19 Soul (*Anima*)

According to Macrobius, *Super sompnium Scipionis*, first book,[[1]](#endnote-1) therefore the soul is different from its descendant, the material body, so that it would be pure and the guilty cause, it would be a helper to its God from whom it is. Augustine[[2]](#endnote-2) is agreeable to this, who said the soul was made to the image of God and therefore it is capacious for him, but nothing can fill it except God. Wherefore it is said in Gen. 1[:26]: “Let us make man to our image.” And what is said in Genesis, that is, chapter 2[:7]: “And man became a living soul.”

Augustine says,[[3]](#endnote-3) that the soul is soiled when it is sent into anything earthly through love, just as pure gold is soiled when it is mixed with silver. Therefore, concerning the soul of the desirous, Isaiah 51[:23]: “You have laid your body as the ground, and as a way to them that went over.” Against this Bernard, in his *Meditationes*,[[4]](#endnote-4) know, I beg you, man, your dignity; reflect upon that excellent nature of your soul, how God made it to his image and likeness, how God lifted it above every corporeal creature, and then you will begin to wonder, how the famous daughter of Sion was banished from heaven to earth, and then you will begin to call out with the Psal. [72:25]: “For what have I in heaven? and besides thee what do I desire upon earth?” But is it a wonder, if in such a recollection, quickly the confusion of my face overcomes me? Who is not ashamed of the mistress of the world, a citizen of heaven, beloved of God, who has given herself to the slavery of the body, who has prostituted herself to the unclean spirits, who has put herself under the yoke of servitude, for making a cure of the flesh in desires? It is a marvel, I say, how she was made as if a widow, mistress of the peoples, she was made princess of the provinces under tribute.

¶ To this consideration he wished to recall us who said, Bar. 3[:10-11]: “How happens it, O Israel, that you are in your enemies’ land? You are grown old in a strange country, you are defiled with the dead,” etc. From which it is evident that they are foolish therefore who have sold their soul for so little love. Because, according to Bernard,[[5]](#endnote-5) it quickly perishes what is delightful, but it endures forever what puts us on the rack. Rather he is foolish who gives a precious thing for one that is more worthless than it is, but every creature is more worthless than the soul and only God is better than the soul, according to Augustine, *De libero arbitrio*, book three, chapter four.[[6]](#endnote-6) Wherefore, the same Augustine, *De verbis Apostoli*,[[7]](#endnote-7) “God made the flesh subject to the soul, and the soul subject to himself. If then the soul always stays under its lord, the flesh will always obey its mistress.

¶ Do not marvel,[[8]](#endnote-8) therefore, if that one who deserts his superior, should suffer the pains through his inferior. When all parents suffer through their children. Chrysostom, *Super Mattheum*, 57,[[9]](#endnote-9) when all parents and friends depart, only God remains with the soul, and therefore he is to be loved from the whole soul. You see that in a dangerous time the prudent man sees that what he has more precious, he places in a safer place, and of that he is more solicitous. But the world is full of perils as is evident below. But man has nothing more precious than his soul. He ought to place it in a safer place just as the saints have done, Wis. 3[:1-3]: “But the souls of the just are in the hand of God,” etc., up to “but they are in peace.” For although in separation from the soul, torments of nature follow, not however the torments of malice and through this that the souls of the just are under a protective mistress [Wis.3:1]. Therefore, when God handed over Job [2:6] and his household to the power of Satan, he added moreover his soul as servant, Matt. 16[:25]: “For he that will save his life, shall lose it.”

¶ “For what does it profit a man, if he gains the entire world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?” etc., [Matt. 16:26]. Wherefore note here that natural heat in an animal in capturing food, it captures to its loss. Wherefore it loses in the end because in every such receiving it becomes purer and the vital heat is lessened, and however on account of the body which receives it. Thus, spiritually the soul gives back in a purer form in receiving such matters, and however on account of the necessities of life it is necessary that such things are used. In figure of this matter, 4 Kings 17[:16], if they who have passed away from the Lord, they left behind all their effects, and fled saving their souls. Wherefore Bernard, in *Meditationes,[[10]](#endnote-10)* against the matter, man, why do you despise your soul and prefer the flesh to it, the mistress before the handmaid and the handmaid before the mistress. It is a great abuse and the whole world cannot be estimated as the price of one. For was it not for the whole world that God gave his own soul, which however he gave for humankind?

Again, *Super Canticum*, homily 59,[[11]](#endnote-11) Hippocrates and his followers teach how to make souls safe in this world. Christ and his disciples teach how to lose it in this world, Matt. 10[:28]. Therefore Peter said in his first canonical epistle chapter 1[:22]: “Purifying your souls in the obedience of charity, with a brotherly love, from a sincere heart love one another earnestly.” In which authority the soul is exercised relative to God through obedience, relative to one’s neighbor through true friendship, relative to oneself through cleanness.

Concerning the first, so to speak, as my soul melts as the beloved speaks. For just like wax[[12]](#endnote-12) obedient to the fire melts, so the soul does to the fire of charity.

Concerning the second, there is the example of 1 Kings 18[:1, 4], where it is said that “the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David,” in so much as “Jonathan stripped himself of the coat, and gave it to David,” etc.

Concerning the third, Wis. 1[:4]: “wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul.” For since according to the Philosopher, the second book, *De anima*,[[13]](#endnote-13) the soul is called an act of physical and organic body having life in potency. If the soul does not have true life, which is God, in its potency, then it is not the soul, Wis. 7[:27]: “She conveys herself into holy souls, she makes the friends of God.” Again the soul ought to be guarded very delicately, from which this is a rational creature, a spiritual vault of God, a spiritual handmaid of Christ.

¶ Concerning the first, Sisyphus[[14]](#endnote-14) was rolled about, if a dog returns to its vomit [Prov. 26:11], it is no marvel since they are irrational. But if the daughter of the king, the soul, is defiled, it is shameful. Therefore Eccli., etc., 2[:20]: “They that fear the Lord, will prepare their hearts, and in his sight will sanctify their souls.

¶ Concerning the second, it would be a shame to make of the temple of God a dung pit, of the image of God an idol, Psal. [24:9]: “Holiness becomes your house.”

¶ Concerning the third, the nobles want to have a clean household establishment, but much more God himself ought to have a clean house in which a clean household rests because it serves him, but such is the soul. But alas because Ezech. 28[:18]: “You have defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities.”

1. Macrobius, *Commentariourm in Somnium Scipionis* 1.14: unde et quasi quodam publico praeconio tantam humano generi diuinitatem inesse testatur ut uniuersos siderei animi cognatione nobilitet. notandum est quod hoc loco animum et ut proprie et ut abusiue dicitur posuit. animus enim proprie mens est, quam diuiniorem anima nemo dubitauit sed non numquam sic et animam usurpantes uocamus. cum ergo dicit hisque animus datus est ex illis sempiternis ignibus, mentem praestat intellegi quae nobis proprie cum caelo sideribusque communis est. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Augustine, *Contra Secundam Juliani* 3.109 (PL 45.1293): In quibus igitur consistit liberum arbitrium, propter quod homines bestiis antecellunt, propter quod ad Dei imaginem facti sunt, et quo solo divini examinis justitia continetur? in quo est hoc, inquam, arbitrium liberum. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Augustine, *De sermone Domini in monte* 2.13.44 (PL 34.1289): Sordescit enim aliquid, cum inferiori miscetur naturae, quamvis in suo genere non sordidae; quia etiam de puro argento sordidatur aurum, si misceatur: ita et animus noster terrenorum cupiditate sordescit, quamvis ipsa terra in suo genere atque ordine munda sit. Sordescit enim aliquid, cum inferiori miscetur naturae, quamvis in suo genere non sordidae; quia etiam de puro argento sordidatur aurum, si misceatur: ita et animus noster terrenorum cupiditate sordescit, quamvis ipsa terra in suo genere atque ordine munda sit. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Bernard, rather Richard of St. Victor, *De gratia contemplationis* 3.13 (PL 196.123): Cognosce, quaeso, homo, dignitatem tuam; cogita excellentem illam animae tuae naturam, quomodo fecerit eam Deus ad imaginem et similitudinem suam, quomodo sublimavit eam super omnem corpoream creaturam, et statim mirari incipies, quomodo inclyta virgo filia Sion projecta sit de coelo in terram, et pariter Domino clamare incipies: Quid mihi est in coelo et a te quid volui super terram? (Psal. LXXVIII.) Quid mirum, [Col.0123B] quaeso, si in recordatione conditionis meae, si ad conspectum animae meae subito et absque mora confusio faciei meae cooperuit me? Quem enim non pudeat dominam mundi, civem coeli, dilectam Dei, addixisse servituti corporis, prostituisse spiritibus immundis, diu tenuisse sub jugo servitutis, ad faciendam carnis curam in desideriis? Mirabitur sane quisque, cum animae suae cogitaverit, cum bene attenderit quid sit, vel esse debuerit. Unde, vel quo projecta sit, mirabitur, inquam, quomodo facta sit, quasi vidua domina gentium, princeps provinciarum, facta sit sub tributo. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Bernard, cf. Caesarius Arelatensis, *Sermones Caesarii uel ex aliis fontibus hausti* 41; attributed to Augustine, *Sermo* 293 (PL 39:2302): Vere enim nimium plangenda et miseranda condicio est, ubi cito praeterit quod delectat, et permanet sine fine quod cruciat. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Cf. Augustine, *De Quantitiate Animae* 34.77 (PL 32.1077): Anima solus Deus melior, adeoque solus ei colendus est. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Augustine, *Sermo* 30.3.4 (PL 38.189): Falsum est, haereticum est, blasphemum est: mentis et carnis unus est artifex. Ipse quando hominem creavit, utrumque fecit, utrumque conjunxit: carnem animae subdidit, animam sibi. Si semper illa staret sub Domino suo, semper et ista obediret dominae suae. Noli ergo mirari si ea quae deseruit superiorem, poenas patitur per inferiorem. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. *Theologiae Dogmaticae, et Moralis* Liber III, De Peccatis Articulus 10, ed. R.P.F. Natali Alexandro (Venetiis: Apud Nicolaum Pezzana, 1759) (2:94a): Noli ergo mirari, si ea quae deseruit Superiorem, penas patitur per inferiorem. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. (Pseudo-)Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum* Homilia 26 ex cap. 10 (PG 56:769): Amici enim recedunt, parentes deficiunt, solus autem Christus nec recedit aliquando, nec deficit, donec voluerimus et nos esse cum ipso. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Bernard, *Meditationes Piissima: De cognitione humanae conditionis* 3.8 (PL184.490): Quare animam tuam vilipendis, et ei carnem praeponis? Dominam ancillari, et ancillam dominari, magna abusio est. Totus quidem iste mundus ad unius animae pretium aestimari non potest. Non enim pro toto mundo Deus animam suam dare voluit, quam pro anima humana dedit. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Bernard, *Sermones in Cantica Canticorum* 30.10 (PL 183.938): Hippocrates et sequaces ejus docent animas salvas facere in hoc mundo; Christus et ejus discipuli, perdere. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Virgil, *Eclogues* 8.80-81 (LCL 63:80-81): limus ut hic durescit et haec ut cera liquescit uno eodemque igni, sic nostro Daphnis amore.

    As this clay hardens, and as this wax melts in one and the same flame, so may Daphnis melt with love for me. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Aristotle, *On the Soul* 2.1 412a20-21 (Barnes, 1:656): Hence the soul must6 be a substance in the sense of the form of a natural body having life potentially within it.

    Cf. *De anima*, 2.1, 412b4-5: anima oportet dicere, erit utique: actus primus corporis phisici | organici. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. The Second Mythographer, 127: On Sisyphus in *The Vatican Mythographers*, trans. Ronald E. Pepin (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), p. 149: Through cruel villainy, Sisyphus seized a mountain positioned between two seas, the Sisyphean and Lechaean. He used to kill men who were passing that way by hurling a huge rock on them. In payment for this crime, he is said to roll a stone toward the peak of a mountain in the Underworld. Since the stone always slides back, he never rests from his labor of rolling it. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)