

grace which snatched him, as he devoutly exclaims, "from the very bottom of the bottomless pit."

Another characteristic of this book is not merely its burning hatred of evil, but that it palpitates with the love of goodness and of God. He gazes with enraptured vision on the heavenly beauty, the divine love.

The rhythmic sonorous Latin language throbs and thrills under the impulse of this mighty soul, as a harp beneath the plectrum of a master of sweet sounds. But this sense of spiritual union with God is not a mere sensuous sentiment. It is founded on evangelical repentance and reconciliation through Jesus Christ. He has knelt with bruised and broken heart at the bar of the Judge before he dared to throw himself on the bosom of the Redeemer.

The rich copiousness and sinewy strength of the noble Roman tongue are taxed to the utmost to express the love-longings of the soul to behold the King in His beauty; to rejoice in the light of that divine and beatific vision. "O Thou most sweet, most loving, most gracious, most precious, most longed for, most worthy to be loved, most fair, sweeter than honey, whiter than milk or snow, more grateful than nectar, more precious than gems or gold, dearer to me than all the riches and honours of the world, when shall I behold Thee? When shall I appear before Thy face? When shall I be satisfied with Thy beauty?"*

For a parallel to this fervid Oriental soul-longing we must go to the matchless Song of Songs, with its spiritual yearnings for the Heavenly Bridegroom, the fairest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely. But to the Augustines, the Anselms, the Bernards, the "angelic" and "seraphic" doctors of the past, the tender mystics like Madame Guyon in her prison cell, and many a saintly soul who walks in close communion with God, is vouchsafed this vision of the pure in heart. The spirit walks in the Beulahland of perfect love, and breathes on earth the air of heaven, sweeter than the odours of

Bether, more fragrant than the mountains of myrrh.

Yet these fervid utterances relate the soul-experiences of one of the keenest intellects, of one of the most profound and metaphysical writers, of one of the most logical and vigorous thinkers, in the range of Christian literature. Well does Shedd remark, "When we find the most abstract and intellectual of the Christian Fathers dissolving in tears, or mounting in ecstasy, we may be certain that the emotion issues from truth and reality. When the rock gushes out water we may be sure that it is pure water.

... As we scan the sentences and syllables, we seem to hear the beating of that flaming heart, which now for fifteen centuries has burned and throbbed with a seraph's affection in the Mount of God. We have seemed to look into that deep and spiritual eye, which gazed without shrinking, yet with bitter penitential tears, into the depths of a tormenting conscience and a sinful nature, that it might then gaze without dazzling, and with unutterable rapture, into the eyes and face of the Eternal. Our Protestantism concedes, without scruple, the cognomen of Saint to this ethereal spirit. Our Christianity triumphs in that marvellous power of grace which wrought such a wonderful transformation. The Cæsars and Napoleons, the Byrons and Rousseaus, all the passionate spirits, all the stormy Titans, are within reach of that irresistible influence which is garnered up in the Redemption of the Son of God, and which is accessible to the prayers and the faith of the Church."

"O God, Thou madest man for Thyself," says the opening paragraph of the Confessions, "and our hearts are restless till they find repose in Thee." And this is the key-note of the whole succeeding strain, the cry of a soul seeking after God, if happily it may find Him.

Aurelius Augustinus, the future theologian and bishop, was born in the year 354, at Tagaste, an episcopal city of Numidia, in North Africa. His mother, Monica, was a Christian woman of deep and fervent piety, who diligently instructed her son in the faith of the Gospel, and had him brought up among the catechumens of the Church. His father, Patricius, a pagan nobleman of moderate fortune, cared only to advance his son in secular learning, or "tongue-science," as Augustine calls it. He confesses that in his childhood he was fonder of

* "Dulcissime, amantissime, benignissime, preciosissime, desideratissime, amabilissime, pulcherrime, tu melle dulcior, lacte et nive candidior, nectare suavior, gen mis et auro preciosior, cunctisque terrarum divitiis et honoribus mihi carior, quando te videbo? Quando apparebo ante faciem tuam? Quando satiabore pulchritudine tua?"