Creator of all good things. If this is so, as supreme God of all things, should we not hold God responsible for the evil in the world?

Like many before and after him, Augustine was puzzled with the Problem of Evil. He could not comprehend why evil existed when the creator of all things was infinitely good. Since Augustine could not dismiss the unlimited goodness of God, he could not accept that God could be responsible for the evil we perceive in this world. Like the Manichaeans (who depict God as supreme Creator) he too asked how a perfect and benevolent God who created the world could permit so much misery, suffering, pain, and injustice. Hence, the problem was that a solution had to be found for the dilemma of the simultaneous presence of good and evil which would accommodate all disputations. In the end, he sought the ethical solution to the problem of the origin of evil or theodicy in the Christian view of human volition and freewill.

If we were to accept Leibniz's explanation that because God is limited to what is logically possible, the existence of evil is necessary in this "best of all possible worlds" (Urmson & Rée, 1991). This would lend support to Augustine's argument that evil is in some respect a necessary good. But how can we place confines on supramental logic? If God is characterised by the traditional but conceptually restrictive omni-predicates, evil should never be allowed to exist unless we are prepared to accept that a good God could allow the existence of both good and evil.

The Manichaean response to theodicy was one with a dualist view, consistent with the Gnostic conception of evil as an existent reality, and something which violates and corrupts the Divine Nature. The Manichaeans

believe there is an independent principle of Evil which is the originator of all evil in the universe. This argument implies that God, as He manifests on some level, can be corrupted by the hostile invasion of the kingdom of Darkness. Thus, the Manichaean response on the one hand discharged God of the responsibility for evil, but on the other hand subjected God to imperfection and corruptivity. For those who view evil as an aggressive force not merely due to human weakness, the Manichaean teaching about the struggle between Good and Evil must make more sense than Augustine's explanation of evil as an outcome of man's sinning.

Augustine's contention is that everything other than God himself is created from God, and that which is of God is of the highest good; that which is from God is the totality of created being. That which is Divine is wholly immutable, while that which is from God is changeable and mutable since anything that is changeable is mutable. Thus, according to Augustine's theory, God is immutable and everything created by God is mutable and all things are created from nothingness. The significance which Augustine attached to Divine immutability is obvious in the following passage by Bernard J. Cooke from the article called The Mutability. Immutability Principle in St. Augustine's Metaphysics:

Because God is absolutely immutable he alone truly is. One of the most striking confirmations of the intimate link between fullness of being and immutability in St. Augustine's thought is the way in which he uses the text of Exodus 'I am who am' . . . and almost invariably St. Augustine will interpret the words of scripture as meaning that God is absolutely immutable. This . . . would have been the one occasion for St.

Augustine to assert the supremacy of existence as a transcendental, as the actuation of all other perfections, . . . instead, St. Augustine treats existence and immutability as if they were parallel perfections and even seems to make immutability more fundamental (Cooke, 1946).

Augustine said that every nature, spiritual or corporeal, is good, precisely because every nature exists from God and all natures exist within a hierarchy of goods. God who is immutable creates both mutable spirits (such as angels and human souls) and mutable corporeal natures. Hence, there is a hierarchy of beings in the universe with varying degrees of mutability and corruptibility according to their created natures.

Augustine attacked the Manichaeans as carnals who were unable to grasp that all nature was naturally good because they based everything on their senses. However, such a claim is quite erroneous, as both Augustine and the Manichaeans agreed that every good can have existence only from the supreme God (De Natura Boni, 1955).

Augustine's **Concerning the Nature of the Good** posits that all good things have measure, form, and order. This pertains to all things created by God regardless of whether they are spiritual or corporeal in nature. Consequently, God the Supreme Creator is ultimately superior to all measure, form, and order that is found in creatures. Another aspect of Augustine's theory of goodness is that goodness is correlative with being. In this sense, the absence of measure, form, and order would result in total privation of goodness and being. This Augustine termed as evil.

Augustine argued against the Manichaean position and said that evil was due to the corruption of a created nature, and not due to the nature itself.

He said evil was a corruption of measure, form, and order. In this respect, Augustine affirmed that any corrupt spirit was better than any incorrupt body (corporeal nature), which was consistent with his hierarchical understanding of reality. He maintained that the highest among the created natures (angels, human beings) could be corrupted only if they chose to do wrong through disobedience to God's law. In this sense, sin (corruption) constituted a just punishment.

Augustine tried to show that creation constitutes an ordered whole whereby things are so ordered that the weak are subject to that which is stronger and more powerful (De Natura Boni, 1955). Further, he said that even those things which decay or cease to exist do not interfere with the measure, form, and order of the created universe. Thus, according to him, the universal harmony is achieved simply in an orderly way whereby lower things are ordered by the Divine for the realization of the greater good. This is an important concept in Augustine's theodicy, for he maintained that if God is good and if God is the creator of everything that exists in the cosmos, then everything which God creates is good. This good extends to all parts of creation and creation as a whole. Augustine tried to prove that the natural order of itself does not allow evil. In order to explain evil, he introduced the concept of sin. But his argument is circular: Sin is due to evil while evil is due to sin.

By affirming the goodness of creation as a whole, Augustine attributed the evil we perceive in the world to human perception. He said that those things we perceive as evil are only so through our own perception but they are not truly evil at all. They are only things exhibiting a lack of good which they ought to have.

In De Natura Boni, on his theory of value, Augustine says that any substance is of positive value, but for each substance there is a proper form and the maximum value is had by it exhibiting its proper form. He argues that corruption reduces value, but if something in nature was to be evil, corruption would reduce its disvalue. This is an interesting point because it exposes Augustine's sub-conscious purpose. It seems to suggest that corruption can be a positive thing in this respect as it reduces the degree of evilness in an existing evil state. A possible responsive argument to Augustine's outrageous claim would be that a wicked person who gets Alzheimer's disease would become less wicked. Another example would be of a murderer and thief who is caught and incarcerated. Is he less evil because he is not free to steal and kill as his evilness permits when he has the opportunities? These cases exemplify a corruption of evil to the less evil, but only in a sense of the superficial perception.

In summary, Augustine denied any substantiality to evil. Since he believed that no nature could be contrary to God, no nature could be evil per se. His definition of evil was as a privation of good and represented the very antithesis of nature. Hence, according to him, something totally evil cannot exist, but any apparent evil can only manifest in relation to that which already exists, and what is deprived of the good must also be deprived of being.

NEGATION

Augustine maintained that the corruption of natures was a direct result of the creation of things from nothing, because everything that was created was subject to mutability. Hence, all things created by God were mutable.

Consequently all created things had a negativity corresponding to their contingency and finitude. This negativity is what Augustine termed the lack of perfection which they ought to possess by nature. He stated that such a limitation was not a privation but rather a negation. He insisted that physical evil, which includes such things as aging, death and suffering, was a negation of a higher good. Augustine's negative tendency defines evil as a negation because some negation is present in the very composition of creatures (Schneider, 1938). An example of evil as negation is the susceptibility to physical pain and injury. But there are supposedly realms that are free of physical pain and injury, hence we can extrapolate that God is capable of creating perfection. If this is the case, Augustine has contradicted himself. Either God did not create all things from nothing, as he insists, or else evil is not a tendency, in all things as he insists also. So God has to resist this tendency that raises the Problem of Evil.

In saying that evils are not natural, Augustine excludes from his concept of evil the limitation which is necessary for all creatures. To him, such limitation is not a privation but rather a negation, the absence or lack of a perfection which is greater than that to which a given creature possesses by nature. Hence, for him, a physical suffering is only the negation of a higher good and not the privation of a proper good. Pain is experienced as a specific physical sensation and suffering as a mental state which may be self-regarding or other-regarding. Pain itself, abstracted from suffering, may be just part of the natural order. For example, you might hurt yourself but then realise that you could so easily have been killed. The joy at still being alive does not remove the pain but it does remove the suffering which normally attends pain. Likewise, morphine sometimes leaves the pain sensation but it no longer matters. So there is no suffering. To inflict pain may not be wrong

if you know it will not result in suffering. Hicks (1977) says that a situation within which we feel pain can sometimes be such as to render the pain itself endurable and suffering can be a function of meaning and that it is possible to conceive of God's love and to experience it through suffering. Superficially this appears to be true but one needs to ask why do we need to suffer in order to appreciate God's love. Surely there is a better way around this. If there is none, then the Manichaean concept on suffering makes a lot more sense.

When it comes to suffering, Augustine has to argue implausibly that this is just the privation of a proper good. To cause the privation of a proper good is to corrupt which is a wrong action. According to this argument then, a physical pain or suffering inflicted purposely and unnecessarily on another is not an evil action carried out by the offender. Such argument excuses all types of offenders.

One may argue that there is nothing evil about suffering for one's own misdeeds, but what if a misdeed was out of one's control? In this sense it is evil even when one has to suffer for one's own misdeeds.

On the issue of pain and suffering, Augustine believed that such pain and suffering were dependent on knowledge and awareness, as in the knowledge and awareness of a disorder or privation. Thus, pain, suffering, and sorrow were only events in one's life that were devoid of a perfection of good, whereas the evil of nature dispensed pain, suffering, and death to animals in a manner whose justification one cannot fully comprehend. It is sad that many people believe that animals feel pain but do not suffer. The truth is that animals do suffer physically and emotionally. Those who abuse and assault animals should be dealt with in the same manner as those who abuse and assault human beings.

Many people believe that the act of evil is due to ignorance. This may be correct to some extent, but false beliefs and misunderstandings are recognizably worse than mere ignorance or failure to understand. For example, someone who believes that all Jews are murderers may be in a worse situation than someone who has not a clue about whether they are or not. But on a privative theory this could not be so. False belief could lead to fanaticism. It is easier to “re-educate” an ignorant person than a fanatic blinded by his false belief. Thus, false belief is harder to overcome than mere ignorance and any doctrine, when taken to fanatical extremes, can be deadly dangerous.

Ugo Bianchi makes the statement that what is specific in Manichaeism is that the negativity of bodily activities (such as sexual, ergological, alimentary activities) does not depend on the fall of man from a previous situation of spiritual or Light corporeity (as with Encratites), it depends rather, and immediately, on the fact of a mixture of mutually repulsive substances (essences). He says that it is the devilish substance and the devilish derivation of body that cause harm to the particles of Light caught in the different provinces of the visible world (Bianchi, 1987).

MORAL EVIL

Augustine defined moral evil as a misuse of freewill. His theory of moral evil was related to an existent substance as a corruption. However, we are all aware that the definition of moral evil is contentious.

PHYSICAL EVIL

According to Augustine, physical evil was the direct consequence of moral evil. It was a privation of those perfections which a creature should possess by nature. However, physical evil was experienced as a punishment by humans, animals, and all creatures of God's creation. Augustine viewed all physical evil as a consequence of sin through freewill. If freewill is responsible for human behaviour, and the exercise of freewill to do good or evil determines if one's action is right or wrong, then we are confronted with the dilemma of deciding what is right action and what is not.

In claiming that physical evil was a consequence of sin through freewill, Augustine said that therefore the punishment (suffering) incurred was always just because it was always consistent with the justice of God. He argued that sin brought about moral and physical evil which affected the whole of creation. On the subject of physical evil, Augustine added that physical evil suffered by man was also due to the consequence of the sin of Adam – the First Sin.

Thus, the theodicy which Augustine develops in De Natura Boni Contra Manichaeus rests upon the definition of evil as privation or corruption of good. This theory further leads to his theory of creation from nothingness (ex nihilo).

Augustine's De Natura Boni contains his best argument thus far against the Manichaeans in his theory of value. The theories he developed in his defence against the arguments of the Manichaeans were probably helpful for his church, but they are still ineffective against the Manichaean position, even though the Manichaean position itself is not totally satisfactory either.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Augustine found in Neo-Platonism, a suitable explanation of evil in terms of a theistic universe. He was confronted with the problems of Divine Providence, the justification of evil in a theistic universe and the reconciliation of unmerited suffering. Primarily, Augustine's Problem of Evil was the problem of wrong doing. To him, evil was a lack of proper good; it need not exist. Evil appeared to exist only in relation to existent natures but it was nothing substantial because it could not exist on its own. Thus, he solved the Problem of Evil by identifying evil as nothing. This theory contradicts the dualism of the Manichaeans. It also differs from Platinus' argument which states that evil is a necessity in the emanation and return of being to its source.

Augustine's view on evil becomes less obviously correct when we talk about malice. Based on his distinction of the 'pain of punishment' from the 'pain of separation', a person who is not truly evil cannot deserve everlasting punishment but might simply be deprived of the company of God in Heaven. Why? The answer could be that such a person might not be fit for it, or might not enjoy it. Augustine thought that pain was an evil for us, but

the absolute good situation required the pain of punishment for wrong doing. His mistake is not in the thesis, but in the suggestion that the punishment could be everlasting. Malice can be explained in many ways. A truly evil person could have malice, which is not due simply to an ordinarily weak will. So, if there is any such truly evil person, then Augustine's theory of evil seems to be flawed. If there are no truly evil people, then why should any be damned? One could say that a selfish, evil-doer lacks consideration but that is not an evil. Clearly, there is a problem for Augustine here, especially as he seemed to consider many who were not 'evil' or 'malicious' but just selfish and weak to suffer everlasting pain. Indeed, it is hard to reconcile the idea of evil with human freedom. If evil is something subsistent (hypostasis) and exists in its own right, we can say two things are in error here:

- i either one denies that an evil god was the author of all things – in which case he could not truly be Lord of all beings if he was evil, as Augustine insists, and he could not have a subsistence and a substance (ousia) – or else,
- ii in order to declare him author of all things, it is necessary to concede that he was also the creator of evil (Oratio Contra Centes, 6, xxv, 12).

Augustine employed the defence of the goodness of the world against the Manichaean position of evil and argued that everything was created by God, and everything created by God was good in so far as it existed, therefore nothing was absolutely evil. He argued that those things which exist and which we call evil are essentially good. He stated that sin was due to people lacking in the degree of goodness that they ought to have, and that the lack was caused by turning away from God and from the good they

ought to seek. When this occurred, they perverted their own nature and deprived it of a wholly good which they originally possessed. In other words, sin was due to a lack of good which it ought to have and this is due to people making the choice to choose lower good. So what Augustine was saying was that it was freewill which prompted people to choose good or lower good. When one chose lower good, sin was constituted. According to the concept of freedom of the will, we can choose whether to act in a certain way or not; that we are responsible for so acting or refraining from action; that for those parts of our history which do not lie within our choice, we cannot be held responsible.

However, an argument against the concept of freedom of the will is that nature is uniform, that whatever happens results from and can be explained by a set of causes and conditions and in particular that our actions result from our inherited character as modified by our environment. But if all that happens is determined by its context, then it would seem that our actions are determined by their context and our choices are determined by their context; in particular, if our actions arise from an inherited character as modified by our environment, then it would seem that we are no more responsible for our actions than we are for our inherited character and environment.

Clearly, Augustine's theory of predestination contradicts his theory of freewill. According to his theory of predestination, human action is purposely determined or compelled. Notoriously, the doctrine of creation and divine foreknowledge raise problems about human responsibility for the theologian. The freewill defence which attempts to show that God is omnipotent, omniscient, and wholly good is consistent with the argument that there is evil in the world when the Manichaeian view of the mixture of

good and evil is taken into consideration. It is also possible to entertain the notion that God could not have created a universe containing moral good without creating one containing moral evil.

Augustine's notion that human beings could become morally perfect by being obedient to God suggests that human beings could earn their goodness by their own efforts. This argument also assumes that human beings are so made that they have need of God's assistance through grace to become perfect, regardless of whether they have sinned or not. It implies that God has created imperfect beings. This contradicts the notion that God, being perfect, cannot create imperfection. Yet, imperfection exists. Hence, this argument is deficient in explaining the observed facts.

However, once accepted, as deficient as it appears, it afforded relief to Augustine's deep anxiety and allowed him to believe that evil was nothing, rather than something which threatened or limited God. But again he contradicted himself, for if evil was only a deprivation, Augustine should not have worried, as he did, about the damage sin could do to the individual human soul.

In his response to the Manichaean outlook on goodness, which insisted that things created by God are fundamentally good, Augustine posited a graded hierarchy of created things with a mixture of good and evil. If evil were removed from created things, then only good would remain, but if good were removed from created things, then good would cease to exist altogether. We need to query whether a privation can form a component of a mixture, and also whether from such a mixture, if it is possible for it to exist, a privation can be removed to leave only good. By definition this is impossible.

According to Manichaeism, the mixture of good and evil occurred only when the two principles became mixed and things were either absolutely good or absolutely evil. Thus, Augustine and the Manichaeans agreed that there was a mixture of good and evil in humans, but for totally different reasons.

For Augustine, things were a mixture of good and evil, natural and corruptible, existent, but tending toward non-being, and no reality stood in opposition to God on equal terms precisely because all things came from God. Unlike the Manichaean view on evil as a co-principle of God (which was a corruption of Gnostic thought), Augustine's view of goodness was correlative with being and evil was explained in terms of its subordinate relation to an existent good, being defined as a displacement of the natural state of a thing – a privation. On the concept of evil being a subordinate of a higher “goodness energy”, he is correct. However, Augustine is applying bits of truth in his argument to draw the unsuspecting into accepting his position. It is not uncommon to find bits of truth mingled with untruth in esoteric writings, which confuse many and can trap the unsuspecting into accepting the untruth as truth. Regarding the concept of good and evil, Gnostics could argue that this blending of untruth and truth has been purposely done to trap beings of Light.

In his defence against the Manichaean position of evil, Augustine defended his position against the existence of an evil principle by pointing out that the inhabitants of the kingdom of Darkness in the Manichaean cosmogony had many desirable good qualities. Hence, it could not be a principle of absolute evil. However, Augustine's defence is poor and inaccurate. His account contradicts the Manichaean account of the kingdom of Darkness whose inhabitants are selfish, quarrelsome, full of jealousy and

hostility, ignorance, lust, and destructiveness. His argument that, because the kingdom of Darkness desires the beauty of the kingdom of Light it must therefore possess good, simply because it covets what Good has, is flawed. Lust, jealousy, and covetousness are evil traits, as is destructive invasion. The analogy which illustrates this is the one of a ruthless, lustful warrior who wishes to rape a beautiful, pure virgin. His desire to possess, even by force, the beautiful virgin and spoil her purity does not make him any less evil.

It is arguable whether there is some degree of goodness in one who desires what good can give for reasons of selfishness and self-aggrandizement. The way the kingdom of Darkness went about to possess the goodness illegally, destructively and by brute force contradicts the very essence of Goodness.

In the Manichaean context, the “desire for the better” on the part of Darkness is taken as perverse presumption and sinful craving, for the “desire” is not for being but for possessing the better; and its recognition is one not of love but of resentment (Jonas, 1958). Since the Manichaeans believe that Darkness is incapable of reformation, it cannot possibly benefit from the perception of Light. In the analogy of the rapist, his lust is for possession and despoliation, not for the wanting to become beautiful and pure himself.

Augustine’s outlook from Libri Platonicorum and Stoicism is reflected in his teleology and presuppositions regarding goodness, order, and harmony of the universe created by the Divine, and the operation of Divine Law and Providence by God in the universe. He stated that divine attributes are eternal, and order and justice were always present in God. In De Ord. I. Vii. 18 , Augustine said that evil is contained within the divine order and God loves order. He said that God loved order precisely because by order He

does not love evil, and evil is in order in being not-loved by God. This contradicts his claim that God is love and that God exercises His justice by giving to each thing in the divinely appointed order, exactly the place it ought to have. God thus accommodated evil by making of it something intrinsically good (De Ord). Hence order is good if God loves it. Given this is true, then Augustine was implying that evil is not good since by order God did not love evil.

Further, Augustine's argument that the desire for good on the part of the kingdom of Darkness is essentially a good quality because the kingdom of Darkness would need strength to invade the kingdom of Light. Therefore, Augustine concludes that strength is a good quality the kingdom of Darkness possesses (De Natura Boni, 1955). This is indeed a ridiculous argument. The misuse of strength by the kingdom of Darkness and its inhabitants can hardly be regarded as a real strength. It is an act of bullying and trespass. It is unreasonable and unjust. The Manichaeans maintained that Good is a being of absolute goodness while Evil is a being absolutely evil in itself. Therefore, what the Manichaeans referred to as evil cannot be taken as partially good as Augustine would. Consequently, the good which Augustine perceived in the kingdom of Darkness could only be good in appearance at best. Hence one might say that the Light naturally possesses all the goodness while Darkness, the appearance of goodness.

One can further argue that the capacity to admire the beauty of the kingdom of Light is a good quality, but such admiration which leads to an invasion is a selfish, barbaric act which should be condemned. Such apparent goodness is not really a genuine goodness. It is really a lust similar to that of a man who admires the beauty of another man's wife so much as to murder her husband and then forcefully abduct her against her will in order to

possess her. Moreover, the Darkness, according to Manichaeian concepts, is incapable of reformation, and cannot possibly gain from the beauty and perception of the Light. At best, one (Light) has all the goodness, the other (Darkness), the appearance of goodness. Hence, such a view of the nature of evil in Augustine's arguments against the Manichaeian principle of evil is not convincing. Clearly, Augustine had argued from the position of divine goodness while the Manichaeians argued from the point of eternal unredeemable badness.

Augustine argued that the very fact that the kingdom of Light found it necessary to fight against the forces of Darkness was indicative of a deficiency and susceptibility to evil even before the mixture of Light and Darkness occurred. He argued that if the Manichaeian God was corruptible, then He could not possibly be compared to the incorruptible God of Augustine's. In adopting Elpidius' strategy, Augustine argued against the Manichaeians by asking "What would the amassed ranks of the powers of Darkness do if the Father refused to do battle with them?" (Confessions, 1961). He challenged them by saying that if their God was afraid, he was capable of violation, but if he was invincible he had no cause to fight. In this respect we can see the development of such arguments as:

- i If the Manichaeian God was incorruptible, then there would be no need for him to engage in a struggle with Darkness.
- ii There would be no mixing of Light and Darkness and its subsequent problems if there was no war waged between the two forces.
- iii This world would not have been created if there was no need for the war and no need for the salvation of the soul.

According to Augustine's reasoning, the Manichaean God is evil because he condemns the beings of Darkness to destruction and his own members to possible punishment and certain suffering by engaging in a struggle with Darkness, thus incurring a gross injustice. The Manichaeans, in response to this accusation, say that it was in fact an act of love to save the inhabitants of the Light that the Father of Greatness decided to launch a counter attack on the kingdom of Darkness.

The notions of incorruptibility and immutability seem to be the crucial links between the notions of the highest good and the most supreme being. Augustine's argument that what is incorruptible is immutable is expressed in the following passage from **The Trinity** :

For what is changed does not retain its own being (*ipsum esse*), and what can be changed, even if it is not actually changed, still can cease to be what it was. And for this reason, only that which not only is not changed but cannot be changed in any way whatsoever is said without any doubt most truly to be (The Trinity, 1963).

Corruption of the sort Augustine has in mind is therefore constituted by accidental changes of a special sort, such as in the example of the apostate angels' corruption due to their making irrational choices against the nature of goodness. If accidental changes of this special sort are the only changes that constitute deprivation of good, then it is hard to see how he can establish the conceptual links between incorruptibility (or corruptibility), immutability (or mutability), and goodness.

On the basis of this theory, Augustine argued against the Manichaean notion of absolute evil. He stated that if the natures in all the regions of Darkness were corruptible, they were of greater good than any other good. If they were not corrupted, then they were incorrupt. If they were corruptible, they would be corrupted or not corrupted. If they were corrupted, they were deprived of the good of non-corruptibility which they initially possessed, and if they possessed this good, then they could not be an essence of evil.

Having given his definition of evil, Augustine proceeded to consider where this “corruption” originated from. He remarked:

For to answer in a word the question, whence is corruption? It is hence, because these natures that are capable of corruption were not begotten by God, but made by Him out of nothing . . .
(Contra epistulum XXXVI).

Thus, Augustine dissociates God from the responsibilities to any corruption or corruptibility. Instead, he links corruptibility with non-being and identifies corruption of natures as those which were created by God from nothing. However, we need to ask how valid this argument is. Can God, as the creator of all things, as Augustine maintains, dissociate Himself from an aspect of creation which is unsavoury if He is responsible for all creation?

Augustine argued that God allowed things to be deprived of good in order that we may learn to appreciate the order, beauty, and goodness of the world. He believed that sometimes things that cause us misery, pain, and suffering do so, not because they are really evil in themselves, but because God has permitted them to be as a just punishment (since God is just) or as a

means of teaching us our subordination to God or to allow us to learn to appreciate things more (Contra epistulum XXXVII). However, evil teaches only evil, it cannot teach one to be good or promote goodness though sometimes it may appear to teach us. Often, those who suffer excessive evil end up denying God exists and even cursing Him and His apparent sick system.

Therefore, according to Augustine, God created good nature. He did not make corruptible natures, any apparent corruption being due to corruption of those natures because they were created out of nothing, and anything that was mutable tended towards decay and destruction – a tendency God sometimes allowed to be manifested. Augustine’s arguments reflected the general optimism of Hellenic rationalism and its teleological presuppositions regarding the order, the goodness, and harmony of the universe.

Hence, he declares any possibility of a nature contradictory to God as an absurdity. Thus, for Augustine, there was no absolute evil. Where there was a lack of good, it was only because God had allowed it to be so for a good reason. To put it simply, according to Augustine, evil had no substance (Confessions, 1961), no actual existence, and no intrinsic reality. He said that nothing was by nature evil, that evil was a lack of good.

But why is there this lack? Augustine distinguished between natural and moral evil. According to him, natural or physical evils such as earthquake and cancer were painful and horrible but not really evils at all. Rather, they were part of a Divine plan whose outlines are hidden from us. This is tautological : “God works in mysterious ways.”

He considered natural evil as part of God’s providence and not as an evil, though it may appear to be evil because we do not understand the

cosmos and the disordering of things was hidden. He said that God permits suffering and pain so as to teach us wisdom, to warn us of the danger of sin, or to ensure just punishment for sin. He argued that natural evil is really part of God's plan for the greatest good, and he turned moral sin to ultimate good. Thus, by applying his theory of providence which is God's way of putting right what was out of order, he denied the existence of 'natural evil' and attributed evil in the perverted will affects matter and causes events in the created world in various ways. However, there is a weakness in this argument. In regard to Divine Providence, if God does not know what evils will occur, He is not omnipotent. If He does know, is God not then either evil or impotent? Since Augustine insisted that God must have foreknowledge to be God, then God must in some sense be responsible for evil if one holds that infallible foreknowledge implies necessity. Augustine argued that God can know all things without undermining freewill, for freewill itself is included in the order of causes which God foreknows. One can accept that God's foreknowledge of a person is that he will sin, not that he will be forced to sin but knowing that a person will sin and still allows him the freedom to do evil is not really a responsible idea.¹

For Augustine, the acceptance of such a thing as a 'natural evil' would be either a God-made evil or a Manichaeian power co-equal with the Good. For him, the source of all evil is the rational will which is forced to choose between good and evil. Evans (1982) makes a sound argument that it may be easier to accept the supposition that God incorporates evil events such as

¹The doctrine of freewill was developed in answer to the argument that God could prevent sin if he wanted to, and because he did not prevent it, there was something wrong with him, not with humanity. As 2 Esdras put it: "It had been better not to have given the earth unto Adam; or else, when it was given him, to have restrained him from sinning. For what profit is it for men now in this present time to live in heaviness, and after death to look for punishment? The problem was to absolve God from suspicion of a frivolous malice.

flooding and earthquakes into the natural order than to speculate that such evil events are due to a human or angelic sin.

If evil is harm done willingly and knowingly by one sentient being to another, then God must be held responsible for the natural evil he inflicts on humans and animals. On one hand, Augustine evades the Problem of Evil, defining God as good and just and then arguing that by deprivation God must have a good reason for his actions and that his actions must ultimately be just and also the right one under the circumstances. If we hold one another to basic moral standards, why can we not hold God to such standards also? The argument that animal suffering is simply part of the natural order of the universe is also a weak one. Moreover, Augustine considered that it was wrong for anyone to cause suffering to others, without a good reason. Why should it be so if suffering is not a genuine evil?

When Augustine is confronted with the question of why moral evil exists, he answers variously. One of his responses is that evil is the result of a freewill choice on the part of mutable, intelligent beings such as angels and humans who are capable of committing sin through wrong choice of freewill. This response is incoherent. We can answer by saying: Nothing caused it but it can be explained as due to reasons. However, any answer to the question of what it was that caused the freewill choice of evil, must be illogical, because nothing is able to cause a freewill choice.

R.R. Brown makes a comment on freewill choice to sin. He says that evil is the freewill choice to sin and that freewill choices have no causes (Brown, 1978). One argument put forward by Titus of Bostra is that man is neither born good nor bad but fair, and acquires goodness through education and training. Consequently he is able to reflect on the consequences of sinful actions and therefore make the right decisions. In this sense a person who

sins is fully aware and in control of their cognitive faculties. Therefore, they can avoid committing a sin if they choose to do so. This goes back to the free choice of one's freewill, and God's gift of freewill does not imply freedom from constraint.

However, a question which arises is how is the evil in the perverted will able to affect matter and cause events in the world which God has created? Further, the argument breaks down in the recognition of differing moral codes in the world. What is sin for Augustine may not be classed as such by others.

Augustine says that God loves order and does so precisely because by order he does not love evil, and evil is 'in order' in being not-loved by God (De Ord). 18). Again, this is tautological nonsense.

He further claims that God exercises his justice by giving to each thing in the divinely appointed order exactly the place it ought to have. This is saying that God tolerates evil by making it something intrinsically good, for order is good if God loves it. Thus, any disorder is not contradictory to nature since God is the author of all natures and God is good. Hence, God can do something similar with evil. It may be easier to accept that God may have incorporated evil events such as floods and earthquakes into the natural order of things than to accept how a human or an angelic sin may have caused it. Augustine has incorrectly identified the properties and behaviour of evil, hence his arguments are deficient.

According to Augustine's argument, evil cannot exist as an independent principle in direct opposition to God (the Good principle) and God is absolved from any responsibility for evil since rational creatures are corruptible and their sins are due to their misuse of freewill. However, Augustine's argument, that all things created by God are good since God is

good and perfect, does not require that all things created by God must be perfectly good and therefore capable of manifesting deficiencies and manifesting varying degrees of goodness.

In contrast to Augustine's view, the Manichaeon view is that, ontologically, the things in this world are either absolutely good or absolutely evil. Therefore, creatures are either good or evil – there is no in-between and there are no varying degrees of goodness.

The negation of goodness, like the negation of anything, should leave a vacuum, a void, a nothingness. But as many, including Jesus, Mani and others, have repeatedly said, evil is an active, destructive force. Hence it can hardly be a void, a vacuum, a negation. It was not a void that assassinated the Manichaeans. It was an active, vicious force which resented the exposures they were making of it.

Biblical evangelists, even Catholic ones, in quoting Revelation 20:3, speak of the Devil as being an entity; a separate, distinct, expressive being who will be cast into the bottomless pit by Jesus Christ on his return after the tribulation. It is clear from Mark 1:12-13 of the Bible that Satan has had possession of this world, for he tried to bribe Jesus with the spoils of this world. If this was the True God's kingdom how could Satan afford to do this? However, why would Jesus say "My kingdom is not of this world"? If Satan's evil was simply a privation of good, why was it not written that Jesus Christ and His Father could simply add goodness to Satan to make him divine? Taking the various arguments into account, it is clear that a privation of Good is an evil (Adam and Adam, 1990).

Augustine's explanation of the theory of privation is in some ways similar to the theodicy of monism, which suggests that evil is not real but only apparent, and could be recognized as a good if we could but see it as a

whole in its full cosmic context. (This concept was later to be adopted by the New Age Movement in the assertion that there is no evil.) This contrasts with the theodicy of dualism, which rejects the view that the universe forms an ultimate harmonious unity and insists that Good and Evil are totally and irreconcilably opposed to one another. These two positions have a powerful influence on Christian thought. However, there is the dilemma of reconciling full Christian monotheism with sin and suffering in a realistic way in order to arrive at a Christian understanding of evil.

To say that evil is only apparent suggests that evil is only an illusion. Even if some evils are illusory then the fact that the illusion exists and makes us suffer and often blocks our path to God is itself an evil. The mere fact that humans and animals are subjected to evil, and all its horrendous consequences, which invariably include pain and suffering, is evil.

Augustine saw evil as a self-originating act which did not exist outside the agent himself. In the Neo-Platonic identification of goodness with existence, Augustine found the necessary philosophical argument to undermine the Manichaean position of an evil power which is co-existent with Good.

In his commentary on Genesis he stated, “everything which is called evil is sin or the penalty of sin.” Like Titus of Bostra he saw evil as self-originating. However, we have yet to address the question of who created free choice and who created sin or the possibility of sin. According to Augustine, God in creating things which were, of their nature, corruptible created not sin but the possibility of sin. The agents themselves, in allowing the corruption which was their natural tendency, created sin. As the Manichaeans had rationalized their obsession with evil on a cosmic scale through their belief in a primordial invasion of the kingdom of Light by the

forces of Darkness, so too, Augustine expressed his belief in freewill as the cause of evil on the same level through his concept of the “Twin Cities”.

From the Manichaean point of view, sin is not an act of one’s own volition but a temporary loss of awareness by the soul, atonement for it being contrition, confession, and a renewal of awareness of the soul’s Divine origin. The Manichaean doctrine of a mingling of Good and Evil in man is seen by the Christian theologian as depriving man of freewill, as he stands helpless while his actions are dictated by the struggle between the two natures within him. Augustine’s reliance on Neo-Platonism for refuting the philosophical basis of Manichaean dualism is an important example of the gradual absorption by Christian theology of Platonic philosophy in late Antiquity – their defence of a monistic universe against Mani’s dualism is very apparent. Simplicius sees the universe as the emanation from the One. For Augustine, the supreme Good is at the heart of his creation. He objected to the Manichaeans’ claim of the two natures as a doctrine which makes the nature of God to be liable to change and defilement (Rickaby, 1925).

CHAPTER EIGHT

SIN, SUFFERING, MORAL AGENCY, and FREEWILL

The Manichaeans viewed sin as a struggle between the two opposed principles of Good and Evil in the human being, with the good impulses originating from the Divine nature and the evil impulses originating from the opposing evil nature (Confessions, 1961). Contrary to Augustine's view, the Manichaean concept of sin was, and is, that Evil can influence one to do wrong. The Manichaean, Fortunatus, in his debate with Augustine, quoted from Paul's epistle to the Galatians to support the Manichaean view that, contrary to Augustine's argument on sin and freewill, they believed that human beings did not have complete control over their actions, in spite of their good intentions (Augustinus, 1866). The incident of stealing the pears suggests Augustine probably did have the unhappy belief that we are to blame for all our actions. But he also held the thesis of predestination. What Augustine did later say was that God would always (eventually) intervene to prevent corruption if that was the desire of one threatened by corruption (*De Natura Boni*, 1955).

The influence of Evil is what the Manichaeans tried to avoid so that their purity would not be compromised. The concept of Original Sin was to make sure no one missed out on any punishment meted out. In reference to this issue, Augustine argued that it was absurd to speak of good acts or evil acts if human beings had the absolute will to freely choose good or evil. But do they have this absolute will, and does each know what is ultimate good and ultimate evil?

In De Duabus Animabus, Augustine argued that an absolutely evil nature could not sin because its evil nature did not permit it to have the choice to choose good. Conversely, an absolutely good nature could only sin if it chose to, or if it was forced to sin by an evil nature. If it was forced to sin by an evil nature, then it had not committed a sin. If the good nature had freely chosen evil, then it could not be a good nature. Thus, Augustine's view of evil was the freewill to wrongly choose a lesser good.

If we assume that human beings have freewill, the Problem of Evil can become a problem of choice, if one knows all the consequences of one's choice. But one does not always know the consequences. The saying that the road to hell is paved with good intentions has a lot of truth in this sense. If man lacks freewill, there can be no moral evil but a more perplexing problem of physical evil.

Some scholars contend that Augustine may have misinterpreted the Manichaeian teaching by addressing the inter-play of good and evil natures in humanity as "two souls". Puech is of the opinion that the Manichaeians would not have referred to the evil nature as a second soul (Puech, 1979).

Augustine argued against the Manichaeians that sin had to involve freewill. It had to involve the exercise of will to be considered as the agent's own act for which the agent was morally responsible. Augustine was convinced that the first humans sinned by freewill. This concept of *will* presented him with the question of how good agents (may they be humans or angels first created) came to *will* the evil they had committed. Augustine did not have a satisfactory solution to this question. He said that the first evil *will* was either a random outcome or due to a withholding of grace. Yet, Augustine on another occasion imputed his (sexual) sins to the insistent

influence of the stars (Ferrari, 1977). On the whole, Augustine's account of moral agency in evil is flawed.

In his City of God, Augustine posited that the cosmos (that is, the combined eternal and temporal universe) was made up of two kinds of moral societies whose citizenship was determined by where human loyalty and love ultimately rested. The citizenship of God was constituted of those who live according to the spirit, and the City of Man of those who lived according to the flesh (Spencer, 1991).

The above concept is a corruption of the Manichaeian doctrine of the two creations. When we examine Augustine's thought on the City of God closely, we can see that as far as Augustine was concerned, human society was divided into three distinct moral spheres which could be termed the sacred, secular, and the profane. However, he does not clearly explain this triadic delimitation of the world though it was clearly implied in his City of God.

Against the Manichaeians, Augustine argued that sin was the result of a free exercise of will to do wrong, otherwise it would not be considered as the agent's own act for which the agent was morally responsible. Again he failed to answer how the good agents willed evil. Augustine has no satisfactory solution. W.S. Babcock describes the problem of moral agency as the problem of conceiving the relation of the person who performs an action to the action performed, in such a way that the action genuinely counts as the person's own (Babcock, 1988).

Thus, Augustine's position was that moral evil was the consequence of spiritual evil, and it was man's sinfulness which was the source of this spiritual evil. On this view, to sin is to corrupt (to remove a good that should be there). If evil is nothing, it does not matter whether one sins, for it would

seem that to sin is to do nothing. If sin is nothing, then one should not be punished by God for sinning, for no one should be punished for nothing. But then again, if evil is nothing, how does one explain how evil can be such a powerful and horrible influence in the world? Surely the evil which ruined humans and angels is something.

The Christians and non-Gnostics maintained that sin was all due to man's own misuse of freewill. This was the position held by Augustine also. The absurdity of Original Sin of each created being, when the being had not yet done anything to deserve such a stain, was explained away as collective inherited sin, just as later the Church would unjustly argue a case for collective inherited sin in the Principle of Vicarious Satisfaction from the murder of Jesus. The tragedy of all this was that it led to the unjust persecution and execution of those who disagreed.

Augustine's argument on Original Sin can actually be taken to imply that the Devil is the creator of all humans born, for he implies that all humans are born with sin and all humans are born with Original Sin. If this is correct, Augustine convicts God of injustice. As G.R. Evans puts it aptly, "Augustine makes men despair of perfection, for they can never eradicate their inborn fault" (Evans, 1982). Some people may argue that the incoherence is only in combining the idea of sin as separation from God or as a desire not to conform to God's will with the idea of sin as wrong doing. On Augustine's theory we do wrong because of Original Sin but Original Sin is not our wrong doing. Whatever the problems with the theory of Original Sin, it could be said that for a start only God is perfect, so why should we worry about imperfection when God could give us what we cannot achieve for ourselves. Augustine's defence of Original Sin is similar to the Manichaeian view.

A prominent Manichaean by the name of Julian of Eclanum, accused Augustine of muddled thinking in his defence of Original Sin in a similar way to that which Augustine had done against the Manichaeans. It is fair to say that Augustine's defence of Original Sin is unjust. As Julian said, the very notion that God would allow a flaw to remain in the nature of man as a result of Adam's Sin shows God is not perfect (Contra Julianum). By asserting the existence of Original Sin, Augustine was saying that Satan or Adam was the creator of all humans who were born. By denying that in baptism all sins are forgiven, Augustine holds that there remains in baptised parents the evil by which their children are born in Original Sin (Contra Julianum).

Augustine's defence of Original Sin implies that God continuously creates imperfection since all human beings have to pay for Adam's sin. By holding on to the argument of Original Sin, Augustine convicted God of injustice, for indeed, it was unjust to condemn new-born infants or anyone else for Adam's sin. Augustine's theory of Original Sin did not allow any human being to be born perfect for no one could ever eradicate their inborn fault. Hence, everyone is born sinful.

The Manichaean position is that there is an independent source of evil. Its account of sin exempted the self from moral agency in evil. The Manichaeans believed that within the human was a mixture of good and evil principles.

All the good acts were ascribed to the good principle and the bad ones to the evil principle. Since the Manichaeans identified the self with the good principle, the self was obviously exempted from being an agent in or responsible for evil. Thus, the Manichaeans asked why would the good turn to evil, if the self was good and its first orientation is to the good?

This is a question to which Augustine could not give a satisfactory answer. One could argue that Augustine was unable to conceive of the relation between the agent and the evil act, where such an evil act includes willing, as well as doing, in such a way as to make the act the agent's own.

The Manichaeans had the advantage of being able to affirm unambiguously that directly or otherwise, God was not the originator of evil (Augustinus, 1866). For them, evil did not originate from God or within the realm that God ordered and controlled. Instead, it stemmed from the Evil Nature that opposed the Divine. In this view, neither God nor anything that came from God was evil nor capable of evil.

Augustine's position is a more difficult and more tenuous one than the Manichaeans'. His premise excludes any substantial view of evil as an independent reality or power in its own right (Confessions, 1961). Consequently, he has had to concede and insist that the origin of evil lies in the human soul. To sustain this position, Augustine is forced to restrict evil to its human and its moral form so as to avoid any kind of evil that might require us to posit another non-moral source to account for its existence. In this instance he insists there are two kinds of evil:

- i SIN, that is, moral evil committed by moral agents, and
- ii PENALTY, that is, the punishment from God, justly imposed on the offender.

On the argument of sin committed by moral agents, Augustine faces two problems. On the one hand, he has to establish the claim that the evil committed by those people is specifically moral evil, of which they may rightly be considered the moral agents responsible for their acts and,

therefore, deserving of punishment. The penalty imposed on them therefore is just. On the other hand, he has to argue that even though human beings are capable of moral evil, they nevertheless initially came forth good from God, and do not implicate God with evil as the originator of any human sin or wretchedness (Contra Faustum, 1901).

The answer to these two arguments seems to rest on freewill. Augustine recognised that his position also committed him to defend the claim that freedom of will was itself a good, or at least that a good act freely done was better than a good act not freely done. Here, Augustine appeared to have secured a base from which to attack what he considered to be a deep flaw in Manichaeism, which stated that if the self (the good soul) had sinned and was in need of repentance and forgiveness, then it must be capable of evil, something which the Manichaeans also denied it could will or do. If they said that the evil nature was the one that forced the good soul into sin against its own inherent goodness, then the opposing force of Darkness could not be unremittingly evil. Instead, it must be capable of repentance, retaining the possibility of good. The Manichaeans would forcefully reject that the evil nature is capable of any goodness. Hence, in either case, there seems to be incoherence in the basic features of the Manichaean view which is probably due to corruption of the texts.

In the Manichaean view, there was no basis for finding anyone or anything at fault. If humans were compelled by the evil nature to do wrong, then they were not responsible for their evil. Since the evil force was by nature evil, then it was only acting according to its nature. Hence, the evil nature was excused from moral fault or sin. Thus, the Manichaeans' arguments on sin undermines their own stance on sin as well as their belief in repentance. Augustine's appeal to freewill as essential to moral agency

enabled him to undercut the Manichaean claim that human beings sinned unwillingly. But then, having this view, Augustine should not believe in predestination.

One can argue that evil stemming from freewill is incomprehensible since the movement of freewill cannot be analysed causally. If sin arises from a prior deficiency in the intellect, then God would be responsible for that deficiency and consequently be the ultimate cause of sin.

It can be argued that if sin is the result of a prior fault, such as greed, then either the greed is God's work and responsibility, or it is itself the sin, and the whole argument goes in endless circles. Augustine said that if any prior cause at all existed, then God was to blame (City of God, 1972). To this extent, even the sin of the Devil poses the same question of its causes. Thus, for Augustine sin was the freewill choice to evil that had no prior cause. His response to why God permitted evil was that freedom of will entailed real freedom to do evil.

He went further by using a scale in which at the top end there was the absolute being, God of goodness. Below him were the angels, humans, animals, plants, inanimate objects, and unformed matter. Each step down the scale was less real, less spiritual, and less good. According to such an argument, the basic confusion of moral with ontological "good" appears immediately and presents further problems.

Augustine would seem to be a compatibilist: we are free but also predestined. Compatibilists typically distinguish between external constraints, which restrict freedom, and the determination of our choices by our own desires and so forth which does not restrict freedom. So Augustine might complain that the Manichaeans externalise the good and evil influences and so cannot preserve belief in human freedom.

Augustine, using a Neo-Platonic explanation in response to why God permitted evil, argued that the successive emanations proceeding from God were filling the whole realm of possible forms all the way down to unformed matter. He said:

You do not have a perfect universe except where the presence of greater things results in the presence of lesser ones, which are needed for comparison. (The Teacher, The Free Choice of the Will, Grace and Freewill, 1968).

This explains the variety of created things and why there are not just angels, but it does not explain the free capacity to give in to the tendency to become corrupted. However, the suggestion that moral evil is the result of a defect in the will fails badly. It fails because it ascribes sin to ontological defect, which is by definition not blameworthy. It fails because if a defect in the will can cause sin, then the will is not truly free.

In short, the ontological explanation of evil neither protects God from responsibility nor responds to our experience of radical evil. Augustine should have stuck with his previous argument [that the decision to sin does not arise from the nature of the will itself. It is not necessary and has no cause (Confessions, 7. 12)] rather than searching for causes.

Likewise, moral evil, according to Augustine was the result of misuse of freewill. He maintained that moral evil was due to a corruption or a privation of moral good which was due to the freewill of the offender, who chose to commit an immoral act (sin) and in doing so rendered it just that God allowed natural corruption to take hold.

Hence, for Augustine, the first Sin of Adam was due to his misuse of freewill. From an ontological perspective we need to ask two things:

- i Who taught Adam to misuse freewill?
- ii Who created the pathway for the misuse of freewill?

According to Augustine, physical evil was a privation of perfection which a creature should possess by nature. He argued that while moral evil was due to the misuse of freewill, physical evil (such as death and suffering) was the direct consequence of moral evil. He attributed Adam's Sin (the fall of Man) as the cause of humankind's subjection to a privation of natural good in existence. He also repeatedly referred to the condition before the fall of Man where there had been a fall among angelic beings. Hence physical evil had been a punishment since the fall of Man.

He viewed all physical evil as the result of sin or some wrongful doing committed by one's own freewill, and therefore the sufferer was justly punished for the sin they had committed. If this argument is to be accepted wholeheartedly, we have to seriously consider the concept of re-incarnation to explain why and how a newly-born baby has to suffer undue pain and trauma the very moment it enters the world. If we accept Augustine's argument of the first Sin (Adam's Sin) and accept the baby's suffering as a just punishment, then it would be most unfair. One can argue that physical evil is the result of a collective sin. In that case God could have seen to it that the natural tendencies to corruption did not manifest themselves. But because people sin, God lets these tendencies have their way.

The Manichaeans and Gnostics maintained that suffering was due to the mixing of good and evil inflicted by Darkness. According to Augustine,

all suffering due to disease, degeneration, death and other things was due to Original Sin and man's separation from God.

The Manichaean concept is that all which leads to disease, suffering and evil is inflicted by Darkness whilst Augustine maintained that Original Sin destroyed the supernatural state in which God resisted the tendencies to corruption in creatures. If Augustine was right, virtuous people would not suffer disease or other ills. But virtuous people do – because of Original Sin. The body of anyone who lives long enough, no matter how pure in spirit they are, will degenerate. This is an unavoidable consequence of biological life in this realm.

According to Augustine's argument, it is not a personal interaction which causes disease – mankind's sins in general affect all equally, just like Original Sin. But, if this truly was the case:

- there would be no need for personal forgiveness of sin.
- there would be no need for personal accountability.
- there would be no need for personal judgement. A collective forgiveness would be sufficient. Such a concept would make many of his church's tenets redundant.

However, this doctrine of sin as the cause of suffering is untenable. Suffering in the form of disease, degeneration, and death is, by and large, independent of personal spiritual status while in this world. Although sometimes one's sins cause one's own suffering – for example, over-indulgence in food and alcohol – but there are babies who suffer from diseases from the moment they are born. Did they suffer because of their sins or did they suffer because of the sins of their parents? Since it is

unlikely that the babies could have sinned the moment they were born, the answer seems to be that they suffered because of the actions of their parents which are deemed as “sins” are responsible for their suffering. This is similar to the concept of Augustine’s Original Sin, whereby people inherit a corrupt nature and as a result are inclined to further sin which further corrupts. If this be so, it is most unjust and cruel.

If these things came about as a result of mankind’s collective evilness, then this would be most unfair. Why should the individual suffer in this way? This is the chief defect of the Augustinian scheme. Clearly, this is an inadequacy in Augustine’s solution to the Problem of Evil. If God freely gives an undeserved benefit to being A, God should do so to being B also, unless A and B are relevantly different.

If disease, degeneration, and death are due to collective sinning, then no individual can be held responsible for the evilness which affects him. This would remove the need for the individual to personally confess, and this would remove the need to have a church and its sacrament of confession. Therefore, this doctrine is defective and untenable.

According to Manichaeian concepts, disease, degeneration, and death are not due to “sins” of the individual but to the suffering imposed by Darkness.

Augustine, in echoing the teaching of the Christian Church, said that mankind had separated itself collectively from God and that is why it suffered as a collective unit. At the same time, he said that there was a personal component and that individuals continued to sin and suffer on top of that. This is like saying that man produced the separation from God and that man produced evil.

The Manichaeans believed it was Darkness that had imposed Its evil influence into this realm. With this knowledge, and using the principles as taught by Mani's Three Seals for example, beings could mitigate factors of influence from Darkness, and therefore could see through the traps and awaken from their spiritual slumber.

The Elect were required to observe the Three Seals:

- ... The Seal of the Mouth (which concerned the prohibition of eating flesh-meat, eggs, milk and wine).
- ... The Seal of the Hands (which forbade the taking of animal and plant life which would contribute to the further imprisonment of the luminous particles (Lieu, 1985).
- ... The Seal of the Womb (which concerned the prohibition to beget children in order to prevent further entrapment of the Light-particles).

The diet of the Manichaeans was restricted to types of food which they judged to contain a large amount of Light-particles. Thus, fruits, especially melons, and vegetables were allowed, but the eating of meat, dairy produce, and eggs was forbidden. Wine was also prohibited.

The prohibition of the Manichaean Elect to marry was called for because, in the Manichaean myth, the union of Adam and Eve was the beginning of a successive imprisonment of Light particles in matter through procreation. The Hearers, conversely, were allowed to marry. It was mentioned by Augustine (Contra Faust XXX) that the Manichaeans denounced marriage because they rejected the claim by Christians that marriage was a contract for the procreation of children. But although the Hearers were allowed to marry, they were encouraged to avoid having

children. It was recorded that the Christian Fathers of the early years were opposed to this institution of marriage.

Origen declared: “Matrimony is impure and unholy, a means of sexual passion” (Fielding, 1942).

Jerome stated: “A man of God was to cut down with an axe of virginity the wood of marriage” (Fielding, 1942).

Ambrose said: “Marriage was a crime against God for changing the state of virginity that God gave every man and woman at birth” (Briffault, 1927).

Tertullian said : Marriage was a moral crime, “more dreadful than any punishment or any death. It was obscenity” (Lederer, 1968).

Augustine said: “Marriage was a sin” although we are told that Augustine eventually came to see marriage as a genuine good (Confessions, 1961).

This illustrates just how much the early church and the Manichaeans had in common. Kurt Rudolph (1983) claims that the Gnostic church had the right interpretation but the pseudo Christians hijacked it.

The Manichaean Hearers were allowed to own property, eat meat, and be involved in a wide variety of professions. They helped the Elect by providing them with fruits that could liberate the particles of Light when eaten. The Elect, in return, prayed for the Hearers who were not fully engaged in purifying themselves since they did not keep the Manichaean discipline of the seals of “Mouth, Hand, and Bosom”.

The Manichaeans claimed that ignorance confuses and produces Darkness, whereas knowledge illuminates. [This has to be a corruption of Mani's teaching because he would have known that ignorance cannot produce the being known as "Darkness". It is more likely that it pertains to ignorance bringing about wrong action]. Since each saved soul was part of the world of Light, and of the same nature as the gods, any departed saint could be addressed as if he were himself God. The living Self, being that part of Light which was captured by Darkness, was itself God, but a part of God imprisoned and in need of salvation. Since it was of the same essence as the individual deities who came to redeem it, it could be considered both as the object of their endeavours and as one with them. It was the "saved Saviour", both prince and slave (Boyce, 1975). Such a concept elevates the worth of a Light being, whether in a human or animal body, to welcomed heights of dignity, and needs to be contrasted with the concept of the oppression of men as unworthy sinners who need to be punished, which is fostered by guilt-imposing dogmas.

In considering the concept that the individual is responsible to some extent for the degree and timing of his or her evil acts due to the exercise of freewill, Augustine's thoughts are incongruous and untenable. He says God is immutable. By this he implies that God is unchangeable. Such a statement seems to imply that God's eternal and immutable knowledge negates human freedom. If God is immutable, then it seems human freedom requires 'MIDDLE KNOWLEDGE'.² However, 'Middle Knowledge' is a suspect. It is so because there is no certainty that 'Middle Knowledge' is possible, even for God. Adams (1977) correctly asserts that 'Middle Knowledge' is impossible on the ground that conditional propositions of the sort that are supposed to be known by 'Middle Knowledge' cannot be true. R. Ayers in A Viable Theodicy for Christian Apologetics aptly says that even a relative freedom of man cannot be maintained. He says that if God knows with absolute certainty the totality of one's existence from eternity, then his life is complete before he himself has actualised it in time (Ayers, 1975).

In De civitate dei XII, 17, Augustine asserted:

We are not permitted to believe that God is affected in one way when he rests and in another way when he works, since he must not be said to be affected, as if something comes to be in his nature which was not previously there. For one who is affected

²'Middle knowledge' (Scientia media) is the theory that God knows with certainty what every possible free creature would freely do in every situation in which that creature could possibly find himself/herself. This theory was called 'middle knowledge' by the Jesuits because they thought it had a middle status between God's knowledge of the merely possible and His knowledge of necessary truths.

Robert Merrihew Adams, 'Middle Knowledge' and the Problem of Evil', American Philosophical Quarterly, 14 (1977), pp. 109-17.

is acted upon, as everything that undergoes something is mutable.

According to this theory, God certainly cannot be acted upon, or be corrupted, or suffer violence. If God alone could be truly said to act, then we could argue that nothing else could act upon him because nothing else could truly act. R.J. Teske remarks that Augustine, in his argument on the above subject, seems to verge upon a pantheistic denial of all created causality (Teske, 1986).

Historically, Augustine's immutability is linked to his rejection of Manichaeism as much as his fondness for Platonism. However, we are at a loss to know whether he did, in fact, interpret what he read of Platonism accurately. Systematically, he held that a mutable God would have to be composed and less than supreme. Since the idea of the nature of God to Augustine was neither composed nor less than supreme, God had to be immutable. For him, God was changeless and His knowledge and will were immutable, though He knew and willed mutable things (Confessions, 1961). But by definition, for this to be so, all mutable things would need to be created of an ungodly nature. The question would then arise as to how or why would God create something not of his nature, something that could and would be inimical and disadvantageous to the rest of Himself?

Perhaps a God who is changeable against His will would be less than supreme. In that case God would be self-mutable but not liable to be changed unwillingly.

The Manichaean belief that some particles of Light were incarnated in the kingdom of Darkness goes against Augustine's view of the omnipotence and immutability of God. Since Augustine saw the immutable as superior to

the mutable, and since he saw with certitude that nothing was superior to God, God must be immutable. But, of course, God as the Supreme can still have mutable manifestations.

As Augustine committed himself to the belief that God was immutable, he rejected Manichaeism, which maintains the existence of the trapped mutable manifestations. His argument was that the Father of Light was cruel and unjust to send part of himself to repel the attack by the forces of Darkness. He argued that such an act was unnecessary and unjust, that if the inhabitants of the kingdom of Darkness could do God injury, then God was corruptible, mutable or changeable. Since to him God was immutable, he insisted that the Manichaean cosmology was false. Hence he rejected Manichaeism.

Augustine accused the Manichaeans for assigning Hyle as co-eternal with God, but the Manichaean notion of Hyle was different from Augustine's understanding of Hyle which stood in need of formation. The Manichaeans sometimes referred to Hyle (the Principle of evil things) as "God" only because some people like the Jews had regarded this nature as Jehovah, their God. But to the Manichaeans, Jehovah is the demi-god of the Evil principle. If the Manichaeans did in fact perceive Hyle as a god in its own right, then they could not be monotheists as they claimed. Yet, Manichaeism professes a belief in one Supreme Godhead and also professes a dualism based upon the two opposing principles of Good and Evil. However, this duality occurs in the ranks below the level of the Supreme Godhead, in the levels of manifestations.

In this respect, Bonner (1986) contends that because the Manichaeans basically regarded themselves as Christians, they were unable to remain pure dualists and had to resort to recognising that the Father of Greatness was, in

a certain sense, the Supreme Ruler against whom the powers of Darkness were rebels rather than equal and independent enemies. This issue about the immutability of God was to become Augustine's fundamental argument against the Manichaeans in his anti-Manichaean polemic.

If the Manichaean position on the struggle between the two opposed natures of Good and Evil is eternal, then evil is immutable, and cannot be destroyed. However, if evil can be destroyed, then evil is not changeless – it is mutable. Augustine said that all things created are mutable. If God is the creator of all things (other than Himself), then evil is created by God, consequently, God is responsible for evil and evil is mutable since all things created by God are mutable. But Augustine would not accept that God had created evil. The incongruity either escaped him or he ignored it for the sake of expediency or simplicity.

The Manichaean position on evil was that evil was a separate principle distinctly opposed to the principle of Good. Their view of evil included anything which could inconvenience a congenial existence. Augustine rejected the Manichaean conception of evil as an existent reality which violated the principle of Light. He argued that evil was a privation or lack of good which should have been there. According to him, suffering itself could become good when one learnt to appreciate “higher values” such as tolerance, perseverance, compassion, and love. This argument is weak because one can witness the complicated dialectic of good and evil, of beingness and privation, in the subject of pain, suffering, sorrow and injustice in relation to evil.

It can be argued that if every being and every action is necessarily bad and deficient, then no one and nothing is bad or deficient in relation to others. On the other hand, if, ultimately, privation is no longer privation, it

then follows that no one is really bad or deficient and no action is bad or deficient. In extremis, this extrapolation eliminates evil entirely, and, as exemplified in his writings, this is exactly what Augustine wanted to conclude as he was hounded by the thoughts of his own sin and fear of perdition. In this sense therefore, Augustine's theory of evil, which states that evil is the lack of good is false, for even at the level of animals as well as the human level, evil can be seen as an assertively active, destructive force against the essence of goodness.

The alternative to the view that man is the source of evil is the view that God himself is the source of evil. This would seem to contradict the very nature of God. If we accept Augustine's argument that God is the Supreme of good and everything that exists is good and there is no absolute evil, then evil is nothing; evil is a mere contrast which makes the goodness of the Good more obvious. If evil is an illusion, then metaphysically speaking there is no Problem of Evil at all. This is the impression one gets when reading Augustine's writings, namely, that he was doing his best to eradicate the notion that evil existed.

Thus, the God of Supreme Good of Neo-Platonism remains intact. This God-centred view of evil completely eliminates the existence of evil and completely contradicts the Manichaeian view that evil is an independent principle in the universe.

In Mani's dualism, evil was not derived from God, nor was it a privation of good or a consequence of the fall of an angel. Evil, according to Manichaeism, was different from Good from the very start. What Manichaeism taught was that from the very beginning there were two opposing natures (Light and Darkness, Spirit and Matter). For that matter, within human beings, there was a mixture of these two natures and the

struggle between these two natures of Good and Evil was waged within man. Conversely, Augustine maintained that the nature of God is the only nature without a beginning.

According to Manichaeism, man could only be saved by the separation of Good from Evil. To liberate man from evil, God sent man the Nous which gave him the knowledge of his original source in the world of Light. The Nous awakened the human being to the fact that his soul had been trapped in matter (Evil) by the powers of Darkness. Once awakened to this truth through Nous, the human being could help God (the Divine) in seeking to save all imprisoned souls (Light Elements) in the world of matter.

The Manichaeans believed that this mixture between the two natures of Light and Darkness, and the ensuing struggle of Light trying to escape while Darkness tried to hold it and exploit it, was what led to all the pain, suffering, ignorance, and despair. In this respect, the Manichaean's explanation is more complete. However, Mani's supposed teaching of the origin of the two principles is missing certain information that allows the corruption of it to occur.

CHAPTER NINE

AUGUSTINE ON PREDESTINATION

In his discussion on predestination, Augustine said that God foreknew all human actions and events and their outcomes. Indeed, the whole of Augustine's theory of predestination hinges on the argument that God has the foreknowledge of all human actions, of events and their outcomes, and these are compatible with human freewill.

According to Augustine's theory of predestination, salvation is not guaranteed for everyone, but only for those whom God wills to save. But why does God not will to save all? The following quote is taken from De dono Perseverantiae XIV, 35:PLXIV, 1014:

This is the predestination of the saints . . . the foreknowledge and the preparation of God's kindness, whereby they are most certainly delivered, whoever they are that are delivered. But where are the rest left by the righteous Divine judgement except in the mass of ruin? . . . and yet in the higher judgement of God, they are not by the predestination of grace separated from the mass of perdition, neither those very Divine words nor deeds are applied to them by which they might believe if they only heard or saw such things.

From the above quote, one might interpret God as an unfair judge who condemns the majority of people to everlasting damnation. In the context of

Augustine's theory, it is not condemnation so much as non-intervention, otherwise the image of God is certainly not one of lovingness but rather one who is stern and unapproachable. If this is the nature of God depicted by Augustine, then we might say that he would certainly pass a severe judgement on those who are not his chosen ones. In view of the Christian teaching that Christ died for all mankind, this clearly contradicts the notion that God foreknows who are to be saved and who are to be condemned to eternal damnation. The only way to complete Augustine's theory is to allow that ALL are saved, even Satan if he/she exists.

If we argue that God does will all people, regardless of colour or creed, to be saved by providing everyone with the power and the means for salvation, and that He also gives freewill for people to choose or reject His salvation, He foreknows that some will choose to respond to His salvation by obeying His laws while others will choose to reject His salvation and thus be condemned. If God foreknows that some will reject salvation and still does not intervene when He can, then in an absolute sense we can say that God had purposefully willed the damnation of those who will be condemned. This does not show God as a wholly just, merciful, and loving God.

If we accept the argument that no one can be saved except by the grace of God, then we need to question why some are not given the grace. Is God biased or unfair? This surely is not what we would expect from a just God (the later Catholic theory is that all are given sufficient grace to be saved if they are prepared to accept it).

It seems then that Augustine's theory of predestination is rather narrow, unjust and untenable, for it means that God, for his own reasons, in fact, wills the salvation of some and the damnation of others. This argument is in opposition to what Bonner has in mind when he cautions against a

negative assessment of Augustine's theory of predestination and says that in as much as all humanity has perished in Adam, it is possible that the reprobates are predestined to perdition; but this does not mean an arbitrary decree which deliberately creates certain vessels of wrath who are to be damned simply for the greater glory of God (Bonner, 1986) – it is an arbitrary distribution of undeserved gift.

In view of Augustine's repeated insistence that the lost are justly condemned, such an interpretation seems preferable to a literal acceptance of his words (Bonner, 1986). Bonner's explanation is unconvincing. Likewise, Augustine's predestination argument which involves a Divine foreknowledge of future events in human existence and that Divine foreknowledge presupposes freewill, is thus inconsistent with Divine justice and mercy. Perhaps Augustine feared that if all people were saved, no one would be grateful for their salvation. But that does not excuse the theory of predestination.

Why should God pick and choose even as he creates individuals? This theory of predestination simply does not make any sense. Surely God would be responsible for all the creatures He created. If in fact God created all things, as those of agnosticism insist, then the responsibility is all His. If however, some are creations of the evil demigod, as the Manichaeans and other Gnostics claim, then certainly the prospect of predetermination is a valid one.

Without the existence of the manifestation of Darkness, whom the Gnostics call the Demiurge, this theory of predetermination simply does not make any sense and destroys the use or need of freewill or positive action towards God. The Manichaeans generally allowed no freewill to the wicked though they sometimes hold the Gnostic view that all beings, regardless of

their natures, can avail themselves of the opportunity to become Divine by using their freewill and embracing the Nous, or God's grace. Hence, those who know the Father and those who accept the grace of the Father will be saved (The Nag Hammadi Library, 1978). In De Natura Boni Augustine, in his disputation with Felix (a Manichaeon), emphatically put down the eternal doom of the wicked to their own refusal of what God offered them. This indeed is an interesting claim in view of his later writing on predestination.

When we assess the above two concepts, we should ask ourselves why would God create the system Augustine proffers where He creates many beings only to then damn the majority? Why would He create imperfections, and punishing, arduous trials to test His own children, His own creations, His own skills? Why would He not create absolute purity, perfection, and bliss from the beginning and stop all the pain, suffering and waste?

In view of these questions, Mani's duality makes a lot more sense. All the perceived chaos is a result of the struggle of Good against the invading Evil and that is why there is a need for salvation and liberation. The reason for the expressiveness of the kingdom of Evil, via the "Celestial Error". (The Nag Hammadi Library, 1978).

CHAPTER TEN

ON THE SENSE WORLD ATTACHMENT OF MANICHAISM

Augustine claimed that the Manichaean conception of God was material rather than spiritual (Decret, 1978). This can also be seen in Contra Faustum XX, 8 in which Augustine writes:

It is difficult to understand how you have been taken with the absurd idea of placing the power of the Son in the sun, and His wisdom in the moon. Only material things can be thus assigned to separate places. If you only understood this it would have prevented you from taking the productions of a diseased fancy as the materials for so many fictions... these absurdities might appear to have some likelihood to men of carnal minds, who know nothing except through material conceptions.

What is observed here is a claim made by Augustine that the Manichaean god is conceived in a sensible way, hence, his comment on their teaching of the Son's power residing in the sun and His wisdom in the moon. This criticism reveals Augustine's lack of knowledge in metaphysical concepts. Why can things of the spirit not abide in material manifestations? After all, Paul of Tarsus even wrote about it, and Augustine would have been aware of these writings.

According to Mani's teaching in the Kephalaia chapter LXXI, the Five Light-Elements of Light, Fire, Water, Wind, and Air represent the

Living Soul in its passive suffering aspect. The Call and Answer, or the Thought of Life, are the Soul's instinct and will to salvation, thus purifying trapped psyche to become awakened nous. This redemptive sequence, which can be internalised as a psychological process, has its outward literal reality in the Soul's ascent up the Column of Glory (the Light-Nous) or Light to the moon, thence to the sun, and finally to paradise (Kephalaia, 1955).

Perhaps Augustine was a literalist or perhaps he chose to ignore the fact that Mani sought to explain everything within one all-embracing system with its symbolism capable of being interpreted on various levels, including the metaphysical, mythic, philosophical, and scientific level. For example, the Milky Way was taken as the pathway of ascending souls as well as the personification of a Divine being, the Perfect Man. The waxing and waning of the moon seemed to Mani to be evidence of the arrival of the purified Light, and then its passage onwards to the sun. However, the sun and the moon continuously purified the Light and transported it ("ships" or "chariots") until after the final victory of Light over Darkness. Thus, for the Manichaeans, the sun and the moon not only held the thrones of the Gods, they were also identified with them. This brings to mind an Indian concept that the moon is "home of the blessed". This concept was also known to the early Greeks such as Pythagoras (Gruber and Kersten, 1995).

The Mani-Codex says that Mani's syzygos revealed the secrets of the sun, moon, and pillar to him. Augustine, who frequently asserted that he remained in the Manichaean position because he did not know how to think of a spiritual substance (Confessions IV, ii 3; IV, v, 24; IV, xvi, 29-31; v, x, 19) seemed to suddenly know what was to be held as spiritual and what was to be considered material when he criticised the Manichaeans' conception of

God as material and not spiritual. Augustine should have said ‘physical’ instead of ‘material’.

Decret (1970) says that the Manichaeans were accused of having a material view of God and did not understand the “sun” and “moon” save in a strictly material sense. In response to this claim he says that rather, the sun and moon were elements of Manichaean mythology, as Augustine himself said elsewhere. Therefore, the sun and moon were not a material notion as Augustine implied in Contra Faustum XX, 8.

Decret also says that Augustine was wrong to call the sun and moon fantasies, because what was simply fantasy to Augustine was spiritual for the Manichaeans. What was fantasy to Augustine was indeed spiritual when understood in the Gnostic way.

Furthermore, Decret cites the same quote in Contra Faustum XX that Augustine quoted (in this passage Faustus says that the Father dwells above the Son in “Light inaccessible”) and explains that he understands this to be the Manichaean way of speaking of the spiritual nature of God. Light is the standard symbol for God in most, if not all religions. Sun and moon could be symbols of Light, that is, as symbolic vessels to contain the Light. Clearly, Augustine had certainly misunderstood that the Manichaeans had limited their understanding of Light to material nature.

Decret also argues that the Manichaean kingdom of Light is opposed in its essence to the matter of the kingdom of Darkness. Therefore, the Manichaean conception of God is a spiritual rather than a philosophical one like Augustine’s (Decret, 1978). He concludes that Augustine was ignorant of the Gnostic element in the Manichaean teaching and had missed the point. He also accurately says that Augustine’s attempted refutation on the characterization of the Manichaean teachings as phantasmata (fantastic

images) due to their conception of God as material (Decret, 1978), which was based on a rationalist and Platonic idea of the spiritual, is entirely different from the Gnostic account of the Manichaeans.

It can be argued that Augustine did not say that the Manichaeans explicitly held God to be material, but that their conception of God, being based on their senses, produced false images which led them to errors and false opinions (De Vera Religione III, 3). Augustine is wrong in his statement that the Manichaeans viewed their God and everything else in a carnal (meaning physical) way. They might have resorted to using words to describe an event or a thing like everyone else, but that does not mean they viewed their God and everything else based on their senses. Similarly, Augustine used words which depicted emotions and feelings in all his writings. Should we then accuse him of being carnal? His criticism that the Manichaeans perceived their God as images based on their senses, is incorrect. His is not an accurate assessment of the Manichaean perception at all. Hence his criticism in this respect is not well founded and should be dismissed.

Decret also argues that the whole Manichaean kingdom of Light is opposed in its essence to matter. He says that matter is above all the property of the kingdom of Darkness. Therefore, the Manichaeans' conception of God is certainly a spiritual one (Decret, 1978). What appeared material to Augustine (who had limited Manichaean insight despite spending nine years as a hearer) was really spiritual. On this basis, Augustine's charge that the Manichaean prayers facing toward the sun and moon were idolatrous is dismissed. Such an argument is ludicrous. Are not Catholic churches full of icons to which the faithful pray? Augustine uses the flawed logic of

polemicists that leads to the double standard: “You are to be taken literally, but you must realise I speak allegorically”.

Augustine was therefore ignorant of, and out of sympathy with, the Gnostic element in Mani’s doctrines. Hence, his controversial writings largely miss the point. It is most unreasonable of him to demand a rationalist and Platonist idea of the spiritual which does not belong to the Manichaeo-Gnostic account, and he tried at every point to refute the Manichaeans on this basis.

As far as the Manichaeans were concerned, their way of conceptualising God was a spiritual one. Why should any label of “spiritual” have to conform to the criteria of the categories of Plato and Aristotle? Clearly, Augustine was assuming that God was not merely immaterial but also non-physical. On this point he is contradicting the very Genesis he tries to sell, for in Genesis 3:8 do not Adam and Eve hear the footsteps of a material God in the Garden of Eden? Augustine cannot have it either way.

Augustine’s assumption was that any genuinely spiritual conception of God had to be of the philosophical, metaphysical type that he himself had, and he thus ignored Genesis 3:8. Indeed, Mani’s concept of God was as a metaphysical/spiritual one, but not metaphysical or spiritual in the way that fits into the mould which Augustine forced others to conform to.

Mani’s teachings were not proposed through philosophical concepts or fantasies, but his concept of God was in Gnostic terms, and, in place of reason, Mani had recourse to myth. How can one use limited human rationality which is based on acquired knowledge to comprehend the incomprehensible? On this topic Augustine erred badly.

Another issue in Augustine’s attempted refutations against the Manichaeans was the latter’s moral teachings. Augustine defended his

Christian moral teachings in the two early treatises – De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae and De Moribus Manichaeorum (388 A.D.) – to demonstrate that his Christian morality, and particularly his Christian asceticism, was based on universal and rational principles. He viewed Manichaean morality and asceticism as not being able to differentiate between the Divine nature and the properties of sensible things. This is the very opposite to what we can see and read in the Manichaean texts.

Indeed, Augustine has lost all credibility here. He ridicules the Manichaean way of living and mocks their beliefs as absurdities that result from the application of the Manichaean principles to their way of life.

While on the subject of morality, Augustine took it upon himself to dismiss the Manichaean criticism of the Old Testament, particularly regarding the morals of the patriarchs of the Old Testament and their scandalous conduct, and the religious observances of the Jews with practices such as the brutal sacrifice of animals in their temple. Before Augustine was converted to Christianity, such criticism of the Old Testament Scripture resonated with his own sentiments, and, in fact, this was one of the reasons he gave for his attraction to Manichaeism.

However, subsequent to his conversion to Christianity after which he became one of the Church Fathers, he wrote extensively against the Manichaeans, and one of the things he addressed was the defence of the morality of the patriarchs of the Old Testament. However, even when he wrote the Confessions he had some difficulty in justifying the conduct of the patriarchs. Yet, he went on to defend their morality.

Some of the criticisms of the Manichaeans against the patriarchs of the Old Testament were:

- i Elijah slew the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal at the brook in Kishon (1 Kings 18:40);
- ii Elisha, when in a rage, cursed some mischievous children in the name of Jehovah, whereupon two she-bears appeared out of the woods and tore forty-two of the innocents to pieces (2 Kings 2:24);
- iii Abraham's cowardly behaviour of introducing his wife as his sister in the court of the king, allowing her to mingle with other men in order to save his own life;
- iv the patriarchs became polygamous.

In Augustine's Confessions III, VII, we learnt of the Manichaeian criticism of the Old Testament in the following passage:

whether they were to be considered just who had many wives at the same time, and killed people and sacrificed animals.

The Manichaeians could not accept the Old Testament as scripture because it gave approval to such immoral conduct of the patriarchs. They said the god of the Old Testament was not the same as the one in the New Testament – the former was a blood-thirsty, evil being, the latter was merciful, compassionate and forgiving. One can argue that a text such as the Old Testament can be partially inspired in spite of its negative contents.

Augustine fended off the Manichaeian criticism of the morality of the patriarchs of the Old Testament and called it unjust. In doing so he developed his own idea of justice or morality. Augustine's idea of justice was a three-fold structure of wholes and parts. This concept can be seen in Augustine's Confessions and in the Contra Faustum (Against Faustus). His

justice was one in which the justice in nature and the justice in human custom and society made up parts of a whole. This whole was the justice of God's creating and ordering will. Augustine defined injustice or sin as anything which contradicted the eternal law of God, and what was considered just or unjust depended on the initial impulse which gave rise to it. If the initial impulse did not contradict the eternal law of God, then the action was just. Conversely, if the initial impulse contradicted the eternal law of God, then an action was unjust – it was a sin. Thus, a person had to correctly discern if an action was just within that context.

Augustine, in Confessions III said:

And I did not know the true inner justice which judges not from custom but from the choice law of almighty God, by which are found the customs of regions and times, for regions and times, when it is everywhere and always, not one way in one place and another in another, according to which Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, and David and all those that are praised by the mouth of God are just. They are judged to be evil by particular ages, measuring the universal customs of their own custom . . . (Confessions, 1961).

From the above, we can conclude that Augustine's response to the Manichaean criticisms of the morality of the Old Testament patriarchs was due to their ignorance of the universal justice by which a particular custom is formed because they judged according to their own custom. Thus, as regards the question of morality, Augustine brought in his own idea of justice in his

defence. His idea of justice here comprised the offences against God (flagitia) and crimes against man (facinora) (Confessions, 1961).

According to Augustine, offences against God are offences against God's law, nature or custom. Offences against man are to be seen as crimes associated with motives corresponding to the hierarchy of natures. At the top end of this hierarchy there are those things ranging from revenge to the pleasure at another's suffering at the bottom end. If this is so, then Augustine's theory in this respect is a perversion of justice.

However, Augustine cannot show that justice is not at the bottom of the struggle between Light and Darkness, nor can he render his own account impervious to Manichaean criticism by proving that the conquest of Canaan was a response to God's command and not due to lust for violence. There is a dilemma: Either it is blood lust not commanded by God in which case the Old Testament errs or it is commanded by God in which case the Old Testament God is not all good. Contrary to Augustine, the Manichaean view on justice is associated with the nature of people – good and evil.

In response to such accusations of the immoral conduct of the patriarchs, Augustine accused the Manichaeans of failing to differentiate between symbolic and moral precepts. He claimed that the ceremonial practices by the patriarchs of the Old Testament were perfectly suitable then as they prefigured future revelations (Contra Faustum, 1901). He claimed Faustus, as a Manichaean, had failed to grasp the deeper meaning inherent in the Old Testament. He said:

You understand neither the symbols of the law nor the acts of the prophets, because you do not know what holiness or righteous means . . . the precepts and symbols of the Old

Testament contained both what was to be fulfilled in obedience through the grace bestowed in the New Testament, and what was to be set aside as a proof of its having been fulfilled in the truth now made manifest (Contra Faustum, 1901).

The above is another example of the double standard of polemicists. This also shows that Augustine believed that the evil done in the Old Testament begat the Good in the New Testament. Hence, he is saying that evil done becomes Good.

With regard to the polygamy of the patriarchs, Augustine's response was that such practice was culturally accepted and normal in certain cultures, and that the patriarchs' activities were not wrong under the circumstances. That might be so, and is compatible with saying some practices are preferable to others. People have different standards of morality. Thus, not only will their concepts of God differ, but their concept of the will of God will be affected by their individual moral judgements. Therefore, our moral principles determine our action in certain circumstances. Augustine also argued that human custom was relative. Thus, social relations which made up the family structure in a society were relative and different for different cultures. He said that polygamy was therefore not wrong for the patriarchs (Contra Faustum, 1901). It was not wrong because such practice was culturally acceptable and normal for the time.

In the old Chinese custom, men were allowed to have more than one wife for the purpose of having as many children as possible to help on the farm or help take care of the household in various ways. According to the old Australian Aboriginal tradition, it is the right thing for an Aboriginal man to let his wife sleep with their guest of honour to show their hospitality.

Certain Eskimo families share wives with guests – this is referred to as “laughing” with the guests. There are many other examples that can be cited. Hence, morality is man-made. It is true that the human custom is relative. However, Asmussen asserts that when polemic passages do occur in Manichaeic literature, the intention in most cases is to stress a general disgust of idolatry and dogmatic abnormalities (Asmussen, 1975). This could have been the intention of the Manichaeans when they criticised the conduct of the patriarchs.

It can be observed that morality changes to suit the time and circumstances of events in a country and in the world at large. Hence, polygamy, which was quite acceptable in the olden times, is now a criminal offence in most non-Muslim countries. In spite of the relativity in human custom, it has the power to conform people to a socially determined coherence. If morality is only relative and man-made, how do we determine what is right and what is wrong, because some culturally related customs/morals are better than others, and some of them are wrong relative to another culture even if one culture condones the acts?

R. Hare in Freedom and Reason remarks that something is of moral concern for some persons if it satisfies certain formal universality. Morality can be a convenient veneer but judgement upon it is relevant to our lives (Hare, 1963). This is quite true, but most people judge what is good and what is evil by their sense of morality. But unless we are aware of the evil imposed on us by various means, such as by indoctrination via education, various religious and political institutions and so forth, we are not aware that these things are evil. Some people even suggest that we should seriously consider the argument that morality may be a fraud perpetrated by the weak against the strong. This is indeed a form of moral scepticism.

In Confessions III, viii, 15 (48, 3-5) Augustine surprisingly says that the sins of the Sodomites are wrong. They are wrong regardless of the trend in human custom. In this instance, morality is not governed by the custom of the culture. Augustine refers this to the justice or morality of nature and not to the morality of a culture or society.

Augustine defends Abraham for having a child by Sarah's handmaid, Hagar, on the ground that Abraham's purpose was in accordance with the natural purpose of sex for procreation. Here he seems to be regarding two conditions for moral permissibility:

- i right relative to a "good enough" culture,
- ii "naturalness".

But his defence does not justify the moral behaviour of Abraham. Thus, Augustine's argument which is based on his theory of justice of nature (Contra Faustum, 1901) is weak.

As to the charge of Jacob's multiple wives, Augustine said that in the time of Jacob, polygamy was acceptable. In Contra Faustum XXII: 47, it is found that Augustine was relying on his theory of justice of custom to defend the polygamy of Jacob on the grounds of the authority of custom. In defending the killing by the patriarchs, such as in the killing of the Canaanites, Augustine argued that God commanded it, and those like Moses [on the contrary, it was Aaron, not Moses, who commanded the killing, despite the account given in the corrupted, extant Bible] and the Israelites had in obedience carried out God's will. Thus, based on his theory of justice of God's command such action was not wrong (Contra Faustum, 1901).

The Jews who adhere to Judaism strictly see revenge as a Jewish concept. In the killing of Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, on November 5, 1995, the gunman, Yigal Amir, claimed that God had asked him to kill Rabin for betraying the Jewish Faith. As far as Amir was concerned, he believed he was carrying out God's order, but under the law of the state he had committed a crime. According to Augustine's argument, God's law is above all laws. If this is so, Amir is not guilty. Yet, most people would disagree that Amir should take the law into his own hands. Most people would condemn the killing. Most people would not believe that God had asked Amir to kill. Indeed, Augustine's argument of God's command is weak, and could be destructively applied and manipulated, as it was in the centuries of the Crusades and the Inquisitions to allow the Church to commit its immoral atrocities and murders.

One can argue that Jehovah, god of the Old Testament, was responsible for the killing because he gave the orders for it. Augustine should not both say that God merely permits evil and that God commanded the killings of innocent children.

Augustine responded to the Manichaeans' criticism of the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament by interpreting the Scriptures allegorically in order to vindicate the authority of the Old Testament. But his arguments are weak and cannot be taken seriously. Once again, Augustine seems to exhibit the typical double standard of polemicists.

When he was challenged by Faustus, the Manichaean bishop, on the validity of his allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures, he defended his argument by using quotes from the New Testament which the Manichaeans accepted as authoritative. For example, he quoted a passage in Galatians chapter 4, where the children of Hagar and Sarah were deemed to represent

the old and the new covenants. But surely the act cannot be taken allegorically any more than Augustine's interpretation of the marriage of Sarah (Abraham's wife) can be taken as allegorically analogous to the marriage between the Church and Christ.

These days, there is evidence to show that the Old Testament was re-written many times, and that the Council of Nicea was the religious council which decided what texts were to be accepted as the Bible, the word of God, and Christians merely believed and relied on this by simple faith. Hence, Augustine's claim that the events in the New Testament were foreshadowed in the Old Testament is quite erroneous. It appears to be correct in some areas because parts of the Old Testament have been re-written to make certain prophecies from the Old Testament appear to have been accurately fulfilled in the New Testament.

One obvious problem posed by Augustine's allegorical interpretation of the Scripture is the changing content of allegorical meaning. Like the changing views of custom, it cannot be reconciled with God's unchanging truth.

Augustine's position on justice is weak because, in having said that God is loving and just, He cannot possibly manifest ways that are unjust. Therefore, if He punishes one criminal and spares another, He is unjust. However, Augustine does show that his account of justice has the form of the Manichaean account which is more complete. Augustine does not seem to present his ideas of justice in a systematic way. This sentiment is supported by R.D. Crouse (1987).

Augustine called Mani's teachings "snares" and "birdlime" (a sticky substance for trapping birds) under the disguise of the name of the Holy

Trinity – God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ) and God the Holy Ghost. Thus, in Confessions III, vi, 11, we note that Augustine said:

Therefore I fell among men arrogantly raving, carnal and full of talk, in whose mouths were the snares of the Devil, and birdlime made from a mixture of the syllables of your name and of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the Paraclete, our comforter, the Holy Spirit . . . and they said ‘Truth, Truth’, and often mentioned it to me, and it was not in them.

To Augustine, the use of the Trinity in any form classed the Manichaeian religion as a Christian religion, a Christianity which he claimed to be pseudo when he was converted to Catholicism. He also wrongly identified the Manichaeians with the faith he was brought up in because the Manichaeians honoured Jesus Christ. We need to remember that Augustine initially rejected the Christian faith he was brought up in. Thus, it is hard to believe that he was attracted to Manichaeism because he thought it was similar to the Christian faith he was familiar with. On the contrary, it should have deterred him from Manichaeism since it was identified with the faith he had rejected initially.

Again, we do not see Augustine engaging in a polite, “friendly discussion” as he claimed. Instead he was full of accusations, hostility, and aggression towards the Manichaeians. Such an attitude is most un-Christian, but the problem is that Augustine has an unfortunate mixture of Christian and Manichaeian elements.

The name of the Trinity was used in various so-called Pagan religions. Are we to call these religions Christian according to the definition of

Augustine? Mani never intended that his new found religion should be identified as a Christian religion nor is there any evidence to the contrary in his writings. Mani was a highly intelligent man and knew what he was doing. He would have known that his doctrines, the teachings as revealed to him by his “Twin”, could never convince anyone that Manichaeism was a Christian religion.

Manichaeism was a religion of its own. Even the Gnostic Christianity which could identify with certain teachings of Manichaeism could not be regarded as the same as Manichaeism. Hence, Augustine’s claim against the Manichaeans, taken out of context, is very misleading. It appears that he had misinterpreted the intentions of Mani.

Should we take Augustine’s words as true? How do we know that his claims that the Manichaeans said this or that were not, in fact, his own fabrications or misinterpretations to justify his polemic writings? How can one trust a man who, after his conversion to Christianity, confessed that he had committed the sins of lust, theft, and so forth, and who claimed elsewhere that he loved Jesus, and then continued to live a life against the teachings of Jesus? If he can be so inconsistent in so many things before and even after his conversion to the Christian faith, which he so proudly rejected earlier on, we cannot take his words seriously, even with the reservation that no one is blameless.

One may argue that in regard to the above charges against the Manichaeans, neither Mani nor his disciples were guilty of the charges rifled at them by Augustine. Those accusations were the products of Augustine’s mind, a mind bitter against the Manichaeans at that moment of his life. Such bitterness could have been directed at his father or someone else at another time.

Though he was salacious in his youth and continued thus into his adult life, he was quick to criticise the Manichaeans as “carnals”. The charge that the Manichaeans were carnals “whose mouths were the snares of the devil” is offensive, and contradicts the Manichaeans’ strict discipline and spiritual teaching as discussed above as the Three Seals.

From the writings about Manichaeism, we learn that the Manichaeans were very strict with their discipline. Augustine admitted that he was attracted and touched by the warmth of the Manichaeans and, in fact, two aspects which he claimed had attracted him to Manichaeism were their morality and the warm fellowship of members of the Manichaean community.

Nowhere in any of Mani’s teachings have we found Mani claiming that he had the answer to every question asked as is alleged in the polemic writing of his opponents. In fact, Mani was cited by Jonas as saying that ultimately the nature of God is unknowable. Thus, it can be seen that Augustine abused the Manichaeans for seducing and “conning” him because they could not provide him with an “intellectual whole and completeness” which Augustine was looking for. In other words, it was not his cup of tea.

In fact, the Manichaean religion does carry its principles into all areas of life. Puech (1949) suggests that the basic pattern underlying the Manichaean institution is the relation of Nous to psyche – the nous illuminates and assists the psyche (which is subject to sin and passion) towards the Light.

This duality was seen between the physical Jesus who suffered and the celestial Jesus who was beyond suffering. This was purportedly the main point of dispute between Christians and Manichaeans. Puech also says that the organisation of the Manichaean church was divided into the Elect (those

who freed themselves from sin) and Hearers (those who were still in sin and who are helped by the Elect) (Puech, 1979).

Hence, the pattern of the Manichaean institutions was also the essential pattern of the Manichaean “mythology”. Thus, Manichaeism was embodied in the form of a religious institution in which the moral and ascetical teachings of the Manichaean principles were, in fact, fully realised in life (Smith, 1991).

Consequently, the Manichaean religion did provide the total religious “whole” so desperately sought by Augustine. Rather, what seems to have happened is that, perhaps by accident, Augustine found with Ambrose what he failed to find with Faustus. That may explain his vehement anti-Manichaeism.

It is possible that what Augustine failed to understand was the importance of the Inner Nous, which would set its recipients free by the knowledge of how the particles of Light were trapped in matter, and how, by taking certain precautions, they could prevent themselves from falling further while waiting for liberation by the “Father of Light”.

In Manichaeism, everything Divine was a coherent whole. Viewed in an esoteric manner, the several god-figures in its cosmogony are all identical with the Father of Light from whom they emanate and who is all that is Divine. This is a rather abstract concept of God for anyone wishing to establish a personal relationship. The solution could possibly be for the individual to follow the religion’s theory and create a concrete concept of God for themselves by prayers, chanting, or singing hymns of adoration, or alternatively, an aspect of manifestation of the “Divine Whole” can be taken as a personal deity. For Augustine it is the “globus” (or massa) which seems

to have exerted a strange fascination upon its great opponent (Buonaiuti, 1929).

Mani's teaching espoused that the particles of the Light of God were mixed with the Darkness and trapped in it when Darkness invaded the Light: part of God himself who was so mixed with Darkness that it could not be separated from it and was no longer homomorphic with the Divine gods. This concept was furiously attacked by Augustine and the Church Fathers, who believed in the immutability of God. It raised a problem with their Christianity, which was in part about God letting Himself be mixed with Darkness. But why could God not send manifestations of Himself to mix with the Darkness? After all the Nicene Creed as a dogma demands that Christians believe that Jesus, the Son of God, descended into Hell.

My comments on the major points are:

- I Augustine's argument is that God is just and good and that whatever one receives is fair unless it is the result of human wrong doing. But our experiences demonstrate the injustice of much suffering to which people have been subjected.
- ii He argued that in the Manichaean cosmogony, the kingdom of Darkness and its inhabitants displayed many good qualities and therefore it could not be a principle of pure evil. This is false. On the contrary, Mani's cosmogony described the kingdom of Darkness as dark, depressing, and foul, and the inhabitants as greedy, hateful, wicked, and constantly fighting one another (see Kephalaia; Cologne Mani Codex). It is absurd for Augustine to assume that the desire to possess the kingdom of Light by the kingdom of Darkness shows that

Darkness admires good. It is a case of greed, lust, injustice, unlawfulness, and destructiveness for the King of Darkness to invade the kingdom of Light by force for its own selfish gain and self-glory at the expense of the kingdom of Light, and to cause disharmony and destruction of Divine existence. This is evil. It has nothing to do with the desire for good for goodness sake. The desire for goodness and strength are good qualities only if they are derived in a way which does not involve exploiting others ruthlessly. No one with a real sense of justice would defend the invasion by the King of Darkness of the kingdom of Light as fair or acceptable.

- iii Augustine was wrong to label the Manichaeans' belief in the existence of an evil principle as a heresy because they were not Christians.
- iv He was also wrong in his view that the Manichaean depiction of the Divine nature was in spatial, carnal terms which led them to posit the existence of evil as a separate principle from the principle of good. Augustine is wrong in his claim that the Manichaeans reduced God to a corporeal substance by confining Him to a spatial extension as he claimed the Manichaeans maintained.
- v It is equally untrue that the Manichaeans could not conceive reality that transcended the carnal or material level for theirs was the teaching of the Nous. Their doctrines were the exact opposite. They were all about transcending the evil material level. Mani's cosmogony with its dualism of Light and Darkness was certainly not the result of his fantasy due to his inability to conceive reality that went beyond the carnal level. On the contrary, to appreciate Mani's Gnostic concept or any Gnostic concept, one has to go beyond the reality of this material level in order for it to make sense. Hence, it was Augustine who could

not view reality beyond the physical, material level, for if he could, he would not have misunderstood the Manichaeans concerning this matter. Another explanation could be that Augustine ignorantly or deliberately distorted the Manichaean view, or, it could well be that Augustine was specifically chosen by Darkness to obscure and distort truth.

WITH PERCEIVED MANICHAEAN INJUSTICE

Augustine's argument about the injustice of Manichaeism begins with his defence against the Manichaean charges that the Old Testament was unjust and unacceptable. He criticized the Manichaean beliefs as false, irrational, and unjust. He argued that it was unjust because the consequences of its beliefs led to the sin of breaking the observance of customs and society.

He also accused the Manichaean beliefs for leading the soul away from its real goal of being in tune with God. He said the Manichaean system was unjust because it transgressed Divine law. Hence, it distorted the true sense of justice. These are very bold accusations indeed! His vindictive style could partly be due to his problem with obsessiveness.

Augustine begins the discussion of his involvement with the Manichaeans with an argument against Manichaeism, in particular on the subject of the nature of justice. Augustine's justice assumed a hierarchy of natures and he placed the Manichaean "myths" (which he called Manichaean phantasmata) at the very bottom of that hierarchy (Confessions, 1961). He declared that the Manichaean belief was unjust in itself. He asserted that the Manichaean doctrine nullified temperance and the justice inborn in the

human character. He claimed that to the Manichaeans, nothing in this world was noble; that the idea of virtue was not to be found in Manichaeism. Such criticism was based on his view of the Manichaean anti-cosmic attitude regarding the denial of any worth to the material things of this world. It is argued that only virtue can reveal God to us. Without virtue it is impossible to know God and appreciate God's justice. Augustine, like the Manichaeans or because he was still partly a Manichaean, also divided the world clearly into good and evil. Hence, those whom he could not endorse as belonging to the party of the good must, he assumed, be evil. Such a dichotomy is a recipe for vilification. However, one should not sacrifice truth for fear of vilification.

The order in Augustine's hierarchy of natures was determined according to the degree of certainty and permanence of each nature. Thus, starting from the top, it reads as follows:

- i The unchanging or immutable Truth of God.
- ii The unseen "heaven of heavens". This is more certain and higher than sensible things though it is created less than God.
- iii The soul, which is higher than the body, but lower than God because of its mutability in nature.
- iv The physical creation, such as humans, animals, and birds.
- v The phantasiae, that is, imaginary forms of real physical objects in the cosmos.
- vi The phantasmata, that is, imaginary forms of objects that do not really exist.

Thus, when one views the order in the hierarchy of natures, the highest order according to its immutability is Truth, and Truth is identified with God (Confessions, 1961), The lowest and the least certain in the order is phantasmata, which is identified with imaginary forms of objects that do not exist. Further examination of Augustine's hierarchy of natures reveals that this order is based on three things:

- i Priority,
- ii Certainty and
- iii Nourishment

which reflect the Trinitarian image of

- i Being,
- ii Truth and
- iii Love

Augustine believed that the soul's fundamental relationship to natures was based on the criteria of being, truth, and love (Confessions, 1961).

With this in mind one can see how Augustine's idea of justice as an unchanging Divine law consists of various customs and laws of different times and cultures. His idea of justice also includes the love of God and one's neighbour. Augustine defined flagitia as corruption, and facinora as crime. According to him, the love of God was in direct opposition to flagitia, while the love of one's neighbour was opposed to facinora. This is shown in The Christian Doctrine III, vi, 10:

What an unconquered lust does to corrupt its own soul and body is called corruption [flagitium], but what it does to harm another is called a crime [facinus].

In this sense, flagitia can be interpreted as spiritual corruption which is negative as far as the relation of one's soul with God is concerned, while facinora are wrong doings committed by one against one's neighbour. When we put the two types of injustices together, Augustine's idea of justice begins to emerge.

Augustine's flagitia consists of injustice against God, against nature, and against custom. The corruption against nature interferes with the right relation of society with God due to lust of sex, power, and other wrong doing (sin).

That society which ought to be between us and God is violated when the same nature of which He is the author is polluted by the perversity of lust. (Confessions III, vii).

Augustine said that regardless of one's custom, any wrong doing against God's law was a sin. Thus it was regarded as a flagitia. But how can we be sure what is in reality God's law and what is not? We can see for ourselves that so often what some people consider God's law is really expedient man-made law.

In contradiction, in Confessions III, viii, Augustine states that an individual who breaks the customs and laws of his society is committing a sin. But those corruptions which are contrary to the customs of men are to be avoided for the sake of the diversity of customs. We can see Augustine risks

running into trouble in his argument if we were to take it seriously. For example, in a country with diverse customs, a girl who breaks a marriage arranged by her parents can be rightly slain by her family, according to their custom, for not honouring the marriage contract and thus bringing disgrace to her family. If the girl was killed because she did not honour the arranged marriage, her murderer would be guilty of the sin of murder in God's law while being in accord with the law of custom. The slain victim would have committed a sin for going against the law of her custom.

If we argue that God's commandment of "Thou shalt not kill" is to be obeyed whatever custom one has, then Divine law supersedes everything else. Hence, the person who murdered the girl, because she had dishonoured the arranged marriage, would have committed a wrong act against God. This situation becomes very confusing when two standards exist.

If the justice of God's command depends solely upon obeying the will of God, one can again argue that, as far as the girl's family and the family of the man she was to marry are concerned, the arranged marriage was truly the revealed will of God. If these people believe both tenets that firstly, killing is a sin against God, and secondly, it is God's will that their respective sons and daughters should marry via the contracts they arrange and be punished by death if they refuse, then these people may be simultaneously guilty of a sin against God if they slay those who refuse to honour the contracts, and also may claim they are fulfilling God's law by murdering those not obeying God's will. Their argument would be, of course, that their act of assassination is no longer murder but just, godly punishment. But this would lead to self-justification and the need to authorize who would be the interpreter of God's law and which law was greater than another.

Augustine probably believed an act to be right only if it was neither flagitia nor facinora. As for the injustices against the neighbour, or facinora, Augustine listed their causes in descending order as the desire for revenge, for self gain, to avoid harm, envy, and the desire to take pleasure in another's harm. Let us examine some of the crimes.

REVENGE

In **Epistula** 167, 6, an injustice committed against one's neighbour that is caused by a desire for revenge stems from what is thought to be a wrong suffered. Augustine remarked that revenge was not true justice. Yet, he said about God: "but who more justly revenges himself than You?" (Confessions, 1961) as though revenge itself was, in fact, some sort of justice. Perhaps Augustine is saying that retribution or vengeance is often just, but that we should not treat justice as simply a matter of retribution. If we argue that an act of revenge is justified as retribution due to the perpetrator, then it appears that at least theoretically the motive for revenge has a sense of reciprocity, and justice is restored. However, in practice, in all probability the desire for revenge is one of self-gratification. It is very unlikely someone who has endured a wrong and suffered greatly can be totally detached so that his or her action is not self-serving.

SELF-GAIN

A crime committed due to a desire for self-gain is another example of injustice against one's neighbour. If X takes over Y's house by force

illegally because he desires it, then it is a facinora (crime) for it has caused distress to Y. Such an act is illegal.

However, what if Y owes X a lot of money amounting to the equivalent of the value of the house and has no means of paying off his debt? Y too has caused distress to X and X sees it as being very unfair on the part of Y. Would X then be entitled to take Y's house as payment for what Y owes him? If X is entitled to it, then X's action is justified provided Y is agreeable. If Y does not agree to giving over his house to X as payment for the money he owes X and makes no effort to pay off his debt, then Y too has committed a "crime" against his neighbour X. It would appear that without a government, both vengeance and tit-for-tat stealing are but systems of human laws supersede this 'state of nature', in which there are only God's laws.

TO AVOID HARM (CHOOSING A PERCEIVED LESSER EVIL)

Regarding crimes committed in order to avoid harm, one may cite the previously mentioned case of Abraham, who pretended that his wife, Sarah, was his sister in order to save his own life. Augustine defended this action by saying that it was a legitimate act for Abraham, who had the right to preserve his life in the midst of danger, and that he was acting justly according to the law of nature.

Augustine's argument is untenable because Abraham, in attempting to save his own life by pretending his wife was his sister, allowed a situation to arise whereby his wife had to falsely deny her marital status and was forced to mingle with other men in order to secure his safety. This would be sinful according to the Church if the Scriptures were to be taken seriously.

ENVY

Crimes committed against one's neighbour due to envy can be illustrated by the case where one deliberately keeps one's invention to oneself and refuses to share these things with his colleague who is already famous and wealthy because one is envious of his colleague's success.

CRIME OF PLEASURE IN THE MISFORTUNE OF OTHERS

An example of crime committed against a neighbour due to the desire to take pleasure in another's harm is as follows: A person who derives great pleasure watching another person suffer in agony due to a fatal accident has committed a facinora. "Justice" against one's neighbour based on the desire for revenge, for self-gain, to avoid harm, or due to envy or taking pleasure in another's harm, all seem to be distortions of the IDEA OF JUSTICE. In the case of injustice committed against the neighbour due to jealousy or envy, we can argue that it is not so wrong or unreasonable for someone to be jealous when he is only trying to preserve a good he thinks belongs to him. Envy is not necessarily harmful if one wishes one could have something another has without becoming obsessed with it. In fact in some circumstances, the envy one has for another spurs one to work positively and diligently towards attaining the object of one's envy. Thus, an over-weight woman who is envious of the slimness of another would work on losing the excess weight in order to look good and feel good.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that Augustine's criticisms of Manichaeism are not convincing. He succeeded in demonstrating his misconceptions of the Manichaean teachings and failed to appreciate them.

Far from being totally removed from the truth about justice, Mani, the founder, claimed he had come to proclaim a message of Truth. That is what constituted Augustine's view of true justice had become the criteria followed by the Manichaeans is not a tenable option.

Having shown this to be the case, Augustine could not claim that the Manichaean sense of justice was the lowest of the order of natures according to his view of justice. Such a claim was erroneous and arrogant.

If Augustine's arguments were to be accepted totally, then in one sense Augustine himself has committed a facinora against the Manichaeans. His view on justice, according to the order of nature, has a flaw, for many questions of justice cannot be restored simply by referring to the order of nature. It is fair to say that civil justice conceals a great deal of injustice especially when seen against the standard of a "truer" justice.

JUSTICE

Augustine defined sin as follows:

Therefore sin is a deed or a speech contrary to the eternal law. But the eternal law is the reason or the will of God which commands that the natural order be preserved and forbids that it be disturbed.(Augustinus, 1866).

Here we see Augustine's reference to the eternal law of God as the "whole of God's rule", which he stated in Confessions. Justice according to Augustine was absolute obedience to the eternal law (Divine law) according to Divine will. (But is this truly knowable? If it is, who is to decipher it?) He

believed that the natural order in humans would run smoothly as long as they obeyed the eternal law.

R. Markus (1981) points out that Augustine in his earlier writings said that human law was only to be obeyed in so far as it was the same as the eternal law. This view receded into the background as Augustine thought of human society more and more as a contrast with the eschatological society of the kingdom of God (Armstrong, 1967).

The Manichaeans divided human society into spiritual principles of Light and Darkness which were thought to be more fundamental. If we were to strictly follow the Manichaean beliefs, we would find it impossible to fit into the traditional society. In any case, Augustine's theory of human society and custom, as well as the Manichaeans, is not maintained by a universal order.

Human laws are man-made and can be, and are, changed to suit the circumstances of time and place. Hence, Augustine's argument on the actions of human beings based on custom laws, laws of property, laws of the land, laws of nature, laws of society, and so forth, can be readily counter-argued. Based on his theory of justice everything can be justified.

On the question of justice, he argued that it was not improper for Jacob to know Leah because, having his wife's approval, Augustine deemed that Jacob was not passionate or lustful. It could be asked, of course, "How does Augustine know this?" This aside, he claimed Jacob's action was just, according to the law of marriage of that culture (Contra Faustum, 1901). Such an argument is ludicrous. Clearly, Augustine's perception of the law as a mediation of the truth is simplistic, unreliable and tenuous.

In contrast these are the points as considered by the Manichaeans:

- i The Manichaean criticism against the Old Testament put forward by Faustus presupposes an interest in the nature of justice and sin.
- ii The Manichaean teaching of the Three Seals prohibits extraneous intercourse, lying, and killing. This position about sin and justice is very different from Augustine's.
- iii The Manichaean cosmogony about Light and Darkness indicates the attitude towards the behaviour and actions of human beings, towards truth and falsehood, the order of creation, morality, possessions, sex, violence, marriage, sin and so on within the framework of the Three Seals.

In this respect, Augustine's argument is as weak as the Manichaeans' if he cannot argue against the Manichaean idea of justice nor argue that his own theory is correct. He cannot disprove Mani's revelation. The Manichaean idea of justice ultimately leads to the struggle between Light and Darkness which is one of the fundamental teachings of Mani. But it is impossible for Augustine to show that justice is not the underlying factor in the struggle between Light and Darkness. It is also impossible for Augustine to prove that the polygamy of some of the patriarchs of the Old Testament, such as Abraham, Jacob, David, and Solomon, was not due to lust and passion. Further, it is impossible for Augustine to prove that the killings carried out by the patriarchs of the Old Testament were a direct response to God's command and not due to a lust for power, violence, or due to envy.

Thus, Augustine developed his theory of justice in response to the Manichaean charges against sections of the Old Testament, and it involved the justice of God's eternal law, the justice of the whole of custom, and the justice of the whole of nature. It dealt with Scriptural revelation, with the

order of nature, with human custom, and human motives, with God's will and its relation to human will, as a general whole. Hence, within the context of his idea of justice, Augustine claimed that Manichaeism was a false "whole".

Augustine responded to the Manichaeans' criticisms of the murders committed by some of the patriarchs by calling the Manichaeans carnals who were attracted to the senses (Confessions, 1961). Augustine accused the Manichaeans of viewing the nature of evil and everything else in a carnal way. He said that the Manichaeans viewed their Manichaean God in a carnal way and that their view of friendships was based on feelings, emotions, and sensations. He argued that, because the Manichaeans viewed everything based on their senses, their attitude towards the killing committed by the patriarchs in the Old Testament was purely a perception based on emotions. Hence he said:

Your idea of evil is derived entirely from the effect on your senses of such disagreeable things as serpents, fire, poison, and so on; and the only good you know of is what has an agreeable effect on your senses as pleasant favours, and sweet smells . . . (Contra Faustum, 1901).

In response to the criticism of the Manichaeans about the practice of sacrifice and the attribution of jealousy to the God of the Old Testament, Augustine argued from natural reason and "religious truths" commonly held by the pagans and from commonly accepted morality. He said that a pagan could interpret such practices of the Old Testament better than a Manichaean. He remarked that the Old Testament God was presented in a

more favourable way than the Manichaean God. He further criticised that the Manichaean God was cruel because he allowed his own to be mixed with the kingdom of Darkness and caused them to be corrupted with evil (Confessions, 1961).

On closer examination of Augustine's arguments, we can detect some kind of assumed authority, though strictly speaking his arguments on the above matters were not authoritative arguments. Assuming Augustine's theory – that God was immutable and had the right to do as He pleased, that everything God did was ultimately right and just and for a good reason – to be correct, then the Manichaeans, who undoubtedly believed that their God was a true God (unlike the demigod of the Old Testament), could argue that their God was not to be blamed and that everything He had done was ultimately good and for the right reason. Augustine can neither prove his God to be the true God nor can he prove that the Manichaean God is a pseudo-God. His rejection of the Manichaean God is as fervent as the Manichaeans' rejection of the Old Testament God as being the true and good God of the New Testament.

As far as the Manichaeans were concerned, the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament were two different beings. Many today are coming to the same conclusion. Some Christians, relying only upon simple faith, believe the God in the Scripture is God. But simple faith, or blind faith, is faith in a belief without evidence.

Augustine claimed that faith could be understood. This specifically referred to faith in God or some sort of Divine intelligence. Those who do not agree with this claim might argue that spiritual truth is a truth of the spirit, not a truth of the intellect. It is not a logical formula. It is not a hard, logical and intellectual notion of truth as a single idea which all must accept.

For example, faith has no room for doubt in the efficacy of the power or mercy of God. How can we truly understand how, in the midst of disappointment, betrayal, suffering, and pain, one can still hold on to one's faith in Divine providence? Blind faith can be misleading and risky and so is faith without trust. One might well agree with the notion that faith can be understood when one expands one's awareness to the limits of a greater reality.

Hence, the Manichaeans' argument, that the God of the Old Testament was not the same as the God of the New Testament, is more acceptable than Augustine's argument that the Manichaean God was false and unjust since his own theory said that his God was good and just. By comparing the deeds of the God of the Old Testament with the God of the New Testament, we can certainly see the difference between the two – the God of the Old Testament is often jealous and cruel while the God of the New Testament is loving and forgiving. But why cannot Scripture be mixed? So, Augustine was a proto-fundamentalist because he stuck out for the inerrancy of Scripture. Perhaps this has something to do with his ideas of God and truth. Indeed, the notion that the Scriptures concern two different gods is not one which can be disproved with any certainty. It is thus a viable possibility.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSION

Manichaeism is hardly pessimistic. Although the Manichaean anti-cosmic dualism is generally regarded as a concept with an unequivocally negative perception and evaluation of the visible world, the total Manichaean view is eschatological. Such a view was generally regarded as optimistic by the Manichaeans but pessimistic by non-Manichaeans. Through its eschatology the Manichaean cosmos assumed a religious quality. It provided hope, goodness, and salvation to a world that was bad, full of evil and suffering.

Indeed, Mani's message was that there was salvation for the souls who were imprisoned in this world for there is a Divine power that saves. The theory of the double nature of humanity and cosmos can lead to various attitudes, including the declaration that the world reveals itself daily as an epiphany of the Kingdom of Light. The claim that Manichaeism, like all forms of Gnosticism, is a response to the problem of suffering and evil is more tolerable than the claim that dualism such as that seen in Manichaeism is essentially a very simple solution devised by the human mind to account for the manifest flaws of existence (Couliano, 1992). Gnostics, including the Manichaeans who have the Nous, would never agree to it.

It is more likely that the apparent similarity of the myth in all cultures with its dualist theme was channelled into the minds of some of the people of those cultures rather than suggest each region spontaneously researched such a solution to the Problem of Evil after careful and due consideration.

The fact that such isolated pockets of humanity could not even share the thought of such a basic invention as the wheel makes the hypothesis that they concluded a sophisticated dualism to explain evil as preposterous. If one were to rely on Jungian primal archetypal mythology, then one needs to accept the concept as being a primal foundation of the human psyche and as such is a truism of existentialism from an ontological perspective.

The speculation that the original and basic option of the Manichaeans consists only of a simple, binary alternative dictated by their idea of the world in a time of economical, political, or religious crisis by Couliano (1992) is incorrect. One does not need to be in such a crisis to see the evil and suffering in the world, but it helps. If one does not question and seek answers for the injustices of this world, one is not going to see through the illusion. It is only when one questions the amount of evil in this world that Gnostic truism can be discovered. It is the real core of the truth. Mani and his followers had used words and aspects of the visible world to explain their cosmogony. In so doing, they opened a path to misinterpretation and manipulation of their meanings.

The refutation of Mani's teachings could be due to further misunderstandings on the part of the non-Manichaeans of Mani's work. It is very likely that the non-Manichaean writers purposely corrupted various texts by Mani in order to discredit him and to corroborate their own theories about Mani and his teachings.

From Augustine's writings is detected an evolving inquiry related to various theological problems. He had taken a highly inclusive approach in his discussion on the nature and origin of evil. For Augustine, the evil of this world is attributed to the Devil who appears as a necessity on the expense of the world at large and things in this world can be both good and evil, natural

and corruptible, existent, but tending toward absolute non-being. For him, no reality such as evil, can stand in opposition to God on equal terms because all realities originated from God. The Manichaeans instead took an uncompromising position: things are either absolutely good or absolutely evil. For them, the world was created by Good to evict Evil. This is a corruption of Gnostic truth.

To accept the postulation of the two principles, is to conclude that both Good and Evil do not have a beginning. If one accepts the postulation of one principle, then Evil must originate from Good. It can be argued that the option is that this world is neither created by Good nor Evil. Alternatively, it can be said that this world is created by both Good and Evil.

It is fair to stress Augustine's debt to Manichaeism and that he had never quite completely discarded it. Augustine, like many other Christian thinkers, tried to express Christian doctrines in terms of Neo-Platonism. This can be detected throughout his attempted refutations against the Manichaeans.

By drawing a clear distinction between God as Creator and that which He creates, Augustine attempted to solve the Problem of Evil. His theory on Original Sin, combined with his theory of Divine Providence, produces a weak and unconvincing argument which is as unpalatable as his notion of the **City of God** which could only be known through the "infallible authority" of the Church in which the state could be part of it only if it obeyed the Church. His doctrine of freewill is so troublesome that most people would probably abandon it in favour of predestination, which states that every person was already saved or damned from birth by God's unalterable decree. This idea restored God's omniscience, but eroded the incentive to live a godly life. His theory of freewill clearly contradicts his

theory of predestination and creates a weakness in his arguments. The necessity of permitting some apparent evil in this world in order to have freewill in creatures cannot be a convincing argument for the Problem of Evil. Hence, Augustine's arguments on sin, providence, predestination and freewill in his response to the Problem of Evil are less than compelling.

Augustine's final division of mankind into the saved and the damned is similar to the Manichaeic view that there will be a final separation of beings of Light and the beings of Darkness. However, the Manichaeic eschatological theodicy is more convincing and attractive than Augustine's vision of the **City of God**.

Clearly, Augustine's doctrine of creation from nothing presupposed a firm commitment to monotheism. It formed an important component of Augustine's theodicy – that God was the Supreme Good which created everything from nothing, that evil could not exist as an independent reality. The theory affirmed that God's nature was wholly immutable. This argument remained an important aspect in Augustine's attempted refutation of Manichaeic dualism throughout his writings.

Augustine, in response to the Manichaeic charges that the narratives and actions of the Old Testament were unjust, tried to show that the Manichaeic perspective was false because its position was itself an unjust one. His response resulted in his development of a comprehensive idea of justice in which the eternal law of God was the ultimate measure of all justice.

Historically and philosophically, Augustine's definition of evil as a privation appeared as a Christian contribution. The affirmation that evil exists, yet, it is not absolute, only seems to triumph over the dilemma of either denying the reality of evil because of God's goodness and intrinsic

power, or denying God's goodness and infinite power because of the reality of evil.

The existence of evil is not illogically inconsistent with God's existence, if that God is both good and evil. If we were to resolve the theistic Problem of Evil by explaining that the evil around us is due to human merit and demerit accumulated from prior karmic actions, then God is not morally responsible for the evil in the world because He merely administers the consequences of our karmic acts. Hence, the individual agents are morally accountable. If this is so, then, all evil is moral evil and human beings are held morally accountable. This also implies that there is no natural evil per se. Such an argument invariably leads to other arguments which are never satisfactory.

Augustine's argument on evil is similar to the solution to the non-theistic Problem of Evil. In identifying evil as a privation, Augustine adopted an optimistic view of the Problem of Evil in which:

- i God was good and the author of all things and
- ii Everything God did was therefore good;
- iii Troubles were due to man's sinning.

In this respect, the Problem of Evil ceases to exist since nothing that happens can be evil. If such were the case, then what appears to be evil is not an absence of good, but itself a good. Augustine provides all these explanations in his writings. However, there are no new insights into the Problem of Evil in any of his arguments. What we see is merely a shifting of emphasis. Augustine adapted Neo-Platonism to meet the arguments against the Manichaean theodicy and he seemed to deal with the Problem of Evil

rather thoroughly. He believed that the Problem of Evil could be answered philosophically without resorting to Mani's revelation (Decret, 1970). However, in the end, the Problem of Evil remained unsolved for Augustine.

The acceptance of Augustine's theory does not depend on the validity of what he believes. It depends on one's choice and one's willingness to accept his arguments. If evil is the mere absence of good, then a given good plus a given evil is no worse than that good by itself. But if evil is the opposite of good, then it is worse.

The Manichaean teaching, by adopting a dualist stance, is extremely convincing for those who would support the general Gnostic view of the Celestial Error (Pistis Sophia). This view sees God Himself (at a level below His Supreme Majesty and Manifestation) as a projected aspect and a limited being, struggling against evil in a conflict in which metaphysically, evil is very real.

The solution presented by Augustine does not solve the Problem of Evil. Though the solution presented by Mani (interpreted within man's preconceived ideas of God) does not resolve the Problem of Evil, it is the more acceptable argument because its explanation of evil is supported by the mixture of Good and Evil in humans and in the events around us.

Finally, there can be four alternatives to the Problem of Evil:

- i If the Problem of Evil is only a privation due to freewill, then we can never be rid of evil. This would contradict what Christ promised and what many pray for every day. This is the Augustinian view.

- ii On Augustine's view, God can, but is not obliged to, prevent the natural tendency created things have towards their own corruption.
- iii If evil is a co-eternal principle opposed to God at all levels of His Existence, then evil can never be destroyed and there will always be a struggle between Good and Evil. This is a corruption of the Gnostic view.

The fourth option goes beyond what anyone has concluded and I will address it herein by means of an allegory in the epilogue.

EPILOGUE

The reality of suffering and evil in the world has posed a tremendous challenge to confidence in the existence of God, let alone a benevolent God. The Problem of Evil is the problem of coming to terms with the suffering and the evil in the world with the belief in the existence of an infinitely good God. Nevertheless, the Problem of Evil does not bother those who are not seeking truth. It does not bother those who do not believe in the existence of God or a Higher Intelligence.

Epicurus is generally credited as the first to expound the Problem of Evil: "Either God wants to abolish evil and cannot; or he can, but does not want to. If he wants to, but cannot, he is impotent. If he can, but does not want to, he is wicked. If God can abolish evil, and God really wants to do it, why is there evil in the world?" Epicurus, 2000 years of Disbelief.

Today, the Problem of Evil is generally presented thus:

- 1 If God exists, then God is omnipotent, omniscient, and morally perfect.
- 2 If God is omnipotent, then God has the power to eliminate evil.
- 3 If God is omniscient, then God knows when evil exists.
- 4 If God is morally perfect, then God has a desire to eliminate all evil.
- 5 Evil exists.
- 6 If evil exists, and God exists, then God does not have the power to eliminate all evil, or does not know when evil exists, or does not have the desire to eliminate all evil.
- 7 Therefore, God does not exist. (Stanford University Encyclopaedia of Philosophy)

The Problem of Evil is mostly discussed in the Christian context of a personal God (and in other Abrahamic religions), and, to a lesser extent, in the context of polytheistic traditions. The definition of “evil” has been ascribed as a privation (absence) of good and as a necessary opposite (as in the Eastern concept of Yin and Yang known as “Taiji”).

The Problem of Evil tests the faith of many sincere seekers, and has led them to despair regarding the nature of God, even to the extent of wondering whether God exists. It is an offensive premise that has not accidentally arisen on this Earth, as I will explain.

Augustine of Hippo’s defences of the existence of God against the Epicurean paradox is widely acknowledged to this day. Augustine maintained that evil was only *privatio boni*, or a privation of good. He also

argued that everything was predestined. His theory of predestination contradicts his theory of freewill.

Augustine posits that all good things created by God have measure, form, and order (De Natura Boni, 1955). Clearly, Augustine is trying to make Darkness look Good. Time and space are measures, form is matter, and order requires servitude. All of these are unique to the Virtual Reality (Creation) of Darkness and do not in any way exist in the Light Creation.

To demonstrate that Augustine was indeed considering order to be equivalent to servitude, he stated that the order is such that the weak are subject to that which is stronger and more powerful. This is also a foundational argument used to support physical evolution – that is, the survival of the fittest via natural selection.

Since there is no matter, time, space, order or hierarchy in the Light Creation, according to Augustine's argument, the Light is not good. He is deviously arguing that the Creation of Evil is Good. To carry his argument to the logical extreme, the Supreme God has no form, measure or order. Therefore, by Augustine's argument, the Unmanifest is Evil.

However, that is untrue, the Unmanifest is Absolute Good. It is no wonder that Augustine would argue this because Augustine is a part of the Demiurge who resides within the Universal Dodecahedron and controls everything that has form, substance and measure under a very strict hierarchy of authority. Augustine is saying that the Unmanifest, since it has no form, measure or order, is not good. The Unmanifest is infinite, so It cannot have measure; It is unmanifested, so It cannot have substance; and It does not have a hierarchy, so It does not have order. This is a clear example of an agent of Darkness talking in such a way as to make Light look Dark and Good appear as Evil.

Another case where Augustine is obviously trying to present Light as being Darkness, and vice versa, is in his theory of privation. He claims that Evil is a privation of Good, but, in fact, it is the other way around – in Absolute Good there is a total absence of Evil.

Augustine argues there is no absolute Evil. If that were true, then there could be no truly evil people, and nobody should be damned. Any goodness in the world can only come from the Light particles that are mingled with the particles of Darkness in humans and all other forms of expression in the world.

Reading Augustine's writings and arguments puts people in danger of entering the "Mind" of Darkness. His arguments are mostly tautological nonsense. Nonetheless, they have immense influence in Western thought and have adversely affected the lives of many by encouraging hatred, bigotry and intolerance. Many innocent people have suffered tremendously due to Augustine's influence, and his legacy has directly and indirectly been responsible for immeasurable suffering and the deaths of an untold number of innocent victims. Ironically, Augustine and many other "butchers" who were Church fathers were made "saints" by the Catholic Church.

What is remarkable is that so many of Augustine's writings have survived to this day. Yet, his writings were used as tools to encourage the destruction of libraries from antiquity, and even those written long after Augustine's death.

Augustine called Mani and his followers instruments of the Devil, and labelled them as heretics, in effect, imposing death sentences on all of them by Church persecutors and civil authorities. This label included all similar followings, such as the Bogamils, the Cathars and other Gnostic groups, which groups were often imprecisely referred to by the Church as

Manicheans. These were peaceful people who were relentlessly hunted down because their views were different to those of the Church. Indeed, Augustine of Hippo is no saint!

Ditheism attempts to resolve the Problem of Evil by positing the existence of two rival gods, diametrically opposed to each other. Gnosticism, Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism are generally regarded as representing ditheistic dualism.

It is from the standpoint of the concept of two rival gods that I will be presenting the solution to the Problem of Evil. However, these are not strictly speaking “gods”, but are, rather, Forces or Principles – the Force of Good (Light) and the Force of Evil (Darkness).

The first difficulty with the Problem of Evil is that it rigidly ascribes characteristics to God to form a neatly packaged deity that meets human expectations of God. Clearly, humans cannot grasp an understanding of God, so to present a rigid model of God is really creating an insoluble problem.

The first premise of the Problem of Evil requires an omnipotent, omniscient, morally perfect God. As I will demonstrate, these characteristics are incompatible with each other and mutually exclusive for a good God.

This incongruence was not inadvertently devised. Whether the people presenting premise number one were aware of it or not, this ridiculous assertion was inspired by one of the existent Forces – Darkness. In other words, it was devilishly created to obscure truth and to cause sincere seekers to despair.

I propose that God exists, and that God is Absolute Good. The premise that has frustrated so many for so long is that God is supposed to

be omnipotent and omniscient, neither of which God is. Further, there is Evil, which God is in the process of eliminating, as will be shown.

God is perfectly good, but certainly not perfect in the unrealistic sense that humans have perceived that It ought to be. Humans have constructed an all-powerful, all-knowing, morally good God, which is totally absurd.

If God were omnipotent, It could eliminate all traces of evil and put things back as if evil had never occurred (however, Evil has set up such a situation that to do this would jeopardize even more Light particles than are currently at risk – such is the putrid scheme of Evil). For the above stated reason, this cannot be done by an Absolute Good God, which therefore renders God, in this unique situation, not strictly omnipotent. God is the highest power there is and has the power to eradicate evil forever, which It is doing in a way consistent with a loving, good God.

If God were omniscient, then everything would be known before anything occurred. If that were the case, then God would have known that evil was being facilitated and that evil would flourish, which would in turn cause tremendous suffering to beings who were in no way responsible for the evil, but were innocent victims of it. The only type of God who could be omniscient in a world where there is evil is an evil God.

An omniscient God would really have no purpose because if everything were known, there would be no point in doing anything, nor would there be anything to do. In effect, God would only be able to do things to occupy Itself. It would be like playing solitaire with a stacked deck, going through the motions just to have something to do. For everything to be predestined as Augustine proposes, the realm would have to be governed by an omniscient being – an evil being.

My position is that all suffering is evil. I realize that many have argued that suffering can be a good thing, that people are on Earth to learn lessons through suffering, but this is totally unacceptable and ultimately false. The other line of argument is that people on Earth suffer because of Original Sin, which is imposed from generation to generation upon undeserving victims, which again, could only be imposed by an evil God. Karma, too, is an imposition by Darkness because it causes suffering.

It is only because God is not omniscient that evil occurred, and it is precisely because God is loving and good that evil will be eliminated. From a human standpoint, God is supposedly imperfect because there is evil. Indeed, God is imperfect with regard to allowing evil to occur and flourish.

Evil is being eliminated by God, who is Absolute Good, but Evil is not being eliminated instantaneously because God is Absolute Good. That is, it is in the process of being eliminated. In other words, we are in the midst of the correction.

The following is an article I wrote entitled *The Source*, which represents an allegory of what I call the True Creation that was originally manifested from the Unmanifest (God). The True Light and the False Light represent Forces, not gods. As will be seen in the allegory, there are two Forces in opposition to each other. One of the Forces is resonant with the Unmanifest, the other Force is in direct opposition to It:

The Source

4th January 2004

Many are charmed by the expression of Light – not seeing the Source of the Light. The Light is NOT the Source.

The [Divine] Source is often mentioned, but one must ask, “What is the Source?” It has been called by many names, such as: The Unmanifest, The Fount, All That Is, The One, The Great Mystery, Wakan Tanka, The Great Mind, The Great Spirit, The Logos, The Formless One, The Infinite, The Timeless One, etc.

The Source is the original “Home” of the Light. From the Source, or The Unmanifest, grows the Root of Creation. Continuing with the analogy of a plant, (realizing that this is necessarily a simplified explanation of something that physical minds have a great deal of difficulty comprehending), consider that the trunk of Creation brings forth a single branch – the Branch of Light.

From the Branch of Light appeared a shoot – the Shoot of Darkness. I have occasionally referred to the Shoot of Darkness as the Evil Creation, the Evil Mind, the Evil Principle, Darkness or Evil. For purposes of this discussion, these terms are interchangeable.

The Shoot of Darkness was not created by Evil. It is in fact a shoot from the Divine Creation that went awry. If the Shoot of Darkness were severed from the Tree of Creation, it would wither and fade upon severance from the Source.

If the Branch of Light were severed from the Source, it also would wither and die. Creation is the Expression of the Source, and the Expression cannot exist without nourishment from the Source.

The Branch of Light eventually became intertwined with the Shoot of Darkness as the shoot clung to the branch for sustenance and support. Due to this mingling, it is difficult to discern if a being belongs to the Branch of Light or the Shoot of Darkness. All beings need to be traced to the Root or Trunk of Creation to discover from where they stem.

The closer to the Trunk, the easier it is to discern, but as the Branch and Shoot grow and express further, the interweaving of Light and Darkness makes it harder and harder to identify individual beings.

Evil stemmed from a celestial experimental error that would not correct itself, nor take Divine Correction, but instead thrived on the Corrective Energy all the while resisting and defying Divine Correction. Evil saw the Creation (The Expression) as the Ultimate and forgot that without the Source there would be no Expression.

Darkness created the illusion that it is the Source. This illusion is so real that Darkness itself is deluded and thinks that It (Darkness) is the Source. Evil chose the glitter over the substance. The glitter attracts the majority of beings. Many of the Light beings also erroneously perceive the Expression of Light as the Ultimate.

It is not the Source, but the Expression that is corrupted. The Source, the Unmanifest, is all there is of permanence and it remains uncorrupted. Nothing is self sustaining that is manifested from the Source. Only the Source is eternal and perpetual. Thus, the statement that the Light is self-sustaining is clearly a simplification that needs further explanation at this time. A simple explanation is that the Light of Creation has been deemed Good by the Unmanifest, and so long as the Light tends towards Purity, it is self-sustaining because by striving towards Purity it automatically connects Itself to the Source.

The Unmanifest will always be as it is – the Unmanifest. It is not personalized in the way humans comprehend and perceive it to be. People are unaware of the existence of the two Lights that are present in this False Creation. The two Lights I am referring to should not be confused with the concept of the greater and lesser lights of the Masonic teachings. For purposes of clarification, I shall refer to the two Lights as the True Light and the False Light.

However, the Light can be contaminated by Darkness if Darkness invades Light. Hence, if Darkness is not checked, the Light could be swamped and weakened by Darkness and become contaminated by It. The Light referred to and experienced by the majority of people in this world and in the astral is often not the True Light – it is actually the False Light from the Shoot of Darkness. Few people suspect that the Light they see and experience is in fact not the True Light of the Branch of Light. This explains why beings of Light as well as beings of Darkness often claim that they are of the Light, and have been in the Light during near-death experiences and at other times even though the Light they experienced is the False Light. The Light experienced by many people during near-death experiences is the False Light.

The present Dalai Lama has cautioned his followers that existence may not be infinite. Further, the Catholic Bible in Psalm 23 expresses a similar thought in its final verse: *“I will dwell in the house of the LORD for years to come.”* This concept is correct – when True Light is withdrawn from the False Light at the time when the True-Light beings are withdrawn from this Evil Creation (Shoot of Darkness). In other words, Darkness is beginning to suspect that when the Light supplied by the True-Light beings is withdrawn due to their liberation from Darkness, the False Light will be extinguished. Hence the existence of the False-Light beings (beings of Darkness) is not infinite.

Creation is an ongoing process. It is only in the Dark Shoot of Creation that "time" exists. True Creation is Timeless.

Beings of Light will naturally be attracted to the True Light unless they are severely contaminated by Darkness. Beings from the Shoot of Darkness are naturally attracted to the False Light created by the Shoot of Darkness and will naturally be repulsed and threatened by the True Light. Further, True-Light beings can still be attracted to the False Light due to programming, illusions and pollution.

Although True-Light beings can be attracted to the False Light, they are not ultimately repulsed or threatened by True Light even though they might initially be a bit insecure towards It due to pollution and programming from Darkness. True-Light beings are in fact nurtured, strengthened and sustained by the True Light.

Beings of Darkness are attracted to the False Light and are nurtured by It, while beings of Light, even if they are being programmed to respond or be attracted to the False Light, are not nurtured by the False Light. Instead, they are being exploited by the False Light and become pockets of energy that nurture Darkness.

Beings of Darkness are not comfortable in the presence of True Light. They feel a sense of utter despair. They can never recognize nor accept the True Light and Its "Messengers". They can never truly feel at home nor can they

truly be committed to the Work sponsored by the True Light. Such ones will always feel that they are still searching for their way home, even if they encounter True Light and Its Messengers. This is true since their real home goes back to the Shoot of Darkness and not to the Branch of Light or the Source.

On the other hand, beings of Light can never totally feel committed to or comfortable with the False Light. The True-Light beings who are nourished by the True Light grow in Purity, while the False-Light beings who are nurtured by the False Light grow more and more evil. However, beings for either side will ultimately know to which side they belong.

The True Light carries an inner sound, an inner “vibration”, a blueprint which the False Light cannot reproduce even though the False Light can imitate the appearance of the True Light. This is where the awakened beings of Light will be able to discriminate the True-Light beings from the False-Light beings AFTER the final stages of the separation of Light from Darkness commence. There is the Pulse, the inner Sound, the inner Vibration that individual beings of True Light can inwardly access to recognize the True Light.

The separation of the True Light and False Light is now in progress. This is manifesting on many levels and the operation is extremely complex and delicate. The entire Tree of Creation (the Expression) appears to be far gone, but some

of It can still be retrieved. Therefore, the Tree can be saved with some delicate pruning. It is better to lose the offending part than to lose the entire Tree.

As beings of the True Light become more and more detached from the beings of the False Light, they become more and more unified with the True Light. When this occurs they begin to notice the differences between themselves and the beings of Darkness (This will occur more on the subtle level and in their spiritual expression rather than in their physical appearance).

As beings of Light become more and more in tune with the True Light, they will become more and more vibrant, shining sparks of the True Light. Beings of Light and beings of Darkness will then become more and more intolerant and uncomfortable with one another. While this separation of the two Lights is in progress, True-Light beings and False-Light beings will both be undertaking their respective “metamorphoses”.

The “Miniature Galaxy” that has been discussed in the past is a “Half-Way House” for the viables when they are evacuated from this Evil Creation. True-Light beings who have been contaminated by Darkness will reside there until all the necessary “metamorphoses” are completed so that they can safely be re-assimilated into the Branch of Light. Thus, once

again, they will be re-united with the Source and become an integral part of the True Creation.

It is then that True-Light beings will exist in the love, purity, timelessness, harmony, joy and beauty of the True Creation. Even the being known as “Time” will have been liberated from Darkness.

(End of Article)

From the above article, *The Source*, it is clear that there is only one God, the Unmanifest, and that God is Absolute Good. Strictly speaking, in the unique situation that Darkness has caused, the Unmanifest is not omnipotent, and in no sense is It omniscient. It is obvious that God is not omniscient because something went awry in the Creation, which resulted in the expression of Evil. However, as already stated, this problem is in the process of being corrected.

Darkness created Its own domain, which I call the Virtual Reality, and rules it as though It were God. But, Darkness is only a minor creator, a demiurge, which created matter as the foundation of the Virtual Reality. The True-Light beings were trapped by Darkness in matter, and blended together in a “mayonnaise”. The correction involves a rescue of the True-Light beings trapped in matter. It takes time and it is a delicate process that is ongoing.

There will be a total separation of True-Light beings from False-Light beings at the final stage of the Rescue Mission. The Principle of Good sent beings from the True-Light Creation at the initial stages of the

Rescue Mission, only to learn that they did not have enough understanding of evil, nor the abilities, to effectively combat evil in the Virtual Reality. Therefore, the Unmanifest took over the Rescue Mission and manifested parts of Itself as the Attas of the True Light, who are able to effectively combat evil. The corrective action has been done gradually and in stages to protect the trapped True-Light beings. It is an extremely complex procedure, but it is well underway and it is now in the final stage.

The Attas of the True Light have had many manifestations on Earth. Some of them are well known to people of the world. They include: Moses, Pythagoras, Plato, Lao Tze, Daniel, Jesus, White Buffalo Woman, John the Divine, Mani, Gwenevere, Luria, Copernicus, Kepler, Haydn, Thomas Paine, Tchaikovsky and Mirra of Pondicherry/Fragrance. Others include: Zoroaster, Babaji of Haidakhan, Mary (mother of Jesus), James (brother of Jesus), Chopin, Liszt, Beethoven, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Edgar Cayce, H.G. Wells, Mark Twain and many other personalities.

Many of these personalities have been wrongly accused by agents of Darkness and falsely accused of doing and saying things they never did or said to discredit or use them. Part of the Attas' role in the Rescue Mission is to keep track of the Archons of Darkness. Hence, in the physical, they can be in situations where they are associated with the Archons of Darkness as family members, spouses, close associates etc.

Therefore, because the Attas associate with these Archons in the physical, Darkness uses the opportunity to slander the Attas of the Light and discredit them with guilt by association with Its Archons! Sometimes,

Darkness uses Archons associated with the Attas to trap and misguide the true seekers by elevating the Archons to exemplary roles. A clear example of this occurred when Jesus associated with the demon known as Mary Magdalene, who has today been elevated by agents of Darkness. Another example is that Moses never ordered the killings of thousands of people; Aaron did that horrible deed. The messages of Jesus, Mani, John the Divine and others have been corrupted because Darkness abhors truth, and does not want the trapped True-Light beings to awaken to the truth. Further, It does not want Its own False-Light beings to know the horrible predicament that they are in.

This realm is a virtual reality that will corrupt any truth that is being disseminated. That is why truth is so easily distorted the moment it is dispensed here. Corruption of truth is an imposition by Darkness designed to keep people ignorant.

The “Half-Way House” that I, as Mani, foretold, has now been re-named the “Miniature Galaxy” for easier physical-mind comprehension. The only things of worth, the viable True-Light beings, will be evacuated to this “Miniature Galaxy”, until they are purified sufficiently to re-enter the True-Light Creation.

The Unmanifest will retain all knowledge of evil which was initially foreign to It. Evil will thus never occur again because the Unmanifest now has an understanding of evil, and steps have been taken to make sure that it can never manifest again. Further, the “Miniature Galaxy” is impervious to evil.

Just as the Four Elements were symbolically released by a physical act of drumming, so too will the Rescue Mission have a symbolic release in the form of a physical evacuation of some beings from the Virtual Reality. Only a certain number of beings need to be physically evacuated to effect the symbolic separation.

Those who are not included in the symbolic physical “evacuation” need not be concerned; every viable True-Light being will be rescued and returned Home. This writing is symbolically unravelling some of the damage done by Darkness in this world. Whether the readers accept what has been written is irrelevant, it is the symbolic presentation of the information that is important to the separation. However, those who do respond in their hearts to what has been presented will be comforted and assisted in the days to come.

To re-iterate, when the physical evacuation noticeably occurs, it will be for symbolic purposes and will not include all of the viable beings (beings who have not given over their Will to Darkness). All of the viable True-Light particles will be evacuated when the separation process is complete. When this happens and all the viable True-Light Beings have been relocated to the “Miniature Galaxy”, all the Attas will return to the Unmanifest. However, the connection of the Attas and the Unmanifest will always be there with the True-Light Beings – the Attas will continue to be with them.

The separation is bitter-sweet because so many beings have been lost to Darkness and will not be going Home. During the process of the separation, some people could feel confused, ostracized, all alone,

different, experience an inner tug-of-war, sadness, etc. It is “natural” to have mixed feelings about the process. It is not an easy thing to go through.

The key to solving the Problem of Evil is for the Attas to symbolically crystallize the solution to rid Creation of Evil. This has been accomplished recently, and the separation has commenced. It is the separation of the Christ Energy from the Anti-Christ Energy – Good from Evil – Light from Darkness. Evil will soon be eliminated; this is the promise from the Unmanifest.

My article entitled *Final Reflections #4* presents another allegory of the horrible thing done by Evil and the inevitable separation being effected by our Absolute Good God:

Final Reflections #4

21st September 2004

There was a time when all was Right – when that which was, was all that was – but that time was lost when things turned Wrong.

The Wrong drew many on that course – the Path to utter Destruction. The Lure to go Wrong was cast into the Divine Sea, and many unwittingly followed. Some have fought like fish on lines and struggled and resisted and they have never been brought aboard the Wrong Ship. These have been valiant struggles for those brave ones who have resisted with

all their will. It is for those who still fight the Wrong that the Love of the Divine has been poured into the Sea of Corruption. Most who took the Lure struggled little. These gave their will over to the Wrong and were easily brought aboard the Wrong Ship. These who have given over their will to Wrong are wasting away in the hold of the Putrid Ship. It is also for these lost ones that the Rescue Mission was commenced – not to bring them Home for they have turned Wrong and are hopeless, but to reduce their suffering by cutting the Source away from the Wrong. Then the Wrong Ship and all Its cargo will soon be no more.

The time of the Rescue is now because so many who have fought so long are at the end of their will to resist. The hold of the Wrong Ship would soon snatch them. It is for these very brave ones who have struggled at every turn that the Wrong Ship is being cut off now.

The time is now. All those who have fallen prey will soon be no more as the Ship of Wrong is wrecked and It too will soon waste away.

For those who struggle against the Wrong – Rejoice! Your battles are nearly over, but fight the Wrong to the last as the Right, which is the Light, will soon cut those lines and pull you from the Corrupted Sea, far from the memory of the Wrong Ship and Its Lures.

Strength is given to those who ask as the Love of the Mother/Father Creator is all about the Corrupted Sea. This

Love was poured into the Corrupted Sea in order to sustain the viable ones. Soon, very soon, all the lines will snap and those who have struggled will swim free and at long last be Liberated from Darkness.

Rejoice. The day is drawing near. Be strong until that time for very soon all who have struggled with all their will shall be rescued and safely returned to their True Divine Home.

The time is indeed very close. Soon all that is will all be Right – when all that is, is in the Light. This is The Promise from the Divine Creator.

The Drumming will soon commence. The New Energy will be released to Liberate those who have remained faithful to the Light. The Warriors are about to fight their final battles on all levels. Victory is assured for the Light. The Journey Home will soon commence for all the True-Light beings who have valiantly struggled against enormous odds.

Take the Divine Love with you always, and It will carry you Home.

(End of Article)

According to the teachings of Mani (bear in mind that some distortion has occurred to them):

There is a Supreme God. Below the level of the Supreme God are two eternal, self-existent Natures or Principles, one Good, the other Evil. Each of these Natures is ontologically different and they are opposed to one another.

These two Natures of Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, became mixed. This resulted in the Light particles (beings of Light) being trapped in Darkness (Matter). A struggle between Light and Darkness began in all aspects of existence in this dimension. The Light particles that are trapped in Matter are constantly oppressed and exploited.

Fundamental to Gnostic belief, the Manichaeans too believe that this world is controlled by Darkness, and that there is a mixture of good and evil in all the actions of human beings. Hence, in this world there are two ontological types of people – those of the Light and those of Darkness, that is, “True-Light beings” and “False-Light beings” respectively.

The True-Light beings have been struggling to retain their Divine connection since the mixing with Darkness occurred. With this mixing, connection to their Source has been obstructed. A rescue operation for the liberation of the trapped True-Light beings was immediately initiated by the Good Principle, (which was unsuccessful, so the Supreme God took over the Rescue Mission and sent projections of Itself as manifestations). The illusion created by Darkness has distorted the Truth about this “war”, about the nature of beings and their spiritual origins. Darkness used many traps to exploit and further entrap the True-Light beings. The loss of both their spiritual awareness and the truth about their predicament have induced True-Light beings into a spiritual slumber. This is why the Manichaeans strive to purify themselves through the discipline of the Three Seals (hand, mouth and bosom).

Darkness feeds on those of the Divine creation in this world, not symbiotically, but very much like a destructive parasite, and the True-Light beings are spiritually assassinated under these perilous and fatal circumstances. The more the True-Light beings are attached to the desires of

this world, the deeper their entrapment in Evil (Matter), and the greater their loss in spiritual awareness.

Throughout the ages, since the entrapment of True-Light beings in Matter, the Supreme God has been sending Messengers of salvation at various times, to reveal the knowledge of Truth (the Nous) to awaken the trapped True-Light beings from their spiritual predicament, and remind them to take steps to purify themselves sufficiently by rejecting Evil and by self discipline and right living according to the instructions revealed by the Divine messengers. Hence, like the “pneuma-nature” of the Gnostic, salvation for the Manichaeans’ “particles of Light” is not automatically assured, but must be accompanied by a corresponding way of life which they believed to be compatible with the condition of one redeemed. The “war” between Light and Darkness will eventually be permanently resolved with victory for the Light.

In Zoroastrianism, the struggle is waged by right action (orthopraxis) in the affairs of this world and eventually all are saved. But for Manichaeism, it is gnosis, not orthopraxis, that saves, and not all are saved. This again is different from Pauline Christianity with its emphasis on salvation by faith and predestination. All of these belief systems have been corrupted by Darkness to confuse searchers and obscure the truth.

Jesus’ and Mani’s undistorted message should have been this, which I now state:

In the beginning, is the Principle of Light, and only the Principle of Light. Above It is Its creator, A-itu, the Unmanifest, the Mother/Father Godhead (for want of a suitable term), the Divine Being of Purity or Supreme Godhead.

The Unmanifest created the True-Light Creation and the Good/Light Principle to run the True-Light Creation. Creation commenced as an experiment in manifestations. Since it was experimental, the Good Principle made mistakes from time to time, but each time the Good Principle was able to correct the mistakes and creation progressed harmoniously.

At some point the Principle of Light innocently created an Error known as the Principle of Polarity, which is commonly known as the Principle of Darkness or Evil. Darkness could have been corrected to again be in line with the Principle of Light, but, the Error would not take correction from the Good Principle. This Error has been referred to as the “Celestial Error” by various Gnostics. In other words, the Error was manifested because the Good Principle is not perfect and accidentally created a self-destructive error, contrary to the Good Principle. Instead of taking correction, the Error isolated itself from the Good Principle. Thus, the Evil Principle is an offshoot of the Light Principle. Had the Error accepted correction from the Light Principle, Evil would never have existed.

Thus, the two principles of Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, did not exist from the beginning of Creation. That is, they are not eternal as stated in Manichaeism or other Gnostic writings. “Eternal” means to exist always, without beginning or end. They cannot be eternal because they both have beginnings and Evil will soon have an ending.

The Evil Principle went on Its own way and began imitating the creative power of the Good Principle (the True Light). However, the Evil Principle is in direct opposition to the True Light, so whilst some of the things in the Evil Creation (False-Light Creation) might look like those in the True-Light Creation, they are not the same.

Soon, the Error (Evil) realized that It was not self-sustaining, and that It needed the Light's energy to sustain Itself, so to speak. So, Evil then commenced Its plan to appropriate as much True-Light energy as possible. This involved an extraordinarily elaborate, devious and malicious plan to trap and hold as hostages as many True-Light particles as possible.

Darkness employed illusions of attraction and motion to solidify Its thought forms into matter. In solidified matter, Darkness blended or mixed True-Light particles, trapping the Light in material "prisons".

Darkness then constructed the Universal Dodecahedron, which is composed of twelve pentagon shaped universes, and attached them to construct a symmetrical solid, and placed Itself inside the Universal Dodecahedron (Virtual Reality). All the while Darkness was inside the Virtual Reality, It tried deceiving Its trapped subjects into thinking It was the Unmanifest. In other words, Evil tried to imitate the Unmanifest, the Supreme Godhead.

The mixing is so thorough and deep that it is difficult to discern Light from Darkness. Darkness' Virtual Reality is literally a huge graveyard, and each being therein is a casket waiting to be buried. The mixing of the True-Light particles in matter is the First Death. The Second Death occurs if a True-Light particle gives over its Will to Darkness. When the True-Light beings are rescued from Darkness, it will be like the resurrection of the dead for those who have only suffered the First Death of entrapment in matter. But, there is no rising from the Second Death. Those who have given over their Will to the Principle of Polarity are lost to Darkness forever.

The Good Principle mounted a rescue mission and attempted to rescue all of the True-Light particles that are trapped in matter (Evil). This is represented in Mani's allegory in which the rescuers succumbed to

Darkness. This indeed happened, and even more attempts were mounted by the Principle of Good, and all failed, and in fact the trap became deeper and deeper as more energy was poured into the rescue mission. Every attempt failed because Good did not fully understand Evil, and all the attempts at rescue only resulted in the rescuers being thwarted and trapped because they were like “sitting ducks” for Evil.

The Unmanifest (Divine Mother) then launched Her own Rescue Mission by projecting Herself and parts of Herself as all of the Attas, who temporarily take on physical forms as walk-ins in the Virtual Reality. The Attas have re-trained the rescuers of the Good Principle so that they can now stand up to Evil in the Virtual Reality and assist in the Rescue Mission. It is the Divine Mother (with the help of the Attas) who is doing the bulk of the work of the Rescue Mission whilst keeping tabs on the manifestations of the Principle of Darkness. There are many projections of the Attas on Earth today. These are the “Warriors” of the True Light. In other words, they are literally parts of the Unmanifest on Earth.

When the Rescue Mission is completed, the True-Light particles will return to their True Home, that is, the True-Light Creation. The Attas will also return Home, to the Unmanifest. However, there will always be connection from the Unmanifest to the True-Light Creation.

Evil will never re-occur because the Principle of Light willingly took the Correction from the Unmanifest and therefore, cannot ever produce, maintain or facilitate Evil again. Further, a new energy has been employed in the modified True-Light Creation that is inimical to Evil. Hence, all the beings of Light will once again enjoy unconditional love, purity, beauty, peace, harmony, joy and all goodness. There will be no suffering, sickness, degeneration or death. Evil will be totally eliminated, never to return again.

All will then be One. Had the Good Principle rejected the Correction of Its weakness regarding Evil, It, too, would have been eliminated in the Rescue Mission and a new Principle devoid of the vulnerability towards Evil would have taken the place of the Good Principle.

The Gnostic concept of God is a spiritual rather than a philosophical one, whilst the Problem of Evil is a philosophical argument about God. My solution to the Problem of Evil is to discard the fixed human expectations of what God ought to be, which resulted in an illogical formula that reads like: $2 + 2 = 5$, which everyone has tried to solve in vain. The Problem of Evil has been mis-stated by putting in mutually exclusive and impossible attributes to God.

Hence, God is Absolute Good, but God is not strictly perfect, not strictly omnipotent, and certainly not omniscient.

The terms omniscient and good are mutually exclusive. That is, a good God could not be omniscient and allow evil. Only an evil God could be all knowing, and allow the suffering Evil has caused in this world. An all knowing God would know what Evil could do and all the suffering that would come from it, and would not allow it to happen.

However, an imperfect God who is not all knowing could allow an innocent mistake to occur, and It did just that. This is how Evil emerged from the Principle of Good. God is not omnipotent because It cannot put things back together from the start, that is, It cannot rescue those who have turned Evil (been lost to the Principle of Polarity). In other words, It cannot undo evil and all the damage Evil has done. But God is Absolute Good and all loving, hence, It is in the process of eliminating Evil forevermore. Evil is

not eternal, and Evil will soon be eradicated by the Supreme Godhead, A-itu (which means the Eternal Flame), the Divine Being of Purity, Wakan Tanka, The Fount, All That Is, The One.

Wagi-pataa

Aloo-ka-satua-ti-ka

A-itu pasar-wah

Wah-ee-paagee-tah

Tiou

Kaui

I shall soon gather all that are mine!

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