



1934

St. Augustine as a Historian of Philosophy

James Patrick Brogan
Loyola University Chicago

Recommended Citation

Brogan, James Patrick, "St. Augustine as a Historian of Philosophy" (1934). *Master's Theses*. Paper 73.
http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/73

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).
Copyright © 1934 James Patrick Brogan

A. M. D. G.

ST. AUGUSTINE AS A HISTORIAN OF PHILOSOPHY.

A Thesis submitted to
the Graduate Faculty
of Loyola University
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for the degree of Master
of Arts,

Loyola University
Chicago, Ill.
1934.

JAMES PATRICK BROGAN.

Vita.

I was born July 2, 1911, in the city of Toledo, Ohio. I attended the Immaculate Conception grammar school. Upon completion of the eight year course I enrolled at St. John's High School, from which I was graduated in 1929. I Received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from St. John's University in June, 1933.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Page.
Vita.	
Introduction	1.
Thales	7.
Anaximander	8
Anaximenes	9
Pythagoras	11
Heraclitus	12
Anaxagoras	13
Archelaus	15
Diogenes	16
Democritus	16
Sophists	19
Socrates	20
Antisthenes	22
Aristippus	23
Plato	24
Successors of Plato	34
Aristotle	35
Stoics	37
Epicureans	42
Plotinus	45
Porphry	47
Conclusion	50.

In his introduction to his work: Early Greek Philosophy, J. Burnet tells us that it is impossible to write a history of philosophy. A man's philosophy is too personal a thing, he thinks, and it is impossible for a man to capture the true spirit of it. Nevertheless, many and varied have been the attempts made by men, seeking to present a true picture of the progress of philosophy since its earliest beginning. There is no doubt that these histories have been of great service to mankind and have aided students no little, in the pursuit of philosophy. They have presented a picture of its progress and have aided us in gaining an insight into the lives and philosophical systems of those men, through the efforts of whom, the study of philosophy was kept alive and given the impetus which aided it in gaining the position which was its due.

Nearly all philosophers have incorporated consciously or unconsciously, in their writings, a history of philosophy, at least a history of those men who have preceded them in this department. It is especially in those whose writings have been prolific, that we find frequent references to the writings of others. Now among the philosophers of antiquity, we find the name of St. Augustine holding a prominent place. He was a pioneer in the field of Christian philosophy and was one of the greatest speculative thinkers, the greatest, perhaps,

since Aristotle. He synthesized all the best elements of pagan philosophy into a system of Christian thought. St. Augustine is known as the founder of the Philosophy of History, which is exemplified in his great work: De Civitate Dei. We are now going to present him in a new role - as a historian of Greek philosophy.

St. Augustine was born at Tagaste in Numidia, the son of Patricius, a pagan, and Monica who was a devout Christian. He was educated at Tagaste and from there he went to Carthage to continue his studies. He devoted his attention to the study of Rhetoric, which subject he intended to teach. We learn from his Confessions, that in his youth, he possessed none of those admirable qualities for which, in his later years, he became famous. He was given to immoralities and travelled with loose companions. St. Augustine had a great deal of spare time on his hands during his youth and this did not serve to improve his character or his morals.

Throughout his youth and early manhood Augustine continued his immoral life, and remained in the company of evil companions. He did, however, continue his studies and advanced in wisdom for which he had an ardent love. In his Confessions, he tells us that at this time he came across a book of Cicero's which was entitled "Hortensius" and which contained an exhortation to philosophy. This book changed his affections and

started him upon the study of philosophy. He was led astray by the doctrines of the Manicheans and became one of their sect, drawing others after him. After some time, however, he found fault with their doctrines and, finding, that not even Faustus, a great bishop of the Manichees, could answer his difficulties, he resolved to leave them.

Augustine continued his profession as a teacher of Rhetoric at Rome and Milan, where he came into contact with the saintly bishop, Ambrose. Through his influence Augustine became a Cathecumen in the Catholic Church, and made his break with the Manicheans definite. Augustine gradually abandoned many of the errors into which he had fallen; he desired absolute certainty. He became an ardent adherent of the Platonic philosophy, by which he was strongly influenced throughout all his writings. When he was thirty-three years of age, St. Augustine decided to devote his life to God and was received into the Catholic Church. It was not long before he was ordained a priest, and eventually became Bishop of Hippo, in Africa.

From this short sketch of his life, we can see that St. Augustine was well qualified to write a history of Greek philosophy. He came into contact with many of the writings of the Greek philosophers, as we read in various places in the Confessions. Having been an adherent of both the Manichean and Academic sects, he doubtless learned much about Greek philosophy from them. Moreover, Augustine himself was not so far

removed from the era in which Greek philosophy flourished, so there was doubtless a great deal of information available on these men, in his time. In his Confessions he remarks that he had read and well remembered much of the philosophers; it is highly probable that the term "philosophers" here refers to Greek philosophers. Thus we see that St. Augustine would be competent as a historian of Greek philosophy.

Throughout Augustine's works we find frequent references to the philosophical systems of others, and it is our aim here to present his views on Greek philosophers. In Book VIII of Augustine's De Civitate Dei, we find a short sketch of the history of philosophy from the beginning, up to and including Plato. It is upon this that we have based our work, together with the other philosophical works of Augustine in which were found expressed opinions on Greek Philosophers and Philosophies.

It is more or less a matter of conjecture as to Augustine's authorities for the statements he makes regarding Greek philosophers. Except for a very few instances he makes no mention of the authorities upon whom he may have relied. Augustine was forced to rely on Latin translations for his knowledge of Greek philosophers. In his Confessions, he mentions the fact that he disliked the study of Greek very much as a boy; in various other works, similar statements are made,

so that it is pretty certain that Augustine's knowledge of Greek was very meagre, if he knew any at all. There ~~were~~ many authorities extant in Augustine's time, of whose works he might have made use. Some of these along with their works are:

Plato: Dialogues ; Aristotle: Metaphysics, Physics and other works; Cicero: Various works; Diogenes Laertius: Lives of The Philosophers; Sextus Empiricus: Contra Mathematicos; Porphyry; Lactantius: Institutiones; Eusebius of Caesera: Praeparatio Evangelica. Now of these Cicero is the only one to whom Augustine makes a direct reference as an authority. No doubt he used Plato and Porphyry a good deal, but he makes no direct references to them as being authorities for his statements in regard to other philosophers. It is quite possible also that Augustine may have made use of the other works mentioned above, for it was not characteristic of the ancient writers to make specific references to authorities, as is the case with the modern historians. Therefore he might have made use of them without making any mention of the fact.

Augustine's attitude towards the philosophy of the Greeks is highly critical. His standard for judging the worth of these philosophies may be gleaned from the following quotations:

Deum et animam scire cupio.
Nihilne plus? Nihil omnino.
(Soliliquia, I, 2, 7.)

Deus semper idem, noverim
me, noverim te, (Soliliquia,
II, 1, 1.)

Fecisti nos ad te, et inquietum
est cor nostrum donec requiescat
in te. (Confessions)

These statements give the whole scope of Augustinian philosophy.

"Frui Deo" is the highest good; it is the very peak of philosophy. In the De Civitate Dei, we get his definition of a true philosopher: "Verus philosophus est amator Dei". Thus from the foregoing we see that with Augustine, philosophies will either stand or fall, according as they voice their thoughts concerning God and the soul. He will apply this standard unfailingly in his criticism of other philosophical systems. With this standard, of course, Augustine's views will be somewhat different from those of the modern historians who will adopt different standards in their judgments on Greek philosophers. It is with Augustine's views, however, that we are here concerned; the views of the modern historians are brought in more or less as a check on the statements of St. Augustine - to note the points on which there may be agreement or dissension. In choosing our modern authorities, we have chosen men representative of the modern view-point.

We shall present Augustine's views as extracted from his writings, and then present the modern view, which, as we have said, is to act as a check on the statements of Augustine.

In our presentation of his views on Greek philosophers we shall follow, as far as possible, the order in which the men and the various systems made their appearance. We shall begin our presentation with Thales.

Thales:

Thales of Miletus, Augustine tells us in Book VIII of the De Civitate Dei, was the founder of the Ionic school of philosophy. He was among those who were styled the seven sages, six of whom were distinguished by the kind of life they lived, and by certain maxims which they gave forth for the conduct of life. Thales, however, was distinguished as an investigator into the natural causes of things. That which especially rendered him eminent, Augustine holds, was his ability, by means of astronomical calculations, to predict eclipses of the sun and moon. Thales thought that water was the first principle of things, and that of it, all the elements of the world, and even the world itself consists. This is one point on which Augustine criticizes Thales - the fact that he holds water to be the first principle - thus making the first principle of all things material. He classes Thales among those whose minds are enslaved to their bodies. Augustine also tells us that Thales committed his dissertations to writing, in order that he might have successors in his school. He makes no mention of any of the particular works with which he might have been acquainted,

however.

J. Burnet whose work: Early Greek Philosophy, will be our main source in regard to the modern views on those early Greek philosophers, tells us that Thales, the founder of the Milesian school, was, to all appearances, the first human being who can be rightly called a man of science. Things which Augustine seems to have stated as positive facts about Thales, Burnet mentions as being of popular tradition and does not appear to place much faith in them. That the principle of all things is water, which Augustine recognized as the main tenet of Thales, is regarded by Burnet, merely as a guess of Aristotle, there being no evidence in support of it. Burnet disagrees with Augustine about the writings of Thales, for he holds that Thales does not appear to have written anything.

Anaximander:

The successor of Thales, according to Augustine, was Anaximander, who held a different opinion concerning the nature of things. For he did not hold that all things spring from one principle, but thought that each thing springs from its own proper principle. These principles he thought to be infinite in number, and he thought that they generated innumerable worlds, and all the things which arise in them. He also thought that these worlds were subject to alternate dissolution and regeneration, each one continuing for a longer or shorter period of time, according to the nature of the case. He is likewise

classed among those who failed to attribute anything to a divine mind in the production of things.

Burnet gives Anaximander a much fuller treatment. He refers to a book written by Anaximander, of which Augustine makes no mention. He holds that Anaximander did not seem to think it necessary to fix upon air or water as the original and primary form of the body; he preferred to represent it as a boundless something, from which all things rise and to which they return again. He was struck by the fact that the world presents us with a series of opposites, the foremost of which are hot and cold, wet and dry. The formation of the world, he holds, is due to the separating out of opposites. His view, says Burnet, is a curious mixture of scientific intuition and primitive theory. His theories were grotesque, he goes on, but his method was scientific.

Anaximenes:

Anaximenes is mentioned by Augustine as the successor of Anaximander.² He attributed the causes of all things to an infinite air. He neither denied nor ignored the existence of the gods, but, so far from believing that the air was made by them, held, on the contrary, that they sprang from the air. This is criticized by St. Augustine in chapter 23 of Letter CXVIII. Here he says that the opinion of Anaximenes that the air is generated and at the same time believed it to be God,

does not in the least move the man who understands that, since the air is certainly not God, there is no likeness between the manner in which the air is generated, and the manner, understood by none except through divine inspiration, in which He was begotten Who is the Word of God. He remarks that even in regard to material things, a person speaks foolishly who says that the air is generated, and is at the same time, God, while he refuses to give the name God to that by which air is generated for it is impossible, says Augustine, that it could be generated by no power. Furthermore, Anaximenes' saying that the air is in motion will have no disturbing influence as a proof that the air is God, upon the man who knows that all the movements of the body are of a lower order than the movements of the soul, and moreover that the movements of the soul are infinitely slow compared with the movements of God. This idea of Anaximenes is again referred to in the Confessions, when he is treating of proofs for the existence of God. Here he says:

Interrogavi auras flabiles, et
inquit universus cum incolis suis:
Fallitur Anaximenes; non sum Deus.
(Confessionum S. Augustini. X, VI
(9 Migne: Pat. Lat. Vol. I)

Burnet, speaking of Anaximenes, says that only fragments of his work survive. He does not regard Anaximenes as a great original genius. His fame was due to his discovery of the formula of rarefaction and condensation, which, says Burnet, makes the Milesian theory intelligible. No mention of this is

made by St. Augustine. Burnet also affirms that Anaximenes thought of air as being a god. Anaximenes' cosmology is spoken of by Burnet, as being reactionary.

Pythagoras:

The Italic school had as its founder, Pythagoras of Samos, according to Augustine. The term "philosophy" also owes its origin to Pythagoras; for Pythagoras, on being asked what he professed, replied that he was a philosopher, that is, a lover of wisdom. Augustine divides the study of wisdom into action and contemplation. The contemplative part, which has to do with the investigation into the causes of nature and into pure truth, is that department in which Pythagoras is said to have excelled, according to St. Augustine. For he says that Pythagoras gave more attention to the contemplative part, bringing to bear on it "all the force of his great intellect".

Moderns also speak highly of Pythagoras. Burnet says of him that he must have been one of the world's greatest men, but that he wrote nothing, and thus it is hard to say how much of the Pythagorean doctrine is to be attributed to him and how much to his followers. He was famous as a man of science and was also the founder of mathematics. Augustine makes no mention of this. The fame of Pythagoras, according to Burnet, was due to his discovery that what gives form to the Unlimited is the Limit. It is through this that the Pythagoreans

discover the conception of form, the correlative of matter, the conception of which had been reached by the Milesians.'

There now comes a gap in Augustine's history of philosophy. For he passes over, without any mention whatever, such men as Parmenides, Zenophanes, Zeno of Elea, and Melissus. Augustine gives no reason for omitting these names. Whether he did not consider them of sufficient importance to mention is only a matter of conjecture. These men are all considered in histories of philosophy written by moderns. Augustine takes up his story again with Heraclitus.

Heraclitus:

Augustine does not mention Heraclitus by name, although he does criticize a doctrine which is attributed to him. For in the De Civitate Dei, Book VIII, II, he says that there are some who think that this is the only world, but that it dies and is born again at fixed intervals, and this times without number. However, Augustine states, they must acknowledge that the human race existed before there were others to beget them. For they cannot suppose that, if the whole world would perish, some men would be left alone in the world, as they might survive in floods and fires, which these speculators suppose to be partial, and thus from which they could reasonably argue that a few men survived whose posterity would renew the population. For, Augustine goes on, since they believe that the

world itself is renewed out of its own material, so they must believe that out of its own elements the human race was produced.

In treating of Herakleitos, Burnet holds that he is much too big for treatment by our formulas. There is no scientific discovery which can be attributed to him however. His cosmology was reactionary to that of his predecessors. Burnet does not refer to the theory of Herakleitos which Augustine had criticized,

Another man who is always considered by modern historians of philosophy, and whom Augustine fails to mention, is Empedocles. As in the former cases, Augustine gives no reason for the omission. The next man to be considered by Augustine is Anaxagoras.

Anaxagoras:

Anaxagoras is mentioned by Augustine as having been the pupil of Anaximenes. He perceived that a divine mind was the productive cause of all things which we see. He held that all the various kinds of things, according to their several modes and species, were produced out of an infinite matter consisting of homogeneous particles, but by the efficiency of a divine mind. In his Letters,¹ Augustine comments on references made by Cicero on Anaxagoras. Here he says that Cicero speaks as if Anaxagoras had said that mind, to which he ascribed the

¹Letter CXVIII, 24.

power of ordering and fashioning all things, had sensation such as the soul has by means of the body; for whatever is perceived by sensation is not concealed from the whole soul. However, Anaxagoras had not said anything about bodily sensation. He refers again to Cicero, who had said that mind, according to Anaxagoras, is a kind of a body and has within it an animating principle, because of which it is called animal. If then it is an animal it must have some exterior body. Augustine holds that Cicero speaks here as if Anaxagoras had said that mind cannot be otherwise than belonging to some animal. And yet, Augustine goes on, Anaxagoras held the opinion that essential Supreme Wisdom is mind, although it is not the peculiar property of any living being, since Truth is near to all souls alike who are able to enjoy it. Thus Augustine holds that Anaxagoras perceived the existence of this Supreme Wisdom and apprehended it to be God. He says further that we should not think ourselves made wise merely by acquaintance with the name Anaxagoras, nor even by our having the knowledge through which Anaxagoras knew this truth. For he holds that truth ought to be dear to us, not merely because it was not unknown to Anaxagoras, but because it is the truth.

We learn from Burnet¹ that Anaxagoras was an adherent of the philosophy of Anaximenes, thus confirming Augustine's view. Mind, Burnet holds, was referred to by Anaxagoras as the

¹Chap. IV, pp. 76-81.

source of motion. Burnet also holds that it is not incorporeal; thus he disagrees with Augustine's view. According to Burnet, mind, as viewed by Anaxagoras, is sort of a fluid, and unmixed. It enters into some things and not into others; thus is explained the distinction between the animate and the inanimate. The way in which it separates things and orders them is by producing a rotatory motion which begins at the center and spreads out. Thus, Mind, in Burnet's opinion, is sort of a "deus ex machina". He also says that Anaxagoras calls only the source of motion, God, while, as we have seen, Augustine holds that Anaxagoras said that essential Supreme Wisdom is mind, and this essential Supreme Wisdom, he apprehended to be God.

Archelaus:

Anaxagoras, says Augustine,¹ was succeeded by his disciple Archelaus. Archelaus also held that that all things consisted of homogeneous particles of which each particular thing was made, but that these particles were pervaded by a divine mind, which perpetually energized all the eternal bodies, namely those particles, so that they were alternately united and separated.

Burnet² merely refers to Archelaus in passing. He says that Archelaus was a disciple of Anaxagoras and was the first Athenian to interest himself in science or philosophy. Burnet mentions that he had Socrates as one of his pupils.

¹De Civitate Dei, VIII.

²Chap. VIII, p.124.

Diogenes:

Diogenes is also mentioned by Augustine¹ as a pupil of Anaximenes. He held that a certain air was the original substance out of which all things were produced. He also adds that it was possessed of a divine reason, without which nothing could be produced from it.

The importance of Diogenes, Burnet holds,² is due to the fact that he was the means by which the doctrines of Ionian Science were carried to Socrates. In the fragments of his writings is found the first explicit justification for the old Milesian doctrine that the primary substance must be one. He followed Anaximenes in his doctrines.

Democritus:

Democritus is not mentioned by St. Augustine in Book VIII of the De Civitate Dei; where he gives a short historical sketch of the philosophers who preceded Plato, but he makes frequent references to him in other parts of his works. In his Letters,³ he remarks that it would have been much better had he never heard the name of Democritus, than that he should now with sorrow ponder the fact that a man who was so highly esteemed in his own age, who thought that the gods were images which emanated from solid bodies, but were not solid themselves; and that circling this way and that way by their independent motions, glide into the minds of men, and make the divine

¹ Ch. VIII. p.123. ² De Civ. Dei. VIII ³ Letter CXVIII, 27

power enter into the region of their thoughts. For these philosophers (Atomists), says Augustine, conceive of no cause of thought in our minds, except when images of those bodies which are the objects of our thought, come and enter into our minds. In criticizing this, Augustine says that there are many things which are without material form and which are intelligible and are apprehended by us. He quotes as an example essential Wisdom and Truth. He holds that if philosophers can form no idea of these, he wonders why they dispute concerning them at all. Augustine remarks that Democritus differs from Epicurus in his doctrines on physics. For Democritus holds that there is in the concourse of the atoms a certain vital and breathing power, by which power he affirms that the images themselves - not all images, but the images of the gods. - are endowed with divine attributes, and that the first beginnings of the mind are in those universal elements to which he ascribed divinity. He also holds that these images possess life inasmuch as they are wont either to benefit or hurt us. He says further that he wonders why Democritus was not convinced of the error of his philosophy, even by this fact, that such images coming into our minds which are so small, if being as the Atomists hold, material could not possibly, in the entirety of their size, come into contact with it. For when a small body is brought into contact with a large body, it cannot in any way be touched at the same time by all points of the larger. How, then asks

Augustine, are those images, at the same moment, in their whole extent, objects of thought, seeing that they cannot in their whole extent either find entrance into a body so small, or come into contact with so small a mind? He holds that Democritus cannot be assailed with this argument if he holds that the mind is immaterial. But in that event, he says that Democritus should have perceived that it is at once unnecessary and impossible for the mind, being immaterial, to think through the approach of material images.

Augustine continues his criticism of Democritus and the Atomists. He remarks that the mere statements of their opinion should have sufficed to secure their rejection, without anyone going to the trouble of refuting them. He says that their opinions, as soon as they were enunciated ought to have been rejected with contempt by the slowest intellects. He holds that we are not even at liberty to grant the existence of the atoms themselves. For the absurdity of atoms can be proven from the statements of the Atomists themselves. For they affirm that there is nothing else in nature but atoms and the void, and the forms which result from the clashing of these. Augustine asks then, under what category they would put the images which they suppose to flow from the more solid bodies, but which, if they are bodies, possess so little solidity that they are not discernible except by their contact with the eyes when we see them. For these men hold that these images can proceed from

the material object and come to the eye or the mind, which nevertheless, they hold to be material. Augustine asks, do these bodies flow from atoms or from themselves? If they do not flow from these atoms, then something can be the object of thought without such images, which they deny. He asks also, whence have they acquired a knowledge of atoms, since they can in no way become an object of thought to us? He then says that he is ashamed for having even thus far ventured to refute them.

Burnet speaks of Democritus as having been one of the greatest writers of antiquity. He says he was one of the disciples of Leukippos, of whom Augustine makes no mention. He received his cosmological system mainly from Anaxagoras, and his theory of atoms and the void from Leukippos. Burnet, of course, gives far more consideration to Democritus than did St. Augustine, who was concerned mainly, as we have seen with the criticism of the Atomic theory of knowledge. Democritus, in the opinion of Burnet, refused to make an absolute separation between sense and thought. Burnet also mentions Democritus' theory on conduct, no mention of which is made by Augustine.

The Sophists are the next who would ordinarily be treated in a history of philosophy. Augustine, however, gives no consideration to these men. We are again at a loss to explain the omission of his treatment of such men as Protagoras and the other Sophists. The next of the philosophers to come

under the scrutiny of Augustine is Socrates.

Socrates:

In continuing his short history of the philosophers who preceded Plato, which he undertook in Book VIII of the De Civitate Dei, Augustine next considers Socrates. Socrates is said to have been the first to have directed the entire effort of his philosophy to the correction and regulation of morals. Augustine is of the opinion that his reason for doing so cannot be determined accurately. He holds that one cannot be sure whether Socrates did this because he was wearied of obscure and uncertain things, and so wished to devote his mind to the discovery of something manifest and certain, which was necessary in order to the obtaining of a blessed life, or whether he did it because he was unwilling that minds defiled with earthly things should attempt to raise themselves upward to divine things. He saw, says Augustine, that the causes of things were sought for by people, and these causes he believed to be ultimately reducible to the will of the only true and supreme God, and on this account he thought that they could only be comprehended by a purified mind. Thus he thought that all diligence ought to be given to the purification of life by good morals, in order that the mind might be delivered from the depressing weight of lusts, and thus be enabled to raise itself upward to divine things. Thence it might, with purified understanding, contemplate that nature which is incorporeal and unchangeable

light, where live the causes of all created things. As to his method, Augustine remarks that it is evident that he had a wonderful pleasantness of style and argument. In his division of philosophy into the active and the contemplative, Augustine holds that Socrates is said to have excelled in the active part of the study. Augustine makes no further remarks on Socrates or on his philosophy.

Socrates is given a much fuller treatment by the moderns. Burnet's treatment of Socrates begins with the statement that there are two things which may be fairly attributed to Socrates, namely, universal definitions and inductive reasoning. No mention of either of these is made by St. Augustine. The reason which Burnet advances as to why Socrates formulated his theory of goodness, was because he was dissatisfied with the teaching of the Sophists. Augustine, as we saw above, was of the opinion that the reason could not be determined accurately. Burnet also mentions that Socrates identified knowledge and goodness, and says that there is no doctrine more closely associated with Socrates, and none better attested to. Augustine does not mention this in connection with his treatment of Socrates.

Another modern authority on the history of philosophy, who is rated highly, is Zeller who has a work entitled Socrates And The Socratic Schools. He holds that there is

considerable difficulty in arriving at an accurate view of the philosophy of Socrates, owing to the discrepancies in the writings of the original authorities. He says that there is no doubt that the purpose of Socrates was to find true knowledge in the service of the Delphic God. He referred all claims of morality to the claims of knowledge. Zeller looks upon Socrates as an intellectual and moral reformer.¹

A. E. Taylor, another modern critic with a good reputation, has published a work entitled Socrates. He looks upon Socrates with a great deal more respect than did St. Augustine, and attributes far more to him. He holds that Socrates created the intellectual and moral tradition by which Europe has ever since lived. Socrates, says Taylor, "brought philosophy down from heaven to earth". Taylor also attributes to Socrates the introduction of the idea of teleology into philosophy, which, he claims, was to be fully worked out and transmitted to later times as the chief heritage of Greek philosophical thought by Plato, Plotinus and Aristotle.² In his consideration of Socrates, Augustine does not bring in this idea.

The followers of Socrates are given a somewhat cursory treatment by Augustine. The first of whom he speaks are the Cynics, mentioning only their founder Antisthenes.

Antisthenes:

In his short history of the pre-Platonics

¹pp. 53-123

²pp. 152-173

philosophers Augustine merely mentions Antisthenes in passing. He states that the followers of Socrates held diverse opinions concerning the final good, a thing which is to be scarcely credited to the followers of one master. Antisthenes, he remarks, placed the final good in virtue. This is the only mention of Antisthenes by Augustine.

Zeller in his work, Socrates And The Socratic Schools gives a much fuller treatment of Antisthenes and the Cynic School. He mentions Antisthenes as being the founder of this sect. Although this philosophy claims to be the teaching of Socrates, the many sided view of Socrates, Zeller holds, was above the powers of Antisthenes, who was naturally of a dull and narrow comprehension.

Aristippus & Cyrenaics

Aristippus is placed in the same category as Antisthenes by St. Augustine. He also held a different opinion from Socrates concerning the final good. He placed the chief good in pleasure. This is the extent of the consideration given by St. Augustine to Aristippus and the Cyrenaics.

We again look to Zeller for the modern view on Aristippus and the Cyrenaics. He states that Aristippus did not follow Socrates so devotedly as to lose his own peculiarities of character and thought. The end to be secured by philosophy is the happiness of mankind. Pleasure is the only un-

conditional good. He concludes his views on Aristippus with the following statement:

Granting that Aristippus was not a false follower of Socrates, he was certainly a very one-sided follower, or rather he, among all the followers of Socrates, was the one who least entered into his master's teaching. (Zeller: Socrates And The Socratic Schools. p. 321)

We now come to consider one of the outstanding figures in the history of philosophy - Plato. It is, of course, to be expected that Augustine will devote a great deal of space to the exposition of the Platonic Philosophy, since this philosophy influenced his own to such a great extent. In fact, Augustine is often referred to as the "Christian Plato". Thus it might be well to keep in mind the fact of Plato's influence on Augustine, in considering Augustine's views on Plato's position in the history of Greek philosophy.

Plato And The Platonists:

In one place Augustine terms Plato as follows:

"Plato, vir sapientissimus et eruditissimus temporum suorum".¹

This quotation is indeed characteristic of Augustine's views on Plato. Augustine holds that among the followers of Socrates, Plato was the one who shone with a glory which far excelled that of the others. To Plato is due the praise for having perfected philosophy by combining the active and the contemplative parts

¹Contra Academicos, III, XVII. Migne: Pat. Lat. I

of the study into one. He divides philosophy into three parts; moral, natural and rational. Augustine is of the opinion that it is very difficult to discover what Plato thought on various matters, for he says that as Plato liked and constantly affected the well known method of his master, Socrates, it is just as difficult to discover what Plato's true opinions were as it was to learn those of Socrates. Thus we should not make any rash affirmations about the opinions of Plato.

The Platonists have distinguished those things which are conceived by the mind from those which are perceived by the senses. Augustine states that they neither take away from the senses anything to which they are competent, nor do they attribute anything to them beyond their competency. The light of our understanding by which all things are learned by us, they have said to be the self same God by whom all things are made. They have seen that no material body is God, and therefore have transcended all bodies in seeking for God. They preferred the intelligible nature to the sensible.

It is because of their thoughts concerning God that Augustine is of the opinion that the Platonists deserve to be exalted above other philosophers. In this he says that they approach nearer to us (Christians) than all other philosophers. For Plato determined the final good to be to live according to virtue, and held that he only can attain to virtue who knows and imitates God, which knowledge and imitation, Plato holds,

are the only cause of blessedness. Thus Plato held that to philosophize is to love God. Philosophy is directed to the obtaining of a blessed life. Augustine further testifies to the preferment of the Platonists when he says, concerning their thoughts about God:

Quicumque igitur philosophi de
Deo summo et vero ista senserunt,
quod et rerum creaturum sit ef-
fector et lumen cognoscendarum,
et bonum agendarum; quod ab illo
nobis sit et principium naturae,
et veritas doctrinae, et feleci-
tas vitae; De Civ. Dei
VIII, 9.

We are told by Augustine that those who are praised as having most closely followed Plato, and who are said to have manifested the greatest acuteness in understanding him, have, perhaps entertained such an idea of God as to admit that in Him are to be found the cause of existence, the ultimate reason of the understanding, and the end in reference to which the whole of human life is to be regulated. Of which three things, Augustine says, the first pertains to the natural, the second to the rational, and the third to the moral part of philosophy. Here he is again referring to the division of philosophy which is attributed to Plato.

All philosophers, Augustine holds, who, with their minds enslaved to their bodies, suppose the principle of all things to be material, must give place to the Platonists, whom, he says, he has not undeservedly exalted above all others.

Plato's thoughts concerning God are derived from the Scriptures, which Sacred Books, Augustine avers, Plato was acquainted with, although many have held opinions to the contrary.

Augustine now chooses to argue with the Platonists because they held that honors ought to be performed to many gods. For they hold that there is a three-fold division of all animals endowed with a rational soul: gods, demons and men. They are of the opinion that the gods occupy the loftiest place, the men the lowest, while the demons occupy the middle region. They think that all of the gods are good and honorable and friendly to the virtues of the wise. They hold it unlawful to think otherwise concerning the gods.'

The Platonists look upon the demons as either good or bad while we, says St. Augustine, are wont to look upon all demons as bad. They attribute to demons the power of mediators which Augustine attributes to angels. Even though these demons are bad, the Platonists hold that divine honor must be paid to them. Augustine devotes a somewhat lengthy treatment to these opinions of the Platonists. He comes to the conclusion that the Platonists, though knowing something of the Creator of the Universe, have misunderstood the true worship of God, by giving divine honor to angels, good or bad.

'The source of all the foregoing on Plato and the Platonists is Books VIII & IX of the De Civitate Dei.

St. Augustine also decries the theory of Plato that all mortal animals are not created by God Himself, but by other lesser gods whom God created and to whom He delegated the power of creating. He says that if only those who held this opinion could be delivered from the superstition which prompts them to seek a reason for paying divine honors to these gods, they could easily be disentangled from this error. For, he argues, if God, as Plato maintained, embraces in His eternal intelligence, the ideas of both the universe and all that is in it, why then should He not, with His own hands, make them all? Could He be unwilling, Augustine asks, to be the constructor of works, the plan of which called for His intelligence?

The Platonists looked upon the soul as being immortal and eternal. As regards the eternity of the soul they argued that nothing can be immortal unless it had no beginning. Thus the soul, being immortal, must also be eternal. However, they look upon the blessedness of the soul as being endless. Augustine avers, and yet this blessedness had a beginning. Thus their argument in support of the eternity of the soul is of no avail. The opinion of some of the Platonists, that there is a necessary revolution carrying souls away and bringing them back again to the same things, is false.²

In the De Trinitate,³ Augustine refers to Plato's doctrine of Reminiscence. He states that Plato endeavoured to

¹ De Civ. Dei XII, 26. ² *Op. cit.* XI, 21. ³ XII, XV, 24.

persuade us that the souls of men lived here even before they bore these bodies. Hence Plato concludes that those things which are learnt are rather remembered as having been known already, than as taken into the mind as something new.

In regard to the creation of the world, Plato assigns this as God's reason in creating it - that good works might be made by a good God. Augustine holds that he does not know whether Plato perceived this through his quick sighted genius, or whether he was instructed regarding this point by someone else. Although some Platonists look upon this world as being eternal, Plato, Augustine avers, most plainly states that the world had a beginning.² As regards the elements of the world, Plato held that the two greatest elements and the furthest removed from one another - earth and fire - are coupled and united by the two intermediate elements - air and water. The earth is at the base of the series, the water is above the earth, the air is above the water, and above all is fire.³ They attribute all these elements to God, their Creator.⁴ In his Letters,⁵ Augustine tells us that in regard to Physics, the Platonists taught that the originating cause of all natures is an immaterial Wisdom. The Platonists held, in regard to the

¹ De. Civ. Dei XI, 21. ² op. cit. XII, 21. ³ op. cit. XXII, 11

⁴ op. cit. XIV.

⁵ CXVIII, 18.

government of the world, that it was governed by the Providence of God.¹

We find also in his Letters,² the opinion of Augustine as to why the doctrines of the Platonists did not receive such a wide acceptance at the time of their promulgation. He says that the people of their time were so enthralled by the flesh, and too greatly immersed in material things, to accept the views advocated by the Platonists. For with all the false philosophies assailing them at that time, the Platonists rather concealed their own doctrines to be sought for, rather than bring them out into the light to be vilified. He states further, that the Platonists were unable to convince men that the final end of man is to enjoy God. The reason for this, he holds was that, God, being spiritual, could not be grasped by their senses, and thus could not be understood by those people. For all of them had a love of earthly things and of things material.

Such were Augustine's views on Plato and the Platonists. That they exercised an influence on his philosophy is apparent ~~from~~ the opinions he uttered concerning them. Though he opposed them on some few points his words of praise for them are much more numerous than his words of censure. It will be interesting now, to consider the views of some of the modern authorities on Plato and the Platonists.

¹ De Civitate Dei IX.

² CXVIII, 18.

Burnet is of the opinion that it is very difficult to interpret the central doctrines of Platonic thought, since Plato did not commit it to writing. We have to rely on Aristotle for much of our information and Aristotle, he avers, is a very unsympathetic critic of Plato's teaching. Burnet gives to Plato the credit for bringing God into philosophy for the first time. He looked upon God as a living soul and also as being good, which two points he believed he had established by scientific reasoning. Burnet states that we can hardly doubt that Plato was a monotheist. He holds that we can look upon the many gods mentioned in the Timaeus, as belonging to the mythology of that dialogue. Thus Burnet would disagree with Augustine, who censured the Platonists for giving divine honor to many gods. Burnet agrees with Augustine in that the Platonists looked upon the soul as being immortal. He gives as their reason, that the souls are not indestructible of their own nature, but because to destroy what He has made, is inconsistent with the goodness of God.

Burnet substantiates Augustine's statements as to the Platonist's belief in the elements of the world. We are told by him that they looked upon the world as made up of the four elements, earth, air, fire and water, which among them, form one proportion. There is a perpetual ebb and flow of the elements; the diversity of matter is the cause of the constant

¹Ch. XVII, pp. 336-338

motion. The sum of the four elements constitute the universe.

Burnet has another work entitled Platonism, in which he regards Plato in the same light as does St. Augustine. In the very first part of his work he says:

I have to speak to you of one who was in many ways the greatest man that ever lived, Plato of Athens. ²

Plato, we are informed, has been the source of all that is best in our civilization. In another place ³ he refers to him as "the greatest man that ever lived". Thus we see that Burnet also regards Plato and his followers in a high light.

Zeller, in his work, Plato And The Older Academy, attributes Plato's greatness to this - that he was able to give the progress of philosophy an impulse so powerful, and one which so far transcended the limits of his own system, and to proclaim the deepest principle of all right speculation - the idealism of thought - with such energy and enthusiasm, that to him, "despite his scientific deficiencies" belongs the honor of conferring "philosophic consecration" on those in whom the principle lives.

Zeller holds that it is quite difficult to discover the distinction which Plato made between the various branches of philosophy. Many classifications were attributed to him which were entirely alien to him. Zeller, however, agrees with

¹ Ch. VIII, pp. 371-378

² Ch. I, p.1

³ Ch. VI, p.96

the distinction attributed to Augustine by Plato, namely that Plato divided philosophy into three parts, Dialectics, Physics, and Ethics.

Zeller attaches great significance to Plato's theory of ideas, no mention of which is made by St. Augustine. He substantiates Augustine's statement as to Plato looking upon God as the creator of the universe.¹ Zeller also refers to the fact that Plato recognized visible and created gods. Their significance, he holds, is limited to their natural connection with the world and to the setting forth of the eternal laws. As regards the demons, to which Augustine devotes a great deal of space in discussing, Zeller says, that although Plato mentions them, he nowhere says a word to imply that he really believed in them.²

Zeller affirms Plato's belief in the immortality of the soul. This is a point, the strict dogmatic signification of which can least be doubted. Zeller is of the opinion that Plato considered his doctrine of Recollection as being a myth. He adds that Plato looked upon myths as being hints of the truth.³

Thus it is seen that the modern critics agree with Augustine on many points concerning Plato and the Platonists.

¹The source of all the foregoing on Plato is to be found in Zeller's work, Plato And The Older Academy Ch. IV, V, & VI

²Ch XII.

³Ch. IX

They substantiate him in many of his statements. Of course, as is to be expected, there is a divergance of view point on some matters. Some of the doctrines which Augustine attributes to Plato as specific beliefs, are referred to by moderns as myths. On the whole, although they realize the importance of Plato in the history of philosophy, they are not apt to attribute to him as much significance as Augustine does.

The successors of Plato in his school were, according to St. Augustine,¹ Speusippus, Xenocrates, Polemo. and Arcesilaus. Augustine does not devote much attention to them, apparently thinking it sufficient to mention that they were the successors of Plato as the head of the Academy. Even in his work Contra Academicos,² Augustine merely mentions them in passing. In his Letters, he says that they devoted themselves to the task of refuting the Stoics and Epicureans.

In speaking of these men, Zeller, in his work, Plato And The Older Academy,³ says that we know so little about them, that it is often impossible to combine, even by conjecture, the scattered fragments of their doctrines, which have come down to us, into any connected whole. He does, though, give a great deal more consideration to them than does St. Augustine.

The next philosopher to come under the attention of St. Augustine is Aristotle. It will, perhaps, be of surprise

¹ Letter CXVIII, 17.

² III, XVII.

³ Ch. XIV

to some, to find that Aristotle does not attribute to Aristotle the position usually attributed to him by the modern historians of philosophy. This is explained however, by Ricaby, in his work, St. Augustine's City Of God. Here he states that the philosophy of Aristotle was in decadence during the time of Augustine, and did not assume the position of importance which was its due, until its revival by later philosophers.

Aristotle:

Keeping in mind the above statement of Ricaby's, we can understand the few references made by St. Augustine to Aristotle. He refers to him as a disciple of Plato. In one place¹ he speaks of him as "a man of eminent abilities, inferior in eloquence to Plato, but far superior to many in that respect". Thus he looks upon Aristotle as being inferior to Plato. Augustine looks upon him as the founder of the Peripatetic sect. When he is discussing passions and perturbations, he remarks² that the Platonists and Aristotelians both held that even the wise man is subject to perturbations, though they are moderated by reason, which imposes laws upon them and keeps them within their proper bounds. His reason for the agreement between the Aristotelians and Platonists is that Aristotle was a disciple of Plato's. In his Confessions,⁴ he refers to the fact that he had read the "Ten Predicaments" of Aristotle. He then looked

¹ Book VIII. ² De Civ. Dei VIII, 12. ³ op. cit. IX, 4.
⁴ III, IV, 7.

upon the name of Aristotle as being something great and divine. Augustine easily understood this work, although he says that there were others who understood it only with great difficulty. In his De Utilitate Credendi¹, he speaks of the philosophy of Aristotle as being deep and obscure. A statement such as this would lead one to believe that Augustine must have known a great deal about the philosophy of Aristotle. However he makes no further references about the philosophy of Aristotle, so it is more or less a matter of conjecture as to his knowledge of this man.

As is to be expected modern historians attribute far more to Aristotle than did St. Augustine. We have chosen Zeller as being representative of the modern view point on Aristotle. He has a lengthy treatise on Aristotle entitled Aristotle And The Peripatetics, which is divided into two volumes. His philosophy, we are told, is to be understood as a development and an evolution of that of Plato's. We are not, however to look upon Aristotle as a mere follower of Plato; although he took over some of the principles laid down by Plato and Socrates, he developed and combined these into a system which went far beyond their systems. In speaking of Aristotle, Zeller says:

He was not only one of the
highest speculative thinkers -

¹VI, 13.

he was also one of the most accurate and untiring observers, and one of the most erudite men of learning that the world knows.'

From this it can be seen that Aristotle is valued much more highly by the moderns than he was by St. Augustine. Zeller then goes on to consider the whole Aristotelian system, showing the perfection of its development. He shows the debt that philosophy owes to the genius of Aristotle. In the opinion of the majority of modern historians Aristotle occupies a place of greater prominence in the history of philosophy than does Plato. Thus we see that there would be some disagreement between Augustine and the moderns on this point. However, it must be kept in mind, as was stated above that the philosophy of Aristotle was in decadence during the time of Augustine, so there is perhaps, some excuse for his cursory treatment of this man who is rated so highly by the modern historians.

The Stoics:

Zeno and Chrysippus are mentioned by Augustine as being the founders of the school of philosophy known as the stoics. The highest good is said by Zeno to be virtue and he who is virtuous attains to a blessed life. In commenting on this, Augustine states that there have been some who have been ashamed to place man's good in the body, and, by placing it in the mind, he avers, have unquestionably assigned to it a

'I, IV, p. 175.

De Civitate Dei, IX, 5

lower sphere than that assigned to it by reason. Among Greek philosophers who have held this view, the chief place, both in the number of adherents and in subtlety of disputation has been held by the Stoics. They have however, succeeded in turning the mind from carnal, if not from material, objects. In regard to Dialectics, the Stoics placed the standard of truth in the senses, although they admitted that the senses are sometimes mistaken.

In the Contra Academicos,² Augustine states that Zeno held and taught that there could be no certain knowledge. He also tells us here³ that when Zeno came to the Academy, which at that time was in charge of Polemo, he suspects that Zeno was not the type of man to whom the Academics would reveal the doctrines of Plato. Zeno also taught that the soul was not immortal. He held to no world other than that of sense. He believed only in material things and taught that God, Himself, was fire. Polemo was succeeded as the head of the Academy by Arcesilaus who was an associate of Zeno. While Zeno's error was going abroad, Arcesilaus, in the opinion of Augustine, prudently and efficiently concealed the teachings of Plato, thinking it better to do so.⁴

Zeno was persistent in spreading the pernicious

¹ Letter CXVIII, 12-19. ² II, VI.

³ III, XVII

⁴ Contra Academicos, III, XVII

belief that there was nothing that was not a body, It also lived in his associate Chrysippus, who helped to spread the doctrines more widely.¹ The errors of the Gentiles, in ethics, physics, and the mode of seeking truth, were conspicuously represented in the schools of philosophy of the Stoics and the Epicureans. Augustine holds that they cannot think of anything which is not material.²

There have been many philosophers who have held to the inseparable coexistence of the virtues. The Stoics, however are the only ones who dared to maintain the equality of sins in opposition to the unanimous sentiment of mankind. This is an absurd tenet, we are told, and it can be easily disproved by referring to Holy Scripture. As regards the inseparable coexistence of the virtues, Augustine would hold this to be a correct doctrine.³

The Stoics also maintained that things do not come to pass by necessity, although they do contend that things happen according to chance. They fear that necessity would take away the freedom of the will. But, says Augustine, if necessity is defined as that according to which it is necessary that anything be of such and such a nature, or be done in such

¹ Contra Academicos, III, XVII.

² Letter CXVIII, 26.

³ Letter CXVIII, 5.

and such a manner. there should not be any dread of that necessity taking away the freedom of the will. ¹

The Stoics taught that fire, one of the four elements of which this world was constituted, was both living and intelligent. They thought of it as the maker of the world and of all things contained in it - that it was, in fact, God. They have been only able to suppose that which their hearts, enslaved to sense, have suggested to them. And yet, says Augustine, they have within themselves something which they cannot see; they represented to themselves inwardly things which they had seen without, even when they were not seeing them, but only thinking of them. ²

Augustine gives us some further ideas in regard to their dialectics. They ascribe to the bodily senses the expertness in disputation, of which they think so highly, maintaining that it is from the senses that the mind conceives the notions of things which they explicate by definition. Thus he maintains, is developed the whole plan and connection of their learning and teaching. In regard to this, Augustine wonders how they can say that none are beautiful but the wise, for, he asks, by what bodily sense have they perceived that beauty? ³

In regard to mental passions and perturbations the Stoics agree with the Platonists and Peripatetics. For they do

¹ De Civ. Dei, V.

² Op. cit. VIII, 5.

³ Ibid.

not hold these passions to be vices, since they also agree that they assail the wise man without forcing him to act against reason and virtue.

Zeller in his work, Stoics, Epicureans And Sceptics,² states that the real business of all philosophy, according to the Stoics, was the moral conduct of man, Philosophy is the learning to be virtuous. Philosophy should lead one to right actions and virtue. He refers to their division of philosophy into Logic, Natural Science, and Ethics, of which Augustine makes no mention.

Zeller also refers to their thoughts on Deity. They at one time emphasize the material side of God, while at another time they give greater prominence to the spiritual side. Zeller holds that the Stoics were Pantheists. They did not think of God and the world as being different beings. It is strange that Augustine did not censure them for this. He does not however, refer to their thoughts on the deity. Zeller also states³ that the Stoics looked upon this world as being under the Providence of God, another fact which Augustine fails to mention.

Zeller agrees with Augustine in regard to the Dialectics of the Stoics. For he holds that there cannot be a very high estimate formed of the logic of the Stoics. Although

¹ De Civ. Dei, IX, 5.

² Ch. IV

³ Ch. VI

there is very little known of this branch of the Stoical system, there is sufficient to justify our judgment.

Zeller disagrees with Augustine, in that he holds that the Stoics believed in the doctrine of necessity. He maintains that this doctrine of theirs was a direct consequence of their Pantheism. For the divine force which governs the world could not be the absolute uniting cause of all things, as they hold it to be, if there existed anything, in any sense independent of itself, unless it were the one unchangeable connecting cause of all things. Divine Providence does not extend to individuals in themselves, but only in so far as they form part of the universe.' Zeller also holds an opinion contrary to Augustine, in that he holds that the Stoics did not recognize the freedom of the will.

The Epicureans:

Epicurus was the founder of that sect of philosophers named after him, the Epicureans. They held that the highest good of man was pleasure, as we learn in the De Trinitate.² They are listed among that group of philosophers who place the supreme good of man in the body, and so stir up crowds of disorderly carnal minds. In fact they are said to have enjoyed the greatest popularity with the multitude.³

In regard to Dialectics the Epicureans held that the

¹ Ch. VII

² XIII, 4.

³ Letter CXVIII, 15.

senses were never deceived. They attribute to the bodily senses the faculty of discriminating truth. They thought that all we learn is to be measured by the untrustworthy and fallacious rules of the senses. The Epicureans could not think of anything that was not material. Augustine is of the opinion, as was stated above, that the many errors of the Gentiles, in physics, ethics, and the mode of seeking truth, are conspicuously represented in the philosophies of the Stoics and the Epicureans.

In his consideration of the origin of the world, Epicurus did not assume anything in the first beginnings of things but atoms, which are certain corpuscles, so minute that they cannot be divided, or perceived by sight or touch. He claims that by the fortuitous concourse of these atoms, there is brought into existence innumerable worlds and living things, and also the souls which animate them. Likewise are brought into existence the gods, who do not inhabit this world, but are located outside of this world. No object of thought is allowed beyond things material. In order that things become an object of thought, images more subtle than those which come to our eyes, flow off from those things which are formed of atoms, and enter into our minds. Thus does he explain knowledge, following in the footsteps of Democritus. Augustine remarks that he

should have been convinced of the error of this, from the consideration of the fact that such images, in their entirety, could not possibly come into contact with the mind, which, being confined within the body is necessarily small.¹

The Epicureans were also of the opinion that the world is eternal and without beginning, and that consequently it has not been made by God. They, Augustine states, are madly deceived and rave in the incurable madness of their impiety. For the world itself, by its well ordered changes and movements, and by the fair appearance of all things visible, bears a testimony of its own that it has been created and that it could not have been created except by God.²

We read in Zeller's work, The Stoics, Epicureans And Sceptics, that the aim of all philosophy with the Epicureans was the promotion of human happiness. Happiness is promoted by knowledge only in so far as knowledge clears away hindrances to the attainment of happiness, Zeller does not think so highly of the philosophy of the Epicureans, for he says that no other system troubled itself so little about the foundations upon which it rested, as they did. Thus he agrees somewhat with Augustine, in his estimate of their philosophy. He holds that their philosophy is lacking in coherence and consistency, and that they involve themselves in many contradictions.

¹ Letter CXVIII, 29.

² De Civ. Dei, XI, 4.

Zeller gives us a different version of the dialectics of the Epicureans. In a speculative light, sensation was the standard of truth; viewed practically the feeling of pleasure or pain was the standard. The senses are not to be trusted, nor is knowledge derived from the reason to be trusted. There is no distinctive mark of truth. As we have seen Augustine reported that the Epicureans believed in the trustworthiness of the senses.

We come now to consider the last group of philosophers with whom we will be concerned in this work - the Neo-Platonists. The first of the men whom we will consider will be Plotinus.

Plotinus:

Plotinus, we are told,² enjoys the reputation of having understood Plato better than any of his other disciples. Plotinus³ held that the way to become blessed was to become like God. He held that the soul derives its blessedness from the same source that we (Christians) do. He even includes in this his world soul. They derive their blessedness from that light which is distinct from it and created by it, and by whose intelligible illumination, it enjoys light in things intelligible. "That great Platonist" Augustine says, in referring to Plotinus, holds that the rational soul has no nature superior to it save God, the Creator of the world and of the soul itself.

¹ Chap. XVI-XXI

² De Civ. Dei, IX, 17.

³ op. cit. X, 2.

Plotinus believes in the Providence of God. He holds that from the beauty of the flowers and foliage, we can see that from the Supreme God, Providence reaches down to even these earthly things below. He argues that all these frail and perishing things could not have such an elaborate beauty were they not fashioned by the Creator. Plotinus also holds that he who possesses all things in abundance, and yet does not enjoy the vision of God, is infinitely miserable.

It is somewhat surprising to find that Augustine does not comment more fully on the philosophy of Plotinus, considering the fact that he was influenced by it to such an extent. From the few comments he does make it is evident that he looks upon Plotinus with a great deal of respect. For the modern view point on Plotinus we have chosen W.R. Inge who has a work of two volumes entitled, The Philosophy Of Plotinus.

In this he deplores the neglect of Plotinus by students of Greek Philosophy. Plotinus, we are told, is one great genius in an age barren of greatness. He is regarded by Inge as a great thinker. Plotinus saw the issue between materialism and the philosophy of spirit more clearly than any previous thinker. Plotinus is not an idealist in the modern sense of the word. Inge then goes on to consider the whole system of Plotinus. He agrees with Augustine in looking upon Plotinus as a great thinker. He, perhaps, even thinks more of

Plotinus than did Augustine.

Porphyry:

Porphyry is the next and the last man whom we will consider in this work. He is also highly respected by St. Augustine, even more so than was Plotinus. He refers to him in one place as "the noblest of the pagan philosophers".¹ He also makes reference to him in various parts of his works as "a great Platonist". However he does censure Porphyry for his advocacy of theurgy as a help for the purification of the soul. At times Porphyry warns people against the practice of theurgy, and at other times says it is helpful for cleansing the spiritual part of the soul, which part takes cognizance of things material. It can not cleanse the intellectual part of the soul, by which the truth of things intelligible is recognized.²

Augustine is of the opinion that Porphyry does not condemn polytheistic worship because he was afraid of offending his friends, the theurgists. He holds that there are angels who visit earth and publish divine truths. Can we believe, Augustine asks, that these angels wish us to be subject to anyone but the Father, whose will they publish? Even Porphyry realizes this, he declares, for he advises one to imitate rather than invoke them. St. Augustine wonders whether Porphyry

¹De Civ. Dei. XXII, 3.

²Op. cit. X, 11.

still doubts whether these gods of the theurgists are wicked demons, or whether he is merely feigning ignorance in order not to offend the theurgists. Augustine remarks that Porphyry makes himself superior to these theurgic rites, by his intellectual life, which dispenses with those things as not being needed by a philosopher.

Had Porphyry been true and faithful in his profession, we are told, he would have recognized the Virtue and Wisdom of God. There is one point in Porphyry's favor mentioned by St. Augustine - that he acknowledged that the spiritual part of the soul could be cleansed by the virtue of chastity, without the aid of those theurgic rites, which he esteemed so highly.²

Porphyry is commended for correcting the theories of Plato and the other Platonists regarding the return of souls. For Plato, and Plotinus following after him, held that the souls of men return, after death, into the bodies of beasts. Porphyry abolished these bestial prisons. For he held that the souls of men return into human bodies, not into the bodies which they had left, but into new bodies. He also holds that the soul, once that it has been received into the Father's presence, shall never again return to the ills of this life. He holds that the purified soul returns to the Father, that it may never again be entangled in the polluting contact with evil.

¹ De Civ. Dei, X, 28.

² op. cit. X 30.

We prefer Porphyry's opinion says Augustine, to the idea of a circulation of souls through constantly alternating happiness and misery.¹ Thus it is seen that Porphyry improved a great deal on Plato and the other Platonists, in regard to this question.

As regards a universal way of the soul's deliverance, Augustine maintains that Porphyry does not hold that there is no such way, but merely says that it has not come to his knowledge. He realized that the philosophy of which he was an adherent did not possess the way. Nevertheless, he believes that Divine Providence could not have left man destitute of a universal way for the soul's deliverance.²

Thus we see that Porphyry stands in high favor with St. Augustine. In regard to points which Augustine does not find quite so agreeable in Porphyry's philosophy, he tries to explain and defend Porphyry's position; from this it can be seen that Porphyry stands high in his estimation. The reason for Porphyry's preference by Augustine is due to the fact that Porphyry emphasized the religious aspect of philosophy. Then, too, when we remember the standard by which Augustine judged the worth of other philosophers - Deum et animam - we can readily understand the reason of Augustine's high regard for Porphyry.

¹ De Civ. Dei, X, 30.

² Op. cit. X, 32.

We find that Porphyry is not regarded so highly by the moderns. This is perhaps, to be explained by the emphasis of religion in Porphyry's philosophy. The religious aspect of philosophy has always been more or less neglected, and thus there has not been much attention paid to the philosophy of Porphyry. The very points which caused Augustine to esteem Porphyry would perhaps be the reason for his neglect by the moderns. Of late years there has been somewhat of a revival of the religious side of philosophy, but apparently no one has considered Porphyry of sufficient importance to give him much consideration. Thus we are obliged to present Augustine's views on Porphyry, without any modern authority to check the statements which he has made.

We have now come to the end of the history of Greek Philosophy as we found it contained in the works of St. Augustine. We have seen that it is not a complete history, since he has omitted the names of some of the philosophers who are usually treated in a history of this type, but he has treated the main figures. Although it is not a complete history of philosophy, the men whom Augustine has considered, have been well handled by him, and he has given to them their place in the history of Greek thought. Thus we can now add to the other laurels of St. Augustine, that of being a historian of philosophy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Migne: St. Augustine. Opera Omnia. Patrologica Latina.

Volumes 32 to 47.

Especially:

Vol. 32.

Confessionum

Solilquiorum

Contra Academicos

Vol. 33.

Epistolae.

Vol. 41

De Civitate Dei

Vol. 42

De Utilitate Credendi

Rev. Marcus Dodds: The Works Of Aurelius Augustine. A new
Translation. 15 volumes.

W. Watts: The Confessions of St. Augustine. Published by G.P.
Putnam & Sons.

E. B. Pusey: The Confessions of St. Augustine. Contained in
the Harvard Classics, Volume 7.

Hatzfield Ad: St. Augustine. A biography. Published by Ben-
ziger Bros. New York. 1898.

Papini Giovanni: Saint Augustine. Published by Harcourt,
Brace & Co. 1930.

Ricaby, J. S.J.: St. Augustine's City of God. A view of the

contents. Published by Burns, Oates & Washburne Ltd. London. 1925.

- Gilson, Etienne: Introduction a l'etude de Saint Augustin. Published by Libraire Philosophique J. Vrin. Paris. 1930.
- Various Authors: A Monument To St. Augustine. Essays on some aspects of his thought written in commemoration of his 15th centenary. Published by Sheed & Ward. London. 1930.
- Burnet, John: Early Greek Philosophy. Published by Macmillan & Co. Ltd. London, 1936.
- Burnet, John: Greek Philosophy. Published by Macmillan & Co. Ltd. London. 1928.
- Burnet, John: Platonism. Published by University of California Press. Berkley Cal. 1928.
- Zeller, Eduard: Plato And The Older Academy. Translated by Sarah Frances Alleyne and Alfred Goodwin. Published by Longman Greens & Co. London. 1888.
- Taylor, A. E. : Plato - The Man And His Work. Published by Menthuen & Co. Ltd. London.
- Zeller Eduard: Socrates And The Socratic Schools. Translated by O. J. Reichel. Published by Longman, Greens & Co. London. 1888.

- Taylor, A. E. : Socrates. Published by Peter Davies Ltd.
1933.
- Zeller Eduard : Aristotle And The Earlier Peripatetics.
Translated from Zeller's Philosophy Of
The Greeks, by B. F. Costelloe and J. H.
Muirhead. Published by Longman Greens &
Co. London. 1897. Two Volumes
- Zeller Eduard: The Stoics, Epicureans And Sceptics.
Translated by O. J. Reichel. Published
by Longman Greens & Co. London. 1870.
- Inge, Wm. R. : The Philosophy of Plotinus. The Gifford
Lectures at St. Andrews. Two Volumes.
Published by Longman Greens & Co. Lon-
don. Third Edition. 1929.
- Turner William: History of Philosophy. Published by
Ginn & Co. 1903.

The thesis "St. Augustine as a Historian of Philosophy," written by James Patric, Brogan, has been accepted by the Graduate School of Loyola University, with reference to form, and by the readers whose names appear below, with reference to content. It is, therefore, accepted as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Dr. Joseph Le Blanc

July 19, 1934

Rev. John McCormick, S.J.

July 20, 1934