



A) Explain Augustine's Theory of Pre-destination (20)

St Augustine was a 4th century Catholic scholar and saint who formulated his view on predestination in his 'doctrine of original sin'. In this doctrine Augustine stated his belief that humans are consigned to either heaven or hell before they are born and in this sense have no free-will.

Augustine uses Genesis 3 as Biblical evidence that humans are predestined, as he suggests that it is because of 'the fall' that humans are born with original sin. By this, he means that all humans were seminally present "in the loins" of Adam and Eve when they gave into temptation and ate the forbidden fruit and later consummated their relationship. Because of this, Augustine suggests that humans are necessarily 'born sinful' as they have strong earthly desires which prevent them from being wholly good. For example, a human who is born damned because of original sin, will not be able but help to commit sinful acts such as gluttony, cruelty or even murder.

Augustine supports the idea of atonement and that Jesus died for the sins of humanity on the cross. However, for Augustine the atonement is limited as only a certain amount of human can be saved by God's grace. For Augustine, those who are saved are known as 'the elect' and those who aren't are known as 'the damned'. In other words, the elect can't help but do good actions (such as Mother Teresa who helped the poor and ill in India) and the 'damned' can't help but commit sin.

Moreover, because of original sin, Augustine argues that humans can never be truly free. He suggests that humans have got 2 natures; an essentially free nature but an overriding second nature. For Augustine, original sin has meant that humans can't help but succumb to their second nature through acts such as greed and sex. This again stresses how Augustine believes that all humans are predestined.

Augustine refers to the letters of ST Paul to justify his beliefs. He uses the letters to the Romans where it is stated "god is the potter who has made one vessel for good and one vessel for bad". This supports Augustine's notion that humanity is divided into two; the elect and the damned. This highlights that humans are predestined to be either good or bad and therefore have no freewill.