“He Makes His Habitation within Us”: Augustine’s Theology of Grace in Light of God’s Gift of Love in the Person of the Holy Spirit

by

Daniel Moroz

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Knox College and the Historical Department of the Toronto School of Theology
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Abstract

Few theologians have so impacted the Church’s teaching on God’s grace over the past two millennia of its existence than has Augustine of Hippo. The present thesis argues that according to Augustine’s mature Trinitarian understanding of the Holy Spirit, culminating in Book XV of the De Trinitate, the Holy Spirit is characteristically the love within the Godhead and the Gift of God Himself, which is given by His unmerited grace, as He inhabits human hearts in order to enliven love for God and neighbour. Augustine argues that the Holy Spirit, by whose agency the Trinity dwells within and ignites the love of God in human hearts, creates the vital link between grace and love whereby he would argue, against the Pelagians, that humankind is utterly dependent upon God’s freely given grace.
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CCL  Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina, Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–.

CSEL  Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, Vienna: Tempsky, 1865–.


Introduction

How can a person truly love God and their neighbour? What exactly does it mean to say that we love someone, and from whence does the power arise within us that enables us to do so? Few people today would affirm that anything matters more to them than the love they share in their relationships with God, family, friends and neighbours. Known to history as the Doctor Gratiae or even as the ‘Father of Western theology’ itself, Augustine produced writings on God’s grace and love that have not ceased to generate much discussion even to the present day, as his continues to be a formative voice in our understanding of love in both its human and divine aspects. Indeed, it has been argued that Augustine’s view of love has exercised the singular greatest influence in the entire history of the Christian idea of love, and even that of Western society as a whole.¹

Augustine’s guiding maxim over the course of his grand theological quest: Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis or “Unless ye believe, ye shall not understand,”² itself a paraphrase of the LXX rendering of Isaiah 7:9, may perhaps apply nowhere better than when inquiring into the great mysteries of the Trinity; and Augustine’s own speculative work on the topic, the De Trinitate, is certainly no exception. The mystery of the Triune Godhead consisting of Father, Son and Holy Spirit has never ceased to evoke great expressions of awe, wonder, praise as well

¹ Nygren could hardly be more emphatic in his estimation of Augustine’s influence on the Christian conception of love: “Augustine’s view of love has exercised by far the greatest influence in the whole history of the Christian idea of love. It even puts the New Testament view of love in the shade. New Testament texts continue to form the basis of discussion, but they are interpreted in accordance with Augustine.” (Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros [London: SPCK, 1982], 450).
as puzzlement throughout the history of the Christian Church; and this extraordinary and uniquely Christian doctrine certainly did not escape the inquisitive mind and vigorous intellect of the renowned bishop of Hippo. In this thesis I will argue that according to Augustine’s mature Trinitarian understanding of the Holy Spirit, culminating in Book XV of the *De Trinitate*, the Holy Spirit is simply the love within the Godhead and the external Gift of God Himself, which is given by His unmerited grace, as He inhabits human hearts in order to enliven love for God and neighbour. Augustine argues that the Holy Spirit, by whose agency the Trinity dwells within and ignites the love of God in human hearts, creates the vital link between grace and love by means of which he would argue against the Pelagians that humankind is utterly dependent upon God’s freely given grace.

1. The Problem in Context: Augustine Against the Pelagians

An analysis of the relationship between Augustine’s doctrine of God’s unmerited grace and his mature pneumatology must proceed on the basis of an understanding of the Pelagian controversy in which he was persistently embroiled for the latter part of his career as both a local bishop and the leading Latin theologian of the early fifth-century. Augustine was the Catholic bishop of the town of Hippo Regius in Roman North Africa from 395 until his death in 430 CE. Few biographers of Augustine or historians of Late Antiquity can speak with the authority and erudition of Peter Brown. His groundbreaking biography of Augustine traces the disputes between Augustine and the Pelagians as developing primarily along ecclesiastical lines, such that

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3 Bonner offers the following timeline of the Pelagian controversy: “As a movement, it enjoyed a very short existence, between 408, when Pelagius first comes on to the stage, and 431, when it was condemned, in the person of Caelestius, by the Council of Ephesus, though its ghost was to haunt theologians for centuries. As regards its place of origin, there seems no reason to dispute the view that it arose in Rome and in aristocratic circles, largely female, to which Pelagius seems to have been a sort of lay spiritual director.” (Gerald Bonner, “Pelagianism and Augustine,” *Augustinian Studies* 23 [1992]: 39).
the two parties competed in shaping church culture and vying for institutional control. Stated alternatively, Brown pits the “cosmopolitan” Pelagius and his supporters against Augustine’s propensity for “sinking himself into the claustrophobic world of African writings on the nature of the Church” from the year 393 (before his debate with Pelagius) onwards, as the bishop of Hippo sought to meet the challenges first of the Donatists and then of the Pelagians. Despite the fact that Augustine was certainly mindful of the ecclesiological claims of Pelagius and his supporters, Brown’s study, although famous and laudable in many respects, does not adequately assess the relevance of critical aspects of the Trinitarian debates that occurred in the late fourth- and early-fifth centuries; nor does he address Augustine’s nascent pneumatology which came to its fullest fruition in the heat of his contest with the Pelagians. Brown demonstrates a predilection to privilege sociological models for interpreting and explaining the contest between Augustine and the Pelagians; and his analysis of the theological postulates that divided Augustine and the Pelagians does not venture far beyond his important observation that “Men choose because they love; but Augustine had been certain for some twenty years, that they could not, of themselves, choose to love.” Whilst Brown offers keen insight into the social and ecclesiastical dimensions of the contest between Augustine and the Pelagians, the present study proposes to highlight

5 Brown offers the following characterization of the Pelagian controversy: “The Pelagians always threatened to appeal to the Eastern churches, with their very different, more liberal traditions. Seen from the outside, the fundatissima fides of Augustine might seem to express merely the narrow rigour of an isolated church. Would this impressive ecclesiastical culture be left in splendid isolation? Or would the ideas formed in its distinctive climate come to dominate the Latin West?” (Ibid., 357).
6 Ibid., 269.
7 Brown contends that Pelagius “had the genius to harness his message to the most ancient and potent theme in Western Christian thought—to the idea of the Church. The Pelagian’s sense of the free will enjoyed by the Christian, his promises of perfection, his inexorable insistence on obedience to the just law of God—all this is firmly based on a distinctive idea of the Church. For Pelagius and the Pelagian the aim always remained not to produce only the perfect individual, but, above all, the perfect religious group: Sanctum esse populum suum Deus voluit... ‘Beata gens, cuius est Dominus Deus eius, populus, quem elegit in haereditatem sibi.’” (Peter Brown, “Pelagius and His Supporters: Aims and Environment,” The Journal of Theological Studies 19 [1968]: 102). Cf. De Vita Christiana 9 (PL 40.1038).
Augustine’s theological postulate of the Holy Spirit as God’s Gift of love as a novel theological lens through which to assess his engagement with the Pelagians. Brown’s analysis of Augustine’s understanding of human motivation as primarily related to its loves only begins to hint at a critical feature of Augustine’s mature soteriology which asserts, as we shall see, that the salvific and life-giving love of God is forged in the human heart by the gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Lastly, Brown admits that his perspective on the writings of Augustine’s old age was coloured by Burnaby’s despairing assessment of them as the “work of a man whose energy had burned itself out, whose love has grown cold.” Although Brown would later reassess this perspective by claiming to have “found new life” in the (fairly) recently discovered Divjak letters, such a bleak assessment of the works of Augustine’s old age may yet be repealed in light of an appreciation of the originality of his later work in its development of an unprecedented theology of the Holy Spirit as God’s Gift of love, which represents the Self-giving of the Triune God and creates the vital connection with his characteristic theology of God’s unmerited grace.

A precise characterization of Pelagius and his diverse group of followers, who would become known to posterity as the ‘Pelagians,’ has been proven notoriously difficult to define, and remains in dispute to the present day. For example, Bonner offers a distinct but related view to that of Brown’s sociologically determined analysis outlined above, as he maintains that what

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9 Brown maintains that “throughout his sermons against the Pelagians, Augustine repeats this as his fundamental assertion on the relation of grace and freedom: that the healthy man is one in whom knowledge and feeling have become united; and that only such a man is capable of allowing himself to be ‘drawn’ to act by the sheer irresistible pleasure of the object of his love.” (Augustine of Hippo: A Biography, 377).

10 Ibid., 466.

11 Ibid.
defined Roman Pelagianism was a combination of asceticism and moralism;\textsuperscript{12} theological views rooted in the views of Rufinus the Syrian, who denied “any transmission of original sin”;\textsuperscript{13} and a basic contribution of Pelagius himself which involved providing “a theological basis to defend Christian asceticism against any charge of Manichaeism and to justify the assurance that a virtuous life is possible for the Christian if he will only try.”\textsuperscript{14} Bonner relocates the primary emphases of the Pelagian dispute to the ascetic impulse among the Roman aristocracy, to which certain theological views eventually became associated, rather than focusing on either the ecclesiastical or theological views as basic to the debate in and of themselves. In sum, Bonner offers an alternative interpretation of the controversy yet ends up in agreement with Burnaby and Brown in their overwhelmingly negative assessment of Augustine’s contest with the Pelagians as he concludes that it only served to embitter and harden the theological views of the aging bishop of Hippo.\textsuperscript{15}

Yet another perspective on the Pelagian controversy is offered by Phillip Cary, who understands the dispute as a contest concerning “the motivations of the soul”\textsuperscript{16} such that “the Augustinian will can be chained or freed, sick or convalescent, weakened or strengthened…something that an Aristotle, a Cicero, or a Seneca never conceived of, and that

\textsuperscript{12} Gerald Bonner, \textit{Augustine and Modern Research on Pelagianism} (Villanova, PA.: Villanova University Press, 1972), 11.
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Ibid.}, 20.
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.}, 34.
\textsuperscript{15} Bonner offers the following summative statement: “The Pelagian Controversy had its effect upon Augustine, producing in him a theological hardening, pleasing to some in his own time and in later centuries, repulsive to others; and the hardening was of a different order from that produced by other controversies. It is an unhappy fact that Augustine, although never descending to the sort of controversial vituperation which disfigures the works of certain other patristic writers when disputing with theological opponents, tended as time wore on to become increasingly bitter.” (Gerald Bonner, “Augustine and Pelagianism,” \textit{Augustinian Studies} 24 [1993]: 28).
Pelagius seems never to have understood.” Cary adds to the diversity of views concerning what was at stake in the Pelagian controversy, as he defines the Augustinian and Pelagian views as mainly a disagreement over the nature of the human soul. Indeed, the manifold perspectives of Augustine and his various ‘Pelagian’ opponents is indicative of the multiplicity of views vying for ascendancy not only in various discrete regions of the Roman Empire in the late fourth- and early-fifth century, but also for what would become orthodoxy in the entire Church catholic. A clear delineation of whom amongst Augustine’s opponents are to be considered ‘Pelagian’ (and if so, to what extent) is certainly a challenging and complex question; yet such a precise determination of Augustine’s opponents falls outside the purview of the present study. In this thesis we propose to pursue the more modest goal of examining Augustine’s own reaction to what he perceived to be the principal ‘Pelagian’ threat in the development his mature pneumatology in relation to his doctrine of God’s unmerited grace.

The rationale for our present point of access to and perspective on the Pelagian controversy will be based on Augustine’s own perception of the Pelagian system: we will endeavour to construct a theological analysis of Augustine’s mature pneumatology in order to understand how his understanding of the Holy Spirit relates to his view of grace, and how he conceived of his theological program in opposition to the Pelagian denial of God’s purely

17Ibid., 42.
18Cf. R. A. Markus, “The Legacy of Pelagius: Orthodoxy, Heresy and Conciliation,” in The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick, ed. Rowan Williams [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989], 215: “The orthodoxy of Augustine and his African colleagues certainly seemed a novelty to Pelagius’s followers, such as the Italian bishop, Julian of Eclanum. In his eyes, the doctrines he and his friends affirmed and which the government condemned in 418, were the received orthodoxy of the church. The North African orthodoxy was not that of the Italian church. Opinion in Italy was more divided, orthodoxy and heresy less sharply distinct.” Markus continues by remarking that “the widespread lack of enthusiasm for the whole body of North African doctrine reveals how little agreement on the nature of orthodox doctrine could be taken for granted. Another hundred years were to elapse before the point of equilibrium would be found between the extremes represented by the Augustinian theology of the North African church and the Pelagian theology of Julian of Eclanum. It has long been widely agreed that the doctrine of grace defined at the second Council of Orange in 529 fell well short of the full-blooded Augustinian teaching on grace and predestination.” (Ibid., 217).
unmerited grace. In other words, we hope to capitalize on Josef Lössl’s observation that
“Julian’s traditional image as architect of the Pelagian system, *Pelagiani dogmatis machinae*
*architectus*, has been shaped by Augustine.”¹⁹ As such, the primary concern of the present thesis
will be less defined by an attempt to recover the ‘authentic’ voices of the host of so-called
‘Pelagians’ than it will be by an effort to relate Augustine’s own perception of the Pelagian
challenge to his distinctive doctrine of grace and the role of the Holy Spirit within his
overarching Trinitarian theology. The decidedly theological aim of the present project, in its
assessment of the contours of Augustine’s mature pneumatology in light of the Pelagian
controversy, will serve as an effort to further complement the social, political and cultural
realities explored by the aforementioned studies. In essence, the present study will proceed by
examining Augustine’s mature pneumatology in light of two key Pelagian postulates which he
considered inimical to his nascent theology of God’s unmerited grace: (1) that God does not
make impossible demands of human beings, which would suggest that God is cruel, unjust and
ignorant of human capabilities; and (2) that human beings do not inherit a disabling Original Sin
and as such are endowed with genuinely free will, are born neither evil nor good (being fully
capable of either) and therefore are fully responsible for their actions.²⁰ Hence, the assessment
of Augustine’s anti-Pelagian theology to follow will revolve around Augustine’s reaction to what
he perceived to be their most basic theological postulates as he developed his doctrine of the
Holy Spirit as God’s Gift who is given to dwell in human hearts.

²⁰Marshall D. Johnson, *The Evolution of Christianity: Twelve Crises that Shaped the Church* (New York:
Continuum, 2005), 64. Bonner corroborates Johnson’s assessment with regard to Augustine’s
fundamental disagreement with the Pelagians as he states: “It is the denial of any doctrine of Original Sin
which constituted the one essential article of belief for any would-be Pelagian. Once there is agreement
on that point there is a reasonable margin for different tendencies and emphases.” (“Pelagianism and
Augustine,” 35).
2. Methodology

The present thesis intends to answer the question of how Augustine’s mature doctrine of God’s unmerited grace is borne out in light of his Trinitarian understanding of the Holy Spirit’s unique character and function as God’s Gift. This analysis of Augustine’s mature pneumatology will proceed by means of an examination of Augustine’s foundational work of the *De Trinitate* (completed over the period of ca. 399-414 CE), and more specifically his critical formulations regarding the Holy Spirit contained in Book XV. Throughout this exposition, I intend to correlate Augustine’s formulations regarding the Holy Spirit in the *De Trinitate* with what is contained in his roughly contemporaneous treatises of *The Spirit and the Letter* (412) and

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21 Cf. Edmund Hill, “Introduction,” in *The Trinity*, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century Series, Vol. I/5, ed. John E. Rotelle, (New York: New City Press, 2008), 20: “In the covering letter which he wrote to Bishop Aurelius of Carthage on sending him the finished work, he says he began it when he was a young man, and now publishes it when he is old. In fact he seems to have begun it about 400 and finished it soon after 420.” As regards the structure and intent of the *De Trinitate*, Hill also notes that it “divides fairly obviously into two parts, Books I – VII, in which the mystery is discussed in itself, and Books VIII – XV, in which the image of God in man, which Augustine regards as a Trinitarian image, is investigated, with the aim of inspecting the divine mystery, so to speak, at closer quarters.” (Ibid., 21). In addition, Clark observes that “All fifteen books of *De Trinitate* follow the method of faith seeking understanding (Isaiah 7:9). Augustine cites scriptural bases for the doctrine of the Trinity and its image in man and woman.” (Mary T. Clark, “De Trinitate,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, ed. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001], 92). Cf. *De Trinitate* 12.7.12–8.13.

22 Cavadini argues that “the *De Trinitate* is not in the first instance a purely ‘speculative’ work inquiring into the mystery of the Trinity for the sake of systematizing Christian dogma, but finds its context rather in a polemical dialogue, visible in other, more familiar parts of the Augustinian corpus, against Neoplatonic views of salvation and also against (as Augustine sees it) overly Platonizing Christian views.” (John Cavadini, “The Structure and Intention of the *De Trinitate*,” *Augustinian Studies* 23 [1992]: 110). While we concur that the *De Trinitate* is not merely a purely speculative work, could it not also bear a polemical edge against the Pelagians, especially with regard to Augustine’s lengthy and distinguishing treatment of the Holy Spirit as Gift?

23 According to Burnaby, this work was written in answer to Marcellinus who “thought it paradoxical to concede, as Augustine did, that the achievement of ‘sinlessness’ was a theoretical possibility, and yet to deny not only that it ever has been achieved, but that there either has been or ever can be any instance of a completely sinless human life, except in the case of Christ himself. Augustine responded to his request for a solution of this difficulty by writing within the year (412) his treatise on *The Spirit and the Letter*, which is occupied entirely with an exposition of the doctrine of Grace, based on an exegesis of Paul’s teaching in the Epistle to the Romans, with the saying of II Cor. 3:6 – ‘the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life’ – as text.” (John Burnaby, “The Spirit and the Letter: Introduction,” in *Augustine: Later Works*, The Library of Christian Classics Series, Vol. VIII, ed. John Burnaby [Philadelphia, PA:
I will seek to assess the role of the Holy Spirit as the Gift of love in Augustine’s theology of grace in its historical-theological context by examining the development of Augustine’s pneumatology in these, his later works. Moreover, Augustine’s enduring usage of formulations of the Holy Spirit as Gift in answer to the Pelagians will be considered throughout the thesis in light of evidence that these crucial pneumatological postulates extended even unto his final anti-Pelagian writing: *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian* (429–430).

In order to demonstrate Augustine’s Trinitarian understanding of the Holy Spirit as characteristically the love within the Godhead and the Gift of God Himself which is given by His unmerited grace as He inhabits human hearts in order to enliven love for God and neighbour, two overarching threads that appear in Augustine’s mature pneumatology will be examined in turn: First, (1) as Augustine develops his Trinitarian vision throughout the *De Trinitate*, a profound

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24 Cf. Boniface Ramsey, “Introduction,” in *Homilies on the First Epistle of John*, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century Series, Vol. I/14, ed. Boniface Ramsey (New York: New City Press, 2008), 9: “Among Augustine’s most important homilies are the series of ten that he preached on the First Epistle of John during Easter Week. They were probably given in the evenings, when an audience would have had more leisure to listen to a longer sermon, and scholars seem to have settled on 407 as the year in which they were delivered.”

25 Cf. Roland J. Teske, “General Introduction,” in *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian*, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century Series, Vol. I/25, ed. John E. Rotelle, (New York: New City Press, 1979), 13: “The six books of Augustine’s *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian* were written in reply to the first six books of Julian of Eclanum’s eight books, *To Florus.*” Also, concerning the production of the work, Teske informs us that “Alypius [a colleague of Augustine] received a copy of *To Florus* during his fourth trip to Italy in 427. He had books one through five copied and delivered them to Augustine with the promise of the remaining three. Though busy with the composition of Revisions, a critical review of all his books, and of heresies, a work which had been persistently demanded of him by Quodvultdeus, a deacon of Carthage, Augustine set to work on a refutation of Julian’s work, devoting his nights to refuting *To Florus* and his days to the other works. However, before completing this last work against Julian, Augustine died on 28 August 430.”
connection between his pneumatology and soteriology begins to emerge as he explains how the Holy Spirit makes us to dwell in God, and God in us; and secondly, (2) Augustine’s contention that the gift of the love of God generated in the hearts of humankind owes its origins to the Self-giving of the Holy Spirit which bears directly on his distinctive view that salvation is due to nothing other than God’s unmerited grace. Concerning (1) Augustine’s conception of God’s making his dwelling within us, it will be argued that (a) the Holy Spirit, as uniquely and characteristically the love within the Trinity, exercises that same love of God in giving Himself to dwell in human hearts. In addition, (b) it will be observed how the Holy Spirit, as the agent by which the Triune God makes his dwelling within human hearts, is absolutely fundamental to Augustine’s view of God’s grace. Subsequently, (c) according to Augustine, human beings are enabled to love God only through God as he resides in people’s hearts and gives them the very capacity to love at all; and (d) the locus of God’s saving work may be seen to consist in God’s infusing the sinful human heart with the ability to love both God and neighbour. Moreover, (e) the locus of God’s saving work will be witnessed as consisting in His infusing the sinful human heart with the ability to love God and neighbour. And, finally, while (f) the Holy Spirit creates a love of God characteristic of the Holy Spirit in human hearts, which requires nothing less than the very presence of the Giver Himself, (g) union and participation in God’s love hinges on God’s dwelling in human hearts through the giving of the Holy Spirit. As a natural consequence of the notion that God determines to make his habitation within human hearts, Augustine (2) formulates a crucial link between the Holy Spirit as Gift and the characteristically Augustinian notion of God’s unmerited grace. It may be demonstrated that Augustine accomplishes this through (a) drawing on 1 John 4:19 and Romans 5:5 in order to substantiate his fundamental conviction that man must turn to God and love God only by God’s first acting to enliven love in
the sinner’s otherwise depraved heart. Also, (b) Augustine illustrates how the dynamics of the inner-life of the Trinity play out soteriologically in that the identity of the Holy Spirit as uniquely Gift and the love within the Godhead entails the generation of the love of God in human hearts wholly as gift and thus utterly by grace. Additionally, (c) stemming from his primary reliance on Johannine texts, Augustine views the Holy Spirit as the consummation of the Father-Son relationship which subsists in love and makes possible the welcoming of the redeemed sinner into fellowship with God through generating a saving love of God within the human heart. Furthermore, (d) salvation, which is wrought by the grace of God, is only possible by the Self-giving of God in the Person of the Holy Spirit as he determines to indwell the redeemed heart. Moreover, it is fundamental to Augustine’s thought that (e) the ultimate Good is none other than the unchangeable God, yet participation in God, which remains humankind’s highest good, is only possible through an implanted love of God wrought graciously and solely by the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, in keeping with the unyielding Augustinian paradigm of God’s wholly unmerited grace, is his assertion that (f) the love of God is found only in God and thus must be given by God; and it is only meritorious before God, insofar as it is not merited by human effort, but implanted within and received by the human heart through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Finally, (g) we will observe how Augustine’s mature theology of the Holy Spirit ultimately redounds unto his theology of grace in his insistence that our love for God is God’s gift to be received as it cannot be divorced from his Trinitarian understanding of the Holy Spirit who gives Himself for us and for our salvation.
Chapter 1

GOD MAKES HIS DWELLING WITHIN US

1. The Holy Spirit as Love within the Trinity & His Indwelling Human Hearts

The fifteenth and final book of the *De Trinitate* may at first glance appear to be little more than a summary statement of Augustine’s grand attempt to find an appropriate image of the Trinity in the psychological makeup of the human being in accordance with the biblical principle that each and every individual is created in God’s image.\(^{26}\) However, this last book represents profound advances in Augustine’s understanding of the Holy Spirit as he begins to expound on the nature and role of this Third Person of the Trinity as distinctively the love within the Triune Godhead which is communicated to humankind through his giving Himself to dwell in human hearts. For example, Augustine begins to turn his attention to the character and function of the Holy Spirit both within the Trinity itself and in terms of God’s economy of salvation as he asserts: “Yet there is good reason why in this Trinity we call none Word of God but the Son, none Gift of God but the Holy Spirit, none of whom the Word is begotten and from whom the Holy Spirit originally proceeds, but God the Father.”\(^{27}\) Although Augustine demonstrates relentless insistence on the affirmation of the unity of the Trinitarian Godhead, he is equally

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\(^{26}\) Cf. Gen. 1:26: “Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” (All biblical quotations are taken from the ESV unless otherwise stated).

eager to ascribe certain differentia to each of the Three Persons in a way that accords with their biblical appellations. Augustine conceives of the eternally prescribed Trinitarian relations, such as the Holy Spirit’s unique role as the *donum dei* or ‘gift of God’, not only in terms of how they reveal the internal structure of the Trinity, but also in terms of their soteriological ramifications in relation to humankind. Moreover, Augustine proceeds to harmonize this notion of the Holy Spirit as ‘gift’ with his conception of the Holy Spirit as uniquely the love exercised within the Trinity: “If then one of the three is by a special fitness to be named charity, the name falls most appropriately to the Holy Spirit.” In the eternally subsisting Trinitarian relations of Father-Son-Holy Spirit, Augustine renders the Holy Spirit as properly the love (*caritas*) exercised by the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit, then, according to Augustine, is rightly to be understood as fundamental to the *self-giving* exercise of the holy and eternal love that unites the Father and the Son. Having established this unique role of the Holy Spirit within the Godhead, Augustine turns to formulating the critical link between the nature of the Trinitarian relations and the salvation of humankind as he comments on the First Epistle of John:

> Now in what follows the writer [John] refers to the love of God – not that by which we love him, but that by which ‘he loved us, and sent his Son as expiator for our sins’; and bases thereon his exhortation to us to love one another, **that so God may dwell in us**, since God (as he had said) is love. And there follows at once, designed to express the matter more plainly, the saying: ‘hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.’

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28 For a lengthier exposition of Augustine’s use of key biblical passages in developing his theology of the Holy Spirit as Gift see Chapter II.A.

29 *De Trinitate* 15.17.29 (159). (CCL 50A. 503): “Si ergo propriè aliquid horum trium caritas nuncupanda est, quid aptius quam ut hoc sit spiritus sanctus?”

30 See discussion of Augustine’s usage of terminology in describing differing types of ‘love’ in Chapter I.D below.

31 *De Trinitate* 15.17.31 (160). Bold mine. (CCL 50A. 506): “Sed in consequentibus cum dei dilectionem commemorasset, non qua nos eum sed qua nos ipse dilexit et misit filium suum litatorem pro peccatis nostris, et hinc exhortatus esset ut et nos inuiucem diligamus atque ita deus in nobis maneat quia utique dilectionem deum dixerat, statim uolens de hac re apertius aliquid eloqui: In hoc, inquit, cognoscimus quia in ipso manemus et ipse in nobis quia de spiritu suo dedit nobis.”
There is a fundamental continuity between Augustine’s conception of the eternally subsisting relationships of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and the means by which God enlivens human hearts to partake of salvation: the Holy Spirit, as uniquely the gift of love within the Trinity, is understandably responsible for giving Himself, insofar as he is God, to dwell in human hearts. Augustine immediately and explicitly ratifies this connection of the Holy Spirit as the love within the Trinity and the nature of humankind’s salvation as he states: “Thus the Holy Spirit, of whom he has given us, makes us dwell in God, and God in us. But that is the effect of love. The Holy Spirit himself therefore is the God who is love.”

Once Augustine has determined that the Holy Spirit uniquely represents the gift of love within the Godhead, it follows quite naturally that in order to partake of God’s eternal goodness and blessedness, the human heart must partake of God’s gift of Himself in the Person of the Holy Spirit. As a matter of method undergirding the entire De Trinitate, including his treatment of the salvation of humankind through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as God’s gift of love, Augustine can be observed to be constantly referring back to the image of God in man and its renewal by God’s grace. For instance, Augustine maintains that “when the promised vision, ‘face to face,’ has come, we shall behold the Trinity – that Trinity which is not only incorporeal but perfectly inseparable and truly changeless – far more clearly and surely than we now behold its image in ourselves.”

Augustine deploys various triadic structures in attempting to find a

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33 Cf. Nygren, Agape and Eros, 525: “The object we are to love is Himself, but Caritas also is Himself, who by the Holy Spirit takes up His abode in our hearts. Even the fact that we love God is itself entirely a gift of God.”
34 De Trinitate 15.23.44 (171). (CCL 50A. 522): “Sed hanc non solum incorporalem uerum etiam summe inseparabilem uereque immutabilem trinitatem cum uenerit uisio quae facie ad faciem nobis promittitur, multo clarius certiusque uidemus quam nunc eius imaginem quod nos sumus.”
suitable model of the Trinity on the basis of human psychology, yet consistently maintains that the image of God in man is marred by sin and awaits its full realization by God’s grace in the eschaton. Moreover, in a cognate passage wherein Augustine discusses how God writes the law on the hearts of the Gentiles by the Holy Spirit, he argues that his “interpretation need not be disturbed by the saying of the text that they do things contained in the law ‘by nature’ – not by the Spirit of God, by faith, or by grace. For it is the work of the Spirit of grace to renew in us the image of God, in which ‘by nature’ we were made.” A vital element of Augustine’s view of the work of the Holy Spirit in His giving of Himself as God’s love in order to dwell within the human heart is that God might bring about a recreation of the true imago Dei previously effaced by sin. Despite Augustine’s repeated emphasis on the renewal or renovatio of the image of God in man, particularly as the Holy Spirit sheds the love of God abroad in human hearts, he is keen to maintain that this fiat is wrought solely and utterly by grace and that we must admit that the creature is always and in every way subordinate to and dependent on its eternal and perfect Creator. Augustine makes the following statement to this effect: “Even when they shall be made whole from all infirmity and equal to one another, the being that owes its constancy to grace will

35 For example, in the eighth book of the De Trinitate, Augustine “introduces the famous psychological discussion of the Trinity in which Augustine finds traces of the highest Trinity in Man, who is created in the image of God. So we see a trinity in the human mind, and the knowledge by which it knows itself, and the love by which it loves itself; or again, in the triad of memory, understanding, and will” (Gerald Bonner, “St. Augustine’s Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” Sobornost 4 [1960]: 57). In his search for an appropriate analogy of the Trinity, Augustine never departs from his basic conviction that it must subsist in love: “Man is made in God’s image; and if we would gain insight into the nature of the Divine life, it is necessary, according to Augustine, to find analogies from the life of the human soul, and especially from those human activities which bear the stamp of love.” (Nygren, Agape and Eros, 541).

36 De Spiritu et Littera 27.47 (230). (CSEL 60. 201): “Nec moueat, quod naturaliter eos dixit quae legis sunt facere, non spiritu dei, non fide, non gratia. Hoc enim agit spiritus gratiae, ut imaginem dei, in qua naturaliter facti sumus, instauret in nobis.”

37 Cf. Clark, “De Trinitate,” 99: “The originality of Augustine is mainly found in his doctrine of the Holy Spirit and in the centrality he gave to love in Trinitarian life, and to love as renewing human likeness to the Trinity.” Once again, Augustine elaborates further on this theme in the De Spiritu et Littera as he states: “By grace the righteousness which guilt had effaced is written in the inward man thus renewed; and this is God’s mercy upon the human race through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (De Spiritu et Littera 27.47 [230]).
not attain equality to the being which is essentially changeless. There can be no equality between creature and Creator; and making whole from all infirmity will itself be a change."

According to Augustine, even as God gives Himself in the Person of the Holy Spirit to make his habitation within the hearts of humankind and thereby renew the shattered image, human beings are ever and always fully reliant on the One immutable God, His grace, and his eternal life-giving power.

Whilst the exploration of the fundamental character and renewal of the image of God in humankind guides Augustine’s inquiry into the great mysteries of the Trinity itself, he never retreats from his insistence on the fact that the Holy Spirit’s dwelling within the human heart as an extension of the love shared within the Trinity is essentially a product of God’s unmerited grace. Augustine articulates his position in the negative as he considers those alienated from God’s grace: “And if those of whom we are speaking, those who do by nature the things contained in the law in the manner we have sufficiently set forth, are strangers from the grace of Christ, then the ‘thoughts’ which ‘excuse’ them can advantage them nothing in the day when God shall judge the hidden things of men – unless it be for a punishment less severe.”

Clearly, for Augustine, wherever the Holy Spirit is not giving of Himself, good works are rendered insufficient. Alternatively, speaking in more positive terms of human beings as potential lovers

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38 De Trinitate 15.23.43 (171). (CCL 50A, 521): “Et quando inter se aequalia fuerint ab omni languore sanata, nec tunc aequabitur rei natura immutabili ea res quae per gratiam non mutatur quia non aequatur creatura creatori, et quando ab omni languore sanabitur mutabitur.”

39 Although Augustine places such stringent limits on the capabilities of human beings in fully attaining to the divine nature, Burnaby observes that both “the imitation of God is possible for man because human personality is made on the pattern of the Divine” and that “the imitation of God, whether true or ‘perverse’, is an imitation of the whole Trinity.” (John Burnaby, Amor Dei: A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine: The Hulsean Lectures for 1938 [London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1960], 144).

40 De Spiritu et Littera 28.48 (232). (CSEL 60. 203): “A cuius gratia si alieni sunt illi de quibus agimus, qui secundum illum modum, de quo superius satis diximus, naturaliter quae legis sunt faciunt, quid eis proderunt excusantes cogitationes in die, qua iudicabit Deus occulta hominum, nisi forte ut mitius puniantur?”
of God, Augustine emphatically declares: “But how shall we be able to love God if we love the world? [John] prepares us, therefore, to be inhabited by charity. There are two loves, that of the world and that of God. If love of the world dwells in us, there is no way for the love of God to enter in. Let love of the world withdraw and that of God dwell in us; what is better should take its place.”\footnote{Tractatus in Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos 2.8 (translation from Homilies on the First Epistle of John, tr. Boniface Ramsey, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century Series, Vol. I/14 [New York: New City Press, 2008], 45). Hereafter all page numbers for quotations from Ramsey’s translation will appear in brackets following the referenced section of the Tractatus in Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos. (PL 35. 1993): “Sed quomodo poterimus amare Deum, si amamus mundum? Parat nos ergo inhabitari charitate. Duo sunt amores, mundi et Dei: si mundi amore habitet, non est qua intrat amor Dei: recedat amor mundi, et habitet Dei; melior accipiat locum.”} In this manner Augustine asserts that by the Holy Spirit’s indwelling the human heart, the love shared within the Trinity may unseat the love of the world which is ultimately inimical to a Holy God. Thus, as Augustine turns to considering the Person and work of the Holy Spirit in Book XV of the De Trinitate, it is evident that he begins to develop an understanding of the Third Person of the Trinity as specially the love exercised within the Trinity, Who, by extension, works soteriologically as the One who gives himself to dwell in human hearts.

2. The Holy Spirit as the Agent of the Indwelling Trinity

Having considered Augustine’s fundamental Trinitarian conception of the Holy Spirit as uniquely the love within the Godhead, we turn now to assess how the agency of the Holy Spirit, through whom the entire Trinity makes its dwelling within human hearts, is basic to Augustine’s view of the utterly gratuitous character of God’s saving grace. Having developed his theory of the Self-giving giftedness of the Holy Spirit, both within and without the Trinitarian relationships exercised within the Godhead, the emphasis on the Spirit’s work in the salvation of humankind reaches a level of unprecedented magnitude for Augustine:
Thus the love which is of God and is God is specially the Holy Spirit, through whom is spread abroad in our hearts the charity of God by which the whole Trinity makes its habitation within us. And therefore is the Holy Spirit, God though he be, most rightly called also the Gift of God; and what can be the special sense of that gift but charity, which brings us to God, and without which no other of God’s gifts can bring us to him?\textsuperscript{42}

The Holy Spirit, for Augustine, is the vital link through whom human beings are filled with the love of God as a product of their being inhabited by the very presence of the divine Trinity. Quite literally, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as the Gift of God is the \textit{sine qua non} of Augustine’s soteriological scheme: the only claim which sinful and depraved humankind can make on exercising the necessary true and undefiled love of God is through nothing and no one other than the Person of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{43} Here we see that the invisible agency of Holy Spirit, for Augustine, is the crucial link whereby the holy and eternal intra-Trinitarian exchange of God’s love ignites that same love in human hearts; as Reinhard observes: “The Spirit abiding in us fires us to the love of God because the love of God (Father-loving-Son-loving-Father) is literally subsisting in an active exchange of love within us.”\textsuperscript{44} Augustine understands the salvation of humankind as hinging upon participation in the loving relationality of the Godhead, which simultaneously undermines any notion of both the commodification of God’s grace and

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{De Trinitate} 15.18.32 (161-162). (CCL 50A. 508): “Dilectio igitur quae ex deo est et deus est proprie spiritus sanctus est per quem diffunditur in cordibus nostris dei caritas per quam nos tota inhabitet trinitas. Quocirca rectissime spiritus sanctus, cum sit deus, uocatur etiam donum dei. Quod donum proprie quid nisi caritas intellegenda est quae perducit ad deum et sine qua quodlibet aliud dei donum non perducit ad deum?”

\textsuperscript{43} Although Augustine amplifies the work of the Holy Spirit to an unprecedented level at this point in the \textit{De Trinitate}, Gioia reminds us that the agency of the Spirit in causing the Trinity to dwell in human hearts is never alienated from the redemptive work of Christ at Calvary: “Just as the Father and the Son are united through love-Holy Spirit, so Christians are reconciled – become ‘one’ – with the Father through the love of Christ’s sacrifice (let us remember that love is the essence of sacrifice) and become one with each other through the same love poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us at Christ’s resurrection.” (Luigi Gioia, \textit{The Theological Epistemology of Augustine’s De Trinitate} [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008], 126).

the Pelagian view of the salvific love of God being some form of achievement.\textsuperscript{45} Although Augustine is intent on demonstrating the unity of the Triune Godhead throughout the \textit{De Trinitate}, he does not shrink back from differentiating and individuating the personalities of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, such that the Holy Spirit is attributed the vital task of leading the sinfully wandering human heart back to God (\textit{perducit ad deum}), precisely through the giving of His own Person to dwell in human hearts.\textsuperscript{46}

Augustine does not limit the redemptive work of God in Christ to a specific moment of belief in an individual’s lifetime; rather, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit ignites a love of God that endures from everlasting to everlasting.\textsuperscript{47} For example, we witness Augustine once again invoking this understanding of the agency of the Holy Spirit whereby the human heart is imbued with the salvific love of God, developed primarily in Book XV of the \textit{De Trinitate},\textsuperscript{48} in his explicitly anti-Pelagian work known as the \textit{Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian}: “God, of

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\item\textsuperscript{45} Kotsko underlines the importance of how Augustine’s soteriology consists in the relationality of the Trinity: “for the Holy Spirit to be gift within the horizon of sin and salvation is nothing other than for it to be the \textit{communio} of Father and Son, generously shared with creation.” (Adam Kotsko, “Gift and \textit{Communio}: The Holy Spirit in Augustine’s \textit{De Trinitate},” \textit{Scottish Journal of Theology} 64 [2011]: 11).
\item\textsuperscript{46} Cf. J. Patout Burns, \textit{The Development of Augustine’s Doctrine of Operative Grace} (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1980), 149: “Augustine assigned the entire process [of conversion] to the work of the Holy Spirit: fear of God to the Spirit of fear, belief in the promise of Christ to the Spirit of faith, the plea for help to the Spirit of prayer, and finally the love of salvific good to the Spirit of charity. None of the external means through which God moves a person to conversion are effective without the corresponding interior operation of the Spirit.” Cf. \textit{Epistle} 194.6.30.
\item\textsuperscript{47} Cf. Burns, \textit{The Development of Augustine’s Doctrine of Operative Grace}, 149: “The consent by which one believes the gospel is attributed to the Holy Spirit, who subsequently effects good willing and promotes good action of believers through the gift of charity.”
\item\textsuperscript{48} In fact, Augustine’s view of the Holy Spirit as “gift” had been a nascent theme in even some of his earliest writings, yet it remained to bloom in full flower in this last book of the \textit{De Trinitate}. Cf. Chad Tyler Gerber, \textit{The Spirit of Augustine’s Early Theology: Contextualizing Augustine’s Pneumatology} (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2012), 181-182: “In \textit{Epistle} 11.4, Augustine identifies all of these interrelated operations with the Holy Spirit as ‘gift’ (\textit{quod donum et munus proprie spiritui sancto tribuitur}). This is the first time that Augustine speaks of the Spirit as ‘gift’ using either \textit{donum} or \textit{munus}. With roots in biblical and patristic traditions familiar to the young Augustine, the pneumatological title will quickly flourish in Augustine’s writings and eventually evolve into a descriptor for the Spirit’s eternal particularity in later works such as the \textit{De Trinitate}.” Cf. Acts 2:38; Hilary of Poitiers, \textit{De Trinitate} 2.2, 3.29, 33-5.
\end{itemize}
course, justifies sinners, not only by forgiving the evil deeds they committed, but also by
bestowing love so that they avoid evil and do good through the Holy Spirit. The apostle asked
the constant help of the Spirit for those whom he said, *But we pray to God that you may do
nothing evil.*49 The life of the redeemed believer, for Augustine, can never be dislocated from
the presence and power of the Holy Spirit: not only is the gift of eternal life bestowed in the
instant that the Holy Spirit gives Himself to dwell in the human heart, but the believer is only
persistently enabled to do good in the sight of a Holy God by the Spirit’s working through him
(*faciat bonum per Spiritum sanctum*). Clearly, for Augustine, humankind is alienated from the
love characteristic of the Holy Trinity, and as such he ascribes the unique role of generating the
requisite holiness and love of God in the human heart to the Self-giving of the Holy Spirit as an
utterly gratuitous act.

A consistent feature of Augustine’s soteriological scheme is that the Holy Spirit, as the
agent Who binds the hearts of men and women to God through participation in His love,
maintains his particular identity as God’s supreme Gift. In a sermon preached to his
congregation at Hippo, even before the Pelagian controversy broke out in earnest, Augustine
unabashedly declared: “*He has given gifts to men.* What gifts? The Holy Spirit. If he gives such a
gift as that, what must he be like himself? Great indeed, you see, is the generosity of God; he
gives a gift that is equal to himself, because his gift is the Holy Spirit, and the whole Trinity,

Father and Son and Holy Spirit, is one God.”\(^50\) By considering the Holy Spirit to be eternally given within the Trinity itself, and subsequently the agent whereby individuals partake of the salvific love of God, Augustine formulates new dimensions of the distinctive character and role of the Holy Spirit within the Catholic Trinitarian tradition.\(^51\) It is of paramount significance for Augustine that by the Holy Spirit’s action alone the human heart is vivified and reforged with the capacity to truly love God, as without him no other of God’s gifts can bring us to him!\(^52\) In summary, Burleigh concisely states the matter thusly: “Amor Dei, not that by which He loved us but that by which we love Him, God’s supreme and indispensable gift, is given to us by and with the Holy Spirit. Here we feel the pulse of Augustine’s religious life.” Perhaps nowhere else do we feel the full force of Augustine’s absolute insistence on the reality of God’s granting His wholly unconditional and altogether unmerited grace to humankind than in his articulation of the agency of the Holy Spirit as giving Himself to dwell in human hearts.

3. The Human Capacity to Love God But Only Through God

Even whilst Augustine repeatedly emphasizes the necessity of God’s making his dwelling within the human heart by the agency of the Holy Spirit in order that such a person might properly exercise a salvific love of God, he goes even further in delineating the very possibility


\(^{51}\) Cf. Robert Louis Wilken, “*Spiritus sanctus secundum scripturas sanctas*: Exegetical Considerations of Augustine on the Holy Spirit.” *Augustinian Studies* 31 (2000): 9: “As in Ambrose, Didymus, and Hilary, what occupies Augustine’s attention is the *proprium*, the distinctive character of the Holy Spirit. Yet a perceptible shift in focus is evident. In earlier thinkers the *proprium* of the Holy Spirit was discussed in relation to mankind; for Augustine the distinctiveness of the Holy Spirit is also discussed in relation to the Father and the Son.”

\(^{52}\) Cf. Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 251: The Spirit’s status is none other than “that which draws us to God, as the love through which we are drawn, as the will and goodness of God in creation, and as the love between Father and Son.”
of this requisite love of God as something achieved only by virtue of God loving Himself in and through the human heart. First, Augustine is abundantly clear that the possibility of love derives from God alone:

To sum up, Holy Scripture proclaims that God is charity. Charity is of God, and its effect in us is that we dwell in God and he in us. This we know because he has given us of his Spirit. It follows that the Spirit himself is the God who is charity. If among God’s gifts there is none greater than charity, and there is no greater gift of God than the Holy Spirit, we naturally conclude that he who is said to be both God and of God himself is charity.  

According to the logic that the highest virtue is to love, and self-giving love traces its provenance to the Holy Spirit, Augustine invites us to conclude that the Holy Spirit, who is love, is the greatest of God’s gifts. By according the Holy Spirit the special name of charity (ipse spiritus eius est deus caritas), Augustine effectively restricts the potential for human love of God and neighbour to finding its source strictly in the shedding abroad of the Holy Spirit. Secondly, since Augustine insists that human love is derivative of the divine love characteristic of the Holy Spirit, he remarks that God “extends his mercy, not because they know him but in order that they might know him: he extends his righteousness whereby he justifies the ungodly, not because they are upright in heart, but that they may become upright in heart.” Because all love is therefore of God, Augustine naturally formulates a soteriological scheme on the basis that God must take the initiative to enliven the human heart to such love. Thirdly, Augustine considers the love of God as something altogether alien to the human heart as “by it the righteous lives in his

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53 De Trinitate 15.19.37 (165). (CCL 50A. 513): “Quapropter sicut sancta scriptura proclamat: Deus caritas est, illaque ex deo est et in nobis id agit ut in deo maneamus et ipse in nobis, et hoc inde cognoscimus quia de spiritu suo dedit nobis, ipse spiritus eius est deus caritas. Deinde si in donis dei nihil maius est caritate et nullum est maius donum dei quam spiritus sanctus, quid consequentius quam ut ipse sit caritas quae dicitur et deus et ex deo?”

54 Cf. Gioia, The Theological Epistemology of Augustine’s De Trinitate, 138: The Holy Spirit “is a gift because he is given to those who through it – and through it alone – love God.”

55 De Spiritu et Littera 7.11 (201). (CSEL 60. 162): “Neque enim quia sciunt, sed etiam ut sciant eum præsentit misericordiam suam; nec quia recti sunt corde, sed etiam ut recti sint corde præsentit iustitiam suam, qua iustificat impium.”
pilgrimage [*peregrinatione*] here.”⁵⁶ What constitutes the believer a stranger and a pilgrim in the present world is precisely the fact that an alien love of God, exercised through the indwelling Person of the Holy Spirit, has been poured into their hearts.

Augustine considers the fact that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit enlivens the human person with a love of God and delight in His commandments, which would otherwise evoke utter disdain and result in nothing other than bitter condemnation, as incontrovertible evidence that the human heart can love God only through God. For example, Augustine establishes this paradigm as the key difference between the two dispensations of the Old and New Testaments: “Grasp this clear difference between the old covenant and the new: that there the law is written upon tables, here upon hearts, so that the fear imposed by the first from without becomes the delight inspired by the second from within, and he whom the letter that killeth there made a transgressor, is here made a lover by the Spirit that giveth life.”⁵⁷ Only through the life-giving Spirit is the human heart enabled to derive joy and delight from the Holy and righteous Law which otherwise incites only fear and condemnation on account of sin. Herein Augustine derives the soteriological dynamic of God’s unmerited grace from the fact that the human heart may only love in and through the God who is love: *Non potest esse dilectio sine Spiritu Dei.*⁵⁸ For Augustine, love in its totality resides in the Three-Personed Godhead of Father, Son and Holy Spirit; as such, each and every instance of genuine human love constitutes a part of the plenitude of God’s love as the Trinity is made to dwell within the human heart through the Spirit. Lastly, Augustine would

⁵⁶ *De Spiritu et Littera* 28.49 (233). Cf. 1 Tim. 1:5; 1 Cor. 13:12.
⁵⁷ *De Spiritu et Littera* 25.42 (226). (CSEL 60.196): “Cum igitur haec appareat distantia ueteris et noui testamenti, quod lex ibi in tabulis, hic in cordibus scribitur, ut quod ibi forinsecus terret, hic delectet intrinsecus, ibi que fiat praearicarator per occidentem litteram, hic dilector per uiuificantem spiritum.”
⁵⁸ *Tractatus in Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos* 6.10 (PL 35: 2026). Cf. Augustine, *Tractatus in Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos* 6.10 (98): “Question your heart: if the love of your brother is there, be secure. There can be no love without the Spirit of God, because Paul cries out, *The charity of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*”
direct this notion explicitly against the Pelagians as he argues: “From this necessity of slavery, then, he sets us free who not only gives commandments by the law, but also bestows love by the Holy Spirit so that the delight of sin may be conquered by the delight of that love. Otherwise, it continues to be unconquered and holds onto its slave.” Only the foreign invasion of the love of God into the sinful human heart, as induced by the Holy Spirit, can turn bitter condemnation under the Law into delight in God and His precepts. The unmerited gift of the presence of the Holy Spirit within the human heart ensures an invincible love of God even as God’s own love is from everlasting to everlasting.

Lest there remain any doubt as to the nature of humankind’s coming to love God, Augustine reiterates that the entire process, from its inception at conversion to its eschatological consummation, is a consequence of God loving Himself in and through the human heart as He gives Himself to dwell within. To this end, Augustine boldly declares:

Having therefore such a great assurance, let us love God with God. Yes indeed, since the Holy Spirit is God, let us love God with God. Now why should I say more than once, “Let us love God with God?” Certainly, because I have said the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us, it follows that since the Holy Spirit is God and we cannot love God except through the Holy Spirit, we can only love God with God.

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59 Contra Julianum Opus Imperfectum 1.107 (128). (PL 45: 1121) “Ab hac ergo necessitate servitutis ille liberat, qui non solum dat praecepta per legem; verum etiam donat per Spiritum charitatem, cujus delectatione vincatur delectatio peccati: alloquim perseverat invicta, et servum suum tenet.”

60 Gerrish identifies a key part of Augustine’s conception of human bitterness towards the Law when a person is enslaved to sin in its demand to seek life in God rather than in one’s own self: “For Augustine, the grace that comes from Christ brings about a conversion, a radical reorientation of the self, which turns a person by the infusion of love (caritas) in a new direction: away from the fault of seeking life in one’s own self, toward the true Fountain of Life, from whose fullness we have all received.” (Brian A. Gerrish, “Sovereign Grace: Is Reformed Theology Obsolete?” Interpretation 57 [2003]: 49).

61 Sermones 34.3 (167). (PL 38: 210): “Amamus Deum de Deo. Idola cordis. Habentes ergo tantam fiduciam, amemus Deum de Deo: imo quia Spiritus sanctus Deus est, amemus Deum de Deo. Quid enim plus dicam; amemus Deum de Deo? Certe quia dixi, Charitas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per Spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis; ideo est consequens ut quia Spiritus sanctus Deus est, nec diligere possumus Deum, nisi per Spiritum sanctum, amemus Deum de Deo.”
With this statement Augustine repudiates any possibility that human beings have the capacity to love God without assistance, and hence demands that its generation must be a work of God’s grace. The very essence of love is circumscribed, for Augustine, by the dimensions and character of the Trinitarian love exercised within the Godhead; therefore, human beings may only partake of love, if it is properly to be called “love,” insofar as they love God through God as he resides within their hearts in the Person of the Holy Spirit. Augustine presses this notion to its limits as he offers the following exhortation: “So in order for you to love God, let God dwell in you, and love himself by means of you; that is, let him prompt you to love him, kindle you, enlighten you, rouse you.” Clearly, Augustine states and restates that the love of God (as in humankind’s love for God) admits of no source other than the singular and defining act of the Holy Spirit shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts in order that God might love Himself through us. Hence it follows that God’s prerogative to make His dwelling within us is crucial to Augustine’s doctrine of grace: we are enabled to love God only through God as he resides in us and gives us even the very capacity to love at all.

4. Salvation & the Necessity of Human Love for God

Not only does Augustine conceive of human love for God as necessarily accomplished in and through the Holy Spirit as God loves Himself through us, but he also considers the presence of such love for God as the sole indicator that a person has a share in God’s saving grace.

62 Cf. Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine’s De Trinitate*, 299: “love proves to be the highest expression of God’s grace: either it is from God (ex deo), the gift of God (donum dei), or it is not love at all.”
63 *Sermones* 128.4 (295). (PL 38: 715): “Ut ergo ames Deum, habitet in te Deus, et amet se de te; id est, ad amorem suum moveat te, accendat te, illuminet te, excetet te.”
64 Cf. John Milbank, “Sacred Triads: Augustine and the Indo-European Soul,” in *Augustine and His Critics: Essays in Honour of Gerald Bonner*, eds. Robert Dodaro and George Lawless (New York: Routledge, 2000), 102: “This inclusion amounts to a radical reciprocity in which we are elevated into a ‘giving back of God to God’—although entirely within and by God—despite our constitutive nothingness.”
Augustine leaves little to doubt as he states his position thusly: “Unless the Holy Spirit be bestowed in such measure on any man as to make him a lover of God and of his neighbour, he cannot pass from the left hand to the right. The name Gift belongs properly to the Spirit, only on account of love.” Whether or not the love of God presently presides over the human heart becomes, for Augustine, the indicator of whether or not an individual has a share in God's bestowal of eternal blessedness. In this manner, shades of the rigorous particularity of Augustine’s doctrine of election and predestination begin to manifest in that the Holy Spirit as Gift is not universally given, and, by consequence, neither is love. Moreover, Augustine contends that “the Holy Spirit is the gift of God, inasmuch as he is given to them that love God through him.” God’s saving grace is inextricably bound to the diffusing of the love of God by the work of the Holy Spirit. Wherever true love of God is present, surely, for Augustine, the Holy Spirit is present also since it is only through the Spirit that human beings are capable of loving God. Salvation, therefore, is not to be construed as an achievement secured by moral rectitude and rigorous self-discipline. Instead, Augustine argues that the love of God constitutes a total renovation of the will in shifting its desires from sinful rebellion against God to finding its highest delight in God. Wetzel describes this transition as follows: “The work of redemption

65 De Trinitate 15.18.32 (161). (CCL 50A. 507): “Nisi ergo tantum impertiatur cuique spiritus sanctus ut eum dei et proximi faciat amatorum, a sinistra non transfertur ad dextram. Nec spiritus proprie dicitur donum nisi propter dilectionem.”
66 Cf. James K. A. Smith, “Formation, Grace, and Pneumatology: Or, Where’s the Spirit in Gregory’s Augustine?” Journal of Religious Ethics 39 (2011): 567. Smith also observes that not only is the Spirit’s presence necessary to ignite a salvific love of God, but “the indwelling of the Spirit is the condition of possibility even for loving the neighbor.” (Ibid., 567).
68 Cf. Burnaby, Amor Dei, 171: “Redemption is in the fullest sense a new creation, restoring in sinful man the love toward God which he had lost.”
69 Cf. Gioia, The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate, 128: “When Augustine determines the property of the gift (datio) or mission of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, i.e. that which corresponds to his role and identity in the inner-life of the Trinity, he declares that the Holy Spirit constitutes us believers in Christ, i.e. he creates in us that faith which works through love (fides per dilectionem), through which we adhere to Christ.” Cf. De Trinitate 4.29; Rom. 5:5.
consequently emerges as a gratuitous infusion of new desires and dispositions, which are
implanted in the human will through the work of the Spirit. Those desires and dispositions
become the raw material for the will’s reconstruction.”  

The defining characteristic of the
redeemed is their delight in God and in doing the holy and righteous commandments given by
God, yet the very disposition to fulfill the Law, even as the Law itself requires that it be done –
with sincerity from the heart – requires the prior indwelling of the Holy Spirit as God’s wholly
unmerited Gift given utterly by God’s grace.

The dynamics of Augustine’s soteriology in relation to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit
stem in large part from his understanding of love as differentiated according to the categories of
‘using’ (uti) versus ‘enjoying’ (frui), such that God ultimately uses human beings, and only
properly enjoys Himself.  

Augustine’s discussion of loving for the purposes of its usefulness (as a means only) or enjoyment (as an end in itself) persists into his mature work: “But there
should be moderation on account of the creator, so that you don’t encumber yourselves with this
love, lest you love for the purpose of enjoying what you should possess for the purpose of
using.”  

In due course, Augustine would conclude that only the love of God should bear the
character of being enjoyed in and of itself (frui), and that all other loves ought to be subordinate
in relation to it (uti).  

Given that, for Augustine, all love derives from God and that human

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71 The genesis of this distinction in Augustine’s thought can be traced to De Doctrina Christiana 1.22.20: “The utifrui distinction plays a central role in book 1 of De Doctrina Christiana, in Augustine’s
discussion of the relationship between love for God and love for neighbour. There the magna quaestio is
‘whether human beings should frui one another or uti one another or both.’” (Raymond Canning,

ut non uos inligent ista dilectione ne ad fruendum hoc ametis quod ad utendum habere debetis.”

73 On this point, Nygren and Burnaby emphatically agree: “According to Augustine, there is only one
object that man has any real right to love – namely, God. The right form of love, Caritas, is in essence
beings must exercise the love of God in order to be redeemed, in the process of shedding abroad His Holy Spirit God uses us (uti) in order to fulfill the final purpose of enjoying (frui) only Himself. Herein we become acutely aware of Augustine’s characteristic insistence on the fact that our love for God is a product of God’s love for us. Furthermore, Augustine offers the following exhortation on precisely this basis:

Would we be able to love him if he didn’t love us first? If we were sluggish in loving, let us not be sluggish in returning love. He loves us first; that isn’t how we love. He loved us when we were wicked, but he did away with our wickedness; he loved us when we were wicked, but he didn’t gather us together for the sake of wickedness. He loved us when we were sick, but he visited us in order to heal us. God is love, therefore.

Augustine clearly conceives of God’s giving the Holy Spirit in order to incite human love of God (amor Dei) as a product of God’s love (caritas Dei). Hence, it is God’s gracious initiative in sending the Holy Spirit in order that human beings might exercise the requisite love of God that is solely responsible for humankind’s redemption.

Augustine recognizes that human beings must exercise this love of God in order to partake of eternal life on account of the demands of the Law, which serves only to condemn unless it be fulfilled in all respects. For example, Augustine argues for the necessity of the work of the Spirit to this end in the De Spiritu et Littera:

This is the Spirit of God by whose gift we are justified. Hereby it comes to pass in us that we find our delight in not sinning – which means liberty, whereas apart from the Spirit...
we find delight in sinning – which means servitude, from the works of which we are to abstain, that is, keep Sabbath in the spirit. That Holy Spirit, through whom charity which is the fullness of the law is shed abroad in our hearts, is also called in the Gospel the finger of God.\textsuperscript{76}

The first and greatest commandment to love God with all of one’s heart, soul, and mind\textsuperscript{77} must be fulfilled if one is to be accounted righteous and thereby avoid condemnation. However, Augustine insists that this first and foremost demand of the law may only be fulfilled by God’s grace, as the giving of the Holy Spirit enables the sinful human heart to both have faith in and ultimately love God and in so doing be justified before a Holy and Righteous God.\textsuperscript{78} Moreover, Augustine would persist in this notion that the love of God is generated by God’s gift against his conception of the Pelagian view of grace even unto his last work as he asks in answer to Julian:

“If knowledge of the law and of God’s words produces love in us so that we love, not by a gift of God, but by the choice of our own will, what we know we should love because God teaches us, how can the lesser good come from God and the greater good from ourselves?”\textsuperscript{79} Whenever Augustine considers the salvation of humankind, he contends that it can never be true that the greater part arises from us (\textit{major ex nobis}) due to his controlling conviction that the very act of loving God is only possible by His gracious giving of the Holy Spirit by whose very presence God loves Himself through us.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{76} \textit{De Spiritu et Littera} 16.28 (216). (CSEL 60. 181): “Hic autem spiritus dei, cuius dono iustificamur, quo fit in nobis ut non peccare delectet, ubi libertas est, sicut praeter hunc spiritum peccare delectat, ubi seruitus, a cuius operibus abstinendum, id est spiritualiter sabbatizandum, est, hic spiritus sanctus, per quem diffunditur caritas in cordibus nostris, quae plenitudo legis est, etiam digitus dei in euangello dicitur.”
\item \textsuperscript{77} Cf. Matt. 22:36-40.
\item \textsuperscript{78} Cf. Cary, \textit{Inner Grace}, 78: In Augustine’s \textit{De Spiritu et Littera}, “letter is to Spirit not just as literal meaning is to spiritual interpretation, but also as Law is to grace – and as outer is to inner. For of course the Spirit of grace affects us inwardly, pouring the love of God into our hearts and causing our wills to delight in doing what pleases him.”
\item \textsuperscript{79} \textit{Contra Julianum Opus Imperfectum} 1.95 (119). (PL 45: 1111): “Aut si scientia legis et eloquorium Dei charitatem operator in nobis, ut non per donum Dei, sed per nostrae voluntatis arbitrium diligamus, quod esse diligendum Deo docente cognoscimus; quomodo res minor ex Deo nobis est, et major ex nobis?”
\end{itemize}
5. The Human Heart as the Locus of God’s Saving Work

One of the consistent features of Augustine’s theological project is his predilection to favour the motions of the inner man above virtually all other concerns. It comes as no surprise, then, that Augustine considers the locus of God’s saving work to consist in God’s infusing the sinfully depraved human heart with the ability to love God and neighbour. For example, Augustine maintains a sharp distinction between those who believe from the heart and those who do not through to the very end of his discourse on the Trinity: “The light shineth in the darkness: if the darkness comprehend it not, let those who are darkness first become enlightened by the gift of God into believing, and so begin in comparison with the unbelieving world to be light. Upon that foundation they may be built up to see what they believe, and in due course gain the power of sight.”80 Augustine makes belief from the heart the most basic differentiator between the children of light and the children of darkness and continues to consistently attribute humankind’s “being illuminated” (inluminentur) by belief to the “gift of God” (dei dono).81 Additionally, as he searches for concrete indicators of the Spirit’s indwelling, Augustine privileges an evaluation of the state of an individual’s heart: “If, therefore, there is no testimony now by way of these miracles to the presence of the Holy Spirit, how does anyone know that he has received the Holy Spirit? Let one question one’s heart. If a person loves his brother, the Spirit of God is abiding in him.”82 As the site of one’s dispositions, motivations and most importantly, for Augustine, the

80 De Trinitate 15.27.49 (178). (CCL 50A. 531): “Lux ergo lucet in tenebris, quod si eam tenebrae non comprehendunt, inluminentur dei dono prius ut sint fideles et incipiant esse lux in comparatione infidelium, atque hoc praemissum fundamentum aedificentur ad uidenda quae credunt ut aliquando possint uidere.”
81 Cf. Gioia, The Theological Epistemology of Augustine’s De Trinitate, 138: When Augustine speaks of the “Gift of God” he means “the gift which only God can give, and since love also is the condition sine qua non for the union with God, without it we are not saved.”
82 Tractatus in Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos 6.10 (97). (PL 35: 2025): “Si ergo per haec miracula non fiat modo testimonium praesentiae Spiritus sancti; unde fit, unde cognoscit quisque accepisse se Spiritum sanctum? Interroget cor suum: si diligit fratrem, manet Spiritus Dei in illo.”
seat of one’s love, the heart must be the target of God’s saving work. It is precisely at the level of the human heart that God’s greatest Gift, the Holy Spirit, disrupts the tyranny of sinful desires and sinful loves and creates and works deliverance through the saving love of God to be enjoyed in its place. Lastly, Morse contends that such an understanding of the Holy Spirit as “Gift” leads to a “disbelief of all attempts both to objectify God and to deify human subjectivity.” The human heart is turned to the love of God by the Holy Spirit as he works in and through relationship and ultimately overcomes the propensity of human pride, through its unfettered self-determination, to overthrow God’s dominion and life-giving enjoyment of Him.

Augustine conceives of the human heart as the center of the human ‘self’ as it ultimately governs a person’s delights and loves; including whether or not such delight and love is taken in either righteousness or iniquity. He consistently directs our attention not only to the keeping of God’s commandments, but also to the motivations of the heart which precede the doing or not doing of what the Law requires: “So, when they too have found the plague of inveterate covetousness worsened by the stimulus of prohibition and the multiplying of transgression, they may take refuge by faith with the grace that justifies, and escape the punishment threatened by the letter through being brought by the Spirit’s gift to delight in the sweetness of

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83 Cf. Kotsko, “Gift and Communio,” 11: “The fall into sin is precisely the fall into desire as a fall into acquisitiveness or attempted ownership, and it is within this horizon that the Holy Spirit appears as a disruption – that is, as a gift in the strictest sense.” Italics mine.
84 Milbank elaborates on this notion of God’s giving Himself in light of humanity’s constitutive nothingness in relation to Him: “And it seems appropriate that this donor, ‘God’, who gives gifts to nothing, and so gives gifts to themselves in order to establish gifts, should create first of all a creature able reflexively to exist by giving this gift to herself in turn. Is this not what it means to think? Then gratitude for the gift of self spills later over into generosity towards the neighbour in imitation of that generosity that has first constituted us in being at all.” (John Milbank, “The Gift and the Given,” Theory, Culture & Society 23 [2006]: 445).
For Augustine, the nexus of all human emotion, affection, and delectation is the heart; therefore, it is the heart that drives the entire person to act either righteously or unrighteously, and so it must yield to the Gift of the Holy Spirit if it is to be properly disposed to delight in God’s Law. In fact, Augustine recognizes that the Law itself cannot be fulfilled by the mere external performance of the deeds it requires: “for there is no good fruit which does not rise from the root of charity.” Augustine contends that God is ultimately concerned with the inclination of the heart as therein the Holy Spirit acts to produce a saving love of God which delights in doing the works of righteousness.

This implanted love of God within the human heart, for Augustine, flowers in works of righteousness made manifest thorough the exercise of love for one’s brother, sister, and neighbour. Initially, love begins within the human heart through its participation in the Self-reflexive love of God: “Have you begun to love? God has begun to dwell in you. Love him who has begun to dwell in you, so that by dwelling in you more perfectly he may make you perfect.” All love admits of a genesis in God, and by loving the One who makes His dwelling

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86 De Spiritu et Littera 10.16 (206). (CSEL 60. 169): “An forte, immo uero non forte, sed certe sic legitime utitur lege iam iustus, cum eam terrendis inponit iniustis, ut cum et in ipsis coeperit inolitae concupiscientiae morbus incentiuo prohibitionis et cumulo praeuaricationis augeri, confugiant per fidem ad justificantem gratiam et per donum spiritus suavitate iustitiae delectati poenam litterae minantis euadant?”

87 In his comparison of John Milbank’s Theology of the ‘Gift’ and Calvin’s Theology of Grace, Billings characterizes Milbank’s position as follows: “Through redemption, God gives, and brings humanity into a trinitarian gift exchange. Yet, in receiving this divine gift, the human is always involved in a vital way: in ‘active reception’. That is, one gives the love one receives from God to one’s neighbor even as one is receiving it from God.” (J. T. Billings, “John Milbank’s Theology of the ‘Gift’ and Calvin’s Theology of Grace: A Critical Comparison,” Modern Theology 21 [2005]: 89). The reception of God’s gift of the Spirit utterly reconstitutes the human heart in its capacity to love God and, as we shall discuss in detail below, one’s neighbour.

88 De Spiritu et Littera 14.26 (215). (CSEL 60. 180): “Non enim fructus est bonus, qui de caritatis radice non surgit.”

within the human heart partakes of the love constitutive of the Trinity. Consequently, as we enjoy God’s gift of love in the Person of the Holy Spirit, we too are inclined to give of what we have received: “Like fire, [love] first seizes upon the things that are nearby and in that way stretches out to what is more distant.” The Self-giving of the Holy Spirit induces the previously selfish and sinful human heart to passionately love God and extend this love through the giving of itself in the love of neighbour. The flashpoint of the love for God and neighbour is the human heart, as the divine initiative to dwell within kindles a love for God that must extend beyond the inner self to those without. Hence, for Augustine, all love finds its source in God’s love; and it is within the human heart, as the seat of all willing, enjoying, and, ultimately, loving that God acts by giving the Holy Spirit to enable the love of God and neighbour.

6. The Love of God and the Presence of the Giver

Whilst the human heart remains the locus of God’s saving work, another critical facet of Augustine’s soteriology, as it is made manifest within the De Trinitate and his other mature works, is his insistence on the continual and permanent presence of the Giver in the Person of the Holy Spirit. Augustine sets forth a formulation of the Holy Spirit as characteristically the Gift of

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90 Morse highlights the nature of God’s love as properly alien to the otherwise sinful human self: “By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and not by any alleged self-actualization of our own spirits, we relate to others in ways that result in freedom and communion.” (Not Every Spirit, 181).


92 Cf. Oliver O’Donovan, The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 133: “Love is a fire, spreading out from the central point to engulf all that lies around it, extending the scope of its identity.” O’Donovan’s choice of terminology in speaking of the “identity” of love reminds us of Augustine’s concern to demonstrate that love (caritas) is constitutive of God’s very Person, and that it is characteristic of the Holy Spirit in particular.

93 Cf. Nygren, Agape and Eros, 549: “It is a basic idea of Augustine’s that the commandments of love to God and to neighbour are not really two, but one single command. God is the only worthy object of our love. When God commands us to love our neighbour, we are not strictly to love our neighbour, who is not worthy of such love, but God in our neighbour. Love to neighbour is really just a special instance of love to God.”
God, which underlies his notion of the transference of the very presence of God to dwell within the human heart, as he states:

He is the gift of God inasmuch as he is given to those to whom he is given. In himself he is God, though he were given to no man; he was God, co-eternal with Father and Son, before being given to anyone. Nor is he lesser than they because they are givers and he given. Though given as God’s gift, he is as God the giver of himself.94

The salvation of human beings requires nothing less than the giving of God himself to dwell within human hearts in order that they might come to share in a love of God which must exceed all other loves, as the first and greatest commandment prescribes. Insofar as the Holy Spirit is the Giver of Himself as God, he must remain present indefinitely and unceasingly in order for the believer to be able to continue to exercise this requisite love of God.95 Human beings never cease to require the very presence of the divine in the Person of the Holy Spirit in order to truly love God; hence, the very essence of their salvation, for Augustine, consists in God’s graciously and unceasingly giving Himself and, therefore, it can in no way derive from any form of previous meritorious action.96 In this way, Augustine advances a thoroughly Trinitarian basis for the means and method of God’s saving humankind by His wholly unmerited grace. It is only by God’s sovereign self-determination to engage in the act of shedding abroad the love shared within the Trinity through the eternal Self-bestowal of the Holy Spirit that humankind may be saved.97 So, the primary condition for any human reconciliation and relationship with the divine,


95 Cf. Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine’s De Trinitate*, 139: “Gift means the presence of the giver, i.e. of the Holy Spirit. Just as the Son truly became flesh and made his dwelling among us (John 1:14), so the Holy Spirit truly comes to dwell in us and through him we dwell in God.”

96 Cf. Ibid., 138: “The fact that charity-Holy Spirit is a gift from God means that we are saved by grace; it means that salvation is truly divine, that only God’s very self-giving can save us.”

97 Cf. Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, 143: “God Himself is the condition of all human apprehension of Him. We know Him through His gifts, because His gift is of Himself.”
for Augustine, is God’s graciously giving Himself and the fullness of His presence to dwell perpetually within the human heart.

It is upon this foundation that Augustine argues that this salvific presence of God through the giving of the Holy Spirit marks the fundamental difference between the Law and the Gospel. For example, Augustine maintains that the Law only works death without the presence of the life-giving Spirit: “The truth is that the teaching which gives us the commandment of self-control and uprightness of life, remains, without the presence of the life-giving Spirit, a letter that killeth.” Without the indwelling power and presence of the Holy Spirit, humankind is utterly unable to fulfill the demands of the Law and thus it serves only to condemn. It is by God’s grace alone that the Holy Spirit creates the love of God within the human heart necessary for the attainment of salvation and eternal life. Moreover, as Gioia states the matter: “Everything which ‘comes from God’ for our salvation is God’s own very presence.” Augustine establishes a fundamental disjunction concerning our willing and ability in and of ourselves to perform works of righteousness and whether or not we will attain unto eternal salvation since the latter is contingent solely upon the presence of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, Augustine contends that the Gospel represents the fulfillment of the Law, as through it the indwelling presence of God Himself is accomplished: “It follows that the laws of God, written by God himself upon the heart, are nothing but the very presence of the Holy Spirit who is the finger of God; the presence by which charity, the fullness of the law and the end of the commandment is shed abroad in our

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98 De Spiritu et Littera 4.6 (198). (CSEL 60. 157): “Doctrina quippe illa, qua mandatum accipimus continenter recte que uiuendi, littera est occidens, nisi adsit uiuificans spiritus.”
99 Cf. Maarten Wisse, Trinitarian Theology Beyond Participation: Augustine’s De Trinitate and Contemporary Theology (London: T & T Clark, 2011), 292: “The issue of grace seems to be the main reason for identifying our love of God and neighbour so strongly with the presence of the Spirit and, in the Spirit, the Trinity as a whole.”
100 Gioia, The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate, 137.
hearts.” The presence of the Holy Spirit as the Gift of God represents, for Augustine, the finis praecepti or “end of the Law.” Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the Law is proven to be holy, just and true as the presence of God Himself, the Giver of the Commandments and the Giver of Himself, creates a love of God and neighbour which ultimately fulfills the Law in its purest and highest form. Thus, Augustine’s insistence on God’s wholly unmerited grace effectively synergizes with his understanding of the Holy Spirit as creating a love of God within human hearts, which in itself is constitutive of the Spirit’s very status within the Trinity, through God’s ceaseless Self-giving of His very presence.

7. Union and Participation in God Through His Gift of the Holy Spirit

Augustine is not content merely with the notion that the presence of the indwelling Spirit creates a salvific love of God; rather, he presses the possibilities of the Spirit’s inner work further by positing that the human soul is capable of union and participation in God’s very being through God’s unimaginable Gift of the Holy Spirit. For instance, Augustine thusly describes the journey of the mind’s ascent to God: “And when its cleaving to him has become absolute, it will be one spirit with him: witness the words of the apostle, ‘He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.’ The mind will be raised to the participation of his being, truth and bliss, though nothing thereby be added to the being, truth, and bliss which is his own.”

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101 De Spiritu et Littera 21.36 (221). (CSEL 60. 189): “Quid sunt ergo leges dei ab ipso deo scriptae in cordibus nisi ipsa praeuentia spiritus sancti, qui est digitus dei, quo praeente diffunditur caritas in cordibus nostris, quae plenitudo legis est et finis praecepti?”

102 On this point Cary clarifies how the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is characteristically, for Augustine, an inward reality: “The shift of metaphor here from the picture of laws written on the heart to a divine presence within the heart – in effect a shift from a two-dimensional to a three-dimensional picture of the inner self – is characteristic of Augustinian inwardsness, which conceives of the soul not just as a table that records impressions from outside but as a whole inner world where God may be found.” (Inner Grace, 79).

the Spirit has the potency required to elevate the human mind and soul to the level of
participation in God’s very being (naturae), truth (veritatis) and bliss (beatitudinis). Moreover,
union and participation in God’s love hinges on God’s dwelling within human hearts through the
giving of the Holy Spirit.\footnote{Cf. Burnaby, Amor Dei, 179: “Augustine taught the Church that she is ‘really’ one with Christ only in
the measure in which she ‘realises’ the love which is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit
which is given to us.”} As human beings are granted the ability to partake of the divine
nature by the Gift of the Holy Spirit, they too are enabled to engage in the radical reciprocity of
Trinitarian gift-exchange as they participate in the Spirit’s giving of Himself back to God.\footnote{Cf. Milbank, “The Gift and the Given,” 444: “And so one gets the contrast between the pure,
disinterested, unilateral gift on the one hand and the idea that any gift is always involved in the complex
reciprocity of gift-exchange on the other.” Cf. also Milbank, “Sacred Triads,” 102.}
Furthermore, not only does this radical form of self-giving come to characterize the divine-
human relationship, but it also typifies the communion shared amongst the community of the
redeemed.\footnote{Olthuis seeks to emphasize such a continuity of the intra-divine communion and communion shared
among human beings as he remarks: “I prefer to speak of one communion – God with us – and not two,
one intradivine, one interhuman, with the first as the model for the latter.” (James H. Olthuis, “A Radical
Ontology of Love: Thinking ‘with’ Radical Orthodoxy,” in Radical Orthodoxy and the Reformed
Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005], 286).} So, Augustine conceives of the union and participation in God on the basis of the
coalessing work of the Spirit as Gift.

Augustine proceeds to even greater lengths in asserting that it is only by the Gift of the
Holy Spirit that human beings are made lovers of God and thereby made participants in the love
and unity of the Godhead. To this end Augustine emphatically declares:

\begin{quote}
Whence comes that love, which is charity, through which faith works, but from the
Source that granted it to faith’s own petition? There could be no spark of it in us,
however small, were it not shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which is
given to us. \textbf{For this charity or love of God which is said to be shed abroad in our
hearts is not his own love for us but that by which he makes us his lovers}: like the
righteousness of God by which we are made righteous through his gift, or the salvation of
\end{quote}
the Lord by which he causes us to be saved, or the faith of Jesus Christ by which he makes us faithful.  

Augustine asserts that the love of God is nothing other than that by which God makes us lovers of Himself (qua nos facit dilectores suos). In becoming true lovers of God by delighting in Him above all else, humankind is lifted to a union and participation in the love that is characteristic of the Trinity itself. In particular, it is the sending of the Holy Spirit to enliven the hearts of humankind with the love of God that serves as the singular means by which sinful people are redeemed and called to dwell in the sublime and everlasting love and unity of the Triune Godhead. Lastly, Gioia highlights the salvific import of Augustine’s insistence on the unifying role of the Holy Spirit as “the gift which only God can give…since love also is the condition sine qua non for the union with God, without it we are not saved.” Augustine considers the Triune Godhead to be a unity of love; therefore, the sole prerequisite for entering into union and participation in the divine nature is sharing in the love of God through the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

Given that love is absolutely fundamental to the constitution of the Triune Godhead, Augustine contests that love is determinative of all being such that, in essence, ‘You are what you love.’ Augustine makes the following statement to this effect in the Tractatus in Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos:

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107 De Spiritu et Littera 32.56 (241). Bold mine. (CSEL 60. 215): “Unde ergo ista dilectio, id est caritas, per quam fides operatur, nisi unde illam fides ipsa inpetravit? Neque enim esset in nobis, quantacumque sit in nobis, nisi diffunderetur in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis. Caritas quippe dei dicta est diffundi in cordibus nostris, non qua nos ipse diligat, sed qua nos facit dilectores suos, sicut iustitia dei, qua iusti eius munere efficimur, et domini salus, qua nos saluos facit, et fides iesu christi, qua nos fideles facit.”

108 Concerning Augustine’s use of terminology in describing various forms of love, we concur with Burnaby that “Amor is caritas when it is the love of God.” (Burnaby, Amor Dei, 142).

109 Cf. O’Donovan, The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine, 130: “The love of God is ‘the love by which he makes us his lovers.’ For Augustine ‘love’ is not a nomen actionis for which the distinction between subjective and objective genitive is relevant; it is a nomen personae, and the ‘love of God’ shed abroad in our hearts is nothing other than the Holy Spirit who sheds it.”

110 Gioia, The Theological Epistemology of Augustine’s De Trinitate, 138.
Hold, rather, to the love of God, so that, just as God is eternal, you also may abide in eternity, because a person’s love determines the person’s quality. Do you love the earth? You will be earth. Do you love God? What shall I say? That you will be God? I don’t dare to say this on my own. Let us listen to the scriptures: I have said that you are gods and that all of you are sons of the Most High (Ps. 82:6).\footnote{Tractatus in Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos 2.14 (51). (PL 35: 1997): “Tenete potius dilectionem Dei, ut quomodo Deus est aeternus, sic et vos maneatis in aeternum: quia talis est quisque, qualis eius dilectio est. Terram diligis? Terra eris. Deum diligis? Quid dicam? Deus eris? Non audio dicere ex me, scripturas audiamus: ego dixi, dixi estis, et filii altissimi omnes.”} 

Whilst Augustine here shies away from a full-blown doctrine of divinization, he does commend the idea that what a person loves is ultimately constitutive of what they are and who they will ultimately end up being: “Grace can lift our being up to the Being of God, because it can lift our love.”\footnote{Burnaby, Amor Dei, 153.} In essence, the nexus of Augustine’s pneumatology and soteriology consists in the Holy Spirit as the utterly gratuitous Gift of God himself, who dwells within us and unites us with the Trinity by infusing a love for God into the human heart. O’Donovan renders Augustine’s understanding of love as determinative of being in this way: “Love is the force which draws every part to its completeness in the whole, and the self-love of the whole is that state of achieved cohesion in which there is no more separateness or division left in the universe. Mutual love stands to this achieved self-love as the many ‘sons of God’ stand to the Son.”\footnote{O’Donovan, The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine, 132.} By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit God welcomes an otherwise sinfully depraved humanity into participation in the divine essence by exercising the highest form of love, that of God for Himself, through dwelling within human hearts.

Although Augustine places such great emphasis on the character and quality of a person’s love as being constitutive of their very essence, he qualifies this notion in relation to the ultimate ontological union of God and humanity. Augustine reserves a unique place atop the hierarchy of being for the One changeless and transcendent God: “Even when they shall be made whole from
all infirmity and equal to one another, the being that owes its constancy to grace will not attain equality to the being which is essentially changeless. There can be no equality between creature and Creator; and making whole from all infirmity will itself be a change.”

Human beings are enabled to participate in the divine essence insofar as they love God through the Person of the Holy Spirit. However, human love for God is reliant on God’s grace from its inception, and is therefore a product of God’s creation and is always and unconditionally derivative of His changeless being. In addition, Augustine once again argues for this absolute distinction between creature and Creator in the *Tractatus in Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos*:

The one who contains and the one who is contained dwell mutually in each other. You dwell in God, but in such a way that you are contained; God dwells in you, but in such a way that he contains you, lest you be diminished. Don’t perhaps think that you have become God’s dwelling in the same way that your dwelling carries your flesh. If the dwelling in which you are is removed, you are diminished; but if you remove yourself, God isn’t diminished. He is complete when you depart from him and complete when you return to him.

For Augustine, the union and participation of human beings in the divine nature is never absolute. The human spirit is changed to be like God through its love for God made possible by the gift of the Holy Spirit; yet, ultimately, this change is wrought wholly and utterly by God’s grace as it is fully dependent on Him from its beginnings in conversion even unto its final consummation in living eternally in God’s presence.

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114 *De Trinitate* 15.23.43 (171). (CCL 50A. 521): “Et quando inter se aequalia fuerint ab omni languore sanata, nec tunc aequabitur rei natura immutabili ea res quae per gratiam non mutatur quia non aequatur creatura creatori, et quando ab omni languore sanabitur mutabitur.”

115 *Tractatus in Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos* 8.14 (129). (PL 35: 2044): “Uicissim se habitant qui continet et qui continetur. habitas in deo sed ut continearis; habitat in te deus sed ut teneat ne cadas. Ne forte sic te putes domum dei fieri quomodo domus tua portat carnum tuam, si subtrahat se domus in qua es, cadis; si autem te subtrahas, non cadit deus. Integer est cum eum deseris, integer cum ad illum redieris.”
Chapter 2

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS GIFT AND GOD’S UNMERITED GRACE

1. The Biblical Foundation of 1 John 4:19 and Romans 5:5: God Acts to Enliven Love

We turn now to consider Augustine’s primary contention with the Pelagians that salvation is due to nothing other than God’s unmerited grace, based on his view that the gift of the love of God generated in the hearts of believers owes its origins to nothing other than the Self-giving of the Holy Spirit. Drawing principally on the biblical texts of 1 John 4:19 and Romans 5:5, Augustine forms his fundamental conviction that man must turn to God and love God only by God’s first acting to enliven love in the sinner’s otherwise depraved heart. Augustine demonstrates his indebtedness to these texts as he draws them together in his own innovative exegetical fusion in favour of his understanding of God’s unmerited grace:

It is the Spirit therefore who is signified in the text ‘God is love.’ God the Holy Spirit who proceeds from God, when he is given to man kindles him with the love of God and of neighbour, and is himself love. For man has no means of loving God, unless it comes of God: hence the following saying, that ‘we love him because he first loved us.’ It is the same in the apostle Paul: ‘the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which is given to us.’

116 These two key biblical texts, for Augustine, read in modern critical Greek editions and English translation of the New Testament as follows: 1 John 4:19: ἡμεῖς ἀγαπῶμεν, ὅτι αὐτὸς πρῶτος ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς (UBS: 629), or “We love because he first loved us” (ESV). Rom. 5:5: ἡ δὲ ἐλπὶς οὐ καταισχύνει, ὅτι ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκκέχυται ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν διὰ πνεύματος ἀγίου τοῦ δοθέντος ἡμῖν (UBS: 414), or “And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (ESV).

117 Wilken observes how “at the beginning of Book 15 Augustine had said he would be discussing the image of God in man by examining the workings of the human mind. And that is what he does for the first half of the book. But beginning with 15.27, the section on the Holy Spirit, Augustine's strategy changes and the argument becomes wholly exegetical. Now he moves from text to text and from word to word.” (“Spiritus sanctus,” 16).

118 De Trinitate 15.17.31 (160-161). Bold mine. (CCL 50A. 506-507): “Ipse ergo significatur ubi legitur: Deus dilectio est. Deus igitur spiritus sanctus qui procedit ex deo cum datus fuerit homini accendit eum in
For Augustine, humankind is utterly unable to relate to God in love, and thereby have a share in His salvation, without the divine giving of the singular ultimate Gift: the Holy Spirit Himself, who is love.\(^{119}\) The genesis of faith and love in the human heart, which marks the beginning of the reorientation of the loveless sinner towards the One true God of Love, is a gift that must be received rather than achieved. In this manner, Augustine effectively harnesses the synthesis of the agape/caritas motif (God’s condescension in order to love humanity) with the eros/amor motif (human beings loving God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit) in order to establish that salvation is wrought solely by God’s unmerited grace. Furthermore, Wilken identifies that, for Augustine, “the gift by its very nature is reciprocal, for it creates a communion between the one who receives and the giver. This is why the pairing of Romans 5:5 with 1 John 4:13 is so significant. The gift of the Spirit ‘enkindles love for God,’ that is, turns the recipient toward God. But this turning takes place only because love has its origin in God.”\(^{120}\) As we have seen already, Augustine insists that all love is from God (ex deo); therefore, it is absolutely fundamental to Augustine that the primary aspect of God’s love for us is His utterly gratuitous generation of our love for Him by the work of the Holy Spirit.\(^{121}\) So, Augustine finds a harmony in the biblical texts of 1 John 4:19 and Romans 5:5 consisting in God’s love for us as bearing

dilectionem dei et proximi, et ipse dilectio est. Non enim habet homo unde deum diligat nisi ex deo. Propter quod paulo post dicit: Nos diligamus quia ipse prior dilexit nos. Apostolus quoque Paulus: Dilectio, inquit, dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis.”

\(^{119}\) Cf. Cary, *Inner Grace*, 44: “A crucial connection is forged here: God causes our will to be what it is, and this causation works inwardly. By his inner gift we love as we ought. This Pauline passage [Rom. 5:5] becomes the basis of later doctrines of infused charity, from the verb ‘poured in’ or ‘poured out’ (infusa or diffusa). The help we need to close the gap between willing and doing is not simply outward example or external teaching, but grace poured deep into our hearts and changing our wills from the inside out.”

\(^{120}\) Wilken, “*Spiritus sanctus,*” 12. 1 John 4:13 reads as follows: “By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.”

\(^{121}\) Wilken observes how Augustine understands the Johannine text to be describing “an activity that is distinctive to the Spirit, to make us abide in God. ‘But,’ says Augustine, ‘that is precisely what love does.’ For the goal of love is to bring one into fellowship with the beloved.” (“*Spiritus sanctus,*” 12).
directly on our love for God, such that the latter is utterly dependent on the former in a manner consistent with a view of salvation as accomplished strictly by God’s unmerited grace.

In his formulation of his mature doctrine of the Holy Spirit, developed most explicitly in the *De Trinitate*, Augustine consistently favours the Johannine priority of love. Augustine explicitly identifies his method:

> But we can also find authority for calling the Holy Spirit charity, by a careful examination of the apostle John’s way of speaking. After saying, ‘Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God,’ he goes on to add, ‘and everyone that loveth is born of God: he that loveth not, hath not known God, for God is love.’ This makes it plain that the love which he calls God is the same love which he has said to be ‘of God.’ Love, then, is God of (or from) God.  

In any of its true forms, and wheresoever it may be found, love is always from God. This is so, for Augustine, because it must be nothing less than God giving God. Bearing this conception of love in mind, it becomes apparent how Augustine comes to his final assessment of the Pelagian view of grace as utter foolishness: any attempt to love God or keep His commandments by one’s own merit is completely absurd since such a love requires that God first give Himself in the Person of the Holy Spirit. Augustine ceaselessly argues that “a life lived in faith is entirely a gift of God,” and repeatedly employs another of his favourite Pauline texts in 1 Corinthians 4:7 to this end: “What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you

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122 *De Trinitate* 15.17.31 (160). (CCL 50A. 505): “Spiritus autem sanctus ubi sit dictus caritas inuenimus si diligenter Iohannis apostoli scrutemur eloquium, qui cum dixisset: Dilectissimi, diligamus inuicem quia dilectio ex deo est, secutus adiunxit: Et omnis qui diligit ex deo natus est. Qui non diligit non congouit deum quia deus dilectio est. Hic manifestauit eam se dixisse dilectionem deum quam quam dixit ex deo. Deus ergo ex deo est dilectio.”

123 Cf. Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine’s De Trinitate*, 298: “Love comes first because the inner life of the Trinity is a life of love (*dilectio*) and the substantial unity of the Trinity is a unity of love. Through the Holy Spirit, the Father and the Son dwell in each other. This primacy of love in the understanding of inner Trinitarian life is the ‘starting point’ theologians have been so anxious to identify in Augustine’s *De Trinitate*.”

boast as if you did not receive it?"125 The very love with which humankind must love God is in
and of itself a product of God giving Himself. There can be no fulfillment of God’s commands
without it. There can be no salvation without it. Hence, Augustine mimics the Johannine
emphasis on God’s love in such a way that undermines any notion of salvation apart from God’s
wholly unmerited grace.

Augustine further elaborates on this palpable connection between the love of God and
God’s grace in his exegesis of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans. For instance, Augustine makes the
following comment on its fifth chapter in his Expositio Quarundam Propositionum Ex Epistola
Ad Romanos: “More than that, we glory in our sufferings’ (5:3) and so on, so that gradually
[Paul] leads us to the love of God (5:6), which he says we have through the gift of the Spirit.
Paul shows us that those things which we might attribute to ourselves ought to be attributed to
God, who deigned to give us the Holy Spirit through grace.”126 God must be the first to act in
order to enliven a salvific love of God in human hearts, as the Spirit is always given through
grace (per gratiam). Augustine unfailingly interprets Romans 5:5 and 1 John 4:13 “in tandem”
such that he “is able to see ‘gift’ and ‘poured out’ as designations of something that is received,
hence possessed, which turns the recipient toward the giver.”127 According to Augustine, the
heart is always oriented in opposition to God on account of sin, unless the Gift of the Holy Spirit

125 De Spiritu et Littera 9.15: “Quid enim habent, quod non acceperunt? si autem acceperunt, quid
gloriantur, quasi non acceperint?” (CSEL 60. 168). Τίς γάρ σε διακρίνει; τί δὲ ἔχεις δὸ οὐκ ἔλαβες; εἰ δὲ
kαὶ ἔλαβες, τί κωνύσαι ὡς μὴ ἔλαβόν; (UBS: 443).
126 Expositio Quarundam Propositionum Ex Epistola Ad Romanos 26 (translation from Augustine on
Romans: Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans, Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the
Romans, tr. Paula Fredriksen Landes [Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982], 9). Hereafter all page numbers
for quotations from Landes’ translation will appear in brackets following the referenced section of the
Expositio. “Quod autem ait: Non solum autem, sed et gloriamur in tribulationibus et cetera, gradatim
perducit usque ad caritatem dei, quam caritatem dicit nos habere per donum spiritus; monstrat illa omnia,
quae possesum nobis tribuere, deo esse tribuenda, qui spiritum sanctum per gratiam dare dignatus est.”
(Ibid., 8).
is given by God’s grace. In fact, Romans 5:5 proves to be a mainstay for Augustine as he continually refers back to it in the *De Trinitate* as well as in his many works against the Pelagians as evidence that the love of God is only made possible by God’s first acting to enliven love in the sinner’s otherwise depraved heart.\footnote{Cf. John H. S. Burleigh, “The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Latin Fathers,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 7 (1954): 128: “This was indeed a luminous text for Augustine, perhaps the most meaningful, as it is the most frequently quoted, of all texts referring to the Holy Spirit. It was his sheet-anchor against Donatism and Pelagianism. Augustine would warmly agree that ‘Every virtue we possess and every victory won and every thought of holiness are His alone’. This deeply-felt personal religious experience must be held to underlie all he says about the Spirit in *De Trinitate*, though it is with the metaphysical implications of the experience that he is mainly concerned.”} Thus, Augustine utilizes the biblical texts of 1 John 4:19 and Romans 5:5 to form the foundation of his conviction that the priority of love confirms the veracity of his teaching that salvation is by grace alone.

2. The Trinitarian Identity of the Holy Spirit as Gift Entails God’s Unmerited Grace

Building on these foundational biblical precedents, Augustine attempts to describe the dynamics of the inner life of the Trinity which play out soteriologically in that the character of the Holy Spirit, as uniquely Gift and the love within the Godhead, requires that the generation of the love of God in human hearts be entirely the work of grace. First, we are reminded that Augustine defines the Holy Spirit’s relational status within the Trinity primarily as Gift:

> He is the gift of God inasmuch as he is given to those to whom he is given. In himself he is God, though he were given to no man; he was God, co-eternal with Father and Son, before being given to anyone. Nor is he lesser than they because they are givers and he given. Though given as God’s gift, he is as God the giver of himself.\footnote{De Trinitate 15.19.36 (165). (CCL 50A. 513): “In tantum ergo donum dei est in quantum datur eis quibus datur. Apud se autem deus est etsi nemini detur quia deus erat patri et filio coaeternus antequam cuiquam daretur. Nec quia illi dant, ipse datur, ideo minor est illis. Ita enim datur sicut dei donum ut etiam se ipsum det sicut deus.”}

Augustine considers the Godhead to consist in not only an absolute unity of being, but also in an eternally subsisting Three-Personed relationship.\footnote{Cf. Bonner, “St. Augustine’s Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” 65: We must remember Augustine’s warning that, while nothing which is said of God may be said accidentally, *(secundum accidens)*, since God can have no accidental attributes; yet not everything that is said is said substantially *(secundum
Holy Spirit that from all eternity He is given and gives Himself as both fully God and the love shared between the Father and the Son.\textsuperscript{131} Moreover, this eternal Self-giving of the Holy Spirit is the only means by which humankind’s salvation may be realized as “the objective reconciliation with the Father realized in Christ’s sacrifice becomes ours only through the love poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, precisely because love is what unites the Son to the father from all eternity and love is that which enables Christ’s sacrifice to reconcile humanity to the Father.”\textsuperscript{132} Apart from the utterly gratuitous extension of the love of God which is constitutive of the Holy Spirit uniquely as the Gift within the Trinity, the propitiation, reconciliation and final redemption accomplished by Christ’s sacrifice cannot be actuated in the human heart.

Augustine’s account of humankind’s salvation is definitively based on this feature of the Holy Spirit as the love shared by the Father and the Son. For example, Augustine argues that the Holy Spirit exists as the unity of love between Father and Son in characteristically loquacious fashion:

> How, then, could it be a short while ago, \textit{Love is from God}, and now, \textit{Love is God}? For God is Father and Son and Holy Spirit. The Son is God from God, the Holy Spirit is God from God, and these three are one God, not three gods. If the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God, and he loves him in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, then love is God, but it is God because it is from God. For you have each in one epistle – both \textit{Love is from God} and \textit{Love is God}. Of the Father alone scripture cannot say that he is from God. But when you hear \textit{from God}, either the Son or the Holy Spirit is understood. But, because the Apostle says, The charity of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us (Rom 5:5), we should understand that in love there is the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{133}

\textit{substantiam)}, for the relationships of the Persons within the Trinity are ‘secundum relativum’, relative to one another. Such relationships are not accidental, for they are eternal.”

\textsuperscript{131} Cf. Ayres, \textit{Augustine and the Trinity}, 258: “The Spirit is the communion of the Father and Son which, as we have seen, is a mutual act of adherence and love; the Spirit is the love and the fount of love between Father and Son who eternally gives himself; the Spirit, as also ‘God from God’, shares in the simple mode of divine existence in which he is what he might be thought to possess.”

\textsuperscript{132} Gioia, \textit{The Theological Epistemology of Augustine’s De Trinitate}, 129.

\textsuperscript{133} \textit{Tractatus in Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos} 7.6 (108). (PL 35: 2031-2032): “Quomodo ergo iam dudum dilectio ex deo est et modo dilectio deus est? Deus ex deo. Etenim deus pater et filius et spiritus sanctus; filius deus ex deo; spiritus sanctus deus ex deo. Et hi tres unus deus, non tres dii. Si filius deus et spiritus
According to Augustine, the unity and essence of the Godhead subsists in the love with which God loves Himself.\(^{134}\) The Trinity is ordered by the love with which the Father loves the Son in the Holy Spirit, even as the Spirit exists as fully a Third Person besides.\(^{135}\) Hence, love is God (\textit{dilectio deus est}) because it is from God, and it follows that each and every instance of God dwelling within the human heart is an extension of the Trinitarian act of God loving Himself in and through the Person of the Holy Spirit.\(^{136}\) Herein we can discern Augustine establishing the vital link between the love of God and God’s unmerited grace: because the love of God is both from God and is God, humankind is not privy to the love constitutive of the Trinity without God giving Himself \textit{in toto} through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.\(^{137}\) In this manner, Augustine conceives of the Holy Spirit functioning salvifically in the role of communicating the love characteristic of the inner life of the Trinity to the hearts of humankind such that they too might

\textit{sanctus deus, et ille diligit in quo habitat spiritus sanctus, ergo dilectio deus est, sed deus quia ex deo. Utrumque enim habes in epistula, et: dilectio ex deo est, et: dilectio deus est. De solo patre scriptura non nouit dicere quia ex deo. Cum autem audis ex deo, aut filius intellegitur aut spiritus sanctus. Quia uero dicit apostolus: caritas dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis, intelligamus in dilectione spiritum sanctum esse.”

\(^{134}\) Cf. O’Donovan, \textit{The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine}, 130: “love is the expression of an ontological ground of unity between subject and object. The unity of the Father and the Son, of course, is a unity of being and as such has its source not in the third but in the first Person of the Trinity, who is the ‘fount of deity.’ But at the level of relational subsistence in the Godhead its unity is its love, the Holy Spirit who binds the Father and the Son in one.” Olthuis echoes Augustine’s emphasis on the relational nature of the Trinity as subsisting in love: “What if we were to set aside our focus on God as being and talk of God as love, beyond both the categories of being and non-being? Without love, nothing. Love calls into existence everything and anything that is. To-be is to-be-related. Creation is then conceived, not as \textit{ex nihilo}, but as \textit{ex amore}.” (“A Radical Ontology of Love,” 292).

\(^{135}\) Cf. Ayres, \textit{Augustine and the Trinity}, 259: “That the Spirit is named as love should not lead us towards a picture of the Father and Son having as their essence something that is not their own, not identical with them. Rather, we must say both that Father and Son are in their essence love \textit{and that} the Spirit is the love of the Father and Son and fully another besides them.”

\(^{136}\) Cf. Gioia, \textit{The Theological Epistemology of Augustine’s De Trinitate}, 133: “The Holy Spirit is the supreme charity conjoining (\textit{con-iungere}) Father and Son to each other and subjoining (\textit{sub-iungere}) us to them, and it would seem suitable to say so, since it is written \textit{God is love.” Cf. De Trinitate 7.2.6.

\(^{137}\) Cf. Nygren, \textit{Agape and Eros}, 542: “The inner life of the trinity is moulded by that love with which God ceaselessly loves Himself – though naturally not with a love that desires and seeks its bonum in something else, but with a love that contemplates and enjoys its own perfection.”
love and desire nothing but God in all of His goodness, glory and eternal perfection. Clearly, such a love of God cannot be realized by humankind’s striving for moral rectitude in the performance of good works as Augustine understands that the Pelagians would have it; rather, it must be diffused by none other than the Holy Spirit who is the love whereby the Father and Son love each other in the fullness of the Trinitarian communion.138

Because Augustine considers love to be absolutely fundamental to the divine nature based on the relationships of the three Persons within the Trinity, he argues, in turn, that whoever “loves love” in fact loves God. If a person has received the indwelling Spirit by God’s grace, His presence is made manifest in their love of love itself:

What then? Does he who loves his brother also love God? It must be that he loves God; it must be that he loves love itself. Can he love his brother and not love love? It must be that he loves love. What then? Does he love God because he loves love? Precisely. By loving love he loves God. Or have you forgotten that you said a little earlier, God is love? If God is love, whoever loves love loves God. Love your brother, then, and be secure.139

Here we see Augustine advancing the somewhat perplexing notion that if a person loves their neighbour they in fact ‘love love itself’ and in so doing love God. However, the curiosity of this statement is (somewhat) extinguished if we recall that Augustine equates the Holy Spirit with the eternal love within and emanating from the Trinity; therefore, as we ‘love love’ we are in fact being incorporated into yet another instantiation of God loving Himself through us.140 Thus,

138 Cf. Ayres, Augustine and the Trinity, 254: “That which the Father gives us is the Spirit of his Son (Gal. 4.6), but the gift of the Spirit is the Spirit, and the Spirit is love (Rom. 5:5). ‘Love’ like ‘Spirit’ is a term which may be predicated of all three persons, but, Augustine argues, Scripture uses it so that when we grasp that the love which the Spirit gives is the Spirit, we will understand that the love which we receive is the love with which Father and Son love each other.”


140 We are reminded once again of Augustine’s final resolution of the question whether or not human love is properly to be used (uti) or to be enjoyed (frui). In the end, Augustine argues that only God is to be
Augustine understands the Holy Spirit to be specially the Gift of God and the love within the Godhead in such a way that encompasses his doctrine that the salvific love of God is generated in human hearts utterly by grace.

3. The Holy Spirit as the Consummation of the Father-Son Relationship

Augustine’s identification of the Holy Spirit as Gift signals how he conceives of the Spirit as the essential Third member of the Trinity that completes the relationship of the Father and the Son, and how in so doing the Holy Spirit allows humankind to enter into the divine fellowship through His generating the love of God within the human heart. Initially, Augustine provides the formula that, according to Scripture, the Holy Spirit is “the Spirit neither of the Father alone nor of the Son alone, but of both; and so his being suggests to us that mutual charity whereby the Father and the Son love one another.”

For Augustine, the Holy Spirit is God’s love for Himself which binds the Father to the Son and the Son to the Father and ultimately seals the completeness of the Trinity which subsists in love. Consequently, Augustine explicitly spells out the soteriological implications: “God the Holy Spirit who proceeds from God, when he is given to mankind kindles him with the love of God and of neighbour, and is himself love. For man has no means of loving God, unless it comes of God: hence the following saying, that ‘we love

enjoyed for His own sake (frui), and this is only made possible through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. See Chapter I.D above. On this theme, O’Donovan observes how, for Augustine, “the Spirit is simply ‘self-love,’ the third in the triad sapientia, notitia sui, dilectio sui. The self-love or mutual love of the Godhead is the link through which the self-love of the universe, the love of man for man and for God, is derived from the divine being.” (The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine, 134-135).

De Trinitate 15.17.27 (157). (CCL 50A. 501): “Qui spiritus sanctus secundum scripturas sanctas nec patris est solius nec filii solius sed amborum, et ideo communem qua inuicem se diligunt pater et filius nobis insinuat caritatem.”

Cf. Evan F. Kuehn, “The Johannine Logic of Augustine’s Trinity: A Dogmatic Sketch,” Theological Studies 68 (2007): 590: “Although Augustine’s Pneumatology is logically subsequent to the Pater–Filius relationship, the Spirit is essential for establishing the fullness of his trinitarian doctrine.”
him because he first loved us.” Augustine clearly argues that even as the Holy Spirit exists within the Trinity as the member who completes the relationship of the Father and the Son as the mutual love shared between them from all eternity, so too must the Holy Spirit act in welcoming the human heart into fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So, Augustine decisively states that since the Spirit constitutes the essential basis of the love within the Trinity in whose image human beings are made and to whom all Creation owes its origin, so too must the nature of humankind’s salvation reflect this fundamental configuration of the Trinity by the Spirit’s binding human hearts to God.

To this end, Augustine contends that the Holy Spirit is the final bond of unity between Father and Son and, in like manner, human and divine. For instance, Augustine exhorts us to

Embrace the love that is God: through love embrace God. He is the very love that links together in holy bond all good angels and all God’s servants, and unites them and us to one another and in obedience to himself. The more we are cleared from the cancer of pride, the more we are filled with love; and he who is filled with love is filled with God.

The Holy Spirit, for Augustine, is the love which unites the Father and the Son. Since it is only through love that humankind may embrace God, it is necessary that the Holy Spirit be given by God’s grace in order to incite such a love of God within the human heart.

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143 De Trinitate 15.17.31 (60-161). (CCL 50A. 506): “Deus igitur spiritus sanctus qui procedit ex deo cum datus fuerit homini accendit eum in dilectionem dei et proximi, et ipse dilectio est. Non enim habet homo unde deum diligat nisi ex deo. Propter quod paulo post dicit: Nos diligamus quia ipse prior dilexit nos.”

144 Cf. Reinhard, “Somebody to Love?: The Proprium of the Holy Spirit in Augustine’s Trinity,” 362: “In other words, gift-giving is a configuration which involves relationship among three things: the giver, the receiver and the gift itself. Augustine understands the Spirit as both the gift given by Father and Son to humanity in the economy of salvation and the gift given by the Father to the Son and the Son to the Father throughout all eternity.”


146 Cf. Kuehn, The Johannine Logic of Augustine’s Trinity, 593: “The logic of the Pater–Filius relationship is devoid of any coherence without consideration of the Spirit as the bond of its unity;
the Holy Spirit, as God’s love for Himself, fully and finally integrates the Father and Son as a Tri-unity, so too must the Spirit be given to human beings in order for them to become partakers of eternal life in the divine. Moreover, the entire history of salvation, culminating in the Christ event, can only be fully appropriated and realized in human hearts by the sealing power of the Holy Spirit who is sent to ignite the love of God therein. Indeed, it is only by the communication of the love shared by the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit that human beings can be saved.¹⁴⁷

As questions pertaining to the nature of humankind’s salvation repeatedly arose in his contest with the Pelagians, Augustine would marshal his understanding of the Holy Spirit as the consummation of love between the Father and the Son to argue that human beings are saved by grace alone as the Spirit enables human fellowship with the Father and the Son. Augustine criticizes Julian in his Contra Julianum Opus Imperfectum on this front:

You mention so many ways in which God helps us, that is, ‘by commanding, blessing, sanctifying, restraining, challenging, and enlightening,’ but you do not mention: by giving his love, though the apostle John says, Love comes from God (1 Jn 4:7). About this love he also says, See what sort of love the Father has given us that we are called and are the children of God (1 Jn 3:1). In this love which is given to the human heart by the Spirit, not by the letter, we also understand that power about which the same apostle said in his gospel, He gave them the power to become children of God (Jn 1:12).¹⁴⁸

likewise the projection of this relationship is neither inaugurated in the sending of the Son, nor completed in the ascent of both the risen Christ and the sons of glory by faith without the power of the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁴⁷ Cf. Reinhard, “Somebody to Love?: The Proprium of the Holy Spirit in Augustine’s Trinity,” 371: “It also follows that if the Spirit is the love between the Father and the Son, then, as a gift to humanity, the Spirit is the gift of the Father’s love for the Son and the Son’s love for the Father—love-in-communion—given to humanity.” ¹⁴⁸ Contra Julianum Opus Imperfectum 3.106 (334). (PL 45: 1291): “Tam multa dicis quibus nos adjuvat Deus, id est, praecipiendo benedicendo, sanctificando, coercendo, provocando, illuminando: et non dicis, Charitatem dando; cum dicit Joannes apostalus, Charitas ex Deo est. Unde item dicit, Ecce qualem charitatem dedit nobis Pater, ut filii Dei vocemur, et simus. In hac charitate, quae cordi humano, spiritus, non littera datur, etiam potestas illa intelligitur, de qua idem ipse in evangelio suo, dedit eis, inquit, potestatem filios Dei fieri.”
According to Augustine, the Spirit’s sealing the Trinity of Father-Son-Holy Spirit as a unity of love must extend to human beings if they are to be saved.\textsuperscript{149} Indeed, for Augustine, the power to become children of God must admit of no other source than the Spirit which is given by God, utterly by God’s grace, and in no way merited by good works. The Holy Spirit as the mutual love of Father and Son creates the ground and possibility of all love, and actuates the salvation of mankind through the love of God shed abroad by the same Spirit.\textsuperscript{150} Hence, the Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of the Father-Son relationship subsisting in love, which creates the possibility of human fellowship with the divine through the formation of a salvific love of God within the human heart.

4. Salvation as the Self-Giving of God in the Person of the Holy Spirit

Subsisting as He does as peculiarly the love within the Godhead and the consummation of the Father-Son relationship, the Holy Spirit also functions as the vital link whereby, for Augustine, the salvation of humankind is wrought by the Self-giving of God in the Person of the Holy Spirit. The Third Person of the Trinity is the sole vector whereby God effectively communicates His saving grace to humankind, which requires nothing less than the very gift of God Himself in the Person of the Holy Spirit. For example, Augustine provides the following explanation of the dual sending of the Holy Spirit after Christ’s resurrection:

If one ask why it was that after his resurrection he first gave the Holy Spirit on earth and afterwards sent him from heaven, my answer would be that by this gift is shed abroad in our hearts the charity whereby we love God and our neighbour – according to those two commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets. To signify this, the Lord

\textsuperscript{149} Kuehn observes that just as the Spirit completes the inner-Trinitarian life of love, He likewise accomplishes humankind’s salvation by emanating this love outward: “It is the mission of the Spirit to enlighten the heart of humanity toward the vision of the Son, in whom the Father is realized.” (Kuehn, \textit{The Johannine Logic of Augustine’s Trinity}, 592).

\textsuperscript{150} Cf. Milbank, “Sacred Triads,” 89-90: “The Father and Son together are the manifestation of love that does not exist before mutuality, and yet in this mutuality gives itself outside the original dyad as this new possibility of love. Finally, the Holy Spirit is this emanating mutuality that only persists in constantly receiving itself from the mutual love of Father and Son.”
Jesus gave the Spirit twice: once on earth for the love of neighbour, and again from heaven for the love of God.\textsuperscript{151}

For Augustine, love exercised on both the human and divine axes is always and everywhere the fulfillment of the Law in and through the Person of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{152} Because the Holy Spirit is accorded the title of God’s love and the Gift of God Himself, this salvific love of God is given by God’s grace and is never properly our possession or achievement; rather, it can only be said to be bestowed upon us and received purely as gift.\textsuperscript{153} Both the love of God (\textit{dilectionem dei}), as in our love for God, and the love of neighbour (\textit{dilecti onem proximi}) cannot derive from any basis in human merit: the utter grace of God is manifest in no greater way than that we come to love God as God gives Himself and loves Himself in and through us. It is precisely at this point that Augustine’s pneumatology manifests its greatest impact on his account of humankind’s salvation.\textsuperscript{154} For Augustine, the eternal love characteristic of the Trinity is the ground of all love, and hence God must give Himself in the entirety of His Person and being in order that humankind might partake of His love. In this manner, Augustine confounds and undermines any Pelagian soteriological scheme consisting in a system of merit by arguing that salvation is

\textsuperscript{151} \textit{De Trinitate} 15.26.46 (173). (CCL 50A. 525): “Quid uero fuerit causae ut post resurrectionem suam et in terra prius daret et de caelo postea mitteret spiritum sanctum, hoc ego existimo quia per ipsum donum diffunditur caritas in cordibus nostris qua diligamus deum et proximum secundum duo illa praecepta \textit{in quibus tota lex} \textit{pendet et prophetae}. Hoc singificans dominus Iesus bis dedit spiritum sanctum, semel in terra propter dilectionem proximi et iterum de caelo propter dilectionem dei.”

\textsuperscript{152} Remarkong on this recurring theme in Augustine, Nygren states that “in his anti-moralism [Augustine] is decidedly theocentric. We have nothing of ourselves, all of God’s grace. Caritas, which is the fulfilling of the law and the root of all good, is not part of our natural endowment, nor can we in any way acquire it. It must be given to us from outside by God as an unmerited grace: it must be infused into our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (\textit{Agape and Eros}, 530).

\textsuperscript{153} Cf. Burnaby, \textit{Amor Dei}, 172: “We are called to ‘partake’ in the ‘divine humility’ proper to the creature, which simply receives the divine gift, acknowledging that of itself it has nothing.”

\textsuperscript{154} Cf. \textit{Ibid.}, 175: “The acceptance of the term ‘Gift’ as \textit{differentia} of the Third Person involved the concentration of attention upon the Spirit as immanent. He insists expressly that the ‘gift of the Spirit’ is the Spirit Himself, that it has no other content; and he is so far from feeling the need to distinguish the love of God which the Spirit ‘spreads abroad in our hearts’ from the love which is in God Himself both the principle of communion or unity between the Persons and the principle of creative and redemptive activity, that his phrases tend rather to obscure than to mark any such distinction.”
accomplished only by God’s giving Himself entirely and without remainder. The Holy Spirit, existing eternally as the Gift of Father and Son, forges the sole avenue whereby depraved humankind may enter into communion with the Trinity through His indwelling of the human heart.

The truly radical nature of Augustine’s doctrine of God’s wholly unmerited grace is perhaps nowhere more pointedly expressed than in his assertion that humankind’s salvation demands nothing less than God giving Himself as God in the Person of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, Augustine so describes the inestimable greatness of both the Giver and the Gift: “It is the same Spirit, then, that was also given from heaven on the day of Pentecost, ten days after the Lord’s ascension into heaven. He who gives the Holy Spirit must assuredly be God: nay, how great a God must he be who gives God!” For Augustine, the hallmark of the Holy Spirit is that He is Self-Giving love, and this love which unifies the inner-Trinitarian life also forms the basis of the redeemed soul’s union and participation in God’s love. Augustine thus leaves no room for human beings to boast in any vain attempts to accomplish works of righteousness apart from God’s grace, since the singular requirement of salvation is God’s giving His very Self in the Person of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, Augustine hereby illustrates that the greatness of the sheer unmerited gift of salvation is equal to the greatness of the Giver Himself: the Person of the

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155 *De Trinitate* 15.26.46 (174). (CCL 50A. 526): “Ipse est igitur qui etiam de caelo datus est die pentecostes, id est post dies decem quam dominus ascendit in caelum. Quomodo ergo deus non est qui dat spiritum sanctum? Immo quantus deus est qui dat deum?”

156 Cf. Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine’s De Trinitate*, 299: “Love is free, it is a grace, because the Holy Spirit is given in such a way that he gives himself as God. Love never becomes our possession. The Holy Spirit remains the Lord in his self-gift. Discovery of our ability to love entails the acknowledgement of our dependence on God. Gift means presence of the Giver.”

157 Burnaby helpfully traces how, for Augustine, the history of salvation bears out this notion of God’s giving Himself in the Person of the Holy Spirit: “When we profess our faith in Christ ‘born of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary’, we must understand that it was by God’s free grace that a Son of Man from the very beginning of his natural existence was the Son of God; for the Holy Spirit is the Gift of God, God’s Gift of Himself.” (*Amor Dei*, 172).
Holy Spirit who is Himself God and the fullness of the Trinity (*per quam nos tota inhabitet trinitas*).\(^{158}\) So, Augustine’s account of the salvation of humankind as being wrought utterly by the grace of God is contingent upon his understanding of the all-or-nothing *fiat* of the Self-giving of God in the Person of the Holy Spirit as He freely resolves to indwell the human heart wholly apart from any meritorious work that may or may not have been performed by the individual in whom he determines to dwell.

5. Human Participation in the Highest Good Through the Implanted Love of God

A hallmark of Augustine’s mature theology is that he resolutely maintains that the Ultimate Good must be none other than the unchangeable God; and that participation in God, which by definition is humankind’s highest good, is only made possible through a love of God inculcated by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. For example, Augustine argues that God is the highest perfection of all virtue and blessedness to which human life must be unwaveringly oriented in order to achieve its proper end: “In the same way, the word given to the prophet whose testimony we are examining leads to this indication that in God is our reward, in God our end, in God the perfection of our happiness, in God the sum of the blessed and eternal life.”\(^{159}\) Augustine reduces the final goal and end of all human striving to the singular ultimate purpose of abiding in God forever. There can be no substitute for the eternal God in whom eternal life and blessedness consists absolutely. However, according to Augustine, the total and utter sinfulness of humanity stands as an insurmountable obstacle to such participation in the holy and divine life unless God Himself acts on their behalf:

Man’s power to accomplish them [the precepts of the law] is wrought in man by God through faith in Jesus Christ, who is the end unto righteousness for everyone that

\(^{158}\) Cf. *De Trinitate* 15.18.32 (161): “by which the whole Trinity makes its habitation within us.”

\(^{159}\) *De Spiritu et Littera* 24.39 (223). (CSEL 60. 191): “Proinde etiam per hunc prophetam, cuius testimonium pertractamus, hoc additur, ut in eo merces, in eo finis, in eo perfectio felicitatis, in eo beatæ aeternae que uitae summa consistat.”
believeth: in whom, that is to say, everyone that is incorporated through the Spirit, and
made a member of him, is enabled to work righteousness because he gives the increase
from within. Of the works of such, the Lord himself has said that ‘without me ye can do
nothing.’

Only through the power of the Holy Spirit, who acts to enable works of righteousness through
igniting an inner love of God, can human beings be incorporated into membership in the divine
life. Since such participation in God requires that God act first in graciously sending the Holy
Spirit to dwell within, the Pelagian soteriological scheme is once again implicitly undermined as
“in their pride they fail to realize that the goodness of their changeable soul comes by
participating in the unchangeable Good, not by their own will.” By casting such a strong
dichotomy between the respective natures of the creature and the Creator, as alluded to
previously, Augustine creates an effective basis from which to argue that humankind’s highest
good, participation in God’s changeless eternity and beatitude, demands that only God can
actuate its realization through the utterly gratuitous Gift of the Holy Spirit given to generate a
love of God from within.

As Augustine’s theology continues to develop and change over the course of his life, the
Holy Spirit begins to feature ever more prominently as the vital link between grace and love
which ultimately enables humankind’s participation in God. Augustine employs this notion of

\[160\] *Ibid* 29.50 (234). (CSEL 60. 206): “Quae ut possit homo facere, deus operatur in homine per fidem iesu
christi, qui finis est ad iustitiam omni credenti, id est cui per spiritum incorporatus factus que membrum
eius potest quisque illo incrementum intrinsecus dante operari iustitiam. De cuius operibus etiam ipse
dixit, quia sine me nihil potestis facere.”

\[161\] Cary, *Inner Grace*, 76.

\[162\] See Chapter I.A above.

unites the Father and the Son, so he joins us to Christ and to each other, through a unity of love. Faith in
Christ only becomes operative through love: a leitmotiv throughout the [*De Trinitate*].” As Gioia
correctly observes, not only does this theme of the “unity of love” appear as a guiding motif throughout
the *De Trinitate*, but it continues to form the foundation of Augustine’s relentless commitment to the
doctrine of God’s unmerited grace throughout his mature work, as the Holy Spirit must always be present
as Gift in order to establish a unity of human and divine by enlivening a salvific love of God.
the Holy Spirit’s work in a decisive statement against the Pelagian notion of salvation in arguing that a person

Receives the Holy Spirit, whereby there arises in his soul the delight in and the love of God, the supreme and changeless Good. This gift is here and now, while he walks by faith, yet not by sight: that having this as earnest of God’s free bounty, he may be fired in heart to cleave to his Creator, kindled in mind to come within the shining of the true light; and thus receive from the source of his being the only real well-being. Free choice alone, if the way of truth is hidden, avails for nothing but sin; and when the right action and the true aim has begun to appear clearly, there is still no doing, no devotion, no good life, unless it be also delighted in and loved. And that it may be loved, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, not by the free choice whose spring is ourselves, but through the Holy Spirit which is given us.\textsuperscript{164}

Augustine contends that there is no greater proof of the utterly gratuitous nature of humankind’s salvation than that the Holy Spirit is given to us as a free gift (\textit{data gratuiti}), and that through Him, and Him alone, our hearts are inflamed with a love of God that allows us to both inhere and participate in the Creator Himself (\textit{inardescat inhaerere creatori}).\textsuperscript{165} The love which the Holy Spirit sheds abroad in our hearts is in fact the love which characterizes the eternal relationships of the Trinity; hence, the love with which we love God is the manifestation of our participation in the relational being of the Triune Godhead.\textsuperscript{166} So, Augustine’s mature soteriology manifests

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\item[\textsuperscript{164}] \textit{De Spiritu et Littera} 3.5 (197-198). (CSEL 60. 157): “Accipiat spiritum sanctum, quo fiat in animo eius delectatio dilectio que summi illius atque incommutabilis boni, quod deus est, etiam nunc cum per fidem ambulatur, nondum per speciem, ut hac sibi uelut arra data gratuiti muneris inardescat inhaerere creatori atque inflammetur accedere ad participationem illius ueri luminis, ut ex illo ei bene sit, a quo habet ut sit. Nam neque liberum arbitrium quicquam nisi ad peccandum ualet, si lateat ueritatis uia; et cum id quod agendum et quo nitendum est coeperit non latere, nisi etiam delectet et ametur, non agitur, non suscipitur, non bene uiuitur. Ut autem diligatur, caritas dei diffunditur in cordibus nostris non per arbitrium liberum, qua surgit ex nobis, sed per spiritum sanctum, qui datum est nobis.”
\item[\textsuperscript{165}] Once again we bear witness to Augustine’s continual return to Romans 5:5 as the foundational biblical precedent for his ascribing to the Holy Spirit such an essential role in the process of humankind’s salvation. Burnaby comments on the participatory nature of the human love for God ignited by the Holy Spirit: “The love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts is no mere human affection: in the last analysis, in the deepest sense, it \textit{is} God’s own love which is ours by His gift. But its object remains to the end God not man – or rather, man only as ‘in God.’” (Burnaby, \textit{Amor Dei}, 99).
\item[\textsuperscript{166}] Cunningham observes how God’s gifts “flow from God to human beings, and thereby draw us back up into the life of God. Grace makes possible our faith, and God’s love for us makes possible our love for God. Similarly, God’s internal triune fellowship grounds the mutual participation between God and
\end{itemize}
its thoroughly Trinitarian quality in that participation in the love constitutive of the Godhead
stands as the sole requirement of humankind’s salvation, which is met by God’s giving of the
Holy Spirit.

Augustine’s conception of the salvific human participation in the divine through the work
of the Holy Spirit also bears significant implications for his theory of the efficacy of the
sacraments. For instance, Augustine exhorts his congregation to consider what ought to be the
ultimate assurance of the sacrament’s power: “Therefore, if you want to know that you have
received the Spirit, question your heart, lest perhaps you have the sacrament and don’t have the
sacrament’s power. Question your heart: if the love of your brother is there, be secure. There
can be no love without the Spirit of God.” Augustine considers the power of the sacraments to
rest in the communicant’s participation in the inner work of the Holy Spirit who ignites a love
for God, utterly by grace. Moreover, Augustine extinguishes any notion that this genesis of
the salvific love of God admits of any other source than the Spirit which dwells within: “A
wicked person, therefore, can also have all these sacraments, but a person cannot be wicked and
also have charity. This, then, is a particular gift; it is the unique font. The Spirit of God exhorts
you to drink from it; the Spirit of God exhorts you to drink from himself.” Even the holy and
blessed sacrament administered by the Church catholic avails nothing without the power and

humanity.” (David S. Cunningham, These Three Are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology [Malden,

accepi spiritum, interroga cor tuum ne forte sacramentum habes, et uirtutem sacramenti non habes.
Interroga cor tuum. Si est ibi dilectio fratris, securus esto. Non potest esse dilectio sine Spiritu Dei.”

168 Cary contends that Augustine’s view of grace does not involve the un-Platonist thought of
participating in mere temporal and external realities: “But neither as example nor as sacrament is Christ’s
flesh the source of this new life or the means through which it is given. Grace itself is conferred by the
inward gift of the Holy Spirit, so that what our hearts participate in is the eternal Word, not the flesh of
Christ.” (Inner Grace, 76).

169 Tractatus in Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos 7.6 (108). (PL 35: 2032): “Ergo habere sacramenta ista
omnia et malus esse potest. Habere caritatem et malus esse non potest. Hoc est ergo proprium donum;
ipse est singularis fons. Ad hunc bibendum uos hortatur spiritus dei; ad se bibendum uos hortatur spiritus
dei.”
presence of the Holy Spirit to enable the believer to participate in God’s love.\footnote{Cf. Phillip Cary, \textit{Outward Signs: The Powerlessness of External Things in Augustine’s Thought} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 211: “The efficacy of baptism is all inward, requiring water and the words of the Gospel for its outward sign but not for its power.” Infant baptism represented a unique case in terms of sacramental efficacy for Augustine, as he considered the practice to be handed down by apostolic authority (Cf. \textit{On Baptism} 4.24.32) such that “without conversion baptism profits no one except infants.” (Cary, \textit{Outward Signs}, 217, Italics mine). The practice figured prominently in Augustine’s contests with both the Donatists and the Pelagians, and greatly influenced the formulation of his doctrine of Original Sin which, according to Cary, forged “an astonishing and radical conception of original human unity. When Adam sinned, each one of our souls was not other than Adam’s. There was but one human soul in the beginning, and we all were it. Long before we had separate lives of our own, we were all there in Adam and shared in his sin. When infants are damned for Adam’s sin, therefore, they are not being punished for the sin of another.” (Ibid., 207). Cf. \textit{Epistle} 98:1.} Hence, participation in God through the sacramental life, according to Augustine, also requires the gracious bestowal of the Holy Spirit to dwell within the human heart as He alone can guarantee the necessary love of God which creates in humankind the possibility of union with the Highest Good consisting in the Triune God who is love.


Augustine’s response to the theological opposition of the Pelagians revolves around the question of grace and what constitutes a person’s coming to be in God’s favour (redounding unto salvation and eternal delight) or disfavour (redounding unto condemnation and eternal punishment). Augustine frames his answer to the challenge of the Pelagians in terms of his understanding of the love of God as the singular fountainhead of all merit to be gained before a Holy God. This all-important love of God, for Augustine, must be given by God as it is found only in God and therefore cannot be merited by human effort but must be implanted within and received by the agency of the Holy Spirit. First, we bear witness to this nascent connection of the love of God, the Person and work of the Holy Spirit and the nature of God’s unmerited grace in Augustine’s \textit{Confessions} as he poetically proclaims: “My weight is my love. Wherever I am carried, my love is carrying me. By your gift we are set on fire and carried upwards: we grow red...
hot and ascend.”

Already in the *Confessions*, Augustine introduces the pivotal notion of love as gift (*Dono tuo accendimur*) which remains to bloom in full flower in his mature doctrine of the Holy Spirit as it develops within the context of his defence of God’s wholly unmerited grace. Love is the absolute center of gravity in Augustine’s ethical universe, and it must always exist as the gift of God in the Person of the Holy Spirit, since God alone has the power to graciously reorder human loves in relation to Him. Furthermore, Augustine draws out the critical soteriological implications of his pneumatology in answer to the Pelagians in the *De Spiritu et Littera* as he affirms the Apostle Paul’s comparison of the Old and New Testaments:

“Accordingly it is because the law, as he says elsewhere, ‘was set because of transgression,’ that is, the letter written outside the man, that he calls it the ministration of death and the ministration of condemnation; whereas the other, that of the New Testament, he calls the ministration of the spirit and the ministration of righteousness, because through the gift of the Spirit we work righteousness and are delivered from the condemnation of transgression.”

The only true merit and righteousness which humankind may deign to possess in the presence of a Holy God is the merit which God alone can give. Human love for God, according to Augustine, stands as the sole source of true merit and is only possible, and ultimately efficacious, insofar as it does not derive from human striving but is energized and accomplished through the Gift of the Holy

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172 Cf. Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine’s De Trinitate*, 134: “This weight is attributed to the Holy Spirit because, by uniting us to Christ through the faith which works through love, he re-establishes the right order in our relation with God.”

173 *De Spiritu et Littera* 18.31 (218). (CSEL 60. 184): “Proinde quia lex, sicut alibi dicit, praeuarcationis gratia posita est, id est littera ista extra hominem scripta, propter eas eam et ministrationem mortis et ministrationem damnationis appellat; hanc autem, id est noui testamenti, ministrationem spiritus et ministrationem iustitiae dicit, quia per donum spiritus operamus iustitiam et a prauearcationis damnatione liberamus.”
Spirit. Moreover, Augustine would continue to consistently argue in this same vein even unto his final clash with Julian: “Those who imagine that they fulfill the commandments of the law by the choice of their own will without the Spirit of grace want to establish their own righteousness, not to receive the righteousness of God.” These final words of Augustine in answer to the Pelagian threat represent the culmination of a theological trajectory relating the love of God, the work of the Holy Spirit and God’s unmerited grace burgeoning in Augustine’s thought even as early as the *Confessions*. In short, Augustine conceives of the Spirit granting a meritorious love of God through the righteousness of God being implanted within the heart by God’s graciously granting His very own presence to dwell within.\(^{175}\)

Because Augustine’s account of humankind’s salvation requires that the only form of merit in God’s sight consists in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who generates a salvific love of God, the salvation of humankind must be subject to divine decree as God alone decides to whom the Spirit is to be given. We might recall that Augustine considers the giving of the Holy Spirit to be the ultimate determinate of whether one has a part in God’s salvation,\(^{176}\) which he once again relates to the necessity of human love for God: “Through the Holy Spirit [God] sheds abroad charity in the hearts of those whom he foreknew that he might predestinate, predestinated that he might call, called that he might justify, and justified that he might glorify.”\(^{177}\) On account of Augustine’s insistence on the fact that a human being may only boast in the merit accorded

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\(^{174}\) *Contra Julianum Opus Imperfectum* 2.158 (234). (PL 45: 1209): “Qui enim praecepta legis imploret se putat per arbitrium propriae voluntatis sine spiritu gratiae, suam justitiam vult, constituere, non justitiam dei sumere.”

\(^{175}\) Cf. Cary, *Inner Grace*, 44: “The power of grace closes the gap between willing and doing, between wanting to do the right thing and actually being able to do it.”

\(^{176}\) Cf. *De Trinitate* 15.32 (161): “More excellent gift of God than this there is none. It alone divides between the sons of the eternal kingdom and the sons of eternal perdition.”

\(^{177}\) *De Spiritu et Littera* 5.7 (199). (CSEL 60. 159): “Per spiritum sanctum diffundit caritatem in cordibus eorum quos praeescuit ut praedestinaret, praedestinavit ut uocaret, uocavit ut iustificaret, iustificavit ut glorificaret.” Cf. Rom. 8:29ff.
him or her in God giving Himself as God in the Person of the Holy Spirit, the boundaries of those who form God’s elect are clearly circumscribed and limited to those to whom God determines to make recipients of this most excellent gift. Moreover, Augustine’s relentless insistence on the wholly gratuitous character of the Gift of the Holy Spirit prompts his emphasis on the particularity of the Divine decree: “The divine aid for the working of righteousness consists not in God’s gift of the law, full as it is of good and holy commands, but in that our will itself, without which we cannot do the good, is aided and uplifted by the imparting of the Spirit of grace.” So, Augustine’s vision of the Holy Spirit as the Gift which enlivens human hearts by grace has critical implications for his theology of God’s divine decree and for what would become his notorious doctrine of double-predestination, since the essential quality of the Gift is that it is just that: freely given to human beings without any prior basis for doing so or on account of any inherent worthiness or merit on the recipient’s part.

178 Cf. Smith, “Formation, Grace, and Pneumatology,” 567: “The Spirit is the spirit of charity; but the Spirit is not shed abroad universally. Indeed, for Augustine, this ‘distribution’ of the Spirit is tied to a very particularist logic of election.” In Bostock’s assessment, Augustine’s doctrine of election, as it came to be articulated in the latter part of his career, serves to indicate that “a profound uncertainty haunts the theology of Augustine. Sadly, Augustine is unable to see himself as the son of a just and loving Father. His relationship to God resembles that of a Roman client to his aristocratic patron - he is at the mercy of a benign but arbitrary despot whose ways are unpredictable.” (Gerald Bostock, “Origen: The Alternative to Augustine?” The Expository Times 114 [2003]: 331). Might we question whether Augustine’s insistence on the utter mercy and grace of God, exercised solely at His discretion, really betrays such uncertainty and fear? To the contrary, we propose that Augustine’s assurances of the utter gratuity of God’s gift furnish the only means by which one can truly rest in the arms of a just and loving Father who is at once utterly Holy and furiously jealous that humankind love Him above all else. (Cf. Confessions 10.29.40 and discussion of this passage below [pp. 65ff.]).

179 De Spiritu et Littera 12.20 (209). (CSEL 60. 173): “Neque enim isto opere hanc epistolam exponendam susceipimus, sed eius maxime testimonio demonstrare, quantum possimus, nitimur non in eo nos diuinitus adiuuari ad operandam iustitiam, quod legem deus dedit plenam bonis sanctis que praeceptis, sed quod ipsa uluntas nostra, sine qua operari bonum non possimus, adiuetur et erigatur inpertito spiritu gratiae.”

180 Cf. Smith, “Formation, Grace, and Pneumatology,” 567: “It is precisely Augustine’s account of love as motivation that is tied to the particularity of his ecclesiology (and, thus, his soteriology).” Augustine also considers the choice of means whereby God acts in His grace to enliven the human heart to a love of God to be solely at His discretion: “Recognize grace: God calls one whom He chooses in this way, another in
Concerning what exactly constitutes human merit in Augustine’s paradigm, we must now turn to his understanding of meritorious works as the product of the healing of the will itself through the inner working of the Holy Spirit. For instance, Augustine unambiguously states that freedom of choice is necessary to the fulfillment of the law. But by the law comes the knowledge of sin; by faith comes the obtaining of grace against sin; by grace comes the healing of the soul from sin’s sickness; by the healing of the soul comes freedom of choice; by freedom of choice comes the love of righteousness; by the love of righteousness comes the working of the law. Notice the order in which freedom of choice appears in Augustine’s schema: it follows only after healing of the soul is accomplished by God’s grace. Herein Augustine defines freedom of the will within the parameters of its first having been healed by the gracious Gift of the Holy Spirit, which enlivens the requisite salvific love of God and delight in his law. In addition, Augustine thoroughly extinguishes any notion of human merit preceding this Self-giving of the indwelling Spirit as he asks: “Is the will by which we believe also the gift of God, or is it exerted by the freedom of choice which is implanted in us by nature? If we say it is not God’s gift, there is a danger of our supposing that we have found an answer to the apostle’s rebuke: ‘what hast thou that thou hast not received? But if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as though thou hadst not received it?’” For Augustine, the crucial moment of a person’s first believing in the

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181 De Spiritu et Littera 29.52 (236). (CSEL 60. 208): “Neque enim lex inpletur nisi libero arbitrio. Sed per legem cognitio peccati, per fidei inpetratio gratiae contra peccatum, per gratiam sanatio animae a uito peccati, per animae sanitatem libertas arbitrii, per liberum arbitrium iustitiae dilectio, per iustitiae dilectionem legis operatio.”

182 Cf. Cary, Inner Grace, 16: “So the gift of grace, poured out deep within our hearts by the Spirit of God himself, does precisely what coercion cannot: it moves the will rather than the body. For free will is indeed freedom from coercion but not freedom from true Beauty.” Cf. Contra Julianum Opus Imperfectum 1.76 (108): “How does freedom remain in those people who need divine grace so that they may be set free from the slavery by which they were handed over to victorious sin – unless they are in fact free, but free with regard to righteousness? For this reason the apostle said, When you were slaves of sin, you were free with regard to righteousness.” Cf. Rom. 6:20.

183 De Spiritu et Littera 33.57 (241). (CSEL 60. 215): “Sed consequens est paululum quaerere, utrum voluntas illa qua credimus etiam ipsa dei donum sit an ex illo naturaliter insito libero adhibeatur arbitrio. Si enim dixerimus eam non esse donum dei, metuendum est ne existimemus inuenisse nos aliquid, quod...
Lord Jesus for the salvation of their soul must not be considered an accomplishment wrought by human effort, but a consequence of the passive reception of the indwelling Holy Spirit who gives Himself wholly and entirely as God’s love in order to incite the salvific love of God within in the human heart. Also, Augustine draws up a critical contrast between the state of the First Man, Adam, and the state of the rest of humankind following the catastrophe of the Fall, which resulted from Adam’s abuse of his free will: “For free will existed perfectly in the first man; we, however, prior to grace, do not have free will so as not to sin, but only so much that we do not want to sin. But with grace, not only do we want to act rightly, but we can; not by our own strength, but by the help of the liberator. And at the resurrection he will bring us that perfect peace which follows from good will.”\textsuperscript{184} For Augustine, the illness which afflicts humankind cannot be overcome by any form of moral discipline imposed by the unaided human will, since the disease of sin has incapacitated the will itself and all of its efforts in attempting to love God and fulfill the righteousness requirements of the Law.\textsuperscript{185} Having so defined the nature of the

\textsuperscript{184} Expositio Quarundam Propositionum Ex Epistola Ad Romanos 18 (7). “Liberum ergo arbitrium perfecte fuit in primo homine, in nobis autem ante gratiam non est liberum arbitrium ut non peccemus, sed tantum ut peccare nolimus. Gratia vero efficit, ut non tantum velimus recte facere, sed etiam possimus, non viribus nostris sed liberatoris auxilio, qui nobis etiam perfectam pacem in resurrectione tribuet, quae pax perfecta bonam voluntatem consequitur.” (\textit{Ibid.}, 6).

\textsuperscript{185} Augustine’s view of the Gift of the Holy Spirit as the author of humankind’s righteousness through His bestowal of the love of God clearly relates to the conflicting notions of free will espoused by Augustine and the Pelagians. According to Bonner, \textit{St Augustine of Hippo: Life and Controversies}, Reissued & Rev. Ed. (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1986): 361, the latter held the view that “the freedom which man was supposed to enjoy by reason of free will made unthinkable the Augustinian conception of Grace as an aid by which man is able to will” (cf. \textit{De Spiritu et Littera} 34.60), whereas “the Augustinian will can be chained or freed, sick or convalescent, weakened or strengthened. It can be infected by pathologies of sin that are not reducible to a matter of ignorance (as in the Stoics) or the unruly desires of the body (as in the Manichaens). The will has diseases of its own, pathologies of misdirected love that become habit and so produce a unique and hitherto unimagined form of inner bondage. Augustine is talking about something that an Aristotle, a Cicero, or a Seneca never conceived of, and that Pelagius seems never to have understood.” (Cary, \textit{Inner Grace}, 42).
freedom of the will with regard to righteousness, Augustine offers this summative statement in the De Spiritu et Littera:

Thus freedom of choice is undisturbed; and yet our soul may bless the Lord, not forgetting all his rewardings: it seeks not in ignorance of God’s righteousness to establish its own, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, and lives by faith till it be admitted into sight, by that faith which works through love. And this love is shed abroad in our hearts, not by the sufficiency of our own will nor by the letter of the law, but by the Holy Spirit which is given to us.¹⁸⁶

Hence, for Augustine, the only merit that human beings can lay claim to concerning their salvation is the righteousness evoked in and through them by the graciously implanted love of God made possible only by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling within them.

7. The Final Answer to the Pelagians: Our Love for God is God’s Gift

Whilst Augustine’s mature works are certainly marked by a striking emphasis on the weakness, sinfulness and even utter depravity of humankind, a ray of hope shines ever brighter through the darkness on account of Augustine’s unfailing confidence that the God of Ages is fundamentally a God who gives, who gives Himself entire, and who gives utterly by grace. Initially, Augustine would frustrate the moralism of Pelagius with his famous prayer in the Confessions: “My entire hope is exclusively in your very great mercy. Grant what you command, and command what you will.”¹⁸⁷ Even before the onset of his full blown confrontation with Pelagius and the Pelagian party, Augustine had begun to reflect on the nature of his own salvation as entirely a gift of God. Indeed, Augustine would press this notion that the will to keep the Law and to love God stems from nothing other than the gift of God’s grace. In

¹⁸⁶ De Spiritu et Littera 33.59 (244). (CSEL 60. 219): “Ita nec arbitrium liberum tollimus et benedicit anima nostra dominum non obliviscens omnes retributiones eius nec ignorans dei iustitiam suam uolet constituerse, sed credit in eum qui iustificat impium et uiiit ex fide, donec ad speciem perducatur, fide scilicet quae per dilectionem operatur. Quae dilectio diffunditur in cordibus nostris nec per sufficientiam propriae uoluntatis nec per litteram legis, sed per spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis.”

¹⁸⁷ Confessions 10.29.40 (202), (PL 32:796): “Et tota spes mea non nisi in magna valde misericordia tua. Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis.” Augustine repeats this phrase in § 10.29.40; 10.31.45; and 10.37.60.
his battle with the Pelagians, Augustine would write the following about the nature of humankind’s justification years later in the *De Spiritu et Littera*: “It is indeed a righteousness of God without law, because God confers it upon the believer through the Spirit of grace, without the help of the law. The law, that is, contributes nothing to God’s saving act: through it he does but show man his weakness, that by faith he may take refuge in the divine mercy and be healed.”

Augustine’s conception of the righteousness of God required to merit salvation comes to humankind wholly and utterly as God’s gift, given through the Spirit of Grace, which God alone freely bestows upon the sinner who is otherwise unable to fulfill the demands of the Law. Consequently, Augustine would preach that we cannot seek God in His holiness and righteousness without His first seeking us: “He is the true Lord who seeks nothing from us. And woe to us if we don’t seek him. He seeks nothing from us, and he sought us when we weren’t seeking him.”

Fallen humanity, for Augustine, truly has nothing to offer God and cannot merit His favour since untainted righteousness and love are characteristics proper only to the divine. Unless God first confers His merit and His righteousness upon the sinner, she cannot seek God and she cannot love God. Certainly, Augustine continues to stress his understanding of salvation as utterly gift even to the bitter end of his dispute with the Pelagians, as he tersely

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188 *De Spiritu et Littera* 9.15 (205). (CSEL 60. 167): “Sed iustitia dei sine lege est, quam deus per spiritum gratiae credenti confert sine adiutorio legis, hoc est non adiutus a lege, quando quidem per legem ostendit homini infirmitatem suam, ut ad eius misericordiam per fidem confugiens sanetur.”

189 For Augustine, God’s utterly free gift of grace entails that He distributes it solely according to His sovereign will, as Bostock duly notes: “In Augustine the justice of God is clearly affirmed, but it is made subordinate to the divine sovereignty. At the same time it lies beyond human scrutiny and knowledge. It is not for human beings to comprehend it.” (Bostock, “Origen: The Alternative to Augustine?,” 331).


191 Bonner notes this increasing emphasis on the divine initiative in Augustine’s mature soteriology: “It is a feature of Augustine’s theological development that he came increasingly to emphasise the absolute power of God. It is true that he always insisted that this absolute power was not, as it might appear, exercised in an arbitrary and tyrannical way, and that at the Last Day the justice of God will be revealed, by which one soul is taken and another left.” (Bonner, “Augustine and Pelagianism,” 31).
states in one of his final works: “Divine justice cheats no one, but it gives many gifts as a favor to those who do not merit them.” In his repeated clashes with the Pelagians, Augustine would continue to refine his understanding of God’s grace such that any and all impulses of salvific efficacy, beginning with the will to believe and ending with perseverance in the faith, are to be understood not as deriving from human effort but from the divine gift of grace given in the Person of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, for Augustine, the paramount of all such salvific religious impulses, the love of God, must admit of its nature as being nothing other than God’s gift: *Amare enim Deum, donum Dei est.* So, it is manifestly clear that Augustine consistently maintained against the Pelagians that salvation is to be understood as entirely God’s gift.

Augustine’s insistence that salvation is God’s gift, and in particular that the love of God is graciously given by God, harmonizes with his theology of the Holy Spirit as that particular Gift which ignites the love of God within human hearts. First, we might recall that the Gift of the Holy Spirit, for Augustine, represents the Self-giving of God in the entirety of the Triune Godhead: “Though given as God’s gift, he is as God the giver of himself.” In order to exercise the love of God, which constitutes the fulfillment of the Law and all righteousness, Augustine asserts that humankind must in fact receive the Gift of God Himself as He determines to dwell within human hearts.

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193 Cf. Studer, *Grace of Christ*, 148: “The dispute with the Pelagians, for its part, gave Augustine the opportunity of defining more precisely his conception of the Father as giver of all gifts in the orders of creation and salvation and thereby to distinguish more clearly between the grace of creation and the grace of redemption.”

194 *Sermones* 297.1 (PL 38: 1359). “To love God, you see, is God’s gift.” (Augustine, *Sermones* 297.1 [216]).


196 Cf. Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, 176: “That the love of God, our love for God, is God’s gift, was [Augustine’s] final reply to the Pelagianism which saw in the Incarnation only the *demand* of God’s love that we should love Him in return.”
the fact that it is only by the work of the Holy Spirit, who gives Himself as God’s Gift, that the love of God can be enlivened in human hearts and thereby bring about humankind’s salvation.\footnote{The Self-giving of the Holy Spirit, for Augustine, is manifestly part of the greater Trinitarian exchange of God’s love for Himself: “The Spirit gives himself as the Father’s gift and as the Son’s gift.” (Ayres, \textit{Augustine and the Trinity}, 254).}

And so we are reminded once again of Augustine’s final characterization of the Holy Spirit in Book XV of the \textit{De Trinitate}:

Thus the love which is of God and is God is specially the Holy Spirit, through whom is spread abroad in our hearts the charity of God by which the whole Trinity makes its habitation within us. And therefore is the Holy Spirit, God though he be, most rightly called also the Gift of God; and what can be the special sense of that gift but charity, which brings us to God, and without which no other of God’s gifts can bring us to him?\footnote{\textit{De Trinitate} 15.18.32 (161-162). (CCL 50A, 508): “Dilectio igitur quae ex deo est et deus est proprius spiritus sanctus est per quem diffunditur in cordibus nostris dei caritas per quam nos tota inhabitet trinitas. Quocirca rectissime spiritus sanctus, cum sit deus, uocatur etiam donum dei. Quod donum proprius quid nisi caritas intellegenda est quae perducit ad deum et sine qua quodlibet aliud dei donum non perducit ad deum?”}

Augustine is everywhere adamant that the apex of all human striving and the culmination of his very being reside in partaking of this love of God which God gives in none other than the Person of the Holy Spirit. Lastly, Augustine would employ his conception of the Holy Spirit as the sole originator of human love for God in his final contest with Julian: “You Pelagian! Love wills what is good, and love comes from God, not through the letter of the law, but through the Spirit of grace. The letter is a help for those who are predestined insofar as, by its commands, not by its help, it admonishes the weak to flee to the Spirit of grace.”\footnote{\textit{Contra Julianum Opus Imperfectum} 1.94 (118). (PL 45: 1111): “Homo Pelagiane, charitas vult bonum, et charitas ex Deo est; non per legis litteram, sed per spiritum gratiae. In hoc est praestestinatis adjutorium littera, quia jubendo et non juvando, admonet infirmos confugere ad spiritum gratiae.”} A vital feature of Augustine’s claim that salvation is wrought utterly by God’s grace is that God does not merely demand or demonstrate righteousness, but actually fulfills the Law within the human person by producing a
salvific love of God through the indwelling of the heart in the Person of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{200} Hence, Augustine repeatedly rebuffs the Pelagians by maintaining that salvation is absolutely a gift of God’s unmerited grace and that this Gift is in fact the Person of the Holy Spirit who is at once the love which is of God and is God.

In Augustine’s estimation, the Pelagians’ attempts to reform the morals of the church featured an inadmissible emphasis on the human capacity to fulfill the requirements of the Law when only the indwelling Gift of the love of God in the Holy Spirit can ultimately realize the fulfillment of all righteousness. For instance, Augustine draws up the crucial contrast of a person striving to fulfill the Law in his own strength as opposed to keeping the commandments having first received the power of the Spirit: “For all this, apart from the Spirit’s aid, is indubitably the letter that killeth: only when the life-giving Spirit is present, does he cause to be written within, and loved, that which when it was written externally the law caused to be feared.”\textsuperscript{201} For Augustine, the wellspring of the ability to fulfill all of the requirements of the Law is the love of God, which itself derives from the presence of the life-giving Spirit (\textit{vivificans spiritus}) within.\textsuperscript{202} It is only in the giving of the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from God as the love within the Trinity, that the Law may be fulfilled. To this end, Augustine states: “The law was

\textsuperscript{200} It would appear that this runs counter to what little we do know of Pelagius’ pneumatology: “The doctrine of the work of the Spirit which Pelagius enunciates is quite fragmentary, but so far as it goes it parallels in a striking way his language about grace. The Spirit shows us the will of God and makes plain the future glory so that we may desire heavenly things and not earthly. The latter activity is characterized as ‘illumination’ by which our weak \textit{possibilitas} is aided.” (Robert F. Evans, \textit{Pelagius: Inquiries and Reappraisals} [New York: The Seabury Press, 1968], 111). Cf. \textit{Expositiones XIII Epistolarum Pauli} 43, 10f.; 67, 13-16; 139, 4; 248, 13.

\textsuperscript{201} \textit{De Spiritu et Littera} 19.32 (219). (CSEL 60. 185): “Illa enim sine adiuuante spiritu procul dubio est littera occidentis; cum uero adest uiuificans spiritus, hoc ipsum intus conscriptum facit diligi, quod foris scriptum lex faciebat timeri.”

\textsuperscript{202} Cf. Nygren, \textit{Agape and Eros}, 521: “What is necessary is that the will should really be won for the supernatural good. This can never be brought about by any legal command, but only by a new desire driving out the old, by Caritas overcoming Cupiditas. The sweetness of pleasure must be vanquished by something yet sweeter. So all turns finally on the question how we are to gain possession of this Caritas, which is the ‘fulfilling of the law’ and the root from which all good grows. Pelagius affirms that man can produce Caritas in himself; Augustine denies it.”
given that grace might be sought; grace was given that the law might be fulfilled.”

So, according to Augustine, the giving of the Holy Spirit reflexively completes and fulfills the giving of the Law which is itself typified in its demand that human beings love God with all of their heart, soul, and mind. The inadequacy of the Pelagians’ system, in Augustine’s evaluation, was precisely that it stopped short in the role it afforded the Holy Spirit in bringing about humankind’s salvation: “This is the horrid poison of your heresy: you want the grace of Christ to consist in his example, not in his gift. You say that people become righteous by imitating him, not that they are brought by the help of the Holy Spirit to imitate him, the Spirit which he poured out in great richness over his own people.”

According to Augustine, God’s grace cannot amount merely to His giving the commandments of the Law and the example of the life of Christ; the greatness of the righteous requirements of the Law must be met and exceeded by the greatness of the Gift of the Giver Himself, who is the Holy Spirit, God giving God. Thus, Augustine charges the Pelagians with a gross overestimation of the capacity of the human will to fulfill the Law by loving God in its own strength, as Augustine considers such a love to be made possible only by the indwelling Gift of the Holy Spirit Who alone has the ability to ignite a love for God by indwelling the human heart.

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203 De Spiritu et Littera 19.34 (220). (CSEL 60. 187): “Lex ergo data est, ut gratia quaereretur, gratia data est, ut lex inpleretur.”

204 Contra Julianum Opus Imperfectum 2.146 (227). (PL 45: 1202): “Illoc est occultum et horrendum virus haeresis vestrae, ut velitis gratiam Christ in exemplo ejus esse, non in dono ejus, dicentes, quia per ejus imitationem fiant justi, non per subministrationem Spiritus sancti, ut eum imitentur adducti; quem Spiritus super suos ditissime effudit.”

205 Augustine’s notion of the Holy Spirit as Gift is wholly absent from the Pelagian understanding of grace. According to Evans, Pelagius: Inquiries and Reappraisals, 111: “We might capture Pelagius’ whole teaching on the grace of Christ as ‘help’ in a single formula: Christ by the example of his life, by his commandments, and by his teaching concerning man and God has brought the final revelation of that ‘way’ for man which leads to life and in doing so has brought ‘help’ sufficient to overcome the power of sinful habit.”
Conclusion

*Nullum est isto dei dono excellentius.* Augustine does not mince words in his description of the unqualified importance of the Gift of the Holy Spirit in his soteriological paradigm: “More excellent gift of God than this there is none.” In this thesis we have argued that according to Augustine’s mature Trinitarian understanding of the Holy Spirit, which reaches its apex in Book XV of the *De Trinitate*, the Holy Spirit is characteristically the love within the Godhead and the Gift of God Himself, which is given by His unmerited grace, as He inhabits human hearts in order to enliven love for God and neighbour. We have witnessed the absolutely critical importance that Augustine accords the Holy Spirit, by whose agency the entire Trinity dwells within and ignites the love of God in human hearts, such that the Spirit’s work creates the vital link between grace and love whereby Augustine argues, against his Pelagian opponents, that humankind is utterly dependent upon God’s freely given grace. Augustine articulates this connection between the love for God generated by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and his notion of God’s wholly unmerited grace most acutely in the *De Trinitate*, yet his understanding of the Holy Spirit as God’s ultimate Gift graciously given to humankind already appears as fundamental to his roughly contemporaneous treatise of *The Spirit and the Letter* and in his *Homilies on the First Epistle of John*. Indeed, Augustine would continue to press this notion of the Self-giving of God in the Person of Holy Spirit as foundational to his doctrine of God’s unmerited grace even unto his final anti-Pelagian work in the *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian*. As we have seen, two major threads define Augustine’s Trinitarian understanding of the

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206 De Trinitate 15.18.32 (161). (CCL 50A. 507).
Holy Spirit as characteristically the love within the Godhead and the Gift of God Himself which is given by His unmerited grace as He inhabits human hearts in order to enliven love for God and neighbour: (1) the Holy Spirit makes us to dwell in God, and God in us; and (2) the gift of the love of God generated in the hearts of believers owes its origins to the Self-giving of the Holy Spirit such that salvation must be due to nothing other than God’s unmerited grace.

The present study has endeavoured to more fully integrate Augustine’s Trinitarian theology and mature pneumatology into the historical-theological horizon of the Pelagian controversy that defined the last three decades of the Bishop of Hippo’s career and which came to define his legacy for centuries afterwards. Although Augustine himself was not attempting to become an innovator or the originator of novel doctrines and dogma, the pressures he felt in responding to the Pelagian threat led him to explore new frontiers of inquiry in terms of how the very Trinitarian nature of the Godhead and the Personhood of the Holy Spirit as God’s Gift of love might form the very core of a theology of God’s wholly unmerited grace. For centuries debate has abounded within and without the Christian church surrounding Augustine’s unremitting doctrine of God’s utterly unmerited grace, which he formulated in large part within the context of the Pelagian controversy, yet the debate has largely ignored or overlooked this absolutely essential role that Augustine ascribes to the Holy Spirit in igniting the love of God in human hearts as feat accomplished wholly and utterly by God’s grace.

The limitations of the present study are manifold, primarily due to the fact that it has been restricted to examining solely Augustine’s theology of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the mediation of God’s unmerited grace. Perhaps the most valuable complement to this study would be an analysis of the pneumatologies of Pelagius and his various ‘Pelagian’ followers. If Augustine is committed to thoroughly integrating his doctrine of the Holy Spirit
and God’s unmerited grace, how might the pneumatologies of Pelagius and the Pelagians inform their respective soteriological schemata? In addition to the theologies of the Pelagians, an assessment of the role of the Holy Spirit as the gift of love in Augustine’s theology of grace may be greater understood in its historical-theological context by comparing it with possibly similar, competing, and/or complementary views represented by the Greek East (Origen and the Cappadocian Fathers), the Manicheans (Faustus), and the Donatists. By means of the examination of such alternative viewpoints, the distinctiveness of Augustine’s own view may thus be witnessed in sharper relief. A deeper appreciation of Augustine’s theology of the Holy Spirit in awakening human hearts unto the love of God may be achieved by comparing it with the full spectrum of late fourth- and early fifth-century perspectives.

Augustine’s mature articulation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in relation to God’s unmerited grace represents a landmark moment in the history of how the Western Church would conceive of humankind’s relationship to God, as it sought to provide an answer to the all-important question of how sinful humankind might find salvation in a Holy and Righteous God. Augustine established such a connection between the human capacity to love God and God’s grace over the course of his literary engagement with Pelagianism. As controversies arose at the dawn of the fifth century surrounding the universality of sin, the bondage of the will, and predestination, Augustine argued against Pelagius that salvation was not an achievement but a gift that was freely given and freely received, entirely by God’s grace. Augustine’s nascent Trinitarian theology, and specifically his doctrine of the Holy Spirit which does not bloom in full flower until the latter books of the De Trinitate, forms a critical part of his salient and distinguishing doctrine of God’s freely bestowing his grace on sinful humankind. Ultimately, Augustine concludes the De Trinitate with a humble restatement of his desire to “see with my
understanding that which I have believed,” as he prayerfully concedes the fact that his
“thoughts are many, thoughts such as thou knowest, vain as thou knowest the thoughts of men to
be.” In the end, Augustine reminds us of the glorious ineffability of the many mysteries of the
Triune God that continue to both perplex and inspire wonder, even as he himself exemplifies a
searching heart of humble faith.

\[\text{De Trinitate 15.28.51 (180). (CCL 50A. 534): “Quaesuui te et diseraui intellectu uidere quod credidi.”} \]
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