

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Evangelical Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_evangelical_quarterly.php

SOME PERMANENT CONTRIBUTIONS OF AUGUSTINE TO CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

PERHAPS it is true that Augustine originated no new ideas. Nevertheless, his encyclopædic mind gathered significant ideas from all available sources, from the Scriptures, the church fathers and the philosophers. He took these thoughts into the crucible of his own experience, and selected, developed, systematized and demonstrated their practical bearing. Many of his conceptions moulded Christian thought even in his own day. During the Middle Ages and the Reformation his numerous writings were diligently searched and they proved a rich storehouse of fertile ideas. In canon, creed, organization and movement it may truly be said that Augustine still lives.

I

HIS LIFE

Aurelius Augustine was born November 13th, 354, at Thagaste, about sixty miles west of Carthage. This Numidian stock was a combination of three races. To the turbulence of the early Numidians there was added the prudence of the Phœnicians and the longing for action of the Romans. Living under a sun of fire the people were rude, alert and ardent (P. Alfaric : *L'Evolution Intellectuelle de Saint Augustin*). His parents were Patricius and Monica. Watson states that being "the son of a heathen father and a Christian mother, there was a contradiction in his mind, which must needs in a man of such veracity and sincerity, lead in the course of his development to disturbance and unrest" (*Philosophical Basis of Religion*, 299). During his high school days at Madaura, Julian the Apostate was zealously re-establishing the pagan worship throughout the Roman Empire. At the University of Carthage he drank deeply of the culture of the pagan world. Seeing the zeal of Christians consumed in strife, Catholic with Donatist, and both blind to the common danger, it was easy for him to drift into Manichæism, which, with a cultured and influential following, was making deep inroads into Christianity. For nine years he was confused

by their display of wisdom. On going to Rome to teach, he turned to Scepticism, half inclined to believe that the "Academics were more sagacious than the rest, in that they said we ought to doubt of everything" (*Confessions*, V, 19-20). Then to Milan he came, unto Ambrose, "the bishop known to the whole world as among the best of men" (*Confessions*, V, 13, 23). And though not understood by him at this time, the teaching of Ambrose concerning spiritual nature became to him "a pole star" guiding him out of the maze of false teaching ("De Beata Vita", I, 4; in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol. 63, p. 91). Certain books of the Neoplatonists answered many of his intellectual problems, but only the letters of the Apostle Paul could bring peace to his troubled soul. Baptized by Ambrose, Easter 387, he began almost at once his strenuous work in behalf of the church. He was ordained priest in 391 and five years later Bishop of Hippo, serving in that capacity until his death, August 28th, 430. He met the foes within the church and exposed their fallacies. Neither Donatist, nor Pelagian, nor Arian could stand before his logic. Under his leadership the Western church became united. He was also the most effective defender against the rivals of the faith. Due largely to his efforts, Manichæism dwindled away and Neoplatonism as an organized system ceased to exist (Van Saun: "Three Torch Bearers" in *Religious Telescope*, October 26th, '29, p. 6). The contributions of Greek philosophy he conserved and its principles he devoted to the interpretation and defence of the Christian faith (Vega: *Saint Augustine His Philosophy*, p. 73).

II

ESTIMATES OF AUGUSTINE

"It is first of all a remarkable fact that the great critics, Protestant as well as Catholic, are almost unanimous in placing St. Augustine in the foremost rank of doctors and proclaiming him to be the greatest of the Fathers" (Eugene Portalie: "Augustine" in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, p. 91b).

"The whole life of the medieval church was framed on lines which he has suggested; its religious orders claimed him as their patron; its mystics found a sympathetic tone in his teaching; its polity was to some extent the actualization of his picture of

the Christian church ; it was in its various parts a carrying out of the ideas which he cherished and diffused ” (W. Cunningham, quoted by Portalie).

“ . . . the greatest, the most powerful of all the Fathers, him from whom proceeds all the doctrinal and ecclesiastical development of the West, and to whom each recurring crisis, each new orientation of thought, brings it back ” (Kurtz : *History of the Church*, quoted by Portalie).

“ Augustine is a star of extraordinary brilliance in the firmament of the Church. Since the Apostles he has been unsurpassed ” (Bindemann, quoted by Portalie).

“ Between Paul the Apostle and Luther the Reformer the Christian Church has no one to compare with him and in his comprehensive work no one is like him ” (Zwischen Paulus, dem Apostel, und Luther, dem Reformator, hat die christliche Kirche Niemanden besessen, der sich mit Augustin messen konnte, und an umfassender Wirkung kommt ihm kein Anderer gleich. Augustin's *Confessionen* von Adolph Harnack, 5).

“ Augustine is practically the father of all Western Christianity after his time ” (F. Loofs : “ Augustine ” in *New Schaff Herzog Religious Encyclopedia*).

“ Augustine is the one great philosopher sprung from the soil of Christianity proper. He unites within himself all the influences of the past and all the fresh impulses of his own age, and out of them he creates something which is new and greater ” (Eucken : *The Problem of Human Experience*, 211).

“ Augustine is the greatest and most versatile of all the church fathers, he is most like Origen ” (Er ist der grösste und vielseitigste aller Kirchenväter, am meisten vergleichbar dem Origen. Gerhard Rauschen : *Grundriss der Patrologie, Die Schriften der Kirchenväter und ihr Lehrgehalt*, p. 355).

“ It is no exaggeration to say that few men have exercised upon their posterity an influence so extensive and so profound as that which history assigns to Saint Augustine ” (J. F. Nourrisson : *La Philosophie de Saint Augustine*, II, 147, quoted by J. Hessen in *Der Augustinische Gottesbeweis*, p. 50).

“ Augustine is the brightest star in the constellation of the church fathers, and diffuses his light through the darkest periods of the Middle Ages, and among Catholics and Protestants alike, even unto this day ” (P. Schaff : *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. III, p. 817).

“It is no wonder, therefore, that the Western Church has felt the force of his influence in all the main lines of its development, and in no one of its prominent characteristics could it have been without him what it has become (p. 120). For the Reformation, inwardly considered, was just the ultimate triumph of Augustine’s doctrine of grace over Augustine’s doctrine of the church” (p. 130). (B. B. Warfield: *Studies in Tertullian and Augustine*.)

“Who impressed the Church’s pure confession more profoundly than Augustine, incomparable among the church fathers . . . ?” (A. Kuyper: *The Holy Spirit*, translated by De Vries, p. 286).

III

THE CANON OF THE BIBLE

One of the significant contributions of Augustine was in securing official recognition of the canon of the Scriptures and in stating the principles of their acceptance. Athanasius in 367 in his Festal letter XXXIX, had put his personal approval upon the canon as we now recognize it. Under the leadership of Augustine, the Council of Carthage in 397 took action that “It is pleasing that besides these canonical scriptures nothing shall be read in the church under the name of divine scriptures.” This action included the Apocrypha and also permitted the reading of the Suffering of the Martyrs on their anniversary days. It also recommended that this action be approved by other councils. (Can. 39. Item placuit ut praeter scripturas canonicas nihil in ecclesia legatur sub nomine diuinarum scripturarum. Sunt autem canonicae scripturae hae. . . . Hoc etiam fratri et consacerdoti nostro Bonifatio, uel aliis earum partium episcopis, pro confirmando isto canone innotescat, quia a patribus ista accepimus in Ecclesia legenda. Liceat autm legi passiones martyrum, cum annuersarii eorum dies celebrantur. Quoted by A. Souter: *The Text and Canon of the New Testament*, 220-1. See also Schaff: *History of Christian Church*, III, 609, and J. S. Briggs: “Canon of the New Testament” in *Inter. Sta. Bi. Enc.*, Vol. I, 566.)

As to the principles of acceptance, Augustine states in his treatise on *Christian Doctrine*, written in the same year, that

“in regard to canonical scriptures, he must follow the judgment of the greater number of catholic churches; and among those, of course, a high place must be given to such as have been thought worthy to be the seat of an apostle and to receive epistles . . .” (II, 8, 12; *N.P.N.*, vol. II, p. 538). In his *Reply to Faustus the Manichæan*, written 400, he states that “there is a distinct boundary line separating all productions subsequent to apostolic times from the authoritative canonical books of the Old and New Testaments. The authority of these books has come down to us from the apostles through the succession of bishops and the extension of the church, and, from a position of lofty supremacy, claims the submission of every faithful and pious mind” (XI, 5; *N.P.N.*, vol. IV, p. 180). In the same treatise he asks, “How can we be sure of the authorship of any book, if we doubt the apostolic origin of those books which are attributed to the apostles by the church which the apostles themselves founded, and which occupies so conspicuous a place in all lands. . . . ?”¹ In these quotations we see that Augustine holds apostolic origin and approval to be fundamental tests of canonicity, but continued acceptance by honoured churches and acceptance by a majority of churches are also factors worthy of consideration.

IV

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

The final formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity was given by Augustine in his treatise on that subject (*Warfield: Tertullian and Augustine*, 115). This doctrine, under the leadership of Athanasius, had been accepted in its fundamental points by the Council of Nicea, 325, and had been further developed and enforced by the three Cappadocians. But due to the labours of Augustine this doctrine was incorporated into the life of the church in fact as well as in theory. The Bishop of Hippo presented this truth in its most complete elaboration and most carefully grounded statement (*Warfield: “Trinity”, Inter. Sta. Bi. Enc.*, vol. V, 3022). Though the doctrine received its classical statement at the hands of Thomas Aquinas, little remained for him to accomplish but to complete the details and perfect the terminology.

¹ *Reply to Faustus the Manichæan*, XXXIII, 6, *N.P.N.F.*, vol. IV., p. 343.

There are four main principles laid down by Augustine from which the Western Church has never departed.

1. Augustine views the divine nature as prior to the personalities of the Trinity. To him God is the Trinity and not the Father alone. "The Trinity is the one and only true God, and . . . the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are rightly said, believed, understood, to be one and the same substance or essence" (*The Trinity*, I, 2, 4, *N.P.N.*, vol. III, p. 19). Though this idea had been employed by Didymus, Augustine was the first to make it the basis for his treatment of the whole system (G. H. Joyce: "Trinity", *Catholic Enc.*, XV, 55a).

2. Growing out of this basic principle, we have in the second place the subordination of the Son eliminated and the consubstantiality of the three persons of the Trinity asserted (Schaff: *Hist. Chr. Ch.*, III, 684). As we read in his own words, "the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit together is not a greater essence than the Father alone, or the Son alone; but these three substances or persons, if they must be so called, together are equal to each singly" (*Trinity*, VII, 6, 11, p. 113). Yet Augustine is careful to explain that this truth applies only to the deity of the Son for in his humanity he is inferior to the Father. "There is so great an equality in the Trinity, that not only the Father is not greater than the Son as regards divinity, but neither are the Father and Son greater than the Holy Spirit; nor is each individual person, whichever it may be of the three, less than the Trinity itself" (*Trinity*, VIII, Preface, p. 115).

3. The procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son as well as from the Father is his third contribution to the doctrine of the Trinity. "Neither can we say that the Holy Spirit does not also proceed from the Son, for the same Spirit is not without reason said to be the Spirit both of the Father and of the Son" (*Trinity*, IV, 20, 29, p. 84). "Wherefore let him who can understand the generation of the Son from the Father without time, understand also the procession of the Holy Spirit from both without time. . . . Therefore the Holy Spirit is not begotten of both, but proceeds from both" (*Trinity*, XV, 27, 47). Schaff reminds us that this new conception of the Trinity is the chief difference in doctrine between the Greek and Latin churches, but then quotes from Waterland, *Works*, III, 237f, that the Latin position was never condemned by the early church

fathers ; that many of them asserted it ; that the Greek church takes the position that nothing can be added to the creed of the general councils ; and also that the Greek church is obliged to admit the same meaning but expressed in other words (Schaff : *Hist. Chr. Ch.*, 687).

4. Analogies of the Trinity and of the nature of man had been employed by Victorinus and others, but Augustine with such rare psychological insight developed the analogies between the personalities within the Trinity and the human faculties that he is properly known as the founder of the psychological theory of the Trinity (Joyce : "Trinity", in *Catholic Enc.*, XV, 55a).

On the one hand Augustine avoided Sabellianism which denied distinctions in the divine nature, and on the other hand condemned Arianism which declared the Son to be different in nature as well as in person. Augustine maintains the Trinity to be three equal, distinguishable yet inseparable persons in one nature or essence (Tolley : *The Idea of God in Phil. of Aug.*, 182).

Augustine's elaboration of the doctrine of the Trinity is summarized in "the battle hymn of the early church", the so-called Athanasian creed. Schaff in his attempt to discover the sources of this document, in fifteen instances out of twenty-two, finds the idea and often the precise words in the works of Augustine (Schaff : *Hist. Chr. Ch.*, vol. III, 690-5).

V

THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The ontological argument for the being of God, that His existence is involved in the very idea of Him, has in the judgment of Warfield not merely its material but its formal preformation in him (*Studies in Tertullian and Augustine*, 125). Hessen states that it is created out of Augustine's treatise on the Trinity (Es ist ganz und gar aus Augustins Werk *De Trinitate* gescopft. Johannes Hessen : *Der Augustinische Gottesbeweis historisch und systematisch dargestellt*, 52). Anselm was indeed original, but his contribution was largely in working out the implications of the accepted doctrines. Augustine himself reasons from relative good to Absolute Good (Richard McKeon : *Selections from Medieval Philosophers*, 143). As stated by Augustine,

“This thing is good and that good, but take away this and that, and regard good in itself if thou canst ; so wilt thou see God, not good by a good that is other than himself, but the good of all good ” (*Trinity*, VIII, 3, 4, *N.P.N.*, vol. III, p. 117). Anselm sees, however, that such reasoning further implies that the idea of the Absolute involves the existence of the Absolute. Otherwise He would not be the Absolute. In the Introduction to the *Monologium*, Anselm recognizes his dependence as follows :

And after frequent consideration, I have not been able to find that I have made in it any statement which is inconsistent with the writings of the Catholic Fathers, or especially with those of St. Augustine. Wherefore if it shall appear to any man that I have offered in this work any thought that is either too novel or discordant with the truth, I ask him not to denounce me at once as one who boldly seizes upon new ideas, or as a maintainer of falsehood ; but let him first read diligently Augustine's books on the Trinity, and then judge my treatise in the light of those. (St. Anselm : *Monologium*, translated by S. N. Deane, p. 36.)

VI

SCHOLASTICISM AND MYSTICISM

Scholasticism as “the systematizer and rationalizer of religious dogma ” (Rogers : *Student's Hist. of Phil.*, 192) has left an indelible impression upon Western thought. Scholasticism was confronted with a fixed body of established doctrine and also by a hierarchy zealous in its punishment of dissenters. As the handmaid of religion its problem was to work out a system of thought that would square with dogma, or, in more modern terminology, to harmonize faith and science (Thilly : *Hist. of Phil.*, 160). Augustinianism was, according to Windelband, the norm of Scholastic philosophy, in its attempt to present the church doctrine as a logical system (*Hist. Phil.*, 266). Schaff calls Augustine “the father of medieval scholasticism ” (P. Schaff : *St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine*, 149). Warfield states that until the rise of Aristotelianism in the twelfth century, Augustinianism reigned supreme and during the rest of the period contended masterfully with its rival (Warfield : *Tertullian and Augustine*, 124).

Scholasticism is intellectual. However, man is not only intellectual but also emotional. Mysticism as a reaction to extreme intellectualism, is an attempt to reach God, not by reasoning but by contemplation. It stresses salvation through

an experience in which the individual rises above time and place and loses himself in ecstatic union with God. It was not mere coincidence that the leaders of the first school of medieval mystics were monks in the Augustinian cloister of St. Victor in Paris (Thilly: *Hist. of Phil.*, 176; and Gamertsfelder and Evans: *Fundamentals of Phil.*, 12). Augustine had taken unto himself a great measure of the Mysticism of Neoplatonism. And in turn the Mystics of the Middle Ages appealed to his writings and cherished his devotional fervour and glowing spirit. Scholasticism and Mysticism, the one stressing the intellect, the other the emotions, both found in Augustine their inspiration and their strength. However, the excesses of either system need not be laid to his account, for Scholasticism often lost itself in empty reasoning and likewise Mysticism, depending upon feeling, often lost itself in sentimentalism (P. Schaff: *Prologomena* in *N.P.N.F.*, series I, vol. I, p. 20).

VII

CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

Schaff designates Augustine as among the chief creators of Catholic theology (P. Schaff: *St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine*, 150). And the theology as developed by Augustine was no mere theory. Controversies demanded the exposure of false positions and the clarification of vital convictions of the church. "He (Augustine) conquered Manichæan dualism, hylozoism, and fatalism and saved the Biblical idea of God, and of creation, and the Biblical doctrine of the nature of sin and of its origin in the free will of man" (Schaff: *Hist. of Chr. Ch.*, vol. III, 1017). The Anti-Donatist works condemn separatism and present Augustine's conception of the church and of church discipline and of the sacraments. The Anti-Arian works, most important of which is the treatise on the Trinity, defend the deity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. In the Anti-Pelagian works Augustine develops his system of anthropology and soteriology (Schaff: *Prologomena*, *N.P.N.F.*, vol. I, pp. 16-17). The Pelagian controversy gave to the Latin church a theology differing at every point from the Greek theology. At the very foundation of this system was the doctrine of original sin (A. V. G. Allen: *Continuity of Christian Thought*, 156-7). Augustine firmly

rejected the idea that matter or any substance is essentially evil. He maintained that evil is a defect, a negative quality which cannot subsist by itself (E. Caird : *Evolution of Religion*, vol. II, p. 288) and that it arose from the misuse of free will.

As we summarize these ideas we find them to group about two foci, the doctrine of grace and the doctrine of the church. Let us hear in Augustine's own statements, his conception of God the giver of grace, the nature of man receiving God's grace, the nature of the transformation wrought by God's grace freely given, and how all of these factors are bound together in the eternal purpose of God.

With God indeed all things are arranged and fixed ; and when He seemeth to set upon sudden motive, He doth nothing but what He foreknew that He should do from eternity ; but in the temporal changes of creation which He ruleth wonderfully, He, without any temporal change in Himself, is said to do by a sudden act of will what in the ordained causes of events He hath arranged in the unchangeableness of His most secret counsel, according to which He doeth everything according to defined seasons, doing the present and having already done the future. (*On the Psalms*, CVI, 31, *N.P.N.F.*, series 1, vol. 8, p. 531.)

The will of God can never be evil ; because even when it inflicts evil, it is just, and what is just is certainly not evil. The omnipotent God, then, whether in mercy He pitieth whom He will, or in judgment hardeneth whom He will, is never unjust in what He does, never does anything except of His own free will, and never wills anything that He does not perform. (*Enchiridion*, 102, *N.P.N.F.*, vol. III, p. 270.)

For God, the author of natures, not of vices, created man upright ; but man being of his own will corrupted, and justly condemned, begot corrupted and condemned children. For we all were in that one man, since we all were that one man, who fell into sin by the woman who was made from him before the sin. For not yet was the particular form created and distributed to us, in which we as individuals were to live, but already the seminal nature was there from which we were to be propagated ; and this being vitiated by sin, and bound by the chain of death, and justly condemned, man could not be born of man in any other state. And thus, from the bad use of free will, there originated the whole train of evil, which, with its concatenation of miseries, conveys the human race from its depraved origin, as from a corrupt root, on to the destruction of the second death, which has no end, those only being excepted who are freed by the grace of God. (*The City of God*, XIII, 17, *N.P.N.F.*, vol. II, p. 251.)

But it does not follow that, though there is for God a certain order of all causes, there must therefore be nothing depending on the exercise of our own wills, for our wills themselves are included in that order of causes which is certain to God, and is embraced by His foreknowledge, for human wills are also causes of human actions ; and He who foreknew all the causes of things, would certainly among these causes, have not been ignorant of our wills. (*The City of God*, V, 9, *N.P.N.F.*, vol. II, p. 91.)

This grace, however, by which strength is perfected in weakness, conducts all who are predestinated and called according to the divine purpose to the state of the highest perfection and glory. By such grace it is perfected, not only that we discover what ought to be done, but also that we do what we have discovered—not only that we believe what ought to be loved, but also that we love what we have believed. (*On the Grace of Christ*, XII, 13, *N.P.N.F.*, vol. V, p. 222.)

This doctrine of grace, denying man any merit in his own powers and efforts, and affirming man's only ground for salvation to be the unmerited favour of God, was not Augustine's invention. This doctrine of Paul was recovered for the Church by Augustine when all thought was dominated by stoic rationalism, and hence it came with all the force of a new discovery (Warfield : *Tertullian and Augustine*, 129).

The doctrine of the church Augustine developed in the Anti-Donatist works. Portalie, in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, tersely states that Augustine "corrected, perfected and even excelled the beautiful pages of St. Cyprian on the Divine institution of the Church, its authority, its essential marks and its mission in the economy of grace and the administration of the sacraments" (article, "Augustine", vol. II, p. 88b). Warfield concludes that he "created a specifically Western type of Christianity" so that the separation between the Eastern and Western Churches naturally followed (*Tertullian and Augustine*, 115-16).

The two sides of Augustine's teaching, the doctrinal and the churchly, were never fully reconciled. Though these two foci, the doctrine of grace and the doctrine of the church, stand out clearly in his system, we need not think that Augustine discriminated between them. To him they were one. He believed himself to be presenting the Catholic faith in its purity (Orr : *Progress of Dogma*, 141).

But in his doctrine of the church, Warfield states that in a true sense Augustine became the founder of Roman Catholicism. However, it was not Augustine but Cyprian that had identified the church with the episcopate, thus laying its basis as a hierarchical institution. And Gregory the Great later designated the organized church as the divine state. To Augustine, however, the church was fundamentally the body of Christ, but in his writings the organized church tends to take the place of the body of Christ. Thus Augustine, almost against his will, becomes responsible for the principle that the organized church is the only channel for divine knowledge and saving grace. In other words, salvation is found only within the Catholic Church (Warfield : *Studies in Tertullian and Augustine*, 122).

Schaff insists that Augustine is responsible for many of the errors of the Roman Catholic Church ; the principle of persecution ; the damnation of unbaptized infants ; he anticipated

the dogma of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, and his statement "Roma locuta est, causa finita est", is a suggestion of the Vatican decree of infallibility (Schaff: *Chrysostom and Augustine*, 150).

Warfield reminds us that the most significant fact about Augustine is that he, first among the church teachers, gave adequate expression to "evangelical religion", a religion of faith, not works; of trust in God, not in self; of dependence on God, not on human organization (Warfield: *Tertullian and Augustine*, 127). Of these two great principles or foci, the doctrine of grace and the doctrine of the church, Roman Catholicism has emphasized the latter.

VIII

THE REFORMATION

Augustine gave to the church a problem of profound significance, and that problem was how to correlate the doctrine of grace and the doctrine of the church. Roman Catholicism subordinated the former to the latter and their solution works out in belief in an infallible church. But the Pauline doctrine of grace as presented by Augustine challenged other heroic souls. Wiclif, Huss, Luther, Knox, and Calvin contributed to the ultimate triumph of the doctrine of grace over the doctrine of the church and their belief works out in belief in an infallible Word. After Paul, Augustine was the chief teacher of the Reformers and his Anti-Pelagian writings were the main source for their views of depravity of human nature, of the regenerating grace of God, and of the mysteries of predestination (P. Schaff: *Chrysostom and Augustine*, 151).

After his conversion Luther began his systematic study of Augustine at the University of Wittenberg. In 1515 he succeeded Staupitz and began expounding the Epistles of Paul and the Psalms, getting much assistance from the commentaries of Augustine. He started with the fact of man's sin. He believed it possible to be pardoned and to find fellowship with God through faith in His promises. He became convinced that men are redeemed not because of any merits of their own but through God's grace as revealed in Christ. The Scholastic theology based on Aristotle sufficed for Luther neither in content nor in

form of expression. By July 1516 he was openly teaching "our theology" based on Augustine and the Scriptures. He condemned the Scholastic theology, that it was Pelagian at heart and that it buried out of sight the Augustinian doctrine of grace (Lindsay : *History of the Reformation in Germany*, 207-12).

Calvin taught the Augustinianism common to all the Reformers, fundamentally as he had learned it from Luther, and in detail often as he had learned it from Martin Bucer (B. B. Warfield : *Calvin and Calvinism*, 22). He studied until "he knew the ancient Fathers as no one else in the century", for second-hand information could not satisfy Calvin (Lindsay : *History of the Reformation; in Lands beyond Germany*, 104). Luther's system was, in his maturer years, modified by humanism and, according to Windelband, "it is only in the doctrine of Calvin that the permanent influence of the great Church Father is shown" (*History of Philosophy*, 364).

In his *Institutes* Calvin often acknowledges his admiration for, and his dependence upon, Augustine. A survey of two fundamental themes in the *Institutes*, original sin and eternal election, reveals that Calvin was aware of his essential accord with the Bishop of Hippo.

I. DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN

Institutes, Bk. II, Ch. I, II, III

Augustine properly observes that pride was the first of all evils. (II, I, 4, translation by J. Allen, 6th ed., vol. I, p. 224.)

Therefore good men and beyond all others Augustine, have laboured to demonstrate that we are not corrupted by any adventitious means, but that we derive an innate depravity from our very birth. (II, I, 5, p. 226.)

Therefore as Augustine says, "Neither the guilty unbeliever, nor the justified believer, generates innocent, but guilty children, because the generation of both is corrupted from nature." (II, I, 7, p. 228.)

Although the Greeks, beyond all others, and among them particularly Chrysostom, have exceeded all bounds in extolling the ability of the human will, yet such are the variations, fluctuations, or obscurities of all the fathers, except Augustine, on this subject that scarcely anything certain can be concluded from their writings. (II, II, 4, p. 236.)

And, indeed, I much approve of that common observation which has been borrowed from Augustine, that the natural talents have been corrupted by sin, but that of the supernatural ones (faith and righteousness) he has been wholly deprived. (II, II, 12, p. 243.)

From these passages the reader will perceive that I am teaching no novel doctrine, but what was long ago advanced by Augustine, with the universal consent of pious men, and which for nearly a thousand years after was confined to the cloisters of the monks. (II, III, 5, p. 266.)

And as we are now engaged on the principal point of the argument, let us give the reader a summary of the doctrine, and prove it by a few very clear testimonies of Scripture . . . let us also show that the truth which we assert to be deduced from the Scripture is not destitute of the support of this holy man ; I mean Augustine. (II, III, 8, p. 269.)

2. DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL ELECTION

Institutes, Bk. III, Ch. XXI, XXII, XXIII

But, it will be said, Ambrose, Origen and Jerome believed that God dispenses His grace among men, according to His foreknowledge of the good use which every individual will make of it. Augustine was also once of the same sentiment ; but when he had made a greater proficiency in scriptural knowledge, he not only retracted but powerfully confuted it. (III, XXII, 8, translation by J. Allen, 6th ed., vol. II, p. 158.)

For it is judiciously remarked by Augustine, that we may safely follow the Scripture, which proceeds as with the pace of a mother. . . . (III, XXI, 5, p. 144.)

If I were inclined to compile a whole volume from Augustine, I could easily show my readers, that I need no word but his ; but I am unwilling to burden them with prolixity. . . . The observation of Augustine therefore remains true, " that the grace of God does not find men fit to be elected, but makes them so." (III, XXII, 8, p. 159.)

I say with Augustine, that the Lord created those whom he certainly foreknew, would fall into destruction, and that this was actually so because he willed it ; but of his will it belongs not to us to demand the reason, which we are incapable of comprehending. (II, XXIII, 5, p. 168.)

For as it belongs to his wisdom to foreknow everything future, so it belongs to his power to rule and govern all things by his hand. And this question also, as well as others, is judiciously discussed by Augustine. (III, XXIII, 7, p. 170.)

I shall not hesitate, therefore, to confess plainly with Augustine, " that the will of God is the necessity of things, and that what he has willed will necessarily come to pass ; as those things are really about to happen which he has foreseen." (III, XXIII, 8, p. 171.)

Wherefore there is great propriety in these observations of Augustine : " The whole mass of mankind having fallen into condemnation in the first man, the vessels that are formed from it to honour, are not vessels of personal righteousness, but of Divine mercy ; and the formation of others to dishonour, is to be attributed, not to iniquity, but to Divine decree." (III, XXIII, 9, p. 173.)

These observations I have faithfully borrowed from Augustine ; but as his words will perhaps have more authority than mine, I will proceed to an exact quotation from them. " If on hearing this some persons become torpid and slothful, and exchanging labour for lawless desire, pursue the various objects of concupiscence, must what is declared concerning the foreknowledge of God be therefore counted false ? . . . (III, XXIII, 13, p. 176.)

Again, " When he desires to bring men to himself, does he bind them by corporeal bonds ? He acts inwardly ; he inwardly seizes their hearts ; he inwardly moves their hearts and draws them by their wills, which he has wrought in them." But he (Augustine) immediately subjoins what must by no means be omitted : that because we do not know who belongs or who does not belong, to the number of the predestined, it becomes us affectionately to desire the salvation of all. . . . (III, XXIII, 14, p. 177.)

This passage (No man can come to me, except the Father draw him) is judiciously explained by Augustine in the following words. . . . (III, XXIV, 1, p. 179.)

To refute their cavil, I prefer Augustine's words to my own. (III, XXIV, 1, p. 180.)

Wherefore let us not hesitate to say with Augustine, "God could convert to good the will of the wicked, because he is omnipotent. It is evident that he could. Why, then, does he not? Because he would not. Why he would not, remains with himself." (III, XXIV, 13, p. 192.)

From such representative quotations it is evident that:—

1. Calvin put little confidence in the church fathers with the exception of Augustine.

2. Calvin quotes freely from Augustine. Of the fifty-nine pages devoted to the discussion of election in Chapters XXI, XXII, XXIII and XXIV of Book III of the *Institutes*, one-fifteenth is credited to Augustine.

3. Calvin very seldom criticizes Augustine and "faithfully borrows" from him and at times prefers Augustine's words to his own.

4. Calvin recognizes that many other passages from Augustine harmonize with his teaching.

5. Calvin recognizes that he is not teaching a new doctrine, but that it is supported by Augustine.

IX

THE IMMEDIATE CERTAINTY OF MAN'S EXPERIENCE

Shortly after his conversion Augustine wrote in his *Soliloquies*, "God and the soul, that is what I desire to know. Nothing more" (I, 7). And in the "immediate assurance of consciousness" he found "the source and warrant of truth" (Warfield: *Tertullian and Augustine*, 135). This "principle of the immediate certainty of inner experience" Augustine was the first to clearly formulate, and he made it the starting-point of his philosophy. This appreciation of the inner experience is revealed in his remarkable powers of self-observation and self-analysis and in his ability to bring to attention the deepest elements of feeling and impulse. Augustine takes up a suggestion from Greek literature and shows that even doubt itself demands the existence of the mind that doubts (Windelband: *History of Philosophy*, 267-8).

But since we treat of the nature of the mind, let us remove from our consideration all knowledge which is received from without through the senses of the body ; and attend more carefully to the position which we have laid down, that all minds know and are certain concerning themselves. . . . Yet whoever doubts that he himself lives, and remembers, and understands, and wills, and thinks, and knows and judges ? Seeing that if he doubts, he lives ; if he doubts, he remembers why he doubts ; if he doubts, he understands that he doubts ; if he doubts, he wishes to be certain ; if he doubts, he thinks ; if he doubts, he knows that he does not know ; if he doubts, he judges that he ought not to assert rashly. Whoever therefore doubts about anything else, ought not to doubt of all these things ; which if they were not, he would not be able to doubt of anything. (*The Trinity*, X, 10, 14, *N.P.N.F.*, vol. III, p. 141.)

Thus Augustine reasoned that doubt not only demands the existence of the mind, but also brings us to the presence of the criterion of certitude. In his treatise on *The True Religion*, 39, 72, he urges the truth-seeker, "do not go outside yourself, but return within yourself, for in the inner man truth dwells" (*noli foras ire, in te ipsum redi, in interiore homine habitat veritas*). By demonstrating that man is in possession of such an intellectual capacity and of such an absolute criterion of truth in the immediate certainty of his mental activity, Augustine lays the rational foundation of a positive Christian conviction. This experience is possible because God not only created the soul, but He also sustains man, He produces in man's mind these capacities and criteria, and also is the indispensable light by which he perceives truth (Warfield : *Tertullian and Augustine*, 143-4).

As Bavink so aptly states, "Augustine discovered reality within himself" for "the self-certainty of man had been lost in the scepticism of Greek philosophy. But when the Christian religion revealed to us the greatness of God's heart, and in the dayspring from on high visited us with His tender mercy, it at the same time cast its light on man and on the riches and value of his soul. It imparted to him a new certainty, the certainty of faith ; it restored to him his confidence in God and therewith his confidence in himself. And by the light of revelation Augustine descended deep into his own inner life ; forgetting nature, he desired to know naught else but God and himself. . . . Augustine went back behind thought to the essence of the soul, and found in it not a simple unity, but a marvellously rich totality ; he found there the ideas ; the norms, the laws of the true and the good, the solution of the problem of the certainty of knowledge, of the cause of all things, of the supreme good" (Herman Bavink : *Philosophy of Revelation*, 63-4).

Thus Augustine demonstrated the immediate certainty of selfhood, cast light upon the riches of man's soul, "laid the foundations of a positive Christian conviction", and made evident the interdependence of psychology and theology. If one would know God he must look deeply into the mysteries of his own soul, and in turn if one knows God his psychological investigation may have a depth and thoroughness otherwise impossible.

To determine the extent of Augustine's contribution in each of these fields would be most tedious and difficult. Others laboured and he entered into their labours, and in turn his ideas have been developed and applied by others. At each crisis and at each advance the church has leaned heavily upon Augustine. He was among the first in approving the canon of the Bible, and was the first in stating reasons for the selection made. He formulated the doctrine of the Trinity so thoroughly that only one significant contribution has since been made, Calvin's re-assertion and defence of self-existence for the Son (B. B. Warfield: *Trinity* in *I.S.B.E.*, vol. V, p. 302a). In his writings are found both the material and the suggestion for the ontological argument for the being of God. Both Scholasticism and Mysticism found in Augustine their inspiration and their strength. Roman Catholic and Protestant alike hold him in high esteem for the doctrinal development that proceeds from him. The former group emphasizes his doctrine of the church, the latter his doctrine of grace. Moreover, Augustine showed that the knowledge of God and the knowledge of man are inseparable. Such are some of the contributions of the Bishop of Hippo to Christian thought. Freely Augustine received, freely Augustine gave.

WALTER VAN SAUN.

Hope College, Holland, Michigan, U.S.A.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alfaric, P., *L'Evolution Intellectuelle de Saint Augustin*, Paris, 1918.
 Allen, A. V. G., *Continuity of Christian Thought*, Boston, 1894.
 Anselm, *Monologium*, translated by Deane, S. N., Chicago.
 Augustine, in *Nicene Post Nicene Fathers*, series 1, edited by Schaff, Buffalo, 1886.
 Augustine, in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol. lxiii., Vindebonne, 1922. His early philosophical treatises.
 Bavink, Herman, *Philosophy of Revelation*, New York, 1909.
 Briggs, J. S., *Canon of the New Testament in I.S.B.E.*
 Caird, E., *Evolution of Religion*, Glasgow, 1904.
 Calvin, John, *Institutes*, translation by J. Allen, 6th edition.

- Eucken, R., *The Problem of Human Experience*, translation by Hough and Gibson, New York, 1912.
- Harnack, Adolph, *Augustins' Confessionen*, Giessen, 1888.
- Harnack, Adolph, *History of Dogma*, translation by Buchanan, Boston, 1910.
- Hessen, J., *Der augustinische Gottesbeweis historisch und systematisch dargestellt*, Munster, 1920.
- Joyce, G. H., "Trinity" in *Catholic Enc.*
- Kuyper, A., *The Holy Spirit*, translation by De Vries, New York, 1910.
- Lindsay, T. M., *History of Reformation*, New York, 1916.
- Loofs, F., *Augustine in New Schaff Herzog Religious Enc.*
- McKeon, R., *Selections from Medieval Philosophers*, New York, 1929.
- Orr, J., *Progress of Dogma*, New York, 1897.
- Portalie, *Augustine in Catholic Encyclopedia.*
- Rauschen, G., *Grundriss der Patrologie: Die Schriften der Kirchenväter und ihr Lebrgehalt.* Freiburg in Breisgau, 1926.
- Schaff, P., *History of the Christian Church*, vol. iii., New York, 1914.
- Schaff, P., *St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine.*
- Souter, A., *Text and Canon of the New Testament*, New York, 1913.
- Tolley, W. P., *The Idea of God in the Philosophy of Saint Augustine*, New York, 1930.
- Vega, A. C., *Kavanagh, Saint Augustine His Philosophy*, Philadelphia, 1931.
- Warfield, B. B., *Trinity in Hastings Enc. of Religion and Ethics.*
- Warfield, B. B., *Studies in Tertullian and Augustine*, New York, 1930.
- Warfield, B. B., *Calvin and Calvinism.*
- Watson, J., *Philosophical Basis of Religion*, Glasgow, 1907.