

Augustine's Theory of Free Will

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Abstract

Augustine is a master of ancient Christian patristic thought, is regarded as one of the four early Christian fathers. Free will be a problem in the traditional western philosophy. Augustine by thinking of free will, expounds the origin of evil, uplifts the subjective initiative of human being. However, in his later years, Augustine has restricted the early free will theory, and completely falls into God determinism. On the premise of God's prediction and reservation, Augustine's theory of free will fall into theoretical predicament.

Key words: Free will; Evil; The theory of grace

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INTRODUCTION

Saint Augustine (354-430), full name Aurelius Augustinus, born in AD 354 in North African town tower Tagaste, father Patrick West Uz is pagan, mother Monca is a devout Christian. Augustine's young a bohemian life, with a woman cohabitation for many years and has a son; he also traveled in pornographic performances in the theater, and the Colosseum. In his early years, Augustine believes Manichaeism good and evil is dualist approach. Once, he and Manichaeism leaders debate found Manichaeism doctrine does not satisfactorily explain the evil, disappointed. Since then, a period of time has been

influenced by the Greek skepticism. Later on reading the works of Platon, since then, the new Platon doctrine philosophy has an indelible impact on his mind.

In 386 AD, Augustine came to Milan to visit Ambrose. In Milan, the most important event in the life of Augustine's mind. In the story of a Christian friends casually from San Antonio to recognize the letter, and two Roman officials because occasionally read Anthony deeds from dedicated to serve the Lord anecdotes, Augustine heard and violent vibration. After the guests left, Augustine toward the garden, feel an upsurge of emotion, confusion, suddenly listen to next door children sing "take up a book and read it, pick up the book to read." However he never heard the song, he hurried back to the garden just sitting place, turns the page, gaze fell on a is: "can not be drunken lust, fornication debauchery, not jealous of strife. But you are to equip yourself with the weapon of the Lord Jesus Christ; not just to satisfy the lust of the flesh" (Romans, 13.13-14). This is the famous "Milan Garden Event".

387 years, Augustine was baptized in the Baptist Milan bishop Ambrose under the auspices of the Christian faith. 388 years, he returned to North Africa, a semi monastic community built hard life. 391 years, he out of duty rather than to receive orders, 395 years, he was promoted to bishop of Hippo. In 430 years, Wang Del's siege, the death of Hippo.

Augustine works in his life, it is a famous. Most of Augustine's writings are collected in *Latina Patrologia* (referred to as the PL.32-47). His most important theological work is *Trinitate De*. In philosophy, the most influential book is *On Free Will* (De libero arbitrio); *Confessions* (Confessiones); *The City of God* (Decivitate Dei). In addition, there are often cited: *On faith and symbol* (De fide et symbolo), *The theory of the Gospel of John* (In Joannis evangelium).

Augustine lived in the end of the classical society, the eve of the middle ages, is the late godfather, but also

the most authoritative Latin fathers. As Whitehead said, the whole western philosophy are the footnote to Plato's philosophy. Therefore, Christian theology can also see as a footnote to Augustine's philosophy. Augustine is the last person in ancient Greece and Rome, and the first person in the middle ages. Augustine the rationality of ancient Greek/Roman traditions and beliefs of the Hebrew culture to integrate into the Christian, the achievements of the unique characteristics of Christian theology and philosophy, to become master of the patristic philosophy. As in the classical period of major schools of philosophy and theology of the confluence of a synthesizer, he created the Augustine doctrine. His thought had an important influence on the history of Christianity in the middle ages, and the history of western philosophy.

1. EARLY FREE WILL

1.1 The Connotation of Theory of Free Will

The problem of evil is the problem of Augustine's life. In Augustine's view, omniscient, almighty, allgood creator—God, it is impossible to do that is the root of evil. So, where evil comes from, that is, the origin of evil. Augustine in the premise of theodicy, that evil cannot be God, evil from nothingness. Why do people commit crimes? In Augustine's view, the reason why people are evil, that is because people use the wrong will.

Augustine's definition of free will is built on the basis of Platon's seeking the good principle. Platon's "freedom" is a kind of ability that can satisfy people's desire. For man, the ability to pursue and get the good is to be free, and to think that such freedom is inherent. At this point, Augustine and Platon have different views on freedom. Augustine believes that the ability of a single person is unable to obtain the good, so that people can get good to the end of Augustine's view of freedom. In Augustine's personal life experience, we have seen that in the process of pursuing the truth, he has failed to fully agree with Platon's "seeking the good principle", so he turned to the Christian concept of salvation. It is this kind of living situation, Augustine came to this conclusion: only through God's salvation, he can achieve his freedom (that is, the good) of the yearning. In his consciousness, therefore, the true freedom is in the grace of God. We see that it is due to survival of Augustine's personal experience, make originally incompatible the two ideas: Plato's "goodness principle" and Christian "save the concept" combined with Augustine's concept of freedom. Therefore, Augustine's free will, not only is the choice of human right and evil, but people in God's love, accept the grace of God, and in the grace of God, from the good, to meet their yearning for the good.

Augustine in *The Free Choice of the Will* (2 and the 3 volume), the distinction between Adam's "freedom" and "freedom". Adam before the fall is choosing good

freedom, and in reality he has swallowed the snake decoy abused the choosing good freedom, to low levels of good and give up the highest level of God's Dasha. Bound to punish him, after the fall of Adam and Eve and their descendants by "ignorance", "incompetent", lost choosing good freedom, leaving only the evil of free will. In this way, Augustine will be the "fall before the freedom" and "fall after the freedom to distinguish.

1.2 The Origin of Free Will

Free will comes from? What is free will? To examine this issue from the standpoint of the Christian faith, Augustine believed that this need to be started from the creation of God. Augustine according to the description of the creation of God, he put forward the two characteristics of the creation of God: A, namely from God created everything; the second, all creatures are good. World everything is created by the God ex nihilo. All creation, the existence of a reason, that God created them. And why does God create? For God's will. And there is no question of why God is willing to be able to ask God for this kind of problem, because it is not only in the limited rationality of human beings, but more importantly, "there is no greater than God's will to be found". The good will of God created all things in the world, creation is really good. In *On Free Will*, Augustine proved that the existence of God and every good thing is from God. However, we already know these two facts, that the existence of God and every good things are from him and, both have been exactly such inspection, the three things, namely behaviours of free will is counted as a good thing, it is clear.

God created the free will, and the free will to Adam and Eve and later every one, every one has a natural freedom will. Augustine thought that it was a kind of ability to exist in our soul, it is a kind of ability of reason and freedom. Whether we can have free will depend entirely on the will of our hearts, as long as the heart is willing to be. It is not like the world's reputation, health, wealth, things that are subject to a variety of external factors, much of the time is not we want to have the. But Augustine believes that as a kind of free will, which is endowed with a kind of power or ability, it is a man who can only decide his own will. What I want to do, I do not want to do is not subject to the constraints of external factors, completely under the control of their own will. Augustine believes that will be the will of freedom, I will, I am free, free will itself be a kind of good.

1.3 The Legitimacy of Free Will

The good is divided into three grades, good, medium, good minimum of good; freedom is a good medium. In the medium of good standing, the free will, its own decision, will be based on the freedom of the will. No one can live without the capacity of the soul. However, with the free will and the will of the act, as a free person should bear the corresponding consequences, the free will

can be said to be a responsibility to play. Determination and willingness of the will to have good and evil, people can do good by free will, also do evil. Free will can be considered is a good tool, people can use for free will and achievement of good, but also by the crime of free will to do evil. Before the fall of man, man is completely free, this is a kind of freedom in the sense of creation, "the body is fully subordinated to the soul, the soul is happy to obey God, people are free to live a peaceful and happy life.

Justification of free will. God is giving us the freedom to choose, but to give is not wrong, if there is a mistake, it will only be the freedom of the will to choose whether or not to be used. God has given the freedom to choose the people who can use it to do the right thing, and can also use it to commit crimes. God gave man free will be one thing, people use it to commit crime is another thing, the two can not be linked together. "People may not have no free will and righteous life, which is God given sufficient reason for it." if it gave both to call a person to live right, it is called crime, this punishment is not righteousness. "If there is no free will, God punishes, there will be, people act on the results also does not the so-called evil or good the, then the punishment will also be unjust." (De libero arbitrio, p.100), therefore, that God gave man free will is justified: "Here Augustine gives the cause of the free will of man, and the purpose of which is to be given the purpose of the free will of God.

1.4 The Misuse of Free Will—The Origin of Evil

Augustine persisted the problem of evil is not from God. God is omniscient, all good and all powerful; he thought the source of evil and people misuse of free will. About the essence of evil, Augustine in almost all of the works is always adhered to the contrary to Manichaeism argument that evil has no entity or ontological, it just "good lack" or "lack of ontology." Augustine said:

I will explore what is evil, I found is not the evil entity, but corruption will renegade the highest ontology is betray your God, and tends to be dirty. In fact we call the evil, is not the lack of good? (De libero arbitrio, 1.1.1)

Augustine also divided into three categories, that is, the "physical evil", "understanding of the evil" and "ethics of evil". Adam was a crime, because the misuse of the free will. Although people abuse of free will lead to evil, but if there is no free will, people can not live in the proper way. God could have created a world without freedom, and thus would have no evil, but God knows that man can not live without freedom, so that he would allow his freedom to live in the world of evil, which he would have to allow for freedom, and the evil of the world.

On free will be Augustine in Manichean dualism of good and evil and, for the sake of that evil, Augustine put too much emphasis on the role of free will. Because too much emphasis on the role of free will, which leads to the conflict between free will and the genetic type of

"original evil". People can not help but ask, since people have free will, then Adam and Eva will only be borne by their own, and after the children are not involved. In order to deal with Pelagius disaster, Augustine began to limit the freedom of the will, more and more clearly to predestination.

2. UNDER THE GRACE OF FREE WILL

2.1 Augustine and Pelagius Argue

As mentioned above, in order to explain the cause of evil, Augustine excessively emphasized the function of free will. Pelagius say: The first, Adam abuse of the free will of God's gift and crime, although a bad example, but it does not destroy the human nature and the ability to commit crimes, a person only for his own free will, not because of Adam's genetic. Second, Adam's evil can only be done by his freedom, and it is not just for a man to punish all mankind for his evil. Third, evince the crime is due to the free will, the crime of the lifting should also be determined by the free will, the key to a person's salvation lies in his own moral efforts. Thus, we can see Pelagius correcting questioning the party's free will fundamentally deny the "theory of original evil", "redemption theory", "grace" theory. The Kibera doctrine, Augustine later wrote many works to emphasize the significance of determinism of "original evil" and "grace", the creation of a thought of a metaphysical doctrine of predestination. Augustine believes that the crime is due to the free will, but the crime of the lifting can not rely on free will, because the human will have been controlled by the evil, it is no longer a real sense of free will. In this case, can only rely on the grace of God could make some people will regain the goodness of ability, get rid of mortal evil and soul of eternal life.

2.2 Under the Grace of Free Will

Augustine argued that when people fall after, human's freedom of will power, has been unable to make people off evil deeds, get rid of evil, only by the grace of God. Pelagianism, when evil before, grace is not involved in the. It is only when evil is created that grace is the outer condition, which helps people to get rid of evil. Because the will be the freedom to decide to obey or not to obey the law. But in Augustine's personal experience, the law of the law is not good to be followed by the will of man. People know their own crimes and evil, but the people's will be not to get rid of the crime, but committed a greater crime. After the discovery and interpretation of Paul's thought of evil and grace, Augustine ruled out the conflict in his heart. For man 's nature has fallen, and he commits a crime, and a man is unable to use his will. And to get rid of evil, it is necessary to aid in the grace of God—the salvation of Christ.

Augustine argued that God's salvation has through Christ instead of human suffering and death and

resurrection miracle and reveals to us. The essence of this grace is the faith into our hearts. According to Augustine's theory of reservation, God has already been made in the beginning of the foundation for some reason which people will be saved, who will be subject to eternal punishment. We can't ask God chosen reason is what, because the reason is beyond human understanding of the sacred mysteries, but we should willingly accept the election results. If we are not God chosen and suffer the punishment of death, it should be subject to the justice of God, because "the wages of evil is death"; if we were God's chosen and gain the soul of eternal life, should thank God's mercy, because is not saved because of our own merit, but the grace of God in vain given. The result of grace is salvation, the essence of grace is to make the Holy Spirit filled in the heart, so that people in the heart of the inevitable set up a firm belief in the behavior will inevitably show virtue and good work. Therefore, not because we have faith and merit so chosen by God, but because we are chosen by God, so must have faith and merit.

CONCLUSION

Augustine's contradiction in free will. The Manichean ditheism, in order to explain the reasons of crime, Augustine put too much emphasis on the role of free will. In his old age, Augustine face to the free will of Pelagius liberalism, he began to limit the role of free will, more and more clearly to the reservation. In his later years, Augustine's theory of this kind of strict determinism, which is to be analyzed in the free will of Pelagius, and his early years in his early years, there are some contradictions between the views expressed in the free will of the theory of free will. Augustine tried to limit the effect of the free will to the origin of evil, and to make all the other said to be God. But the problem has not been solved, as it is not the decision to change from the creation to the salvation of God. So, why does Adam's abuse of his free will is not determined by

God? Since God before the creation of the world has been identified correctly booked someone will be saved, someone will suffer eternal punishment. Then why does he unexpectedly to the first man of crime do not bear any responsibility? If you acknowledge that God is a crime of human, then, since God has predicted that people will use the free will to commit crimes, why not stop? Moreover, people abuse the free will of the motivation and ability, if not from God, but from where? Augustine can only resort to the mystery". In the face of these questions, Augustine refused to answer or say that unless you believe it or not understand.

In the doctrine of predestination, Augustine treats libertarian attitude has been increasingly to belittle and deny, Augustine in his later years completely denies free will lead to happiness reward results. Since saved according to is no longer free will, but some mysterious grace, then all secular moral effort it will be in vain. It is due to the profound contradiction and the negative effect of the theory on the reservation, in the medieval Christian theology of the book is gradually being replaced by the free will of good work.

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