

THE DOCTRINES OF SALVATION (SIN AND GRACE)
Part II: The Theologians (Augustine)

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I. INTRODUCTION.

It was in the Age of the Theologians (A.D. 300–600), most particularly in the life and writings of Augustine, that the doctrines of “Sin and Grace” received their most intense study and delineation. Augustine’s views were developed by A.D. 395, years before Pelagius reacted against them as he taught in Rome after 407. Pelagius took offense at Augustine’s famous dictum, “Lord command what thy willest and will what they commandest,” and taught his equally famous dictum, “If I ought I can.”

The purpose of this lesson shall be to understand the views of Pelagius and Augustine in their doctrines of “sin and grace,” as well as to conceive the history of the controversy that the differing views occasioned.

N.B. Basic questions that should be answered:

1. What was the nature of Adam’s sin, spiritual death, and its impact on his descendants?
2. How is it that sin and guilt are passed on to the human race?
3. Is mankind spiritually sick, dead, or healthy?
4. How does this relate to the freedom of the will and ongoing salvation? It seems that with Augustine, perseverance will mean the regenerate can choose the good which gives evidence of salvation.
5. What are key Scriptures referred to and how are they interpreted?
6. What is the background role of previous philosophical and religious ideology?

II. THE CLASH BETWEEN PELAGIUS AND AUGUSTINE.

A. The Major Figures.

1. Pelagius (ca. 354–ca. 424)

a) His Early Years (ca. 354–380)

Of the early life of Pelagius, little is known of certainty. His birth date is uncertain and most agree that he was of British origins (Pelagius Brito). His character, in contrast to Augustine's, shows no signs of having passed through any serious moral crises in its development, rather "he led a silent life in the midst of studies and monastic asceticism" (Neander, *History*. 2, 633). Apparently, he was a man of clear intellect, mild disposition, learned culture, and high moral integrity.

In stature, Pelagius is reported to have been an imposing figure. Wiggers said (*Augustinianism and Pelagianism*, 44), "He bore himself erect, and did not neglect his dress." Jerome said that he "has the build and the strength of a wrestler and he is nicely stout" (quoted in Evans, *Inquiries*, 35).

Pelagius was a monk (not a monastic or hermit) with enormous learning (Antiochene). He was fluent in both Latin and Greek and linguistically superior to Augustine, his most formidable opponent.

- b) His Life in Rome (ca. 380–409). The New Catholic Encyclopedia states (9, 58): "He became a highly regarded spiritual director for both clergy and laity. His followers were few but influential, and this rigorous asceticism was a reproach to the spiritual sloth of many of their fellow Catholics." Between 385–398, it is likely that he traveled in the East. He did befriend Rufinus (Antiochian), Paulinus of Nola, Sulpicus Severus, and Coelestius (a lawyer).
- c) His Life in Africa (ca. 409–12). Pelagius attempted to meet with Augustine.
- d) His Life in Palestine (ca. 412–18). Pelagius befriended John of Jerusalem, but was condemned by Pope Innocent I in 417. Emperor Honorius upheld Innocent's condemnation and ordered him banished from the empire.
- e) His Life Upon Leaving Palestine (ca. 418–24). Little is known of Pelagius after 418, except a notice in 424 by Augustine.

2. **Augustine of Hippo (354–430).** Aurelius Augustine was born in Tagaste, North Africa, on 13 November 354 of the now-famous St. Monica. After a lustful pursuit of peace, he turned to religion (Manicheanism in 373, Neoplatinism in 382), but found frustration. Due to illness, the rhetoric teacher went to Rome, then to Milan where he met Ambrose. After rejecting the gospel initially and struggling with a continued illness, he came to Christ in 387. In 391, he became a priest and, in 395, the Bishop of Hippo. He remained in his office, writing voluminously, until 430 as the Vandals stood at the gates of his city. Most of his writings were after 400, thus after the period of his eschatological shift from premillennialism to amillennialism.

During Augustine’s ministry he dealt with three major doctrinal controversies: the Manichaean Controversy, the Donatist Controversy, and the Pelagian Controversy. The Donatist Controversy focused on doctrines of ecclesiology but also impacted Augustine’s views on eschatology. This shift in his eschatology in turn impacted his soteriology and must therefore be briefly surveyed to understand the context of his soteriology.

- a. **The Manichean Debate:** Augustine was born to a pagan father and Christian mother, Monica. Loosely raised a Christian, he rejected Christianity in adolescence and by 18 he became a devotee of Manichaeism for the next decade. Following this he was enamored with neo-Platonism.

1. After his conversion to Christianity, during his early years as a priest he wrote several tracts against the Manicheans including the anti-Manichaean *Confessions*. However, Manichaeism and neo-Platonism still influenced his theology.

The *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* notes:

“Augustine nevertheless remained influenced by Mani’s contention that unregenerate humanity lacks free will to perform any good action, and the proposition that sexuality exercises a downward pull on the soul (common to Mani and the Platonists) was important to Augustine both in his ascetic ideals and in his articulation of the doctrine of ‘original sin.’”

Regarding this influence the *Dictionary of Historical Theology* (p. 44) makes this helpful assessment:

“Against the Manichean teaching that sin is involuntary and due to human embodiment, Augustine’s earliest writings

defend the traditional Christian teaching on the freedom of the human will (*On Free Will*, books 1 and 2). From 396 on, however, his understanding of human freedom, of God's salvific will, and of God's dealing with humankind changed. (The occasion for the change may have been a challenge from the Manicheans to explain why God had chosen Jacob, but not Esau.) Beginning with the second part of his reply To Simplicianum, Augustine taught that, while God gives grace to all, the human will is so vitiated by Adam's sin that humankind is incapable, without divine compulsion, of accepting that grace and turning to God. It is only those God wishes to save who are given that compelling or irresistible grace, *gratia congruens*. Those not predestined to be saved will inevitably refuse the less forceful grace given them. Augustine's conviction that the human will is totally vitiated was based on his belief that humankind inherits not only the results of Adam's sin (as traditionally taught) but Adam's guilt as well. The exegetical basis of this conviction was a misreading of the *eph hō pantes hēmarton* of Romans 5:12 as 'in whom all sinned' rather than 'in that all sinned' (RSV). It is probable that other factors as well contributed to his increasingly pessimistic outlook. Even western churches which have not accepted Augustine's teaching of double predestination (it was rejected as early as 529 at the Second Council of Orange) have not totally escaped his bleak understanding of Christian anthropology."

2. When in Rome I 387–388 Augustine began a treatise *De libero arbitrio voluntatis* (*On the Freedom of the Will*) which he did not complete until ca. 395. In this work he refutes the external determinism of Manichaeism. His argument is summarized well by Peter Brown (148).

"For, previously, he had taken up his stand on the freedom of the will; his criticism of Manichaeism had been a typical philosopher's criticism of determinism generally. It was a matter of common sense that men were responsible for their actions; they could not be held responsible if their wills were not free; therefore, their wills could not be thought of as being determined by some external forces, in this case, by the Manichaean 'Power of Darkness.' ... [This] committed Augustine, in theory at least, to the absolute self-determination of the will; it implied an 'ease of action', a *facilitas*, that would hardly convince such somber observers of the human condition as the Manichees.

At this time, indeed, Augustine was, on paper, more Pelagian than Pelagius: Pelagius will even quote from Augustine's book *On Free Will* in support of his own views."

In the Introduction to the Hackett Classics Kindle version of *On Free Choice*, translated by Thomas Williams, the translator writes:

"The view that human beings have metaphysical freedom is called 'libertarianism'. Libertarianism is no longer a popular view among philosophers, most of whom think that at best we have only physical freedom. But Augustine was one of the great defenders of libertarianism; indeed, he was the first to articulate the view clearly."

He clearly argues that Augustine in the early years was not a determinist. Kenneth M. Wilson (*Augustine's Conversion from Traditional Free Choice to "Non-free Free Will"*) presents an overwhelming case that the latter Augustine's determinism was based on his return to Neo-platonic and Manichaean determinism. Thus, his views on Sin and Grace were in opposition to those of the early church fathers prior to A.D. 400 and introduced the basic elements of what was later described as Dortian Calvinism.

Luther, who was a monk in the Augustinian order, and Calvin who was educated at the Sorbonne (University of Paris), an Augustinian school, acquired Augustine's determinism which shaped their presuppositions on sovereignty, human freedom, and grace. Thus, to understand the issues as they were shaped following the Reformation, the student should carefully work through Dr. Wilson's material. An abridged version may be available through Kindle. Along with this the second chapter of Fred Chay, ed., *A Defense of Free Grace Theology with Respect to Saving Faith, Perseverance, and Assurance*,¹ chapter 2: A Theological and Historical Investigation, along with the two part article by Dr David R Anderson, The Soteriological Impact Of Augustine's Change From Premillennialism To Amillennialism: Part One and Part Two (see handout uploaded to EdBrite) originally published in *The Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*, 15:1 (Spr 02).

b. The Donatist Controversy

¹ Fred Chay, ed., *A Defense of Free Grace Theology: With Respect to Saving Faith, Perseverance, and Assurance* (Houston, TX: Grace Theology Press, 2017), iii.

1. Augustine and Chiliasm

The Donatists were a group who claimed superiority to the Catholic Church because they refused to accept the validity of church sacraments or ministry from those who had once recanted their faith under persecution. Thus, they claimed the moral and spiritual high ground and refused to recognize the salvation or legitimacy of those who had succumbed under threat of persecution to burn their Bibles. The Donatists honored their martyred dead with drunken feasts.

The Donatists were also premillennial, a position also held by Augustine. However, their concept of a materialistic millennial complete with revelries and parties led him, out of his neo-platonic asceticism, to reject millennialism altogether.

In conjunction with this, Augustine was influenced by the hyper typology of Tyconius which bordered on the allegorical method of Origen, to reinterpret the imagery and numbers in Revelation.

According to Paula Fredriksen,

“. . . it is Tyconius who stands at the source of a radical transformation of African—and thus, ultimately, of Latin—theology, and whose reinterpretation of his culture’s separatist and millenarian traditions provided the point of departure for what is most brilliant and idiosyncratic in Augustine’s own theology. And it is Tyconius, most precisely, whose own reading of John’s Apocalypse determined the Western church’s exegesis for the next eight hundred years. (Paula Fredriksen, “Apocalypse and Redemption in Early Christianity,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 45 (1991): 157)

2. Impact on Augustine’s Soteriology

Having rejected chiliasm, Augustine was logically consistent in his reinterpretation of the Olivet Discourse. In his Soteriology he showed the influence of the fatalism of the Manichaeans.

a. Augustine had a poor grasp of Greek and translated *dikaioo* as to make righteous rather than to declare righteous. Thus, for Augustine and his followers in the Roman Catholic Church a person gradually become righteous and could be both righteous and a sinner at the

same time. This doctrine was not recovered until the Reformation.

b. In his early years Augustine, consistent with his premillennialism, understood “saved” in Matt. 24:13 to be saved from physical destruction; the context for him was the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

“ ‘And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.’ . . . If, saith He, the war of the Romans against the city had prevailed further, all the Jews had perished (for by ‘no flesh’ here, He meaneth no Jewish flesh), . . . But whom doth He here mean by the elect? The believers that were shut up in the midst of them. For that Jews may not say that because of the gospel, and the worship of Christ, these ills took place, He showeth, that so far from the believers being the cause, if it had not been for them, all had perished utterly. For if God had permitted the war to be protracted, not so much as a remnant of the Jews had remained, but lest those of them who had become believers should perish together with the unbelieving Jews, He quickly put down the fighting, and gave an end to the war. Therefore He saith, ‘But for the elect’s sake they shall be shortened.’ ” (*Homily, 14*)

c. Following his shift to amillennialism, Augustine consistently interprets “saved” in Matt. 24:13 to be salvation to eternal life. Regarding the centrality of Augustine’s misinterpretation Anderson notes:

“For Augustine Matt. 24:13 becomes the *sine qua non* of eternal salvation. One can genuinely believe, but not be elect: ‘It is, indeed, to be wondered at, and greatly to be wondered at, that to some of His own children—whom He has regenerated in Christ—to whom He has given faith, hope, and love, God does not give perseverance also . . .’ One can be regenerated, but not be elect: ‘Some are regenerated, but not elect, since they do not persevere; . . .’ The only way to validate one’s election was to persevere until the end of his physical life on earth. This was the ultimate sign of the elect.” (David Anderson, “The Soteriological

Impact of Augustine's Change From
Premillennialism to Amillennialism: Part One"
JOTGES, 15:1; 31).

- d. This resulted in Augustine's belief that no one could be assured of being elect in this life. This doctrine later influences the Reformers and their view of perseverance.

For more on the issue of total depravity/inability, please study: George E. Meisinger, "[The Issue of One's Ability to Believe: Total Depravity/ Inability.](#)"²

B. The Historical Controversy.

It is advantageous, before we compare their theological views, to grasp the ongoing theological clash between these two men.

1. **The Setting for the Clash.** While teaching in Rome, Pelagius penned an Exposition of Paul's Epistles (A.D. 405), the basic explanation of his views. He left Rome for Africa via Sicily in 409 as Alaric, king of the Goths, was about to pillage the city. The basic cause for this was a reading in Augustine's *Confessions*, that "Give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt." Pelagius believed this destroyed human volition and blurred the majesty of God. He penned a counter, *On Nature*.
2. **The Initial Confrontation with Augustine.** Pelagius arrived in Africa to meet Augustine with Coelestius at Hippo, but Augustine was at Carthage disputing with the Donatists. Pelagius' letter to Augustine received a courteous reply expressing his regrets at not meeting. Unfortunately, they never met. Augustine saw to Pelagius' condemnation at the provincial synod in Carthage twice (416, 418).
3. **The Actual Theological Clash**
 - a) In 415 Augustine penned a work against Pelagius entitled "*On Nature and Grace.*"
 - b) Also, in 415 Augustine sent Orosius, a young Spanish presbyter, to Palestine to subvert Pelagius' influence. Orosius got John of Jerusalem to call a synod, but Pelagius was acquitted largely due to the unfamiliarity of the East with the issues or Augustine's writings.

² George E. Meisinger, "[The Issue of One's Ability to Believe: Total Depravity/ Inability.](#)" *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal Volume 11* 11, no. 1 (2005): 65.

In December, 415, a second synod was held at Diospolis (Lydda) in which Pelagius was again acquitted due to the failure of accusers to present the charges because of illness, linguistic inability of those presiding, Pelagius' ability, and his disavowal of Coelestius' views. Augustine commented that he was acquitted either by a "lying condemnation or a tricky interpretation."

- c) In 416, Augustine had Pelagius and Coelestius condemned at two local synods (Carthage, Mileve). North African bishops wrote to Innocent I, bishop of Rome, to mediate and resolve the dividing East-West issue.
- d) In 417, Innocent condemned Pelagius and Coelestius, but the bishop's untimely death brought Zosimus to Rome. Zosimus, after Coelestius appeared in Rome, to plead his case, reversed the decision reproving the North African bishops.
- e) In 418, the African bishops appealed to Emperor Honorius who supported them banishing Pelagius and Coelestius. In the same year (March) Zosimus capitulated to the imperial decree and issued his famous "Epistola Tractoria" which reversed his decision based upon "mature consideration." As a result, all bishops were required to subscribe to the doctrine of the African bishops as set forth by a Synod of Carthage on 1 May 418.
- f) In 431, at the Third Ecumenical Council held in Ephesus, Pelagius' views were universally condemned by the church. Bishop Celestine of Rome supported the condemnation of Nestorius (the East plagued with Christological problems) in turn for bishop Cyril of Alexandria's support in the condemnation of Pelagius (West labored in anthropological-soteriological problems). The *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia* stated (1783-84): "While the Eastern Church engaged all her energies in the elaboration of the doctrines of the Trinity and incarnation, and the demonstration of the supernatural character of Christianity as a fact in the objective world, it fell to the lot of the Western Church to take up the doctrines of sin and grace, and demonstrate the supernatural character of Christianity as an agency in the subjective world. Not that those ideas were altogether wanting in the Eastern Church, but they were only partially developed. The problem was then and there to burst the bounds of Pagan naturalism and rise to the higher level of spiritual morality. Both in the contest between the Greek philosophy and the old mythological spirit, and in the contest between Christianity and Gnosticism, the issue at stake was to make a definite

distinction between nature and morality, to disentangle man from all his improper complications with nature, to make him feel himself an independent moral centre, to place him as a free, responsible personality in his relation to God. Hence the constant and strong emphasis which all the Greek Fathers, from Origen to Chrysostom, lay on human freedom.”

Warfield (Reformed theologian) adds (4): “All the elements of the composite doctrine of man were everywhere confessed. But they were variously emphasized, according to the temper of the writers of the controversial demands of the times. Such a state of affairs, however, was an invitation to heresy, and a prophecy of controversy; just as the simultaneous confession of the Unity of God and the Deity of Christ, or of the Deity and the Humanity of Christ, inevitably carried in its train a series of heresies and controversies, until the definitions of the doctrines of the Trinity and of the Person of Christ were complete. In like manner, it was inevitable that sooner or later some one should arise who would throw so one-sided a stress upon one element or the other of the Church’s teaching as to salvation . . . the emphasis that he laid on free will than in the fact that, in order to emphasize free will, he denied the ruin of the race and the necessity of grace. This was not only new in Christianity; it was even anti-Christian. . . . The struggle with Pelagianism was thus in reality a struggle for the very foundations of Christianity.”

III. THE THEOLOGICAL OPINIONS OF PELAGIUS.

The sum of Pelagius’ teaching is not the freedom of the will, indeed this is actually a byproduct of his foundational assumptions concerning the sin nature and the sinfulness of man. Thus, the central and formative principle of Pelagianism said Warfield, (6) [is]: “in the assumption of the plenary ability of man; his ability to do all that righteousness can demand—to work out not only his own salvation, but also his own perfection. This is the core of the whole theory; and all the other postulates not only depend upon it, but arise out of it. Both chronologically and logically this is the root of the system.”

An introductory summary of Pelagius-Coelestius’ views are given by Augustine as he commented on the Synod of Palestine held by John of Jerusalem in 415 (*On Original Sin*, 12): “The synod said: Now, forasmuch as Pelagius has pronounced his anathema on this uncertain utterance of folly, rightly replying that a man by God’s help and grace is able to live *anamartetos*, that is to say, without sin, let him give us his answer on other articles also. Another particular in the teaching of Coelestius, disciple of Pelagius, selected from the heads which were mentioned and heard at Carthage before the holy Aurelius bishop of Carthage, and other bishops, was to this effect: ‘That Adam was made mortal, and that

he would have died, whether he sinned or did not sin; that Adam's sin injured himself alone, and not the human race; that the law no less than the gospel leads us to the kingdom; that before the coming of Christ there were persons without sin; that new-born infants are in the same condition that Adam was before the transgression; that, on the one hand, the entire human race does not die on account of Adam's death and transgression, nor, on the other hand, does the whole human race rise again through the resurrection of Christ; that the holy bishop Augustine wrote a book in answer to his followers in Sicily, on articles which were subjoined, and in this book, which was addressed to Hilary, are contained the following statements: That a man is able to be without sin if he wishes; that infants, even if they are unbaptized, have eternal life; that rich men, even if they are baptized, unless they renounce and give up all, have, whatever good they may seem to have done, nothing of it reckoned unto them, neither can they possess the kingdom of heaven.' Pelagius then said: 'As regards man's ability to be without sin, my opinion has been already spoken. With respect, however, to the allegation that there were even before the Lord's coming persons who lived without sin, we also on our part say, that before the coming of Christ there certainly were persons who passed their lives in holiness and righteousness, according to the accounts which have been handed down to us in the Holy Scriptures. As for the other points, indeed, even on their own showing, they are not of a character which obliges me to be answerable for them; but yet, for the satisfaction of the sacred Synod, I anathematize those who either now hold or have ever held these opinions.' ”

The three principal corollaries of Pelagius' system are its denial of an Adamic fall, original sin, and unmerited, unassisted grace. These heretical views, along with Pelagius' rejection of a substitutionary atonement for sin is admitted by both sides of the Calvinist-Arminian debate.

A. Pelagius on Original Sin

N.B. The description of Pelagius' opinions will be largely taken from G. F. Wiggers' *Augustinism and Pelagianism* (66-316).

1. Summary. “According to the Pelagian doctrine, there is absolutely no original sin, i.e., no sin which passes, by generation, from the first man to his posterity, and of which they have to bear the punishment. Hence man is born in the same state, in respect to his moral nature, in which Adam was created by God.”
2. Propositions
 - a) “A propagation of sin by generation, is by no means to be admitted. This physical propagation of sin, can be admitted only when we grant the propagation of the soul by generation. But this is a heretical error. Consequently there is no original sin; and nothing in the moral nature of man has been corrupted by Adam's sin.”

- b) “Adam’s transgression was imputed to himself, but not to his posterity. A reckoning of Adam’s sin as that of his posterity, would conflict with the divine rectitude. Hence bodily death is no punishment of Adam’s imputed sin, but a necessity of nature”.
- c) “As sin itself has no more passed over to Adam’s posterity than has the punishment of sin, so every man, in respect to his moral nature, is born in just the same state in which Adam was first created.”

3. Scriptural Support

- a) “Romans 5:12. In this verse, Pelagius took ‘death’ not with Augustine for bodily death, but for spiritual, or the moral ruin which came into the world by the example and imitation of Adam’s sin. Sin, and moral death with sin, came into the world by Adam, for Adam gave the first example or form of sin, which did not there exist before him. So moral corruption came upon all, with the exception of a few righteous, because all sinned after the example of Adam. The phrase, ‘in whom all have sinned,’ he explained thus, ‘In as much as all have sinned, they sin by Adam’s example.’ The sense of the whole passage (Romans 5:12ff), therefore, according to Pelagius, was that by one man sin has come into the world, and moral ruin with sin, so moral corruption has come to all, because all have sinned after Adam’s example. Pelagius’ interpretation of Romans 5:12 means that men are justified by their own voluntary action just as they come under condemnation by their own voluntary sin.”
- b) “1 Corinthians 15:21. Pelagius explained this verse by saying that as death came into the world by Adam because he died first, so the resurrection by Christ, because he has risen first. As the former is the pattern of those that die, so is the latter of the resurrection.”
- c) “Ephesians 2:3. On this verse Pelagius refers the phrase ‘we were by nature children of wrath,’ to ‘the custom of paternal tradition,’ so that all appeared to be born to condemnation. POINT. In this manner, Pelagius knew how, by this exegesis, to dispose of the sin propagated from Adam by generation, and to argue against it and Augustine’s interpretation of the same passages.”

B. Pelagius on Free Will

“With the doctrine of original sin, the doctrine of man’s freewill stands in the closest connection. As the Pelagians admitted no original sin, but maintained that every man, as to his moral condition, is born in just the same state in which Adam was created, they had also to admit, that man, in his present state, has the power to do good. And this they actually taught.”

1. Pelagius
 - a) “All men are governed by their own will, and each one is left to his own inclination.”
 - b) “We are born capable of good and of evil; and as we are created without virtue, so are we without vice” (cf. Augustine, *On Original Sin*).
 - c) “God has imparted to us the capacity of doing evil, merely that we may perform his will by our own will. The very ability to do evil, is therefore a good.”
2. Coelestius. “Apparently Coelestius did not show himself so fully on man’s freewill as Pelagius. But, that he also received the doctrine, may be presumed, partly because he denied original sin, and partly because he declared in his confession of faith (cf. Augustine’s *On Original Sin*), that sin is not a trespass of nature, but of will; and it was also adduced at the Synod of Diospolis, as a proposition of Coelestius, that it depends on the free will of every one, whether to do or not to do a thing.”

C. Pelagius on Grace

1. “Free will is a gracious gift of God, by which man is in a condition to do good from his own power, without special divine aid. This, according to a later technical expression, may be called ‘creating grace.’ Grace in the wider sense.”
2. “This gracious gift, all men possess, Christians, Jews, and heathen. But that man may the more easily perform good, He gave him the law, by which knowledge is more easily gained, and the reasons why he should do thus and not otherwise, become the more manifest to him. For this purpose, He gave him the instructions and example of Jesus, and for this He aids Christians further by supernatural influence. This is ‘illuminating grace;’ and in reference merely to supernatural influence, ‘co-operating grace;’ grace in the more restricted and the most restricted sense.”

3. “He, to whom this grace is imparted, can do more than they who do not receive it. By it, he more easily reaches a higher step than he would have reached by his own power.”
4. “The supernatural influence of gracious operations, however, is imparted only to him who merits it by the faithful application of his own power.”
5. “The supernatural operations of grace, do not relate immediately to the will of man, but to his understanding. This becomes enlightened by those operations; and thus also the will is indirectly inclined to do what the understanding has perceived as good.”
6. “These gracious operations do not put forth their influence in an irresistible manner (this would be determinism); but the man can resist them. There is therefore no ‘irresistible grace.’ ”
7. “It is also grace, that God remits to the sinner the punishment of his past transgressions. And so is baptism to be called grace, by which Christians become partakers of the benefits of Christianity and a higher salvation.”

D. Pelagius on Predestination

Pelagius bases the decree of election and reprobation upon prescience (foresight). Those of whom God foresaw that they would keep His commandments, He predestinated to salvation; all others to damnation. But for him, this is a foresight of meritorious action, foresight of doing “good.” Augustine argued for Pelagius (*Predestination of the Saints*. 18): “Do you not see that my desire was, without any prejudgment of the hidden counsel of God, and of other reasons, to say what might seem sufficient about Christ’s foreknowledge, to convince the unbelief of the pagans who had brought forward this question? For what is more true than that Christ foreknew who should believe on Him, and at what times and places they should believe? But whether by the preaching of Christ to themselves by themselves they were to have faith, or whether they would receive it by God’s gift—that is, whether God only foreknew them, or also predestinated them, I did not at that time think it necessary, to inquire or to discuss. Therefore what I said, ‘that Christ willed to appear to men at that time, and that His doctrine should be preached among them when He knew, and where He knew, that there were those who would believe on Him,’ may also thus be said, ‘That Christ willed to appear to men at that time, and that His gospel should be preached among those, whom He knew, and where He knew, that there were those who had been elected in Himself before the foundation of the world.’ But since, if it were so said, it would make the reader desirous of asking about those things which now by the warning of Pelagian errors must of necessity be discussed with greater copiousness and care, it seemed to me that what at that time was sufficient should be briefly said, leaving to one side, as I said, the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God, and

without prejudging other reasons, concerning which I thought that we might more fittingly argue, not then, but at some other time.”

Schaff's (who is Calvinistic) summary is perhaps valuable (*History*. 3, 78): “The Pelagian controversy turns upon the mighty antithesis of sin and grace. It embraces the whole cycle of doctrine respecting the ethical and religious relation of man to God, and includes, therefore, the doctrines of human freedom, of the primitive state, of the fall, of regeneration and conversion, of the eternal purpose of redemption, and of the nature and operation of the grace of God. It comes at last to the question, whether redemption is chiefly a work of God or of man; whether redemption man needs to be born anew, or merely improved.”

IV. THE THEOLOGICAL OPINIONS OF AUGUSTINE.

Introduction to Augustine's views on Grace and Free will

The following is taken from the material in Wilson, Chapter 5, p 131ff, “C. The Pre-Pelagian Years 406-411 CE

Until 406 Augustine still held to traditional free will that anyone could trust in Christ without a prior regeneration or gift of faith.

Regarding the first work, *Quaestiones expositae contra paganos VI (ep.102)*

Wilson summarizes, “Holy Scripture stands sufficient to expose the foolishness of pagan idolatry... ‘The will’ still provides the power for piety and religion (*ep. 102.20*). In an analogy (*ep.102.14*), Augustine discusses: 1) the innate ability of persons to believe Pythagoras's doctrine, 2.) hypothesizes Pythagoras has foreknowledge revealing himself only to those who would believe, and, 3.) then applies this to Christ. Therefore, Christ only refused to reveal Himself to those whom He foreknew would not believe His words or miracles. These persons were not incapable but ‘would not’ and ‘refused’ to believe. The perverse human heart misguides persons and our limited capacity/strength makes it the duty of all persons to yield to divine authority (so gloriously revealed) rather than resist it. Foreknowledge of human decisions anticipated divine actions. Salvation was not withheld from anyone who was worthy of it. The only persons not worthy were ones God's foreknowledge had identified as rebuffing his grace (*ep. 102.15*)

Wilson further summarizes Augustine's position that each person has “a residual ability to respond in faith to God's revealed truth without God's intervention pervades *ep 102*. This letter explicitly and boldly contradicts *Simpl. 2.*, allegedly written over a decade prior and wherein the human ‘will’ to choose God becomes impotent. Augustin continues to teach the

traditional theology of God's non-discriminatory grace and human residual free choice. God's foreknowledge remains paramount in election of persons to eternal life, just as prior Christian authors taught when fighting against Gnosticism and Manichaeism.

One of the significant issue in Augustine studies is the place of the writing of *Ad Simplicianum* which was written *ca.* 396 with some of Augustines later deterministic theology. However, Wilson and other Augustinian scholars have demonstrated that the initial letter written in 396/7 was revised much later following the shift in Augustines theology after 411. Much that is stated concerning the timing of Augustine's theological shift being earlier has been challenged and clarified that this shift occurred later in the context of the Pelagian controversy when he reverted to the determinism consistent with his ongoing presupposition of the Stoic view of providence that God micromanaged each movement of every falling leaf. This understanding of divine providence did not exist among any church fathers prior to Augustine.

In *De divinatione daemonum* 406 CE Augustine affirms God's permissive will rather that He will/desires all acts to occur.

In his summary of the evidence he developed from Augustine's works from 396-411 Wilson states:

From these twenty-seven works after 395 CE and prior to 412, it seems that everything except initial salvific faith was a gift of God. No evidence of a conversion from traditional free choice to Divine Unilateral Predetermination of Individuals's [sic] Eternal Destinies- or any of his five major doctrines (listed earlier in the notes) – can be identifies. Augustine persists in defending his traditional doctrines of free choice and inherited mortality with a sin propensity but without damnable *reatus* [guilt]." (Wilson, *Augustine's Conversion*, 134). For Augustine, from 396-411 the basis for the individual's election is God's foreknowledge. Augustine still believed that Romans 11 did not refer to predestination to eternal life or damnation, but individual degrees of temporal punishment.

Wilson further asserts (p 211) that nowhere does Augustine claim to have taught initial faith as God's gift, damnable inherited *reatus*, the gift of perseveralnce, or the Divine Unilateral Predetermination of Individuals's [sic] Eternal Destinies. Further, Wilson argues that Augustines *Retractiones* is evidence that there is a discontinuity in his doctrine from 386-411 and that which followed. "His innovative attempts at dismissing the plethora of obvious traditional free choice theology in works between 397 and 412 simply fail to convince." (211).

Augustine clearly viewed infant baptism as a requirement for salvation. Further his exegesis of Rom 9:18-21, Romans 11, Phil 2:13, Eph 2:8-10, and John 6:65 exactly matched that of the pagan heretics (Stoics, Manicheans, Neo-Platonists).

Manicheans had taken Eph 2:3 to argue against the free will arguments of the earlier

A. Augustine on Original Sin

In summary, Augustine maintains that by Adam's first sin, in whom all men jointly sinned together, sin and the other positive punishments (guilt), came into the world. By it, human nature has been both physically and morally corrupted. Every man brings into the world with him a nature already so corrupt that it can do nothing but sin. After the fall, Adam was still free, but he lost the gift of grace which enabled him not to sin and was free only to sin. Augustine wrote (*Enchiridon*, 26-27):

“Thence, after his sin, he was driven into exile, and by his sin the whole race of which he was the root was corrupted in him, and thereby subjected to the penalty of death. And so it happens that all descended from him, and from the woman who had led him into sin, and was condemned at the same time with him—being the offspring of carnal lust on which the same punishment of disobedience was visited—were tainted with the original sin, and were by it drawn through divers errors and sufferings into that last and endless punishment which they suffer in common with the fallen angels, their corrupters and masters, and the partakers of their doom. And thus ‘by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.’ By ‘the world’ the apostle, of course, means in this place the whole human race.”

“Thus, then, matters stood. The whole mass of the human race was under condemnation, was lying steeped and wallowing in misery, and was being tossed from one form of evil to another, and, having joined the faction of the fallen angels, was paying the well-merited penalty of that impious rebellion. For whatever the wicked freely do through blind and unbridled lust, and whatever they suffer against their will in the way of open punishment, this all evidently pertains to the just wrath of God. But the goodness of the Creator never fails either to supply life and vital power to the wicked angels (without which their existence would soon come to an end); or, in the case of mankind, who spring from a condemned and corrupt stock, to impart form and life to their seed, to fashion their members, and through the various seasons of their life, and in the different parts of the earth, to quicken their senses, and bestow upon them the nourishment they need. For He judged it better to bring good out of evil, than not to permit any evil to exist. And if He had determined that in the case of men, as in the case of the fallen angels, there should be no restoration to happiness, would it not have been quite just, that the being who rebelled against God, who is the abuse of his freedom spurned and

transgressed the command of his Creator when he could so easily have kept it, who defaced in himself the image of his Creator by stubbornly turning away from His light, who by an evil use of his free-will broke away from his wholesome bondage to the Creator's laws—would it not have been just that such a being should have been wholly and to all eternity deserted by God, and left to suffer the everlasting punishment he had so richly earned? Certainly so God would have done, had He been only just and not also merciful, and had He not designed that His unmerited mercy should shine forth the more brightly in contrast with the unworthiness of its objects.”

Gonzalez has a helpful passage (*History*. 2, 44): “In summary, natural man is free only inasmuch as he is free to sin. ‘Thus, we always enjoy a free will; but this will is not always good.’ This does not mean that freedom has lost its meaning in fallen man, who is only able to choose a particular sinful alternative. On the contrary, natural man has true freedom to choose between several alternatives, although, given his condition as a sinner subject to concupiscence, and as a member of this ‘mass of damnation,’ all the alternatives that are really open to him are sin. The option not to sin does not exist. This is what is meant by saying that he has freedom to sin (*posse peccare*) but does not have freedom not to sin (*posse non peccare*).”

B. Augustine on Free Will

Augustine's work *On Free Will* written early in his ministry and during the early Manichaean Controversy showed a belief in free will differing from that which followed. In his developments during the debate with the Manichaeans he shifted more to a view similar to that which he had later held. The influence of this is seen in the writings against Pelagius.

As stated above, Augustine maintains that by virtue of Adam's initial transgression that freedom to chose the good, not freedom itself, has been lost entirely. In this present state of corruption, man cannot will out of a pure motive (selflessness) hence all his thoughts in God's sight are evil. God judges motive of action, not simply action. No natural man wills the glory of God, hence all he does is sinful in God's reckoning. At the moment of salvation, God provides grace that restores man's will to chose the good, that is Christ. He wrote (*On Grace and Free Will*. 10): “When God said ‘Turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you,’ one of these clauses—that which invites our return to God—evidently belongs to our will; while the other, which promises His return to us, belongs to His grace. Here, possibly, the Pelagians think they have a justification for their opinion which they so prominently advance, that God's grace is given according to our merits. In the East, indeed, that is to say, in the province of Palestine, in which is the city of Jerusalem, Pelagius, when examined in person by the bishop, did not venture to affirm this. For it happened that among the objections which

were brought up against him, this in particular was objected, that he maintained that the grace of God was given according to our merits—an opinion which was so diverse from catholic doctrine, and so hostile to the grace of Christ, that unless he had anathematized it, as laid to his charge, he himself must have been anathematized on its account. He pronounced, indeed, the required anathema upon the dogma, but how insincerely his later books plainly show; for in them he maintains absolutely no other opinion than that the grace of God is given according to our merits. Such passages do they collect out of the Scriptures—like the one which I just now quoted, ‘Turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you,’—as if it were owing to the merit of our turning to God that His grace were given us, wherein He Himself even turns unto us. Now the persons who hold this opinion fail to observe that, unless our turning to God were itself God’s gift, it would not be said to Him in prayer, ‘Turn us again, O God of hosts;’ and, ‘Thou, O God, wilt turn and quicken us;’ and again, ‘Turn us, O God of our salvation,’—with other passages of similar import, too numerous to mention here. For, with respect to our coming unto Christ, what else does it mean than our being turned to Him by believing? And yet he said: ‘No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.’”

Again (29): “Now if faith is simply of free will, and is not given by God, why do we pray for those who will not believe, that they may believe? This it would be absolutely useless to do, unless we believe, with perfect propriety, that Almighty God is able to turn to belief wills that are perverse and opposed to faith. Man’s free will is addressed when it is said, ‘To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.’ But if God were not able to remove from the human heart even its obstinacy and hardness, He would not say, through the prophet, ‘I will take from them their heart of stone, and will give them a heart of flesh.’ That all this was foretold in reference to the New Testament is shown clearly enough by the apostle when he says, ‘Ye are our epistle, . . . written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.’ We must not, of course, suppose that such a phrase as this is used as if those might live in a fleshly way who ought to live spiritually; but inasmuch as a stone has no feeling, with which man’s hard heart is compared, what was there left Him to compare man’s intelligent heart with but the flesh, which possesses feeling? For this is what is said by the prophet Ezekiel: ‘I will give them another heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, saith the Lord.’ Now can we possibly, without extreme absurdity, maintain that there previously existed in any man the good merit of a good will, to entitle him to the removal of his stony heart, when all the while this very heart of stone signifies nothing else than a will of the hardest kind and such as is absolutely inflexible against God? For where a good will precedes, there is, of course, no longer a heart of stone.”

N.B. Logically, not chronologically since conversion is instantaneous, regeneration precedes faith (the exercise of the free will). Free will and God's grace are simultaneously commended.

N.N.B.B. The freedom to choose the good out of a proper motive, which was lost in the first Adam, is renewed by means of grace. The believer by grace now has freedom of choice (good–evil). Augustine calls the freedom a gift (*Enchiridion*, 32): “And further, should any one be inclined to boast, not indeed of his works, but of the freedom of his will, as if the first merit belonged to him, this very liberty of action being given to him as a reward he had earned, let him listen to this same preacher of grace, when he says: ‘For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His own good pleasure;’ and in another place: ‘So, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.’ Now as, undoubtedly, if a man is of the age to use his reason, he cannot believe, hope, love, unless he will to do so, nor obtain the prize of the high calling of God unless he voluntarily run for it; in what sense it is ‘not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy,’ except that, as it is written, ‘the preparation of the heart is from the Lord?’ Otherwise, if it is said, ‘It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy,’ because it is of both, that is, both of the will of man and of the mercy of God, so that we are to understand the saying, ‘It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy,’ as is it meant the will of man alone is not sufficient, if the mercy of God do not with it—then it will follow that the mercy of God alone is not sufficient, if the will of man go not with it; and therefore, if we may rightly say, ‘it is not of man that willeth, but of God that showeth mercy.’”

C. Augustine on Grace

“If, nevertheless, man, in his present state, wills and does good, it is merely the work of grace. It is an inward, secret, and wonderful operation of God upon man. It is a preceding as well as an accompanying work. By preceding grace, man attains faith, by which he comes to an insight of good, and by which power is given him to will the good. He needs cooperating grace for the performance of every individual good act. As man can do nothing without grace, so he can do nothing against it. It is irresistible. And as man by nature has no merit at all, no respect at all can be had to man's moral disposition, in imparting grace, but God acts according to his own freewill.”

Augustine simply stated that grace is free, unmerited (*On Nature and Grace*, 4): “This grace, however, of Christ, without which neither infants nor adults can be saved, is not rendered for any merits, but is given gratis, on account of which it is also called grace. ‘Being justified,’ says the apostle, ‘freely through His blood.’”

Whence they, who are not liberated through grace, either because they are not yet able to hear, or because they are unwilling to obey; or again because they did not receive, at the time when they were unable on account of youth to hear, that bath of regeneration, which they might have received and through which they might have been saved, are indeed justly condemned; because they are not without sin, either that which they have derived from their birth, so that which they have added from their own misconduct. 'For all have sinned'—whether in Adam or in themselves—'and come short of the glory of God.' ”

Again (*On Grace and Free Will*, 33, 458): “He, therefore, who wishes to do God’s commandment, but is unable, already possesses a good will, but as yet a small and weak one; he will, however, become able when he shall have acquired a great and robust will. When the martyrs did the great commandments which they obeyed, they acted by a great will—that is, with great love. Of this love the Lord Himself thus speaks: ‘Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.’ In accordance with this, the apostle also says, ‘He that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law. For this: Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.’ This love the Apostle Peter did not yet possess, when he for fear thrice denied the Lord. ‘There is no fear in love,’ says the Evangelist John in his first Epistle, ‘but perfect love casteth out fear.’ But yet, however small and imperfect his love was, it was not wholly wanting when he said to the Lord, ‘I will lay down my life for Thy sake;’ for he supposed himself able to effect what he felt himself willing to do. And who was it that had begun to give him his love, however small, but His co-operation which He initiates by His operation? Forasmuch as in beginning He works in us that we may have the will, and in perfecting works with us when we have the will. On which account the apostle says, ‘I am confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.’ He operates, therefore, without us, in order that we may will; but when we will, and so will that we may act, He co-operates with us. We can, however, ourselves do nothing to effect good works of piety without Him either working that we may will, or co-working when we will. Now, concerning His working that we may will, it is said: ‘It is God which worketh in you, even to will.’ While of His co-working with us, when we will and act by willing, the apostle says, ‘We know that in all things there is co-working for good to them that love God.’ What does this phrase, ‘all things,’ mean, but the terrible and cruel sufferings which affect our condition? That burden, indeed of Christ, which is heavy for our infirmity, becomes light to love. For to such did the Lord say that His burden was light, as Peter was when he suffered for Christ, not as he was when he denied Him.”

This grace to Augustine is irresistible. God, through His grace, boosts the will, strengthens and stimulates it, so that the will itself, without any coercion, will

desire the good. Man does not save himself, nor is he saved against his will. Augustine said (*On Nature and Free Will*, 10), “Neither the grace of God alone, nor he alone, but the grace of God with him.”

D. Augustine on Predestination

“From eternity, God made a free and unconditional decree to save a few from the mass that was corrupted and subjected to damnation. To those whom he predestinated to this salvation, he gives the requisite means for the purpose. But on the rest, who do not belong to this small number of the elect, the merited ruin falls.” Augustine wrote (*Predestination of the Saints*, 19): “Moreover, that which I said, ‘That the salvation of this religion has never been lacking to him who was worthy of it, and that he to whom it was lacking was not worthy,’—if it be discussed and it be asked whence any man can be worthy, there are not wanting those who say—by human will. But we say, by divine grace or predestination. Further, between grace and predestination there is only this difference, that predestination is the preparation for grace, while grace is the donation itself. When, therefore, the apostle says, ‘Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus in good works,’ it is grace; but what follows—‘which God hath prepared that we should walk in them’—is predestination, which cannot exist without foreknowledge, although foreknowledge may exist without predestination because God foreknew by predestination those things which He was about to do, whence it was said, ‘He made those things that shall be.’ Moreover, He is able to foreknow even those things which He does not Himself do—as all sins whatever.

Because, although there are some which are in such wise sins as that they are also the penalties of sins, whence it is said, ‘God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient,’ it is not in such a case the sin that is God’s, but the judgment. Therefore God’s predestination of good is, as I have said, the preparation of grace; which grace is the effect of that predestination. Therefore when God promised to Abraham in his seed the faith of the nations, saying, ‘I have established thee a father of many nations,’ whence the apostle says, ‘Therefore it is of faith, that the promise, according to grace, might be established to all the seed,’ He promised not from the power of our will, but from His own predestination. For He promised what He Himself would do, not what men would do. Because, although men do those good things which pertain to God’s worship, He Himself makes them to do what He has commanded; it is not they that cause Him to do what He has promised. Otherwise the fulfillment of God’s promise would not be in the power of God, but in that of men; and thus what was promised by God to Abraham would be given to Abraham by men themselves. Abraham, however, did not believe thus, but ‘he believed, giving glory to God, that what He promised He is able also to do.’ He does not say, ‘to foretell’—he does not say, ‘to foreknow;’ for He can foretell and foreknow the

doings of strangers also; but he says, 'He is able also to do;' and thus he is speaking not of the doings of others, but of His own."

E. Summary of Augustine's Theology.

Despite Augustine's valiant attempt to preserve the depravity of man and the imputation of Adam's original sin and guilt to all mankind, he overstates his case and also has an equally heretical soteriology as Pelagius.

1. He believed in the inspiration and canonicity of the apocrypha, and the inspiration of the Septuagint. He quoted from Baruch, Bel and the Dragon, Susana, and the Song of the Three Children as authoritative. He had no knowledge of Hebrew and little of biblical Greek.
2. Augustine held to an allegorical interpretation of the Scripture.
3. Augustine rejected his early Chiliasm in favor of a sort of amillennial and postmillennial synthesis. He rejected a literal thousand-year reign of Christ and believed that in the present conflict between the City of God and the City of Man, the City of God would be victorious before Christ returned.
4. He believed the devil is currently bound.
5. He equated the Church with the kingdom.
6. He interpreted the Bible within his neo-platonic grid.
7. He believed a person could be regenerated but not elect.
8. He believed that a person was regenerated through water baptism.
9. He believed that salvation was kept through perseverance. He wrote in *On Rebuke and Grace*:

"We, then, call men elected, and Christ's disciples, and God's children, because they are to be so called whom, being regenerated, we see to live piously; but they are then truly what they are called if they shall abide in that on account of which they are so called." (22)

"It is, indeed, to be wondered at, and greatly to be wondered at, that to some of His own children—whom He has regenerated in Christ—to whom He has given faith, hope, and love, God does not give perseverance also." (18).

"But they who fall and perish have never been in the number of the predestined." (36)

10. He believed in limbo for those who died in infancy and finalized the form of purgatory.

J. A. Neander (1789-1850) concluded that Augustine's theology "contains the germ of the whole system of spiritual despotism, intolerance, and persecution, even to the court of the Inquisition."

V. CONCLUSION.

I shall conclude with Schaff's remarkable summary (*History*, 3, 787-89): "The soul of the Pelagian system is human freedom; the soul of the Augustinian is divine grace. Pelagius starts from the natural man, and works up, by his own exertions, to righteousness and holiness. Augustine despairs of the moral sufficiency of man and derives the new life and all power for good from the creative grace of God. The one system proceeds from the liberty of choice to legalistic piety; the other from the bondage of sin to the evangelical liberty of the children of God. To the former, Christ is merely a teacher and example, and grace an external auxiliary to the development of the native powers of man; to the latter he is also Priest and King, and grace a creative principle, which begets, nourishes, and consummates a new life. The former makes regeneration and conversion a gradual process of the strengthening and perfecting of human virtue; the latter makes it a complete transformation, in which the old disappears and all becomes new. The one loves to admire the dignity and strength of man; the other loses itself in adoration of the glory and omnipotence of God. The one flatters natural pride, the other is a gospel for penitent publicans and sinners. Pelagianism begins with self-exaltation and ends with the sense of self-deception and impotency. Augustinianism casts man first into the dust of humiliation and despair, in order to lift him on the wings of grace to supernatural strength and leads him through the hell of self-knowledge up to the heaven of the knowledge of God. The Pelagian system is clear, sober, and intelligible, but superficial; the Augustinian sounds the depths of knowledge and experience and renders reverential homage to mystery. The former is grounded upon the philosophy of common sense, which is indispensable for ordinary life, but has no perception of divine things; the latter is grounded upon the philosophy of the regenerate reason, which breaks through the limits of nature, and penetrates the depths of divine revelation. The former starts with the proposition: *Intellectus procedit fidem*; the latter with the opposite maxim: *Fides procedit intellectum*. Both make use of the Scriptures; the one, however, conforming them to reason, the other subjecting reason to them. Pelagianism has an unmistakable affinity with rationalism and supplies its practical side. The natural will of the former system corresponds with natural reason of the latter; and as the natural will, according to Pelagianism, is competent to good, so is the natural reason, according to rationalism, competent to the knowledge of the truth. All rationalists are Pelagian in their anthropology; but Pelagius and Coelestius were not consistent and declared their agreement with the traditional orthodoxy in all other doctrines, though without entering into their deeper meaning and connection. Even divine mysteries may be believed in a purely external, mechanical way, by inheritance from the past, as the history of theology, especially in the East, abundantly proves."

THE DOCTRINES OF SALVATION (SIN AND GRACE)
Part III: The Medieval Church

Summary:

- I. INTRODUCTION.**
- II. THE DOCTRINES OF SALVATION AND THE SYNOD OF ORANGE (529).**
 - A. The Opinions of John Cassian.
 - B. The Mediating Position of the Synod of Orange (529).
- III. THE DOCTRINES OF SALVATION AND THE MEDIEVAL ERA.**
 - A. In the Pre-Scholastic Era.
 - B. In the Scholastic Era.
- IV. CONCLUSION.**

I. INTRODUCTION.

In the previous lesson we focused upon the most active era in the Ancient Church of the discussion of the doctrines of the nature of man and the nature of the origin of saving grace. Augustine postulated that man lost his ability to choose out of a pure motive so that his righteousness was and would always be characterized by imperfection unworthy of God's justice and, hence, forgiveness; Pelagius suggested the plenary ability of all men to will out of a pure motive. Augustine, therefore, argued that God through the preaching of Christ's cross must move upon man to cause him to be willing to choose the Savior; Pelagius felt Christ's death was gracious, but not necessary.

While the Third Ecumenical Council at Ephesus in 431 condemned Pelagius, the issues of the nature of sin and grace continued to be debated in the church; indeed, even to this day. The purpose of this lesson shall be to trace these doctrines through the Medieval era from Augustine.

II. THE DOCTRINES OF SALVATION AND THE SYNOD OF ORANGE (529).

With the condemnation of Pelagianism (Ephesus, 431) the doctrine of Augustine in its logically worked out details was not necessarily approved. (**N.B.**—Remember the real issue at Ephesus was the securing of the condemnation of Nestorianism; the Western issue of Pelagius was tangential.) The doctrine of predestination, an essential feature in the Augustinian system, was not only rejected by some, but was vigorously opposed by many who heartily condemned Pelagianism; hence from 427 to 529 the controversy continued, not in North Africa where the Vandals destroyed a once vital Christianity, but in Gaul, the new intellectual center in the West.

A. The Opinions of John Cassian.

- 1. The Man (ca. 360–ca. 435).** John Cassian was by birth and education a man of the East and does not appear in the West until 405 when he went to Rome on some business connected with the exile of John Chrysostom, his friend and patron. After some time as an ascetic in Egypt, he became a monk in Marseilles and founded two monasteries (“a haven in the falling debris of western civilization”). Cassian was largely responsible for the spread of monastic life in the West.
- 2. His Opinions.** Cassian, through his work *Spiritual Discourses*, sought to mediate the extremes of Augustine’s soteriology. For example, he restated, redefined such concepts as predestination, grace, and free will making God’s actions a response to man’s initial action. In the *Discourses* he wrote (13):

“When His [God’s] kindness sees in us even the very smallest spark of good-will shining forth or which He Himself has, as it were, struck out from the hard flints of our hearts, He fans it and fosters it and nurses it with His breath, as He ‘will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth’ [1 Tim. 2:4] For He is true and lieth not when He lays down with an oath: ‘As I live, saith the Lord, I will not the death of a sinner, but that he should turn from his way and live’ [Ezek. 33:11]. For if He willeth not that one of His little ones should perish, how can we think without grievous blasphemy that He willeth not all men universally, but only some instead of all to be saved. Those then who perish, perish against His will, as He testifieth against each of them day by day: ‘Turn from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?’ [Ezek. 33:11] . . . The grace of Christ is then at hand every day, which, while it ‘willeth all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth,’ calleth all without exception, saying: ‘Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest’ [Matt. 11:28]. But if he calls not all generally but only some, it follows that not all are heavy laden with either original sin or actual sin, and that this saying is not a true one: ‘For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God’ [Rom. 3:23]; nor can we believe that ‘death passed on all men’ [Rom. 5:12]. And so far do all who perish, perish against the will of God, that God cannot be said to have made death, as the Scripture itself testifieth: ‘For God made not death, neither hath He pleasure in the destruction of the living’ [Wisdom 1:13].

“When he sees anything of a good-will arisen in us He at once enlightens it and strengthens it and urges it on to salvation, giving

increase to that which He himself implanted or He sees to have arisen by our own effort.

“We should not hold that God made man such that he neither wills nor is able to do good. Otherwise He has not granted him a free will, if He has suffered him only to will or be capable of evil, but of himself neither to will nor be capable of what is good. . . . It cannot, therefore, be doubted that there are by nature seeds of goodness implanted in every soul by the kindness of the Creator; but unless these are quickened by the assistance of God, they will not be able to attain to an increase of perfection; for, as the blessed Apostle says: ‘Neither is he that planteth anything nor he that watereth, freedom of will is to some degree in a man’s power is very clearly taught in the book called *The Pastor*, where two angels are said to be attached to each one of us, i.e., a good and a bad one, while it lies in a man’s own option to choose which to follow. And, therefore, the will always remains free in man, and it can either neglect or delight in the grace of God. For the Apostle would not have commanded, saying, ‘Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling’ [Phil. 2:12], had he not known that it could be advanced or neglected by us. . . . But that they should not think that they did not need divine aid he adds: ‘For it is God who worketh in you both to will and accomplish His good pleasure’ [Phil. 2:13]. The mercy of the Lord, therefore, goes before the will of man, for it is said, ‘My God, will prevent me with His mercy’ [Psalm 59:10], and again, that He may put our desire to the test, our will goes before God who waits and for our good delays.”

Cassian became the leader of the Massilians who strenuously denied complete moral ability as well as Augustine’s complete moral inability. Klotche summarized Cassian’s arguments (*History*, 94-95): “(a) Adam’s fall entailed death and corruption of nature upon his posterity (original sin). (b) Original sin does not eliminate the free will, but weakens it, nor does it involve complete impotence, but only moral infirmity. (c) The natural man is accordingly neither morally dead (Augustine), or morally healthy (Pelagius), but morally sick and weakened. (d) He needs, therefore, divine grace as the co-operative agency of the human will in conversion. Accordingly the main share in our salvation is to be ascribed not to the merit of our own works, but to heavenly grace. (e) Sometimes it is the divine agency as in the cases of Paul and Matthew, sometimes it is the human agency (Zacchaeus) which begins the work of regeneration. (f) There is no unconditional election to eternal salvation. Predestination is based on

foreknowledge. Those who perish, perish against God's will, for He willeth all men to be saved."

Two other Massilians are worth a passing note: Vincent of Lerins and Faustus of Reji.

- a) **Vincent of Lerins'** attack upon Augustine is not direct but far reaching in that he classified Augustine's views as novel, the product of novel "innovators." He wrote (*Commonitorium* 26): "But what do they say? 'If thou be the Son of God cast thyself down'; that is, 'If thou wouldest be a son of God, and wouldest receive the inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven, cast thyself down; that is, cast thyself down from the doctrine and tradition of that sublime Church, which is imagined to be nothing less than the very temple of God.' And if one should ask one of the heretics who gives this advice: How do you prove it? What ground have you for saying that I ought to cast away the universal and ancient faith of the Catholic Church? He has only the answer ready: 'For it is written'; and forthwith he produces a thousand testimonies, a thousand examples, a thousand authorities from the Law, from the Psalms, from the Apostles, from the prophets, by means of which, interpreted a new and wrong principle, the unhappy soul is precipitated from the height of Catholic truth to the lowest abyss of heresy. Then with the accompanying promises, the heretics are won marvelously to beguile the incautious. For they dare to teach and promise that in their church, that is, in the conventicle of their communion, there is a certain great and special and altogether personal grace of God, so that whosoever pertain to their number, without any labor, without any effort, without any industry, even though they neither ask, nor seek, nor knock, have such a dispensation from God, that borne up of angel hands, that is, preserved by the protection of angels, it is impossible they should ever dash their feet against a stone, that is, that they should ever be offended."
- b) **Faustus of Rhegium**, the most ardent spokesman for the anti-Augustinians in his treatise *On the Grace of God and Free Will* argued that faith demands free will. He wrote (I, 11): "To God, the liberality of his reward and to man, the devotion of his search." Gonzalez summarized Faustus (II, 58): "He defends the doctrine according to which the *initium fidei*—the first step of faith—depends on human freedom. This freedom gives man the natural capacity to turn toward God and to seek him until he responds. 'To God, the liberality of his reward; and to man, the devotion of his search.' Those who claim that human free will is able only to sin,

and can do no good, are mistaken. Christ died for all, and this is sufficient basis on which to reject the doctrine of predestination as Augustine understands it, and to affirm that the so-called predestination is no more than God's judgment on what his foreknowledge tells him each man will do with his own freedom."

B. The Mediating Position of the Synod of Orange (529).

- 1. The Opposition to Cassian.** The principal defenders of Augustine's theology were Prosper of Aquitaine and Hilary of Arles. Of the two, the greater was Prosper who wrote *Grace and Free Will. A Defense of St. Augustine Against Cassian*. He stated some of the beliefs of those who attack Augustine (chapter, 19.2-4, 7, 8):

"It was said in the second proposition: 'The divine protection is inseparably with us, and so great is the love of the Creator for His creature that not only does His providence accompany it, but even unceasingly goes before it, and the Prophet admits this from experience. He said: "My God, His mercy shall prevent me." And when He sees in us any beginning of a good will, He illumines it, strengthens it and directs it to salvation, giving increase to that which either He Himself planted, or which He saw come forth from our efforts.' "

"In the third proposition you asserted: 'What else are we being told except that in all these both the grace of God and the liberty of our will are proclaimed, and also that man can sometimes by his own activity reach out to a desire of the virtues; but he always needs the Lord's help?' As if our physician does not also grant the sick desire true health!"

"You asserted in the fourth definition: 'In order that it may be the more evident that the beginnings of a good will sometimes emanate from a good will, through the bounty of nature bestowed by the beneficence of the Creator, and the Apostle is the witness that, unless these beginnings are directed by God, they cannot come to the perfection of virtues, he says: 'For to will is present with me; but to accomplish that which is good, I find not.' As if the Apostle, who professes that his sufficiency, even to think, is from God, had a good will from a natural inclination and not from the gift of grace!"

"You said in the seventh proposition: 'After the Fall, therefore, Adam conceived a knowledge of evil which he did not have; but he did not lose the knowledge of good which he did have.' "

“Both are false, because Adam by a divine admonition knew in advance how great an evil must be on guard against, and, when he believed the Devil, he forgot in how great a good he was established. For, just as to be evil is a very bad knowledge of evil, so not to be good is a very bad ignorance of good.”

“In the eighth definition it was said: ‘Wherefore, we must beware lest we refer all the merits of the saints to God in such a way that we ascribe only what is evil and perverse to human nature.’ ”

“As if nature were not damned before grace, were not in blindness, not wounded; or as if they whose merits are thence, whence justice, were not gratuitously justified!”

He concluded the treatise by stating (chapter 22), “It has been sufficiently demonstrated, I think, that those who blame St. Augustine make empty objections, attack what is right and defend what is wrong.”

2. The Synod of Orange (529)

- a) The immediate background. Through the labor of Faustus of Rhegium (d. 495), Augustinian views (extreme ones) were condemned at a Synod in Arles (475) and again at Lyons. Faustus’ views began to gain a wide currency in Gaul; but the popes in Rome, where Augustine was held in high esteem, rejected semi-pelagianism while ignoring Augustinian predestination. Then in 529 two further synods were held, Valence and Orange, the latter being the most crucial.
- b) **The Synod of Orange.** In reality this synod brought a close to the Semi-Pelagian controversy by moving to a position further toward Augustine, hence a moderate Augustinianism became the official position of the church.

A.D. 430	Augustine			Pelagius
A.D. 475	Augustine		Cassian	Pelagius
A.D. 529	Augustine	Orange	Cassian	Pelagius

The Council of Orange was made up of several bishops and some lay notables that gathered for the dedication of a church. Caesarius of Arles had received from Felix IV of Rome eight statements

against the Massilians, Cassians, to which the assembled added several others. The canons that were approved are as follows:

“Canon 2. Whoever asserts that the transgression of Adam injured himself only, and not his offspring, or that death only of the body, which is the penalty of sin, but not also sin, which is the death of the soul, passed by one man to the entire human race, wrongs God and contradicts the Apostle [Rom. 5:12].”

“Canon 3. Whoever says that the grace of God can be bestowed in reply to human petition, but not that the grace brings it about so that it is asked for by us, contradicts Isaiah the prophet and the Apostle [Is. 65:1; Rom. 10:20].”

“Canon 4. Whoever contends that our will, to be set free from sin, may anticipate God’s action, and shall not confess that it is brought about by the infusion of the Holy Spirit and his operation in us, that we wish to be set free, resists that same Holy Spirit speaking through Solomon: ‘The will is prepared by the Lord’ [Proverbs 8:35, cf. LXX; not so in Vulgate or Heb.], and the Apostle [Phil. 2:13].”

“Canon 7. Whoever asserts that by the force of nature we can rightly think or choose anything good, which pertains to eternal life, or be saved, that is, assent to the evangelical preaching, without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, who gives to all grace to assent to and believe the truth, is deceived by an heretical spirit, not understanding the voice to the Lord [John 15:5], and of the Apostle [II Cor. 3:5].”

“Canon 8. Whoever asserts that some by mercy, others by free will, which in all who have been born since the transgression of the first man is evidently corrupt, are able to come to the grace of baptism, is proved an alien from the faith. For he asserts that the free will of all has not been weakened by the sin of the first man, or he evidently thinks that it has been so injured that some, however, are able without the revelation of God to attain by their own power, to the mystery of eternal salvation.”

Schaff’s brief quotation of the canons are quite helpful (*History*. 5, 258-60): “These Canons are strongly anti-Semi-Pelagian—3: ‘The grace of God is not granted in response to prayer, but itself causes the prayer to be offered for it.’ 4: ‘That we may be cleansed from sin, God does not wait upon, but prepares, our will.’ 5: ‘The beginning of faith is not due to us, to the grace of God—that state

of believing by which we believe in him who justifies the impious, and attain the regeneration of holy Baptism, is brought about through the gift of grace, i.e., the inspiration of the Holy Spirit correcting our will from unbelief to faith, and it is not ours naturally.' 6: 'It is the work of grace that we believe, will, desire, attempt, knock, etc., and not vice-versa.' 7: 'We cannot without grace think or choose, by our natural powers, anything good that pertains to salvation.' 8: 'It is untrue that some attain baptismal faith by mercy, others by free will.' 9: 'As often as we do good, God works in and with us, that we may work.' 10: 'Even the regenerate and holy always need the divine aid.' 11: 'We can only vow to God what we ourselves have received from him.' 12: 'God loves us as we shall be by his gift, not as we are by our merit.' 13: 'Choice of will, weakened in the first man, cannot be repaired except by the grace of Baptism.' 16: 'Let no one boast of what he seems to have as if he did not receive it, or think that he has received, because the letter appeared or was sounded outwardly that it might be read or heard.' ”

- N.B.** The necessity of divine grace was affirmed, but not grace as irresistible. Baptism is the vehicle of grace. Election to grace is recognized but unconditional election is not mentioned, and predestination is expressly anathematized. Orange is not Augustinian, Pelagian, or Cassian! Orange advocated cooperative salvation from an Augustine perspective, not a Pelagian perspective. Hence, it is semi-Augustinianism! Gonzalez stated (*History*. 2, 61): “It would be incorrect to say that the synod of Orange was a victory for semi-Pelagianism. On the contrary, the synod clearly rejected such typical semi-Pelagian doctrines as that of the human *initium fidei*. It is true, however, that the synod was not truly Augustinian in its doctrine. Nothing is said here—although it is in a way implied—of a predestination that takes place not on the basis of a divine foreknowledge of the future attitudes and actions of men, but on the basis of a sovereign decision of God. Nor is anything said of an irresistible grace. The emphasis is now rather on that grace which is given at baptism. The overwhelming and dynamic experience set forth in the Confession is being transformed into an entire system of grace—a process that was perhaps inevitable, but nonetheless unfortunate.”
- c) The Aftermath. The canons of Orange were then referred to the bishop of Rome, Boniface II, who approved the resolutions thus setting the pattern for catholic theology (semi-Augustinianism). Gradually, however, the church would drift to a Romish position

(Cassian) with notions of infusion and gracious ability (i.e., justification through grace and works).

N.B. Concluding summary of the various general positions on sin and grace.

1. Augustine—Salvation is totally, causatively of God.
2. Orange—Salvation originates in God, proceeds God and man.
3. Semi-Pelagianism—Salvation originates in man, proceeds by man and God.
4. Pelagianism—Salvation is totally, causatively of man.

III. THE DOCTRINES OF SALVATION AND THE MEDIEVAL ERA.

A. In the Pre-Scholastic Era.

In the early medieval era (600–950), the church maintained an Augustinian perspective without exact particulars. Shedd wrote (*History*. 2, 111-12): “The more devout and evangelical minds in the 5th and 6th centuries, like Bede and Alcuin, propagated the teachings of Augustine respecting the corruption of human nature, and the agency of the Holy Spirit in regeneration; but were less distinct and bold, in their statements respecting the preterition and reprobation of the lost. They were content with affirming, in the most unqualified manner, the doctrine of an enslaved will, and the need of divine efficiency in order to its renewal and liberation, and left the darker and more difficult side of the doctrine of predestination, without explanation. So far, therefore, as the practical part of the Augustinian anthropology—its relations, namely, to the renewal and salvation of men—is concerned, the more distinguished Fathers of the Western Church, during the two or three centuries succeeding that of Augustine, were steady adherents to his opinions. But the general decline that was advancing in all the great interests of the church brought with it a departure from the high vantage-ground which had been gained in the contest with Pelagianism.”

N.B. The Medieval Age progressively evidenced a shift from Augustinianism to semi-Pelagianism!

1. **Gregory the Great (540–640)**, bishop of Rome (590–604), shows the influence of a weakened Augustinianism. Gregory rejected Augustinian’s predestination and irresistible grace. Gregory developed within his theological framework the doctrine of penance and progressive satisfaction for sin. Gregory is a milestone in the development of Romish theology, which is a semi-Pelagianism.

2. **Gottschalk (ca. 804–ca. 869)**, a monk of Orbais, within the context of the 9th century Carolingian Revival, attempted to stir the church to advocate Augustinianism (this attempt evidences how alien Augustine had at length become in the church). Harnack asserted (*History*. 5, 293); “But the theology of Gregory I had already accustomed men to combine the formulas of Augustinianism with the Pelagianism required by the system of the cultures.”
- a) **His Views.** Gottschalk appears to have come to his views having copiously read Augustine, Ambrose, and Prosper. His teachings, says Harnack, “were not different from Augustine” (*History*. 2, 239) except that he stressed predestination to the neglect of other doctrines. Klotsch wrote (*History*. 123) in summary: “Gottschalk, starting from the conception of the immutability of God who from eternity has ordered all his decrees in virtue of his foreknowledge which merely accompanies predestination, contended for a twofold predestination. The immutable God has from all eternity predestinated eternal life to the elect, and the elect to eternal life. And the same immutable God has immutably predestined everlasting punishment to the reprobate, and the reprobate to everlasting punishment. God did not predestinate to sin, but only to punishment for sin. Christ did not die for all, but only for the elect; and only they constitute the true church. Gottschalk did not differ essentially in his view from the Augustinian scheme. He only carried Augustine’s doctrine to its extreme logical conclusions.”
- b) **His condemnation.** Gottschalk was opposed by Rabanus, Abbot of Fulda, and Hinkmar, Archbishop of Reims. Hinkmar has him publicly whipped, forced into a secluded monastery, and so mistreated that he lost sanity. He continued a literary battle until his death against Hinkmar, who based predestination on foresight! Of Hinkmar’s beliefs and triumph Harnack wrote (*History*. 2, 301-302): “Hinkmar composed this document. Besides predestination to life, which was set forth in good Augustinian language, it was declared that God willed to save all, Christ died for all, and that while free-will required to be redeemed and healed after the Fall, it had never been wholly lost. If the worth of a confession depends on its really expressing the existing belief, then the triumph of Hinkmar’s formula was really more valuable than would have been that of the contrary doctrine. The avowal of twofold predestination, in itself even more the expression of a theological speculation than of Christian faith in God the Father, would have meant less than nothing coupled with the retention of ecclesiastical empiricism. Of course the formula of Hinkmar, which no artifice could reconcile with that of Orange, did not mean much either; for, in spite of

words, Augustine remained deposed. Gregory I's system of doctrine held the field. Men thought of the sacramental Christ, as they rejected, along with Adoptionism, the Augustinian Christology, and it was still this Christ and the good works of believers to which they looked, when, along with twofold predestination, they in fact set aside Augustine's doctrine of grace."

B. In the Scholastic Era.

The great scholastics structured the faith so as to buttress its formulations by means of reason. It is not surprising that the ideas of "sin and grace" are discussed.

1. **Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109).** In the scholastic period one thinker appears not only to have an Augustinian viewpoint but seems to clarify and advance the doctrines of sin and grace.

a) **Anselm and the Doctrine of Sin.** Anselm defines sin in two ways: First, it is the non-payment of the debt of obedience to God and, second, a dishonoring of God. He wrote (*Cur Deus Homo*, 11):

"Boso: What is the debt we owe God?"

"Anselm: The will of every rational creature must be subject to the will of God.

"Boso: Perfectly true.

"Anselm: This is the debt which angel and man owe to God, so that no one sins if he pays it and anyone who does not pay it, sins. This is justice or rectitude of will, which makes persons upright or right in heart, that is, in will. This is the only and the total honor which we owe to God and which God exacts of us. For only such a will produces works pleasing to God, when it is able to act; and when it is unable to act, it gives satisfaction by itself alone, because no effect of activity gives satisfaction without it. A person who does not render God this honor due Him, takes from God what is His and dishonors God, and this is to commit sin. Now, as long as he does not repay what he has plundered, he remains at fault. Neither is it enough merely to return what was taken away, but no account of the insult committed, he must give back more than he took away."

Original sin is innate to Anselm; it is inherited from Adam (“everything starts with the original unity of the race”). Anselm maintains mediate, not immediate imputation. He wrote of Original Sin (*The Virgin Conception*, 27):

“I understand original sin, therefore, to be nothing else than what is in an infant, as soon as it has a rational soul, whatever may have occurred in its body, before it was so animated—for example, some disintegration of its parts—or whatever is to occur afterward, either in the soul or in the body. Because of the reasons mentioned before, I think that this is equal in all infants generated in the natural way, and that all who die in that sin alone are equally condemned. Indeed, whatever sin occurs in man over and above this one, is personal; and just as a person is born sinful on account of his nature, so the nature is rendered more sinful by the person, because when any person at all commits sin, man commits sin.”

“In regard to these infants, I cannot understand this sin I am calling ‘original’ to be anything else than that same deprivation of the required justice, which I described before as a result of the disobedience of Adam, by which all are children of wrath. The reason is that the voluntary forsaking of justice, of which nature was the cause in Adam, is a reproach to the nature, and its inability to recover justice does not excuse persons, as has been said. Deprivation of happiness also goes along with this inability, so that as they lack all justice, they likewise totally lack happiness. On account of these two deprivations, they have been left unprotected in the exile of this life, and exposed to the sins and miseries that are unceasingly besetting them everywhere, and assaulting them from every side, except to the extent that they are protected by divine providence.”

- b) **Anselm and the Doctrine of Free Will.** Hopkins wrote (*A Companion*, 142), “When Anselm speaks of free will, he is thinking of the will as that function of the soul which is responsible for choosing.” Freedom of choice is, then, “the ability to keep uprightness of will for their own sake.” Freedom is the ability to choose, it has nothing to do with the kind or object of choices (God is free but He cannot choose evil—freedom is ability within nature or constitution). Although fallen man has the ability to keep the uprightness of the will, he no longer has an upright will to keep. Hence, in freedom he maintains his depraved will. Freedom is not alternatives (good/evil), but the choice of the good. Shedd wrote (*History*, 2, 130-31): “The true end and destination of the will is not to choose either good or evil, but to choose good. The

voluntary faculty was intended by its Creator to will the right, and nothing else. Its true freedom, consequently, consists in its self-determination to holiness; in its acceptance of the one single righteous end which the Creator has prescribed to it. The notion that freedom is caprice, that the will is created with the liberty of indifference, and that the choice of either right or wrong is granted to it by the Creator, Anselm rejects. By creation, the will has not option of choosing either of two contrary objects, but is shut up to the choice of but one, namely, holiness. But its acceptance of this one object must be uncompelled. It must be self-determination, and not a compulsion from without. If it chooses holiness by its own inward self-activity, then it exercises true and rational freedom, and the power to choose an entirely contrary object like sin would not add anything to this freedom, because, by the terms of the statement, there is already a self-election of the one true and proper object. On the contrary, the power to choose the wrong, when given for purposes of probation, subtracts from the perfection of voluntary freedom, because it exposes it to the hazards of an illegitimate choice. The human will, according to Anselm, was created in possession of true and rational freedom. It was made with a determination to the one sole proper object, with an inclination to holiness, with a choice of the right.”

- N.B.** As Anselm defines it, natural man has freedom in direct opposition to God. Man has freedom, but not to choose the good.
- c) **Anselm and Grace.** Anselm understands that grace is a gift from God to cause men to will the good, though his thinking is not clear (i.e., no concept of irresistible grace). Hopkins wrote (*A Companion*, 52-53): “Anselm recognized, but never emphasized, the noetic consequences of the Fall. The Apostle Paul teaches that unbelievers have their ‘understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts’ (Eph. 4:18). Anselm holds with the Apostle that the Fall has corrupted human nature, so that the natural man, unaided by grace and revelation, cannot understand the requirements of justice or righteousness. Yet the corrupting influence of sin is not such that it can present the natural man’s reason from assenting to the ‘necessities’ of the Christian faith once these are presented to him. Anselm’s ‘rationalism’ is such that he aspires to prove that God exists, that He is triune, that the soul is immortal, that salvation can be accomplished only by a God-man, and so on. On the other hand, though, he is aware that the mind needs grace as a precondition for theological understanding and that the human intellect is inherently limited

with respect to penetrating the mystery of the Divine Being. This recognition—rather than any conflation of *necessitas* and *convenientia*—modifies his rationalism. That Anselm comments relatively little on the relationship between sin and the intellect manifests the absence of that fear of reason’s deceptiveness which haunted Augustine after his experience with Manicheism.”

Again (*A Companion*, 158): “Baptized infants, who have not yet reached the state of rational choice, are saved by grace alone. Those who have reached the age of understanding either receive uprightness by grace or else they do not receive it at all. Those to whom God gives His grace should recognize that the gift is not based on antecedent merits; i.e., it is truly a gift, and not a reward. Those who are offered divine grace and accept it are to be numbered among the redeemed. Grace further assists them by reducing the power of temptation against the will and by increasing the will’s affection for uprightness. Although the initial acceptance of grace is done through free choice, this acceptance is not a meritorious work. For the acceptance is identical with an act of faith. And this act of faith is itself encompassed by grace. Thus Anselm can speak of faith as coming through grace; and like Augustine, he can silently leave it a mystery why this grace, which cooperates with the act of faith by being its necessary precondition, should be given to some men and not to others.”

2. **Thomas Bradwardine, Archbishop of Canterbury (ca.1290-1349)** called Doctor Profundus for his erudition in math, physics, and theology. He was also chaplain to King Edward III.

Bradwardine held that “God immutably ordained all that comes about, with His will as the instrument in attaining His decrees.”

3. **Aquinas, the Dominican (1224/25–74).** Thomas Aquinas is properly designated as “the doctor” of the Roman Church. His concept of “sin and grace” is instructive of the scholastic of his day. Aquinas is semi-Augustinian in his theology. For example, he stated that God alone is the cause of grace. He wrote (*Summa Theologica*. Q. 112, 1): “I answer that, Nothing can act beyond its species, since the cause must always be more powerful than its effect. Now the gift of grace surpasses every capability of created nature, since it is nothing short of a partaking of the Divine Nature, which exceeds every other nature. And thus it is impossible that any creature should cause grace. For it is as necessary that God alone should deify, bestowing a partaking of the Divine Nature by a participated likeness, as it is impossible that anything save fire should enkindle.”

The reception of grace to the soul can and ought to be prepared for by means of the assistance of God (*Summa Theologica*. Q. 112, 3):

“On the contrary, Man is compared to God as clay to the potter, according to Jer. 18:6: As clay is in the hand of the potter, so are you in My hand. But however much the clay is prepared, it does not necessarily receive its shape from the potter. Hence, however much a man prepares himself, he does not necessarily receive grace from God.

“I answer that, As stated above (A. 2), man’s preparation for grace is from God, as Mover, and from the free-will, as moved. Hence, the preparation may be looked at in two ways: First, as it is from free-will, and thus there is no necessity that it should obtain grace, since the gift of grace exceeds every preparation of human power. But it may be considered, secondly, as it is from God the Mover, and thus it has a necessity—not indeed of coercion, but of infallibility—as regards what it is ordained to by God, since God’s intention cannot fail, according to the saying of Augustine in his book of the Predestination of the Saints (*De Dono Persev.* xiv) that by God’s good gifts whoever is liberated, is most certainly liberated. Hence if God intends, while moving, that the one whose heart He moves should attain to grace, he will infallibly attain to it, according to John 6:45: Every one that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh to Me.”

On the linkage of grace to the will, Aquinas understands that the will of man is not coerced, but made willing (*Summa Theologia*. Q. 113, 3): “I answer that, The justification of the ungodly is brought about by God moving man to justice. For He it is that justifieth the ungodly according to Romans 4:5. Now God moves everything in its own manner, just as we see that in natural things, what is heavy and what is light are moved differently, on account of their diverse natures. Hence He moves man to justice according to the condition of his human nature. But it is man’s proper nature to have free-will. Hence in him who has the use of reason, God’s motion to justice does not take place without a movement of the free-will; but He so infuses the gifts of justifying grace that at the same time He moves the free-will to accept the gift of grace, in such as are capable of being moved thus.”

Also justification through infused grace is instantaneous. He appears remarkably Augustinian at this point (*Summa Theologia*. Q. 113, 7): “I answer that, The justification of the ungodly consists as to its origin in the infusion of grace. For it is by grace free-will is moved and sin is remitted. Now the infusion of grace takes place in an instant and without

succession. And the reason of this is that if a form be not suddenly impressed upon its subject, it is either because that subject is not disposed, or because the agent needs time to dispose the subject. Hence we see that immediately the matter is disposed by a preceding alteration, the substantial form accrues to the matter; thus because the atmosphere of itself is disposed to receive light, it is suddenly illuminated by a body actually luminous. Now it was stated (Q. 112, A. 2) that God, in order to infuse grace into the soul, needs no disposition, save what He Himself has made. And sometimes this sufficient disposition for the reception of grace He makes suddenly, sometimes gradually and successively, as stated above (Q. 112, A. 2 ad 2). For the reason why a natural agent cannot suddenly dispose matter is that in the matter there is a resistant which has some disproportion with the power of the agent; and hence we see that the stronger the agent, the more speedily is the matter disposed. Therefore, since the Divine power is infinite, it can suddenly dispose any matter whatsoever to its form; and much more man's free-will, whose movement is by nature instantaneous. Therefore the justification of the ungodly by God takes place in an instant."

Also, Aquinas sees man as an absolute debtor to God and cannot merit converting grace (*Summa Theologia*. Q. 114, 1): "Now it is clear that between God and man there is the greatest inequality: for they are infinitely apart, and all man's good is from God. Hence there can be no justice of absolute equality between man and God, but only of a certain proportion, inasmuch as both operate after their own manner. Now the manner and measure of human virtue is in man from God. Hence man's merit with God only exists on the presupposition of the Divine ordination, so that man obtains from God, as a reward of his operation, what God gave him the power of operation for, even as natural things by their proper movements and operations obtain that to which they were ordained by God; differently, indeed, since the rational creature moves itself to act by its free-will, hence its action has the character of merit, which is not so in other creatures."

Having said all this Aquinas seeks God's grace through sacramental forms. Not that the forms are mechanical means of grace, but that God supplies grace through participating in the forms. He wrote (*Summa Theologica*. Q. 61.3): "I answer that, Sacraments are necessary for man's salvation, in so far as they are sensible signs of invisible things whereby man is made holy. Now after sin no man can be made holy save through Christ, Whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood, to the showing of His justice . . . that He Himself may be just, and the justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:25, 26). Therefore before Christ's coming there was need for some visible signs whereby man might testify to his faith in the future coming of a Saviour.

And these signs are called sacraments. It is therefore clear that some sacraments were necessary before Christ's coming."

Again (*Summa Theologica*. Q. 62.1): "We must therefore say otherwise, that an efficient cause is twofold, principal and instrumental. The principal cause works by the power of its form, to which form the effect is likened; just as fire by its own heat makes something hot. In this way none but God can cause grace: since grace is nothing else than a participated likeness of the Divine Nature, according to 2 Peter 1:4: He hath given us most great and precious promises; that we may be (Vulg.,—you may be made) partakers of the Divine nature.—But the instrumental cause works not by the power of its form, but only by the motion whereby it is moved by the principal agent: so that the effect is not likened to the instrument but to the principal; for instance, the couch is not like the axe, but like the art which is in the craftsman's mind. And it is thus that the sacraments of the New Law cause grace: for they are instituted by God to be employed for the purpose of conferring grace. Hence Augustine says (*Contra Faust.* 19): All these things, viz. pertaining to the sacraments, are done and pass away, but the power, viz. of God, which works by them, remains ever. Now that is, properly speaking, an instrument by which someone works: wherefore it is written (Titus 3:5): He saved us by the laver of regeneration".

N.B. Rome and Protestantism agree in definition on a majority of theological terms, but are miles apart on the method of reception of God's gracious benefits (works or a gift; assisting, cooperating grace or grace)!!

IV. CONCLUSION.

The purpose of this lesson has been to trace the doctrines of "sin and grace" from the Synod of Orange to Thomas Aquinas. The church repudiated Pelagianism and then battled Cassian's semi-Pelagianism only to mediate Augustine's theology for a moderate Augustinianism at Orange (529). In practice the church in the Medieval Era progressively slipped into, or at least came perilously close to, a Cassian formula as evidenced by the harsh treatment of Gottschalk in the ninth century. In the Medieval era both Gottschalk and Anselm evidence alliance to Augustine's views, but Aquinas speaks for the church in the thirteenth century in a confused medley of opposites. The reformers will break with semi-Pelagianism and return, in varying degrees, to Augustine.