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Original Sin

The Shaping of the Doctrine in the Tension between
Individual and Corporate Responsibility

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Introduction

As a Chinese Catholic, I have been trying to reconcile the two systems of thought, the Chinese and the Judeo-Christian tradition. However, given the geographical, historical, and philosophical differences, it is hardly a task possible without studying and understanding the aforementioned differences of both. And this is a huge task.

At a conference¹ concerning the dialogue between Christianity and Chinese Culture held in Lapland, Finland, 2003, the presentation started with the debate whether the Christian doctrine of Original Sin is compatible with the Confucian notion that the nature of man is good. This is particularly relevant because the answer to this question may support or decline the teaching that the need of Christ's Salvation is for all and hence, for all Chinese.

In spite of the fact that the doctrine of Original Sin is investigated by scholars with modern scientific tools, like the theory of Evolution, by Peter Enns, Jerry D. Kormeyer, Daryl P. Domning and Monika Hellwig for example,² or with a study

¹ All the papers presented in the conference are contained in the book: Miikka Ruokanen and Paulos Huang, eds., *Christianity and Chinese Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2010).

² See their books: Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say about Human Origins* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2012); Jerry D. Kormeyer, *Evolution and Eden: Balancing Original Sin and Contemporary Science* (New York: Paulist Press, 1998); Daryl P.

of concrete situations by Alistair McFadyen,³ I still think that it is worthwhile to study the development of the doctrine of Original Sin by tracing its source, understanding the elements which influenced that development.

Apart from scripture, the practice of the early Church and the philosophical thoughts flourished at the time, the presence of the tension between corporate responsibility of sin of Adam and salvation by Christ which is central to the Christian faith, and individual responsibility of sin and salvation conscious by the self are all significant to the development of the doctrine.

Only with the awareness of the historical and philosophical context of the development, and the hidden tension behind the development can one grasp the essence of the doctrine, and in turn re-interpret it in later research with tools that are more easily understood by and are more familiar with contemporary readers. Only until then, the dialogue between Christianity and Chinese culture can be more faithfully carried out, at least insofar as the tradition of Christianity is concerned.

This paper is a historical research on the development of the doctrine of

Domning and Monika Hellwig, *Original Selfishness: Original Sin and Evil in the Light of Evolution* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2006), respectively. For an attempt to identify Original Sin as selfishness developed during the process of evolution and natural selection, see: Christian De Duve, Neil Patterson, and Edward O. Wilson, *Genetics of Original Sin: The Impact of Natural Selection on the Future of Humanity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

³ See his book: Alistair I. McFadyen, *Bound to Sin: Abuse, Holocaust, and the Christian Doctrine of Sin* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Original Sin until its fruition at the hands of Augustine of Hippo. It tries to show how Christian literature receives its earlier tradition and in turns influences its development.

Therefore, the understanding of the development of Christian Tradition with regards to the notion of Sin is more important to this paper than the historical context of the Roman world at large, thus the emphasis is given to the former. Nonetheless, the latter is not totally excluded, particularly in the study of philosophical influence to that development.

Given the scale of the paper, and the accessibility of the sources, the lists of quotations employed in this work are not exhaustive. However, I believe that it is adequate to show the major opinion held by the Christian traditions at a particular time period.

As for many theological papers and papers of other fields, this paper employs the Chicago/Turabian referencing system in notes/bibliography style.

In terms of the structure of this paper, first, I am going to examine the development of the teaching of sin in light of the tension between individual and corporate responsibility from the beginning of the Judeo-Christian tradition until the second century C.E., which includes the Old and New Testaments, and the

apostolic literature, by which I mean Christian writings contemporary to the New Testament.

After that, I am going to investigate how Christian Tradition receives the development by studying two relevant teachings, the immortality and the origin of the souls, during the period between the apologists and the Christian writers before Augustine.

Afterwards I am going to study Augustine in particular more in depth by examining the biblical and philosophical backgrounds of his teaching about Original Sin, its consequences, and the remedy by Christ to it.

Lastly, I will try to identify some theological implications of the doctrine of Original Sin as developed until Augustine, in which we can also observe how Augustine deals with the hidden tension between individual and corporate responsibility of sin and salvation.

1 Sins: Individual and Corporate Responsibility until the mid-2nd Century C.E.

Since the Enlightenment, individualism, the philosophy that “emphasizes the moral worth of the individual,”⁴ has been playing an important role in shaping our society. It seems that the general public has taken it for granted, without being aware that the moral value of the individual may not have been so emphasized in the ages before, especially in biblical times.

Rather, the tension between individual and corporate responsibility has been existing in the Judeo-Christian Tradition since its very beginning. In this chapter, a non-exhaustive enumeration of examples is given, in the Deuteronomist and Prophetic traditions in the Old Testament, in the Pauline, Synoptic, and Johannine traditions in the New Testament, and in the reception of these traditions in the Apostolic Literature.

1.1 Individual and Corporate Responsibility in the Old Testament

1.1.1 Individual Responsibility

In spite of the fact that individualistic thinking started its domination over modern society only after the French Revolution, it has been present in an ancient literature, i.e. the Old Testament. Indeed, readers may find a number of passages in

⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "individualism", accessed June 13, 2012, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/286303/individualism>.

the Old Testament which is morally individualistic.

Among the laws the Moses reiterated in the Book of Deuteronomy, there is one that spares children from their parents' sin, and vice versa:

Parents shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their parents; only for their own crimes may persons be put to death.⁵

Among his eschatological promises, before the one on the new covenant, the prophet Jeremiah, whose ministry was within Judah during shortly before the Babylonian exile, evokes this same principle also, in its applied form:

In those days they shall no longer say: "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." But all shall die for their own sins; the teeth of everyone who eats sour grapes shall be set on edge.⁶

Another criticism on the same proverb, but a more famous one, is pronounced by the prophet Ezekiel, who prophesized during the exilic period among the exiled. Justified by notion that all lives belong to the living God, he exclaims:

It is only the person who sins that shall die.⁷

After this exclamation, he gives an example⁸ to illustrate his teaching. Suppose there is a benevolent father, who has a wicked son committed intolerable crimes. This

⁵ Deut. 24:16 (New Revised Standard Version). Hereafter all biblical quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version, otherwise stated.

⁶ Jer. 31:29-30.

⁷ Ezek. 18:4.

⁸ Cf. Ezek. 18:5-18.

wicked son will not be spared for the benevolence of his father. This wicked man also has a son, who, unlike his wicked father, is benevolent to all his neighbors. This benevolent son, first, will not die on account of his father's sin, second, will live because of his own good deeds.

In summary, in the Old Testament, since individual retribution is more emphasized in the later part of Ancient Israel history, given the criterion of social progression, some scholars, like J. R. Porter,⁹ conclude that individual retribution is more superior than corporate retribution. However, before any conclusion, the idea of corporate retribution has first to be visited.

1.1.2 Corporate Responsibility

Despite the noticeable presence of individual responsibility in the Old Testament, corporate retribution remains a strong notion throughout. For instance, in Deuteronomy, as aforementioned, God inclines to individual retribution, in Exodus, when He was also promulgating the Law, He shows his inclination to corporate retribution:

For I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of

⁹ J.R. Porter, "The Legal Aspects of the Concept of "Corporate Personality" in the Old Testament," *Vetus Testamentum* 15, no. 3 (1965): 379-80, quoted in Joel S. Kaminsky, "The Sins of the Fathers: A Theological Investigation of the Biblical Tension Between Corporate and Individualized Retribution," *Judaism* 46, no. 3 (Summer 1997): 320.

parents, to the third and fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.¹⁰

While God only voiced for individual responsibility, God, God actually punished according to corporate retribution. For instance, when the Israelites were invading Jericho, through Joshua God commanded that no one should covet the things devoted to destruction.¹¹ However, one man, Achan son of Carmi of the tribe of Judah did not follow¹² what God had commanded. God was made angry, and caused the three thousand Israelite soldiers lost in their fight against Ai. Thirty-six of them were killed, probably also the rest.¹³ Apparently the three thousand men were not liable to the act of transgression, but they were made dead by God's will because of the transgression of one man, Achan.

Perhaps one of the most famous stories of corporate retribution in the Old Testament is the "sin(s) of Jeroboam." This expression is repeated 13 times in books of Kings, and in the entire bible. And this formula, "sin(s) of *somebody*," is repeated the most¹⁴ under the name of Jeroboam.

¹⁰ Exod. 20:5-6.

¹¹ Josh. 6:18.

¹² Josh. 7:1.

¹³ Josh. 7:4-5.

¹⁴ Actually, the formula appears in the entire Bible under only two names, "Jeroboam," 13 times as mentioned, and "Baasha and Elah," once. The "sin of Adam" or "Adam's sin" is not biblical, with only one exception in Rom. 5:16 "the one man's sin" alluding to Adam's.

The story of Jeroboam's sin is as follow. After the Kingdom of Solomon was split into two by Jeroboam, there was still only one cultic center, which was Jerusalem, the capital of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Seeing that the necessity of his own subjects worshipping in Jerusalem as a potential deconsolidation to the political stability in the Northern Kingdom, Jeroboam made two golden calves, set them one in Bethel and another in Dan, and he proclaimed, "Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt."¹⁵ What's more, his words are verbatim¹⁶ to Aaron's when he allowed the Israelites to build their first golden calf under Mount Sinai.

Although the building of the two golden calves is the idea of Jeroboam, God's punishment is not limited to him. First, his son, Abijah, died on account of his father's deed.¹⁷ And the prophet Ahijah prophesized:

The Lord will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water; he will root up Israel out of this good land that he gave to their ancestors, and scatter them beyond the Euphrates, because they have made their sacred poles, provoking the Lord to anger. He will give Israel up *because of the sins of Jeroboam*, which he sinned and which he caused Israel to commit¹⁸ (Emphasis added).

As told in the Book of 2 Kings, this prophecy was fulfilled. In the author's

¹⁵ 1 Kings 12:28.

¹⁶ Exod. 32:4.

¹⁷ 1 Kings 4:12.

¹⁸ 1 Kings 14:15-16.

conclusion on the history of the Kingdom, he recalled¹⁹ the prophecy above.

Therefore, the notion of corporate responsibility is as prominent as individual responsibility in the Old Testament. If it is only moral person is morally accountable, and hence responsible, then H. W. Robinson's statement is illuminating:

The larger or smaller group was accepted without question as a unity; legal prescription was replaced by the fact or fiction of the blood-tie, usually traced back to a common ancestor. The whole group, including its past, present, and future members, might function as a single individual through any one of those members conceived as representative of it. Because it was not confined to the living, but included the dead and the unborn, the group could be conceived as living forever.²⁰

Given the prominent roles of both individual and corporate personality in the Old Testament, the question about whether individual retribution is superior to corporate retribution is still under scholarly debate.²¹ In any case, the idea of corporate personality is of great importance, as well as individual personality. It is due to the fact that, when we move to the New Testament, the problem in question is not only retribution, but also salvation.

¹⁹ 2 Kings 17:21-23.

²⁰ H. Wheeler Robinson, *Corporate Personality in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 25-26, quoted in Joel S. Kaminsky, *Corporate Responsibility in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 16. This article was originally published in P. Volz, F. Stummer and J. Hempel (eds.), *Werden und Wesen des Alten Testaments: Vorträge gehalten auf der Internationalen Tagung alttestamentlicher Forscher zu Göttingen vom 4.-10. September 1935* (BZAW, 66; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1936), 49-62.

²¹ Joel S. Kaminsky, "The Sins of the Fathers: A Theological Investigation of the Biblical Tension Between Corporate and Individualized Retribution," *Judaism* 46 (1997): 319-32.

1.2 Individual and Corporate Responsibility in the New Testament

In the three main traditions in the New Testament, viz. the Pauline, Synoptic, and Johannine traditions, the interplay between individual and corporate personality is not difficult to pinpoint.

1.2.1 Pauline Tradition

Biblical Scholars²² generally agree that not the entire Pauline Corpus is penned by Paul. Among the 13 Pauline Epistles, the Pauline authorship of only seven letters, i.e., Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon, is undisputed. The undisputed, or authentic, Pauline tradition is dated between the 40s and 50s of the 1st century, C.E.

The idea of corporate responsibility is prominent in 1 Corinthians, particularly chap. 12. However, in this chapter, the notion that all members of the Christian community become one body under the head of Christ is used by Paul to explain the diversity of ministry within one community. Therefore, instead of 1 Corinthians, I take the Letter to the Romans as an example. This letter has been contributive to the

²² For Scholars agree with the distinction undisputed and disputed Pauline letters, see: Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 307-09; Gerd Theissen, *The New Testament: A Literary History*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 7; Edwin D. Freed, *The New Testament: A Critical Introduction*, 3rd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Pub., 2001), 251; Raymond Edward. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 418-19. For scholarly opinion against the distinction, see: Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 241-42.

discussion and development of the doctrine of Original sin.

In his Letter to the Romans, Paul's idea on sin and salvation is most easily seen. And this letter is also one of the most influential, as far as the shaping of the doctrine of Original Sin is concerned. In this letter, as in the Gospel of John, the tendency is solely corporate.

First, in Chap. 3, Paul finds men are a corporate of sinners,²³ and it is because of this that all men need to be justified. This justification for all is worked by Christ alone, through his blood.²⁴ Thus, this one man Jesus is made responsible for the sins of all men, a corporate salvation.

Second, in the most famous Chap. 5, he made explicit the parallelism between Adam and Christ:

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all²⁵ have sinned—sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come. ...If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift

²³ Rom. 3:23.

²⁴ Rom. 3:24.

²⁵ It would be demonstrated later in this paper that the mistranslation of "because all" into "in whom" might be one of the factors that facilitated the establishment of the doctrine of Original Sin as we now have it today. The translation of this verse of a classic debate, Joseph A. Fitzmyer provided 11 translation options with evaluation to each one of them, see: Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, Anchor Bible 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 413-7. Here I follow the translation of the New Revised Standard Version, as the debate of the translation is out of the scope of this paper.

of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.²⁶

As James D. G. Dunn rightly observes,²⁷ for Paul, the intriguing element here is death. For him, death is not a natural phenomenon, but it is a universal phenomenon. Only sin is accountable for death.

Hence, the Pauline logic here works as follow, 1) all men die, 2) death is brought about by sin; 3) therefore all are sinners. Men form a corporate of death, and hence a corporate of sinners.

Michael J. Gorman further argues,²⁸ that Paul makes use of Adam only as a type, in order to parallel what Christ has done. Just as through an act of one man (Adam) sin and death extended to the entire corporate of mankind, also through another act of one man (Jesus) that justification and life extended to the entire corporate of mankind.

1.2.2 Synoptic traditions

Although biblical scholars still debate about the sequence of writing of the three synoptic gospels, there is a general consensus²⁹ that the earliest date of the composition of any of the three is in the 60s of the 1st century C.E., while the latest is

²⁶ Rom. 5:12-14; 17.

²⁷ James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 1998), 97.

²⁸ Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 367.

²⁹ See: Ehrman, *The New Testament*, 103, 132, 152; Freed, *The New Testament*, 123-124, 141-143, 164-165; Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 163-164, 216-217, 273-274.

the first decade of the 2nd century.

Most of Jesus' teachings in the Synoptic Gospels are address to a group of individuals. This means that although Jesus is facing a crowd, it depends on each one of them whether to following Jesus' teaching or not, and this individual decision will not affect other's destiny.

One of the examples is the beatitudes. It is addressed to a crowd of individuals. If they follow the beatitudes individually, they enjoy the promise individually:

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.³⁰

Also, in most of Jesus' eschatological discourses, the theme of each individual's destiny is decided by what he/she has done in his/her life is highlighted. One of the most celebrated examples is Matt. 25, in which one's fate is decided by whether

³⁰ Matt. 5:3-12; see also: Luke 6:20-22.

he/she has carried out charity toward those little ones in Christ.³¹

Last but not least in this non-exhaustive enumeration of examples is Jesus' proclamation throughout the Synoptic Gospels: "Repent!"³² The object of the call for repentance is one's internal disposition. In other words, no one should be responsible for another one's repentance or non-repentance.

Nevertheless, as Christians, we all know that our salvation, viz. the destiny of our lives, does not solely depend on our own inner disposition or charitable works. As Jesus once said in the Gospel of Mark, his life would be given over "for the ransom of many."³³ Hence, the central message of the Synoptic Gospel is Jesus' self-giving death. As recorded in all the Synoptic Gospels, at the night he was betrayed, he said certain words during the last meal with his disciples before his death:

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out *for many* for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'³⁴ (Emphasis added)

The Synoptic Gospels teach that it is through the blood of Jesus that the sins of

³¹ Matt. 25: 31-46.

³² Matt. 3:2; Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3, etc.

³³ Mark 10:45.

³⁴ Matt. 26:26-29; See also: Mark 14:22-25; Luke 21:14-23.

many are forgiven. We are forgiven not on account of our own act, but an act of one person, Jesus Christ. The Synoptic tradition has yet to discern whether this salvation works through reconciliation, redemption, or recapitulation. However, this is definitely not an individual salvation, but a corporate one.

1.2.3 Johannine Tradition

The Gospel of John and the Revelation are both members of the Johannine Tradition. While the gospel is dated by scholars³⁵ between 90-120 C.E., the Revelation between 68-96.

At the beginning of John 9, a Pharisee asked Jesus whether the parents of the man born blind sinned. Jesus' answer there might seem to support a view of individual salvation. He replies:

Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him.³⁶

Jesus denied that that man suffered on account of his parents' sin. But first, this statement of Jesus is particular to this man, and it's not a universal statement. Second, Jesus' negative response is not out of a principle of individual responsibility, but out of the opportunity for God to work.

³⁵ See: Ehrman, *The New Testament*, 196, 503; Freed, *The New Testament*, 336-338, 376-378.

³⁶ John 9:3.

On the contrary, the Johannine tradition seems to tend toward the idea of corporate retribution. First, at the outset of the Johannine Gospel, Jesus is called by John the Baptist as “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”³⁷ The world is saved not by every individual in the world making an effort for one’s own salvation, but by one man bearing the sins of others.

Second, the Gospel of John emphasizes a corporate existence, or a collective being. One of the most remarking images of this kind is Jesus as the true vine, and his followers as the branches of the vine.³⁸ The followers have life by simply remaining one with the vine, Jesus.

Third, although in the Gospel of John there is no institution of the Eucharist as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, the most famous saying in the Gospel of John bears similar meaning, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”³⁹ It is by the self-giving of the Son that all men have life over death. In addition, the idea of the blood of Jesus appears in the Book of Revelation, “for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people

³⁷ John 1:29.

³⁸ John 15:1-11.

³⁹ John 3:16.

and nation.”⁴⁰

Without parables, call for repentance, and the beatitudes, the Gospel of John and later the tradition that was inspired by him seem to incline to the idea of corporate salvation rather than an individual one. This phenomenon is reminiscent to the earliest Christian tradition as we have seen above, in the Pauline tradition

We have seen how the tension between corporate and individual personality appear in the New Testament traditions. Although the Synoptic Gospels balance the two, it seems that the Johannine and Pauline traditions lay more emphasis on the corporate idea.

1.3 Individual and Corporate Salvation in the Apostolic Literature

In the apostolic literature,⁴¹ there is a realization that the Christ event, particularly the resurrection, is central in human history. In a sense, as a Christian, accepting that Christ’s death is for the entire humankind is itself a corporate idea. Therefore, Christianity, in all its diversity, by nature upholds corporate retribution. The problem is how much a particular tradition weighs individual responsibility.

⁴⁰ Rev. 5:9.

⁴¹ In line with the contemporary works on Patristics, e.g., Hubertus R. Drobner, *The Fathers of the Church: A Comprehensive Introduction*, trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 9-62. I employ the term “apostolic literature” to denote the writings which are contemporary with the New Testament but not made into the Canon.

It is the liturgical practice in the early Church, as recorded in the *Didache*,⁴² intrigues most Christians in the modern times. The thanksgiving formula⁴³ in the thanksgiving meal makes no reference to Jesus' sacrifice and the pouring out of his blood. Indeed, it is not mentioned in the entire work. This greatly diminishes the corporate dimension of the work.

On the contrary, the *Didache* starts with the two paths, one of life and another of death, from which a man has to choose for himself. This individual responsibility, in addition to the lack of corporate dimension, makes the document remarkably inclined to individual responsibility.

In the Epistle of Barnabas,⁴⁴ there is only one reference which implies what we perceive as the Transgression in Gen. 3:

For the Lord made every serpent bite them and they were dying (since the act of

⁴² It is dated ca. 100 C.E. according to Bart D. Ehrman in Bart D. Ehrman, ed., *The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings: A Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 320. Although there has been a debate about the dating of the *Didache*, from as early as 60 C.E. to as late as the 4th century C.E., I stick with the dating provided by Ehrman, whose translation I adopted here. More on the debate of the dating, see: Henry Scowcroft Bettenson, ed., *The Early Christian Fathers: A Selection from the Writings of the Fathers from St. Clement of Rome to St. Athanasius*, trans. Henry Scowcroft Bettenson (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 5-6.

⁴³ "And with respect to the fragment of the bread: 'We give you thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge that you made known to us through Jesus your child. ...' *Didache* 9:3, also "And when you have had enough to eat, you should give thanks as follows: 'We give you thanks, holy Father, for your holy name which you have made reside in our hearts, and for the knowledge, faith, and immortality that you made known to us through Jesus your child. ...'" *Didache* 10:1-2 in Ehrman, *The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings*, 323.

⁴⁴ This Christian writing, so-called the Epistle of Barnabas, is dated around 130 C.E. For more information about the work, cf. Ehrman, *The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings*, 445-449.

transgression came by Eve through the serpent). This was to convince them that they will be handed over to the affliction of death because of their transgression.⁴⁵

However, by merely mentioning, but not tracing individual transgression to Eve, it seems that the author is more in line with Paul's idea that all die inasmuch as all transgressed. Man is a corporate of sinners by an act in common.

In the Epistle, without the institution of the Eucharist, the author conveys the same message by saying that:

This is why the Lord allowed his flesh to be given over to corruption, that *we* might be made holy through the forgiveness of sins, which comes in the sprinkling of his blood.⁴⁶

An apparent corporate idea is present as in the institution. And the idea of "sprinkling of his blood" for "the forgiveness of sins" may recall readers about the institution also. Moreover, for the author, the "sins" here is clearly personal.⁴⁷ Hence Jesus' death is for a corporate of sinners' individual sins. In addition, it seems that apart from the personal sins that Jesus' blood forgives, there is no other sin, for the author advocates that the souls of children are innocent or sinless.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ *Epistle of Barnabas* 12:5 in Ehrman, *The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings*, 360.

⁴⁶ *Epistle of Barnabas* 5:1 in Ehrman, *The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings*, 355.

⁴⁷ "Because he [the Lord] himself was about to offer the vessel of the Spirit as a sacrifice for *our own sins*." *Epistle of Barnabas* 7:3 in Ehrman, *The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings*, 356. (Emphasis added.)

⁴⁸ "Since, then, he renewed us through the forgiveness of our sins, he made us into a different type

However, according to the author, every man is also responsible for his own destiny in the future. One has to choose between the path of light and path of darkness on one's own deliberation.⁴⁹

As for another apostolic literature, the Shepherd of Hermas,⁵⁰ the sins that are forgiven through descent into the water are the sins that man "formerly committed,"⁵¹ thus there is no other sin apart from personal sin. More importantly, as Christian writing, the Shepherd is quite neutral in terms of the tension between individual and corporate responsibility.

1.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, from the Old Testament to the apostolic literature, the tension between individual and corporate dimension of responsibility persists. However, from the three examples that are drawn from the apostolic literature, it seems that the apostolic fathers are more and more inclined toward the corporate dimension of responsibility.

On the other hand, from the New Testament onwards, it seems the writers are

of person, that we might have the soul of children, as if he were indeed forming us all over again." *Epistle of Barnabas* 6:11 in Ehrman, *The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings*, 356.

⁴⁹ *Epistle of Barnabas* 18-20 in Ehrman, *The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings*, 362-364.

⁵⁰ According to Ehrman, "Hermas was a Christian living in the middle of the second century C.E.," and so this work is dated. See: Ehrman, *The New Testament*, 503.

⁵¹ Hermas, *The Shepherd of Hermas* 31 in Ehrman, *The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings*, 404.

well aware of the fact that mankind lives under a sinful situation, thus in the Pauline tradition Jesus overcomes sin and death, in the Synoptic Gospels Jesus' blood is for the forgiveness of sins, and in the Gospel of John Jesus takes away the sin of the world.

The idea of the forgiveness of sins persists through the apostolic fathers. Nevertheless, they did not give an account of where and how man finds himself in this sinful situation. In search of the origin of this sinful situation, Christian Tradition resorts to the origin of the human soul, but maintained in the struggle of the tension between the individual and corporate dimensions of responsibility.

2 The Fall of Adam: the Sin of Origin and the Origin of the Souls

After approximately a century of receiving the biblical traditions, writers of the apologetic literature started interacting with different cultural traditions in which they lived. Since a majority of the apologists were writers from the Greek culture, hence among these cultural traditions, Greek philosophy has been the most interactive with the development of Christian traditions.

2.1 The Immortality of the Soul: The Apologetic and Anti-Heretical literature

At the time of the emergence of the apologists, stoicism, a school of Greek philosophy, was very popular. It teaches that “all human lives are predetermined by the providentially designed, all-embracing causal nexus of fate.”⁵² This determinism might lead people to think that they themselves are not the cause of their actions, so the notion of individual moral responsibility diminishes in the mindset of the general public. In reaction to this determinism, the apologists always defend that human being possesses free will. The first defense comes in Justin’s First Apology⁵³:

⁵² Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Stoicism.”

⁵³ This work is generally dated between 148-155 C.E. See: William A. Jurgens, ed., Vol. 1 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers: A Source-book of Theological and Historical Passages from the Christian Writings of the Pre-Nicene and Nicene Eras*, trans. William A. Jurgens, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1970), 50.

Our coming into being in the beginning was none of our doing. But now, to follow those things which are pleasing to Him, and to choose them by means of the rational faculties which he has bestowed upon us.⁵⁴

For Justin, God upholds individual responsibility by rendering reward or punishment in accordance with what one chooses individually with the exercise of the free choice of the will:

Neither would man deserve reward or praise if he did not of himself choose the good; nor, if he acted wickedly, would he deserve punishment, since he would not be evil by choice, and could not be other than that which he was born.⁵⁵

Thus incorruptibility, peace (as opposite to passion), and immortality are the reward granted God to an individual who has chosen and undertaken good works that is pleasing to God:

And if men, by their works, show themselves worthy of His design, they are deemed worthy, so we are told, to make their abode with Him and to reign with Him, being freed of all corruption and passion. Just as in the beginning He created us when we were not, in the same way, we believe, He will regard all those who choose to please Him, because of their choice, as worthy of immortality in communion with Him.⁵⁶

Justin's tendency toward individual responsibility is shown in his explanation on Christian Baptism. He contrasted the first birth, which we were not aware of and hence not responsible for, with the rebirth, which is our "deliberate choice:"

⁵⁴ Justin Martyr, *1 Apology* 10 in Jurgens, Vol. 1 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 51.

⁵⁵ Justin Martyr, *1 Apology* 43 in Jurgens, Vol. 1 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 53.

⁵⁶ Justin Martyr, *1 Apology* 10 in Jurgens, Vol. 1 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 51.

Since we had no awareness of our first birth, but were compelled to be born of the moist seed through the mutual union of our parents, and were raised in bad habits and in evil training, and so that we might not remain as children of necessity and ignorance, but rather of deliberate choice and knowledge, and in order to obtain in the water the remission of past sins, there is invoked over him who wishes to be reborn and who has repented his sins, the name of God, the Father and Master of all.⁵⁷

In Justin's account, in addition to the "past sins," i.e. personal sins committed before the baptism, baptism also remits the "bad habits and evil training" that were given by parents, which may point to a primitive idea of social sin. Thus, it is possible the idea that individual responsibility for evil stems from a corporate retribution for evil is somehow present in Justin's mind. This must be a primitive one. At the very least, it is almost certain that infant baptism was not in place as it would be in the centuries to come, for baptism must be a decision of deliberation and knowledge.

In his later work, *Dialogue with Trypho*⁵⁸, Justin admits that the entire human race is under a curse. However, the source of the curse is no other than that there is no individual is able to observe all the laws promulgated by God:

For indeed, the entire human race will be found under a curse. For in the law laid down by Moses it is written, 'Cursed by everyone that abides in the words of the book of the Law so as to do them' (Deut. 27:26). Not even you will dare to assert

⁵⁷ Justin Martyr, *1 Apology* 61 in Jurgens, Vol. 1 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 54.

⁵⁸ This work is dated between 155-161 C.E., some years after the second Jewish war in ca. 135. See: Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, trans. Thomas B. Falls, rev. Thomas P. Halton, vol. 3 of *Selections from the Fathers of the Church*, ed. Michael Slusser (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), xv.

that anyone ever fulfilled all the precepts of Law exactly; some have kept them more than others, some less. But, if those who are subject to the Law are certainly under a curse, because they have not kept the whole law ...⁵⁹

However, Justin does not elaborate on what makes man unable to observe all the laws that God commands. In any case, Justin does not attribute the fact that mankind is a corporate of the cursed to a corporate responsibility of evil, but an individual responsibility for the failure of observing God's law in a corporate scale.

Moreover, earlier in the same work, when Justin is arguing against the Platonic idea that souls are unbegotten and immortal, he says⁶⁰ that all created things, as they are created out of nothing, they are destined to annihilation. Immortality is only an individual reward for those who are worthy of it.

Tatian the Syrian, one of Justin's disciples, in his works *Address to the Greeks*⁶¹, identified a possibility for man to attain immortality through any individual exercise of his/her free choice not to transgress the will of God:

Each of these species [man and angel] of creature was created free, not having the nature of good, which pertains only to God, and which is brought to perfection by men through their freedom of choice. Thus, ... the just man is worthy of praise for his honest deeds, since it was in his free choice that he did not transgress the

⁵⁹ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 95 in Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, trans. Falls, 146.

⁶⁰ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 5 in Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, trans. Falls, 11-13.

⁶¹ This work is usually dated between 165-175 C.E. See: Jurgens, vol. 1 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 66.

will of God.⁶²

Theophilus of Antioch, in his writing to Autolycus⁶³, shared similar view with

Tatian:

By nature, ... he [man] was made neither mortal nor immortal. ... Thus, if he should incline to the ways of immortality, keeping the command of God, he should receive from God the reward of immortality, and become God. If, however, [should] he turn aside to the ways of death, disobeying God, he should become for himself the cause of death.⁶⁴

The idea of a progress toward perfection finds its peak in Irenaeus of Lyons. In his major work, *Adversus Haereses*, one of the most famous anti-heretical literature, he identifies the keys to perfection as “obedience and discipline and training,”⁶⁵ which are moral virtues developed individually. Perfection, Immortality, and vision of God are to be realized simultaneously:

Man has first to come into being, then to progress, and by progressing come to manhood, and having reached manhood to increase, and thus increasing to persevere, and by persevering be glorified, and thus see his Lord. For it is God’s intention that he should be seen: and the vision of God is the acquisition of immortality; and immortality brings man near to God.⁶⁶

⁶² Tatian, *Address to the Greeks* 7 in Jurgens, vol. 1 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 67.

⁶³ This only surviving work of Theophilus is dated ca. 181 C.E. See: Jurgens, vol. 1 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 73.

⁶⁴ Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 2:27 in Jurgens, vol. 1 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 76.

⁶⁵ Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses* IV, xxxviii, 2-3 in Bettenson, *The Early Christian Fathers*, 68.

⁶⁶ Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses* IV, xxxviii, 2-3 in Bettenson, *The Early Christian Fathers*, 68.

However, the idea of corporate retribution is not absent in Irenaeus' writings. And his corporate tendency can be seen in his teaching on the atonement of man wrought by Christ. When he is contrasting Adam the origin of sinfulness and Christ the origin of salvation, he writes:

For as through the disobedience of one man, who was the first man, fashioned out of virgin soil, many were made sinners; so it was necessary that through the disobedience of one man, who was the first to be born of a virgin, many should be justified and receive salvation.⁶⁷

Elsewhere⁶⁸ he finds it in Adam's wife, Eve, however, this variation does not object but support his corporate tendency.

The most prominent advocate of Irenaeus' corporate tendency is his famous theory of "recapitulation," for instance:

The only-begotten Word, . . . , is himself Jesus Christ our Lord, who suffered *for us*, and rose again *for us*, . . .⁶⁹ (emphasis added)

This corporate tendency is evident still in other passages.⁷⁰ Indeed, if Christ sums up

⁶⁷ Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses* III, xviii, 6-7 in Bettenson, *The Early Christian Fathers*, 79.

⁶⁸ "Eve by her disobedience brought death upon herself and on all the human race." Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses* III, xxii, 4 in Bettenson, *The Early Christian Fathers*, 74.

⁶⁹ Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses* III, xvi, 6 in Bettenson, *The Early Christian Fathers*, 81.

⁷⁰ For example: "He [the Lord] effected the consummation [restoration], and declared war on our enemy, and crushed him who in the beginning had led *us* captive in Adam. . . . that as *through a man that our race* was overcome and went down to death, so *through a victorious man* we may rise up to life: and as *through a man* death won the prize over *us*, so *through a man* we may win the prize of victory over death." Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses* V, xx, 2-xxi, 2, in Bettenson, *The Early Christian Fathers*, 81-82; and "then he [the Son of God] summed up in himself the long line of the human race, procuring for us a comprehensive salvation, that we might recover in Christ Jesus what in

humanity unto himself through his incarnation and suffering, then it can be concluded that the theory of recapitulation is corporate by nature.

In summary, against the stoic teaching of determinism, the apologists uphold free will and hence, individual responsibility of one's own action. Besides, against the platonic teaching of the eternity of the soul, the apologists argue that souls are creature and thus have a beginning. Their argument goes further that the creatureliness of the soul is manifested by the fact that the soul is not by nature immortal, the destiny of soul depends on how an individual soul wills and acts. Thus, when they develop their teaching on the immortality of the souls, they depends it on the sins and good works that the individual has committed, and hence start searching for the sin of origin.

However, once a Christian argument is employed, the individual tone immediately diminishes. When Irenaeus traces the sinful situation of mankind in one man, Adam, and the salvation of mankind in one man, Jesus Christ, he inevitably pulls the Christian tradition to the corporate side. After all, the central Christian teaching,

Adam we had lost, namely, the state of being in the image and likeness of God." Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses* III, xviii, 1, in Bettenson, *The Early Christian Fathers*, 81-82; also "As through one man's disobedience sin gained entrance, and death obtained power as a result of sin; so through the obedience of one man righteousness was introduced and he causes life to flourish in men, who before were dead." Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses* III, xxi, 10, in Bettenson, *The Early Christian Fathers*, 82-83.

Christ died and risen for mankind, bears a strong corporate tone that outshines the individual effort for one's own salvation.

2.2 The Origin of the Souls

Beginning with the apologists, the source of the sinful condition in which mankind finds itself is no longer a problem, for it seems that they are unanimous that Adam is the answer. Therefore, the new question that they need to address is how the effect of Adam's transgression passes on to the entire human race. During the process of answering this question, they developed their ideas on the origin of the souls.

2.2.1 In the Greek Tradition: Pre-existence

With an obvious Platonic tone, Origen's idea is that souls are pre-existent to the body. In his work *On First Principles*, Origen recounts a story of origin which sounds unfamiliar to most Christians:

God did not begin to create minds; before the ages minds were all pure, both daemons and souls and angels, offering service to God and keeping his commandments. But the devil, who was one of them, since he possessed free-will, desired to resist God, and God drove him away. With him revolted all the other powers. Some sinned deeply and became daemons, others less and became angels; others still less and became archangels; ... But there remained some souls who had not sinned so greatly as to become daemons, nor on the other hand so very lightly as to become angels. God therefore made the present world and bound the soul to the body as a punishment.⁷¹

⁷¹ Origen, *On First Principles* I, 8, 1 in Bart D. Ehrman, ed., *After the New Testament: A Reader*

This is also known as the “cosmic Fall,” distinguished from “the Fall” that is usually refer to the Gen. 3 account, which is taken by his contemporaries as historical. And this is Origen’s version of the beginning of the World. Thus, for Origen, the creation accounts in Genesis are not historical. He tends to interpret it with the Platonic worldview. He even identifies an existential example to support his theory:

For if this were not so, and souls had no pre-existence, why do we find some new-born babes to be blind, when they have committed no sin, while others are born with no defect at all? But it is clear that certain sins existed before the souls, and as a result of these sins each soul receives a recompense in proportion to its deserts.⁷²

As a result, as is written in Origen’s work, *Contra Celsum*,⁷³ for him it is logical that all infants are born sinful:

The prophets, giving obscure expression to some wise doctrine on the subject of becoming [birth], say that a sacrifice for sin is to be offered even for new-born babes because they are not pure from sin.⁷⁴

In order to support his teaching that infants are born sinful, Origen appeals to two passages in the Book of Psalms:

I was conceived in iniquity and in sins my mother bore me (Ps. 50:7), and,

in *Early Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 420.

⁷² Origen, *On First Principles* I, 8, 1 in Ehrman, *After the New Testament*, 420.

⁷³ According to the translator, it is dated 246 to 248 C.E. For a scholarly discussion on the dating of this work, see: Origen, *Contra Celsum*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), xiv-xv.

⁷⁴ Origen, *Contra Celsum* VII, 50 in Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 437.

They were in error from the womb, they spoke lies (Ps. 57:4).⁷⁵

Therefore, the established practice of infant baptism is legitimate, as it is recorded in his Homilies on Leviticus⁷⁶:

Every soul that is born into flesh is soiled by the filth of wickedness and sin. ... in the Church, Baptism is given for the remission of sins; ... Baptism is given even to infants. And indeed if there were nothing in infants which required a remission of sins and nothing in them pertinent to forgiveness, the grace of Baptism would seem superfluous.⁷⁷

For Origen, that man is sinful is not because of an act of transgression of Adam as recorded in Gen. 3. He does not take it historically. Identifying that⁷⁸ the word “Adam,” “*anthropos*” in Greek, means “man,” he seems to propose that we should read the Pauline passage “in Adam all die”⁷⁹ as “in *man* all die.” Clearly he interprets the account of Gen. 3 as an allegorical description of what human nature is. Moreover, he interprets⁸⁰ the “coats of skins,” which God gave the primal parents when they were expelled from Eden, as the body in which the soul is imprisoned after the cosmic Fall. And he takes this as another biblical support for his theory.

⁷⁵ See: Origen, *Contra Celsum* VII, 50 in Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 437.

⁷⁶ According to the translator, these homilies were written after 244 C.E. See: Jurgens, Vol. 1 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 207.

⁷⁷ Origen, *Homilies on Leviticus* 8, 3 in Jurgens, Vol. 1 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 208.

⁷⁸ Origen, *Contra Celsum* IV, 40 in Henry Chadwick trans., *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953; reprint with corrections, 1965), 216-217.

⁷⁹ 1 Cor. 15:22.

⁸⁰ Origen, *Contra Celsum* IV, 40 in Henry Chadwick trans., *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953; reprint with corrections, 1965), 216-217.

In spite of the fact that, for Origen, body is the punishment given by God, body is not evil in itself.⁸¹ On the contrary, it is the soul, or more precisely the mind,⁸² that is the source of evil, for it was its choice to distance itself from God, i.e. to fall from the Highest. It is this cosmic Fall that makes it fall into the material world.

After this brief discussion on Origen's teaching, it is not difficult to identify his individual tendency. It is true, and true for all Christian theology, that the forgiveness of sins wrought by Christ, effected in baptism, always bears corporate connotation, as far as salvation is concerned. However, by not reading the account of Gen. 3 as historical, humankind did not sin in Adam, hence not making the entire race sinned corporately in him. On the contrary, it was the decision of individual mind of how far they would fall from God that leads to its current situation. Thus every intellectual being finds itself in its current situation on its own account.

As great the theory of Origen as it is, it was not well accepted in the Greek tradition. For instance, Cyril of Jerusalem, in his Catechetical Lectures⁸³, teaches⁸⁴

⁸¹ "For what is properly speaking abominable is of the nature of evil. But the nature of the body is not abominable." Origen, *Contra Celsum* III, 42 in Henry Chadwick trans., *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953; reprint with corrections, 1965), 157.

⁸² "Any who intends to know this must possess an accurate understanding of daemons, and be aware that they are not God's creation in so far as they are daemons, but only in so far as they are rational beings of some sort. And he must understand how they came to be such that their mind put them in the position of daemons." Origen, *Contra Celsum* IV, 65 in Henry Chadwick trans., *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953; reprint with corrections, 1965), 237.

⁸³ According to the translator, this work can be dated about 350 C.E. See: Edward Yarnold, *Cyril of Jerusalem* (London: Routledge, 2000), 22.

that the soul has not sinned prior to its coming into the world. Besides, it seems that Cyril is an advocate⁸⁵ to the idea that the body and soul of every individual is created upon conception by God, which is later termed “creationism”. It is obvious that these two teachings of Cyril are incompatible with Origen’s theory. Moreover, in addition to Cyril’s rejection, criticisms also come from other Greek Fathers, for example, Gregory of Nazianzen,⁸⁶ and later Cyril of Alexandria.⁸⁷

Although creationism cannot explain the link between individual soul and that of Adam, or to link individual soul to an event of a Fall, be it historical or comic, it gradually becomes the theory of the origin of the soul that prevails in the Greek tradition. It is because Origen’s works, alongside with himself, were condemned by the Council of Constantinople II in 553 C.E.⁸⁸

Perhaps it is because of this failure to explain the sinful situation of mankind with a Fall, the Greek tradition did not develop a theology of Original Sin as it did in

⁸⁴ “Before the soul enters this world, it has committed no sin; but although we arrive sinless, now we sin by choice.” Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis* 4, 19 in Yarnold, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 104.

⁸⁵ “God, ..., is the Creator of both soul and body.” Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis* 4, 18 in Yarnold, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 103.

⁸⁶ “I fear some absurd reasoning arise to propose that the soul has lived elsewhere, and is afterwards bound to this present body; and that it is from that other life that some receive the gift of prophecy, and that some are condemned, having lived wickedly. ... But this is all too absurd, and belongs in no way to the teachings of the Church.” Gregory of Nazianzen, *Orations* 37, 15 in Jurgens, Vol. 2 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 35.

⁸⁷ “That it is utterly absurd to suppose that the soul existed before the body and to imagine that it is sent down into earthly bodies because of its prior sins ...” Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John* 1, 9 in Jurgens, Vol. 3 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 221.

⁸⁸ DS. 223 in Heinrich Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari, 13th ed. (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto Publications, 2010), 88.

the Latin tradition. Hence, the Greek tradition maintains its teaching that mankind is maturing and progressing toward perfection, which has been established in the apologetic and anti-heretical period.

2.2.2 In the Latin Tradition: Traducianism

While Origen, one of the great theologians from the East, was influenced by Platonic philosophy, Tertullian, one from the West, was also greatly influenced by another school of philosophy, Stoicism. It teaches that “only bodies strictly ‘exist’ and can interact,”⁸⁹ and even the human soul is material.⁹⁰

Influenced by this school of thought, Tertullian, in one of his treatises which is solely dedicated to the subject, the Soul,⁹¹ perceives the soul as material. He writes that the soul has a body, although it is in and through the human body, and takes the very same space of the human body:

When we assert that the soul has a body of a quality proper to itself, by that fact we at the same time assert the existence of the other accidents of corporality. ... Nevertheless, we shall not be inconsistent if we solemnly profess that whatever are the usual characteristics of corporality, these are found also with the soul, such as location, confinement, and the threefold dimensions by which

⁸⁹ Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Stoicism.”

⁹⁰ “Air and fire, severally or conjointly, are an active rational force called breath (Greek *pneuma*, Latin *spiritus*). ...A thing’s qualities are constituted by its *pneuma*, which has the additional role of giving it cohesion and thus an essential identity. ... in animals [it is called] “soul.” Even qualities of soul, e.g. justice, are portions of *pneuma*, and they too are therefore bodies.” In Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Stoicism.”

⁹¹ According to the translator, it is dated between 208-212 C.E., see: Jurgens, Vol. 1 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 143.

philosophers measure all bodies, that is, length and breadth and height.⁹²

Perhaps stimulated by this notion, in explaining the origin of the souls, he develops the theory, proposing that the entire human person, soul and body, is simultaneously produced at the time of conception:

How, then, is a living being conceived? Is the substance of both body and soul formed together at the same time, or does one of them precede the other? We do indeed maintain that both are conceived, formed and perfected at the same time, as also they are born together; nor is there any moment intervening in their conception, which would give a prior place to either.⁹³

This theory of the origin of the souls, traducianism, is the theory that Tertullian advocates.

Therefore, it is easier in Tertullian's teaching to see that the defect of the soul of Adam, which is the result of his transgression, can be transmitted to the souls of his progeny. Nevertheless, this portrait of transmission is more likely to be the one more concrete, like an infectious disease, rather than a kind of hereditary identity as responsibility, or guilt of a crime.

When confronting the heretic Marcion, Tertullian is in strong defense of free-will:

I find that man was constituted by God with a freedom of both his own will and

⁹² Tertullian, *The Soul* 9, 1 in Jurgens, Vol. 1 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 143.

⁹³ Tertullian, *The Soul* 27, 1 in Jurgens, Vol. 1 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 144.

his own power; for I observe in him the image and likeness of God by nothing so clearly as by this, the characteristic of his estate.⁹⁴

Despite of the obvious individualistic tendency of this text, Tertullian is very much inclined to a corporate interpretation, perhaps a solidarity of the entire human race in Adam, as the Latin tradition would later develop. His corporate inclination can be seen in his earlier work, the *Testimony of the Soul*⁹⁵. In which he writes:

On account of his transgression man was given over to death; and the whole human race, which was infected by his seed, was made the transmitter of condemnation.⁹⁶

2.3 Conclusion

During the process in which Christian traditions interact with different cultural, particularly philosophical elements, Christian traditions adapted to them so as to respond to problems posed to them by people lived by these elements.

In face of the determinism of stoic philosophy, which may imply a diminishment of individual responsibility of one's action for one's destiny, the authors of the apologetic literature reasserted the existence and importance of free will, which renders individual responsible for one's own act and destiny. However, as Irenaeus'

⁹⁴ Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 2, 5-7 in Jurgens, Vol. 1 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 139.

⁹⁵ According to the translator, this work is dated between 197-200 C.E., see: Jurgens, Vol. 1 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 118.

⁹⁶ Tertullian, *The Testimony of the Soul* 3, 2 in Jurgens, Vol. 1 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 118.

theory of recapitulation rightly emphasizes, an individual can never be fully responsible for his/her future, because if Christ had never incarnated for consummating humankind into Himself, no matter what an individual does, it would make no difference to his/her destiny.

Although all the Christian writers in this period are unanimous on the idea that God intends human soul to live forever, all of them agree with the notion that human soul has a beginning, which is incompatible with the platonic idea that forms, in the case of humankind the soul, are eternal.

After reiterating that the soul has a beginning, different traditions have speculated on the origin of the souls. Origen, from the Greek tradition, with his allegorical reading of scripture, and with his philosophical background perhaps, argues that the soul pre-exists the body, and fell in a cosmic, pre-historical fall. Moreover, since how far an intellectual mind fell from God, which the mind itself was capable to decide, determines the current state in which the soul finds itself, every individual is responsible for the situation in which he/she finds him/herself in this world. This is a quite individualistic interpretation of the origin of human sinfulness.

On the other hand, in the Latin tradition, taking up partly of the stoic teaching, Tertullian proposes that the soul is also corporeal. Thus at the moment of conception,

the body and soul both come into being. The soul starts to exist as the body. Tertullian's traducianism links the body and soul of one generation directly to its preceding one, henceforth back to the monogenic parent. In addition, despite his insistence on free will and thus individual moral responsibility as other Christian writers, Tertullian interprets it in another way that makes the entire race is corporately responsible for this situation in Adam. Therefore, Tertullian is able to explain the sinful situation of mankind with a corporate responsibility.

3 Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin

After the brief investigation of the patristic treasure before Augustine regarding the discussion of the origin of sin and souls, it is recognized that the tension between individual and corporate responsibility is always present. On the one hand, the core Christian message that Christ died for the sins of all is itself a corporate idea. On the other, the notion that the obtainment of the effect of Christ's salvation depends also on the response of individual reception or rejection of Christ bears an individual mark.

Until the time of Augustine, this tension did not diminish but climbed to its climax. Nevertheless, the interaction of the two seemingly opposing tendencies winds up producing some of the most important teachings of the Christian Tradition.

3.1 Biblical Foundation

As a Christian theologian, Augustine has scripture as his starting point for all his theological investigations. In this section, I will some of his most quoted scripture passages in his anti-Pelagians corpus,⁹⁷ i.e. Exod. 20:5, Matt. 6:12, Rom. 5:12, and 7:19. However, before exploring them, another passage, Rom. 7:25, deserves to be

⁹⁷ This entire body of writings refers to all Augustinian writings against Pelagius and his followers, whose teaching the majority of their contemporary Christian authorities rejected. This corpus include: *The Punishment and Forgiveness of Sins and the Baptism of Little Ones*, *The Spirit and the Letter*, *Nature and Grace*, *The Perfection of Human Righteousness*, *The Deeds of Pelagius*, *The Grace of Christ and Original Sin*, *The Nature and Origin of the Soul*, *Marriage and Desire*, *Answer to the Two Letters of the Pelagians*, *Answer to Julian*, *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian*, *Grace and Free Choice*, *Rebuke and Grace*, *The Predestination of the Saints*, and *The Gift of Perseverance*.

investigated first, for to me it is the key to unlock Augustine’s way to interpret the other passages, insofar as the doctrine of Original Sin is concerned.

3.1.1 Rom. 7:25: “The grace of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord.”

This is quoted by Augustine approximately 20 times⁹⁸ in his writings against the Pelagians. However, the importance of this text is not in itself, but in the preposition that Augustine adds on, which presents his own view on the issue. Some examples:

- From [the anger of God] nothing sets us free except *the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord*⁹⁹ (Emphasis added).
- And from that sin [of that one man] only *the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ*, set us free¹⁰⁰ (Emphasis added).
- Whenever and wherever [Christians] will become perfect, I insist that they cannot become perfect except *by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord*¹⁰¹ (Emphasis added).
- After all, it is one thing to leave this body, which the last day of this life compels every human being to do; it is something else to be set free *from the body of this death* (Rom. 7:24), which only *the grace of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord* grants to his holy and faithful people¹⁰² (Emphasis added).

⁹⁸ See the “Index of Scripture” in Roland J. Teske, trans., *Answer to the Pelagians I*, ed. John E. Rotelle (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1997), 543-59, and Roland J. Teske, trans., *Answer to the Pelagians II*, ed. John E. Rotelle (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1997), 537-46, also Roland J. Teske, trans., *Answer to the Pelagians, III*, ed. John E. Rotelle (Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 1999), 727-33, as well as Roland J. Teske, trans., *Answer to the Pelagians, IV: To the Monks of Hadrumetum and Provence*, ed. John E. Rotelle (Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 1999), 241-8.

⁹⁹ Augustine of Hippo *The Punishment and Forgiveness of Sins and the Baptism of the Little Ones* I, 21, 29 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, I*, 49.

¹⁰⁰ Augustine of Hippo *The Punishment and Forgiveness of Sins and the Baptism of the Little Ones* I, 22, 33 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, I*, 52.

¹⁰¹ Augustine of Hippo *Nature and Grace* 68, 82 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, I*, 259.

¹⁰² Augustine of Hippo *The Perfection of Human Righteousness* 8, 17 in Teske, *Answer to the*

It is easily observable that, for Augustine, “the grace of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord” is the *only* means through which mankind obtains its salvation. This emphasis is evident by another biblical passage which sometimes¹⁰³ precedes Rom. 7:25:

For God is one; one too is the mediator between God and human beings, the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5).

Hence, Augustine’s insistence on “the grace of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord” as the one and only means to salvation is equivalent to his insistence on the one and only mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ.

Indeed, so argues Augustine, that Jesus Christ is not only the mediator for men living in the time of and after the New Testament, but mankind of all time. In another anti-Pelagian passage,¹⁰⁴ appealing to 1 Tim 2:5, he argues that even the just in the Old Testament, Abraham for instance, are saved, only by their faith in Jesus Christ. He is the only mediator for mankind living in all time and space.

3.1.2 Exod. 20:5: “I shall punish the children for the sins of their parents”

Although Augustine’s formulation of his teaching of Original Sin presupposes

Pelagians, I, 286.

¹⁰³ Augustine of Hippo *The Grace of Christ and Original Sin* II, 24, 28 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians II*, 433.

¹⁰⁴ Augustine of Hippo *The Grace of Christ and Original Sin* II, 27, 32-28, 33 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians II*, 436-7.

Adam's Fall, which he considers historical, and the curse and blessing that God subsequently addressed to Adam and Eve, Augustine seldom quotes from the Book of Genesis when he was rebutting his opponents, the Pelagians. Instead, his most quoted Old Testament passage is Exod. 20:5, a quotation apparently corporately disposed. It is quoted twenty times¹⁰⁵ in the same writing, the *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian*.

First, Augustine argues¹⁰⁶ that if God requires Abraham and his descendants to circumcise on the eighth day, it must have been a requirement for undoing some sins. And since when they undergo circumcision, they are only infants, thus these sins must not be any of their own, but of their parents or ancestors.

However, the children are not suffering for what their parents have done, because an individual has to be responsible for what him/herself has done. Rather, these children are to be blamed not for the sins of imitation of evil, but merely for their birth.¹⁰⁷

Since all men have been born, all men are sinners. Therefore all men, even infants who are yet to commit personal sins, need the grace of Jesus Christ, the one

¹⁰⁵ See the *Index of Scripture* in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, III*, 727.

¹⁰⁶ Augustine of Hippo *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian I*, 50 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, III*, 78.

¹⁰⁷ See: Augustine of Hippo *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian III*, 18-20 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, III*, 291-3.

mediator between God and man, as the Pauline quotes Rom. 7:25¹⁰⁸ and 1 Tim. 2:5¹⁰⁹ suggest.

Nevertheless, Julian, Augustine's opponent, appeals to Ezek. 18:20,¹¹⁰ which is contrary to Exod. 20:5. Julian, similar to other Pelagians, is rather individually disposed. Confronted by this quotation of opposite disposition, Augustine argues that both are true, given that they are inspired by the same God.

The harmonization of the two seemingly contradictory scriptural quotation, Augustine argues,¹¹¹ is that one, Exod. 20:5, refers to the Old Testament and the other, Ezek. 18:20, refers to the New. In his own words:

And yet, even in this life the omnipotent and just God who says, *I shall punish children for the sins of their parents* (Exod. 20:5), shows quite clearly that descendants too are ensnared by the guilt of their parents. And, though the bondage is less harsh, they become debtors by inheritance unless... they are released from the bonds of that proverb, which used to be spoken: *The parents ate sour grapes, and the teeth of their children were set on edge* (Jer. 31:29) ... by the new testament, not by the nature of birth, but by the grace of rebirth.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ "The grace of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

¹⁰⁹ "For God is one; one too is the mediator between God and human being, the man Christ Jesus."

¹¹⁰ "The person who sins shall die. A child shall not suffer for the iniquity of a parent, nor a parent for the iniquity of a child; the righteousness of the righteous shall be his own, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be his own." See: Augustine of Hippo *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian III*, 54 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, III*, 313.

¹¹¹ Augustine of Hippo *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian III*, 84 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, III*, 322-3.

¹¹² Augustine of Hippo *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian VI*, 21 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, III*, 656.

Augustine observes that¹¹³ the children, who have not committed any personal sin, do suffer. However, although they are not the cause of the evil that they suffer, God also cannot be that cause. It is because then God would be unjust to punish those who commit no sin, and Augustine cannot tolerate¹¹⁴ anyone who renders God unjust, for God simply cannot be unjust.

As a result, the only just cause that Augustine is able to identify for the children to suffer is the “sins of their origin.”¹¹⁵

3.1.3 Matt. 6:12: “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”

Surprisingly, instead of any passages in the Letter to the Romans, this is the second to the most quoted scriptural text in Augustine’s anti-Pelagian corpus, in which his teaching on Original Sin progresses to its full bloom. It is quoted at least forty-four times.¹¹⁶

For Augustine,¹¹⁷ this quotation, Matt. 6:12, is prayed daily by baptized individuals so that their sins, incurred by consent to concupiscence, viz. disordered

¹¹³ Augustine of Hippo *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian III*, 61 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, III*, 316.

¹¹⁴ Augustine of Hippo *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian III*, 55 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, III*, 313.

¹¹⁵ Augustine of Hippo *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian III*, 61 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, III*, 316.

¹¹⁶ See the “Index of Scripture” in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, I*, 543-59, and Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, II*, 537-46, also Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, III*, 727-33, as well as Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, IV*, 241-8.

¹¹⁷ Augustine of Hippo *The Punishment and Forgiveness of Sins and the Baptism of the Little Ones II*, 4, 4 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, I*, 80-1.

desire, may be wiped away. According to Augustine, no one in this world is without sin, even after baptism. It is because after baptism, the guilt of concupiscence is removed, but its effect remains. This disordered desire still tempts human beings from not desiring God as the highest good. Elsewhere he gives an example to illustrate:

Similarly, in these objects present to the senses of the body the eye cannot find pleasure in darkness; on the other hand, it cannot be fixed upon brilliant light. ... Hence, the commandment, *You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole strength* (Matt. 22:37), pertains to that immortal life, but *Let sin not reign in your mortal body so that you obey its desires* (Rom. 6:12) pertains to this life.¹¹⁸

It is somehow our inability to fulfill wholly the commandment prescribed in Matt. 22:37 that we need to say Matt. 6:12. And whenever it is said, the one who prays that verse proclaims that he/she is not without sin.¹¹⁹

After all, Augustine's emphasis is that no one is without sin. Perhaps it is the reason that he sometimes¹²⁰ juxtaposes Matt. 6:12 and 1 John 1:8, which reads, "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

Therefore, according to Augustine, there is still sin remains in all the baptized. The only remedy to make the baptized to be free from sin is "the grace through Jesus

¹¹⁸ Augustine of Hippo *The Spirit and the Letter* 36, 65 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, I*, 188.

¹¹⁹ Augustine of Hippo *The Perfection of Human Righteousness* 11, 24 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, I*, 291.

¹²⁰ For instance, see: Augustine of Hippo *Answer to the Two Letters of the Pelagians* IV 10, 28 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, II*, 208.

Christ, our Lord,”¹²¹ who is “*the* mediator between God and human beings.”¹²²

Christians believe that forgiveness of sins is wrought by Christ. This notion is obviously a corporate one, having Christ being responsible for not his sins but the sins of all other human being. Nevertheless, Augustine places responsibility of the forgiveness of the sins committed by the baptized to the baptized themselves, since the ones who pray the Lord’s Prayer obtains forgiveness. Here, Augustine seems to be both individualistic and corporate on the view of the forgiveness of sins for the baptized.

3.1.4 Rom. 5:12: “Through one man sin entered the world, and through sin death, and thus it was passed on to all human beings in whom¹²³ all have sinned.”

As the most quoted passage in the anti-Pelagian corpus, it is quoted at least 92

¹²¹ Rom. 7:25.

¹²² 1 Tim. 2:5, emphasis added.

¹²³ Augustine picks the Latin *in quo* (in whom) to be the translation of the Greek ἐφ’ ᾧ in Rom. 5. It is very possible that he inherits this translation from Ambrosiaster or Jerome, for both the *Vetus Latina* and *Vulgata* use *in quo* to translate ἐφ’ ᾧ. However, nowadays most biblical scholars consider it a wrong translation, thus in Dunn’s commentary to the Romans he uses “because” and Fitzmyer uses “with the result that” to translate the Greek phrase. See: Jurgens, vol. 2 of *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 179; Henri Blocher, *Original Sin: Illuminating the Riddle* (Leicester: Apollos, 1997), 71; Tatha Wiley, *Original Sin: Origins, Developments, Contemporary Meanings* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), 51, 61; Joseph Fitzpatrick, "Original Sin or Original Sinfulness?," *New Blackfriars* 91, no. 1031 (January 2010): 72, doi:10.1111/j.1741-2005.2009.01291.x. More discussions on the possible translations of ἐφ’ ᾧ, see: James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, Word Biblical Commentary 38 (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1988), 273-4; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 413-7.

Nevertheless, since the aim of this paper is to discuss the topic within the patristic framework, the translation problem is not our concern, for this problem was not in place until the rise of modern biblical scholarship.

times¹²⁴ by Augustine. However, central as it is to the understanding of Augustine's teaching on Original Sin, it cannot be interpreted alone, but with other scriptural passages, as what Augustine does throughout the corpus.

One of the passages that Augustine sometimes¹²⁵ uses to juxtapose with Rom. 5:12 is 1 Cor. 15:21-22:

Death came through a man, and the resurrection of the dead came through a man.
For, just as all die in Adam, so too all will be brought to life in Christ.

Augustine put this text along side with Rom. 5:12 perhaps for its similar explanation of the link between Adam and humankind. However, the parallel that since death came through one and only one man, so life also will come through one and only one man, Jesus Christ, is very much present¹²⁶ in his anti-Pelagian corpus. More importantly, Christ as the one and only source, “mediator,” of the grace of life, is his emphasis over Adam as the sole source of death:

Since this is the case, from the moment that *through one man sin entered the world, and through sin death, and thus it was passed on to all human beings* (Rom. 5:12) until the end of this carnal generation and corruptible world, the

¹²⁴ See the “Index of Scripture” in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, I*, 543-59, and Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, II*, 537-46, also Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, III*, 727-33, as well as Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, IV*, 241-8.

¹²⁵ For instance, see: Augustine of Hippo *The Punishment and Forgiveness of Sins and the Baptism of the Little Ones* I, 8, 8; III, 11, 19 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, I*, 37-8 and 127-8, etc.

¹²⁶ For instance, see: Augustine of Hippo *The Punishment and Forgiveness of Sins and the Baptism of the Little Ones* I, 8, 8; I, 28, 55; III, 11, 19 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, I*, 37-8, 64-5, and 127-8, etc.

children of which are born and beget children, there is no human being present in this life whom one can truthfully call absolutely sinless, apart from the one *mediator*, who reconciles us to our creator through the forgiveness of sins.¹²⁷
(Emphasis added)

Appealing to Eph. 2:3-5,¹²⁸ he draws a similar conclusion:

But because all were damaged in him [Adam,] this nature [being children of anger] naturally has already spread and continues to spread through all. As a result only the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord sets anyone free from this destruction.¹²⁹

Since Augustine takes Adam as the monogenitor of the human race, it can be said that for Augustine, all men need Adam, for without him, they would not come to be. Similarly, Augustine, and all Christians, takes Christ as the savior of the human race, then all need Christ, for without him, they will not truly come to be, viz. have eternal life.

As for the way in which man shares Christ's eternal life, it is also parallel to how man shares Adam's life:

For, just as all who are born according to the will of the flesh die only in Adam, *in whom all have sinned* (Rom. 5:12), so from these persons all who are reborn according to the will of the Spirit are brought to life only in Christ in whom they

¹²⁷ Augustine of Hippo *The Punishment and Forgiveness of Sins and the Baptism of the Little Ones* II, 29, 47 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, I*, 107-8.

¹²⁸ "We all once lived in the desires of the flesh, doing the will of the flesh and of its inclinations, and we were by nature children of anger, just as the others. But, on account of the great love with which he loved us, when we were dead because of sin, God who is rich in mercy brought us to life with Christ, by whose grace we have been saved."

¹²⁹ Augustine of Hippo *Marriage and Desire* II, 8, 20 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, II*, 65.

are all made righteous.¹³⁰

This rebirth is baptism. And thus, by further appealing to John 3:5,¹³¹ he insists that infants are in need of baptism. He is definitely aware of the innocence of infants regarding personal sins, thus the reason that he himself proposes is that, supported by Matt. 9:12,¹³² “it is not those who have no sin who need Jesus, but those who must be healed from sin.”¹³³

Indeed, Augustine attributes¹³⁴ human failure in observing the law to its woundedness. Thus, together with the psalmist,¹³⁵ men are in need of Christ the physician. He heals us with grace that “is written in the renewed interior human being that righteousness that sin had removed, and this mercy came upon the human race through Jesus Christ our Lord.” There is only one mediator of this healing grace, according to Augustine, quoting 1 Tim. 2:5.¹³⁶

¹³⁰ Augustine of Hippo *The Punishment and Forgiveness of Sins and the Baptism of the Little Ones* I, 28, 55 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, I*, 64-5.

¹³¹ “Unless one has been reborn of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

¹³² “It is not those who are in good health who need a physician, but those who are sick.”

¹³³ Augustine of Hippo *The Punishment and Forgiveness of Sins and the Baptism of the Little Ones* III, 4, 8 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, I*, 120.

¹³⁴ Augustine of Hippo *The Spirit and the Letter* 27, 47 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, I*, 173.

¹³⁵ “Have mercy on me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against you” (Ps. 41:5).

¹³⁶ “For God is one; one too is the mediator between God and human beings, the man Christ Jesus”

3.1.5 Rom. 7:19: “I do not do the good that I want, but I do the evil that I hate.”

This passage is quoted at least 23 times¹³⁷ in Augustine’s anti-Pelagian corpus. It is mostly used to describe and explain the inner moral struggle of a baptized against concupiscence.

For Augustine, “the free will with which human beings were created” is “to do what is right.” However, after man has been condemned, he cannot will what is right with his free will alone. It is because with that condemnation, two punishments come: ignorance and difficulty:

As a result of ignorance [the soul] suffers the shame of error; as a result of difficulty it is afflicted with pain.¹³⁸

Hence, some evil deeds may be done out of ignorance and difficulty, instead of will.

When explaining the antecedent verse, “but now it is not I who do that, but the sin that dwells in me”¹³⁹, Augustine claims that “the sin” refers to concupiscence. Being “carnal desires, evil desires” that are possibly realized, concupiscence is not sin in its proper sense. However, it can still be called sin because:

¹³⁷ See the “Index of Scripture” in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, I*, 543-59, and Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, II*, 537-46, also Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, III*, 727-33, as well as Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, IV*, 241-8.

¹³⁸ Augustine of Hippo *Nature and Grace* 67, 81 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, I*, 258-9.

¹³⁹ Rom. 7:18.

It was produced by sin and, if it attracts and entices one who consents, it conceives and brings forth sin.¹⁴⁰

Here, it is useful to see how Augustine categorizes three kinds of evil:

[1] sin: the will do that which justice forbids and from which we are free to hold back.

[2] punishment of sin: one in no sense does, but only suffers, for instance, when sinners are killed for their crimes or are tormented by some other bodily punishment.

[3] sin that is itself also the punishment of sin: can be found in the one who says, *I do the evil that I do not want.*¹⁴¹

According to Augustine, Adam's Fall belongs to the first category, for only the prelapsarian human nature is capable of holding back in front of evil. On the other hand, Original Sin as man experiences it:

belongs to this third kind in which there is sin that it is itself also the punishment of sin. It is present in the newborn, but it begins to be seen in them as they grow up when the foolish need wisdom and those with evil desires need self-control. The origin of this sin, nonetheless, comes from the will of a sinner. "For Adam existed, and we all existed in him; Adam perished, and all perished in him" (Ambrose, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* VII, 234).¹⁴²

Augustine compares concupiscence with habit. He argues, just as a habit of sinning makes the act of sin necessary, so does concupiscence. Hence he identifies

¹⁴⁰ Augustine of Hippo *Answer to Julian* VI, 73 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians*, II, 527.

¹⁴¹ See: Augustine of Hippo *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian* I, 47 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians*, III, 73.

¹⁴² Augustine of Hippo *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian* I, 47 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians*, III, 74.

two situations in one a man sins by will and in another a man sins by necessity:

And for this reason ... the necessity to sin from which they are not free to hold back is a punishment of that sin from which they were free to hold back when no weight of necessity urged them on. ... We admit that human beings also have those sins which are committed not by necessity, but by will, sins which are only sins and from which one is free to hold back. And the human race is rife with sins that come from the necessity of ignorance and of the emotions—sins which are not only sins, but also the punishments of sins.¹⁴³

In a subsequent text Augustine puts it in a way that is easier to understand:

For there is, though you do not admit it, not only the voluntary and the possible sin from which one is free to hold back, but also the necessary sin from which one is not free to hold back. This latter is not merely sin, but also the punishment of sin. Nor do you want to notice that what is produced in each individual by the force of habit—that which some learned people called a second nature—has been produced by the penal force of that greatest and most serious sin of the first man in all who were in his loins and were to come to be through his concupiscence when the human race is propagated, that is, the concupiscence which the sense of shame of the sinners covered in the area of their loins.¹⁴⁴

Thus, by using the allegory of habit as a second nature, Augustine wants to convince his opponent, Julian, and to convince his later readers that concupiscence has become a second nature to man, through which man sins out of necessity. What's more, since sexual impulse is not out of the will, but of necessity, and man propagates its race through sexual impulses, classified as concupiscence by Augustine, all men

¹⁴³ Augustine of Hippo *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian I*, 105 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, III*, 125.

¹⁴⁴ Augustine of Hippo *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian V*, 59 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, III*, 584.

are born into concupiscence, this second nature of mankind, as if an infant naturally possesses a habit without repeating a particular action. And again, for Augustine, all men can only be healed from concupiscence, the second nature of man as it were, only by “the grace of Jesus Christ, our Lord,”¹⁴⁵ who is “the mediator between God and human beings.”¹⁴⁶

3.1.6 Conclusion

By appealing to scripture, Augustine demonstrates that there is always an inner struggle between doing good or evil in all men. Concupiscence, which caused moral struggles in man, together with death, is brought to humankind by Adam. According to Augustine, this idea of a group of people, children, are held responsible for the act of (an)other, their parents, is inherent in the Jewish tradition which Christians inherits.

Therefore, the entire human race, being the children of Adam and Eve, is held responsible for their act in the Garden of Eden. Any member of this race, no matter being born before or after Christ, is to be justified by the only mediator, Jesus Christ, through one’s faith in him.

3.2 Philosophical Foundation

Apart from scripture, Augustine also developed his teaching with another tool

¹⁴⁵ Rom. 7:25.

¹⁴⁶ 1 Tim. 2:5.

that was available to him, i.e. philosophy. As a bishop, he had to defend the Christian faith against other teachings, especially those with complex philosophical arguments involved.

As shown in the previous chapters, among all other great philosophical debates, the origin of the souls, and the freedom that the souls enjoy when exercising their will is of particular relevance.

3.2.1 The Faculties of the Soul: Pelagius vs. Augustine

With the awareness that Augustine develops his teaching on the faculties of soul against that of Pelagius, it is necessary to take note of Pelagius' side then it becomes possible for us to grasp a basic understanding of Augustine's. However, it is worth noting that most of our knowledge about the teaching of Pelagius is from Augustine's own writings.

According to Augustine,¹⁴⁷ Pelagius teaches that there are three elements in the soul, i.e. ability, willing, and being¹⁴⁸, and it is through them that man fulfills God's commandments. In Augustine's word, these Pelagian elements are "the ability by which one can be righteous, the will by which one wills to be righteous, and the action

¹⁴⁷ Augustine of Hippo *The Grace of Christ and Original Sin* I, 3, 4-4, 5 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians I*, 392-3.

¹⁴⁸ Another variation of the name to the third element is "action." See: Augustine of Hippo *The Grace of Christ and Original Sin* I, 3, 4-4, 5 in Roland, *Answer to the Pelagians I*, 392-3.

by which one is righteous.”¹⁴⁹ However, in Augustine’s opinion, this Pelagian teaching limits God’s help in the first element, the ability, thus claiming willing and being to the sole accomplishment of man.

Indeed, for Pelagius, man is totally and only responsible for what he wills.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, what is out of natural necessity is not of the will. It seems that according to Augustine,¹⁵¹ for Pelagius, both of them are not compatible. Thus, there is sin only when there is voluntariness.¹⁵²

In short, Pelagius can be said to be individualistic. For him, apart from attributing man’s ability to God, willing and action belongs to individuals. As he states according to Augustine:

Our being able to speak we owe to God, but our saying something good or bad is due to ourselves.¹⁵³

On the contrary, Augustine rejects the idea that man can do, or even choose, anything good on his/her own account. For him, for man to do any good, God’s grace must precede:

¹⁴⁹ Augustine of Hippo *The Grace of Christ and Original Sin* I, 3, 4 in Roland, *Answer to the Pelagians I*, 392.

¹⁵⁰ Augustine of Hippo *Nature and Grace* 30, 34 in Roland, *Answer to the Pelagians I*, 233.

¹⁵¹ Augustine of Hippo *Nature and Grace* 46, 54 in Roland, *Answer to the Pelagians I*, 243.

¹⁵² Augustine of Hippo *The Perfection of Human Righteousness* 2, 2 in Roland, *Answer to the Pelagians I*, 279-80.

¹⁵³ Augustine of Hippo *The Grace of Christ and Original Sin* I, 16, 17 in Roland, *Answer to the Pelagians I*, 400.

Hence, we must maintain that not only that the choice of the will, which freely turns this way and that and which belongs to the natural goods which a bad person can misuse, but also that the good will, which already belongs to those good which cannot be misused, can come to us only from God.¹⁵⁴

The reason for this argument, as Augustine gives in this passage, is that if the will granted to man by God is neutral, but man makes the will the good, then it is a corollary that what is effected by man is greater than what is by God. And it is impossible to think of God being less great than man.

For Augustine, it is not only that the good that man does is from God, even faith itself is from God:

Let that person pay attention and see that this will is to be attributed to God's gift, not only because it arises from the free choice which is created in us as part of our nature, but also because God brings it about by the enticements of our perceptions that we will and that we believe.¹⁵⁵

It is very difficult for modern Christians to understand Augustine's teaching on the will unless they realize that Augustine is greatly influenced by Stoicism insofar as the will is concerned, according to Michael Frede.¹⁵⁶ He argues that, Augustine does not follow the Platonic teaching of the will, which teaches that "the will is responsible for only some of our choices and decisions, namely, those constitute willings, one's

¹⁵⁴ Augustine of Hippo *The Punishment and Forgiveness of Sins and the Baptism of Little Ones* II, 18, 30 in Roland, *Answer to the Pelagians I*, 97.

¹⁵⁵ Augustine of Hippo *The Spirit and the Letter* 34, 60 in Roland, *Answer to the Pelagians I*, 97.

¹⁵⁶ Michael Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 153-74.

willing to do something.” On the other hand, Augustine follows a more complex notion of the will:

The will is responsible for all of our choices and all of our decisions concerning our impressions. Thus the will is also responsible for our choice to give assent to an ordinary, non-impulsive impression, like the impression that $2+2=4$. Such an assent does not constitute a willing but a believing. ... it is important for this doctrine of the will that, properly speaking, you cannot choose to cross the street but only will to cross the street, since in principle it is not entirely under your control whether you manage to get across the street. In contrast, you can choose to give assent to an ordinary non-impulsive impression, and thus you can choose to believe something, since in principle it is entirely under your control whether you give assent or not to an impression.¹⁵⁷

Frede further argues that in this more complex notion of the will, which is standard stoic, holds that even perception and cognitive impression involve the will:

What holds for perceptions holds true for all cognition, which are constituted by an act of assent to a cognitive impression, and indeed for all beliefs, whether perceptual or not, whether cognitive or not, whether true or false. They all involve assent, and hence they involve both a choice to give assent and a will disposed to choose to give assent.¹⁵⁸

In light of Frede’s explanation, it is possible for us to understand the reason why, for Augustine, that even to start believing in God requires God’s grace, given that any good produced or willed by the will is from God. It is because, according to Frede’s framework, even to believe is an act of the will.

¹⁵⁷ Frede, *A Free Will*, 158.

¹⁵⁸ Frede, *A Free Will*, 158.

To sum up, Pelagius attributes the ability to will and to execute what is willed to God, but he holds individual accountable for the good or evil that he/she has willed and executed. On the other hand, Augustine, apart from being grateful for God's creative work, he even attributes all the goods that an individual has willed and/or executed to God. And until this point, he has not emphasized any corporate responsibility yet, but he diminished individual responsibility for good works to the extreme.

3.2.2 Grace: the Source of Free Choice

As noted above, Augustine does not attribute any praise, or positive responsibility, of good works done by any individual to him/herself, but to God, it is because he does not think that man is capable of freely choosing the good, namely, without the internal aid of God, grace:

I have no doubt that free choice itself belongs to the grace of God, that is, to God's gifts, not only insofar as it exists, but also insofar as it is good, that is insofar as it turns to carrying out God's commandments.¹⁵⁹

In his earlier but decisive works on the will, Augustine lists three bases of arguments for the free choice of the will that is only for good:

¹⁵⁹ Augustine of Hippo *The Punishment and Forgiveness of Sins and the Baptism of Little Ones* II, 6, 7 in Roland, *Answer to the Pelagians I*, 83.

[1] If a person is something good and could act rightly only because he willed to, then he ought to have free will, without which he could not act rightly. We should not believe that, because a person also sins through it, God gave it to him for this purpose. ...

[2] If anyone uses it [free will] in order to sin, the divinity readdresses him [for it]. This would happen unjustly if free will had been given not only for living rightly but also for sinning. ...

[3] If human beings lacked free choice of the will, how could there be the good in according with which justice itself is praised in condemning sins and honoring right deeds? Consequently, penalty and reward would be unjust if human beings did not have free will. There ought to be justice in punishment and in reward, since justice is one of the goods that are from God.¹⁶⁰

Nevertheless, this free will, or the free choice (*liberum arbitrium*) [of the will], is to be distinguished from freedom (*libertas*). The former is of our current capacity. The end of this free choice is good, but it does not enable us to avoid evil. On the contrary, “man also sins through it,” as quoted above. Augustine’s notion of free choice, as summarized by Frede, is that “it is up to us, that it is in our power to give assent or not, that it depends on us whether or not we choose to act in a certain way.”¹⁶¹ In short, it is not our choice to be confronted with an option, but it is our choice to give or decline to give our consent, thus we are still responsible for the choices that we make.

Freedom, on the other hand, “belongs to happy people who adhere to the eternal

¹⁶⁰ Augustine of Hippo *On the Free Choice of the Will* II, 1, 3 in Peter King, trans., *On the Free Choice of the Will, On Grace and Free Choice, and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 31-2.

¹⁶¹ Frede, *A Free Will*, 168.

law.”¹⁶² According to Augustine,¹⁶³ it is the capacity that Adam and Eve had in the Garden of Eden, before their Fall. With this freedom, they were “able to will both good and evil,” and were “able not to sin.”

Thus Augustine attributes the lost of freedom to the Fall of Adam. However, the problem of how the act of Adam affected the entire human race is to be answered by Augustine’s teaching on the origin of the souls.

3.2.3 Augustine’s Unsettled Teaching on the Origin of the Souls

Among all the teachings of Augustine, perhaps his teaching on the origin of the souls undergoes the longest period of development. He expresses that this question poses doubt on him as early as he wrote *De Beata Vita*¹⁶⁴, and at the end of his writing career he still expresses that he is ignorant on this issue in his Revisions¹⁶⁵.

It seems, at the earlier stage of Augustine’s life, he was a supporter to the pre-existence theory, as he wrote in *De Beata Vita*:

God or nature or necessity or our will or some combination of these has cast us

¹⁶² Augustine of Hippo *On the Free Choice of the Will* I, 15, 32 in King, *On the Free Choice of the Will*, 27.

¹⁶³ Augustine of Hippo *Rebuke and Grace* 11, 32-12, 33 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, IV*, 131-2.

¹⁶⁴ According to Peter Brown, this work is dated in 386 C.E., between November and December. See: Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, New ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 64.

¹⁶⁵ According to Boniface Ramsey, this work is completed in 427. See: Boniface Ramsey, trans., *Revisions*, ed. Roland J. Teske (Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 2010), 11.

into this world.¹⁶⁶

Nevertheless, he remains in doubt¹⁶⁷ about the question of the soul in the same work.

Later, in Book III of his *On Free Choice of the Will*¹⁶⁸, he enumerates four possible options of the origin of the souls:

[1] Souls come from a stock.

[2] Souls come about anew in each individual born.

[3] Souls already exist somewhere and they are sent by God into the bodies of those who are born.

[4] Souls already exist somewhere and they descend of their own accord into the bodies of those who are born.¹⁶⁹

These four options cover all the three theories of the souls of the ancient time. As Teske points out,¹⁷⁰ the first one looks like traducianist, the second one creationist, the third and the fourth two variations of the theory of pre-existence.

It really seems that Augustine had once been fond of the pre-existence option. For although when¹⁷¹ he was writing to Simplician explaining God's election of Jacob

¹⁶⁶ Augustine of Hippo *De Beata Vita* I, 1 quoted in Roland J. Taske, "Augustine's Theory of Soul," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, by Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 120.

¹⁶⁷ Augustine of Hippo *De Beata Vita* I, 5, see: Taske, "Augustine's Theory of Soul," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, 120.

¹⁶⁸ According to Peter Brown, Book III of this work is dated in 391/3 C.E. See: Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 64.

¹⁶⁹ Augustine of Hippo *On the Free Choice of the Will* III, 21, 59 in King, *On the Free Choice of the Will*, 113.

¹⁷⁰ Taske, "Augustine's Theory of Soul," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, 121.

¹⁷¹ According to Brown, it is dated 396. See: Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 178.

instead of Esau, he explicitly writes that “they had not yet been born and had not yet done anything either good or evil,”¹⁷² later when he pens¹⁷³ the *Confessions*, it seems that he still holds it to some degree:

O merciful God, whether my infancy was itself the sequel to some earlier age, now dead and gone. Was there nothing before it, except the life I lived in my mother’s womb? ... But then, my God, my sweetness, what came before that? Was I somewhere else? Was I even someone?¹⁷⁴

In his anti-Pelagian corpus, he dedicates four books on the Nature and Origin of the Soul¹⁷⁵. In which he first refutes Tertullian, for he teaches that the soul is corporeal:

He [Vincent Victor] believes that God is incorporeal, and I congratulate him for having abandoned the ravings of Tertullian, at least on this point. The latter contends that, as the soul, so God is also corporeal.¹⁷⁶

However, immediately following this passage, he refutes the idea that the soul pre-exists the body:

¹⁷² Augustine of Hippo *Miscellany of Questions in Response to Simplician* 2, 5 in Boniface Ramsey, trans., *Responses to Miscellaneous Questions*, ed. Raymond Canning (Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 2008), 189.

¹⁷³ According to the translator, Augustine wrote this work in about 397. See: Maria Boulding, trans., *The Confessions*, ed. John E. Rotelle, Pocket ed. (Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 2001), 7.

¹⁷⁴ Augustine of Hippo *The Confessions* I, 6, 9 in Boulding, *The Confessions*, 18. Elsewhere in the same work, he also alludes to the idea of a pre-existent soul, see: XII, 10, 10 in Boulding, *The Confessions*, 252-3 and XIII, 8, 9 in Boulding, *The Confessions*, 279.

¹⁷⁵ According to the translator, it was written from 419-421. See: Roland, *Answer to the Pelagians I*, 452.

¹⁷⁶ Augustine of Hippo *The Nature and Origin of the Soul* II, 5, 9 in Roland, *Answer to the Pelagians I*, 484.

Notice how much this teacher of yours has erred in these words! He said that the soul recovers its [good] state through the flesh through which it had lost its merit. . . . Let him say how it sinned before it was defiled through the flesh so that it merited to be defiled through the flesh. Let him say this, if he can—and he cannot, because he cannot at this point find anything at all to say that is true.¹⁷⁷

Having said all these, three years before his death, in his Revisions, he proclaims¹⁷⁸ that he had not been and was not clear about the origin of the soul.

3.2.4 Conclusion

Although Augustine does not place the reward of the good works accomplished by man in him/herself but in God, he does reserve the responsibility of evil done of man unto him/herself. It is also clear that Augustine accepts the historicity of the Fall of Adam, as a result of which humankind lost freedom, while he insists that free choice of the will remains.

Unlike he predecessors who were able to explain the situation in which mankind finds itself by their theories of the origin of the souls, Augustine fails to do this with his rejection of both pre-existence and traducianism. Alternatively, creationism works only when he accepts that it is the body which produces sin. However, it would contradict his conviction that it is the will that sins. Unable to solve this problem with

¹⁷⁷ Augustine of Hippo *The Nature and Origin of the Soul* II, 7, 11 in Roland, *Answer to the Pelagians I*, 486-7.

¹⁷⁸ Augustine of Hippo *Revision I*, 1, 3 in Ramsey, *Revisions*, 28.

philosophy, his last resort is found in his theological teachings.

Theological Implications

Inherited earlier Christian traditions, with his own biblical and philosophical investigations, Augustine has developed his own theological understanding regarding the situation in which mankind finds itself, and other related issues. Nevertheless, he does not develop his doctrine on Original Sin for the sake of itself, rather, in the interaction with other combating theological views.

Confronted by Pelagianism, Augustine is a strong defender of infant baptism. Like his predecessors, e.g. Origen,¹⁷⁹ he holds the tradition that baptism is for the forgiveness of sins:

Even a little one, then, must be immersed in the sacrament of rebirth to avoid departing from this life without it in an evil state. And this is done only for the forgiveness of sins.¹⁸⁰

There must be a reason to administer baptism to infants. If baptism is for the forgiveness of sins, then there must be sin(s) for the infants to be remitted. Augustine identifies it as Original Sin.

Taking the story of Adam's Fall as historical, alongside with the help of Rom.

¹⁷⁹ See: Origen *Homilies on Numbers* 7, 2 in Jurgen, Vol. 1 of *Faith of the Early Fathers*, 206; *Homilies on Leviticus* 2, 4 in Jurgen, Vol. 1 of *Faith of the Early Fathers*, 207; also his *Commentaries on Romans* 5, 9 in Jurgen, Vol. 1 of *Faith of the Early Fathers*, 209.

¹⁸⁰ Augustine of Hippo *The Punishment and Forgiveness of Sins* II, 27, 43 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians I*, 105.

5:12 and 1 Cor. 15:21-22, Augustine finds¹⁸¹ the negative situation in which mankind finds itself as the consequence of Adam's transgression. One of the main consequences is death, and man is saved from death through baptism, by which he/she is able to enter into the kingdom of God, where man enjoys eternal life.¹⁸²

For Augustine, infants, before committing any sin personally, bear the consequence of Adam's own act. However, infants can be saved from this situation by the redemptive act of Christ, whose effect is to be made available for them through baptism. A corporate tendency is easily recognized in this regard.

Other than death, there is another consequence brought to human kind by Adam. Before his transgression, it was able for Adam to enjoy freedom, choosing good and avoiding evil on his own capacity. However, once he fell, i.e. forgoing the capacity of choosing good on his own capacity, Adam himself and his descendants can never regain it by their own effort. In other words, they can never choose the good freely, unless with God's aid. It is this consequence of Adam's act, concupiscence, which holds all men guilty of Adam's sin. And infants died without baptism, are eternally condemned because they are guilty of concupiscence.

¹⁸¹ For instance, see: Augustine of Hippo *The Punishment and Forgiveness of Sins* I, 4, 4–10, 11 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians I*, 35-40; etc.

¹⁸² For instance, see: Augustine of Hippo *The Punishment and Forgiveness of Sins* I, 20, 26–21, 30 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians I*, 47-50; etc.

Despite being wounded by concupiscence, Augustine is not hesitant to attribute moral responsibility on the individual, on the ground that although concupiscence presents temptations to the will, it depends on the will itself whether to consent or not.

Although the will is capable of choosing evil, Augustine insists that the will is not able to choose good by itself. The aid from God, grace, is always antecedent to any good chosen and performed by the will. Concupiscence makes man wars within himself without grace. Hence, it makes the will to choose the thing that which it knows it should not. According to him,¹⁸³ sexual desires, a typical kind of concupiscence, even suspend the use of reason in its climax.

Since Augustine considers sexual desires as concupiscence *par excellence*, it makes an impression that he tends to devalue marriage to a certain extent, or at least considers it as a concession:

In order to avoid such an evil, even those marital relations which are not entered into for the sake of having children, but in subservience to victorious concupiscence, are not enjoined by way of command, but are permitted by way of concession. ... And so, where a concession is needed, one cannot deny that there is something to blame. ... So what does the Apostle grant as a concession but that, when husband and wife cannot practice abstinence, they demand from each other their conjugal rights, not because of the will to have children, but because of the pleasure of sexual desire? Because of marriage this pleasure is not counted as

¹⁸³ Augustine of Hippo *Answer to Julian IV*, 14, 71 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians II*, 420-1. For a discussion on Augustine's idea of concupiscence, see: Jesse Couenhoven, "St. Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin," *Augustinian Studies* 36, no. 2 (2005): 372-81.

something blameworthy; rather it is permitted by way of concession on account of marriage.¹⁸⁴

In contrast, the goods that Augustine identifies in marriage are “children, fidelity, and sacrament.”¹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, “concupiscence of the flesh ought not be attributed to marriage; rather, it should be endured. For it is not a good coming from the nature of marriage, but an evil resulting from the ancient sin.”

In any case, for Augustine, only with the grace of God can the will choose any good. Nevertheless, in contrast to the case where the moral responsibility of choosing evil goes with the individual even though he/she is affected by concupiscence, Augustine attributes all the praise for choosing good to God. As McFarland identifies an Augustinian principle, “whatever a good creature does, it does by the power of God.”¹⁸⁶ Hence, with regard to individual voluntariness and actions, Augustine is simultaneously individualistic and corporate, incorporating the individual goodness into God.

Human sufferings, i.e. death and concupiscence, are brought to mankind by the one and only monogenitor, Adam. Likewise, salvation, the life and forgiveness of sins, is brought to humankind by the one and only mediator, Jesus Christ. Augustine

¹⁸⁴ Augustine of Hippo *Marriage and Desire* I, 14, 16 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians II*, 38-9.

¹⁸⁵ Augustine of Hippo *Marriage and Desire* I, 17, 19 in Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians II*, 40-1.

¹⁸⁶ Ian A. McFarland, *In Adam's Fall: A Meditation on the Christian Doctrine of Original Sin* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 63.

receives this Pauline parallel¹⁸⁷ between Adam and Christ unreservedly.

Therefore, the real debate that Augustine entered into with the Pelagians is not ultimately about Original Sin, but the soteriological concern that “Christ is the savior for all.”¹⁸⁸ Hence, Augustine often appeals to other Pauline quotations¹⁸⁹ to seek biblical supports for his insistence.

It is through the baptism that man gains entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven where there will be no death. Baptism also removes the guilt of concupiscence so that man is considered just before God. What’s more, through baptism, man receives the grace of God so that he/she is able to choose and perform the good. Christians, during their lifetime struggle against concupiscence, are able to obtain help from Jesus Christ through reciting the Lord’s Prayer. As for those who were confined by time, i.e. those just in the Old Testament, they had been saved by their faith in anticipation of Jesus Christ.

All things considered, the Pelagians claim that it is the exercise of free will by an individual that decides one’s destiny as being saved by Christ or condemned by God, and hence infants, who are yet able to use their free will, are considered sinless, it is

¹⁸⁷ The classic quotation from the Pauline letters are: Rom. 5:12 and 1 Cor. 15:21-22.

¹⁸⁸ McFarland, *In Adam’s Fall*, 63.

¹⁸⁹ 1). Rom. 7:24-25, “Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” and 1 Tim 2:5, “For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus.”

strongly disposed to an idea of individual responsibility, and it makes an individual and his/her exercise of free will a savior of mankind. And this, Augustine rightly points out, is contradictory to the Christian faith.

On the contrary, for Augustine, man on the one hand commits evil on account of his/her own will, on the other man wills and accomplishes good only by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, the unique mediator between God and man. He stresses individual responsibility but at the same time safeguards the core Christian message which is corporate by nature.

After all, as Paul employs Adam only as a means to explain the unique mediatorship of Jesus Christ, it is the same for Augustine. The key message of the two of them is “Jesus Christ is one and only savior, who alone mediates between God and man.” Perhaps, in one of his homily, Joseph Ratzinger’s phrase is one of the best summaries of this Augustinian insistence, “the cross of Christ is the tree of life.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ Joseph Ratzinger, *‘In the Beginning...’: A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*, trans. Boniface Ramsey, Augmented ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 1995), 76. See also: Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Ground: A Liturgical Cosmology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 220-4 quoted in George L. Murphy, "Roads to Paradise and Perdition: Christ, Evolution, and Original Sin," *Perspective on Science and Christian Faith* 58, no. 2 (June 2006): 117.

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