

Addiction as sin and syndrome: the divided self

The aim of this chapter is to reflect theologically upon the concept of addiction with a view to exploring some possibilities for the construction of a theological model of addiction. This is not exactly a proposal for a dialogue between Christian theology and science,¹ but it does presuppose that a kind of conversation can be established between Christian theology and the scientific study of addiction.

Alistair McFadyen² has drawn attention to the twin dangers that contemporary theology faces. On the one hand, it is at risk of reducing conversation about God to purely secular terms, such that it has no real contribution to make to the discussion. On the other hand, it is at risk of withdrawing completely from secular discourse about material reality and confining itself to the non-material fields of the spiritual and the moral. Both are perceived by McFadyen as essentially 'non-Christian' positions; forms of collusion with the 'pragmatic atheism' of secular discourse. For McFadyen, the 'one possibility by which modern theology may live'³ is that it might engage in a critical dialogue with the secular. Thus 'the business of Christian theology . . . is to understand both God and reality from the perspective of God's concrete presence and activity in the world, and in relation to our concretely lived experiences of being in the world'.⁴ McFadyen proceeds to illustrate this in relation to the doctrine of sin. His study, published under the title *Bound to Sin*, sets out to test the proposition that the doctrine of sin holds 'explanatory and descriptive power in relation to concrete pathologies'.⁵ He endeavours to achieve this aim by means of the study of two particular pathologies: childhood sexual abuse and the Holocaust. His specific claim is both exacting and challenging: 'the concrete pathologies operating in child sexual abuse and the holocaust cannot *adequately* be understood except with reference to the denial and opposition to God

¹ At least not in terms of the dialogue between science and religion proposed by Ian Barbour and others (Barbour, 1998, pp. 90–98).

² McFadyen, 2000. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 43. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44. ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

which characterises sin.⁶ Focussing primarily upon the Augustinian doctrine of original sin, McFadyen skilfully marshals extensive evidence in support of his claim. This includes evidence that, for victims of both childhood sexual abuse and the Holocaust, any notion of willing as based purely upon free decision and arbitrary choice is clearly simplistic.⁷ Just as the doctrine of original sin would suggest, people in practice find themselves 'embedded' in sin for which they are not morally accountable on the basis of moral culpability understood solely in terms of the exercise of free will.⁸ More importantly, however, McFadyen believes that both pathologies can be construed in terms of worship and idolatry.

For McFadyen, worship 'is actively to orientate and order one's life, whether more or less explicitly, around a reality as primary to and constitutive of meaning, worth, truth and value'.⁹ Whereas 'loving joy' is the mark of worship of God, idolatry is characterised by the blocking and disorientation of this joy.¹⁰ Sin, even when its agent is also a victim and not morally accountable in the usual sense, leads to constriction of joy. Thus, McFadyen finds that his dialogue between the doctrine of sin and the concrete pathologies that he chose to study leads to both an enriched understanding of the pathologies in question and also an enriched understanding of the doctrine of sin.¹¹ His exploration of these two concrete pathologies of sin thus leads him to understand sin in relation to joy in worship of God as Trinity:

Sin now appears as energised resistance to the dynamics of God and, thereby, as constriction in the fullness of being-in-communion and of joy. Sin is thus construed primarily in dynamic terms, as highly energised, comprehensive disorientation in, through and of all relationships. Such energised disorientation is also communicable and, whilst the claim of biological transmission has not been amenable to testing in relation to these pathologies, it is clear that this disorientation is transmittable through the dynamics of social relationships.¹²

McFadyen makes an extremely convincing case in respect of the explanatory and descriptive power of the doctrine of sin in relation to both his chosen pathologies. It is, perhaps, more debatable whether or not he shows that these pathologies can be *adequately* understood *only* in the context of a theistic (specifically Christian) doctrine of sin. What would it mean *adequately* to understand either childhood sexual abuse or the Holocaust in any context?¹³ However, his methodology at least allows an interesting

⁶ Ibid., p. 54, original emphasis preserved. ⁷ Ibid., p. 126. ⁸ Ibid., p. 129.

⁹ Ibid., p. 227. ¹⁰ Ibid., p. 232. ¹¹ Ibid., p. 246. ¹² Ibid., pp. 246–247.

¹³ McFadyen seems to be asking whether or not the language of moral responsibility offers a *sufficient* description of the pathologies in question (ibid., p. 112). However, even if it is accepted that he has

dialogue to emerge and arguably does result in an enriched understanding of both the two pathologies and the Christian theology with which he brings them into dialogue. The important question in the present context is whether or not a similar methodology might assist in developing a creative or illuminative dialogue between Christian theology and the pathology of addiction.

It is argued here that McFadyen's methodology is well suited to a theological reflection upon the phenomenon of addiction. Addiction certainly shares the characteristics according to which McFadyen selected his two pathologies, namely an almost universal recognition of the reality of, and the pathological nature of, the phenomenon,¹⁴ an extensive descriptive and research literature, and obvious complexity. It is true that addiction is morally more ambiguous. The moral model of addiction is now unpopular, and those who subscribe to the disease model would argue that it is not primarily a matter of moral culpability that one suffers from the disease of addiction. On the other hand, there is a long Christian tradition of recognising addiction (e.g. as 'habitual drunkenness') as sin. However, this moral ambiguity may make the dialogue more interesting, and may allow more opportunity for Christian theology to demonstrate explanatory power (or not). Scientific theories of addiction also incorporate a biological dimension of aetiology, which is not a prominent factor in either of the pathologies selected by McFadyen. This may be of relevance to Augustine's belief in the biological transmission of original sin, an aspect of the doctrine which McFadyen found could not be tested by his chosen pathologies. Furthermore, the present task is fundamentally a similar one to that intended by McFadyen – namely to show that Christian theology holds explanatory power in relationship to a specified concrete pathology (i.e. addiction).

However, McFadyen set out to test the explanatory power of Christian theology, exemplified by the doctrine of sin, in the context of the

succeeded in showing that such language alone is insufficient, and that Christian theology does offer a sufficient description, his methodology does not allow him to prove conclusively that a Christian doctrine of sin offers the *only* sufficient description of these pathologies.

¹⁴ This statement should not be taken to imply assent to the disease model, and neither should this footnote be taken to imply dissent from that model. It is rather argued that there is common assent, in a general and pragmatic way, to the 'pathological' nature of addictive behaviour as maladaptive, deviant or dysfunctional. Even when alcoholism or addiction as a disease is described as 'myth', it is still recognised that alcohol misuse and addictive behaviours are real social problems to which appropriate social and individual responses are required (see, for example, Fingarette, 1989; Davies, 2000). In passing, it is important also to note that, in *Bound to Sin*, McFadyen uses the term 'pathology' extensively, and even describes sin as 'a way of speaking of the pathological aspects of the world encountered by human beings as they live in it' (McFadyen, 2000, p. 44) but yet does not define what he means by that term. He appears to have in mind a broad understanding, including both sin and sickness.

contemporary secular understanding of two concrete pathologies. The present exercise is concerned less with demonstrating the explanatory power of Christian theology in principle, and more with understanding the problem of addiction in theological terms, or with showing that Christian theology has a useful contribution to make to discourse about addiction. It is therefore by definition concerned with only one concrete pathology: namely, addiction. Furthermore, this pathology is already capable of description according to diverse, and sometimes contradictory, explanatory models. It is therefore proposed that some minor modifications of McFadyen's methodology are required.

First, following McFadyen, the concrete pathology (i.e. addiction) has already been described, in Chapters 1 and 2, according to understanding developed in secular scientific discourse, using non-theological language. The description has largely focussed on one particular conceptual framework of understanding – that of the dependence syndrome – which has been chosen for reasons already outlined. The scope has been limited largely to one specific drug, alcohol, both in order to simplify the discussion and also to allow a longer historical context of theological reflection to be examined. It has been seen that addiction to alcohol can properly be understood only in the broader context of the use and misuse of alcohol by populations and by individuals. However, because the concept of the alcohol dependence syndrome has been extrapolated to other forms of drug misuse, and to other behaviours, the conclusions drawn here are of relevance to broader theological reflection on addiction.

Secondly, the theological focus of the discussion will be broadened slightly. Two theological perspectives on sin (albeit not unrelated) have been chosen rather than one, because the aim is to explore theological possibilities in relation to the concrete pathology of addiction, rather than to explore a particular doctrine in relation to different concrete pathologies. Limitations of space will prevent a comprehensive engagement with either of these theological frameworks. However, it is hoped that an initial exploration of the possibilities that they offer will provide at least a preliminary indication of the way in which theological language might assist in developing a more adequate understanding of the phenomenon of addiction.

The two theological perspectives that have been selected for consideration here are those of St Paul the apostle and St Augustine of Hippo. These two theological systems have been chosen partly with a view to the enduring influence that they have had upon Christian theology, and thus western culture, and partly because of the particular promise that they would appear to offer in relation to this field. Augustine (and probably Paul) also had relevant

pastoral experience of dealing with drunkenness among members of his Christian community.¹⁵

In addition to their broader theological analysis of sin, both Paul and Augustine wrote about the subjective experience of inner conflict, or struggle, in relation to willed action. This theological attention to the way in which human beings find themselves behaving in ways that they personally dislike, or would wish not to do, would appear to be especially relevant to the understanding of a pathology which essentially involves habitual behaviour that people find difficult to control despite the pain and harm that it causes.

In each case, a particular text has been selected from the work of the author in question, in order to provide a focus for the discussion. These texts have been selected by virtue of the promise that they show as descriptions of subjective experiences which would appear to be similar to that of addiction. In the case of Paul, the selected text is the description of the divided self to be found in Romans 7:14–25. In the case of Augustine, the selected text is book VIII of his *Confessions*, in which he relates his own autobiographical experience of a divided will.

Thirdly, the engagement here with the theologies of Paul and Augustine will be set firmly in the historical context of Christian engagement with problems of drunkenness. It is important that any exploration of a possible theological model of alcohol addiction/dependence should be understood in the context of the differing Christian responses to problems of drunkenness over the centuries. This context has already been set in Chapters 3 to 5, but it will be recapitulated here and some further brief comments will be added.

The primary purpose of this exercise is to explore some possibilities for the construction of a Christian theological model of addiction. Secondly, however, the methodology may allow some further reflection on McFadyen's question about whether or not a specifically Christian theological discourse can offer additional explanatory and descriptive power in relation to an area of secular discourse.

THE HISTORICAL CHRISTIAN CONTEXT FOR A THEOLOGY OF ADDICTION

I have argued in Chapter 3 that drunkenness was recognised by Old and New Testament authors as a problem of excessive indulgence of an appetite,

¹⁵ In relation to Paul, see Chapter 3. In relation to Augustine, see Chapter 4.

rather similar to gluttony as excessive indulgence in food. However, it was also recognised as a problem which led to a range of other vices, including 'sins of speech', sexual immorality, violence, strife and jealousy. In the New Testament, drunkenness is represented as a 'desire of the flesh'; a manifestation of a life under a power which is 'not God', and inappropriate to life in the eschatological kingdom of God. While early Christian understanding of the problem of drunkenness shared much with Jewish and Greco-Roman culture, it was also distinctive in this way. Drunkenness was seen to be the result of a desire which exerts a power over an individual, which competes with the call of God, and which results in a life which is inappropriate to, or unready for, the coming kingdom of God.

As the centuries passed,¹⁶ drunkenness remained a problem for the Church, and successive Christian theologians resorted to scripture, philosophy and the traditions of the Church in a quest to understand it and respond to it. For Augustine, and later Aquinas, drunkenness was understood primarily as failing to contribute to the ultimate good. For Augustine, it represented a failure to strive to please God alone. For Aquinas, it was an impairment of the ability of human beings to fulfil the rational function for which they were created. With the Reformation came an increasing emphasis upon scripture as the basis for Protestant attitudes to the problem. For Luther, drunkenness was analogous to the sin of Adam and Eve in Eden, but it needed no other verdict than that it was expressly forbidden in scripture. It was a state of misdirected will rather than a state of impaired reason. For Whitefield, drunkenness was improper stewardship of wine, which was one of God's creatures, but again the express injunction of scripture against drunkenness was his primary basis for argument.

Augustine, Aquinas, Luther and Whitefield were all strongly influenced by Pauline theology, but, for Augustine and Aquinas, philosophy was also important. For Augustine and Luther, drunkenness was a work of the flesh. For Augustine this meant that it arises, as do other works of the flesh, from human pride. For Luther, it meant that drunkenness arises from a corrupt human nature which is prone to excesses and self-indulgence.

Augustine and Aquinas also left in their writings broader theological concepts with incompletely explored potential for a more sophisticated Christian theological exploration of contemporary problems of drunkenness and alcohol misuse. For example, Augustine's concept of the divided will has enormous relevance to an understanding of how people engage with desires or appetites that impel them towards goals that they recognise as

¹⁶ See Chapter 3.

being inherently undesirable. Similarly, Aquinas' concept of the mean of virtues has the potential to relate 'normal' drinking ethically to drunkenness and to other alcohol-related problems in a manner which is harmonious with current scientific thinking.

Prior to the nineteenth-century, drunkenness was generally understood by all Christians as being sinful, but drinking alcohol was not. Drunkards were sinners, because they allowed their will to follow their sinful desire to drink excessively and did not sufficiently desire, or act upon their desire for, the virtue of temperance. However, during the nineteenth century, in the light of new medical conceptions of the problem, this all changed. Habitual intemperance came to be understood by large numbers of Christians (albeit mainly Protestants, and certainly not all of them) as the virtually inevitable result of almost any regular alcohol consumption, which would create a strong, and perhaps uncontrollable, desire for alcohol. The habitual drunkard came to be seen as victim more than sinner, a sufferer from a cruel disease, the evil cause of which was alcohol itself. Intemperance was reconceived as being moderate alcohol consumption, and temperance as complete abstinence from alcohol.¹⁷

During the twentieth century, these attitudes changed once more. As the temperance movement declined in influence, moderate alcohol consumption was again accepted by most western Christians as being good, and drunkenness was still understood as bad. However, this 'badness' was not a simple return to the attitudes of pre-nineteenth-century Christendom, and neither was it a simple continuation of nineteenth-century temperance thinking. For many, a specific problem of 'alcoholism' or 'alcohol addiction' was understood as being a disease.¹⁸ Drunkenness was certainly to be distinguished from this disease, but was nonetheless also an important symptom of it. In contrast, the so-called 'moral model' of alcoholism was widely dismissed by secular discourse as being unhelpful. In fact, a variety of models of alcoholism was propounded and, to a greater or lesser degree, the models existed alongside one another.¹⁹

Contemporary scientific understanding, as described briefly above, now views alcohol dependence as a bio-psycho-social disorder. It is clear that this context provides an understanding of the nature of alcohol-related

¹⁷ See Chapter 5. ¹⁸ S. Y. Hill, 1985; Meyer, 1996.

¹⁹ Siegler, 1968. Even by the end of the twentieth century, there is evidence that a significant minority of educated young people conceptualised alcohol abuse as both sin and disease, or as both sin and addiction. Furthermore, conceptualisation of illicit drug (cocaine) abuse as sinful was endorsed by 51 per cent of respondents – a similar proportion to that endorsing the disease concept (Cunningham et al., 1994).

problems radically different from that encountered by the apostle Paul, Augustine, Aquinas or the Church Reformers. It is a clear improvement on the medical and social understanding of nineteenth-century physicians and theologians. There is thus a need for a contemporary theological and ethical analysis of the most appropriate Christian foundations for understanding drunkenness, alcohol dependence, and other alcohol-related problems.

A PAULINE THEOLOGY OF SIN AND ADDICTION

Paul has been referred to as 'the first and greatest Christian theologian'.²⁰ He was a zealous Jew, a native of Tarsus in Cilicia,²¹ who had trained as a Pharisee.²² He persecuted the young Christian Church,²³ until an experience on the Damascus road, probably in the early 30s CE,²⁴ left him with a conviction of being commissioned by God to take the gospel – the good news about Jesus Christ – to the Gentiles.²⁵ The missionary work that he undertook in response to this call was controversial, especially among Jewish Christians,²⁶ because of his insistence that circumcision should not be a requirement for Gentile converts²⁷ and his support for non-observance of food laws by Jewish Christians.²⁸ He was probably martyred in Rome, under Nero, around 62–65 CE.²⁹

Paul was a Roman citizen, with a substantial Greek education.³⁰ He left seven epistles which are generally agreed to be of authentic authorship, all of which were probably written in the mid-50s CE.³¹ From these writings it is possible to adduce that Paul saw his faith in Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of the faith of the Hebrew people, and not as a departure from it.³² However, Christ was central to Paul's theology. Christ replaced the Torah as the defining characteristic of the people of God and of the purposes of God. The image of the body of Christ replaced the Temple cult as the defining context of the faith community. God was to be known definitively through Christ. Christ was the hermeneutical key to scripture. Salvation was to be found in increasing conformity to Christ. For Paul, Christianity *was* Christ.

²⁰ Dunn, 1998, p. 2. ²¹ Acts 22:3; Dunn (1988a), p. xl.

²² Philippians 3:5; Galatians 1:13–14. ²³ Galatians 1:13.

²⁴ Dunn, 1988a, p. xli. ²⁵ Galatians 1:15–16; Romans 1:5.

²⁶ See Dunn, 1988a, pp. xxxix–xliii. ²⁷ Galatians 2:1–10. ²⁸ Galatians 2:11–14.

²⁹ Cross and Livingstone, 1997, pp. 1234–1235. ³⁰ Dunn, 1988a, p. xl.

³¹ Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians and Philemon. In addition, various claims are made for Pauline authorship of Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, Ephesians and the pastoral epistles. Except perhaps for Colossians and 2 Thessalonians, these claims would appear dubious (see Cross and Livingstone, 1997, p. 1235).

³² See Dunn, 1998, pp. 713–737, on which the following account of Paul's theology is largely based.

James Dunn has suggested that among the most innovative and enduring features of Christian theology which may be traced to Paul were his distinctive Christian understandings of gospel, grace and love.³³ The 'good news' of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, grace as the epitome of God's dealings with human beings, and love as the motive for divine giving and human living, together encapsulate the breadth and nature of Christianity. Of these, it is relevant here to say just a little more about grace.

For Paul, grace was to be understood as the activity of God in bringing about the redemption of human beings through Christ.³⁴ Grace is the opposite of sin, in that sin is self-centred whereas the grace of God is manifested in outgoing love.³⁵ Grace is offered by God as a gift to human beings. Grace is concerned with divine initiative, divine activity and divine power, all offered to the benefit of undeserving human beings.³⁶ It is expressed particularly in the event of Christ himself, but also in the divine enabling of human beings in the course of their daily lives.³⁷

An innovation of Paul which has perhaps had less lasting impact is that of the distinction between 'body' and 'flesh'. Flesh (*σάρξ*), in Pauline thought, had a range of meaning, but was almost always concerned with the weakness and corruptibility of the creature as contrasted with the creator.³⁸ Body (*σῶμα*) also had a range of meaning, but referred to somewhat more than just the physical body. It had a sense of the embodied 'I', standing in relation to the physical environment.³⁹ Thus, Dunn suggests that for Paul 'body' denotes a *being in the world*, whereas 'flesh' denotes a *belonging to the world*.⁴⁰ The anthropology defined by this distinction incorporated a positive evaluation of the createdness of human beings, derived from Hebrew thought, and also a more negative element to life in this world, the 'desiring, decaying flesh which . . . subverts existence before and for God',⁴¹ derived from Greek thought.

This distinction also relates to the tension inherent in Paul's eschatology. For Paul, the Christian is situated simultaneously in two overlapping ages or epochs. The believer, who is still in this world in the flesh, is also in Christ, desiring to serve God and do his will. Therein lays a tension, a

³³ Ibid., p. 733. ³⁴ Ridderbos, 1977, pp. 173–174. ³⁵ Barrett, 1994, p. 90.

³⁶ Dunn, 1998, pp. 322–323. ³⁷ Ibid., p. 320.

³⁸ Dunn, 1988a, p. 363. Ridderbos emphasises more the inclusion of human sinfulness within the meaning of this term (Ridderbos, 1977, pp. 93–95).

³⁹ Dunn, 1998, p. 56. Ridderbos again has a slightly different emphasis, noting that the body has a spiritual and heavenly sense, as well as a material one, and that the body does not have the negative connotations of weakness and sin associated with the Pauline concept of flesh.

⁴⁰ Dunn, 1998, p. 72, original emphasis preserved. ⁴¹ Dunn, 1998, p. 72.

warfare even, which will continue until the resurrection of the body after death.⁴²

Paul understood sin as a power over human beings which has a tendency to enslave, and to cause them to forget their creaturely dependence upon God. Its influence is both upon individuals, their attitudes and actions, and also upon the values and practices of society as a whole.⁴³ For Paul, sin was concerned primarily with relationship with God. It involved the whole person, and the whole human race.⁴⁴ It was concerned with enmity, or rebellion, against God himself.⁴⁵ Paul offered very little analysis of where this power originated from. He was concerned much more with its reality in human experience.⁴⁶

Dunn has suggested⁴⁷ that Paul saw three effects of the power of sin in the lives of human beings: misdirected religion, self-indulgence and sins. Misdirected religion is manifested as a perversion of the instinct to invest ultimate significance in God, such that religion is directed to other ends, which remain more easily under human control. Self-indulgence is concerned with the way in which neutral or good desires (e.g. sexual appetite) become transformed into harmful preoccupations (e.g. lust). Sins are those consequences of wrong judgement, made under the power of sin, exemplified by the lists of vices that Paul provided in various places.⁴⁸

For Paul, sin was intimately linked with death.⁴⁹ Death was the inevitable consequence of sin, the end of life lived 'in the flesh', and the due punishment for sins.

Romans 7:14–25: the divided self

At the time of writing his epistle to the Romans, Paul clearly hoped to visit Rome for the first time, *en route* to Spain.⁵⁰ Prior to undertaking this missionary journey, it was apparently his intention to visit Jerusalem to deliver money collected by Gentile Christians in his churches for the (primarily Jewish) Christian poor there.⁵¹ He was concerned, in the wake of previous controversies, that this offering might not prove to be acceptable.⁵² The epistle represents Paul's mature reflection upon, and understanding of, the Christian gospel, addressed to a church of some size and importance.⁵³

⁴² Ibid., p. 475.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 111–114.

⁴⁴ Barrett, 1994, p. 64.

⁴⁵ Ridderbos, 1977, p. 105.

⁴⁶ Dunn, 1998, p. 113.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 114–124.

⁴⁸ See Chapter 3.

⁴⁹ Dunn, 1998, pp. 124–127; Barrett, 1994, p. 64.

⁵⁰ Romans 1:11–15; 15:23–24; Cranfield, 1995, p. xiii; Ziesler, 1989, p. 3.

⁵¹ Romans 15:25–29; Cranfield, 1995, p. xiii.

⁵² Romans 15:31.

⁵³ Cranfield, 1995, p. xiii.

It incorporates an attempt to address missionary, apologetic and pastoral purposes.⁵⁴

Paul's epistle to the Romans deals with the need of Jew and Gentile for the grace of God, the means by which they may both be engaged in an experience of that grace, and the way in which they should relate together as Christians. There is a strong Christological element to the letter, and Paul eventually describes a new ethical framework based upon an understanding of the community of faith as the body of Christ.⁵⁵ An important (and complex) subsidiary theme in the letter is that of the place of the law for those who are in Christ.⁵⁶

That portion of the letter with which we are most concerned here is chapter 7, verses 14–25:

¹⁴For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. ¹⁵I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. ¹⁹For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

²¹So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. ²²For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, ²³but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.⁵⁷

This passage must be understood within the context of the whole letter. However, the nature, position and detailed exposition of this section of the text are differently construed by different commentators. The end of chapter 7 clearly represents an important transition by all accounts, as chapter 8 changes focus to the more positive theme of 'life in the Spirit'. However, for some commentators, 7:14–25 is concerned primarily with the experience of the Christian who continues to struggle with sin, and for others it is concerned with non-Christian experience. Within the former group, some see this as being mature Christian experience and others as a way of Christian life which should be left behind. For some it is understood

⁵⁴ Dunn, 1988a, pp. lv–lviii.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. lxi–lxii; Ziesler, 1989, pp. 6–8.

⁵⁶ Dunn, 1988a, pp. lxiii–lxxii.

⁵⁷ Romans 7:14–25, NRSV.

as more or less autobiographical of Paul's own experience, and for others it is not.⁵⁸

By way of example, the interpretations of Cranfield, Dunn and Ziesler will be reviewed here, as well as the more psychologically orientated analysis offered by Theissen. Cranfield and Dunn understand 7:14–25 as representing Christian experience, and Ziesler and Theissen as non-Christian experience.

Cranfield⁵⁹ is clear that verses 13–23 are concerned with 'the inner conflict characteristic of the true Christian, a conflict such as is possible only in the man in whom the Holy Spirit is active and whose mind is being renewed under the discipline of the gospel'.⁶⁰ For Cranfield, the inner conflict portrayed in verses 16, 18 and 19 is the result of a battle 'that is not possible until a man is sanctified by the Holy Spirit'.⁶¹ His interpretation of the passage in question is that the Holy Spirit provides a growing knowledge and awareness of God's will as expressed in the law, and also a growing 'will to obey it'.⁶² As this Christian growth continues, individuals become increasingly perceptive of, and sensitive to, the extent to which sin still has power over them.⁶³ This process should not be misunderstood, however, as a conflict between the Holy Spirit and sin. It is rather a reflection of the work and power of the Holy Spirit within the human mind and personality alongside the continuing power of sin over the self. Thus, Paul writes in the first person singular.⁶⁴ For Cranfield, Paul's understanding of 'the flesh' is interpreted in a Calvinistic sense of 'fallen human nature' and even his best actions will always be marred by egotism.⁶⁵

According to this understanding, verses 24–25 provide a conclusion to the previous verses and a link to chapter 8.⁶⁶ Verse 25b is reflective of the eschatological tension experienced by the Christian living in this present age, and verse 25a is expressive of confidence in the expectation of future deliverance from this tension.

⁵⁸ See reviews of the possibilities in Cranfield, 1995, pp. 156–159; Ziesler, 1989, pp. 191–195. For Dodd, Romans 7 represents Paul's 'vivid personal recollection' of his pride in the law, the consequent repression of natural instincts that this brought about, and the inner conflict that it thus generated (Dodd, 1967, pp. 74–75).

⁵⁹ For Cranfield, 1:16b–17 represents a statement of the main theological theme of the body of the letter. The quotation from Habakkuk in v. 17, 'But he who is righteous by faith shall live', is then expounded in 1:18–8:39. In particular, 5:1–8:39 is understood as an exposition on the words 'shall live'. Within this section 7:1–25 is concerned with 'a life characterized by freedom from the law's condemnation', and 7:7–25 is considered to be a 'necessary clarification of what has been said concerning the law' (Cranfield, 1995, p. xv.)

⁶⁰ Cranfield, 1995, p. 155. ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 166. ⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 166, 169.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 155, 166. ⁶⁴ See e.g. v. 16, and *ibid.*, pp. 166, 168.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 167. ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 155, 169–172.

Dunn⁶⁷ portrays the inner conflict in verses 15–25 as a split in the ‘I’ between willing and doing.⁶⁸ He understands Paul as having become aware of the power of sin ‘as never before’ following his conversion.⁶⁹ He also sees a parallel between a split in the ‘I’ and a split in the law. The ‘willing’ ‘I’ agrees with the law, and wishes to obey it. This is the same ‘I’ that is identified with Christ in his death, that is no longer under the law of works, and that is obedient to the spiritual law, the law of faith. The ‘impotent’ ‘I’, however, is the ‘man of flesh’, the ‘I’ not yet identified with Christ in his resurrection, the ‘I’ which is still under the law used by sin to bring death. A liberation of the ‘I’ has been commenced, but is not yet complete. This is not a form of dualism. The flesh is still ‘I’, but life in this world is still life in the flesh. The split is therefore one between the two epochs: the old epoch of life in this world, in the flesh, over which sin still has power, and a new epoch of life in Christ, lived in the power of God.⁷⁰

Dunn portrays verse 24 as a cry of frustration at the existential plight in which Paul finds himself. He too sees verse 25a as reflective of confidence in the deliverance that will come in Christ, and verse 25b as reflecting the eschatological tension inherent in the situation of the believer in this world, in whom the work of redemption has been begun but not yet completed.⁷¹ The tension is initiated, not resolved, at the point of conversion, for it is only then that the ‘eschatological “now” in Christ’⁷² is introduced.

For Ziesler,⁷³ 7:14–25 is a description of the ‘divided self’ – a description of a pre-Christian state, experienced by people who are without Christ. Although he admits that this position is debatable, he feels that Paul would

⁶⁷ For Dunn, 1:16–17 also represents a summary of the letter’s theme. However, for him, it is the whole of vv. 16–17 that provides this summary for the whole letter. A focus on the quotation from Habakkuk is considered misguided (Dunn, 1988a, pp. 46–49). The passage of interest to us here (i.e. 7:15–25) is located within a section concerned with the ‘outworking of the gospel in relation to the individual’ (6:1–8:39), and is a part of an answer to the question of whether or not grace might be understood as encouraging sin (ibid., pp. viii–ix). First, Dunn sees vv. 14–25 as redressing any possible misunderstanding created in v. 13 regarding the benefits of remaining under the law. Secondly, he sees vv. 14–25 as an exploration of the role of the law in the Christian’s experience of the eschatological tension created by the continuing power of sin prior to full participation in the resurrection of Christ (ibid., p. 404).

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 406. ⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 407. ⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 407–409.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 410–412. ⁷² Ibid., p. 411.

⁷³ For Ziesler, 1:16–17 is again understood as a summary of the whole letter. It is also a bridge between the opening thanksgiving in 1:8–15 and the main body of the letter in 1:18–11:36 (Ziesler, 1989, pp. 35, 67). However, Ziesler sees 7:1–25 as being the third of four aspects of God’s solution to human sinfulness as discussed by Paul (ibid., p. 36). The four aspects of Paul’s understanding of this divine solution, according to Ziesler, are an end to divine condemnation [4:1–5:21], an end to bondage to sin [6:1–23], an end to the divided self [7:1–25], and an end to life in the flesh [8:1–25]). Romans 7:1–6 is concerned with the death of the Christian to the law, and 7:7–13 is concerned with the way in which the law is exploited by sin.

not have given such an extremely negative description of Christians as to suggest that they are 'sold under sin'.⁷⁴ However, he makes the point that this passage is concerned primarily with the failure of the law to solve the problem of sin, and not with the identity of the 'I'.⁷⁵

Ziesler also considers that the nature of the conflict described in this passage is debatable. He recognises that the passage is reminiscent of a tradition exemplified by a quotation from Ovid, although he considers it not precisely the same: 'I see and approve the better things, but I pursue the inferior things.'⁷⁶ He points out that, although the notion of the divided self is pervasive, it varies throughout the passage. On the one hand are sin, the 'I' sold under sin, the flesh, and a law in 'my members'. On the other hand are the 'I' that wants to do good, the 'inmost self', 'the law of my mind', and the law of God. Up to verse 20, or perhaps verse 21, the division appears to be within the self, but after this it appears to be between different laws.⁷⁷ In verses 14–16, the opposition is between will and action, in verses 17–20 it is between self and sin.⁷⁸

Rather more speculatively, Ziesler points out that the passage is preceded (vv. 7–13) by, and possibly even followed by (8:4), a concern with covetousness or 'wrong desire', and that the line of argument works best in respect of desires over which people do not have control.⁷⁹ Is Paul talking here primarily about conflicting desires?

For Ziesler, verse 24 is concerned with the person living under sin, without Christ. Verse 25a ostensibly presents Christ as the solution to the human dilemma. However, verse 25b appears to be an awkward return to that dilemma, and is unconvincingly explained by Ziesler as a possible gloss.⁸⁰

For Theissen, 7:14–25 is a depiction of suffering 'under the flesh'.⁸¹ It achieves this description by means of two strands of thought,⁸² which are to be found respectively in verses 15–18 and 19–23. In each, the argument begins with the contradiction of willing and doing,⁸³ and then moves on to a consideration of the power of sin.⁸⁴ In the second strand of thought, the power of sin is dealt with rather more briefly, but the concluding assent to the law is emphasised more strongly, and the theme of a clash between the flesh and the law becomes a more greatly emphasised clash between two laws (the 'law of God' and 'another law').

⁷⁴ Romans 7:14; *ibid.*, pp. 191–194. ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 194–195.

⁷⁶ *Metamorphoses*, 7.19f., quoted by Ziesler (*Ziesler*, 1989, p. 190).

⁷⁷ *Ziesler*, 1989, p. 190. ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 196. ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 190–191.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 192, 199. ⁸¹ Theissen, 1987, p. 183. ⁸² Theissen, 1987, pp. 186–188.

⁸³ Verses 15 and 19 respectively. ⁸⁴ Verses 17–18 and 20 respectively.

For Theissen, Paul has described a 'three tribunal' anthropological model, in which the tribunal of the 'I' stands between the antagonistic tribunals of the law which points to God, and the law of sin. The law of God is represented in the mind, the law of sin in the 'members' or the 'flesh' of the person. The 'I' stands between these two, being drawn in either one direction or the other.⁸⁵

Theissen believes that, in 7:14ff., Paul was drawing implicitly upon the classical Greek tradition of understanding the conflict between willing and doing.⁸⁶ On the one hand, this tradition represented affect, in the form of passion, sloth or pleasure, as the cause of evil, by means of its power to override reason. This is exemplified by Medea, who was portrayed by Euripides as having killed her children because of her desire for revenge, and who was understood by Ovid as caught in conflict between love for Jason and the voice of reason: 'Some strange power holds me down against my will. Desire persuades me one way, reason another. I see the better and approve it, but I follow the worse.'⁸⁷ Seneca took this understanding a step further. Rather than portraying Medea's murder of her children as a conflict between passion and reason, he saw her as caught in a conflict between two emotions: love and anger.

On the other hand, the tradition included an argument that evil is due, not to passion, but to ignorance. This was exemplified by Socrates and Epictetus, for whom human beings were understood to make rational choices, based upon knowledge and interpretation. According to Epictetus, Medea deceived herself in her decision to murder her children. She acted according to her understanding, but lacked proper understanding and thus acted wrongly.

Theissen sees Paul as following in this tradition of reflection on the conflict between willing and doing. He argues that Paul inclines more towards the 'affective' model of Euripides than to the 'cognitive' model of Epictetus. For Paul, sin is the power which generates the conflict, but the flesh is the source of the passions which draw the subject away from right action. However, he sees Paul as going beyond tradition by virtue of his portrayal of two 'normative systems' in conflict: the law of the flesh and the law of the mind.

⁸⁵ Theissen later proposes a correspondence between these three tribunals and the id, ego and superego of Freudian psychoanalytic thought (Theissen, 1987, p. 244).

⁸⁶ Theissen, 1987, pp. 211–221.

⁸⁷ Quoted by Theissen (Theissen, 1987, p. 217), from Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (with removal here of the interpolations of the original Latin text).

For Theissen, in 7:7–23 Paul is engaged in relating ‘an inner dialogue that leads more and more deeply into a destructive self-condemnation’.⁸⁸ Redemption is to be found in Christ, and is announced in 7:24. It takes the form of life ‘in the Spirit’, which is the subject of chapter 8, and the destructive dialogue is thereby replaced by the constructive dialogue of 8:31–39.⁸⁹ The transformation is understood by Theissen in psychological terms, in which he takes in a broader view of chapters 7 and 8, understood according to learning theory, psychodynamic processes and cognitive restructuring.⁹⁰

Addiction as divided self

At first sight, there would appear to be a very significant problem to be encountered by any application of Christian commentary on Romans 7:14–25 to providing a theological account of the subjective experience of addiction. Namely, how can the conflict between pre-Christian and Christian interpretations be accommodated if this passage is taken to be descriptive of the subjective experience of addiction? Whichever interpretation is accepted, addiction is clearly not confined exclusively either to those who are not Christians or to those who are.⁹¹ It is encountered among people of every religious tradition, as well as among atheists and agnostics.⁹² Therefore, if Cranfield and Dunn are correct in asserting that the experience described by Paul in Romans 7:14–25 is a result of the work of the Holy Spirit in specifically Christian experience, or that it is initiated by entry of the Christian at conversion into the new epoch of Christ, how can it be descriptive of the experience of the Buddhist, atheist or agnostic alcoholic? Conversely, if Ziesler and Theissen are correct in their assertion that this passage describes a human predicament to which Christ is the solution, a predicament which Christians have therefore left behind, how can it be

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 260–261. ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

⁹⁰ See *ibid.*, pp. 222–265. A full discussion of this psychological analysis is beyond the scope of this book. However, Theissen portrays Christ as a ‘learning model for overcoming normatively conditioned anxieties’ (p. 226), a ‘symbol of an integration of originally antagonistic tribunals’ (p. 249), and a means of making possible a ‘new interpretation of the human situation’ (p. 263). He does not explore adequately, so far as this reader is concerned, the extent to which Christ may be understood as fulfilling these roles in a unique way, although to some extent this could be taken as implicit. The danger would appear to be that redemption is understood in a purely psychological sense, addressed primarily to the resolution of the inner conflict between willing and action. Theological discourse could thereby be understood as reduced entirely to the terms of secular discourse, and as adding nothing to it. I do not think that this is Theissen’s intention, but the question remains of how this model of understanding Romans 7–8 may be seen to have unequivocally avoided such a conclusion.

⁹¹ See, for example, Fichter, 1982.

⁹² Although there are differences of prevalence between these groups (G. Edwards, Marshall and Cook, 2003, p. 19).

descriptive of the experience of the Christian alcoholic? Surely, according to either interpretation, we must conclude that Paul is describing a different kind of experience altogether? The divided self of Romans 7:14–15 is therefore not a description of the experience of addiction; it is a description of another kind of experience – perhaps similar or analogous to addiction in some way – but actually confined either to Christian or non-Christian experience, according to one's assessment of the arguments presented by different commentators.

While this argument may appear compelling in some ways, it does not withstand closer scrutiny. In particular, it might be argued that Cranfield, Dunn, Ziesler and Theissen are all somewhat too preoccupied with making a decision between the pre-Christian and Christian interpretations of the passage. Surely, the passage could be descriptive of both Christian and non-Christian experience? According to Paul, both Christians and non-Christians are caught up in the human experience of both positive and negative aspects of createdness in this world. Both have *σωμα* and *σαρξ*, body and 'flesh', with all the good things and all the problems that this entails. Those who are outside Christ are not necessarily viewed by Paul as being without any moral awareness or sense of inner conflict.⁹³ Similarly, he has no illusions that Christians have automatically become sinless,⁹⁴ and indeed the continuing struggle with sin is inherent in the eschatological tension between the old and new epochs, within which Paul understands Christians as being involved.

But is there a valid parallel between this passage and the subjective experience of addiction?

Dunn, Ziesler and Theissen all draw specific attention to the way in which the passage is concerned with the conflict between will and action. As far as will is concerned, Paul indicates that he can 'will what is right' (v. 18), or 'want' to do something (vv. 15, 19), and then finds that he does not do it. Conversely, he can *not* want to do something (vv. 16, 19, 20), or even 'hate' something (v. 15), and then finds that he nevertheless does it. As far as action is concerned, Paul finds that he does not understand his own

⁹³ See, for example, the conflict alluded to in Romans 2:14–15. Unfortunately, there is further debate here also! As far as our present commentators are concerned, Dunn clearly understands this passage as referring to non-Christian Gentiles (Dunn, 1988a, pp. 98–99, 105–106) whereas Cranfield concludes that the reference is to Gentile Christians (Cranfield, 1995, p. 50).

⁹⁴ See, for example, Romans 6:12. Although for Ziesler (1989, p. 164) this is an anomaly, for according to his understanding we might expect Christians to be sinless and therefore to need no such advice, he clearly recognises that Paul actually does not expect this. He sees, rather, that the Christian now has the 'possibility' of defeating sin. How he might reconcile this with his interpretation of 7:14–25 as applying only to pre-Christian experience is not entirely clear. If he sees Christians as no longer being under the 'power' of sin (p. 165), why do they sin at all?

actions (v. 15), that he does what he does not want (vv. 15, 16, 19, 20), and even does what he hates (v. 15). Conversely, he does not do what he wills to do (v. 18) and wants to do (vv. 15, 19). All of this would certainly appear to be very similar indeed to the subjective experience of drinkers who want to stop drinking, but then find themselves drinking again, and who want to abstain, but find that they do not.

The subjective compulsion of the alcohol dependence syndrome, however, also incorporates the experience of craving or desire for alcohol. Is this also to be found in Romans 7:14–25? At first, it would seem that the answer is clearly ‘no’. Whereas the alcohol-dependent person desires both to stop drinking, and also to resume or continue drinking, Paul speaks clearly of a desire to do what is right, but does not admit to a desire to do that which is evil. Perhaps, then, the subjective experience of Romans 7 is qualitatively different from that of alcohol dependence? Whereas Paul (assuming for a moment that he does write autobiographically) finds himself willing and wanting only one thing, the addict finds that he or she is torn between competing desires, which engender correspondingly competing wills to do different and opposite things. However, this cannot be a complete contrast with Romans 7, for verses 1–13 are concerned with desire (in the form of ‘sinful passions’ in v. 5, and covetousness in vv. 7–13), and it will be recalled that Ziesler considered the possibility that Paul was in fact still talking about conflicting desires in verses 14–25. Similarly, Theissen considered that Paul’s account of the divided self in verses 14–25 was influenced by the Greek tradition of conflict between affect and reason, or between conflicting affective states. His ‘three tribunal’ model further postulates that the self stands between the antagonistic tribunals of the law of God and the law of sin, drawn in opposite directions by each. Furthermore, Cranfield and Dunn each portray Christians as being caught in a conflict or tension created by their experience of the power of sin. How is this power experienced, if not as an affective state or desire?

The competing desires of the person caught up in the subjective experience of alcohol dependence must actually be of different qualitative kinds. The rational desire to stop drinking is presumably based upon a recognition of the harm that drinking has caused (especially over a longer chronological perspective), a desire to be free of this harm, and a sense of what is recognised as ‘right’ or necessary in the circumstances. The desire to continue drinking is presumably much more affective, or appetitive, and perhaps therefore more biological, in nature. It almost certainly includes a variety of components, such as the desire to relieve withdrawal symptoms, a desire to experience the short-term relief of anxiety or dysphoria, and a desire

for the positive subjective effects of alcohol intoxication. The discourse in Romans 7:14–25 can similarly be understood as recognising competing desires of contrasting kinds. On the one hand is the more rational and explicit desire, expressed in the will to do that which is spiritual (v. 14), good (vv. 16, 19, 21), and according to the law of God (v. 22) or the ‘law of my mind’ (v. 23). On the other hand is a more implicit desire, induced by the power of sin, and variously experienced as ‘slavery under sin’ (v. 14), ‘sin that dwells within me’ (vv. 17, 20), evil that ‘lies close at hand’ (v. 21), and ‘another law’ which makes one ‘captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members’ (v. 23).

Understood in this way, Paul’s theology of sin, and the subjective experience of the divided self described in Romans 7:14–25, would together appear to describe subjective phenomena very similar to those experienced as a part of the alcohol dependence syndrome. In other words, Paul’s account of the struggle with sin would appear to be of a very similar nature to the subjective experiences of desire and compulsion which are associated with alcohol dependence. Both are concerned with the relationship between will and behaviour. Both acknowledge a tension within the self between that which is recognised as good, rational and delightful, on the one hand, and that which is recognised as ‘evil’, contrary to reason and enslaving, on the other. Both acknowledge competing ‘desires’ of different kinds: the one a more rational desire, and the other more affective, or perhaps even biological in nature.

The strong similarities evident in this parallel between the subjective experience described in Romans 7 and the subjective experience of the alcohol dependence syndrome do not necessarily demonstrate that addiction can be reduced without remainder to a Pauline understanding of the inner conflict generated by the power of sin. (It almost certainly cannot.)⁹⁵ Neither do they necessarily mean that all human beings suffer from a ‘sin dependence syndrome’. However, they do clearly suggest that the relationship between sin and addiction is worthy of further exploration. They also suggest some important possible implications for a theological understanding of addiction.

First, addiction may be concerned not so much with sins as with sin. It may be concerned not so much with freely made moral decisions as with a struggle against the power of sin. This power has a tendency to enslave, and to corrupt the attitudes, values and actions of individuals and of society. It is

⁹⁵ A cursory consideration of the seven elements of the alcohol dependence syndrome would immediately suggest that tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, relief drinking and reinstatement, at the least, are without any direct or obvious parallel in the Pauline understanding.

not a power which affects only the addict or alcoholic. It has influence in the lives of all human beings. The plight of the alcoholic is at least very similar to the plight which we all share and in which we are all involved. This idea of a 'power' of sin as implicated in the nature and origins of addiction offers a level of understanding of the experience of addiction which is not to be found in moral, disease or purely scientific models. Addiction is not concerned simply with freely made moral choices, and neither is it concerned purely with deterministic forces that act upon a helpless victim. It is concerned with an interplay of agent and environment in such a way that subjects experience themselves as 'drawn into' an addictive pattern of behaviour for which they are neither entirely responsible, nor entirely without responsibility. This pattern of behaviour involves the whole person, in interaction with his or her social context.

Secondly, addiction may be understood, like sin, as being essentially concerned with a personal attitude or orientation towards God. Because this assertion is based here upon a fundamental prior assumption of Pauline theology, at least insofar as sin is concerned, it is in no sense offered as evidence that the phenomenon of addiction can be understood only within a theistic framework. However, it does show that a context of relationship with God can offer an informative approach to understanding addiction. The inner conflict of addiction can be understood as concerned with a division of the self between openness to the grace and power of God in Christ, on the one hand, and openness to the power of sin, on the other hand. The former offers the possibility of freedom, whereas the latter offers only further entrapment in the addictive process. Self-reliance does not offer a solution, for it is the powerlessness of the self in the face of the power of sin that is at the root of the problem.⁹⁶

Thirdly, because the power of sin cannot be conquered by the mind or will alone, we all stand in need of the grace of God if we are to be set free from our enslavement or captivity to it. What this means for the treatment of addiction will be discussed further, below. However, the danger of pursuing a heavily psychological understanding, such as that followed by Theissen, is that freedom from sin becomes ultimately a matter of psychological health, and redemption is to be found in psychotherapy (whether in the guise of Christian faith or in some other form). The danger of pursuing too

⁹⁶ It is of note that this is at the heart of the philosophy of the Twelve Step programme of AA, which emphasises both the need to recognise powerlessness over alcohol, and also the need to orientate life towards a Higher Power, or God. (See the Twelve Steps of AA, and especially the first three steps; for example, as quoted and discussed in G. Edwards, Marshall and Cook, 2003, pp. 300–303, 306–307).

enthusiastically a heavily Christological understanding, such as that offered by Pauline theology, is that it might appear that freedom from addiction can be found only through Christian faith, whereas it is clear that psychological and other approaches are effective.⁹⁷ The nature of this tension is not dissimilar to the tension between pre-Christian and Christian understandings of Romans 7. The one understanding, if over-emphasised, denies ongoing inner conflict in the Christian life, which is clearly not true to Christian experience. The other, if over-emphasised, fails to acknowledge the reality and similarity of the inner conflict experienced by non-Christians, and the uniqueness of the solution to this conflict that is offered by the grace of God in Christ.

AN AUGUSTINIAN THEOLOGY OF SIN AND ADDICTION

Augustine of Hippo understood a yearning (*desiderium*) for God as being at the heart of Christian faith. He wrote an extensive work on the Trinity, placed a high value on his understanding of the Christian community as the body of Christ, and was increasingly concerned during his lifetime with the proper interpretation of scripture. He was engaged in various religious controversies of his time and argued strongly in various writings against the Manichaeans, the Donatists and the Pelagians.⁹⁸

Augustine understood that all things have been created by God from nothing (*ex nihilo*) and that, as God is good, all things must therefore be good:

Because, therefore, no good things whether great or small, through whatever gradations of things, can exist except from God; but since every nature, so far as it is nature, is good, it follows that no nature can exist save from the most high and true God: because all things even not in the highest degree good, but related to the highest good, and again, because all good things, even those of most recent origin, which are far from the highest good, can have their existence only from the highest good.⁹⁹

Sin, therefore, cannot be a desire for evil things as such, for no things which are evil by nature exist. Sin is, rather, concerned with the misuse of that which is good:

⁹⁷ G. Edwards, Marshall and Cook, 2003, especially pp. 333–336.

⁹⁸ Cross and Livingstone, 1997, pp. 128–130. Brief biographical details have already been provided in Chapter 4, and will not be repeated here.

⁹⁹ *Concerning the Nature of Good, Against the Manichaeans*, 1. This, and other quotations here from Augustine's works, are (unless specified otherwise) taken from the Christian Classics Ethereal Library CD-ROM, version 4, Calvin College, Grand Rapids.

Sin is not the striving after an evil nature, but the desertion of a better, and so the deed itself is evil, not the nature which the sinner uses amiss. For it is evil to use amiss that which is good. Whence the apostle reproves certain ones as condemned by divine judgment, 'Who have worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.'¹⁰⁰ He does not reprove the creature, which he who should do would act injuriously towards the Creator, but those who, deserting the better, have used amiss the good.¹⁰¹

Exactly when, in practice, the striving or desire for a lesser good constitutes sin is not entirely clear. The distinction may be concerned with justice, itself derived in turn from the edicts or laws of God; ultimately it is concerned with a turning away from God himself, a failure to love God.¹⁰² The problem is thus not with the existence of evil things – for evil things as such do not 'exist' – but with the inordinate desire of human beings for good but inferior things; in other words, a perversion of desire and will.¹⁰³

For Augustine, sin could be traced back to the rebellion against God of the Devil, and the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, both acts representing freely made, sinful, choices motivated by pride.¹⁰⁴ The latter act, in particular, was understood by Augustine as being the means by which humans acquired 'original sin'. Original sin was in turn understood as a fundamental change in the human condition imposed by God as a punishment for the sin of Adam. This condition included mortality, pain, fatigability, disease, degeneration with age, and lust. It is a biological condition, genetically transmitted and innate to all human beings.¹⁰⁵ Although it is not fundamentally an impairment of reasoning or will,¹⁰⁶ it is reflected in bad judgements that human beings make, in habits that they develop, and in a disposition to misuse their free will. However, it is also a secondarily acquired condition. It is not fundamentally the way that God created things to be.¹⁰⁷ If sin has become our second nature, it is not our primary nature – which is still good.¹⁰⁸

McFadyen¹⁰⁹ suggests that there are four corollaries of the doctrine of original sin. First, sin is a contingent but non-necessary consequence of free will. Secondly, sin is more concerned with an enduring human 'condition' or 'situation' than it is with individual sinful acts. Thirdly, sin is

¹⁰⁰ Romans 1:25. ¹⁰¹ *Concerning the Nature of Good, Against the Manichaeans*, 36.

¹⁰² Mann, 2002, pp. 45–46. ¹⁰³ Mathewes, 2001, pp. 73, 80; Burnaby, 1991, p. 185.

¹⁰⁴ Mann, 2002, pp. 46–47. Pride is thus the ultimate origin of sin. See also Burnaby, 1991, p. 189.

¹⁰⁵ Mann, 2002, p. 47; McFadyen, 2000, pp. 16, 189–190. However, it has been pointed out that the imposition of modern views of biology upon the thinking of Augustine is an anachronism (Mathewes, 2001, pp. 83–84).

¹⁰⁶ Mann, 2002, p. 47. ¹⁰⁷ Mathewes, 2001, pp. 74–75. ¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁰⁹ McFadyen, 2000, pp. 16–18.

communicated to human beings such that it is present from the very earliest stages of biological being, even before they are capable of self-determining (morally culpable) acts. It is an inheritance of a distortion of personhood and of alienation from God which incurs guilt. Fourthly, sin is a universal human condition and experience. The last three of these corollaries in turn suggest that sin has ontological substance and that it is not primarily concerned with the exercise of human will, but is an inescapable aspect of human being. For many critics, both Christians and others, this renders it unacceptable on both scientific and ethical grounds: on scientific grounds, because the fall is understood as mythological, and on moral grounds, because of a consensus that ethics are concerned with free choices made by responsible, autonomous, personal agents.

For Augustine, sin was identical neither with actions nor with will. Sinful actions were understood as willed.¹¹⁰ But willing was not to be understood as the neutral selection from available choices – actions are willed under the influence of affection and desire, and a motivation to pursue the good.¹¹¹ Furthermore, willing does not depend upon choice. It is possible to will an action, even where there is no choice.¹¹² For Augustine, freedom was not to be found in withholding oneself from God – for that would be to display pride and to demonstrate bondage to sin in the process of pursuing an inferior representation of the good. Freedom is to be found, therefore, only under the influence of the grace of God, the source of all goodness, where persons are so orientated towards God that their desire, volition and actions are brought into harmony.¹¹³

Original sin is associated in the work of Augustine with concupiscence. Concupiscence is a loss of control of the spirit over the flesh.¹¹⁴ Concupiscence is concerned with the overpowering of the rational will by desire, and thus leads to the situation in which the will is 'divided' in the face of competing desires.¹¹⁵ McFadyen writes: 'Sins of concupiscence are consequently failures in willing actually to pursue that which one would; failures coherently and consistently to instantiate in practice the life-orientation consented to in faith.'¹¹⁶ In Augustine's understanding, the divided will is the result of concupiscence. Concupiscence is a disorder of desire which is partly biological and partly socially conferred. Even for those who are baptised, their personal history of habit and practice in relation to this disorder of desire will ensure a continuing power and influence of it. But the grace of God, received through baptism, brings a person under the effects

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 187.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 179.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 180–184.

¹¹³ Ibid., pp. 184–187.

¹¹⁴ Burnaby, 1991, p. 208.

¹¹⁵ McFadyen, 2000, pp. 190–194.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 192.

of a new power and influence – the grace of God – which disempowers concupiscence. The power of sin can no longer rule unchallenged, and thus the Christian is drawn in two directions.¹¹⁷

His interpretation of Paul's theology of grace was in fact fundamental to Augustine's understanding of sin and willing. He understood the necessity of God's grace for human salvation as implying that human beings were fundamentally flawed – that they could not desire or will that which is good without God's action upon them from outside themselves. Nonetheless, he still saw that goodness of the individual as being, in some sense, their own.¹¹⁸ For Augustine, the grace of God provided both a representation of perfect goodness and also the desire for it.¹¹⁹ The grace of God thus brings about an orientation towards God such that desire and volition are integrated. Competing attractions are denied their capacity to motivate towards action. Only in this way, according to Augustine, can a person be truly said to be free.¹²⁰

CONFESSIONS, BOOK VIII: THE DIVIDED WILL

The text which has been selected for special attention here is book VIII of Augustine's *Confessions*. When Augustine wrote his *Confessions*, in about 397 CE, he was both relating an autobiography of his conversion to Christian faith from Manichaeism some eleven years earlier and also rebutting the arguments of the Manichees, whose radical dualism understood there to be not so much a divided will as two minds or substances at work within human experience.¹²¹ He did this in a literary form which was almost without precedent, providing a compelling and inspiring account of the inner subjective experience of a man who strove relentlessly to find philosophical truth.¹²²

In *Confessions*, Augustine presents himself as having lived a sinful life until the age of thirty-two years, at which time he was converted to Christianity. However, given his purpose in writing the book, and given his theology of grace and sin, it is quite possible that he tended to exaggerate his own sinfulness prior to conversion. He was clearly keen to persuade his readers that any sanctity he might have, and for which he had in fact gained quite a reputation, was attributable only to the grace of God.¹²³

Book VIII of *Confessions* is concerned with Augustine's conversion to Christianity. The book opens with Augustine on the brink of conversion.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 192–193.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 173–176. See also Bernasconi, 1992, pp. 62–63.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 179–180.

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp. 184–187.

¹²¹ *Confessions*, VIII, v, 22–24.

¹²² O'Donnell, 2002, p. 20.

¹²³ Pine-Coffin, 1961, pp. 11–18.

It is his reluctance to embrace sexual continence which seems to hold him back. He relates how he was told the story of the conversion of the philosopher Victorinus, and how he was inspired to emulate him, but then found himself prevented:

I was eager to imitate [Victorinus] . . . for he had found a reason for giving his time wholly to thee. For this was what I was longing to do; but as yet I was bound by the iron chain of my own will. The enemy held fast my will, and had made of it a chain, and had bound me tight with it. For out of the perverse will came lust, and the service of lust ended in habit, and habit, not resisted, became necessity. By these links, as it were, forged together – which is why I called it ‘a chain’ – a hard bondage held me in slavery. But that new will which had begun to spring up in me freely to worship thee and to enjoy thee, O my God, the only certain Joy, was not able as yet to overcome my former wilfulness, made strong by long indulgence. Thus my two wills – the old and the new, the carnal and the spiritual – were in conflict within me; and by their discord they tore my soul apart.¹²⁴

The obviously autobiographical nature and context of Augustine’s account allows more clarity concerning the development of the divided will than does Paul’s account of the divided self. Augustine tells us that he developed a new will, which was eager to imitate Victorinus. He perceived this as a joyful experience of freedom to worship God. But this new will came into conflict with an older will – initially described as ‘my own will’. This old will he perceived as ‘bondage’ and ‘slavery’, and as having been made strong by ‘habit’ and ‘long indulgence’. The two wills are described as being in conflict: a conflict which Augustine portrays as the tearing apart of his soul.

There need be no uncertainty here, as there was in interpreting Romans 7. Augustine was reflecting on a time when he was almost, but not yet, a Christian. He was reflecting upon a new subjective experience – but one which was the outcome of a clash between new experiences, notably his hearing of the conversion of Victorinus, and long-established habits, which he now desired to change.

The relationship between will and desire (or ‘lust’) is also clear in this passage. Interestingly here, it is desire which arises from will in Augustine’s understanding, rather than the other way around. However, it is also clear that it is the ‘service of lust’ which leads to habit, and the failure to resist habit which leads to ‘necessity’. The sequence seems to be: will – desire – behaviour. Where actions are repeated, they lead to habit and a sense of compulsion. Where habit is resisted (implicitly by the will) that sense of compulsion may be broken.

¹²⁴ *Confessions*, VIII, v, 10.

Augustine interpreted his experience in the light of scripture, quoting specifically from two of Paul's letters.¹²⁵ First, he refers to Galatians (5:17), as a basis for interpreting his experience in terms of conflicting desires:

Thus I came to understand from my own experience what I had read, how 'the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.'¹²⁶ I truly lusted both ways, yet more in that which I approved in myself than in that which I disapproved in myself. For in the latter it was not now really I that was involved, because here I was rather an unwilling sufferer than a willing actor. And yet it was through me that habit had become an armed enemy against me, because I had willingly come to be what I unwillingly found myself to be.¹²⁷

Augustine thus recognised that he desired both to imitate Victorinus and also to remain in his old way of life. He approved of the former desire, which he estimated to be the stronger, but disapproved of the latter. He is now ready to identify the latter desire as 'not now really I', on the basis that he was an 'unwilling sufferer' of that desire, although he recognised that he had played a willing role in bringing it to be. However, the desire to imitate Victorinus is identified with the desire of 'the Spirit' in Galatians 5:17, and the desire to remain in his old way of life is identified with 'the flesh'. In the present context, it is important to note that in Galatians 5:19–21 Paul lists a number of works of the flesh, and that they include drunkenness. For Augustine, the Pauline concept of 'the flesh' was concerned with living for self rather than for God.¹²⁸

Secondly, Augustine refers to Paul's letter to the Romans (7:22–25) as a basis for interpreting his experience as one of captivity of the will:

In vain did I 'delight in thy law in the inner man' while 'another law in my members warred against the law of my mind and brought me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.' For the law of sin is the tyranny of habit, by which the mind is drawn and held, even against its will. Yet it deserves to be so held because it so willingly falls into the habit. 'O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death' but thy grace alone, through Jesus Christ our Lord?¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Augustine also quotes (in VIII, v, 12) from Ephesians 5:14: 'Awake, you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.' This quotation appears to reflect his understanding of the challenge to 'awake' and 'arise' and receive 'light' that was presented by his hearing of the conversion of Victorinus. Our concern here, however, is more with Augustine's interpretation of the inner conflict in which he found himself involved as a result of this challenge.

¹²⁶ In the NRSV, Galatians 5:17 reads: 'For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want.'

¹²⁷ *Confessions*, VIII, v, 11.

¹²⁸ This is discussed further in Chapter 4.

¹²⁹ *Confessions*, VIII, v, 12.

Augustine particularly draws here on Paul's tension between the law of God in the inner man (or mind), and the law of sin in his 'members'. He explicitly understands the latter law as the 'tyranny of habit' which brings the mind into captivity against its own will. It is easy to assume here that he conceives of the law of sin as operating at the level of purely bodily desire (in the 'members'), but things cannot be this simple, for he clearly recognises that this 'tyranny' was *willingly* entered into. In other words, the will is brought into captivity by means of its own complicity with, and failure to resist, the formation of habit.

Augustine goes on to relate how he was told of the conversion of two agents of the Emperor,¹³⁰ and how this threw him into a state of turmoil and self-loathing.¹³¹ This led him eventually to a further description of the inner conflict that he experienced:

The mind commands the mind to will, and yet though it be itself it does not obey itself. Whence this strange anomaly and why should it be? I repeat: The will commands itself to will, and could not give the command unless it wills; yet what is commanded is not done. But actually the will does not will entirely; therefore it does not command entirely. For as far as it wills, it commands. And as far as it does not will, the thing commanded is not done. For the will commands that there be an act of will – not another, but itself. But it does not command entirely. Therefore, what is commanded does not happen; for if the will were whole and entire, it would not even command it to be, because it would already be. It is, therefore, no strange anomaly partly to will and partly to be unwilling. This is actually an infirmity of mind, which cannot wholly rise, while pressed down by habit, even though it is supported by the truth. And so there are two wills, because one of them is not whole, and what is present in this one is lacking in the other.¹³²

It becomes clear here that Augustine understood himself as possessing two wills in opposition to each other. The one will commanded that his mind should will that he follow the example of Victorinus. This was evident in his consciousness of 'commanding' himself to do the same. The other will was his unwillingness to follow Victorinus. This was evident in the fact that the 'command' was not actually obeyed. He understands this state of affairs as reflecting an 'infirmity of mind' in which there are two partial wills, neither of which is 'entire' or 'whole'.

However, this interpretation does not seem to do full justice to the subjective state that Augustine describes here, for he also puts most of the emphasis on one of these wills, in such a way that only one is referred to here as a will as such, and the other is an *unwillingness* to implement it.

¹³⁰ *Confessions*, VIII, vi, 15.

¹³¹ *Confessions*, VIII, vii, 16–18.

¹³² *Confessions*, VIII, ix, 21.

It is really the one will with which Augustine is most concerned, which is 'supported by the truth' but 'pressed down by habit'. It is true that, owing to the latter influence, it is only a 'partial' will, which commands something that does not happen. If it were a complete will, the command to follow Victorinus would be implemented, and there would be only one will, where will and action were one and the same. The will would then not 'command' itself at all – for what was willed would simply happen. However, because it is only a partial will, the will finds itself commanding itself to do something, which does not happen. This understanding has close parallels with Harry Frankfurt's¹³³ distinction between first- and second-order volitions (or desires), where Augustine's will to follow Victorinus might be understood as a second-order volition, and his unwillingness to do so as a first-order volition to remain in his old way of life. This model will be discussed further below.

Augustine continued to describe his state of inner conflict as both partial willingness and partial unwillingness. He recognised, on the one hand, that willingness and unwillingness were both aspects of his own mind and self, such that he was 'at war' with himself and 'torn apart'. But, on the other hand, and with further allusions to Romans 7 (this time to v. 17), he understood the unwillingness as being no longer himself, but rather the 'sin that dwelt in [him]':

While I was deliberating whether I would serve the Lord my God now, as I had long purposed to do, it was I who willed and it was also I who was unwilling. In either case, it was I. I neither willed with my whole will nor was I wholly unwilling. And so I was at war with myself and torn apart by myself. And this strife was against my will; yet it did not show the presence of another mind, but the punishment of my own. Thus it was no more I who did it, but the sin that dwelt in me – the punishment of a sin freely committed by Adam, and I was a son of Adam.¹³⁴

There is a clear implication here of the effects of original sin – the 'punishment of a sin freely committed by Adam' – which now exerted its influence upon Augustine, such that he did not do that which he wanted to do.

With further echoes of the Pauline understanding of the Christian as caught in a tension between two epochs, or powers, Augustine summarised his own state of conflict in more general terms:

When eternity attracts us from above, and the pleasure of earthly delight pulls us down from below, the soul does not will either the one or the other with all its force, but still it is the same soul that does not will this or that with a united will,

¹³³ Stump, 2002, pp. 126–127.

¹³⁴ *Confessions*, VIII, x, 22.

and is therefore pulled apart with grievous perplexities, because for truth's sake it prefers this, but for custom's sake it does not lay that aside.¹³⁵

Augustine therefore saw himself, along with all human beings who are attracted by 'eternity . . . from above', as being drawn into a state of inner conflict generated by a tension between that force of heavenly attraction and an opposing force 'from below'. The force from above was represented for Augustine by the life that Victorinus had adopted – a life given wholly to God. The force from below seems to have much in common with Paul's understanding of 'the flesh', but it is concerned also with Augustine's doctrine of original sin, and further with the influence of a lifetime of 'habit' which binds people to ways of life that they might (at least partially) wish to break away from.

It may be argued that Augustine saw the will as not so much divided as 'partial', or incomplete, or held captive. Or again, it may be argued that he saw the inner conflict generated within people as a result of the competing attractions of 'eternity' and 'earthly delight' as being concerned with two conflicting wills, or perhaps between willingness and unwillingness. However, overall, Augustine's understanding of the will in the state of inner conflict associated with his desire to give his life wholly to God, as Victorinus had done, would seem to be well described as being a 'divided will', and it is this term which will be used here.

Whatever terminology one may wish to use, it is clear that this state of inner conflict was associated, at least in Augustine's experience, with a strong affective component. Distraught, he went aside to weep, alone, beneath a fig tree in a garden. It was then that he heard a child playing, and chanting: 'Pick it up, read it; pick it up, read it.'¹³⁶ Interpreting this as a divine command to read scripture, he picked up a Bible and read Romans 13:13:

I snatched it up, opened it, and in silence read the paragraph on which my eyes first fell: 'Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.' I wanted to read no further, nor did I need to. For instantly, as the sentence ended, there was infused in my heart something like the light of full certainty and all the gloom of doubt vanished away.¹³⁷

Thus, book VIII of *Confessions* concludes with Augustine's conversion to faith in Christ.

¹³⁵ *Confessions*, VIII, x, 24.

¹³⁶ *Confessions*, VIII, xii, 29.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

Addiction as divided will

Eleonore Stump,¹³⁸ and others, have interpreted Augustine's understanding of the divided will in terms of Frankfurt's distinction between first- and second-order desires and volitions. First-order desires are simply 'desires to do or not to do one thing or another'. Second-order desires are concerned with wanting 'to have (or not to have) certain desires and motives'. Second-order desires thus require a capacity for 'reflective self-evaluation'.¹³⁹ For Frankfurt, the will is understood as '*effective* desire', and is thus a desire expressed in motivation for action.¹⁴⁰ A first-order volition is an action or intention to action motivated by a first-order desire. A second-order volition is concerned, however, with wanting a particular first-order desire to be the will, whether or not it actually is, and it is this which, for Frankfurt, is essential to the concept of personhood.¹⁴¹ According to this understanding, Augustine's awareness of the will commanding itself¹⁴² was a description of a second-order volition. According to this understanding also, the will may variously be divided against itself – at first or second-order levels, or between first- and second-order levels.¹⁴³

Both Stump and Frankfurt provide examples concerned with addiction, and indeed addiction appears to provide the almost quintessential example of conflict between first- and second-order volitions.

For Frankfurt,¹⁴⁴ the narcotic addict may have first-order desires both to take the drug, and not to take it. The former is in both cases, more or less, generated by physiological dependency upon the drug. The 'unwilling addict', however, also has a second-order volition to stop taking the drug, and therefore identifies self with this first-order desire, while withdrawing from the first-order desire to continue using the drug:

It is in virtue of this identification and withdrawal, accomplished through the formation of a second order volition, that the unwilling addict may meaningfully make the analytically puzzling statements that the force moving him to take the drug is a force other than his own, and that it is not of his own free will but rather against his will that this force moves him to take it.¹⁴⁵

Frankfurt contrasts the 'unwilling addict' with the 'wanton addict'. The latter lacks either the capacity or interest for evaluating desires self-reflectively. In the case of the wanton addict, whichever first-order desire is stronger will win but, whichever desire does win, this addict will have no personal sense of winning or losing a struggle at all. Indeed, according to Frankfurt,

¹³⁸ Stump, 2002, pp. 126–127. ¹³⁹ Frankfurt, 1971, p. 7. ¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10. ¹⁴² *Confessions*, VIII, ix. ¹⁴³ Stump, 2002, p. 126.

¹⁴⁴ Frankfurt, 1971, pp. 12–14. ¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

the wanton addict does not have the characteristics of a *person* at all. However, Frankfurt also considers the possibility of a third type of addict: the 'willing addict'. The willing addict has both a second-order volition and a first-order volition to take the drug. According to Frankfurt, it is therefore possible to understand a personal state of addiction in which first- and second-order desires do not come into conflict, and in which the will is therefore not divided.

Frankfurt's proposition of the willing addict is actually put forward in the course of an argument concerning freedom of the will, and it presupposes that there are no first-order volitions to discontinue drug use which might provide a source of conflict with the second-order volition to continue drug use. In fact, research on the alcohol dependence syndrome makes clear that such first-order volitions almost certainly will arise, since psychological, social and biological harm associated with the dependent pattern of use is likely to motivate cessation of drug use, or at least reduction of use. However, the phenomenon of salience (as an element of the dependence syndrome) reflects the observation that all types of addicts (willing, unwilling or wanton) do in fact tend to implement first-order volitions to continue drug use despite first-order volitions to discontinue. It would therefore appear likely in practice that established addiction will be associated with at least a degree of division of the will, both at the level of competing first-order volitions, and between the levels of first- and second-order volitions, whether an addict is willing or unwilling. However, it remains possible that the willing addict may experience no such internal conflict. Such a possibility may in fact be realised relatively frequently in the early stages of development of the dependence syndrome, when first-order volitions to reduce or discontinue drug use may be less frequently encountered. But, as Frankfurt suggests, this is in fact a state of 'overdetermination' of the first-order desire for drug use.¹⁴⁶ This would seem likely to reinforce the dependent pattern of drug use, and thus pave the way for a later conflict between first- and second-order volitions if and when the second-order volition should change from that of a 'willing' to that of an 'unwilling' addict. It is also highly consonant with Augustine's understanding, both of the willingness of the self in generation of the internal conflict, and of the part played by habit. Recall, for example, his statement that

the law of sin is the tyranny of habit, by which the mind is drawn and held, even against its will. Yet it deserves to be so held because it so willingly falls into the habit.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 19–20.

¹⁴⁷ *Confessions*, VIII, v. 12.

Stump provides a very similar example of addiction, concerned with a smoker who wants to give up smoking.¹⁴⁸ Again, there is a powerful first-order volition, this time to continue smoking, in conflict with a second-order volition to stop. However, Stump's purpose in analysing this example is different from Frankfurt's. In particular, she is concerned primarily with resolving the tension between grace and free will in Augustine's thought. The question here is about where the second-order volition of faith might arise from. Is it implanted as an act of God, by grace, and therefore not ultimately an act of will of the individual at all, or is it an act of free will of the individual? This is a fundamental problem in Augustine's work, where it would seem that he wishes to insist both that the grace of God is the sole source of human goodness and faith, and also that human beings have free will and thus responsibility for the evil that they commit.

Stump considers the imaginative possibilities of a technical device which might be operated by the smoker, so as to bring about a first-order volition not to smoke, or a neurosurgeon who might be able to perform an operation with the same effect. In either case, where the device is active at the smoker's behest, or the operation is undertaken only with the smoker's consent, it may be argued that the ultimate determinant of the outcome is the free will of the individual concerned.¹⁴⁹ The device is arguably not dissimilar to the action of certain 'anti-craving' drugs which are currently the subject of research in the field of alcohol dependence.¹⁵⁰

Stump argues that Augustine understands God as willing to give grace to those who ask in such a way that God is analogous to the technical device or the neurosurgeon.¹⁵¹ In this way, Augustine's understanding of the necessity of the grace of God might appear to have been retained along with an understanding of the free will of the individual in asking for that grace. However, the problem simply recurs at the level of the second-order volition. If the second-order volition is also given by God, human free will would appear to be only illusory.

A full analysis of this problem is not directly relevant to the purpose of this book. However, the question still arises of an appropriate

¹⁴⁸ Stump, 2002, pp. 127–130.

¹⁴⁹ This assumes, of course, that causal determinism is rejected, and that the possibility of indeterminate actions resulting from the exercise of free will is accepted.

¹⁵⁰ E.g. Acamprosate and naltrexone (G. Edwards, Marshall and Cook, 2003, pp. 328–331). The device is also not dissimilar to another pharmacological treatment for alcohol dependence, namely disulfiram. Disulfiram confers an aversive response when alcohol is consumed, and thus assists patients in maintaining abstinence. A decision to take disulfiram is thus a second-order volition, but the drug does not reduce craving and therefore does not actually remove the first-order desire to drink. (See review: Hughes and Cook, 1997.)

¹⁵¹ Stump, 2002, p. 133.

understanding of the nature of the relationship between grace and free will in any theological response to the problem of addiction. If the divided will of Augustine's experience in coming to Christian faith is in principle the same as the divided will of the addicted person, what does this mean for our understanding of the latter? More specifically, is the addict, ultimately, dependent only upon the grace of God for freedom from this state of conflict or captivity, or does personal choice and free will also play a part?

First, it is surely now clear that a second-order volition to stop drinking, smoking, drug use, or any other addictive pattern of behaviour, would appear to be essential if a pattern of addictive behaviour is to be broken. The 'willing addict' that Frankfurt envisaged would seem very unlikely indeed ever to change his or her addictive behaviour. One could perhaps imagine strong first-order volitions which might develop, perhaps as a result of the biological, psychological and social harms of drinking, which might set up a division of the will between a second-order volition to continue drinking and a first-order volition to stop. Indeed, such cases are sometimes encountered in clinical practice. However, the prognosis in such cases (from the perspective of abstinence as a 'good' outcome) is, in my experience, usually poor. The will is divided not only between first- and second-order volitions, but also at the level of opposing first-order divisions. The addictive behaviour is strongly over-determined and is unlikely to change, except perhaps on a temporary basis.

Secondly, any solution to the problem of addiction must take account of the seriousness of the internal conflict which the divided will represents. If it were easy, of one's own volition, to break free from this experience of conflict, incompleteness and captivity of the will, it would not represent the source of turmoil that it clearly presented to Augustine and which it similarly presents to the addict. As Augustine so vividly portrays, and as Frankfurt so logically argues, the will to adhere to familiar patterns of behaviour, reinforced by habit, and made all the more compelling by physiological processes that strengthen desire, can be a formidable obstacle to behavioural change. But is this the only obstacle, or is this obstacle adequately understood in this way alone?

Thirdly, then, the analysis of Frankfurt, orientated as it is towards a concern with philosophical issues of personhood and free will, surely neglects important aspects of Augustine's theology. In book VIII of *Confessions*, Augustine is preoccupied with a Pauline tension between the 'flesh' and the 'Spirit', the competing powers of the 'law of sin' and God's law, and the competing attractions of 'eternity' and 'earthly delight'. He understands human beings as suffering the consequences of original sin, such that without

the grace of God they are caught in a subjective experience of being unable to break free from the power of sin, habit and earthly delight. Or – for our present purposes – individuals caught in a pattern of addictive behaviour find that they need more than just their own willpower if they are to break free.

Fourthly, Stump proposes a possible solution to Augustine's dilemma concerning libertarianism and grace, which is understood in terms of an analysis of the options available to human beings in response to the grace that God offers.¹⁵² She suggests that refusal and assent are only two possibilities, and that it is also open to human beings to adopt a neutral position of non-refusal and non-assent. If we understand human beings as being normally in a state of continuous refusal of grace, by virtue of original sin, then they might still be able to cease refusing grace, and thus receive it, even though they are otherwise unable to actively request it or assent to it. Thus, the second-order volition of faith might be understood as entirely the gift of God, but also dependent upon the free will of an individual to cease refusing it. Perhaps a similar understanding might be helpful in the specific case of addiction?

If we imagine that the addict is positively held, or attracted in some way, not just by a neutral choice between first-order desires, but by a nature which is in some way biased against the very thing that a second-order volition ought to choose – both for the longer-term benefit of the self, and for the benefit of others who suffer as a result of the addiction – we come closer both to the experience of addiction and to Augustine's account of the divided will. For Augustine, this division, captivity or incompleteness of the will could be mended only by the grace of God. For many alcoholics who follow the Twelve Step programme of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), experience has suggested that it can be mended only by a 'Power greater than [them]selves'.¹⁵³ In either case, it was not so much that a first-order volition was suddenly made in favour of freedom, as that the individual (Augustine or the alcoholic respectively) ceased making a second-order volition to continue in their existing way of life. Thus, Augustine became open to a second-order volition of faith, conferred by the grace of God. Thus the alcoholic becomes open to a second-order volition for abstinence, conferred (using the language of AA) by a Power greater than self.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 139–142.

¹⁵³ The second step of the Twelve Steps of AA (G. Edwards, Marshall and Cook, 2003, p. 302).

¹⁵⁴ The third of the Twelve Steps of AA refers to the making of 'a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God' (G. Edwards, Marshall and Cook, 2003, p. 302).

It would therefore appear to be the case that Augustine's experience of the divided (or captive or incomplete) will shows strong parallels with the subjective experience of addiction. Indeed, if we accept the analyses of Frankfurt and Stump, both Augustine's experience of struggling with the decision to adopt sexual continence in order to give his life wholly to God, and the experience of the alcoholic struggling to stop drinking, are identical experiences of inner conflict between first- and second-order volitions. Furthermore, in his understanding of the significance of the words of Romans 13:13, Augustine himself seems implicitly to have recognised that his struggle with sexual desire was similar to a desire for drunkenness, although the latter was not a desire with which he struggled. But is there not also an important difference? Augustine was concerned primarily with a spiritual and religious decision (whether or not to become a Christian), which had behavioural and psycho-social implications (celibacy). The alcoholic is concerned primarily with a behavioural decision (whether or not to abstain), which has bio-psycho-social implications (withdrawal symptoms, craving, stigma, etc.). These decisions are of a qualitatively different kind, and present different challenges.

For a decision to convert to Christianity, a theology of grace might well be an essential part of the healing of a divided will. But is it equally necessary in the case of alcoholism? Are pharmacological and psychological treatments, informed by the natural, behavioural and social sciences, not sufficient?

For Augustine, the distinction here would be quite unrecognisable. The initial psychological barrier to his conversion seems to have been primarily concerned with his desire for sexual fulfilment. But, for him, this was little different from other desires of the flesh, including drunkenness, which might equally have held him back from giving his life wholly to God. Similarly, all such desires ultimately present the same challenge. Will life be fulfilled by striving for the highest good, or will it be subject to concupiscence, and thus characterised by a divided, captive, will? For Augustine, the solution to this dilemma was to be found in the grace of God, which alone provided a route to freedom.

For contemporary clinicians, social scientists, neuroscientists, counsellors and psychotherapists in western society, however, the distinction is very recognisable indeed. Religion has been relegated to the private domain, and theology is not admitted to participation in secular discourse on such matters. Conversion to Christianity and therapy for alcohol dependence are either completely unrelated matters, or at least should be addressed in different conversations, according to different rules. The former is the province of those who constitute a community of faith, and the latter the province of

those who constitute the community of science. The latter can be addressed without addressing the former, and *vice versa*. Scientific outcome studies would appear to support this contention. Therapies of various kinds are apparently equally successful as treatments for alcohol dependence, and Christian faith does not appear to be an essential prerequisite for a good outcome.

However, the distinction that Augustine fails to recognise, and that post-Enlightenment western society insists upon, is perhaps more real than the former could have realised, and more illusory than the latter cares to allow.

For embodied persons such as human beings, the neurochemistry of craving, lust and other biological drives is a very significant consideration indeed, about which Augustine can have suspected little and known nothing. Where 'anti-craving' drugs offer a therapeutic opportunity to modify or eliminate such drives, they offer an opportunity for at least partial freedom for a captive will. Similarly, psychological treatments such as motivational interviewing might be understood to be offering support for fragile first- or second-order volitions for abstinence or moderation. In this sense, we might wish to reverse Stump's analogy, and suggest that such treatments are analogous to the part played by God in Augustine's conversion, rather than the other way around. They are certainly, however, at least in a limited sense, a means of grace. They offer an opportunity of freedom which individuals could not have achieved for themselves, which is based upon the intervention of an external (therapeutic) power. But all such interventions are focussed only on the solution to a particular problem – that of alcohol dependence. They do not offer any broader understanding of what it means to be a creature with a 'divided will' – or (in Frankfurt's terms) what it means to be a 'person'.

But, on the other hand, the phenomenon of addiction may be much more closely related to a broader human experience of division of the will and thus (if Frankfurt is correct) personhood than many contemporary scientists and therapists might readily admit. From this perspective, a focus upon addiction as somehow apart from 'normal' human experience may be very unhelpful. Perhaps addiction is, after all, simply one example of the many and varied ways in which different human beings struggle with a sense of wishing to be something other (or rather better) than that which they actually find themselves to be. And if this struggle is, after all, as Augustine suggested in relation to his own experience, ultimately therefore a personal struggle for the highest good, it is necessarily also a religious, or at least spiritual, matter and not a purely scientific one. In this case, the nature of the struggle itself, the very recognition of the division, captivity and limitations

of the human will, would appear to beg the assistance of all that is ultimately good in achieving that which is personally the highest achievable good. In other words, the nature of the struggle implicitly recognises the need for grace as the means of finding freedom and wholeness.

DEPENDENCE AND SIN: TOWARDS A THEOLOGICAL
MODEL OF ADDICTION

Having, in Chapter 2, briefly reviewed the alcohol dependence syndrome as a scientific interpretation of the concept of addiction, and having in this chapter considered the ways in which Pauline and Augustinian theologies (as exemplified in two selected texts) might shed light upon the subjective experience of addiction, what may we now say about the possibilities for a Christian theological model of addiction?

A theological model is not a resurrection of the moral model!

Although drunkenness has always been understood as an ethical concern of the Christian tradition, the moral model of addiction has suffered from unhelpful emphases and diverse interpretations. The most unhelpful perceived emphasis would appear to be in placing the blame mostly or entirely upon the individual drinker, as though it were a simple matter of 'telling [other] people not to do it'. This approach does not do justice to the complexity of this bio-psycho-social problem, and neither does it show understanding of, or sympathy for, the subjective plight of the drinker who suffers from the alcohol dependence syndrome. However, it is also extremely unfortunate that the notion of a 'moral model' has become so unpopular in relation to a contemporary social problem which has enormous ethical implications – not merely on the part of the individual drinker, but in terms of the whole context of the production, sale and consumption of alcohol, and the consequences of the same, within society as a whole. A more sophisticated ethical analysis of this complex system is, in the view of the present author, urgently needed.

This chapter does not provide that analysis, at least not comprehensively, and it is not an attempt to reintroduce the old moral model. Indeed, it suggests that a model which conceives of either morality or addiction as being concerned simply with freely made choices on the part of an impartial moral agent is simply unrealistic. However, it does seek to explore some of the possibilities for constructing a Christian theological model of addiction. This in turn is of potentially great importance for a Christian ethical analysis

of this serious contemporary problem. A theological model of addiction is not at all the same thing as the old moral model – but it certainly does offer an important contribution to moral and ethical debate.

Recognition of the contribution of theology to discourse on addiction

Over a period of almost eighteen centuries, Christian theology came to provide one of the main foundations for understanding the problem of drunkenness in western society. Over the last century, theology has been largely excluded from public discourse on alcohol-related matters, but it is argued here that theology still has a significant contribution to make to discourse about addiction. Addiction is concerned with some fundamental aspects of human experience with which Christian theology is also concerned. As with McFadyen's analysis of the Holocaust and the sexual abuse of children, theology also offers both descriptive and explanatory power. This is particularly evident in terms of the Pauline account of the divided self, and the Augustinian account of the divided will, both of which show significant parallels with the subjective experience of addiction. The Pauline and Augustinian accounts emphasise aspects of the experience of addiction that have been neglected, or only partially explained, in secular discourse. In particular, theology draws attention to aspects of addiction which relate to universal human experiences of self-reflection, internal conflict and choice. It sets these considerations in a broader, theistic, context and shows how such experiences are not properly understood in terms either of causal determinism or of completely free human agents who make completely free, self-determined choices.

Recognition of addiction as one manifestation of the human condition

While the alcohol-dependent person may have experienced cravings, withdrawal symptoms, affective states or other 'pathological' experiences, the model that is suggested by the present exploration of Pauline and Augustinian theology is not that of the uniqueness of the subjective experience of addiction so much as that of its universality. In other words, there are aspects of the subjective experience of addiction which are common to the human experience of personhood. In particular, human persons have a capacity to be self-reflective and to will to change, but also experience a power of resistance to that change which appears as though contrary to their own will.

Does this mean that addiction does not constitute any kind of disorder or disease at all? It is certainly difficult to see how, in theological terms, it can be construed as qualitatively different from the normal range of human experience. However, that is not to say that there are not important scientific discriminators. Just as personality disorders are understood as matters of clinical concern, representing as they do the statistical extremes of normal human personality traits, even though they may not strictly be diseases or illnesses at all,¹⁵⁵ perhaps addictive disorders are at least *disorders* in some statistical and scientific sense. However, the danger in this argument lies in Frankfurt's contention that secondary volitions are distinctive to personhood. This argument might, therefore, make it appear as though some people are more fully *people* than others (as indeed Frankfurt's discussion of the wanton addict does appear to be in danger of implying).

Perhaps the difference, therefore, lies not so much in fundamental qualitative or quantitative differences between the subjective inner conflict of addiction as compared with the similar inner conflicts experienced by Paul, Augustine and others, but rather in the focus and scope of the conflict(s). As discussed briefly above, individual differences in the ways in which subjective desires such as lust or craving for alcohol are mediated at the neurochemical level may be more important in determining the nature and range of subjective human experience than Augustine or Paul ever could have imagined. However, both Paul and Augustine do appear to have recognised a range of difference vices as being essentially manifestations of the same underlying weakness of the flesh (e.g. the 'revelling and drunkenness . . . debauchery and licentiousness. . . quarrelling and jealousy' of Romans 13:13). This leaves much scope to understand environmental and genetic differences which might make different individuals more or less vulnerable to internal conflict in some areas than in others (e.g. to alcohol dependence rather than quarrelling, or to nicotine dependence rather than sexual licentiousness).

It may therefore be the case, not so much that addiction is the universal human condition (as, for example, Lenters¹⁵⁶ would have us believe), as that the subjective experience of division of will and self is universal, and is experienced in different ways by different people. For one person it may be experienced in the domain of a struggle with alcohol dependence, and for another (as, perhaps, with Augustine) in the domain of grappling with sexual desire. For one person, the struggle may in some sense be identified as 'addiction' (traditionally this would have been by virtue of drug

¹⁵⁵ P. Hill, Murray and Thorley, 1987, pp. 197–198.

¹⁵⁶ See Chapter 2, pp. 18–19.

dependence) and in another it might not be (e.g. the habitual quarreller). In some cases, biological predisposition might be strong, and biological features of tolerance and withdrawal might be predominant (e.g. in alcohol dependence) and in other cases, the pattern of behaviour might appear much more psychological in both aetiology and presentation (e.g. in forms of behaviour such as 'pathological shopping').¹⁵⁷ In other cases (e.g. sexual behaviour) it might be much more debatable whether to construe the struggle as a behavioural 'addiction' or simply as habitual behaviour.

Perhaps the key lesson here is that we may all identify with the essential subjective experience of addiction in one area of our lives or another, but that this does not mean to say that we are all 'addicted' in any scientific or sociological sense. The universality of the human experience is such that none of us should feel able to look down on the addict, as though we were morally superior. On the other hand, this understanding does not construe addiction (in any scientific or sociological sense) as being a universal human disorder. Not everyone suffers from the alcohol dependence syndrome – or indeed any dependence syndrome at all.

Pauline and Augustinian understandings of the power of sin

One of the features of the theological understandings of both Paul and Augustine which may be considered most objectionable in secular discourse about addiction is that of the power of sin. And yet, it is also this theology of sin which seems to provide a better account of the experience of addiction than do purely scientific theses. Both Paul and Augustine understood sin as exerting a power over people such that their moral choices are distorted and impaired. At the same time, the weakness of the flesh, and concupiscence, tend to make human beings vulnerable to this power, such that they make morally wrong judgements and misuse their free will. In short, sin tends to enslave and to bring people into captivity to self-indulgence. Original sin and concupiscence, according to Augustine, are biologically acquired. But sin also affects social relationships and is socially effected. As McFadyen eloquently shows in the context of the Holocaust and child sexual abuse, sin can so permeate the social environment that it engages as willing participants those who are its victims. Those who are not morally culpable in the usual secular sense become engaged as active participants in the very processes of injustice and immorality of which they are themselves victims.

¹⁵⁷ Glatt and Cook, 1987.

This would seem to offer a very good description of the way in which biological, psychological and social processes contribute to the pathology of addiction. Inherited predispositions to alcohol dependence combine with social pressures to conform to a heavy drinking culture, and with the psychological power of habit in such a way that people are innocently drawn into dependent patterns of drinking which they then actively seek to continue, even to their own detriment and that of those around them. In this sense there is an apparent 'power' of addictive behaviour which seems to enslave and to bring people into captivity. Thus dependent drinkers find that they hide their drinking, and sacrifice those people and things which they hold as valuable at the altar of that which has enslaved them.

The present argument is intended to imply neither the objective reality of evil powers nor their demythologisation. What is inherent to the present discussion is that sin is experienced as a power which adversely influences human choice and decision-making, and which engages people in the very processes which bring about their own enslavement. This would indeed also appear to provide a good account of the processes of addiction.

The internal struggle: divisions of self and will

The exploration of the parallels between addiction and sin which has been undertaken here has focussed especially upon subjective experience. It has been argued that the experience of the divided self in Romans 7, and the experience of the divided will in book VIII of Augustine's *Confessions*, both provide accounts of subjective experiences which have many features in common with the subjective experience of addiction. While these accounts are both primarily theological, the philosophical analysis and contemporary language and terminology of Frankfurt are also helpful in clarifying the nature of the division of the will which is experienced in addictive disorders such as alcohol dependence, and which is also to be found in Augustine's account of his personal journey to conversion to Christianity. Frankfurt further argues that this capacity to self-reflect and to make second-order volitions is at the heart of what it means to be a person. Perhaps, then, the possibility of addiction is inherent in the human experience of personhood.

Theologically, this internal conflict is made possible by the meeting of concupiscence and original sin with the grace of God in the experience of individual human beings. Human beings do not make decisions about life with full knowledge of their consequences, and neither do they do so in a completely neutral and rational way. The weakness of human beings (in their *flesh*) is easily drawn by the power of sin towards self-indulgence and

a form of religion which is self-serving, but also radically self-enslaving. On the other hand, at least according to Augustine and Paul, they have the opportunity to serve God, and in so doing to experience freedom. Only in this way may desire, volition and action be brought into harmony and the divisions of the will be healed. Human beings thus face a choice between two competing powers, or (to use the language of Theissen) tribunals. We are not neutral agents (perhaps most especially we are not when we imagine that we are) – we will be drawn into the sphere of influence of one or the other. The one will enslave, and the other will bring freedom.

McFadyen has developed this theme in terms of worship and idolatry. Worship of God, which might appear at first to be a form of slavery, is actually characterised in Augustinian theology as life-enriching and as a state of ‘loving joy’. Idolatry, as worship of anything that is not God, acts to block and disorientate joy. Alcohol dependence, with its narrowing of the repertoire of enjoyment of alcohol, its salience of alcohol over other (more highly valued) people and things, and its subjective compulsion towards harmful behaviour is just such an orientation of life under the power of sin. For the willing addict, this may initially not offer a source of conflict. However, for the unwilling addict who is attracted (to use Pauline and Augustinian terminology) by the grace of God, an experience of division of the will must arise. The pattern of behaviour which has been the object of willing consent then becomes understood as a habit which enslaves. The will which was identified as ‘self’ becomes understood as ‘now not really I’ and the ‘true’ self is understood as an unwilling sufferer, held captive by the power of sin.

The search for the highest good

Augustine’s search for the highest good is the essential context to an understanding of the turmoil of his divided will in Book VIII of *Confessions*. For Augustine, perfect freedom was to be found only in a proper orientation towards God. For Paul also, Christ was everything, to be sought above all other things which (in comparison) he regarded as ‘rubbish’.¹⁵⁸ It is in this context that these two men have left us with their accounts of the divided self and the divided will. Can such a single-minded existential quest be expected of those who merely seek to be free from the life-restricting influence of alcohol dependence?

¹⁵⁸ Philippians 3:8.

It is of importance to note that the Twelve Step programme of AA does indeed require that life be turned over to God (Step 3) and that conscious contact be sought with him through prayer and meditation (Step 11). In his history of AA, Ernest Kurtz emphasises the importance to alcoholics in AA of recognising that they are 'not God'.¹⁵⁹ Something beyond the self, something transcendent of the self, seems to have been recognised by the founders of AA as being necessary for recovery from alcoholism. However, it is clear that the treatment of alcohol dependence is not always associated with this transcendent goal. Perhaps, for those who recover through other means, it is merely necessary to acknowledge pursuit of a *higher* good than the state of alcohol dependence in which they have found themselves entrapped. However, the second-order volition that would seem to be necessary to any kind of recovery would appear to require acknowledgement at least of this – that individuals desire something better, something other, than that they remain dependent upon alcohol.

The need for grace

We thus come, at last, to the acknowledgement of both Paul and Augustine that only the grace of God provides a way out of the inner conflict of the division of self and will. It would seem inherent to the experience of Paul, Augustine, and the founders of AA that they each faced an awareness that they could not 'will' themselves out of the captivity in which they found themselves held.

For Paul, the solution was to be found in an assertion of eschatological hope, founded upon faith in the uniqueness of the gracious act of God in Jesus Christ. For Augustine, it was only by an act of the grace of God that he was able to 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ' at last. For the founders of AA, it was a recognition that they had to turn over their lives to God, as they understood him.

For Augustine, a lifetime of struggling to understand what had happened failed to address the paradox presented by his conviction that faith in Christ was both a matter of free choice and also wholly the grace of God. Perhaps Stump's analysis of this problem provides at least a partial answer in terms of the need for the person with a divided will to stop resisting the grace of God, so that God may then graciously confer a second-order volition of faith. Similarly, for the alcohol-dependent person, at least an end to the second-order volition to continue drinking would seem to be a necessary prelude

¹⁵⁹ Kurtz, 1991, pp. 3–4.

to finding a second-order volition to stop drinking. But is something more than this required?

It is suggested here that a theological model of addiction must follow Paul and Augustine in recognising the need for the grace of God in recovery from addiction. Perhaps there are those who find recovery without recognising this need. But the whole dynamic of the division of self and will is concerned with human weakness in the face of the power of sin. The sense of powerlessness of will that is inherent in the experience of a divided will is such that it requires an individual at least to look towards something higher than self as offering a way out. Even if this is not the *highest* good, it must needs be a *Higher Power*. The nature of the struggle implicitly recognises the need for grace – or at least something which looks very much like it – as the means of finding freedom and wholeness.