

CHAPTER 1 – AUGUSTINE ON LOVING EQUALLY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In Book I of *De doctrina christiana* (DDC) Augustine notoriously claims that we should “use” our neighbor to “enjoy” God. This claim encapsulates his reading of what it is to love God and neighbor according to the two great love commands of the New Testament. Over the years, scholars have made interesting work of both raising and defusing difficulties for this controversial formulation.⁴ While this issue in DDC is well-trodden, Augustine’s related and similarly interesting claim in Book I that “All people should be loved equally”⁵ has been less thoroughly examined in contemporary scholarship. Those familiar with this claim will recall that immediately after he makes it, he clarifies that unequal *action* toward some people over others is not only allowed but required. Given human limitations, Augustine thinks we must do good

⁴ Oliver O’Donovan’s seminal work exemplifies both approaches. See Oliver O’Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in Saint Augustine* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), esp. 27–29, and Oliver O’Donovan, “Usus and Fructus in Augustine De Doctrina Christiana I,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 33, no. 2 (October 1982): 361–97. O’Donovan argues both that the formulation raises problems for Augustine in DDC and that the formulation is not his mature view.

⁵ DDC Book I, XXVIII 29. All English quotations of DDC are adapted from R.P.H. Green’s translation Saint Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, trans. R.P.H. Green, 3rd ed., Oxford World’s Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Latin quotations are from Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, trans. R.P.H. Green, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Green’s translation (the most recent available) is from his 1995 Latin text.

preferentially toward those with whom we have close relations, such as friends and family members. Nevertheless, that our *love* should remain equal, despite preferential beneficence, remains a hard teaching. The claim is of course controversial because, to most of us, it seems quite fitting to love some people more than others. For example, if we did not love our own child more than a new friend, something would seem wrong. The counterintuitive nature of Augustine's claim makes one wonder what, exactly, he could mean by it, and how he could possibly support it. My central aim in this chapter, then, is to give an exposition and analysis of this less-examined claim, and the argument Augustine makes in favor of it.

His argument for the claim may be summarized as follows:

- (1) The degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has.
- (2) Every person has equal value.
- (3) Therefore, we should love all people equally.

The majority of the chapter will focus on an interpretation of this argument as it occurs in DDC, and on other texts in Augustine's corpus that help to illuminate it. However, in the penultimate sections of the chapter, I will undertake to evaluate the argument by considering two possible responses to it. First, I will consider the view that Augustine has in mind a distinct kind of love (e.g., for one's neighbor) that has no implications for intimate loves such as those for one's own children or romantic partner. My verdict will be that while such a response does render Augustine's argument plausible as applied to such a distinct kind of love, it leaves open the question of why his argument does not *also* apply to the other intimate kinds of love. In short, I will argue that it leaves us wanting an explanation of why we should love some people more than others.

Second, I will consider the objection that premise (1) has obvious counter-examples, such as the case of a parent's preferential love for his child. After all, one's child and one's new friend

have equal value as human beings, yet it seems one should love one's child more than a new friend. Since one should love in this way, an interlocutor might insist, the case suggests that there is no need for proportionality between the value of the beloved and the degree of one's love, contrary to premise (1). In response, I will concede that the objection is effective and that premise (1) thereby seems false. Nevertheless, I will argue that there should be *some* connection between love and value, though it is challenging to say just what it should be. Indeed, I will suggest that it is difficult to point out exactly what is wrong with Augustine's premise (1), even if we think it false.

The upshot of this chapter, then, will be that Augustine's argument is an effective spur to further reflection on important and difficult questions about love. Specifically, it prompts us to consider more carefully the proper relation between love and value—which includes the question of exactly what is wrong with Augustine's premise (1)—and the question of why we should love some people preferentially over others. These are the questions I will undertake to address in subsequent chapters of my dissertation. I will say more about these subsequent chapters and the aims of the dissertation in the concluding section of this chapter. I will turn now to an exposition of the context of Augustine's argument.

1.2 *FRUITIO*: LOVE AS ENJOYMENT

The context of Augustine's argument is his attempt in Book I of DDC to interpret the two "greatest commandments," i.e., the love commands of the *New Testament*: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind," and, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."⁶ In particular, Augustine's claim that all people should be

⁶ Matthew 22.38-40. These commandments are also mentioned other places in the *New Testament (NT)* including Mark 12.28-31, Luke 10.25-28, Romans 13.8-10, Galatians 5.14, and James 2.8. Of course, these commandments have their origin in the *Hebrew Bible* (Deuteronomy 6.5 and Leviticus 19.18), though the *NT* couples them together and gives them a meaning and pride of place that is not immediately evident from their original context (at least in the case of the second commandment).

loved equally is part of an effort to interpret what it might mean to love one's neighbor as oneself. Augustine begins this interpretive effort with a distinction between "enjoyment" (*fruitio*) and "use" (*usus*). In this section I will discuss his notion of enjoyment. In the next section I will take up his notion of use.

According to Book I of DDC, "to enjoy something is to hold fast to it in love for its own sake."⁷ From this definition, it seems that Augustine views enjoyment as an aspect or kind of love. This view is confirmed by his subsequent claim that enjoyment is the proper mode of love for God in fulfillment of the first great commandment.⁸ According to the first part of the definition, enjoyment-love involves "holding fast" (*inhaerere*) to a thing, or clinging to it.⁹ Since the proper object of enjoyment-love is God, it seems that Augustine is speaking metaphorically here: one cannot physically cling to an immaterial God. Thus, his meaning seems to be that to enjoy something is to maintain a close relation of some sort to it.

The second part of the definition holds that to enjoy something is to love it "for its own sake" (*propter se ipsam*). By this phrase Augustine means that we maintain the relevant close relation to the beloved as an end or final good, i.e., we maintain it because of the good that the object itself is.¹⁰ Given his eudaimonist ethical framework, Augustine understands things we take

⁷ DDC Book I, IV 4.

⁸ DDC Book I, XXII 20. See also DDC Book I, V 5.

⁹ Augustine says something similar in *De trinitate* VIII.3.4: "For the good of the soul that is to be sought is not that over which one flies by judging, but that to which one adheres [*haerere*] by loving, and what is this but God?" Augustine, *On the Trinity, Books 8-15*, ed. Gareth B. Matthews, trans. Stephen McKenna, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). While the verb translated "adhere" (*haerere*) is not identical to that used in DDC (*inhaerere*), the two are obviously closely related and seem to express the same idea of sticking, clinging, cleaving, or adhering to something. All references to the Latin text of *De trinitate* make use of the following critical edition: Sancti Aurelii Augustini, *De Trinitate, Libri XV*, ed. W.J. Mountain, vol. 50, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina (Turnhout: Brepols, 1968).

¹⁰ As Peter Geach has pointed out, the noun phrase following the "for-sake-of" locution may pick out either a good of some sort (i.e., an end) or a beneficiary of some good. As an illustration of the second usage, I might drive across town for the sake of my daughter if she needed a ride somewhere. See Peter Geach, "Teleological Explanation," in *Explanation*, ed. Stephen Korner (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975), 82. It seems obvious to me that Augustine has in mind the first usage, i.e., for the sake of an end and not for the sake of a beneficiary since it seems obvious, on Augustine's picture, that God is not a beneficiary of our holding fast to him. Rather, God is a great good for humans, according to Augustine, and thus we should hold fast to God.

to be final goods as things we understand to be constitutive of our happiness.¹¹ If they make us genuinely happy, they are properly objects of enjoyment.¹² We can thus understand why he claims that God alone is to be enjoyed, since he understands God alone to be our true happiness.¹³

Importantly, although Augustine seems to hold that people can love God with enjoyment-love here and now, it seems he also thinks complete enjoyment-love of God is deferred until after death when, presumably, a person will be with God in the fullest sense. He claims, “...in this mortal life we are like travelers away from our Lord,”¹⁴ and he speaks metaphorically of God as the “homeland” toward which we are journeying, suggesting that we travelers may “live happily only in our homeland...the object of our enjoyment.”¹⁵ He further comments that “if something is to be loved on its own account [*propter se*], it is made to constitute the happy life, even if it is not as yet the reality but the hope of it which consoles us at this time.”¹⁶ Thus, the journey of the mortal life, for Augustine, is but a prelude to complete enjoyment-love of God after death, when the happy traveler will hold fast to God in the most complete sense.

Nevertheless, it also seems clear that Augustine thinks people may love God in their earthly life. Indeed, it is obvious from the general thrust of discussion in DDC that he thinks the two love commands of the NT are to be carried out here and now; otherwise there would be no point to his lengthy teaching on the matter. In the following passage, he links the carrying out of the command to love God with enjoyment of God. He writes,

¹¹ DDC Book I, XXII 20.

¹² DDC Book I, III 3.

¹³ DDC Book I, IV 4 and XXII 20.

¹⁴ DDC Book I, IV 4.

¹⁵ DDC Book I, IV 4.

¹⁶ DDC Book I, XXII 20.

For the divinely established rule of love says, ‘you shall love your neighbor as yourself’ but God ‘with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind,’ so that you may devote all your thoughts and all your life and all your understanding to the one from whom you actually receive what you devote to him. And when it says ‘all your heart, all your soul, all your mind’, it leaves no part of our life free from this obligation, no part free as it were to back out and enjoy some other thing...¹⁷

In this passage, Augustine states that love of God according to the commandment is to include devotion of all of one’s thoughts, understanding, and life to God. Moreover, in the last sentence of this passage he implies that such love just is the enjoyment of God, which is not to be compromised by enjoying something else. Thus, if the commandment to love God is to be carried out here and now—which seems obvious from context—and if carrying it out amounts to enjoying God, then it seems that Augustine thinks there is a sense in which people are to love God with enjoyment-love here and now, even if the completion or fulfillment of that love is deferred until after death.

Although Augustine does not develop the “here-and-now” sense of enjoyment-love much further in DDC, he seems to do so in *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* (DDQOT).¹⁸

There he writes,

For to love is nothing other than to desire [*appetere*] something for its own sake [*propter se ipsam*]. . . Then again, since love is a kind of motion, and since there is no motion except it be toward something, when we seek what ought to be loved we are looking for something to which this motion ought to direct us.¹⁹

Here Augustine describes love as a “desire” for something for its own sake. That the lover desires the thing “for its own sake” suggests that Augustine is talking about what he calls

¹⁷ DDC Book I, XXII 21.

¹⁸ If Mosher’s dating of Questions 35 and 36 (those cited here) in DDQOT is correct (391 CE) then Augustine wrote it only four years before the common dating of Book I of DDC (395 CE). Thus, it would be unsurprising if his conception of love for God were similar in these two works. See Saint Augustine, *Eighty-Three Different Questions*, trans. David L. Mosher, *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 20 (Introduction); Saint Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, ix (Introduction).

¹⁹ DDQOT, 35.1. All English quotations of DDQOT are from Saint Augustine, *Eighty-Three Different Questions*. All references to the Latin text of DDQOT are from the following critical edition: Sancti Aurelii Augustini, *De Diversis Quaestionibus Octoginta Tribus, De Octo Dulcitii Quaestionibus*, ed. Almut Mutzenbecher, vol. 44A, *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975).

“enjoyment” in DDC. The formulation in this passage is, of course, different from the definition of enjoyment in DDC: the notion of “holding fast” to something is not identical to the notion of “desiring” it. Nevertheless, his language of love as “desire” would seem to fit well with the “here-and-now” sense of enjoyment implied in DDC, since “desiring” God seems to capture well the traveler’s earthly longing for, and journey toward, her homeland.²⁰ Thus, it does not seem too much to think that Augustine’s discussion of love in DDQOT may shed some helpful light on the notion of enjoyment-love in DDC.

In the passage from DDQOT above, Augustine suggests that love’s desire amounts to a kind of “motion” toward the beloved object. If enjoyment-love for God is indeed in view, it seems we should again understand his language as metaphorical: there is no sense to physical motion toward Augustine’s immaterial God.²¹ Rather, love’s desire is a motion of the soul or will—an attraction toward the beloved that may or may not issue in physical movement toward the beloved. This reading is confirmed by Augustine’s claim (soon after the passage above) that covetousness is “a base love by means of which *the soul chases after things* inferior to itself.”²² Thus, for Augustine, love’s desire is a motion in the soul and not the body.

Other passages in DDQOT suggest that it is not so much that love desires the beloved object *itself*, but rather that love desires to stand in a certain *relation* to the beloved object. As such, the aim of love’s desire might also be understood as this particular relation to the beloved,

²⁰ It is worth noting that desire for the beloved can be a feature of love even when the beloved is near. In that case, the desire is to maintain the close relation and not necessarily to establish it. Thus, desire of some sort seems plausibly attributable to both phases of Augustine’s conception of enjoyment-love for God.

²¹ Compare his claims in DDC that “progress towards the one who is ever present [i.e., God] is not made through space...” (Book I, X 10), and that “we are on a road—in spiritual, not spatial terms...” (Book I, XVII 16).

²² DDQOT, 35.1. Emphasis added.

on Augustine's view.²³ But, what is the relation? One way that Augustine talks about this relation is as "possessing" or "having" (*habere*) the beloved. Consider the following passage:

Accordingly that should not be loved which can be taken away from a love persisting and delighting in its object. Therefore, what kind of object should a love love, unless it be that kind of object which cannot be absent while being loved? That object is what is possessed [*habere*] in the knowing of it. But as for gold and any material thing, possessing them is not the same as knowing them; so they should not be loved. Moreover something can be loved and not had [*haberi*], not only of those things which should not be loved, e.g., something of physical beauty, but also of those things which should be loved, e.g., the happy life.²⁴

Here Augustine is trying to distinguish those things that should be loved from those that should not. Setting aside questions about the veracity of his claims, in this discussion he indicates the kind of relation to the beloved that he thinks the lover desires in loving the beloved for its own sake, namely the "possession" or "having" of the beloved. The passage suggests that a lover seeks to possess the beloved object whether or not that object is a proper object of love. For example, in the case of love for improper objects such as gold, possession remains the lover's aim; it is just that such possession is tenuous since it is not accomplished by mere knowledge of the object. As Augustine's use of this example makes clear, loving something does not amount to possessing it. Rather, as for the "here-and-now" sense of enjoyment-love for God in DDC, love may amount merely to a desire to possess the beloved—a longing for the "homeland"—without actually possessing it. Importantly, however, the passage above also implies that there is a sense in which God may be possessed by mere knowledge of God. Thus, part of Augustine's point seems to be that "here-and-now" love for God need not consist merely in a desire to possess God; by knowing God we may also possess God in an actual, though perhaps incomplete, way.

²³ Aquinas fusses over this distinction in *Summa Theologica*, I-II 3.1. Of course, it is not inconsistent to talk about the object of love's desire as both the beloved itself, and as a certain relation to the beloved. After all, when we desire a thing (e.g., an apple) we generally want to *have* it, i.e., to stand in a relation of "possession" to it. Thus, both the thing and a certain relation to it are sensibly understood as the object of our desire for "it".

²⁴ DDQOT, 35.1.

There is a sense in which it will not do to talk of “possessing” God, the proper object of enjoyment-love. Possession of an object often implies the idea that the object may be put to use by the one who possesses it, as a house or a tool may be put to use by its owner. Such a view of what it might be to “possess” God seems patently contrary to Augustine’s idea of loving God for his own sake. Thus, this possible instrumental implication of possession does not seem intended by Augustine in this context. This point is reflected in other ways that Augustine describes the relation of a lover to God. After the passages from DDQOT that we have been considering above, Augustine makes the following comment, which I quote as a fragment: “However, when God is loved more than the soul so that a man prefers *to belong to him* rather than to himself...”²⁵ Here Augustine describes loving God more than oneself as preferring “to belong to him” (*eius esse*) than to oneself. The relation at which love aims remains something like “possession,” but instead of suggesting that the lover aims to possess God, Augustine suggests that the lover aims to *be possessed* by God, or to belong to God.²⁶ This switch to lover as “possessed” further suggests that the instrumental sense of “possession” will not do when speaking of what humans go for in loving God. The switch may also suggest a kind of mutuality to the relation aimed at in love, i.e., lover and beloved mutually possessing or belonging to each other.

The picture of enjoyment-love emerging from DDC and DDQOT, then, is that of a kind of love that takes God alone as its proper object and a certain relation to God as its end or final good. Augustine seems to have a loosely two-phased understanding of such love. If the lover is apart from God, then enjoyment-love is perhaps best characterized as a desire for God, or as a desire for a close relation to God. On the other hand, if the lover is with God in the fullest sense (after death, for Augustine), then enjoyment-love is best characterized as actually maintaining

²⁵ DDQOT, 36.1. Emphasis added.

²⁶ As the Latin shows, Augustine does not use the verb *habere* here. Rather, he employs *eius esse* to express a similar idea. The phrase might be literally translated as “to be of him”, since *eius* is a genitive form.

that close relation to God, i.e., actually holding fast or clinging to God in mutual possession. However, the distinction is not overly strict: it seems Augustine also thinks there is a sense in which we may bear a close relation to God “here-and-now,” prior to death, through knowledge of God. In any case, both senses seem important to Augustine’s notion of enjoyment in DDC.

1.3 *USUS: LOVE AS USE*

Augustine contrasts his idea of enjoyment with that of “use.” He states, “to use something is to apply whatever it may be to the purpose of obtaining what you love...”²⁷ By “what you love,” Augustine here means what you enjoy or love for its own sake. Augustine employs his example of a journey to illustrate the idea of use. As noted above, he imagines travelers who can live happily only in their homeland, but who find themselves far from home. Their homeland is the object of their enjoyment, and so they wish to return to it. To do so, they must find some means of transport, such as a cart or a boat, which they will use to get there. In general, then, to use something is to treat it as a means of achieving something else—an instrument for realizing some further (and, ultimately, final) good. According to Augustine, to fix on the cart or the boat as objects of enjoyment would be an erroneous distraction since the only thing that could make the travelers genuinely happy, and thus the only thing that should be enjoyed, is their homeland.

Of the set of things to be either used or enjoyed, Augustine claims “it is only the eternal and unchangeable things which I mentioned that are to be enjoyed; other things are to be used so that we may attain the full enjoyment of those things.”²⁸ The phrase ‘eternal and unchangeable things’ is clearly a reference to God, the sole proper object of enjoyment. Other things in the

²⁷ DDC Book I, IV 4.

²⁸ DDC Book I, XXII 20. While Augustine acknowledges the possibility that some things might be both used and enjoyed (cf. DDC Book I, III 3 and XXII 20), he does not always seem careful to carry through this logical possibility in his argumentation. For example, in the passage just quoted he seems to view “use” and “enjoyment” as mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories for the set of things in question. In any case, it does not seem the third category of things—those to be used *and* enjoyed—plays an important role in the topics under discussion here.

relevant set are to be used. Augustine puts human beings in that category, concluding that they are to be used (to enjoy God) and not enjoyed.²⁹ Indeed, Augustine holds that to use one's neighbor—by whom he means anyone³⁰—as a means of loving God is to love the neighbor as oneself, in fulfillment of the second great commandment.³¹ His reasoning to the claim that we should merely use our neighbor to enjoy God seems to be that enjoyment is reserved only for that which constitutes the happy life, a role that human beings should never occupy.³² Augustine further claims that use is the sort of love I ought to have for myself, since I too am a human being.³³

Importantly, Augustine does not think that our use of just any object amounts to a kind of love. Rather, it is only objects that have some close association with human beings and God that we are to use-love. As he puts it,

(A) There are four things that are to be loved—one, that which is above us; two, that which we are; three, that which is close to us; four, that which is beneath us. No commandments needed to be given about the second and fourth of these. For however much a man may lapse from the truth, he retains a love of himself and a love of his own body.³⁴

²⁹ DDC Book I, XXII 20.

³⁰ DDC Book I, XXX 31.

³¹ As O'Donovan argues, it seems this way of putting things—*using* one's neighbor to *enjoy* God—was an early formulation that Augustine later found inadequate and abandoned. See O'Donovan, "Usus and Fructio in Augustine De Doctrina Christiana I." and O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in Saint Augustine*, 24–32. Although it is an interesting topic in its own right, I will not pursue objections and replies to this early formulation.

³² DDC Book I, XXII 20 and XXXIII 36. Nevertheless, Augustine holds that we can enjoy other human beings "in God." Although the meaning of this second formulation is hard to discern, it seems Augustine thinks enjoying your neighbor in God amounts to somehow understanding the pleasure and goodness you find in loving your neighbor as having its source in God. In this way love for neighbor still looks beyond the neighbor to God and so still amounts to enjoyment of God and not the neighbor (DDC Book I, XXXIII 37). O'Donovan suggests that this is Augustine's mature reading of love for neighbor. O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in Saint Augustine*, 24–32.

³³ DDC Book I, XXII 21.

³⁴ DDC Book I, XXIII 22.

Four things are to be loved, according to Augustine: God (“that which is above us”), our own self or soul (“that which we are”), our neighbor (“that which is close to us”) and our own body (“that which is beneath us”). Given that God is to be enjoyed and not used, the kind of use that amounts to love is reserved for our own body and soul, and for our neighbor. Thus, our use of a hammer or an ox does not amount to love on Augustine’s view. Interestingly, in the passage just quoted we see both Augustine’s Platonistic dualism about human nature (body and soul/self) and an allusion to a certain order or scale of value indicated by the language of “above” and “beneath.” Since this idea of a scale of value will be important for interpreting the claim that we should love all people equally, I will explain it further in the next section.

First, however, I must say more about what Augustine thinks it is to love one’s neighbor by using him. Importantly, it is different from the desire to possess the beloved, as suggested above for enjoyment. Rather, by “use” it seems Augustine has in mind benevolence.³⁵ Passage (B) suggests this point:

(B) Human beings must also be told how to love, that is, how to love themselves so as to do themselves good. (It would be absurd to doubt that anyone wishes [*velit*] to love himself and do himself good.) They must also be told how to love their own bodies so as to look after them systematically and sensibly; for it is equally obvious that one loves one’s own body and wants [*velit*] it to be healthy and sound.³⁶

Here Augustine is suggesting that while there is no need for a commandment *to* love oneself or one’s body—people do this instinctively; to doubt it would be absurd—there is a need for teaching about *how* they should love themselves. What is important for my purposes is that in making this point he suggests that to love oneself and one’s body is related closely to doing good

³⁵ O’Donovan agrees. He writes, “The love which man has for God is cosmic love, the attraction of the creature toward the supreme good; the love which he has for himself is benevolent love.” O’Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in Saint Augustine*, 39. O’Donovan’s focus in this quotation is self-love. However, his reference to love for oneself should not be understood to exclude love for other people. Love for self and other people clearly both fall under “use” in DDC. That “use” is equivalent to benevolence when applied to people might seem odd to the modern reader: why would Augustine call benevolence “use”? Augustine’s point in maintaining this equivalence, it seems to me, is to keep the proper relation between one’s love for neighbors and one’s love for God in view. He wants to insist that benevolence for neighbors is not at odds with the all-consuming first love command, but rather is the means of satisfying it.

³⁶ DDC Book I, XXV 26.

to them. Love and doing good are not, however, identical here. Augustine says, in the first part of (B), that we must be instructed how to love “so as to” or “in order to” (*ut*) do ourselves (or our souls) good. Thus, love may bring it about that we do ourselves good, but love is not, itself, the doing of good. A similar idea emerges from Augustine’s discussion of love for one’s own body in the second part of passage (B). He says we must be told how to love our bodies “so as to” (*ut*) look after them. Thus, again, the love we are to have for our bodies seems distinct from the acts of taking care of them.

What, then, is use-love, for Augustine? Both the parenthetical comment and the final line of passage (B) seem to suggest that use-love for oneself—body and soul/self—is at least partially constituted by a wish or desire for one’s own good, i.e., a motivational attitude of benevolence toward oneself. As noted above, in passage (B) Augustine seems to be contrasting the idea *that* we love ourselves with the idea of *how* we should love ourselves. Given this interpretation, as a whole the parenthetical comment in (B) seems to express the thought (obvious to Augustine) that every person loves her own soul/self. Thus, I take it that the final idea in the parenthetical comment—“wishing to do oneself good”—is simply a (perhaps partial) explanation of what it is to love oneself.³⁷ The last line of passage (B) seems to play a role similar to the parenthetical comment, though pertaining this time to love for one’s own body. Again, as a whole, the line seems to express the thought (obvious to Augustine) that every person loves her own body. Thus, I take it that the final idea of the last line—“wanting one’s body to be healthy and sound”—is, again, a (perhaps partial) explanation of what it is to love one’s own body. Thus, together, the parenthetical comment and the last line of (B) seem to suggest that use-love for oneself at least partially consists in benevolence toward one’s own body and soul/self. Given relevant

³⁷ I grant that Augustine’s usage here is not as clear as we might like it to be, but the view I have expressed seems, to me, to be the clear sense of the passage.

circumstances, this motivational attitude (benevolence) then issues in the actual doing of good to oneself (beneficence).

That Augustine distinguishes benevolence and beneficence in this way is evident in other passages in his corpus. For example, elsewhere he writes, “But there is a certain friendship of benevolence, so that we sometimes render service to those we love. What if there is not any service we may render? Benevolence alone is sufficient for the one who loves.”³⁸ Here love is described as an attitude that inclines one to help the beloved if he is in need (i.e., benevolence) and so, in the absence of a need, love does not necessarily issue in action. Thus, in this passage, love as benevolence seems distinct from the actions of beneficence. Such acts are the natural result of benevolent love when the beloved is needy and the lover is able to serve him.

Thus, if my reading is correct, passage (B) indicates that our love for ourselves and our bodies—two of the three proper objects of use-love—amounts, at least in part, to benevolence, a motivational attitude aimed at the good of the beloved. Given that Augustine’s focus on oneself and one’s body in passage (B) began as a reply to a possible worry about using one’s neighbor —“If we are also to use ourselves and our bodies, why should my neighbor worry that I use him?”—it seems that Augustine also thinks use of one’s neighbor amounts, at least in part, to benevolence toward her.³⁹ Thus, on this reading, Augustine’s view in DDC is that the second great commandment—to love one’s neighbor as oneself—urges us (at least in part) to a kind of benevolence toward ourselves and our neighbors, which Augustine calls “use” and views as a means of enjoying God.

³⁸ *Tractatus in epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos* 8.5. All English quotations are from Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John 112-24, Tractates on the First Epistle of John*, trans. John W. Rettig, vol. 92, *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995). The PL remains the most recent available critical edition of this work: Augustinus Hipponensis, *Tractatus in epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos*, ed. J.-P. Migne, vol. 35, 162 vols., *Patrologia latina* (Paris, 1844).

³⁹ See also his discussion of the meaning of ‘neighbor’ in the command to love one’s neighbor as oneself, in DDC Book I, XXX 32. There he says, “...so it is clear that we should understand by our neighbour the person to whom an act of compassion is due if he needs it or would be due if he needed it.” Love for neighbor implies benevolence here.

For Augustine, one important upshot of viewing love for neighbors a means of loving God is that we can satisfy the second great commandment without jeopardizing our satisfaction of the first—to love God with all of one’s heart, soul, and mind. For example, as partially quoted above Augustine states that when the first commandment

says ‘all your heart, all your soul, all your mind’, it leaves no part of our life free from this obligation, no part free as it were to back out and enjoy some other thing; any other object of love that enters the mind should be swept towards the same destination as that to which the whole flood of our love is directed.⁴⁰

According to Augustine, then, the loves referred to in the two greatest commandments should be ordered in this means-end way. Those who fail to love in this way—perhaps by loving oneself or one’s neighbor for his own sake—love in a disordered manner. According to Augustine, such disordered love is the mark of an unjust person.⁴¹ This idea of “ordered love,” which I have explained at length in this and the preceding section, will be crucial for properly understanding Augustine’s claim that we are to love all people equally. A second idea crucial to this task is Augustine’s notion of orders or scales of value, as I hinted above. Thus, before directly addressing the claim that all people should be loved equally, I will explain Augustine’s view of orders or scales of value.

1.4 THREE SCALES OF VALUE

At several points in Book I of DDC, Augustine seems to have in mind a certain order or scale of value according to which objects may be evaluated. For example, Augustine suggests that worthy, cogent thinkers think as follows:

Whatever corporeal form occurs to them, they establish that it either lives or does not live; and they esteem what lives more highly than what does not. They understand that the living corporeal form, however outstanding its light, however outstanding its size,

⁴⁰ DDC Book I, XXII 21.

⁴¹ DDC Book I, XXIII 23.

however outstanding its beauty, consists of two separate things, namely itself and the life by which it is energized; and they raise that life above the mass which is energized and activated by it to a position of unrivaled status. Then they proceed to examine that life, and if they find it has energy but not sense (as in the case of trees) they subordinate it to a sentient form of life (like that of livestock), and they subordinate that in turn to an intelligent form of life (like that of humans). Realizing the mutability of human life, they are obliged to subordinate that too to some unchangeable form of life, namely the life which is not intermittently wise but rather is wisdom itself.⁴²

Here Augustine suggests that certain kinds of things are above or below others in proper “esteem” or “status.” For example, he suggests that inanimate matter has the lowest status and is exceeded by living things. Similarly, the life that animates matter in the case of living things (such as trees) is higher in status than the matter it animates. Non-sentient life (e.g., the life of plants) is, in turn, subordinate in status to the life of sentient things (e.g., that of livestock), while the life of non-intelligent sentient beings is subordinate to that of intelligent sentient things (e.g., that of humans). Finally, the immutable form of life—God—is above even the life of intelligent sentient things that are subject to change and corruption. Augustine’s talk here of “status” and proper “esteem” suggests that he has in mind a certain ranking or scale of value on which objects of different kinds fall as described above.

Furthermore, that he ranks by kind of thing suggests that he views it as a scale according to the *nature* of the various things. That the ranking is according to nature seems confirmed in the following statement, which comes only two sentences after the quotation above:

They [i.e., those who rank the immutable above the mutable] certainly see that the actual standard of truth, by which they maintain the superiority of that [immutable] life, is not subject to change, and they can only see this as belonging to a realm above their own nature, since they see themselves to be subject to change.⁴³

Although Augustine’s idea here is not as clear as one might like, his thought seems to be that the immutable standard of truth, which he takes to be the basis for ranking the immutable God above mutable human beings, belongs to a realm above mutable human nature. Moreover, it belongs to

⁴² DDC Book I, VIII 8.

⁴³ DDC Book I, VIII 8.

this higher realm in virtue of its immutability: this quality is what sets it apart from mutable human beings. Thus, it stands to reason that Augustine’s immutable God would also belong to this higher realm, and so would surpass human nature in status and proper esteem. If this is correct, then it seems a short step to think that God ranks above human beings, on Augustine’s view, in virtue of God’s superior nature, of which immutability is one important feature. But, if the distinction in nature between God and human beings is what accounts for their relative ranking, then, given the context, it would make sense to think that the distinctions in status or value between *all* the different kinds of things that Augustine considers (e.g., inanimate matter, plants, sentient animals, etc.) are attributable to differences in their natures. In short, Augustine seems to have in mind a kind of ranking or scale of nature.

Such a scale of nature again seems evident in passage (A), quoted above, where Augustine enumerates the four things that are to be loved according to the love commandments—God, soul, neighbor, and body. Recall that he there describes God as “that which is above us,” our soul/self as “that which we are,” our neighbor as “that which is close to us,” and our body as “that which is beneath us.” Here, talk of God as “above us” seems to imply the sort of scale of nature just described: God ranks above human beings in value because of God’s superior (immutable) nature. Similarly, describing the body as “that which is beneath us” seems to imply that the body ranks below the soul/self in value because of its inferior nature. His description of our neighbor as “that which is close to us” seems to imply that he thinks our neighbor has a value commensurate with our own in virtue of her commensurate nature.⁴⁴ In addition to this seeming

⁴⁴ My guess is that Augustine uses the vague language of “close to us” rather than the sharper “equal to us” since he wants to leave open the possibility that our neighbor might be an angel, and so our value according to nature might not be identical but would still be “close”. Immediately before passage (A) he writes, “It is not the case that all things which are to be loved are to be loved; but only those which exist in some kind of association with us and are related to God, like a man or an angel...” Moreover, at XXX 33 Augustine argues that the commandment to love one’s neighbor “also embraces the holy angels...”

evidence in passage (A), Augustine hints at the scale of nature in still other passages of Book I.⁴⁵ Thus, such a scale does seem to be part of the framework of Book I. The scale of nature reappears more clearly and explicitly in *De ciuitate dei* (DCD),⁴⁶ one of Augustine's later works.⁴⁷ Thus, it seems the idea persisted through most of his writing career.

In addition to the scale of nature, in DCD XI.16 Augustine discusses two contrasting scales of value: the scale of utility, and the scale of righteousness or justice. Although these scales are not explicitly in view in Book I of DDC, my evaluation of Augustine's argument in subsequent sections will be aided by a brief explanation of these scales here. Augustine makes the following memorable comments about the scale of utility:

(C) But there are also various standards of value arising out of the use to which we put this thing or that; and, for this reason, we often prefer some things which lack sensation to some which have sensation. So strong is this preference, indeed, that we would abolish the latter from nature altogether if we could, whether out of ignorance of the place that they hold in nature, or, knowing this, still putting our own convenience first. Who, for example, would not rather have bread in his house than mice, or gold than fleas? But why should we wonder at this? For even in the estimation of men themselves, whose nature is certainly very great in dignity, a horse is often worth more than a slave, or a jewel than a maidservant. So far as freedom of judgment is concerned, then, the reason of the thoughtful man is far different from the necessity of one who is in need, or the desire of the pleasure-seeker. For reason considers what value a thing has in itself, as part of the order of nature, whereas necessity considers how to obtain what will meet its need. Reason considers what appears to be true according to the light of the mind, whereas pleasure looks for whatever agreeable thing will gratify the body's senses.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ For example, at XXII 20 he writes, "A human being is a major kind of thing, being made 'in the image and likeness of God' not by virtue of having a mortal body but by virtue of having a rational soul and thus a higher status than animals." Furthermore, at XXIV 25 he describes the conflict between spirit/soul and body as follows: "The spirit fights back not out of hatred, but to establish its primacy, because it wants the body it loves to be subservient to something better."

⁴⁶ DCD XI.16, to be precise.

⁴⁷ DCD is typically dated 413-426 CE. See Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, trans. R.W. Dyson, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), xxx (A brief chronology of Augustine's life).

⁴⁸ DCD XI.16. All English quotations of DCD are from Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*. In quoting DCD I make use of the following critical edition: Sancti Aurelii Augustini, *De Ciuitate Dei, Libri XXII*, ed. Emanuel Hoffman, vol. 40, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna: Academiae Litterarum Caesareae Vindobonensis, 1899).

According to passage (C), then, the scale of utility is a scale of instrumental value—the value something has for furthering the purposes of a person in a particular setting. Thus, anything that satisfies our needs or desires has this sort of utility or use-value. Augustine points out that evaluating objects according to the utility scale may result in an entirely different evaluative ranking than that of the scale of nature: for example, on the utility scale the non-living (e.g., bread, gold) may well rank above the living (e.g., mice, fleas). He also notes that the scale of nature is objective while the scale of utility is subjective. Judgments of utility vary from person to person and situation to situation according to a person’s need or desire for pleasure. Not so judgments according to the scale of nature: these look to the “value a thing has in itself,” they are guided by reason, and they admit of truth.⁴⁹

Finally, immediately after passage (C) Augustine introduces the scale of righteousness or justice⁵⁰ with the following comment: “In the case of rational natures, however, a good will and a rightly ordered love have, as it were, such great weight that, even though angels rank above men in the natural order, good men are nonetheless placed above the wicked angels according to the law of righteousness.”⁵¹ On the scale of justice, then, the value of an object—in this case, only rational beings—is determined by the condition of the will, which, for Augustine, amounts to the status of the being’s loves, whether properly ordered or disordered. Thus, a virtuous rational being (with a good will, well-ordered loves, or good character) is more valuable on the scale of justice than a vicious one. Moreover, Augustine points out that this ranking of value according to the scale of justice may be different from that of the scale of nature, since a good person ranks

⁴⁹ Of course, judgments of use value may also be guided by reason, in a certain sense, and also may well admit of truth and falsehood. So, there is more to be said here about the subjective-objective distinction Augustine is going for. Nevertheless, something like this distinction seems to be what he has in mind.

⁵⁰ For convenience I will refer to it simply as the “scale of justice”.

⁵¹ DCD XI.16.

more highly than a bad angel on the scale of justice.⁵² Though it is not entirely clear from the passage, he may also think that the scale of justice and the scale of nature are commensurate, and thus that some sort of combined total value (e.g., nature-value plus justice-value) may be figured for a rational being. If Augustine's point is that the *total* value of a good man ranks above that of a bad angel, despite the fact that the order of nature would rank them in reverse order, then this sort of commensurability of the nature and justice scales may be in view. In any case, whether or not Augustine thinks the two scales are commensurate, it seems he thinks both are objective.

1.5 VALUE AS THE CAUSE OF LOVE

In *De trinitate*, a work that is roughly contemporary with DDC,⁵³ Augustine makes the following claim: “Certainly you love only the good...”⁵⁴ Here, Augustine claims that good things are the objects of love. Presumably Augustine means that good things are both the actual and proper objects of love, and that they are properly love's objects in virtue of their goodness. Although Augustine is not as direct in Book I of DDC, the same picture seems to be operating there. For example, near the end of a discussion of enemies that do not love God, he claims, “If they turned to him, it is inevitable that they would love him as the goodness which is the source of all happiness and love us as joint participants in such goodness.”⁵⁵ Here, it is God's goodness that makes God a proper object of love. Indeed, Augustine thinks human beings may somehow “participate” in God's goodness, thereby making them worthy of love also.

⁵² The passage also tells us that angels—which are “close” in value to humans according to DDC—rank above humans on the scale of nature, according to Augustine.

⁵³ *De trinitate* is typically dated 399-426 while DDC is typically dated 395-426. See Augustine, *On the Trinity, Books 8-15*, xxx (Chronology); Saint Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, ix–xi (Introduction).

⁵⁴ *De trinitate*, VIII.3.4. Translation from Augustine, *On the Trinity, Books 8-15*.

⁵⁵ DDC Book I, XXIX 30.

If Augustine holds that the good things we are to love are properly objects of love in virtue of their goodness, it stands to reason that the goodness of such objects serves as a kind of *proper cause* (or *proper ground*, as I will call it in Chapter Four) of love, i.e., that in response to which love is properly sustained, or that which properly brings about love, whether enjoyment or use. According to this picture, a person would encounter something good, and in response to its goodness a relevant kind of love would quite appropriately arise. This picture of value as a proper cause of love seems borne out in the following lines from DDC: “A miser buys himself bread in spite of the fact that he loves money; in doing so he gives away the money which he loves so much and wants to have more of, but he does this because he puts greater value on the health of his body, which needs the bread for its sustenance.”⁵⁶ These lines come immediately after passage (B) in a discussion of love for one’s own body. Augustine tells us that the miser gives away some of the money he loves “because he puts greater value on the health of his body.” In context, Augustine seems to be suggesting that the miser loves his own (healthy) body more than the money he trades for bread insofar as he views his (healthy) body as more valuable than the money. Thus, the picture here seems to be one on which the degree of the miser’s love for the two different objects—a healthy body and money—is responsive to the degree of value he apprehends in each. In turn, this picture seems best explained by the idea that his love is a response to such value, or is brought about by such value. If this reading is correct, Augustine seems to hold that when a lover loves something, it is the apprehended goodness or value of the thing that brings about or causes her love. If the object is both of the sort to be loved and actually good, then that love is a proper response.

⁵⁶ DDC Book I, XXV 26.

1.6 ORDERED LOVE AND THE SCALE OF NATURE

A similar sort of picture seems implicit in passage (D), which immediately precedes Augustine's claim that all people should be loved equally. After briefly recapitulating his interpretation of the two greatest commandments, Augustine states the following:

(D) The person who lives a just and holy life is a sound judge of these things. He is also a person who has ordered his love, so that he does not love what it is wrong to love, or fail to love what should be loved, or love too much what should be loved less (or love too little what should be loved more), or love two things equally if one of them should be loved either less or more than the other, or love things either more or less if they should be loved equally. No sinner, *qua* sinner, should be loved; every human being, *qua* human being, should be loved on God's account; and God should be loved for himself. And if God is to be loved more than any human being, each person should love God more than he loves himself. Likewise, another human being should be loved more than our own bodies, because all these things are to be loved on account of God whereas another person can enjoy God together with us in a way in which the body cannot, since the body lives only through the soul, and it is the soul by which we enjoy God. All people should be loved equally.⁵⁷

Augustine begins, here, by claiming that a person who lives “a just and holy life” loves in an ordered manner. This claim complements his prior claim that the unjust person loves in a disordered manner, e.g., loving herself for her own sake and failing to love God.⁵⁸ He also specifies what it is to love in a well-ordered manner. First, one must love the correct objects. But what are these objects? Augustine tells us that “every human being, *qua* human being” is a correct object of love. Why? Augustine's use of “*qua* human being” seems to suggest that it is something about the nature of a person *as a human being* that makes her a correct object of love. The fact that Augustine thinks “every” human being should be loved as such further reinforces this thought; what else could warrant love for *every* human being but something about the common nature that each of them shares? I take it, then, that the best explanation of why every human being is a correct object of love, here, is that Augustine thinks that, according to the scale of nature, human beings have a certain value attributable to their nature and that this value makes

⁵⁷ DDC Book I, XXVII 28.

⁵⁸ DDC Book I, XXIII 23.

them proper objects of love, since goodness is the proper cause (or ground) of love for those things that are to be loved.

This reading of why every human being should be loved as such also explains well his other judgments in passage (D) about correct and incorrect objects of love. For example, he claims that a “sinner, *qua* sinner” is not a proper object of love. Why? Presumably because, considered merely as sinners, sinners are not created beings with natures, and thus they do not bear value on the scale of nature.⁵⁹ God, of course, is the preeminent object of love, for Augustine. This fact may be explained by God’s supreme value on the scale of nature; because of the exalted value of God’s nature, God is a correct object of human love. Finally, Augustine also implies in (D) that one’s own body is a correct object of love. Recall that in passage (A) Augustine claims that, although the body is a proper object of love, it is “beneath us,” i.e., lower in value than the soul/self on the scale of nature. Given that he thinks of the body in this way, his view that the body is a proper object of love may be explained by the idea that the body has a certain value on the scale of nature, and that this value makes it a proper object of love. If I am correct in my reading, here, it seems implicit in passage (D) that the love of the commandments is properly an attitude toward certain objects possessing value on the scale of nature—namely the four objects noted above in passage (A): God, the self/soul, neighbors, and the body—and that such objects are properly loved *because* they are valuable in this way.⁶⁰

A second characteristic of well-ordered love evident in (D) is that it must exhibit the correct means-end relationships expressed by Augustine’s distinction between use and

⁵⁹ Sinners *qua* human beings are, of course, an entirely different matter. They *are* worthy of love, according to Augustine.

⁶⁰ If my reading here is correct, one might still wonder why such things as trees and fleas are not also proper objects of love. After all, plants and animals of all kinds have value on the scale of nature for Augustine. Of course, Augustine thinks that the four proper objects of love are all implicated by the two love commands, and this clearly sets them apart from other objects. However, part of what Augustine seems to be trying to do, here, is to *explain why* the love commands single out the four proper objects of love, in which case it will not do to cite the commands as an explanation of why only those four objects are proper objects of love. I do not see an answer to this puzzle in the text.

enjoyment. As he told us before and reiterates in (D), God should be loved “for himself” (*propter se ipsum*): people should enjoy God, and thereby possess or belong to God (or desire to do so) because of God’s exceeding goodness. Again, as he told us before and reiterates in (D), every human being should be loved “on God’s account” (*propter deum*): we should exhibit benevolence toward every human being as a means of enjoying God. Similarly, Augustine includes our bodies as one of the “all these things” that are to be loved on account of God.

We might wonder, here, how Augustine’s seeming view that human beings are proper objects of love due to the value of their nature fits with his view that they are to be loved “on God’s account.” Specifically, one might worry that the two views are incompatible. If we are to love a human being in virtue of the value of her nature as human, insofar as she is in possession of that nature it seems we love her because of something inherently good *about her* and not merely as a means of attaining some further good, namely enjoyment of God. In short, if we properly love other human beings in virtue of their value as humans, in so doing it seems we do not *use* them but rather *enjoy* them. In so doing, it seems, then, that we would love other humans for their own sakes and not on God’s account.

Although I cannot give it a complete airing here, I think this worry is legitimate. Indeed, I think Augustine himself feels the problem insofar as later in Book I of DDC he experiments with the idea that we might enjoy other people “in God.”⁶¹ Although he seems not to abandon the idea that God alone should be enjoyed and that people should be used to that end,⁶² this new locution of “enjoying people in God” seems to evidence a certain dissatisfaction with his use-enjoyment formulation.⁶³ In any case, as far as his view in Book I of DDC is concerned, Augustine’s basic

⁶¹ DDC XXXII 35, XXXIII 37.

⁶² At XXXIII 37 he states, “When you enjoy a human being in God, you are enjoying God rather than that human being.” Thus, he refuses to concede that enjoying another person “in God” amounts to simply enjoying her. Rather, the object of enjoyment remains God.

⁶³ So thinks O’Donovan. As noted above, he suggests that Augustine did abandon the formulation in his later work.

strategy of reply to this worry seems to be that God is, ultimately, the source of the value of human nature, and so when our love is *properly* caused by the value of human nature, it somehow looks beyond that value to the value of God's nature. Put another way, for Augustine the cause of our love for a human being when we love her in virtue of the value of her nature is, strictly speaking, the value of God's nature as the source of her human nature. This sort of reply seems evident in Augustine's idea noted above that human beings "participate" in God's goodness and thereby become worthy of love.⁶⁴ The idea of "participation," here, seems to reflect both likeness (human goodness understood as *like* God's goodness in some way) and causation (the value of human nature understood as *caused* by God's goodness in some way).⁶⁵

I do not claim that Augustine's mode of reply, here, is effective. Indeed, I think both the worry and the reply would need further sharpening before we could tell. However, insofar as Augustine does seem to hold together the two views in question—that human beings are proper objects of love in virtue of the value of their nature, and that human beings should be loved for the sake of God—I will not be further detained by the worry.⁶⁶ My interpretive project demands only that Augustine held the two views in question and not that they are compatible.

A third characteristic of well-ordered love, according to (D), is that it is *in the correct degree*. This point is clear from Augustine's repetitive insistence that one not love something too much or too little, and that one love two things equally if they call for it. In passage (D), Augustine illustrates this point about degrees of love with the example of loving God more than any human being, including oneself. (Although he puts the point conditionally, it is clear that he

⁶⁴ DDC Book I, XXIX 30.

⁶⁵ This reading of "participation" seems to derive, ultimately, from Plato, who held that the mutable objects of the world "participated" in the Forms, insofar as they were images or likenesses of the Forms and depended on the Forms causally for what little "being" they had.

⁶⁶ I hope to take this worry up in future work.

also affirms the view.) Similarly, he suggests that another human being—body and soul⁶⁷—should be loved more than our own bodies, and that all people should be loved equally. By “equally,” I take his point to be that we should love no person more or less than another.

The best explanation of *why* Augustine holds to these distinctions in the proper degree of love seems to be that each kind of object possesses a different degree of value on the scale of nature. It seems that for Augustine some objects merit greater love than others since their nature is more valuable than that of others. Similarly, some objects merit less love than others due to their less valuable nature, and other objects merit equal love since they are equally valuable. This explanation seems most obvious for his claim that we should love God more than any human being. Why should we do this? Because God is the most valuable object on the scale of nature, and thus God’s value far exceeds that of any human being. Just as the miser does well to love his own (healthy) body more than money for bread⁶⁸—due to the greater value of a healthy body relative to the value of money for bread—so we do well to love God more than any human due to God’s exceeding value relative to human beings. Similarly, one should love another human being more than one’s own body because the value of one’s body is “beneath” that of a whole person (her soul, in particular) on the scale of nature.⁶⁹ Finally, it seems Augustine thinks that we should love all people equally because each person possesses the same value according to the

⁶⁷ Comments immediately preceding passage (D) indicate that by talking here of “human beings,” Augustine means to indicate both body and soul, or “your whole neighbor,” as he puts it. See DDC Book I, XXVI 27.

⁶⁸ We should not overestimate the miser’s accomplishment here. While he should certainly love his healthy body more than money for bread, Augustine would likely add that he should not love money at all, since it is not implicated by the two love commands. Thus, insofar as the miser loves money at all, he is still getting something wrong.

⁶⁹ Might Augustine have the scale of utility in mind here, rather than the scale of nature? In other words, might he think that another person has more use-value than one’s own body, and so should be loved more? It seems not. Apart from the fact that it seems he does not yet (in DDC) have a developed scale of utility in play (recall that the account I related was from the later DCD), he tells us that “all these things [i.e., bodies and whole persons] are to be loved on account of God,” and so loving each of them is equally a means of enjoying God. Thus, it does not seem he has in mind that a whole person would be more valuable according to the scale of utility, i.e., as a means of enjoying God, than would one’s own body. Rather, in passage (D) the salient difference between another person and one’s own body seems to be that the person (in virtue of her soul) has a natural capacity for enjoying God while a mere body does not. Presumably, this natural capacity gives a whole person greater value on the scale of nature than a mere body, and thereby renders it worthy of greater love.

scale of nature. That our love for all people should be equal fits well with the idea (suggested above) that every human being is a proper object of love in virtue of the equal value each possesses as a human, i.e., according to nature.

Augustine's claims in passage (D) about the degree to which we should love various things are the basis, then, of the two premises in my reconstruction of his argument. First, Augustine seems to be urging a sort of proportionality in one's love. For the kinds of love under consideration in DDC (namely, the love of God, neighbor, and self in the two greatest commandments), Augustine seems to think love should be proportioned to the value of an object on the scale of nature. Those things with greater value we should love more, those things with lesser value we should love less, and those things with equal value we should love equally. Here, then, is the textual basis for premise (1) of my reconstruction of Augustine's argument: "The degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has."

Second, if my reading is correct, Augustine thinks we should love all people equally since he thinks every person bears identical value on the scale of nature. Implicit in this thought is the idea that the value we bear as human beings, according to our nature, is properly the kind of value to which love for neighbors is a response.⁷⁰ Augustine's claim, then, that we should love all people equally is partially supported by his view that every person has equal value, according to the scale of nature. Hence premise (2) of my reconstruction of Augustine's argument: "Every person has equal value."

1.7 LOVING EQUALLY

As noted in the last section, I read Augustine's claim that "we should love all people equally" as the claim that we should love no person more or less than any other; rather, we

⁷⁰ David Velleman would agree. He argues that the value inherent in us as people—specifically, the value of the human rational will—is the value to which all forms of love should be a response. See Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion," 362, 365.

should love every person to the same degree in virtue of their equal value on the scale of nature. However, this interpretation does not get to the bottom of what, exactly, Augustine means by “loving equally.” In this section I will address that question directly.

One obvious reading of Augustine’s view in DDC might be that to love two people equally is simply to love each as a means of loving God, i.e., to use each to enjoy God. On this view, the equality of love would consist in the equal means-end relation according to which one should love each person on God’s account. On this view, equal love would not necessarily have to do with equality of one’s benevolent motivations toward each person. Indeed, one could be consistently more motivated toward the good of some people than that of others—e.g., that of one’s own children more than that of a stranger—without compromising the equality of one’s love. After all, as long as one loved both one’s children and the stranger as a means of loving God, the identical means-end relation would hold and one could be said to love each equally in the relevant sense. Such a view would surely be consistent with the thrust of Augustine’s argumentation in Book I of DDC and would fit with aspects of passage (D).

However, several of Augustine’s examples of loving some things more or less than others in DDC suggest that this interpretation is inadequate. Consider the examples in the following passage (E), which includes the passage about the miser and his bread, quoted above:

(E) Now it is possible to love something more than the health and soundness of one’s own body. It is well known that many people have voluntarily undergone pain and the amputation of limbs in order to obtain other things which they valued more. But it should not be said that someone does not value his body’s health and safety just because he values something else more highly. A miser buys himself bread in spite of the fact that he loves money; in doing so he gives away the money which he loves so much and wants to have more of, but he does this because he puts a greater value on the health of his body, which needs the bread for its sustenance.⁷¹

In the two examples of this passage, loving one thing more than another is not a matter of loving according to the proper means-end relationship. Consider the first example. Loving something

⁷¹ DDC Book I, XXV 26.

more than the health and safety of one's body does not, here, amount to loving one's body as a means of loving the better thing, i.e., having benevolence toward one's body as a means of loving something better. Rather, it amounts to *sacrificing* an aspect of one's health and safety—indeed, having what might be understood as a *hatred* of one's body, relative to one's love for the other thing⁷²—in order to obtain the more beloved thing. This does not mean, of course, that one fails to love one's body, as Augustine assures us. Rather, it just means that one loves something else more. The idea emerging from this example, then, is that loving one thing more than another is not necessarily related to loving the two objects in the correct means-end relationship; rather, loving one thing more than another amounts to preferring it over the other in cases of conflict. Put another way, it amounts to being more willing to pursue or benefit the more loved object than the less loved object. From this example I take it that if one loved one's body and some other thing *equally* then one would not necessarily be willing to sacrifice one's body for the thing. In a case of conflict, then, one would be no more willing to pursue the thing than to look after the health and safety of one's body.

The second example of passage (E) suggests the same picture of what it is to love one thing more than another, and thus implies the same notion of what it is to love two things equally. A miser loves money. Indeed, Augustine might suggest that he *enjoys* it, i.e., that he seeks to possess it or hold fast to it for its own sake. But, when his possession of money conflicts with the welfare of his body to some extent, to that extent he is willing to part with his money, preferring that which would sustain the welfare of his body (e.g., bread). This, according to Augustine, is an example of the miser loving his body more than money. Again, the idea of loving one thing more than another, here, is not a matter of loving the other as a means of loving the one: the miser does

⁷² As O'Donovan points out, this idea of relative "hatred" or "despising" of something that one loves less than something else is consistent with Augustine's language in certain passages. See O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in Saint Augustine*, 63–64.

not love money as a means of loving his body.⁷³ If anything the relation is quite the opposite: the miser's final end is the possession of as much money as possible while the sustenance of his body is a mere necessary means to that end. Thus, in some sense, the miser loves (or uses) his body as a means of loving (or enjoying) money. Nevertheless, despite this inverted means-end relationship, Augustine thinks the miser still loves his body *more* than his money since he prefers the former over the latter in cases of conflict. Thus, it seems Augustine could not think, here, that loving one thing more than another is just a matter of which love is the end and which is the means, since, in this case, the object that is the means (the body) is loved more than the object that is the end (money). So, again, the picture of what it is to love one thing more than another reflected in this example is to be more willing to benefit the one thing (the body) than to pursue the other (money) in cases where one cannot do both. Thus, to love two things equally is to be no more willing to do one thing over the other in such cases.

A previously quoted line from DDQOT further suggests the reading of what it is to love one thing more than another that I find in the two examples from DDC. There Augustine says, "However, when God is loved more than the soul so that a man prefers to belong to him rather than to himself..."⁷⁴ Here to love God more than oneself is to prefer "to belong to him" than to oneself.⁷⁵ Thus, again, what it is to love one thing more than another is to exhibit greater willingness or motivation to pursue it over the other. As a result, it seems implied that to love two things equally is to be no more willing or motivated to pursue the one thing over the other.

Finally, that loving one thing more than another is not just a matter of means-end ordering also seems clear in the following line from passage (D): "Likewise, another human

⁷³ Indeed, this is probably a reasonable description of someone with a healthy view of money, unlike the miser.

⁷⁴ DDQOT 36.1. Op. Cit.

⁷⁵ Interestingly, we also see here the idea that love of self might involve a motivation to "belong to oneself" and not mere benevolence toward oneself. Whatever it means to "belong to oneself", the comment seems to broaden the picture of love for human beings (including the self) beyond that of DDC.

being should be loved more than our own bodies, because all these things are to be loved on account of God whereas another person can enjoy God together with us in a way in which the body cannot...” Here Augustine suggests that although both our own bodies and another human being are “to be loved on account of God”—i.e., they are to be loved as a means of loving God—another human being should be loved more than our own bodies. Thus, the idea of loving something according to the proper means-end relationship is *distinct*, here, from the idea of loving one thing more than another. The point is not that we are to love our bodies as a means of loving another person; rather, we are to prefer another person over our bodies if need be. We are to be willing to sacrifice our bodies in cases of conflict between the two loves. It seems, then, that Augustine does not simply mean that our loves should be arranged in the proper means-end relationship when he suggests that we love one thing more than another. Rather, he has in mind the idea of preferring one thing over another in cases of conflict, or of being more willing to pursue one thing than another in such cases. Thus, it also seems that, for Augustine, to love two people equally is to have no such preference in cases of conflict.

1.8 UNEQUAL BENEFICENCE

The following passage (F) comes immediately after Augustine’s claim that “all people should be loved equally”:

(F) But, you cannot do good to all people equally, so you must take particular thought for those who, as if by lot, happen to be particularly close to you in terms of place, time, or any other circumstances. Suppose that you had plenty of something which had to be given to someone in need of it but could not be given to two people, and you met two people, neither of whom had a greater need or a closer relationship to you than the other: you could do nothing more just than to choose by lot the person to whom you should give what could not be given to both. Analogously, since you cannot take thought for all men, you must settle (rather than by lot) in favor of the one who happens to be more closely associated with you in temporal matters.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ DDC Book I, XXVIII 29.

Here Augustine seems to be anticipating a point at which his readers might go wrong. From his claim that all people should be loved equally he thinks they might infer that we should *do good* equally to all, i.e., that equal benevolence implies equal beneficence. However, Augustine clearly thinks that we should *not* treat every person with equal beneficence. On the contrary, from this passage he thinks we owe beneficence preferentially to those that are “close” to us. First, he sensibly claims that we cannot do good to all people equally, given the limitations of individual human resources.⁷⁷ Then, in light of this limitation, he proposes that, in cases where we cannot benefit everyone equally, we preferentially distribute our resources so as to benefit those temporally, spatially, or circumstantially closest to us more than those who are more distant. I take it that Augustine’s reference here to those who are close to us in terms of “place, time, or any other circumstances,” or “in temporal matters,” is simply another way of referring to those with whom we have a relationship closer than that between two people who have never encountered each other. So, on Augustine’s view our “close” relations might include our clients, shopkeepers, bus drivers, colleagues, neighbors, friends, family members, or even the beggar at our gate.⁷⁸

Interestingly, however, Augustine seems to think that our choosing to benefit those closer to us over those more distant should not be an expression of preferential benevolence toward them. After all, this would compromise the norm of loving all equally. Rather, he thinks we should understand our acts of preferential beneficence as instances of choice according to

⁷⁷ The omnipotent God’s limitless love for all human beings seems to lurk in the background here. On Augustine’s picture, God *is* able both to love and benefit every human equally, and so God’s beneficence need not be limited by practical matters as human beneficence must be. On the other hand, despite the ability of Augustine’s God to benefit every human equally, it seems that he does not do so, according to his discretionary grace.

⁷⁸ Augustine makes a similar point elsewhere. For example, in DCD XIX.14 he writes, “In the first place, therefore, he [a man] must care for his own household; for the order of nature and of human society itself gives him readier access to them, and greater opportunity of caring for them.” I thank Oliver O’Donovan for his insightful comment that this set of people “close” to us is not limited, in Augustine’s view, to friends and family members (though it surely includes them).

random chance.⁷⁹ The example of the agent who must settle by chance whom to benefit is intended as an analogue for cases in which we must decide between potential beneficiaries with whom we have different relationships. Augustine’s admonition to “take particular thought for those who, *as if by lot*, happen to be particularly close to you...”⁸⁰ suggests that he views the differing closeness of these relations as a matter of chance. Yes, in our friendships and romantic relationships we choose some people over others, and thus in a sense these relationships reflect our deliberate choice and not mere random chance. However, ultimately, we choose these people from a subset of people with whom we have been randomly grouped—the people who live in our time period, the people who live where we live, the people who share our interests, etc. And, of course, most of our family members we do not choose at all. For these reasons, it seems, Augustine suggests that, ultimately, our close relations are a matter of contingent chance.

His point in all this, then, is that we must *act* preferentially toward our close relations, but only because of a role of the dice, so to speak—as a decision procedure—and not because of a preference or greater willingness to do so. Our *willingness* to act for the good of people must be equal toward all. Chance circumstance may rule our *actions*, but not our motivating *desires*.

1.9 DIFFERENT KINDS OF LOVE

My explanation of Augustine’s argument is now complete. In this section, then, I will begin to evaluate the argument by articulating the first of two responses to it. This first response might run as follows: perhaps we *should* love everyone equally with *one* kind of love, and with respect to this kind of love Augustine’s argument and conclusion would be correct. For example, perhaps Augustine is just talking about a generalized benevolence that we typically think we owe

⁷⁹ If there is such a thing as random chance for Augustine. Perhaps inscrutable divine providence would be the actual mechanism for Augustine. After all, “The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD” (Proverbs 16.33).

⁸⁰ Emphasis mine.

to one and all, even to strangers. This sort of generalized benevolence might be characterized, by some, as part of what it is to respect someone, though there is also nothing wrong with calling it a kind of love. However, such generalized benevolence is not the *only* kind of love, the interlocutor might emphasize. It seems clear that we love our children and our friends with a *different* kind of love altogether. And perhaps Augustine was just not talking about *that* kind of love in his argument. The response strategy, here, is to restrict the scope of Augustine’s argument to a kind of love that more plausibly should be equal—e.g., general benevolence—thereby harmonizing it with our intuitions.

As a historical point, this view seems to go beyond Augustine’s view in DDC. There Augustine makes no mention of further kinds of love appropriate to those we are close to, such as children or friends, despite the fact that passages (D) and (F) seemed to offer every opportunity to do so. Moreover, there are reasons elsewhere to think this was *not* Augustine’s view in DDC. For example, in *De vera religione*, a work written roughly five years prior to DDC,⁸¹ Augustine rejects the idea that we should love any person—including friends or family members—in a special, distinct way reserved for those we are close to. He writes,

A human being is not to be loved by people even as brothers after the flesh are loved, or sons, or wives, or kinsfolk, or relatives, or fellow citizens... Let no one think that is inhuman. It is more inhuman to love someone because he is your son and not because he is a human, that is, not to love that in him which belongs to God, but to love that which belongs to yourself.⁸²

Here Augustine implicitly acknowledges that people typically do love in a special distinct way those they are close to, but he denies that such love is proper. Rather, he thinks those we are

⁸¹ *De vera religione* is typically dated around 389 or 390 CE; see Augustine, “Of True Religion (De Vera Religione),” in *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, trans. John H. S. Burleigh, vol. VI, The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), 222 (Introduction). As noted above, DDC is typically dated around 395.

⁸² Augustine, *De vera religione*, 87-88. Translation adapted from *Ibid.*, 270. I will return to an expanded version of this quotation in Chapter Five, where I engage it in more depth. Importantly, there is some evidence (*Retractiones* Book I, 12.8) that Augustine later rejected this early radical view. See Saint Augustine, *The Retractions*, trans. Sister Mary Inez Bogan, vol. 60, The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1968), 56.

close to are to be loved merely because they are human. Presumably, his idea, here, of what it is to love a person “because he is a human” is something like the kind of love he encourages in DDC, i.e., egalitarian benevolence that arises in response to the value of a person’s nature as human.

Despite the fact that the interlocutor’s response seems hard to attribute to the Augustine of DDC, it seems effective as far as it goes: it does seem plausible *both* to restrict the scope of Augustine’s argument to one kind of love that should be equal (“nature-love”) *and* to postulate further appropriate kinds of love beyond the scope of the argument. However, the response also leaves lingering questions. One implication of the response is that the proposed additional kinds of love allow for cases of unequal or preferential love. We might think of the response as making space outside of the scope of Augustine’s argument for such love. However, the mere fact that there could be further kinds of love beyond the scope of Augustine’s argument (as the interlocutor suggests) does not explain why, exactly, such kinds should be unequal or preferential. And given the plausibility of Augustine’s argument as applied to one kind of love (as the interlocutor herself grants), we might well wonder why it does not also apply to other kinds.

For example, suppose we grant that the love we have for a friend (“friend-love”) is different in kind from the love we have for our own children (“parental-love”), and that both are different in kind from the love we might have for a stranger (i.e., Augustine’s nature-love). Why, exactly, should we love our friend or our child more than a stranger? Why not think both friend- and parental-love should also be responses to the value people have as human beings, and that such love should be proportional to such value? In other words, why not think that Augustine’s argument simply captures the cases of friend-love and parental-love too?

Even if we can give some kind of explanation here as to why we should love our friends or children more than a stranger, we might still wonder why we should love our own children more than certain friends (e.g., new friends). Simply distinguishing love for close relatives from nature-love will not answer this question. Moreover, even if we can explain why we should love our own children more than certain friends, it might seem that Augustine's egalitarian challenge will reappear within each kind of love. For example, if friend-love is a distinct kind of love, Augustine's argument might challenge us to love all of our friends equally, which seems hard to countenance. Such equal love within kinds seems supported by the case of parental love. It is quite typical for parents to think they should love their children equally. But, if equality is demanded for the parental kind of love, why not for friend-love or any other distinct kind of love? Even if an interlocutor can answer Augustine's egalitarian challenge as applied to any two distinct kinds of love, then, the challenge seems poised to return *within* such kinds unless we tell a story about why it does not.

Thus, the interlocutor's response raises further questions that call for some kind of account of why we should love some people more than others. Simply noting that the love we have for our friends or our children is different in kind from nature-love does not yet give this account.

Perhaps we can go some way toward such an account by making use of Augustine's later views about the scales of utility and justice in DCD.⁸³ For example, Augustine could say that taking up an attitude of benevolence toward someone in response to his use-value (call this "use-love") or his justice-value (call this "justice-love"), would amount to having love for the person that is different in kind from nature-love. He could then claim that we should use-love more those who are more useful to us than those who are less so and justice-love more those who are

⁸³ To be clear, I am not attributing such a view to Augustine, even in his later years. Rather, here I am simply offering a distinct view inspired by Augustine's conceptual scheme.

more virtuous than those who are less so, even while maintaining an equality of nature-love for all people. Finally, then, if use-love and justice-love were the kinds of love we had for our close relatives (e.g., friends and children), it seems Augustine would have a ready way of explaining why we should love such people more than strangers, even while maintaining his thesis of equality about nature-love: our close relatives are more virtuous or useful to us than others.

However, this account of why we should love preferentially seems implausible. Indeed, it just seems false that our close relatives are typically more virtuous than other people we might possibly come to love. Often it is quite the opposite: we love our friends, family members, and romantic partners *despite* the fact that other objects of love might be more virtuous. But, if our close relatives are often not more virtuous than others we might love, how could their having greater virtue possibly demand greater love for them?

Perhaps our close relatives *are* more useful to us than others in the Augustinian sense that they typically satisfy certain of our needs and desires more effectively than others (e.g., desires for companionship, emotional support, sexual intimacy, etc.). However, even so, it still seems there are typically many other people who might be more useful to us in this way if we had a relevant relationship to them: there is always someone who could be a better companion, a stronger emotional support, or a more satisfying sexual partner, if only he were my friend or romantic partner. What seems to be doing the work, here, then, in making our close relatives more useful to us is the special *relationships* we have to them, not necessarily their utility as particular individuals. Perhaps, then, the relationships—or the Augustinian utility of the relationships—we have with our close relatives warrant the greater love we typically have for them, rather than their superior justice-value or use-value as particular individuals.

I think this story about the Augustinian use-value of relationships is quite promising as a way of explaining why we should love some people more than others. However, it obviously

needs much more development and is not without problems. For example, if our love for our close relatives is a response to the use-value of our relationships to them, it seems that such love runs the risk of being too selfish.⁸⁴ Thus, there is much more that needs to be said about such a view if we are to properly evaluate it. One task of my dissertation will be to articulate a view of this kind and thereby to explain why we should love some more than others. Fulfillment of this task, then, will address one of the two central aims of my dissertation. I will take up this task most directly in Chapters Six and Seven. I will turn, now, to a second possible response to Augustine's argument.

1.10 OBJECTION: LOVE IN PROPORTION TO VALUE

A second response to Augustine's argument is the objection that premise (1)—“The degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has”—has obvious counter-examples. For example, it seems that a parent's preferential love for his own child over a new friend would be a straightforward counter-example to premise (1). Insofar as it seems appropriate for a parent to love his child more than a new friend, it seems there is no requirement that the degree of one's love be proportional to the value of the beloved object, since the child and the new friend are equally valuable as human beings. Rather, it seems appropriate for us to love some things more than others, even if we admit that the things we love more are no more valuable than the things we love less.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ I suspect that this sort of worry is driving Augustine's rejection of such a view in *De vera religione*, as quoted above.

⁸⁵ David Velleman makes a similar point when he states, “Loving some but not others entails valuing them differently but not attributing different values to them...” (Velleman, “Love as a Moral Emotion,” 372.) Certain comments by T.M. Scanlon on “valuing” and “value” suggest that he would also press an objection of this sort. For example, he says, “To claim that something is valuable (or that it is ‘of value’) is to claim that others also have reason to value it, as you do. We can, quite properly, value some things more than others without claiming that they are more valuable. So, for example, it is natural to say, and would be odd to deny, that I value my children; but it would be odd for me to put this by saying that they are valuable (except in the sense that everyone is). The reason behind this oddness is the one just mentioned: claiming that something is valuable involves claiming that its attributes merit being valued generally, and valuing one's own children above others, in the sense in which we all do this, lacks this impersonal quality and this dependence on what is merited or

Augustine might try to respond to this objection by contesting the idea that preferentially loving one's own children is appropriate, given that they are no more valuable than anyone else. Augustine might understand his opponent's argument as pitting a concrete case (preferential love of one's own children) against a principle (loving in proportion to value). However, if both the principle and the concrete case seem plausible, it is not clear which should win the battle. Indeed, it is a hallmark of the Rawlsian reflective equilibrium method in ethics—a method that has wide philosophical acceptance—that principles may sometimes bring us to change our views about concrete cases, just as concrete cases may sometimes bring us to change our principles.⁸⁶ And, while the concrete case seems plausible, Augustine would also think the principle in premise (1) seems plausible. After all, the principle is one way (though perhaps not the only way) of accounting for the fact that we can over- or under-value certain objects: in such cases our response might be out of proportion to what is called for by the value of the object.

Although this reply to the objection is not without merit, I find the objection more compelling: the intuition that preferential love for our own children is appropriate—indeed, that it is an attitude we *should* have—seems far clearer to me than does the truth of Augustine's premise (1). Indeed, I take it that the concrete case amounts to a counter-example that shows premise (1) to be false.

Nevertheless, even if the objection goes through and Augustine's argument fails, the exchange, here, raises an important question: what exactly is wrong with premise (1)? To show it false by counter-example is not yet to diagnose what is wrong with it. More specifically, if love need not be proportional in degree to the value of the beloved object, what exactly *is* the correct

called for by their attributes." T.M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 95. That Scanlon puts the point in terms of "valuing" and not "loving" is not crucial. Indeed, many contemporary philosophers take love to be a kind of valuing. For example, Niko Kolodny takes this view explicitly in Kolodny, "Love as Valuing a Relationship." Velleman also does.

⁸⁶ John Rawls, "Outline of a Decision Procedure for Ethics," *The Philosophical Review* 60, no. 2 (April 1951): 188–189. See also T.M. Scanlon, "Rawls on Justification," in *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 139–67.

relationship between love and value? After all, it seems plausible that love should have *some* relationship to value. This question seems both philosophically important and difficult to answer. A second aim of my dissertation, then, will be to identify more clearly the problem with premise (1) of Augustine's argument and in the process to illuminate more clearly the proper relation between love and value.

1.11 CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

In the foregoing discussion my aim has been to explain and engage the Augustinian claim in Book I of DDC that we should love all people equally. I suggested that Augustine's argument for the claim may be summarized as follows:

- (1) The degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has.
- (2) Every person has equal value.
- (3) Therefore, we should love all people equally.

After explaining the argument, I engaged two responses to it as a way of beginning to evaluate it. First, I considered the claim that Augustine is talking about a kind of love—e.g., general benevolence—that has no bearing on the preferential loves with which we typically love our friends, romantic partners, and family members. As such, it seems open to an interlocutor to side-step any problematic implications of Augustine's conclusion by suggesting that only general benevolence need be equal and that there are further more intimate kinds of love outside the scope of the argument. While I granted that this strategy renders the argument unproblematic, I also suggested that it raises further questions. Specifically, it implies that the further more intimate kinds of love outside the scope of Augustine's argument call for unequal or preferential love without explaining exactly why they do so. Put another way, for all that the interlocutor has said, it is not yet clear *why* Augustine's argument does not simply apply to these other kinds of

love too. Thus, this first response left us wanting an account of why we should love some people more than others.

The second response was a possible counter-example to premise (1), namely, the case of parental love. Although reasonable parents would likely acknowledge that their children are no more valuable than any other children, they would typically think it appropriate to love their own children far more than they love any other children. If such a state of affairs is, in fact, appropriate, then the case would be a counter-example to premise (1): it would be a case in which the degree to which we love something need not be proportional to its value. I conceded that this objection seems effective. I take it to show that Augustine's premise (1) is false. However, the objection also raises the further question of what, exactly, is wrong with premise (1). Simply demonstrating its falsity via counter-example is not yet to diagnose the problem with it. Presumably, a diagnosis of the problem would illuminate the correct relation between love and value that premise (1) attempted to capture.

In the remainder of my dissertation, I will try to address the two questions raised by this preliminary evaluation of Augustine's argument. My dissertation thus has two aims. The first is to give an account of the proper relationship between love and value, and thus to show more clearly what is wrong with Augustine's argument. The second is to give an account of why, exactly, we should love some people more than others. With respect to this second aim, my basic claim will be that closer relationships demand preferential love insofar as closer relationships are more valuable than more distant ones. I will argue for this claim and directly address the two aims of the dissertation only in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. In Chapters Two, Three, and Four I will lay the philosophical groundwork for Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. Specifically, in Chapters Two and Three I will give an account of love itself, and in Chapter Four I will give an account of love's "reasons," or "proper grounds," as I will prefer to call them.