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AUGUSTINE'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION: PART 2 (Augustine's Pastoral Activity)

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ABSTRACT

This study is part of a study on Augustine on his exegesis. Some of the arguments in his pastoral activity was used in a research entitled: "Student's Shady Loves and their Climactic Awareness on Transformation from Carnals to Spiritual." On Augustine pedagogy of conversion, he sees Christ's death as an allusion in the model of courage. Christ's humility nullifies human pride. His undeserved death on the Cross was for the remission of the physical punishment of Adam's sin. In his later treatise, he affirms Christ's life, death and resurrection as the effective means to overcome habitual sins such as the psychological root of pride. Year 392, he used language of sacrifice and redemption in his homily seeing sin as purely volitional, the cross as the model of courage and humility and Christ's death as a sacrifice for sin. He called the Lord Redeemer because he bought back all souls. Two prices were paid. "Pleasure and guilty death, on the one hand, suffering and innocent death, on the other hand." Christ's Cross was the payment of the human debt to God. Year 396, Augustine presents the Cross as the source of the movement of operative grace. In the Confessions, there are four references to the death of Christ. First, (Confessions 4.12.19) Human person's/Augustine's too much materialistic desire as a means of happiness in the land of death. Second, Augustine's sickness in Rome. Augustine thought that his sins were not forgiven even though Christ died on the Cross (Confessions 5.9.2). Later, this made Augustine think that bodily suffering and death were essential to blot out his sins. Third, Augustine's idea of redemption is strong. Finally, Augustine needs an Intercessor to reconcile him to God (Confessions 9.13.35). Augustine believes that Jesus paid the price of redemption with his blood (Confessions X.X1.iii.68).

The configuration here involves an exploration of Augustine's pastoral activity focusing on Augustine's achievements in his priestly ministry and the episcopate stressing the grave controversies such as the Manichean controversy, the Donatist controversy, and the Pelagian controversy. It will also depict Augustine's productive monumental work as bishop.

KEYWORDS: Pastoral, Conversion, Ministry, Episcopate

St. Augustine (354 –430)¹

Aurelius Augustine was born on November 13, 354 at Tagaste in the Roman province of Numidia Proconsularis now known as the French province of Algeria (near Carthage in North Africa). Punic language lingered in the province influencing a vernacular basis of African nationalism since the province was governed by ancient Carthage. His father, Patricius, was a jovial, sensual, and a passionate person. He was a pagan administrator but with small means. His mother, Monica, was a model of Christian motherhood and exemplary virtues. She was a Christian by parentage, conviction and disposition.

He was attracted as a youth first to the Manichean religion, a variation of the Zoroastrianism that had spread through the Roman Empire, and later to the mysticism of the neo-Platonists, whose influence is discernible throughout his writings. After being educated both in Carthage and Rome, he took a position in Milan as a professor of rhetoric. There he came under the influence of St. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, who succeeded in leading him into the Christian fold. After his conversion, Augustine devoted the remainder of his life to the strengthening of the church, especially in North Africa. In 395, he was appointed bishop of a busy seaport (French port of Bona), Hippo, now Annaba in Algeria (near Carthage), a post he retained until his death (AD 354). In spite of his heavy clerical duties he wrote voluminously, authoring 113 books, 218 letters, and approximately 7,000 sermons, particularly in philosophy and theology. His literary output covers the entire sphere of human thought and ranges from the psychological complexity of the confessions, to the political insights of the *City of God*, to the stridently polemical.

Augustine was a man of vital personality, with an abounding gift of self-expression. He knew the depths of the soul and he could articulate its secrets. The following saying of St. Augustine shows who the man “Augustine” is.

“Thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless until it find rest in thee.”

The “*Cor inquietum*” or the restless heart symbolizes Augustine’s desire for God. This moved Augustine to explore and seek God, in whom alone his spirit can find rest.

Augustine’s writings, successful preaching, tireless activity against the heretics, and an indefatigable pen finally ceased its work when the Vandal Gaiseric started a Teutonic conquest besieging the city in 430. The dying Augustine leaves the Church three great treasures: his books, his

clergy, and his monasteries. Augustine died on August 28, 430.

St. Augustine is probably the greatest of all the Christian philosophers and theologians. He was especially concerned with the combating of the three great heresies:

- a) **Pelagianism** – heresy originating in the 5th Cent. It derived its name from the British Monk Pelagius (355-425). Pelagianism is a series of heretical propositions concerning grace, ultimately denying both the supernatural order and the necessity of grace for salvation. Among its other tenets were: Adam still would have died even if he had not sinned; the fall of Adam injured only Adam and not the entire human race; a new-born child is in the same state as Adam prior to the fall; the human race will not die as a result of Adam’s sin, but it will not rise on the last day because of Christ’s redemption; the law of the Jews (or Israel) will permit individuals to reach heaven in the same day as the Gospel. He believed that Augustine’s positions of grace being dependent upon the divine will was incorrect and gave humanity no personal reason to avoid sin. Instead, he argued that humans were responsible for their own actions. Augustine disagreed with Pelagius concept of an individual’s essentially good moral nature and his understanding of the person as a free and autonomous individual who can achieve sanctity through unaided human effort.
- b) **Donatism** – Schismatic sect that originated in North Africa during the early 4th cent. The Donatist’s derived their name from Donatus, the 2nd schismatic bishop of Carthage. The members of the Donatist sect originated out of the rigorists within the African Christian community, who were opposed to the so-called traitors, those Christians who had handed over the Scriptures to Roman officials during the terrible persecutions under Emperor Diocletian. Their focus became centered on Caecilian, bishop of Carthage, who was consecrated in 311 by *Felix of Aptunga*. The rigorists refused to accept Caecilian on the grounds that Felix had been a traitor, thereby making him no longer able to administer the sacraments validly. For Augustine, the true minister of the sacraments is Christ and thus the unworthiness of any other minister does not in any way affect the efficacy of a sacrament.

- c) **Manichaeism** – religious sect founded by a Persian named Mani or Manes in the 3rd cent. Augustine was a member for 9 years. The followers of Mani believed that there was an eternal struggle between good and evil, between darkness and light. When darkness intruded upon the realm of the light, there occurred an intermingling of the mortal with the divine, a mixture trapped in matter. The light was found in the brain. Humanity was to practice strict asceticism in order to begin the process of releasing the trapped light. Those who became hearers hoped to achieve rebirth as the elect, those blessed few who had overcome the need for the transmigration of the soul. Jesus, they felt, was the Son of God, but he had come to earth to save his own soul because of Adam. Jesus, Buddha, and other holy figures were sent to help humanity in attaining spiritual freedom.

Augustine's Contributions

1. Augustine is considered as the greatest and foremost of the Fathers:
 - a. Augustine's teaching marks a distinct epoch in the history of Christian thought and opens a new phase in the unfolding of the church.
 - b. Down the centuries Popes praised his wisdom and depended on his teachings. As a humble and unobtrusive teacher, he does not feel superior to others. He considered truth as a good common to all. He constraints himself to a simple statement of his own excruciating experiences.
2. Augustine is a "world historical figure" whose legacy is a fundamental feature of both ancient and modern civilization: Link between ancient and modern civilization.
 - a. He gathers and condenses on his writings the intellectual treasures of the ancient world and transmits them to the new generations anchoring between ancient heritage and modern civilization.
 - b. He analyzes, classifies, combines and synthesized the vast contributions of the primitive world/primitive Christianity to nurture the growth and structure of the movements of his own age consciousness by leaving his own stamp upon them.
3. Inspirer of religious thought.
 - a. With Augustine the center of dogmatic and theological development shifted, moving from the East to the West. The practical, realistic spirit of the Latin race

- supplants the speculative idealistic spirits of the East and Greece.
- b. Augustine was the inspiration of Scholastics and Mysticism: From Gregory the Great to the Fathers of Trent, his theological authority, unquestionably the highest, dominates all thinkers. The representation of scholasticism – Anselm, Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, and the representatives of mysticism – Bernard, Hugh of St. Victor, and Tauler – both appealed to his authority, nourished themselves upon his writings and were penetrated with his spirit.
 - c. Modern trends of thought depended on him for truth and profound religious sentiment.
 - d. Councils have drawn extensively on the teaching of Augustine.
 - e. The history of Augustinianism is coextensive with the history of Western thought in its philosophy, spirituality and its political thought.
 - f. Great thinkers turned extensively to Augustine as the highest possible authority in teaching. Even Thomas Aquinas is a disciple of Augustine in the field of theology, philosophy, spirituality and political thought.
 - g. The presence of Augustinian motifs and the influence of Augustinian thought are remarkable in idealism, existentialism and spiritualism. It is more evident in spirituality from the "Devotio Moderna" movement to St. Teresa of Avila, St. Francis de Sales, etc.
 - h. The emphatic and constant appeal to his authority by thinkers exhibit the presence and perennial fruitfulness of his teaching.
 - i. Augustine was a philosopher, theologian, a master of spiritual life, mystic, pastor, poet and a controversialist. He has the depth of metaphysical intuition, rich abundance of theological proofs, synthetic power and energy, psychological depth in spiritual ascents, and a wealth of imagination, sensibility and mystical fervor.
 - j. As a great theologian of the Trinity, of redemption, of Christ, and of history, he is the developer of scholarly theological method, who continues an ardent desire for understanding with a firm adherence to the authority of the faith, a keen sense of mastery which constant subordination of knowledge to love. He has profound

- religious experience that teaches us to pray, communicates a passionate love, and speaks words of hope.
- k. Augustine's relevance is his ecumenical indispensability. His synthesis acknowledges the doctrinal points that unite all Christians.
4. Augustine leads in the unfolding of dogmas.
 - a. The entire Christian dogma is indebted to Augustine for new paradigms, which better, justify and explicate revelation, for new perspectives of the greater clarity and precision such as the fall, the atonement, grace and predestination.
 - b. He was the first person in the consciousness of the Church to advance anthropological and soteriological doctrines with clarity and conciseness.
 - c. The Augustine of Christian philosophy: of the interior and eternal summons us to the interior life and offers a ground for transcendence; of the person as "a deep abyss" and image of God, who receives from God gifts of being, knowledge, and love that can be preserved only in God; of human beings as weak sinners who long for freedom and salvation that Christ alone can give them; of the relationship between time and eternity, reason and faith, nature and grace, etc.
 - d. He is not only the Doctor of Grace; he is also the Doctor of the Church. He is the Doctor of the Good and the Doctor of Charity.
 - e. Theology is indebted to him for a host of concise formula.
 - f. His extensive system on doctrines such as grace, original sin, and the fall would serve as the impetus for a host of theologians and interpreters.
 - g. He is considered a pivotal figure in the history of Christian thought chiefly for his immense role in reconciling Platonism with Christianity.
 - h. His philosophical outlook is thus essentially Platonic. He advances the notion of eternal truths that correspond to Plato's subsistent ideas, but for Augustine, since truths subsist in the intellect; therefore, eternal truths must subsist in the intellect of God. The pursuit of these truths is the ultimate pursuit of the person. The central motivation, though, is not reason, but love, which forms the central basis of life. The object of desire is the blessed life of the Christian in finding God.

Philosophy to Augustine is insufficient in itself in discovering this blessed life. It does offer to the Christian a means to improve the understanding of the faith and hence is a positive asset in the rational approach to the love of God. In his book *The Confession* Augustine considers man as the *great mystery*. The place of rationalism is clear in the famous maxim *Credo ut intelligam* ("I believe in order to understand"), an expression of the preeminence given by Augustine to faith over reason.

St. Augustine is directly concerned with ethical questions. It is apparent that his religious beliefs shaped his thought. First, he inquired in the fashion of Aristotle, concerning the chief or highest good of human life, which we ordinarily call happiness. He rejects the body as the basis of this good, arguing instead that it must be an attribute of the soul. Then, through a series of steps, he reaches the conclusion that this good is virtue, which the soul attains through seeking and following God.

St. Augustine also confronts a question with which Christian philosophers have struggled ever since he raised it. If God created the universe and everything in it and God is both omnipotent and perfect, why does evil exist? Many answers have been given to this question that of St. Augustine is one of the most ingenious.

The Controversial Writings of Saint Augustine

Augustine's controversial works are the following: Confessions, 397, Retractions, 427-8, contra Academicos, 386, De Vita Beata, 386, Soliloquia, 387, De Musica, 387-9, De Magistro, 389, De Anima et Ejus Origine, 419, De Doctrina Christiana, 397, De Civitate Dei, 413-26, Enchiridion, or De Fide, 421, De Vera Religione, 390, De Genesi ad Literam, 401-15, enarrationes in Psalmos, De Consensu Evangelistarum, etc.

The Writings of Saint Augustine

The writings of Saint Augustine are divided into nine classes:

1. Autobiography and correspondence
 - a. Confessions
 - b. Division
 - c. Judgment
 - d. Retractions
 - e. Letters
2. Philosophy and liberal arts
 - a. Against the Academics
 - b. On the Happy Life
 - c. On Order
 - d. Soliloquies
 - e. Apocryphal works
 - f. On the Immortality of the Soul
 - g. On the Quantity of the soul

- h. On the teacher
- i. An encyclopedia of the liberal arts
- j. On Music
3. General apologetics and polemics against the infidels
 - a. On the city of God
 - b. On the True Religion
 - c. On the advantage of Believing
 - d. On Faith in things Unseen
 - e. On the divination of Demons
 - f. Six Questions against the Pagans
 - g. Letters 118
 - h. Treatise against the Jews
4. Polemics against the heretics
 - 1) History of heresies
 - a. On Heresies
 - 2) Against the Manicheans
 - b. On the Morals of the Catholic church and the Moral of the Manicheans
 - c. On Two Souls
 - d. Disputation against Fortunatus
 - e. Against Adimantus
 - f. Against a Letter of the Manicheans
 - g. On Freedom of choice
 - h. Against Faustus
 - i. Proceedings with Felix the Manichean
 - j. On the Nature of Good
 - k. Against Secundinus
 - l. Against the Priscillianists and the followers of Origen
 - m. Against an Adversary of the Law and the Prophets.
 - 3) Against the Donatists
 - n. Psalm against the Donatists
 - o. Against the Letter of Parmenianus
 - p. On Baptism against the Donatists
 - q. Against the Letter of Petilianus
 - r. Letter to the Catholics against the Donatists
 - s. Against Cresconius, the Donatist Grammarian
 - t. On single Baptism
 - u. Letter 108 to Macrobius
 - v. Resume of a conference with the Donatists
 - w. To the Donatists after the conference
 - x. The discussion with Emeritus (Proceedings with Emeritus)
 - y. Against Gaudentius
 - 4) Against the Pelagians
 - a). Against Pelagius and Coelistus
 1. On the Punishment and Remissions of Sins
 2. On the spirit and the Letter
 3. On Nature and Grace
 4. On the Perfection of Justice
 5. On the Deeds of Pelagius
 6. Letter 186 to Paulinus of Nola
 7. On the Grace of Christ and Original Sin
 8. Letter 194 to Sixtus
 9. On the Soul and its Origin
 - b). Against Julian of Eclanum
 1. On Marriage and Concupiscence
 2. Against Two Pelagian Letters
 3. Against Julian the Defender of the Pelagian Heresy
 4. Incomplete Work against Julian
 - c). Against the Semipelagians
 1. On Grace and Freedom of Choice
 2. On Punishment and Grace
 3. Letter 217 to Vitalis of Carthage
 4. On the Predestination of the Saints
 5. On the gift of Perseverance
 - 3). Against Arianism
 - a. Against an Arian Sermon
 - b. Conference with Maximinus (Against Maximinus)
5. Scriptural exegesis
 - a. Theory of Exegesis
 - a) On Christian Doctrine
 - b. Commentaries on the Old Testament
 - a) On Genesis against the Manicheans
 - b) Incomplete Literal Commentary of Genesis
 - c) Literal Commentary on Genesis
 - d) Expressions in the Heptateuch
 - e) Questions on the Heptateuch
 - f) Notes on Job
 - g) Discourses on the Psalms
 - c. Writings on the Gospels
 - a) On the Agreement of the Evangelists
 - b) Questions on the Gospels
 - c) On our Lord's Sermon on the Mount
 - d) Commentary on the Gospel of St. John
 - e) Commentary on the First Epistle of St. John
 - d. On the Epistles of St. Paul
 - a) Explanation of some Questions from Romans
 - b) Partial Explanation of the Epistle to the Romans
 - c) Explanation of the Epistle to the Galatians
 - e. Scriptural Analecta
 - a) The Mirror of Scripture
6. Dogmatic and Moral Exposition
 - a. General Exposition of the Faith
 - 1) On the Christian Struggle

- 2) Enchiridion
- b. Various Questions or Collections
 - 1) On Eighty-three Different Questions
 - 2) On Various Questions for Simplicianus
 - 3) On Eight Questions of Dulcitius
- c. Particular dogmatic Questions
 - 1) On the Trinity
 - 2) Letter 120 to Consentius
 - 3) On Faith and Works
- d. Moral or Ascetical Questions
 - 1) On Lying
 - 2) Against Lying
 - 3) On Continence
 - 4) On Conjugal Good
 - 5) On Holy Virginitiy
 - 6) On the Good of Widowhood
 - 7) On Adulterous Marriages
 - 8) On Patience
 - 9) On the Care to be shown the Dead
 - 10) On the labor of the Monks
7. Pastoral theology and preaching
 - a. On Catechizing the Uneducated
 - b. Sermons
8. Apocryphal works
 - 1) Letters
 - a. Letter to Demetrias
 - b. Rule for Monks
 - c. Letter to Probus
 - d. Correspondence with Count Boniface
 - e. Correspondence between Augustine and Cyril of Jerusalem
 - 2) Philosophy
 - a. On the spirit and the Soul
 - 3) Apologetics against the Infidels
 - a. Treatise against five Heresies
 - b. Sermon on the Creed against the Jews, Pagans, and Arians
 - c. Dispute between the church and the synagogue
 - 4) Apologetics against the Heretics
 - a. Against the Manicheans
 1. On the Faith against the Manicheans
 2. Warning how one should deal with Converted Manicheans
 - b. Against the Donatists
 1. Sermon on Rusticianus the Subdeacon
 2. Against Fulgentius
 3. Testimonies of Faith against the Donatists
 - c. Against the Pelagians
 1. Hypomnesticon against the Pelagians and Coelestians
 2. On Predestination and Grace
 3. Booklet on Predestination
 - d. Against the Arians
 1. Discussion of Augustine with Pascentius
 2. Against Felicianus
 3. On the Trinity and Unity of God
 - e. Exegesis
 1. On the Marvels of Holy Scripture
 2. On the Blessings of the Patriarch Jacob
 3. Questions on the Old and New Testaments
 4. Seventeen Questions on Matthew
 5. Psalter for His Mother
 6. Explanation of the Magnificat
 - f. Dogmatic or Moral Exposition
 1. On Faith to Peter
 2. On the Dogmas of the Church
 3. On the Incarnation of the Word
 4. On the Essence of the divinity
 5. On the Unity of the Holy Trinity
 6. Questions on the Trinity and on Genesis
 7. Dialogue of Sixty-five Questions
 8. Book of Twenty-one Sentences
 9. On Antichrist
 10. On the Assumption
 11. On the Christian Life
 12. On True and False Penance
 13. Book of Exhortation
 14. On the Knowledge of the True Life
 15. On Friendship
 16. On the Eremitical Life
 17. Mirror
 18. Mirror of the sinner
 19. Book on Loving god
 20. Soliloquies, Meditations, Manual
 21. On the Triple Dwelling
 22. On Contrition of Heart
 23. Ladder of Paradise
 24. On the Seven Vices and gifts
 25. On the Conflict of the Vices and Virtues
 26. On the Twelve Degrees of Abuses
 27. On Sobriety and Chastity
 28. On Visiting the Sick
 - g. Preaching

1. Sermons to the Brethren in the Desert
 2. Various sermons or parts of sermons collected by the Benedictines
 3. On the series of eleven sermons edited among the opuscles (the Creed, Sermon of the Creed against the Jews, Pagans, and Arians, On Christian discipline, On the New chant – baptism, On Wednesday, On the Cataclysm, and On the Barbaric Age, etc.)
 4. Sermon 351 (recognized as authentic by the Benedictines)
9. Lost writings
- a. Philosophical and Literary works
 - 1) On the fitting and Beautiful
 - 2) Great Study on the Liberal Arts
 - b. Anti-Donatist Writings
 - 1) Against the Donatists
 - 2) Against the Assertions of Centurius
 - 3) Proofs and Witnesses against the Donatists
 - 4) Against the Donatist
 - 5) Warning of the Donatists
 - 6) On the Maximinianists
 - 7) To Emeritus
 - 8) Against Primianus
 - 9) On surrendering the Scriptures in Persecution
 - 10) On Baptism
 - c. Various subjects
 - 1) Book Against Hilary
 - 2) The Answer to the Objections of Hilary
 - 3) Explanation of the epistle of St. James
 - 4) Possidius, Cave, and Schonemann
 1. Against the Pagans
 2. Exhortation to the Pagans
 3. On Spiritual Sacrifices
 4. On the Lord's Day
 5. Various treatises against the Arians
 6. On Charity

Augustine as Presbyter of Hippo (391-396)²

Augustine returned to Milan. He attended the baptismal catechesis, participated in the liturgical celebrations, meditated and visited the monastery of Ambrose.

Augustine was baptized on April 24-25, 387 at Hippo Regius (an ancient and wealthy Numidian

City). He continued his scholarly and apostolic activity. Monica died before November 13, 388. There are essential points in Augustine's program: poverty, common life, asceticism, study and apostolate. Augustine was reluctant in becoming a priest for two considerations: first, the responsibility of the priesthood, which he considered the most difficult, laborious and dangerous office. Second, monastic ideals.

Augustine was commissioned by Bishop Valerius (a Greek by birth who spoke Latin poorly) the *traditio symboli*: to expound the gospel and to preach in his presence in Bona. Augustine was directed to the task of Christian exegesis. He was set to endeavor in his life long task of justification and interpretation of the Christian faith. As a consequence of the example, zeal and stimulus of the newly ordained Augustine, his monastery, the first in Africa, became a training school for clergy and supplied learned and devout priests. The example of monastic life spread rapidly. He fostered, defended and organized monastic life.

He composed a rule for his monastery, dedicated without reservation to the ascetic life and diffuses it throughout the African churches. It became the great storehouse of energy for pastoral activity. His life and brother clerics adhered to vow of poverty (construed as the surrender of all property, as a completely common life, as trust in God and joy in possessing him alone), fellowship (the daily exercise of solidarity and charity, i.e., mutual help and support, trust, and avoidance of expenses, ill will, etc.), moderation and was inspired by the first Christian community in Jerusalem (A 2:42). This entire way of life wherein poverty was marked by dignity and moderation by joy, in addition to its ascetico-mystical and apostolic goal, a social purpose, viz, to lessen the needs of other members. The key word is "fellow poor" or "one of Christ's heart brethren."

Portalie³ listed Augustine's achievements in his five-year period of priestly ministry:

1. The office of preaching "the traditio symboli" was entrusted to Augustine.
2. Augustine fought against heresies especially Manichaeism and tireless victorious debates against the Donatist became known both in Africa and abroad. August 392, he held a successful public discussion for two days with Fortunatus, a Manichean Presbyter. He confronted the Donatist controversy, first, by writing to a neighboring bishop of that sect to remonstrate with him for rebaptizing about 394. He composed an acrostic song in refutation of the

sect (394: *Psalmus contra Partem Donati*), and a tract, *Contra Epistolam Donati*. He also wrote a group of exegetical works “An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount.” He began a continuous commentary on the epistle. He wrote other books that were remarkable for the suppression of the philosophical form of the elder works by biblical, and to a great extent Pauline, categories. The philosophical substratum of Platonism remains, but Augustine is now a biblical and ecclesiastical theologian.

3. Augustine’s writings and participation by giving a discourse in the Plenary Council of Africa in October 393. Augustine preached to them *De fide et Symbolo*. A council was held at Carthage in 394. To refute the Manichean controversy, he wrote *De Utilitate Credendi*, *De Beatus Animabus*, a tract against Manichean Adimantus, and *De Genesi ad Literam*.
4. He abolished the abuse of holding banquets in the chapels of the martyrs. This is evident in his correspondence with Aurelius, the new bishop of Carthage [Confessions V.ii).
5. It was as a presbyter that he completed his three books *De Libro Arbitrio*: they were directed against the Manichean theory of origin of evil and vindicate the moral responsibility of man against the theory of a physical principle of evil.
6. The Pelagians appealed against Augustine’s doctrine of irresistible grace. Augustine refuted such anticipation.
7. Of personal interest, Augustine corresponded with Saintly Paulinus of Nola, to whom he sent the books on “Free Will.” He also corresponded with Jerome.

The Episcopate⁴

The old and infirm Valerius marked out Augustine as his successor by inducing Megalium of Calama (bishop senior by consecration in Numidia) to consecrate Augustine as his co-adjutor with right of succession. Megalium personally objected, but subsequently withdrew. Augustine’s consecration occurred between Ascension of 395 and August of 397. He was an extraordinary person: a

contemplative by inclination and a bishop by obedience.

He found his office a burden, a sarcina. He never liked it, but accepted it out of love. He called himself “A servant of Christ and, in his name, a servant of his servants.” His motto was: “to rule is to be useful” (*prae esse est prodesse*). For Augustine, the word bishop entails a responsibility, not an honor. The theme of service was the root of his Episcopal spirituality. To rule is to serve. The exercise of a bishop’s office does not depend on man’s moral qualities. His own Episcopal consecration was an opportunity to remind himself of the burdensome accountability he carries to ask the faithful for assistance of their prayer and obedience.

A bishop’s duties is a configuration of preaching, catechesis, administration of the sacraments, care of the poor, the defense of the lowly, aged and the underage, the stewardship of the church’s goods, the task of defending the integrity of the faith against heresy, the unity of the church against schism, and the administration of justice demanding time (to sit hour after hour in court, listening, admonishing, and discretion making), dedication and energy.

The episcopate, for Augustine, was not something desirable in itself, but as a change to be accepted as manifestation of love for Christ. This love must be humble, disinterested, and generous.

Concerning preaching, he preached not only in Hippo but also in all the Churches of Africa to which he was invited. He preached twice a week on Saturday and Sunday. He also preached frequently, often for five days in succession. He spent five years as a priest and thirty-four years as a bishop. The sum total of his sermons was exemplary. The sermons fall into three categories: commentaries on the Gospels and the first letter of John, commentaries on the Psalms and other sermons on the commentaries on Scripture, sermons on the liturgical seasons, and occasional sermons. Augustine found preaching very fatiguing (because of the physical effort it demanded) and at a constant grief because it prevented him from devoting himself to studies.

Grave controversies, and productive monumental works occupied Augustine’s episcopate. As a bishop (about 397-400):

1. The Episcopal residence of Hippo became a nursery of founders with monasteries and bishops for the sees of the neighboring dioceses.
2. Augustine merited the title of the patriarch of the religious life and the reformer of clerical life in Africa.
3. He won others by example. His exemplary virtues such as extreme poverty and

simplicity, excessive austerity of life, and charity inspired the sale of the sacred vessels to ransom captives. He had a hospital and five churches erected.

4. He was a pastor of soul and the defender of truth. His activity in defense of orthodoxy range over every field.
5. He preached the word of God with such evident charity that he won souls. Augustine delivered about 7,000 sermons. His sermons disclose several genres: 205 *Enarrationes in Psalmos* as conferences, 124 tractates on the Gospel of Saint John and 10 tractates on the Epistle of Saint John as exegetical commentary, and more than 540 popular sermons. Augustine's *Indiculum Librorum* was compiled and copies of the sermons were sent to those requesting them. Fleeing African bishops from Vandals brought his sermons in Europe, Italy, South-Gaul, and Spain. In Campania Quodvultdeus (+454) was the greatest advocate of Augustine's sermons, initiating even Augustine's style of preaching. Fulgentius of Ruspe (+527/533) delivered Augustine's sermons in his letters. Cassiodorus (+ 580) also cited Augustine's sermons in his letters. The spread of Augustine's sermons was due to Caesarius of Arles (+452) who distributed Augustine's sermons to be read in the Gallic churches.
6. His correspondence carried replies to questions concerning problems on a world-wide scale.
7. He offered directions to the different African councils in which he took part: Carthage (398, 401, 407, 419) and Milevis (416, 418).
8. Augustine unceasingly fought against every sort of error. These struggles would be an endless task.

The Manichean Controversy⁵

1. Augustine wrote two books: "The Value of Belief" and "The two souls" directed against the Manichean rationalism: the human being has two souls, one good and one evil, which are at odds with one another.
2. The controversial writings of Adimantus attacking the Law and the Prophets. Augustine replied in his sermons.
3. He refuted the letter of Mani known as "The foundation."
4. About 400 he refuted, in thirty-three short books, a treatise by his old Manichean friend, Faustus, a Manichean bishop.
5. Augustine wrote a book on The Nature of the good directed against the Manicheans demonstrating that God is immutable by his

nature. He is the Supreme good and from him proceeds all things, corporeal and spiritual. And that these are good to the extent that they are.

6. He outgrew a controversy with Manichean "auditor" Secundianus. Augustine wrote "Against Secundianus." It is a comprehensive treatise on the creation of the world from nothing, on the divinity of Christ and our adoption through grace, on the nature and origin of evil, on marriage, and on freedom.
7. December 7 and 12, 404 [Retr. 11.viii]] he held a public argumentation with a Manichean Felix. The outcome was the short tract *De natura Bona*. Felix acknowledged defeat and became a catholic.
8. Augustine struggled with the Manicheans for sixteen years of sleepless labor in defense of the catholic faith.
9. Augustine wrote against heretics the tracts *Fundamenti* and *De Agone Christiano*.
10. He defended the faith and struggled not only with the Manicheans but also with the Donatist, Arians, Pagans and Pelagians.

Augustine's objections with the Manicheans:⁶

His criticism was directed at the major metaphysical, moral, scriptural, and methodological errors that Manicheans promulgated harshly against the Catholic Church.

The Donatist Controversy⁷

The Donatist struggle unceasingly pressed upon him for twenty years of his episcopate. The schism existed since about 311, when Caecilianus was elected bishop of Carthage. Felix of Aptunga, his consecrator, was alleged to have been a traitor, i.e., given up sacred books during persecution. This vitiated his power to give valid orders. To communicate with an offender is to take part in his offense and Felix's offense cut him off from the Church.

Like Cyprian, the opponents of Caecilianus rejected the validity of any sacrament conferred outside the church. There are two principles involved:

1. The old Cyprianic negation of the validity of the Sacraments conferred by heretical.
2. The nullity of sacraments performed by unworthy ministers.

The Principal landmarks in the contention were:

1. The appeal to Constantine by the Donatists which generated an adverse discretions of the councils of Rome (313) and Arles (314).

2. The consecration of Majorinus as bishop of Carthage in opposition to Caecilianus (311) who died in 315 and was succeeded by Donatus.
3. Imperial persecution of the Donatists, first by Constantine in 316 and then, after an attempt to bribe the Donatists into submission (340), a ruthless suppression by Constans in 347.
4. Return of the Donatist under Julian. In 361 Julian repealed his predecessor's measures against the Donatist, and during his brief reign they exercised a violent supremacy in Africa.

Augustine's first endeavored on responding to the Donatist by writing, "Psalm against the Donatist Party." It teaches the history of Donatism to illiterate people and explicates the errors of the Donatist.

Augustine refuted a letter of Donatus, schismatic bishop of Carthage. He wrote a long letter to the Donatist bishop of Siniti, who was accused of rebaptizing a catholic deacon. Around 397 he wrote two books entitled "Against the Donatist Party." From 400 to 406, he wrote nine books as a reply to all writings emanating from the adversary: those of bishops Parmenian of Carthage and Petilian of Cirta, of Cresconius the grammarian, and of anonymous other Donatists.

Augustine wrote a book on the One Baptism, against Petilian. He also wrote a fundamental work: the seven books on Baptism, against the Donatists, and several writings such as Proofs and Testimonies against the Donatists, against an anonymous Donatist, and Admonition to the Donatists regarding the Maximinians.

After being consecrated a bishop, Augustine wrote to Proculeianus (his Donatist counterpart in Hippo), Crispinus (Donatist bishop of Calama) and bishop Honoratus. Augustine wrote a short summary of the Acts of the Conference of Carthage, a lengthy book written to the Donatists. In briefer form he wrote a synodal letter addressed to the Donatists in the name of Catholic Bishops who gathered in Council at Zerta on June 14, 412.

Augustine then addressed a book to Emeritus, a Donatist bishop. He also wrote a handbook for Count Boniface on "The Correction of the Donatists synthesizing the history of Donatism.

Later, in 418 he went to Caesaria in Mauretania at the request of Pope Zosimus. He spoke to the people on the unity of the Church and held public debate with Donatist bishop Emeritus.

In 420-21 he wrote two books against Gaudentius, Donatist bishop of Thamugadi. The response to Gaudentius marked the end of Augustine's antiDonatist endeavors.

The Donatist controversy was a domestic dispute between two Christian churches on the aspects of the nature and structure of the church. Here were two churches, united in their acceptance of the Scriptures, the creed, and the sacraments, but profoundly divided on relevant issues concerning the sacraments and the church.

The Donatist agreed that baptism administered in the church is the sacrament of salvation and that sacred ordination gives its recipient a share in the hierarchic ministry of the church. But they made the validity of the sacraments depend on the ecclesial holiness of the minister. Augustine accepted as valid both the baptisms and the ordinations conferred by the Donatists as brothers and sisters.

Augustine taught that:

The sacraments of the Church are Christ's sacraments. He instituted them; they are administered in his name and by his authority. Because they belong to him and not to Donatus they imprint a character; it is through his merits that they are what they are. "Baptism is baptism not by the merits of those who administer it, but by reason of the holiness and truth it has from him who instituted it. Christ is the primary minister of Baptism. Therefore, "when Peter baptizes, it is Christ who baptizes; when Paul baptizes, it is Christ who baptizes; when Judas baptizes, it is Christ who baptizes." For this reason the Catholic Church does not rebaptize anyone already baptized, no matter where or by whom. It does not rebaptize lest it cancel out "the inscribed name of the commander," "the seal of the king." Rather it respects the name inscribed, approves it, and declares it its own. It combats and seeks to remove only error and division, so that what was formerly an occasion of condemnation may become a source of salvation."

St. Augustine further taught that:

"The church is the mystical body of Christ, and the Holy Spirit is the soul of this body. Just as the soul gives life only to those members that that are part of the body, so the Holy Spirit gives life only to those who belong to the mystical body of Christ, which is the Church."

The Pelagian Controversy⁸

There are three points to consider:

1. Pelagius and his disciple Caelestius – marked by calm and affirmative theological exposition.
2. Julian – marked by inflamed polemics.

3. The Monks of Hadrumetum and Marseilles – marked by clarifications within the household of the Church.

Augustine's first endeavored to write a book entitled "The Merits of forgiveness of sins." It contains the first biblical theology of redemption and original sin. In response to Marcellinus, he wrote "The Spirit and the Letter."

Around 415, he wrote "Nature and Grace" as a reply to Pelagius nature. He also wrote Perfect Justice as a reply to the Definitions of Caelestius, disciple of Pelagius. In this Augustine's anthropology, he exhibited that Christian perfection can in fact never be perfect in this world, since the divine command that we love god with our whole heart is an ideal to which we aspire, not a goal we actually reach.

Pelagius was accused of heresy and tried by the Synod of Diospolis, but acquitted by fourteen bishops of the synod. Augustine examined the acts of the synod. Then, he wrote a book entitled "The Acts of Pelagius" addressed to Aurelius, bishop of Carthage. The condemnation followed after. The condemnation was confirmed by Innocent's successor, Pope Zosimus. After the renewed condemnation, three aristocrats: Albina, Pinian, and Melania asked Augustine to write a work denouncing the deception practiced by Pelagius. Augustine wrote "The Grace of Christ and original sin." Pelagius talked of grace, but he meant freedom and law. Pelagius and Caelestius negated original sin. The controversy was now marked by bitterness lasting a long time.

Julian and eighteen other bishops negated to subscribe to the "Tractoria" of Zosimus. Pope Boniface asked Augustine again to reply to the two letters/accusations. Augustine wrote four books, against the two letters of the Pelagians. He also wrote another book entitled "Marriage and Desire" at the request of Count Valerius of the Court of Ravenna. This writing was the threshold of an endless debate. Julian wrote four books. Augustine replied by writing a 2nd book to his "Marriage and Desire."

In 421, Augustine writes a fuller and more careful reply. The consequence was the six books of his work against Julian. Julian's reply to Augustine's 2nd book of "Marriage and Desire" was writing four books dedicated to Florus. As a reply, Augustine wrote six books.

Augustine considered Pelagianism to be a form of arrogant naturalism. It declined original sin and the necessity of grace. It asserted on human sinlessness and autonomy before God. Hence, it stripped all meaning from the Cross of Christ and the idea of our redemption.

The error of the Pelagians was their one-sidedness: they affirmed the goodness of nature and the power of freedom, but they denied the necessity of redemption and the efficacy of grace.

Augustine's goal was to bring home the doctrine of redemption by presenting that Christ is essentially a redeemer, and conclude that those who have no need of redemption do not belong to Christ. Redemption is universal in scope: it has been accomplished by Christ in behalf of all human beings, even those who are in fact lost, even Judas. The universality of redemption is an irrefutable argument for the universality of the fall.

Redemption does not consist solely in the examination of virtue that Christ has given. It is also a composite of ransom, reconciliation, and liberation. It was accomplished by the sacrifice of the cross, which was a proper, freely offered, and perfect sacrifice.

Augustine also accentuated on freedom and grace. Without freedom there is no human dignity; without grace there is no salvation. Grace does not deny freedom (freedom from sin, freedom from inclination to sin, freedom from death, and freedom from time), but is rather its source. For Augustine, the entire history of salvation is a history of freedom.

Other Dogmatic errors of the Pelagians⁹

The Council of Carthage in 411 condemned Coelestius errors on the following:

1. Adam was created mortal. This is a denial of the supernatural elevation of the first man. Hence, there existed neither original justice nor the preternatural privileges which flowed from it.
2. The sin of Adam injured himself alone, not the human race. This is a denial of original sin.
3. Infants today are born in the state in which Adam was before his fall. This is a mixture of two errors. Death, concupiscence, etc. are not the result of Adam's sin, but the original condition of humanity.
4. Adam by his death (or by his sin) does not subject the whole human race to death/ Christ by his resurrection does not give anyone immortality of the body nor does He give to all life of the soul, but only those who believed and are converted.
5. Infants who die without baptism enjoy eternal life.
6. Man can live without sin and observe the commandments easily.

Pelagianism's Fundamental Idea:¹⁰

1. Not solely a denial of the supernatural – Pelagianism is a naturalism which excludes supernatural elevation, divine adoption, the fall, all merit of a higher order, but which admits that the will depends on the divine government. Pelagius exaggerated the powers of freedom of choice.
2. Basic error: absolute independence of human liberty in relationship to God and its unlimited power for good as well as for evil.
3. Omnipotence of free choice – this is the result of emancipation. The Pelagians damned for all eternity every Christian guilty of the slightest venial sin. For a lie, an idle word, one ceases to be just and becomes a reprobate and a sinner, worthy of hell.

NOTES

¹The entire chapter 1 is taken from Eugene Portalie, **A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine** with an introduction by Vernon Bourke. Trans. By Ralph Bastian (Chicago, H. Regnery, 1960). **Writings of St. Augustine**, entire chapter IV, 39-77. Neoplatonic influences, entire chapter VI, 95-104. Eugene TeSelle, **Augustine the Theologian** (London: Burns and Oates, 1970). Agostino Trape, **Saint Augustine: man, pastor, mystic** (New York: Catholic Book Publishing, 1986).

²Eugene Portalie, **A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine**. With an Introduction by Vernon Bourke. Trans. By Ralph Bastian (Chicago, H. Regnery, 1960), 81-88. Agostino Trape, **Saint Augustine: man, pastor, mystic** (New York: Catholic Book Publishing, 1986), 333-337

³ Eugene Portalie, **A Guide to the thought of St. Augustine**, Intro. Bourke, Trans. Bastian (Chicago: H. Regnery, 1960), 20-21

⁴Agostino Trape, **St. Augustine: man, pastor, mystic** (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1986), chapter 21, 143-156. Eugene Portalie, **A Guide to the thought of St. Augustine**, Intro. Bourke, Trans. Bastian (Chicago: H. Regnery, 1960), 22-35 esp. 22-23. See Schrama's "Prima Lectio Quae Recitata Est. The Liturgical Pericope in Light of St. Augustine's Sermons" in **Augustiniana**, Annus 45, Fasc. 1-2 (1995), 141-168 esp. 141-147.

⁵Ibid., Trape, **St. Augustine**, 157-182. Portalie, **A Guide to the thought of St. Augustine**, esp. 23-24. Henry Chadwick, "Confessions in Augustine" in **Augustine** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid. Portalie, **A Guide to the Thought of St. Augustine**, 24-29. Trape, **St. Augustine**, 183-196 esp. 184-192.

⁸Ibid. Trape, **St. Augustine**, 197-210. Portalie, **A Guide to the Thought of St. Augustine**, esp. 29-37, 184-229.

⁹Ibid. Portalie, esp. 29-30.

¹⁰Ibid.